Final resting place: Vatican releases updated instruction on burial, cremation

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Professing belief in the resurrection of the dead and affirming that the human body is an essential part of a person’s identity, the Catholic Church insists that the bodies of the deceased be treated with respect and laid to rest in a consecrated place. While the Catholic Church continues to prefer burial in the ground, it accepts cremation as an option, but forbids the scattering of ashes and the growing practice of keeping cremated remains at home, said Cardinal Gerhard Muller, prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

“Caring for the bodies of the deceased, the Church confirms its faith in the resurrection and separates itself from attitudes and rites that see in death the definitive obliteration of the person, a stage in the process of reincarnation or the fusion of one’s soul with the universe,” the cardinal told reporters on Oct. 25.

In 1963, the congregation issued an instruction permitting cremation as long as it was not done as a sign of denial of the basic Christian belief in the resurrection of the dead. The permission was incorporated into the Code of Canon Law in 1983 and the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches in 1999.

However, Cardinal Muller said, Church law had not specified exactly what should be done with “cremains,” and several bishops’ conferences asked the congregation to provide guidance.

The result, approved by Pope Francis after consultation with other Vatican offices and with bishops’ conferences and the Eastern Churches’ synods of bishops, is “Ad resurgendum cum Christo”.

See CREMATION, page 2

Six brothers enter more deeply into family, faith through the priesthood

By Sean Gallagher

He had planned this moment for months, had thought about it for years. What would he say in this profound moment in his life and the life of his brother that both would remember for the rest of their lives?

Yet when Father John Hollowell came to his younger brother, Father Anthony Hollowell, to give him a sign of peace minutes after he was ordained a priest, all of his planning disappeared and he said words that he never considered.

“I love you.”

This moment, which Father John described as “a blessing of the Spirit,” happened on June 25 in SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis when Cardinal-designate Joseph W. Tobin ordained six men as priests for service to the Church in central and southern Indiana.

When Father Anthony Hollowell became a priest that day, he filled out three sets of brothers who have been ordained priests for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis since 2009.

All priests share a common brotherhood in their deep bond of ordained life and ministry. Fathers Anthony and John Hollowell, David and Doug Marquette and Andrew and Benjamin Syberg experience it at an even deeper level as brothers. And they hope their witness will deepen the faith of archdiocesan Catholics, and encourage them to make their families the seed bed of future vocations.

“Love fights”

But while they recognize the importance that growing up in faith-filled families had on their future as priests, the priests acknowledged that growing up together came with more than its fair share of scuffles.

“Love fight,” said Father Anthony while reflecting on the times when he and three of his brothers would wrestle their oldest brother John.

“In our family life growing up, we fought a lot,” Father Anthony went on. “But, in my mind, it was never outside of the context of our love for each other.”

Cardinal-designate Tobin will say ‘thank you’ to archdiocese with Dec. 3 Mass and reception

By John Shaughnessy

When Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin learned on Oct. 9 that Pope Francis had named him as one of 17 new cardinals, he quickly thought of the impact that the people of the archdiocese have had on his life.

“I want to be able to say thank you to the people for helping make me who I am,” said the cardinal-designate, stressing how pleased he was that Pope Francis was allowing him to continue as the spiritual leader of the Church of central and southern Indiana.

“What four years has done for me is that this wonderful Catholic community spread across 39 counties has gone from ‘the archdiocese’ to ‘my people.’ I don’t mean that in a proprietary way at all. They have a claim on me, and I have a claim on them.”

Cardinal-designate Tobin will be sharing his gratitude with the people of the archdiocese in a special celebration on Dec. 3, a celebration that will begin with a Mass at 11 a.m. in SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis. Dec. 3 is also the feast day of St. Francis Xavier, principal patron of the archdiocese.

A reception and a receiving line with the cardinal-designate will follow in the Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center across the street from the cathedral. The Mass and the reception are both open to the public.

The celebration in the archdiocese will come exactly two weeks after Pope Francis installs the archbishop as a cardinal in St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome on Nov. 19. He will be the first cardinal to lead the archdiocese.

“The Mass of celebration for Archbishop Tobin on Dec. 3 is important in a couple of ways,” says Annette “Mickey” Lentz, chancellor of the archdiocese. “One, it will be the
Pope expresses shock over cruelty waged against innocent Iraqis

“VATICAN CITY (CNS)—As a military operation in northern Iraq fights to wrest control of areas held by retreating Islamic State militants, Pope Francis criticized the so-called ‘cruelty and heinous violence waged against innocent civilians.’

He invited people to pray with him, asking ‘that Iraq, where violence stricken, might be both strong and firm in the hope of moving toward a future of security, reconciliation and peace.’

Speaking to visitors in St. Peter’s Square on Oct. 23 for the Angelus prayer, the pope said, ‘In these dramatic hours, I am close to the entire population of Iraq especially that of the Christian communities. Our hearts are shocked by the heinous acts of violence that for too long have been perpetrated against innocent citizens, whether they be Muslims, whether they be Christians, or people belonging to other ethnic groups and religions.

He said he was ‘saddened to hear news of the killing, in cold blood, of many sons and daughters of that beloved land, including many children; this cruelty makes us weep, leaving us without words.’

The pope’s remarks came as Iraqi government troops and Kurdish fighters backed by a U.S.-led coalition were successfully retaking control of Mosul, the nation’s second-largest city. As the so-called Islamic State lost control of its offshoots in villages and its capital, it has stepped up attacks in other parts of the country.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees verified reports that ISIS militants were forcing residents of surrounding villages into Mosul—presumably to be used as human shields. As humanitarian groups worked to aid those already displaced by the offensive, many fear it will become a mass exodus.

‘This is history in the making,’ Lentz noted. ‘There’s an element of excitement from people for his being named a cardinal. At the same time, I see how humble he is about it. He is also honored by it.’

Correction

The poet of the “My Journey to God” poem in the Oct. 21 issue of The Criterion was Patrick Harkins, not Patrick Harris.
Annual appeal supports retired archdiocesan priests

By Natalie Hoefner

In November, Catholics in central and southern Indiana donate to United Catholic Appeal: Christ Our Hope (UCA), which in part benefits the retirement of priests of the archdiocese. Then just a month later, a second collection is taken for retired religious in December.

Why two collections for the same cause?

The Criterion spoke with Father Gerald Kirkhoff, archdiocesan vicar for advocacy for priests, about the difference between the two collections.

‘They’d never say they deserve it’

The difference between the two collections is easily summed up, he says. The funds from the UCA benefit priests of the archdiocese, whereas the December collection for retired religious, sponsored by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), benefits priests, brothers and sisters of religious orders.

“A lot of people don’t know that we have religious priests and diocesan priests,” Father Kirkhoff explains. “It doesn’t mean that the diocesan priests aren’t religious or pious. It just means that they’re attached to and serve the diocese rather than [being attached to] a specific religious order.”

Of the 149 priests of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, there are currently 45 who are age 70 and above and therefore receive retirement funds. An additional six priests have been approved for early retirement for health or other reasons.

Just because a priest is of retirement age does not mean they are fully retired, notes Father Kirkhoff.

“Eighty-eight of the 45 retired priests age 70 and older still serve in some capacity, including three who are still parish pastors. Others take on other part-time roles in the archdiocese, such as Father Kirkhoff, who at age 73 serves not only in his vicar role but as director of the archdiocesan Mission Office and Society for the Propagation of the Faith.”

He and the other 27 retired-but-still-active archdiocesan priests serve as substitute celebrants at parishes Masses, hear confessions, and celebrate weddings and funeral Masses.

The retirement funds the priests receive, funded in part by UCA donations, go toward priests’ monthly living expenses, including housing.

“The diocese doesn’t really have an official facility for our retired priests,” Father Kirkhoff explains. “St. Paul Hermitage [in Beech Grove, a ministry of the Sisters of St. Benedict of Our Lady of Grace monastery] does make accommodations for retired priests, but most find housing on their own.”

Donating to the United Catholic Appeal is “a token of people’s appreciation of what they receive from the priests,” says Father Kirkhoff. “Priests would say [the funds are] helpful, but they’d never say they deserve it—some wouldn’t even think that,” says Father Kirkhoff.

Bishops to vote for USCCB president, vice president at general assembly

WASHINGTON (CNS)—U.S. bishops are scheduled to elect the next president and vice president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) at their upcoming fall general assembly taking place on Nov. 14-16 in Baltimore.

Each office is elected from a slate of 10 candidates who have been nominated by their fellow bishops. Released by the USCCB, the slate of candidates for president and vice president are as follows:

- Archbishop Gregory M. Aymond of New Orleans.
- Archbishop Charles J. Chaput of Philadelphia
- Archbishop Paul S. Coakley of Oklahoma City.
- Bishop Daniel E. Flores of Brownsville, Texas.
- Archbishop Jose H. Gomez of Los Angeles.
- Archbishop William E. Lori of Baltimore.
- Archbishop Allen H. Vigneron of Detroit.
- Archbishop Thomas Wenski of Miami.
- Archbishop John C. Wester of Santa Fe, New Mexico.

The president and vice president are elected to three-year terms, which begin at the conclusion of the general assembly. The current president, Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz of Louisville, Ky., and the current vice president, Cardinal DiNardo, will complete their terms.

USCCB bylaws provide that the first election is that of the president by simple majority vote of members who are present and voting. Following the election of the president, the vice president is elected from the remaining nine candidates.

‘A lot of people don’t know that we have religious priests and diocesan priests. It doesn’t mean that the diocesan priests aren’t religious or pious. It just means that they are attached to and serve the diocese rather than [being attached to] a specific religious order.’

—Father Gerald Kirkhoff, vicar for advocacy of priests

‘I think of the teaching sisters’

The USCCB’s Retired Religious collection in December benefits all other religious—priests, sisters and brothers of religious orders—who serve in the archdiocese.

“It’s the most successful second collection,” says Father Kirkhoff.

In central and southern Indiana, there are 134 religious priests and brothers serving from nine orders, the majority being Benedictines, Conventual Franciscans, Dominicans, Jesuits and Order of Friars Minor (Franciscans).

Some serve as parish pastors. Others serve in schools, hospitals, on college campuses or as counselors.

The archdiocese also benefits from the service of 499 religious women representing 24 orders.

Some serve in hospitals, such as the Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration. Others serve a specific population, such as the Little Sisters of the Poor serving the impoverished elderly at St. Augustine Home for the Aged in Indianapolis, or the Missionaries of Charity serving those in need on the east side of Indianapolis.

Catholics of central and southern Indiana are probably most familiar with the sisters who founded communities in the archdiocese and taught in parochial schools, says Father Kirkhoff, including Benedictines, Franciscans and Sisters of Providence.

“When I think of the Retired Religious collection, I think of the teaching sisters who for so long went underpaid and underappreciated,” he says. “They built the Catholic school system. … They did this for a pittance, and they live long lives.

“So in one sense, when a person contributes to the religious collection in December, it’s not just an act of charity—I think it’s an act of justice.”

(For more information on the United Catholic Appeal, log on to www.archindy.org/uca or call the Office of Stewardship and Development at 317-236-1415 or 800-382-9836, ext. 1415.)
History of the ‘Catholic vote’

In his columns that appear on page 5, Cardinal-designate Joseph W. Tobin has taught us how we should decide whom to vote for in the coming elections. As he wrote, no candidate and no political party perfectly represent the positions of the Catholic Church. Neither he nor we are going to tell you whom to vote for.

For some of us, though, the history of the Catholic vote in the United States is fascinating. There was a time, prior to 1960, when Catholic periodicals insisted that Catholics didn’t vote as a bloc and, therefore, really wasn’t such a thing as “the Catholic vote.” That argument fell apart in 1960 when John F. Kennedy received 80 percent of the Catholic vote. (One study showed 78 percent and another 82 percent.)

Sure, it was recognized that most Catholics happened to be Democrats. But the 1952 election hadn’t been that lopsided, when Catholic voters were Democrats and Catholic votes, received only 52 percent of the Catholic vote. Kennedy’s Catholic vote was not such a thing as “the Catholic vote.” That happened shortly after the first half of the 20th century and through the first half of the 2000s. Anti-Catholic riots flared up in many places.

Meanwhile, the Democratic Party took in the immigrants, especially the Irish refugees from the potato famine who arrived penniless and took whatever jobs they could find. Soon Irish Catholic Democratic machines dominated politics in Boston, New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Kansas City and St. Louis.

The bosses helped the poor Catholics find jobs, and picked up the tabs for doctor bills, weddings and funerals. In return, Catholic voters kept the machines in power. That continued through the first half of the 20th century and through the Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson presidencies.

Then, though, the Democratic Party turned left, notably supporting abortion rights. That happened shortly after many Catholics had benefited from the GI Bill after World War II to get a college education and join the middle class. Catholics founded the Republican Party advocating the things they believed in. Many ardent Republicans today had parents or grandparents who were just as ardent Democrats.

The first Republican president to get a majority of Catholic votes was Richard Nixon in 1972. But more Catholics swung back to a Democrat in 1976 to vote for Jimmy Carter. Then it was Republican again, especially in 1984 when Ronald Reagan received 61 percent of the Catholic vote. That was the high water mark for Republicans though, because the Democratic Party has won more Catholic votes since then. Michael Dukakis, Bill Clinton, Al Gore, John Kerry and Barack Obama all received more Catholic votes than their opponents. It was close at times, though, especially in the Dukakis-George H.W. Bush race in 1988 and the Gore-George W. Bush race in 2000—the one that required a Supreme Court decision.

So is there a Catholic vote? It appears that Catholics today vote about the same way as the rest of the population. Even when Catholic John Kerry ran, he received only 52 percent of the Catholic vote, not 80 percent as Smith and Kennedy did.

Letter to the Editor

Rise above party politics, promote the common good, and vote for life, reader says

As Catholics get ready to vote in the general election, they should remember that some issues are more important than others. The most important issue of all is the right to life because all other issues are meaningless without it. Only those who are alive can exercise their civil rights, pursue earthly happiness, or labor for their eternal salvation.

From a Catholic perspective, problems that affect the quality of life, such as poverty, health care, immigration, or refugee resettlement, though important, do not carry the same moral weight as problems that threaten the basic life principle, such as abortion, euthanasia, embryonic stem-cell research, or same-sex “marriage.”

On quality-of-life issues, a Catholic can take one side or the other without acting against the faith, but on matters of principle, the only choice that must be made is on the side of life.

Unfortunately, politicians often cloud the issue when they try to justify the non-existent right to abortion under the pretext of “helping people,” as they could help people by killing people. This is nonsense.

As long as a pro-life alternative is available, a Catholic may not, in good conscience, vote for a pro-abortion candidate, regardless of his or her position on quality of life.

Not only does a vote against life make one complicit in the murder of unborn children, it will also herald a loss of religious freedom. It is no coincidence that defenders of abortion and same-sex marriage seek to criminalize Christianity and brand the Bible as “hate speech.” Sinners simply do not want to be reminded of their sins.

So I urge my fellow Catholics to rise above party politics, promote the common good, and vote for life on Nov. 8. If not for your country or your Church, please do it for the sake of your immortal soul.

Stephen L. Bussell
Indianapolis

Letters Policy

Letters from readers are welcome and should be informed, relevant, well-expressed, concise, temperate in tone, courteous and relevant to issues. The editors reserve the right to select and edit the letters based on space limitations, public interest and content. Letters must be signed, but, for serious reasons, names may be withheld. Send letters to “Letters to the Editor,” The Criterion, 1400 N. Meridian Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202-2605; or by e-mail to criterion@archindy.org.
We must work hard to avoid war and promote peace

The history of humanity is marked by endless warfare, the seemingly constant conflict between families, tribes, nations and peoples. In the modern era—especially since the middle of the last century—wars have included the threat of complete annihilation through the use of “weapons of mass destruction.” War has always been problematic—even when it was “justified,” but now it has the potential to totally destroy life as we know it. How can we possibly justify that?

In “Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship,” the bishops of the United States warn against becoming indifferent to war (#60). The number of armed conflicts spreading throughout the globe and the ever-present threats against our way of life can have a numbing effect. More than ever before, we need to be awake and alert to the dangers of war. More important, we must work hard to avoid war and promote peace.

War is never a sign of what ought to be. It is never necessary to defend the innocent against an even greater evil. At best, war is like an amputation to the body against a death-dealing infection. War should always be the last resort, and we should never lose sight of the cost of war (personal, economic and social) and its irreversible harm to human life.

As noted in “Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship,” “Nations should protect the dignity of the human person and the right to life by finding more effective ways to prevent conflicts, to resolve them by peaceful means, and to promote reconstruction and reconciliation in the wake of conflicts” (#68).

It’s true that nations have the right, and the obligation, to protect innocent people against unjust aggression, including terrorism and the persecution of individuals and groups for reasons of race, political ideology, religious intolerance or economic gain. As we bishops teach, “the duty of nations to defend human life and the common good demands effective responses to terror, moral assessment of and restraint in the means used or disproportionate use of force, a focus on the roots of terror, and fair distribution of the burdens of responding to terror” (#68).

But the right to defend against unjust aggression is not unlimited. Here, as everywhere, the end does not justify the means. As Catholics and as faithful citizens, we insist that “the use of torture must be rejected as fundamentally incompatible with the dignity of the human person and ultimately counterproductive in the effort to combat terrorism” (#68). As Church leaders, we have also raised fundamental moral concerns about preventive use of military force. We honor the commitment and sacrifice of those who serve in our nation’s armed forces, and we also recognize the moral right to conscientious objection to war in general, a particular war, or a military procedure.

Again, as Catholics and as citizens, we feel compelled to speak out against any use of force that is indiscriminate or disproportionate. “Direct and intentional attacks on noncombatants in war and terrorist acts are never morally acceptable. The use of weapons of mass destruction or other means of killing are not justified if they do not distinguish between civilians and soldiers is fundamentally immoral. The United States should be working to reverse the spread of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons, and to reduce its own reliance on weapons of mass destruction by pursuing progressive nuclear disarmament. It also must end its use of anti-personnel landmines and reduce its predominant role in the global arms trade” (#69).

Catholics are called to be peacemakers, not warmongers. We understand that the use of military force is sometimes both justified and necessary, but we would much prefer that our leaders use other means to promote the common good and achieve lasting peace. “Further, we support policies and actions that protect refugees of war and violence, at home and abroad, and all people suffering religious persecution throughout the world, many of whom are our fellow Christians” (#69).

In this election year, we have many tough choices to make, but high on the priority list is this question: Which candidates and political parties are truly for peace, and the common good of all? There are no easy answers. That’s why we need to pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit—especially on Election Day.

Debemos esforzarnos arduamente para evitar la guerra y promover la paz

La historia de la humanidad está marcada por interminables conflictos bélicos, y las constantes diferencias entre las familias, tribus, naciones y pueblos. En la época moderna, especialmente desde mediados del siglo pasado, las guerras encierran además la amenaza de la aniquilación completa a través del uso de “armas de destrucción masiva.” Las guerras siempre han sido problemáticas, aunque se las considere “justificadas,” pero hoy en día tienen el potencial de destruir por completo la vida tal como la conocemos. ¿Acaso existe algo que pueda justificar esto?

En “Formando la conciencia para ser ciudadanos fieles,” los obispos de los Estados Unidos nos previenen contra el peligro de volverse indiferentes hacia la guerra (#68). La cantidad de conflictos armados que se propagan por todo el mundo y las amenazas siempre constantes contra nuestra forma de vida pueden llegar a generar indiferencia. Pero ahora más que nunca debemos estar atentos y despiertos ante los peligros de la guerra. Y lo que es más importante: debemos esforzarnos arduamente para evitar la guerra y promover la paz en este año electoral tenemos muchas decisiones difíciles que debemos tomar, pero encabezando nuestra lista de prioridades se encuentra la siguiente interrogante: ¿Qué candidatos y partidos políticos verdaderamente obran en favor de la paz, la justicia y el bien común para todos? Las respuestas a este planteamiento no son sencillas. Es por ello que debemos rezar para recibir la guía del Espíritu Santo, especialmente en el día de las elecciones.

Traducido por: Daniela Guaita
November 2
Archbishop O’Meara Catholic Center, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. Solo Seniors, Catholic, educational, charitable and social singles, 50 and over, single, separated, widowed or divorced. New members welcome. 6 p.m. Information: 317-243-0777.


November 3

November 4
Marian University chapel, 3200 Cold Spring Road, Indianapolis. Lumen Del Catholic Business Group, Mass and monthly meeting, 6:30-8:30 a.m., breakfast, $15 per person. Information: 317-435-3447 or hansen@diocese.com.net.

Most Holy Name of Jesus Church, 89 N. 17th Ave., Beech Grove. First Friday devotion, exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, 5:30 p.m., re-consecration, 4:55-6:45 p.m., Mass, 7 p.m.; Litany of the Sacred Heart and prayers for the Holy Father, 7:30 p.m. Information: 317-784-5454.

St. John Paul II Parish, St. Joseph Church, 2005 St. Joe Road, Sellersburg. First Friday devotion of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, noon Mass, followed by Litany and consecration to Sacred Heart of Jesus. Information: 824-246-2512.

Our Lady of the Greenwood Church, 315 S. Meridian St., Greenwood. First Friday celebration of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Mass, 3:45 p.m., exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, following Mass until 9:30 p.m., re-consecration of re-consecration available. Information: 317-488-2861 or jcgardn@benedictinn.org.

St. Lawrence Church, 6944 E. 46th St., Indianapolis. First Friday Charismatic Renewal Praise and Mass, praise and worship, 7:30 p.m. Information: 317-523-4193, dbarter@comcast.net.

November 5
St. Augustine Home, 2345 W. 86th St., Indianapolis. St. Augustine Guild Bazaar, handmade crafts, decorations, jewelry, alfajin and food, all proceeds benefit Little Sisters of the Poor, Fri. 9 a.m.-6 p.m., Sat. 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

St. Agnes Church, 1005 McLaury Road, Nancyville. Christmas Bazaar, crafts, babled topiary trees, jewelry, food, quilt, raffle, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Information: 317-988-2778.

St. Bartholomew Church, 1300 N. Mulberry St. “A Musical Pilgrimage to Rome and the Vatican” concert, St. Bartholomew Choir with conductor Bogdan Kuz, 7:30 p.m., free. Information: www.saintbatholomew.org or call on Music Min The concert Series.

St. Malachy School, 7410 N. County Road 1000 E., Beech Grove. Father Bruce Path, Christmas Bazaar 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Information: 317-425-4153, srcalep@yahoo.com.

November 6
Father Jeff Merton evening talk, St. Benedict Church, 11441 Hague Road, in Fishers, Ind., in the Lafayette Diocese, is hosting a free Thanksgiving dinner in Craig Willy Hall from 11 a.m.-2 p.m. on Nov. 6. The meal will include turkey, mashed potatoes, stuffing, vegetables, rolls and dessert. All are welcome. For more information, contact 317-517-4256.†

St. Louis de Montfort Parish, 11441 Hague Road, in Fishers, Ind., in the Lafayette Diocese, is hosting a free Thanksgiving dinner in Craig Willy Hall from 11 a.m.-2 p.m. on Nov. 6. The meal will include turkey, mashed potatoes, stuffing, vegetables, rolls and dessert. All are welcome. For more information, contact 317-517-4256.†

Rachels Vineyard retreat on Nov. 4-6 in Lafayette Diocese offers post-abortion healing

A Rachael’s Vineyard Healing Retreat will be offered in the Lafayette Diocese on Nov. 4-6. The retreat is open to anyone who has had an abortion or suffered because of an abortion by another. God’s love and mercy are bigger than your pain.

To register by Oct. 31 or for more information, contact Rachael’s Vineyard at 765-577-7706, Dave at 765-860-6066, or log on to rachelsvineyard.org.

November 7
Benedictine Sisters hosting virtual prayer service for peace

The Sisters of St. Benedict of Our Lady of Grace Monastery, 1402 Southern Ave., in Beech Grove, will hold a prayer service for peace in their monastery at 6:45 p.m. on Nov. 6, the Sunday before the elections.

All are invited to the service, and to stay for evening prayers with the sisters. For more information, contact the monastery at 317-787-3287.†

Father Vincent Lampert offers healing service on Nov. 15 at cathedral

Father Vincent Lampert, pastor of St. Malachi Parish in Brownsburg and the archdiocesan priest, will hold an evening of prayer and reflection with song and petitions for healing, protection, mercy and hope at St. Peter and Paul Cathedral, 1347 N. Meridian St., in Indianapolis, at 6:30 p.m. on Nov. 15. The service is for those experiencing a “dark valley,” spiritual affliction or a need for the shelter of God’s comfort and abiding presence, especially during the Year of Mercy. All are welcome.†

Sisters of Providence’s Taizé service on Nov. 8 to focus on silence

The Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods and the greater faith community of the Wabash Valley will host their monthly ecumenical Taizé prayer service in the Church of the Immaculate Conception. 1 Providence Place, at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, from 7:8 p.m. on Nov. 8. The services take place on the second Tuesday of each month. The 2016 theme for Taizé has been “Finding God in the Ordinary.” Each month has had a specific focus. For November, it will be “silence.” The service is open to persons of all faith traditions and is free. It includes prayer, music, time for silence and time for spoken prayer by Father Vincent Lampert on weekdays, or a prayer space lit primarily by candlelight. For more information, call 317-535-2952 or log on to TaizePro ConorCenter.

Standing up for life

David Beret, CEO of 40 Days for Life, speaks during the pro-life rally outside of the Planned Parenthood abortion clinic in Indianapolis on Oct. 8. (Submitted photo by Jim Recasner)
Parishes, pro-life organizations live out call during Year of Mercy

Compiled by Natalie Hoefer

Each year, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops recognizes October as Respect Life Month. In recognition of this focus, The Criterion has compiled pro-life highlights from around the archdiocese over the last 12 months. It is impossible to list all of the pro-life activities throughout central and southern Indiana since Respect Life Sunday on Oct. 4, 2015. But this roundup offers a sampling of many of the good works accomplished to embrace life at all stages.

• On Oct. 9, 2015, St. Joan of Arc Parish hosted a talk by Safe Haven Baby Boxes founder Monica Kelsey. She was a driving force behind Indiana House Bill 1016 to have infant incubators (“boxes”) placed in locations such as police and fire stations, hospitals and nonprofits dedicated to child welfare.

• The first ever “Future Full of Hope: Honoring Children We Have Entrusted to the Lord” service was held on Oct. 15, 2015. The service is for families and individuals who are grieving pregnancy loss, infant loss, or childhood loss, including stillbirths, ectopic pregnancies, abortions and miscarriages. It was such a success that it is now a Parish hosted a talk by Safe Haven Baby Boxes founder Monica Kelsey. She was a driving force behind Indiana House Bill 1016 to have infant incubators (“boxes”) placed in locations such as police and fire stations, hospitals and nonprofits dedicated to child welfare.

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Men’s conference to feature three popular priest speakers

By Sean Gallagher

The 2016 Indiana Catholic Men’s Conference will feature three priests who are popular preachers and authors that attract listeners and readers from around the world. This year’s speakers include Father Larry Richards, a priest of the Diocese of Erie, Pa., Society of Our Lady of the Trinity Father James Blount and Father Ronan Murphy.

The conference will begin at 8 a.m. on Nov. 19 at the Indiana Convention Center, 100 S. Capitol Ave., in Indianapolis, and will conclude by 4:30 p.m.

Mike Fox, a conference organizer and member of St. Pius X Parish in Indianapolis, noted that this year’s conference will occur on the weekend that will see the close of the Holy Year of Mercy.

“Last year our theme was ‘Preparing for the Year of Mercy,’ and this year we do conclude on the final weekend for the Year of Mercy,” he said. “We hope those who attend this year will look back at the last year, and feel they have a better understanding of God’s mercy. As we conclude on the final weekend, we hope to see God’s mercy continue, and we hope the men also see their importance in spreading God’s mercy to others.”

Registration for the conference, which is sponsored by the Marian Center of Indianapolis, is $50 per person, $45 per person in groups of 10 or more, and $25 per person for religious brothers, deacons and students. Priests and seminarians may attend free of charge. Registration fees will increase after Nov. 8.

In addition to a full slate of speakers, the conference will include a midday Mass, with Bishop Timothy L. Doherty of the Diocese of Lafayette, Ind., serving as the liturgy’s principal celebrant, and lunch that follows. Eucharistic adoration will take place during the conference, and a eucharistic procession from the convention center to nearby St. John the Evangelist Church will occur preceding the midday Mass. The sacrament of penance will be available throughout the conference.

Ordained in 1989, Father Richards serves in parishes in the Erie Diocese and is the founder of The Reason for Our Hope Foundation, an evangelization and education association. In addition to being a speaker on Catholic topics in demand across the nation, he is the author of several books, including Be a Man!

Fr. Larry Richards

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Fr. James Blount

Ordained in 1998, Father Blount serves in parishes in the Diocese of Lafayette, Ind., and has served in parishes in his diocese and Australia, in addition to ministering as a mission preacher in many countries. Father Murphy currently ministers to a community of Carmelite nuns in New York, and leads retreats for the Marian Movement of Priests.

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Fr. Ronan Murphy

Born in Dublin, Ireland, Father Murphy is a priest for the Camden, N.J., Diocese. Ordained in 2000, he has served in parishes in his diocese and Australia, in addition to ministering as a mission preacher in many countries. Father Murphy currently ministers to a community of Carmelite nuns in New York, and leads retreats for the Marian Movement of Priests.

Knights of Columbus urges U.S. Catholics to pray novena ahead of election

NEW HAVEN, Conn. (CNS)—The Knights of Columbus is urging members and other U.S. Catholics to pray a novena from Oct. 30 to Nov. 7, the eve of Election Day.

“The Church teaches that Catholics are called to form their consciences based on Church teaching and vote in accordance with that well-formed conscience,” said Supreme Knight Carl Anderson, who is CEO of the international fraternal organization based in New Haven.

“Pope Francis has said in reference to the U.S. election that we should ‘study the proposals well, pray and choose with your conscience,’ and this novena is designed to help Catholic Americans do that,” Anderson said in a statement.

The Knights’ novena—nine consecutive days of prayer—asks for the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, the mother of Jesus, under her title of the Immaculate Conception. Individuals, families, councils and parishes are all invited to participate, the Knights said.

Mary Immaculate is the patroness of the United States. In 1791, Archbishop John Carroll of Baltimore, the first bishop of the United States, dedicated his diocese to her. The first U.S. diocese, it covered the entire country. In 1846, the U.S. bishops reaffirmed that dedication and Pope Pius IX ratified it in 1847.

Here is the text of the novena:

“Most Holy Trinity: Our Father in heaven, who chose Mary as the fairest of your daughters, Holy Spirit, who chose Mary as your spouse; God the Son, who chose Mary as your mother, in union with Mary we adore your majesty and acknowledge your supreme, eternal dominion and authority.

“Most Holy Trinity, we put the United States of America into the hands of Mary Immaculate in order that she may present them to you. Through her, we wish to thank you for the great resources of this land, and for the freedom which has been its heritage.

“Through the intercession of Mary, have mercy on the country to you. Through her, we wish to thank you for the great resources of this land, and for the freedom which has been its heritage.

“Through the intercession of Mary, have mercy on the Church in America. Grant us peace. Have mercy on our president and on all the officers of our government. Grant us a fruitful economy, born of justice and charity. Have mercy on capital and industry and labor. Protect the family life of the nation. Guard the precious gift of many religious vocations. Through the intercession of our mother, have mercy on the sick, the tempted, sinners—all on who are in need.”

According to the Knights, the prayer was written for the 1959 dedication of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, which includes a bell tower known as the Knights Tower. The Knights of Columbus donated money for the tower’s construction.

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May Our Lady of Perpetual Help care for you at all times.

May Mary the Seat of Wisdom guide all your decisions.

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Marian University is sponsored by the Sisters of St. Francis, Oldenburg, Indiana.
Vocations discerned through encountering Jesus in prayer, service

By Father Eric Augenstein

The first line of the homily is the one that has stayed with me. Gathered with a few million young Catholics for World Youth Day this past July, Pope Francis began his homily by saying, “Dear young people, you have come to Krakow to meet Jesus.”

We might be tempted to think that the young Church gathered at World Youth Day was there primarily to see the Holy Father, walk in the footsteps of the great Polish saints, make new friends from around the world, or listen to some of the best-known Catholic speakers and musicians of our time. But that would be missing the point. World Youth Day was all of these things—but none of them would matter if we did not meet Jesus Christ. “Dear young people, you have come to Krakow to meet Jesus.”

It’s so simple—and yet that simple statement goes to the heart of not only an event like World Youth Day, but the journey of discipleship.

To be a disciple is to have met Jesus and to pledge to continue encountering him—learning from him, following him, striving to be like him.

We meet Jesus in the sacraments, in prayer, in Scripture. We meet Jesus in the friend, or stranger in need of love and compassion. We meet Jesus reflected in the lives of other disciples. We meet Jesus in the silence of our hearts, and in the joyful uplifting of voices in song and prayer.

Sometimes, we meet Jesus in planned encounters; other times, he takes us by surprise.

To grow in discipleship is to meet Jesus on a regular basis. To meet Jesus on a regular basis is to grow in discipleship.

The same is true for vocational discernment. The best way to discover our particular vocation—the unique way God is calling us to follow him—is to grow in discipleship, to regularly encounter Jesus Christ in prayer, Scripture, sacraments, community, and works of mercy. And the living out of a vocation continues the same pattern—to be a good and holy priest, brother, deacon or consecrated religious, we need to regularly meet Jesus and invite him into our lives.

Speaking recently to a group of diocesan vocation directors, Cardinal Gerald Cardinal Lacroix of Quebec, Canada, reiterated what many others have said: “The strength of a priest depends on his relationship with Christ—a living relationship with Christ, so that the priest sees as Christ sees and loves as he loves.”

The same is true for all vocations—starting with the universal call to discipleship.

In the pages of this year’s Vocations Supplement, you will read stories of men and women who have met Jesus along the journey of their lives—and continue to encounter him as they discover and live their vocations.

As you read these stories, I encourage you to reflect on your own journey of faith. How have you met Jesus in your own life? In those moments—those encounters—how has Jesus called you to follow him?

Along the way, if you hear the call to discern the priesthood or consecrated life, let me know—I’d be honored to walk the journey of discernment with you.

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Sisters share a journey toward ‘the loving heart of God’

By John Shaughnessy

NAPOLEON—Her words offer a combination of wisdom and welcome: “Let us no longer be strangers, but friends in our journey of faith. Then we, together, will meet the loving heart of God.”

Franciscan Sister Shirley Gerth shares that message on the website of St. Maurice Parish in Napoleon in southeastern Indiana, where she serves as its parish life coordinator (PLC).

Those words show the purpose that has guided Sister Shirley in her interactions with people through the years. They also capture the blossoming relationship that is developing between her and Franciscan Sister Donna Prickel, the parish life coordinator of Immaculate Conception Parish in Millhousen, which is just a few turns along country roads from St. Maurice.

While Sister Shirley has been a part of the Franciscan community in Oldenburg for 55 years and Sister Donna has had a connection for 44 years, the two women are relative “strangers” because their faith journeys have led them in different directions—until now.

Since the summer, their lives have become intertwined in their roles as parish life coordinators in the archdiocese. In her 25 years in that role, Sister Shirley has served the parishes of St. Anne in New Castle, St. Rose of Lima in Knightstown, St. John the Baptist in Osgood and St. Maurice. She also ministered in the former St. John the Evangelist Parish in Enochsburg.

As for Sister Donna, she’s in just her third month as a parish life coordinator.

The closeness of St. Maurice and Immaculate Conception parishes has led to a connection where Sister Shirley serves as a mentor to Sister Donna, but the roots of their relationship run far deeper—to their shared commitment to their Franciscan values.

“I can’t imagine doing this pastoral work without the foundation of our Franciscan values,” says Sister Shirley. “When we talk about St. Francis, we talk about a life of simplicity and the love of creation.”

Sister Donna nods and adds, “It’s the sense of all being one. Francis was very strong about being the humble one. That whole concept works well in the country where people live from the land, and they

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Postulant finds ‘kindred spirits’ among Sisters of Providence

By Jason Moon (Special to The Criterion)


They collaborate with others through prayer, education, service and advocacy. Through their ministries, the mission of the congregation is to honor Divine Providence, and to further God’s loving plan through devotion to works of love, mercy and justice in service among God’s people.

Those collaborations include working with Providence Associates, women and men of faith who choose to have a relationship with the Sisters of Providence. Providence Associates commit to sharing their own unique gifts and talents with others while walking with the Sisters of Providence. Currently, there are more than 200 Providence Associates living out Providence spirituality in their daily lives across the United States and in Taiwan.

The Sisters of Providence continue to accept new members to the community and have done so in recent years, including Sister Dina Bato, who is currently preparing to profess perpetual vows, as well as temporary professed Sisters Hannah Cothran, Arinnie Whitaker and Sister Joni Luna. In addition, mission novice Sisters Tracey Horan and Anna Fan are also in formation.

In September, Indianapolis native Emily TeKolste knocked on the door to Providence Hall seeking entrance as a postulant to the Sisters of Providence of Saint-Mary-of-the-Woods religious community at its motherhouse northwest of Terre Haute.

Emily’s connection to the Sisters of Providence stems from Sister Tracey, who entered the congregation in 2014. “When I encountered the Sisters of Providence, I had just moved into the Indianapolis Catholic Worker community,” Emily said. “I had moved there because I was searching for a way to get out of the suburbs where I grew up and into a more economically marginalized community. I was looking for deeper friendships, since most of my friends from high school and college lived in different states.”

“I was looking for a way to connect in a deeper...
By Natalie Hoeter

BEECH GROVE—When Benedictine Sister Jennifer Mechtilde-Horn is thinking about the Rule of St. Benedict, she says mercy is one of the words that comes to mind.

“The rule is merciful,” says Sister Jennifer, prioress of the Sisters of St. Benedict of Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove. “Because we were received by God, we need to receive others.”

So how does the Holy Year of Mercy play out in a community that already lives by mercy as a rule? The Criterion spoke with members of the Benedictine community to discover how they have highlighted in a special way this year that trait that is so paramount to their vocation, and the different ways in which mercy is shown in the daily work of the sisters.

“We receive all as Christ”

Being a community based on mercy, the sisters “did not suddenly start being merciful on the first day of the jubilee year,” says Benedictine Sister Mary Luke Jones, monastery director of development, with a chuckle.

“But the Year of Mercy as declared by the Holy Father has brought it to the forefront of our thinking and our reflection and our own prayer,” she says. “It has focused our attention.”

She lists special actions the community took to mark the jubilee year, such as having mercy-themed prayer services for the public (with the final one set for 4:15 p.m. in the monastery chapel on Nov. 6). The efforts also include sharing quotes about mercy in honor “thank you” letters, offering a retreat on mercy at the Benedict Inn Retreat & Conference Center, and publishing an educational article about corporal and spiritual works of mercy in the community’s newsletter.

Internal actions were taken as well, such as trips for the sisters to the Holy Doors of Mercy at S.S. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis, and Lenten reflections on Pope Francis’ letter announcing the holy year, “Misericordiae Vultus” (“The Face of Mercy”).

“We’ve been touched as a community by the Holy Father, his presence in the world,” says Sister Jennifer. “He is mercy. That’s how he wants to live in the world, and he calls us to live that way.”

Both sisters agree that much of mercy is seeing Christ in others, an action that lies at the center of the Rule of St. Benedict.

“I think the most important sentence in the Rule is that we receive all as Christ,” says Sister Mary Luke. “It underlies everything we say and everything we do, our hospitality in seeing and treating each person as Christ.”

Sister Jennifer sees mercy in the first sentence of the Rule, which states, “Listen carefully … and incline with the ear of your heart.”

“I think that also helps us to see Christ and to really listen to what [a person’s] need is,” she says. “I think if we listen long enough to people, we can get underneath something they’ve said or done. They may irritate us, but when you listen, there’s something else going on. It’s easy to judge and see what we see, but not know all the stuff underneath that makes that person be that way…”

“Because we were received by God, we need to receive others. And hopefully, that person receives others, and it goes on.”

“I’m driven by mercy”

Benedictine Sister Kathleen Yeandon, a 53-year-old teacher of theology at Bishop Chatard High School in Indianapolis, defines mercy as compassion.

“It’s how you receive others, how you understand their own struggles,” she says. “Mercy was shown at an early age in Sister Kathleen, whose 17-member family operated a food pantry out of their basement for St. Joan of Arc Parish in Indianapolis.

“I’m driven by mercy,” she says. “You give it because you’ve been given it. I’ve been given so much of it and continue to be given it—why wouldn’t I want to give it back?”

And give it back she does, in many ways. While Sister Kathleen’s list of merciful activities includes volunteering for charitable organizations such as the Cathedral Kitchen in Indianapolis—where she takes the students of her social justice class to volunteer twice a year giving out clothes they collect—and bringing food to Help Our Own People, much of her mercy is given out on the fly.

“I like driving through neighborhoods and giving out stuff,” she says. “I drive south from Chatard, so I take extra food to shelters. If I see people on a porch, I’ll stop and say, ‘Can you use food?’ ”

It’s not just in the giving of needed goods, but in the interaction with those she encounters that Sister Kathleen finds the most mercy.

“I develop these friendships,” she says. “I feel God leads me to these people. There are a lot of cool things that happen when you interact with people not in your economic status. Most people I’ve met have been so kind to me. They remind you your life is not as bad as you think.

“Each time we meet, you know because of God’s mercy to you that there’s so much more to their heart than what you see.”

Sister Kathleen looks to the current pope as a model of mercy.

“I think it’s great that Pope Francis teaches [mercy] all the time,” she says. “He’s everywhere doing everything.

“I love how he’s met with the different groups [each month during the Year of Mercy], so each time is a different group we’re supposed to reflect on, and we’re called to keep thinking about it.

“It’s that constant message—it doesn’t matter where you live, you’ve got to extend and receive mercy.”

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Audrey Shroyer, director of development at the Benedict Inn Retreat & Conference Center, says the Mercy-themed retreat will have centered around mercy through times in prayer or special experiences.

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Merry is a ‘theme on my journey’

Benedictine Sister Heather Jean Foltz, 33, sees her vocation as a journey of unfolding mercy.

“It came in little seeds throughout my journey,” she says. “I received God’s mercy through times in prayer or special experiences I had along the way when others have given mercy to me. I’ve had people in my life who planted those seeds of mercy for me, and the desire to live a life of mercy and hospitality and as a faithful Benedictine bloomed from that.”

After entering the monastery in 2009, Sister Heather professed her solemn vows in June of this year.

The Year of Mercy was really special to me, to be able to make my solemn profession during this year, because that’s been a theme on my journey— that I have received love and compassion that I’ve given to others. Through living in community I’ve given and received mercy, so to be able to make my profession during this time was such a grace for me.

She now lives the life of mercy not just in her monastic community but also in her job as director of social services at the sisters’ St. Paul Hermitage. The facility serves the elderly by providing independent living, assisted living and 24-hour nursing care.

“For me, it’s a gift to be able to journey with people in their final years,” says Sister Heather. “It is a journey with family while loved ones are passing away—being present, offering prayers and a listening ear. Being hospitable to them is an important piece of my job.

She also helps newcomers transition into their new home, “plugging them into activities, finding ways they can continue to share their gifts in the community. ... It’s important that people are able to share their gifts throughout their entire lifespan, doing those things they love to do all their life.”

While Sister Heather considers it a gift to have a job in which she is able to show mercy, she says that mercy “doesn’t necessarily have to be big acts.”

“My definition of mercy is living a life of love and compassion. It’s those little things we do over time, like thanking a co-worker, or letting someone going through a hard time know I’m praying for them. “I try to extend mercy in the way I live my life, and embracing whatever comes up in my life with love and compassion.

(For more information about the Benedictine sisters of Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove, visit www.benedictine.com.)
Seminarian grows in faith during hard times in vocational journey

By Sean Gallagher

According to his mother, Mary Dedek, archdiocesan seminarian Michael Dedek has “always been very close to God.”

That closeness was nurtured from his early years in grade school until he became a seminarian after two years of college. And in the more than three years he’s been involved in priestly formation, his bond with God has become more intimate still.

But the path to this deep relationship has involved its own hardships where Dedek could have easily turned away from his faith. Instead, he embraced it all the more.

“As I grew up, I had the sense that I wanted to do what God wanted me to do with my life,” said Dedek, who is in his first year of theological formation at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology at St. Meinrad. “Over time, I really fell in love with the faith. I never wanted to be anything but Catholic.”

Dedek grew up as the oldest of four in Monroe County. He and his family were members of St. Charles Borromeo Parish in Bloomington, where he and his mother are still parishioners.

He experienced the importance of his faith as early as second grade when he was a student at St. Charles’ school and was absolved of his sins for the first time in the sacrament of penance.

“I remember an incredibly peaceful feeling after going to confession for the first time,” Dedek said. “I felt so happy. It was the first time that I felt a peaceful feeling that can only come from God.”

That was a timely gift for Dedek, because it was around that time that his parents divorced. His mother then had to care for him and his three younger siblings by herself.

“I don’t think it challenged my faith, but it certainly was a challenge to me as a person,” he said. “It helped me to learn how to turn to God during those difficult moments. It helped me to learn how to trust him.

“A big part of growing up was coming to terms with the divorce. It made me stronger and helped me become the man I am today.”

Among his many responsibilities in caring for her children during this time, Mary Dedek took seriously her duty to pass on the faith to them, especially making sure they went to Mass on Sundays.

And in the hard times, she would encourage them to turn to prayer.

“When we would have troubles that we couldn’t figure out, I’d always tell them to pray, maybe to St. Joseph,” Mary Dedek said.

Despite the challenges he had to face at a young age, Dedek was firm enough in his faith that he expressed a desire to be a priest one day—something he said that his mother affirmed but let develop on its own.

“She was very supportive of that,” Dedek said. “And I don’t think she ever forgot about that, even in the times when I forgot about that.”

As he became a student at Bloomington North High School in Bloomington, Dedek remained interested in his faith, something that Father Michael Keucher noticed when he helped lead a confirmation preparation class that Dedek was taking in his freshman and sophomore years.

At the time, Father Keucher was a seminarian and a member of St. Charles.

“He’d always have all the answers in confirmation class,” said Father Keucher, associate pastor of Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish in Greenwood. “He had a passion for the faith and for the Lord that kind of spread to the other people in the class.”

As the years went on, Dedek became more involved in the parish, especially assisting in liturgies as an altar server. Father Keucher, who often came back to St. Charles for important Masses to serve as a master of ceremonies, saw how the faith continued to grow in his former student.

“I remember after one Easter Vigil that I told him, ‘Michael, you need to go to seminary. I think you’d be a very good priest.’” Father Keucher recalled. “This was probably at about 12:30 in the morning and he said, ‘It’s funny that you say that, because I’ve been thinking about it and I’ve been feeling the Lord call me.’”

Nonetheless, it would be a few more years before Dedek became a seminarian for the archdiocese. In the interim, he studied for a year at Indiana University in Bloomington.

Going into that year, he thought God was calling him to marriage. But that started to change.

“The thought of the priesthood came and went for a long time growing up,” Dedek said. “But this time, I had the sense that I couldn’t just push those thoughts to the back of my mind. I had to figure out what they meant and what God was trying to tell me in all of this.”

At the end of his freshman year at Indiana University, Dedek “wasn’t ready to make the commitment yet” and so he enrolled at Ivy Tech Community College while speaking regularly about his discernment with his pastor, Father Thomas Kovatch, and then-archdiocesan vocations director Father Eric Johnson.

During that time, he also visited Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary in Indianapolis. Dedek admitted he was a bit nervous on the way to the seminary.

“When I got there, everyone was so welcoming,” he said. “The whole time I was there, it just felt that I belonged. That’s really what it did. After that, the decision was easy.”

He enrolled there and at nearby Marian University where the college seminarians take classes, graduating three years later.

“Brute is a home,” Dedek said. “The seminarians there are family. It makes formation more of something you want to do for yourself and your brothers.”

Dedek said that what draws him to the priesthood now is what was attractive to him as a child and a youth.

“What really attracted me to the priesthood was the way that a priest can help people, the way he can be there for people,” he said. “The priesthood seems like one of the best ways to help other people.”

A priest who was there for him during the difficult times of his parents’ divorce was Father Charles

Cheshire, his boyhood pastor at St. Charles, who died in 2008. Dedek appreciated “the love and compassion that he had for all of the kids” at the parish school.

“He would remember your name and would always make sure to talk with you when he walked by,” Dedek said of Father Cheshire. “He was a very kind, loving person.

“He was helpful by just being himself—a jolly priest who was always happy to say ‘Hi’ to you and made sure you were doing OK.”

Father Keucher looks at Dedek and sees a possible future jolly priest in him.

“Michael has a very hospitable presence,” Father Keucher said. “He takes joy in being with people and truly represents the Lord to people in a kind of humble way. He’s just kind of a jolly guy.”

For men considering that God might be calling them to the priesthood, Dedek encouraged them to take it prayer.

“Make sure you spend some time praying about it, even if it’s just a little bit,” he said. “Praying about it will crack open the door that God can push open the rest of the way.”

“One day you’ve prayed about it, you listen and wait for that beautiful, peaceful feeling that God will give you when you’re on the right track.”

(For more information about a vocation to the priesthood in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, visit www.HearGodsCall.com.)
BROTHERS

Continued from page 1

You could stretch it at times. But, even in our worst fights, … there was always a deep love there.”

Father Doug and David were the only children in their family, and were born less than two years apart.

“Just being the two of us, we played together quite a bit,” said Father Doug, pastor of Most Sacred Heart of Jesus and St. Augustine parishes, both in Jeffersonville. “But being brothers, at times it ended up with a dispute and a fight.”

Brothers can also be “partners in crime” in both their youth and adulthood, as Fathers Andrew and Benjamin found out when they were classmates for a period while in priestly formation at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad.

“We got into a little trouble,” Father Benjamin said with a laugh. “We’d have too much fun sometimes. There’d be some slapping and giggling with us sitting in the back of class from time to time. We got along so well.”

“God is very rich in his blessings”

In the midst of all the fun times and fights they’d have as children, the brothers also had the faith planted in them by loving parents who then nurtured those seeds with love, but also in other ordinary ways.

One was an uncompromising dedication to attending Mass on Sunday.

“We were at Mass every single Sunday, unless you were bleeding or dying,” said Father Doug, who was ordained in 2013. “You were there.”

“If we were on vacation, Dad was going to find us a place to go to Mass,” said Father Anthony, who is pursuing graduate studies in Rome.

Another way that the faith was planted early on in these priests was simply through their parents’ example of living out their faith and their vocation to marriage.

“That was the first vocation that we were exposed to, and it was a very solid one,” said Father Andrew, associate pastor of St. Bartholomew Parish in Columbus.

His brother recalled the influence of his parents’ dedication to spending an hour in adoration of the Eucharist each week at 2 a.m. on Tuesdays in a perpetual adoration chapel.

“Even as a kid, not being all that prayerful, I knew that my parents prayed and I knew that it was important,” said Father Benjamin, who was ordained in 2014 and serves as administrator of Our Lady of the Springs Parish in French Lick and Our Lord Jesus Christ the King Parish in Paoli. “I believe that so much grace over the years has come from their continued dedication to do that. God is very rich in his blessings when we continually turn to him in that kind of way.”

The Marcotte brothers also saw in their parents a witness to the importance of service in the Church by “being active in a variety of things” at St. Michael Parish in Greenfield where they grew up.

“They both spent time in giving to God,” said Father David, who was ordained in 2014 and serves as administrator of St. Martin of Tours Parish in Martinsville. “That helped us to think about what ways we could give of ourselves to the Church as well.”

“Sometimes, we need each other just to be a brother”

As young adults, each of the brothers came to discern that God was calling them to serve as priests.

The brothers who were ordained second acknowledged some influence on their own discernment from those that preceded them in the seminary.

“Facility, it had some effect on me in terms of getting to know seminarians and what they were like,” said Father Andrew, who was ordained in 2015. “I did meet different priests. I saw more of what seminarian life was like than your average guy who was working and didn’t have a sibling involved in formation.”

Father Anthony became a seminarian for the archdiocese just four months after his brother was ordained in 2009.

“Things happened around that ordination that started stirring spiritually,” Father Anthony said. “I attribute it to that ordination Mass and his Mass of Thanksgiving.”

At the same time, he and the other brother priests recognized that their individual discernment was their own.

“I looked up to [Father John] in many ways growing up,” Father Anthony said. “But when it came to discernment, it was pretty personal.”

When they were in priestly formation, the brothers were a support for each other.

For Father Benjamin, being at Saint Meinrad together with his brother “was like home.”

“Just the fact that my brother was there gave me so much life and kept me grounded,” Father Benjamin said. “Someone who knows everything about me was always around the corner.”

The Marcottes, however, were separated by an ocean, with Father Doug in formation at the Pontifical North American College in Rome and Father David at Saint Meinrad. And the Hollowells were divided by time, with Father Anthony not becoming a seminarian until after his brother was ordained.

Yet the support was still there. The Marcottes had online video chats through Skype.

Father John, already ordained, appreciated being able to share his concrete priestly experiences with his brother who, as a seminarian, could only speculate about what it would be like to be a priest in the future.

“For me as a priest to be able to confirm those things for him was really helpful, as other priests did for me,” said Father John, pastor of Annunciation Parish in Brazil and St. Paul the Apostle Parish in Greencastle. “But when it’s coming from your brother, that’s awesome.”

That support has continued since the brothers have entered into priestly life and ministry.

“Sometimes, we need each other to be another good priest to talk with,” said Father Benjamin. “And sometimes, we need each other just to be a brother. The fact that that’s the same thing is an unbelievable source of support.”

That mutual support took on a special poignancy for the Marcotte brothers last December when their father, William Marcotte, died.

“It was obviously a different experience for us as priests,” said Father David. “We were able to support Mom in a different way. At the same time, we’re still her sons. And he was our Dad. We had many of the same emotions. Like anyone, you still struggle with the same things.”

The faith that they’ve grown in through the priesthood, which was nurtured in them as children by their parents, was a source of strength for them in that time of shared grieving.

“There is a comfort that comes from our faith, because we have hope that this is not the end,” said Father Doug. “While it is still sad and there’s still grief very much involved, it’s not something that crushes us.”

Where vocations are found

Not that all sets of brothers are serving as priests, they see a helpful meaning in their shared ordained life and ministry for the faithful of central and southern Indiana—the importance of the family.

“That is where it starts. The family is so important to vocations, whether it’s married life or [religious life] or the priesthood,” said Father Andrew.

“Parents are the driving force behind that,” Father Benjamin agreed.

“It’s about the family,” he said. “And, to go deeper, it’s about marriage. Two people who love each other completely and live that out in the Church are the greatest thing that can produce vocations to the priesthood.”

The importance of families to vocations, the Church and the broader society should lead the faithful to do all it can to bolster them, Father Doug said.

“I don’t think we are going to solve the priesthood crisis—or the marriage crisis—without strengthening our families,” he said.

“That doesn’t mean that there are not priests who come from less than ideal family situations.

“But, I think we do have to acknowledge that strong families help people to be able to say, ‘Yes,’ because they’ve been formed day in and day out.”

(For more information about a vocation to the priesthood in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, log on to www.HeaGodsCall.com.)
Siblings in priesthood, religious life support each other in ministry

By Sean Gallagher

BEECH GROVE AND BROOKVILLE—In addition to having three sets of brothers ordained priests in the past several years, the Archdiocese of Indianapolis also has two priests who have sisters in religious life.

Father Sean Danda, pastor of St. Michael Parish in Beech Grove and St. Peter Parish in Franklin County, is the brother of Society of Our Lady of the Trinity Sister Solanus Casey Danda, who teaches at St. Alphonsus School in Seattle.

Msgr. Paul Koetter, pastor of Holy Spirit Parish in Indianapolis, is the brother of Benedictine Sister Mary Ann Koetter, sub prioress (second in authority) at Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove.

The siblings recently spoke with The Criterion about their common influences in their vocational discernment, and how they support each other in their lives of prayer and service to the Church.

Sister Solanus, less than a year from professing perpetual vows, entered her religious community in 2008, seven years after her brother became a seminarian and two years before he was ordained.

“They were both open to priestly and religious vocations when they were students at Cardinal Ritter Sr. High School in Indianapolis in the late 1990s and early 2000s. ‘I can remember having conversations with him about discernment while we were driving to school,’ Sister Solanus said. ‘We talked about religious vocations. I got advice from him. He definitely contributed to that. Seeing his openness and having a deep admiration for him definitely affected my openness to God’s call in my life.’

Father Danda said he and his sister support each other through their prayers, regular phone calls and, in a world dominated by digital communications, by writing each other letters.

He noted that the example of a brother and sister dedicated to serving God and the Church is a witness to the broader world that “God has to remain number one in our life.

‘Celibacy and vocations to consecrated chastity tell the world that being in a sexual relationship is not necessarily the end all, be all to happiness,’ Father Danda said. ‘The world does not want that message right now. And it’s all the more needed for people to take up the consecrated life.’

Msgr. Koetter, the sixth of nine children from a family from Floyds Knobs, was ordained a priest of the archdiocese in 1977 when he was 25.

Sister Mary Ann, the eighth child in the family, entered Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Indiana in 2004. They also have two nephews who are priests, including Father Eric Johnson, pastor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in New Albany.

As they were growing up, the Koetters also had the example of a cousin who was a priest and two other cousins who were religious sisters at the Benedictine Monastery Immaculate Conception in Ferdinand, Ind., in the Evansville Diocese.

“The vocation of religious life was real,” said Sister Mary Ann. “It was a normal thing in our family. Knowing I had cousins who were in religious life, made it something I could look at. It was an option. It wasn’t some foreign idea. She also noted the example of her brother in his priestly life and ministry was an aid in her own discernment.

“Our lives are different in how we live them out,” Sister Mary Ann said, “but it is a call from God that we’ve both received. And Paul’s been very supportive. He’s someone I would turn to in order to talk about it. I think he has influenced me.”

For his part, Msgr. Koetter finds strength in the religious life of his sister.

“I feel the support of Mary Ann being in religious life and being able to share that experience,” he said. “We’re both celibate and have made a commitment to God that’s pretty important in our lives. We can mutually support each other within that. They also both find support in their other siblings’ vocations to married life. Together, they have several hundred combined years of marriage.

“They’ve been a tremendous witness,” said Msgr. Koetter. “And most of them have been involved in all sorts of volunteer and Church-related activities. It’s not just the example of the two of us. It’s the example of all.”

Brother priests offer advice to parents to foster vocations in the home

By Sean Gallagher

They all agreed.

“The three sets of brothers in the archdiocese who are priests, and the two priests who have sisters in religious life all pointed to the importance of the family in encouraging priestly and religious vocations.

Here is some advice and reflections they shared on fostering vocations in the home.

Sister Solanus. “Family is really where you have that foundation placed, where you’re first truly formed in the faith,” she said. “Hopefully the role and the significance that the family plays will come out. It helps to shape us for the rest of our lives.”

Having the example of brothers who are priests can hopefully help dispel misconceptions about the priesthood and religious life for parents.

“This is a great life that lets young men and women know that giving your life in service to the Church is full of joy,” said Father John Hollowell.

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“It’s not just the example of the two of us. It’s the example of all.”
Deacon hears the call to ‘be Christ for those in need’

By John Shaughnessy

The father-to-be became so agitated that hospital employees were on the verge of calling security when someone decided to call Deacon Dave Reising first. As a chaplain for St. Vincent Dunn Hospital in Bedford, Deacon Reising rushed to the scene where the panicking man was yelling in Spanish.

“He was in labor, and they took his wife away from him, and he wasn’t going to let that happen,” Deacon Reising recalls. “I was wearing black, and I had my deacon cross around my neck. He came over and was talking a mile a minute to me in Spanish. I don’t speak Spanish, but I jumped on the phone.”

The deacon was also able to get the man to calm down. After the baby was born, the man was able to communicate. Dr. Reising began to learn Spanish from that time forward.

As soon as the baby came and everything was fine, he wanted me to stay with him the whole time. He wanted to pray together. Then he took me back to the nursery with the child.”

As nice as that story is, it isn’t the best part. Deacon Reising matched the new parents with a couple at St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Bedford who speak Spanish. Since then, the couples attend Mass together, and more Hispanic families have been drawn to the parish. Some children have been baptized, while others take religious education classes.

“We have an increasing number of Hispanic families at St. Vincent de Paul and St. Mary Parish in Mitchell,” Deacon Reising says. “Every time I’m in a situation like that, I feel the presence of God. A lot of times, I don’t know what to do. But I want to be Christ for people. God’s Spirit takes over, and you do the things that need to get done.”

“He’s definitely a blessing’

The list of things Deacon Reising has done since becoming a deacon in 2008 is staggering, according to Father Richard Eldred, the pastor of both St. Vincent de Paul and St. Mary parishes.

Beyond his work as a hospital chaplain, he visits with prisoners in jail, helps with youth ministry, trains altar servers for the parishes, assists the local Catholic Charities with Mass shelter for women and children, and leads an effort to bring Communion to shut-ins and parishioners in nursing homes. He’s also involved in baptisms, funerals, weddings and six Masses a week.

“He’s definitely a blessing for all of us,” Father Eldred says.

Then there’s the ministry that Deacon Reising took on to help lower teenage pregnancies and improve the odds of marriages surviving—an effort that also had the impact of creating greater respect for Catholics in Lawrence County.

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Then there’s the ministry that Deacon Reising took on to help lower teenage pregnancies and improve the odds of marriages surviving—an effort that also had the impact of creating greater respect for Catholics in Lawrence County. Deacon Reising was an original board member of Marriage and Family Alliance, an organization formed in 2007 that involved different churches to address the issue of teenage pregnancy in Lawrence County, which had the highest rate in the state at that time, he said.

“We were trying to bring sanctity back into marriage,” he said. “The real issue was teen pregnancy. I would give classes to the ministers in town on marriage preparation. Marriage prep is such an important part of having a successful marriage. We knew the effect we had was a great one because we had so many people involved in it.”

Deacon Reising’s leadership also led to an improved attitude toward Catholics in the community.

“Catholics are only 2-3 percent of the community here,” Father Eldred says. “By his work with all these other ministers, he’s helped forge a path for Catholics to be better accepted. He’s helped bring a better awareness of the Catholic faith to the ministers and the people in the community.”

“You know you need to be there’

For Deacon Reising, improved acceptance and understanding became an opportunity to “let people see what Catholics are about—the love we can provide to the community.”

So when he has a weekly Communion service at the Lawrence County Jail for prisoners who are Catholic, he speaks his time to non-Catholics, too.

“I go through the bars, and I’m with them. That’s so important,” he says. “A lot of times, the other inmates could see Catholics being ‘fed’ by this, so they wanted to come, too. I give them a rosary when we pray. They want to wear it as a necklace so I have to explain to them why it should be used. It helps them understand a little about our faith, I love that.

He has the same approach when he visits people in nursing homes and at the hospital.

“One of the ministries that really touches my heart is to the dying—just being with them and their families,” he says. “That seems to be one area in which I especially feel the presence of God. It’s praying with families, just holding their hands, just being there in silence with them. It fills my heart because you see how God is affecting them and their families. It’s hard, but you know you should be there. You know you need to be there.”

“I’m doing God’s will’

His dedication and involvement as a deacon requires the support and understanding of his wife of 45 years, Kathy.

They share a family that includes two children and three grandchildren. They also share a commitment to the Church as Kathy worked for 21 years as the parish secretary at St. Vincent de Paul Parish.

And they now share lunch together on the days he serves as a chaplain at the hospital—where she volunteers in helping make sure flowers and mail reach patients. It’s one of the ways they stay connected, just as their prayer time together is.

“I know this is what he has a calling for,” she says. “I support it all the way. He’s always been a good guy, but this has brought him closer to Christ and to people.”

At 67, Deacon Reising says that love for God and his people is the essence of his life as a deacon.

“Everything I do is in support of the Church and God’s kingdom. The satisfaction for me is knowing I’m doing God’s will, no matter what that is. I think it’s important to just bring Christ to people—to increase their faith, or if they have no faith, to help them see there’s something greater than themselves.

“I want to be Christ for those in need. I know that’s what Jesus is calling me to do. That’s what he’s calling all of us to do. You don’t need to be a deacon to do it. You just have to see Jesus in every person you meet.’”

Deacon David Reising greets a person at a Mass at St. Vincent de Paul Church in Bedford. Ordained in 2008, Deacon Reising is involved in many ministries in the Bedford faith community and St. Mary Parish in Mitchell. (Submitted photo)

FRANCISCANS continued from page 8

have a gratitude and praise for that living. In the past, we had schools in many of these little parishes. We’re continuing part of that mission, that presence in the rural community.”

‘I’ve never doubted my vocation’

The Franciscan way of life attracted both sisters at an early age.

“There were nine of us in my family,” says Sister Shirley, who is 72. “I knew my parents always prayed that one of their daughters would be a sister and one of their sons would be a priest. I did have a brother who was a priest but a hospital chaplain.”

“I was taught by Franciscan sisters at St. Mary School in North Vernon. I never thought of any other religious order. I entered the order in my senior year of high school. And I’ve been happy ever since. I don’t know why we don’t have more vocations to religious life and the Franciscan community by primarily focusing on what I’m doing—working as a nurse for nearly 35 years, with many of those years in Michigan. I was also taught by a large family,” says Sister Donna, who is 63. “I was the oldest daughter of 11 children. I grew up in St. Anthony of Padua Parish in Morris. I had the Franciscan sisters all through grade school and high school. We lived a half mile from the parish, and my parents always encouraged helping the sisters and the parish.”

“My vocation is helping this one这是”

Having that connection with the sisters nourished my thoughts of a vocation, and it grew. I knew by the second or third grade that I was going into religious life—and that has never changed.”

Her life has changed since becoming a parish life coordinator. First, she had to move to a place where she didn’t know anyone—a transition that has been eased considerably by the way she has been “warmly embraced,” she says, by Immaculate Conception parishioners.

She has also had to make a transition from being with people in a health care setting.

“When I worked with people in health care, it was for a short interim of an internship crisis,” Sister Donna says. “Now my life is about being with them and supporting them over the continuum of their lives. That gives me an opportunity to know people before those vulnerable times.”

“We’re that reminder that God is with them”

In 25 years as a parish life coordinator, Sister Shirley has experienced all the roles and all the emotions of that relationship with parishioners.

“A parish life coordinator does everything a priest does, except for celebrating Mass and the sacraments,” she says. “One of the joys of being a PLC is you enter people’s lives at all stages—as babies, as a young, engaged couple or with people dying. You get to be more of a presence for people in sickness and dying. I just think you’re standing on sacred ground during that process. It’s a privilege to be involved into people’s lives and help them through such a vulnerable time. I know I’m a better person and a better Franciscan because of this ministry.”

She shares the story of the relationship she developed with a woman, diagnosed with dementia, who had been in a nursing home for 10 years.

“Many times, she didn’t know me,” Sister Shirley recalls. “I walked in there two weeks ago, and she had died that morning. The fact she wasn’t there left an impact on me. Through all that time, I learned more deeply what presence means.”

Sister Donna has begun to experience that feeling as a parish life coordinator.

“That relationship that Shirley is describing is ‘God with us,’” Sister Donna says. “Our presence lets them know they’re not alone. We’re to remind that God is with them in their joy and their suffering. That’s the message of the Gospel.”

It’s also become the message of the growing relationship between Sister Shirley and Sister Donna.

“I’ve been fortunate to have Shirley with me,” Sister Donna says. “I don’t have those 25 years of experience. That’s what I rely on.”

Sister Shirley smiles and says, “Instead of mentoring, I like to use the word, ‘companionship.’ Our lives are intertwined. There’s a natural bond there.”

It’s a bond that began as Franciscan sisters—a bond that continues as two people on a journey of faith toward “the loving heart of God.”

(For more information about the Oldenburg Franciscans, visit www.oldenburgfranciscans.org)
By Natalie Hoefer

Religious communities can often mirror a slice of society—members with different jobs, different backgrounds and different ethnicities. Such a slice can be found even among the six Conventual Franciscans who live and serve in Terre Haute, Indiana.

The Criterion interviewed two of the priests and one transitional deacon from that community. The three serve at St. Joseph University Parish among them are one American, one Indian and one American raised in the Mexican culture of his father’s family. They are three of different generations, with different backgrounds, but the same strong love of their vocation.

Here are their stories.

‘I believe everyone has a call’

At 33, Deacon Mario Serrano is the youngest member of the community. He was born and raised in New Mexico, but with the strong influence of his Mexican father, he considers himself Mexican-American. He was introduced to the Conventual Franciscans in the monastic parish of the small southwestern New Mexican town where he grew up.

“They were all Franciscans,” he says. “The brown Franciscans have said to me, ‘When will you come back to us?’ We formed your vocation!”

He is currently living out that vocation serving as the parish’s university minister, serving the students primarily of Indiana State University and Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology, both in Terre Haute, and also Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College in nearby St. Mary-of-the-Woods and Ivy Tech Community College in Terre Haute.

“I joke that I went through college and stayed there,” says Deacon Mario. With six years of experience in campus ministry, the deacon has found joy in serving those at the college level.

“They are discerning where God is calling them,” he explains. “I believe everyone has a call. I’m there to help them discover what God is calling them to be, not necessarily to be Franciscans but to become themselves.”

On Nov. 4, Deacon Mario will become who he feels he is called to be: an ordained Conventual Franciscan priest. The ordination will take place in El Paso, Texas.

‘Every day, I’m learning something new’

Father Savio Manavalan, associate pastor of St. Joseph University Parish, has been a priest for nearly 40 years. And Deacon Mario, he was confused about Franciscan orders as a youth growing up in India.

“The Franciscan order of Capuchins has a good presence in India, especially in my state,” he says. “I used to see them, I went to their retreats. I joined the Franciscans, and then I learned the different orders!”

Living in Indiana has been a learning experience for Father Savio, 34. One major difference between India and Indiana is the climate.

“We don’t have a fall or spring climate, just months of heavy rain, summer and the time we don’t have rain,” he says. But just as much of a transition for him was the Mass. In India, Father Savio grew up with and learned to celebrate the Syro-Malabar tradition. Syro-Malabar is an Eastern Catholic Church and liturgical rite tracing its origins to the Apostle Thomas in the first century.

He had experience celebrating the Latin Rite Mass at a convent while serving for 10 months in India. But it’s still not the same, says Father Savio.

“When I came here, [the Latin Rite] was very new to me,” he recalls. “I hadn’t done any weddings or baptisms. For almost a year, I was studying and learning more about the faith and what we do differently. But I was happy to have more experiences in my life.”

The other priests in the community have been instrumental in that learning process, says Father Savio.

“All the other friars helped me a lot,” he says. “I started from them how to live in a parish, because in India it was more missions.

‘Every day, I’m learning something new.’

“I knew I wanted to be like them’

Like Father Savio and Deacon Mario, 65-year-old Father Mark Weider did not know of the various Franciscan orders when he was growing up on a farm in Ohio.

At the church where he worshipped, there was “a young priest who always was bringing seminarians with him,” says Father Mark, pastor of St. Joseph University Parish in Terre Haute.

Thinking over what kind a priest I wanted to be, I knew I wanted to be like them. But I didn’t know the distinction of what kind of Franciscans there were.”

At the age of 14, he entered the former minor seminary of the Conventual Franciscan Province of Our Lady of Consolation in Mount St. Francis. He was ordained in 1977 at the age of 25.

Over the course of his 39 years as a priest, he has served in California and at three parishes in Indiana—two in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis and one in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend.

But his priesthood has not been confined to the states. For 25 years, from 1979-2004, Father Mark ministered in Central America. He spent 16 years in Honduras and nine years in El Salvador.

“Most of the time I was not with another English speaker,” he says. “It was a big cultural and linguistic challenge to be a priest in Terre Haute as ‘an English-speaking priest.’

But having a multicultural experience has proven advantageous to the priest, who serves in a parish with “a lot of different cultures.”

“I counted a couple of years ago, and our parish has people born in at least 25 countries,” he says. “It’s a parish with a spirit of welcome and openness, even though it is predominantly Anglo.”

And it was Father Mark’s multicultural experience that led to the placement of Father Savio in Terre Haute.

“When there was a possibility of an Indian priest, the province thought [with that] my experience of living in a different culture and the parish having cultural variety, it would be an excellent place for him.”

‘The best of all worlds’

With members of such varying backgrounds, the friary in Terre Haute is “the best of all worlds,” says Deacon Mario.

“It’s a way we can give witness to the Church and our society, because we are not only an intercultural community but also intergenerational,” he says, noting that the friars range in ages from 33-79. “We can see the wisdom of the older friars and those simply beginning.”

Father Savio also appreciates the variation of ages in the friary.

“In India, the oldest friar was maybe 60 or 65,” he says. “We didn’t have a generation that had passed through all of their religious life and all their wonderful experiences.”

He and Deacon Mario try to share their cultural and faith backgrounds with the other friars and with the faith community in Terre Haute. Deacon Mario has assisted at bilingual Masses and enjoys answering questions about his culture, such as the Mexican “Day of the Dead” holiday.

As for Father Savio, he says that since “the day I came here [two years ago], the parish was asking for Mass in my mother tongue and [the Syro-Malabar] Rite.”

He finally celebrated such a Mass at St. Joseph University Church in this rite in August.

“We had 150 people. I expected 50-60… It was a good experience. They asked me to do more in the coming years.”

In a society seeming to become more divided and divisive, Deacon Mario sees the multicultural, multigenerational Conventual Franciscan friary in Terre Haute as “‘a unifying way, as St. Francis of Assisi was doing at his time. Within the Church, there was a crusade, but he focused on relating with each other.’

“We strive to do that today. It’s living out our charism, living out our brotherhood, and that experience spreads into our ministry and those we come in contact with.”

(For more information on the Conventual Franciscans of the Our Lady of Consolation Province, headquartered in Mount St. Francis, visit www.franciscansusa.org.)
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NOGALES, Ariz. (CNS)—The apostolic nuncio to the United States celebrated Mass at the U.S.-Mexico border on Oct. 23, offering prayers to break down the barriers that separate people.

Archbishop Christophe Pierre faced the immense steel border fence in Nogales as he and the bishop of Tucson and the bishop of Mexico’s Diocese of Nogales, Sonora, concelebrated the liturgy with people gathered on both sides of the border.

The nuncio began the prayer of the faithful with a plea for unity.

“Jesus, we come before you today as your disciples, sometimes filled with fear and doubt, even suspicion,” he said. “We pray to dismantle the barriers within our hearts and minds that separate us, who are all members of your body.”

Following his words, young people led the congregation in prayers for “needed immigration reform,” for humane treatment of migrants who don’t have documents, and for “security and justice for all.” They prayed especially for migrant children, “who are vulnerable to exploitation and abuse,” and for all who have died in border violence, including border patrol agents, immigrants and innocent victims.

The Mass was the third such one this year along the U.S.-Mexico border in Arizona. The liturgies were organized by Dioceses Without Borders, an effort of the dioceses of Nogales, Tucson and Phoenix to work collaboratively on issues that affect the church and people in the border region.

During his homily and afterward in an interview with Catholic News Service (CNS), Archbishop Pierre echoed the sentiments of Pope Francis in regard to borders and the care of migrants and refugees, who the archbishop said all too often are looked upon as unwanted and as criminals.

“Borders exist all over the world, and borders are not bad, but borders should not be just a barrier—should not be a wall—but should be a bridge between people,” the nuncio said.

“Anything that goes in the direction of understanding, helping each other, discovering the beauty of the other is what is necessary to convert hearts and transform the world,” he said. “It’s time to break the obstacles that exist between people.”

To the cheers from both sides of the border, Archbishop Pierre ended his homily with, “Viva Cristo Rey! Viva la Virgen de Guadalupe! Viva la Iglesia santa!” ("Long live Christ the King! Long live the Virgin of Guadalupe! Long live the holy Church!")

Archbishop Pierre is no stranger to the people of Mexico. He served as nuncio in Mexico for nine years before being appointed as the pope’s representative in the U.S. But he said this Mass was his first visit to Nogales, Ariz.

In what seemed to be a spontaneous moment during the liturgy, five young people ducked under a barrier near the border fence to hold hands and pray the Our Father with those on the other side in Mexico.

They stayed at the border fence until the sign of peace, offering their hands to those on the other side.

Among the hundreds of people that gathered for the border Mass were those that serve the Kino Border Initiative, a binational migrant advocacy and service organization.

Bishop Kicanas expressed his pride in the group and in a group of young people, the Kino Teens, who work with the border initiative.

“Their enthusiasm, their spirit is a true blessing,” he said. “They believe in the Lord. They believe in the Church, and to have these young people participating in our Mass here in ambos Nogales’ was a true blessing.”

Carlos Zapien, music director for the Diocese of Tucson, said the special Mass was a statement that "faith can unite people.” Zapien’s original score “Misa de la Misericordia” ("Mass of Mercy") was used in the cross-border liturgy with choirs on both sides participating.

“Faith and music have no borders,” he said.

Bishop Gerald F. Kicanas of Tucson said he was grateful for Archbishop Pierre’s participation in the liturgy.

“Faith can unite people.”

The nuncio’s presence is a reminder of our Holy Father’s great love for those who are suffering, for those who are in need. So this was a very special celebration here in ambos Nogales” [both Nogaleses] as we pray together across walls united in our prayer for one another.”

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Above, Archbishop Christophe Pierre, apostolic nuncio to the United States, gives Communion during Mass at the international border in Nogales, Ariz., on Oct. 23. Dioceses Without Borders, an effort of Mexico’s Nogales Diocese and the U.S. dioceses of Phoenix and Tucson, Ariz., organized the liturgy celebrated on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border. Right, a Mexican girl peers through the fence during Mass at the international border. (CNS photos/Nancy Wiechec)
For expectant parents, miscarriage can be ‘loss of a dream’

CLARKSVILLE, Tenn. (CNS)—Immaculate Conception parishioners Kayla and Matt Boesch had planned to welcome their first baby this fall.

Instead, they will be visiting the cemetery plot where they buried their baby’s remains last spring.

When Kayla suffered a miscarriage around the 11-week mark of her pregnancy, she and her husband were devastated, but determined to honor the life that existed, however briefly, inside of her.

During National Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Month, observed each October, the Boesches share their story to help break the silence that often surrounds miscarriage.

Miscarriage, the loss of a pregnancy during the first 20 weeks of gestation, occurs in about 10 to 20 percent of all known pregnancies, and the vast majority of these are early term miscarriages, occurring before 13 weeks.

Often, women who experience a miscarriage unjustly feel ashamed and don’t speak up or reach out. Kayla Boesch told the Tennessee Register, newspaper of the Nashville Diocese. “It’s like this quiet, private, sad group.”

When the Boesches learned their baby had died in utero, they were initially overwhelmed and weren’t sure how to deal with the practical or emotional aspects of miscarriage. They hope that by opening up, they can help other couples heal.

“When you’re so deep in grief, it’s really hard to have clarity about what you should do,” Kayla said. “Our pain would be worth it if we can help someone else.”

It was on the day of Kayla’s first ultrasound that the couple found out the sad news. “The tech who performed it knew something was wrong,” Kayla said. “There was no heartbeat.”

The couple, filled with grief and anxiety, immediately sought solace in their church, and met with Deacon Dominick Azzara at Immaculate Conception Parish in Clarksville. As Catholics, “we believe the life begins at conception,” Kayla said. She and her husband knew they wanted to honor the brief life of their unborn baby in a special way.

Deacon Azzara didn’t have many definite answers for them.

Ministering to couples who have experienced a miscarriage “is an area that has not been addressed well enough” by the Catholic Church, the deacon said, but there are ways priests, deacons and other Church personnel can offer support. When a baby dies in the womb, there are specific prayers and blessings that can be offered for the family.

A memorial service, funeral and/or burial can be planned; grief support and counseling should be available, Deacon Azzara said. “People working in a parish need to be sensitive,” Deacon Azzara said. “People are finally coming forward and saying they’re having trouble,” after a pregnancy loss. For so long, he said, miscarriages were “unspoken and unshared.”

Some that more people are speaking out and seeking support, “we need to be aware and ready to respond,” Deacon Azzara said. “It’s a work in progress.”

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops offers some specific prayers and blessings for parents who have experienced a miscarriage, as well as some limited resources on their “For Your Marriage” website—www.foryourmarriage.org—but Church guidance on coping with the specifics of miscarriage is limited.

The Church does not define how a couple should handle their baby’s remains, or whether or not they should have a burial. It’s largely up to the couple involved, in consultation with their spiritual adviser.

Deacon Azzara said more pastoral training on miscarriage is needed. Kayla Boesch would like to see miscarriage covered in marriage preparation and natural family planning classes. “You learn all about your cycle and family planning, but no one tells you what to do with a loss,” she said.

The Boesches had to wait and see if Kayla miscarried naturally, and would need a “D and C”—a dilation and curettage procedure—to remove any remaining tissues that walked them through the process, including those most uncomfortable parts, such as how to store and transport the baby’s remains.

Before undergoing the “D and C” procedure, Kayla had to explain repeatedly to hospital personnel that she was planning to take the baby’s remains from the hospital, and had to fill out pages of paperwork to do so. In Tennessee, but not all states, parents have the right to bury the fetal remains from early-term miscarriages. If the parents choose not to take the remains and bury them, hospitals must properly dispose of them.

When Kayla was recovering from the procedure at St. Thomas Midtown Hospital in Clarksville, she received a small basket with a tiny handmade blanket, two roses and a card from the nonprofit organization Minutes of God, dedicated to supporting women experiencing miscarriage or infant loss. “That was so beautiful,” she said, “the acknowledgement of someone saying, ‘This was a child.’”

“We try really hard to honor each life,” said the Rev. Jennifer Jarvis, staff chaplain. “A chaplain attends every pregnancy loss. It’s part of our protocol.”

The Boesches were alone in the hospital, wanting to bury the miscarried remains of their child. “We’ve done an awful lot of those out here lately,” said Deacon Mike Wilkins, director of the Diocese of Nashville’s Calvary Cemetery.

A section of the cemetery, dubbed “The Garden of Angels,” is reserved for the burial of unborn children and infants under age 1.

Since 2014, “there has been a dramatic increase in the rate of miscarriage burials,” Deacon Wilkins said. This could be attributed to more awareness of Calvary’s service, or a cultural shift to honor lives lost to miscarriage, he said. “To lose a child in very damaging, and having a funeral or memorial and burial can be very cathartic,” Deacon Wilkins said.

Echoing Deacon Azzara, he said the Church “is still trying to find our way” to best minister to parents who lose a child through miscarriage.

Since physically recovering, Kayla has faced the more difficult challenge of spiritually healing. While miscarriages can be tough on married couples, “I could feel God in our marriage working on something,” Kayla said. “Matt was my rock.”

Going through the process together has brought them closer, and helped them heal as a couple.

“I want a name and having a memorial service really helped,” Matt said.

“It gave us some closure, and was a way to honor Francis,” Kayla added.†

Nebraska bishops urge Catholics, other voters to OK death penalty repeal

OMAHA, Neb. (CNS)—Nebraska’s three bishops made their positions—and the Church’s position—on capital punishment clear in 2015 in their support for repeal of the death penalty through the legislature’s approval of a measure to eliminate capital punishment.

And as the November election draws closer, Tom Venner, executive director of the Nebraska Catholic Conference, is focused on sharing that message again with Catholics and all other voters.

Nebraskans will vote on Nov. 8 on whether to retain the measure, known as L.B. 268, which repealed the death penalty in Nebraska and replaced it with a life sentence without parole. State senators passed the bill last year over Gov. Pete Ricketts’ veto. But a successful petition effort supported by Ricketts put the measure on the ballot as Referendum 426. Venner, who represents Archbishop George J. Lucas of Omaha and Bishops James D. Conley of Lincoln and Joseph G. Hendrich of Grand Island, saw public policy issues, announced plans for building awareness and educating voters on the death penalty referendum at a Sept. 29 news conference in Lincoln.

Getting the bishops’ message to the people began the week before the news conference. Venner told the Catholic Voice, Omaha’s archdiocesan newspaper, with the start of social media campaigns to educate and increase awareness among voters. The effort includes summaries of Church teaching, quotes from Church leaders and articles.

Venner said the strength of the social media campaign will be in Catholics sharing the material with others.

Regular media—print and broadcast—are also vehicles for the message, he said.

And the message “advocating and urging a vote to retain the repeal of the death penalty,” also is going to parishes across the state.

The state Catholic conference, working with the Catholic Mobilizing Network, has sent packets of materials, including posters and prayer cards. Videos of each bishop discussing the death penalty have been created and distributed to parishes, and events featuring speakers and discussion were being held at each of the three cathedrals across the state.†

† Photo/Theresa Laurence, Tennessee Register)
The ‘Our Father’ is rooted in Jewish tradition of prayer

By Marcellino D’Ambrosio

As Jews, Christ’s disciples already knew how to pray. Psalms were sung as part of sacrifices offered in the Temple. Psalms were chanted in the synagogue services and prayed around the table of host and guest. Jews also prayed morning, noon and night (see Dn 6:11). The most important of our prayers was the Shema, which was written on a little scroll (called a phylactery) and bound to a man’s forehead and fastened to doorposts (called a mezuzah): “Hear O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord alone! Therefore, you shall love the Lord, your God, with your whole heart, and with your whole being, and with your whole strength” (Dt 6:4-5).

The prayer, the “Shema,” was the first thing whispered in a newborn’s ear, and the last thing whispered to the dying. It was the verbal emblem that distinguished Jew from gentile. So why did Jesus have to teach his disciples how to pray? Because it was time for a new Israel to be born. The identity of God and his plan of salvation, revealed in bits and pieces in the law, was now being fully revealed in his Son.

It was time for the new Israel to pray in a new way, a way that would make clearer than ever the identity of the one God and how we should love him with all our heart. There had been hints that the fearsome God who had revealed himself on Sinai was a father, at least to the widow and orphan (Ps 68:6) and to the king (Ps 110:3). But Jesus in his time emphasized God’s majesty that, far from calling him Father, they no longer even dared to utter the name, “covered Sinai and shone from Moses’ face. We pray in this petition that through and in us the Father’s love would be made manifest to the world and that people would see, understand and glorify him.”

“Thy kingdom come.” Though the kingdom or reign of God won’t come in its fullness until the return of Christ, it began to break into history in the public ministry of Jesus and broke in with even greater force on Pentecost Sunday, falling upon 120 initially, which in a matter of hours became 3,000.

“Thy will be done on Earth, as it is in heaven.” God reigns where people yield to his will. His will and his kingdom mean the same thing: “righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Rom 14:17). “Give us this day our daily bread.” This helps us understand the attitude we should have toward God’s children—we confidently expect our loving Father to provide for all our needs. But we pray not just for our own private needs but for the entire worldwide family’s needs. On the flip side, there is never a moment when our brothers and sisters are not praying for us.

“Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.” Here, Jesus reminds us that the Church, the new Israel, is a community of mercy, where all is forgiven by God and the family. If we refuse to forgive, we block the flow of God’s mercy to and through us, and essentially put ourselves outside of the family.

“And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.” This is a sober reminder that we live in a world where God’s kingdom is in conflict with another kingdom. Our world is a dangerous place where a powerful adversary prows “like a roaring lion” (1 Pt 5:8). In praying this, we reject Satan’s tricks and humbly acknowledge our need for God’s help in escaping his snares. But we also rest confident that our Father has the power to protect us.

In the writings after the New Testament, the Lord’s Prayer replaced the “Shema” of the Jews, and Christians prayed it at least three times per day. Yet in the Holy Land, there are still descendants of the first Christians who preserve the ancient Jewish-Christian heritage. When a baby is born to such a family, it is still customary for the father to be the first one to speak to the newborn. What does he whisper in the child’s ear? “Our Father, who art in heaven … ?”

(Marcellino D’Ambrosio is co-founder of Crossroads Productions, an apostolate of Catholic renewal and evangelization.)

Versions of the ‘Our Father’ in New Testament have similarities, differences

By Daniel S. Mulhall

In the “Our Father,” Jesus gave us what St. Thomas Aquinas called “the most perfect of prayers” because it teaches us to ask for what we need, and the order in which to ask. The Catechism of the Catholic Church declares (quoting Tertullian, a theologian of the early Church) that the entire message of the Gospel is summarized in this prayer (#761).

There are two versions of the “Our Father” found in the New Testament. The first is found in Matthew 6:9-15, while the second is found in Luke 11:1-4. While the two versions are similar in the words they use, there are differences in how they are presented. The “Our Father” used today is most similar to Matthew’s account, although not identical.

Matthew situates the prayer as part of Jesus’ teaching in the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5-7). As the new lawyer, Jesus tells his disciples to pray quietly in private because “the Father knows what you need before you ask him” (Mt 6:6).

Like Luke 10, Jesus lays out the meaning of discipleship, ending with the story of Mary having “chosen the better part” because she focused on the Lord (Lk 10:42). Immediately in the next chapter, Jesus is asked by a follower to “teach us to pray just as John taught his disciples” (Lk 11:1).

In both Matthew’s and Luke’s versions, we pray to our Father in heaven. Luke simply begins “Father.” Both versions acknowledge the holiness of God’s name (“hallowed”), and ask for the kingdom to come. Matthew adds, “your will be done, on Earth as in heaven.” In both, we are told to ask for our daily bread.

In Matthew, we ask God to forgive us our debts while in Luke we ask that our sins be forgiven. Both versions ask that we not be subjected to the final test. Only Matthew’s version includes the request that we be delivered from evil.

Both versions tie our forgiveness to our willingness to forgive others, although with different wording. Immediately following his teaching of the “Our Father,” Jesus explicitly tells his followers: “If you forgive others their transgressions, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your transgressions” (Mt 6:14-15).

Where Jesus in Matthew encourages us to pray quietly, in Luke Jesus tells us to pound unceasingly at the doors of heaven (Lk 11:5-8), illustrating this with the story of the man who, late at night, knocks on his neighbor’s door seeking food. Jesus says that the neighbor eventually will give the man what he wants if for no other reason than to stop the clamar.

So too, he tells us, will God reply to our persistent prayer. “For everyone who asks, receives; and the one who seeks, finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened” (Lk 11:10).

(Daniel S. Mulhall is a catechist living in Louisville, Kentucky.)
Quick appointment with the new specialist? To visit the established expert? Or accept a see a neurologist? If so, who? Should I wait the treatment. Will they go away? Should I...
Sunday Readings

Sunday, October 30, 2016

- Wisdom 11:22-12:2
- 2 Thessalonians 1:11-22
- Luke 19:1-10

The Book of Wisdom provides this weekend’s first reading. As the condition of the environment absorbs more and more public interest, the pope and other Church leaders have addressed the problems of exploiting nature. This reading, while composed many, many centuries ago, states the basic principle in the Church’s teaching on respecting the environment.

This principle is that God is the Creator of all, and the author of all life. It should be recalled that Wisdom was written in a world highly influenced by Greek philosophy. Surounding Greek philosophy was Greek mythology, which saw gods and goddesses as being within nature. They had control over nature, of course, but they could exercise their control in ways not necessarily kind to humanity.

For the second reading, the Church gives us a passage from St. Paul’s Second Epistle to the Thessalonians.

While the nature within which humans live while on Earth is marvelous, it is God’s loving gift, it is not everything. God calls us to earthly life. He gives us Jesus. The Lord became human, as we see, bonding with us, in the mystery called the Incarnation. Through the Incarnation, through the redemption accomplished by Jesus on Calvary and in the Resurrection, and by accepting God’s gift of faith, we gain the supreme result of possessing the gift of Jesus. We gain life eternal with God.

Paul constantly summoned Christians, such as the faithful in Thessalonica, to live while on Earth is marvelous and is God’s gift to us. Therefore, the Church gives us a passage from St. Paul’s Second Epistle to the Thessalonians.

The Apostle never leads anyone down a primrose path. The epistles, and this reading in particular, remind believers that the path through life with God is rough, crooked and beset with dangers and attractive detours. We must be careful in our determination to be with God.

For its last reading, the Church gives us a portion from St. Luke’s Gospel. The Lord was on the way to Jericho, an ancient city not far from the Dead Sea, mentioned in several dramatic Old Testament passages. It was a city seated at the foot of the great Judean mountains, a virtual oasis in a stark and lifeless terrain.

While Jericho offered security to so many, as it offers security still, Jesus truly brings hope and security.

Zaccaeus was wealthy, but Luke’s Gospel sees wealth as a burden. The poor are nearer to God. They are unembarrassed. Additionally, Zaccaeus was a tax collector, a disgusting occupation among the Jews. Tax collectors worked for the detested Romans, and the system made them little else other than legalized thieves.

Nevertheless, Jesus, the Lord of life, freed Zaccaeus from the heavy burden of sin and gave him life.

Climbing the tree on the part of Zaccaeus teaches us two important lessons. Despite all his wealth, he was subject to the simple obstacles confronting everyone, namely the inability to see through or over others. And Zaccaeus desires more than to see Jesus, realizing that wealth offered no lasting satisfaction.

Reflection

In just three weeks, the Church will close its liturgical year. The weekend following, four weeks from this weekend, it will lead us into a new year of worship and reflection. But before then, it will call us to different gifts, mood profoundly hopeful and thankful.

We have hope, and we give thanks because we are one with God, in Jesus. The key is truly to be with Jesus, without compromise, without pause. Our union with the Lord must be perfect. Jesus is our kind. This weekend’s Gospel points us toward the Feast of Christ the King, the great celebration closing this year.

Our life and security are in Jesus. We must realize that we are as desperately in need of the Lord as was Zaccaeus.

The Church is doing much to promote vocations to the priesthood. This effort is making some inroads, even in a culture that seems to marginalize priests, and in which parents are often reluctant to have a son choose the priesthood because they have different hopes for him.

In 2015, 3,650 men were enrolled in postulacy (the earliest stage for the priesthood)—a modest increase from the low year of 1998 (3,114 students), but not near the high year of the 1960s (8,159 students in 1968).

In some places where particular energy is applied to these efforts, the results are remarkable. One small farming town in central Michigan with a population of 1,224 has produced 22 priests; that town’s Catholic parish has a weekly Holy Hour to pray for vocations to the priesthood and religious life, and fundraisers are held regularly to support those who have chosen such paths.

A key factor in promoting vocations is personal encouragement from other Catholics. Recently, the Center for Advanced Research in the Apostolate determined that 350,000 single Catholic males in the U.S. have “very seriously considered a vocation to the priesthood, but only 1,000 enter a seminary or a religious order’s novitiate each year.” That study shows that if a young man has three people encourage him toward the priesthood, he is five times more likely to consider such a vocation.

In my own diocese, some success has come from a program titled “Called by Name.” On one particular weekend, churchgoers throughout the diocese were encouraged to write on a card the name of someone they knew who they felt would make a good priest.

Those names were then contacted by the diocese, and invited to an evening with our diocesan bishop where, in low-key and friendly conversation, vocational discernment and the daily lives of priests and religious are discussed. This effort resulted in some young men entering the seminary, and several others who began to discern a vocation with the help of a spiritual director.

The Church do to promote more vocations to the priesthood?

Fr. Kenneth Doyle

The Sunday Readings

Daily Readings

Monday, October 31

Philippians 2:1-4
Psalm 131:1b, 2c-3
Luke 14:12-14

Tuesday, November 1

Sol omnium of All Saints
Psalm 24:1b-c, 4b-5, 6
1 John 3:1-3
Matthew 5:1-12a

Wednesday, November 2

Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed
(Part of the Souls’ Day Wisdom 3:1-9
Psalm 23:1-6
Romans 5:5-11
or Romans 6:3-9
John 6:37-40

Questions Corner

Fr. Kenneth Doyle

The Church is doing much to promote more vocations to the priesthood.

How does one go about responding to this call?

There are many ways for a young man to respond to a vocation. One idea is to identify his strengths and interests, and to see how the world needs it more than he plans to respond. But the growing shortage of priests in many parts of the country troubles me because I know that their life and ministry is vital to the Church’s mission. Will the Church do more vocations to the priesthood?

The Catholic Church in the U.S. is energetically involved in promoting vocations to the priesthood. This effort is making some inroads, even in a culture that seems to marginalize priests, and in which parents are often reluctant to have a son choose the priesthood because they have different hopes for him.

In 2015, 3,650 men were enrolled in postulacy (the earliest stage for the priesthood)—a modest increase from the low year of 1998 (3,114 students), but not near the high year of the 1960s (8,159 students in 1968).

In some places where particular energy is applied to these efforts, the results are remarkable. One small farming town in central Michigan with a population of 1,224 has produced 22 priests; that town’s Catholic parish has a weekly Holy Hour to pray for vocations to the priesthood and religious life, and fundraisers are held regularly to support those who have chosen such paths.

A key factor in promoting vocations is personal encouragement from other Catholics. Recently, the Center for Advanced Research in the Apostolate determined that 350,000 single Catholic males in the U.S. have “very seriously considered a vocation to the priesthood, but only 1,000 enter a seminary or a religious order’s novitiate each year.” That study shows that if a young man has three people encourage him toward the priesthood, he is five times more likely to consider such a vocation.

In my own diocese, some success has come from a program called “Called by Name.” On one particular weekend, churchgoers throughout the diocese were encouraged to write on a card the name of someone they knew who they felt would make a good priest.

Those names were then contacted by the diocese, and invited to an evening with our diocesan bishop where, in low-key and friendly conversation, vocational discernment and the daily lives of priests and religious are discussed. This effort resulted in some young men entering the seminary, and several others who began to discern a vocation with the help of a spiritual director.

Q

What can the Church do to promote vocations to the priesthood?

The Church do to promote more vocations to the priesthood?

Fr. Kenneth Doyle

The Church is doing much to promote more vocations to the priesthood.
Please submit in writing to our office by 10 a.m. Thursday before the date of publication; be sure to state date of death. Obituaries of archdiocesan personnel serving our archdiocese are listed elsewhere in The Criterion. Order priests and religious sisters and brothers are included here, unless they are natives of the archdiocese or have other connections to it. See these separate obituary pages.


CARTWRIGHT, Bryan Volta. Uncle of two.


WIBBELS, Jr., Thomas A., 71, St. Mary, Lanesville, Oct. 15. Father of Thomas A. Wibbels III. Grandfather of one.


Vatican City (CNS)—Dialogue is an essential component of mercy and peace, Pope Francis said during an audience last Saturday with newlyweds who have just started. †

Pope Francis said dialogue is an important aspect of mercy. It is what “allows people to know each other and understand the needs of the other.” In addition, “it is a sign of great respect” because it involves listening to the other and making the effort to see the good in what the other is saying. “Dialogue calls us to place ourselves before the other, see him or her as a gift of God,” the pope said.

“We don’t dialogue when we do not listen enough, or when we interrupt the other to prove that we are right,” he said. “How many times when we are listening to someone, we stop them and say, ‘No. No. That’s not right,’ and we don’t let the person finish.”

Such an attitude, he said, is “aggression.”

The Church, too, is called to dialogue, Pope Francis said. Listening is only the first way to know what is in the other’s heart and what the other needs. Dialogue is an expression of God’s love, which reaches out to each person, souring seeds of goodness, he said. “Dialogue tears down walls of division and misunderstanding, creates bridges of communication and does away with anyone to isolate him- or herself.”

Thousands of pilgrims from Poland attended the audience, which occurred on the anniversary of the day in 1978 that John Paul II formally inaugurated his ministry as pope. Stating his John Paul tirelessly proclaimed “the Gospel of mercy,” Pope Francis offered special prayers that the late pope would intercede to help young people face the challenges in their lives, help the sick “embrace with hope the cross of illness” and fill with love the families

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Back in June, Kristan Hawkins, who heads Students for Life, got a firsthand look at how this presidential election differs from others when she participated in Donald Trump’s outreach meeting with evangelicals, which had only a few Catholics present.

She said the Republican nominee for president appeared to be unfamiliar with the pro-life movement. “He kept saying ‘the pro-life,’ I think I would have liked to have known more about him than just being anti-abortion.”

Three months and two campaign managers later, Trump issued a specific document about his pro-life positions with the formation of his 34-member Catholic Advisory Group, whose members include Marjorie Dannenfelser, president of the Susan B. Anthony List; Janet Morana, co-founder of the Silent No More Campaign; and Father Frank Pavone, national director of Priests for Life.

On Oct. 5, the Trump campaign sent a letter to members of the National Catholic Leadership Conference seeking his support for pro-life issues. Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton was invited to address the group, but her campaign declined.

During the final presidential debate with Trump, Clinton said she wants “a Supreme Court that will stick with Roe v. Wade and respect a woman’s choice.” She reiterated that position during the last presidential debate on Oct. 19 in Nevada.

How prominent a role have life issues—abortion but also capital punishment and assisted suicide—really played in the 2016 presidential elections?

“It’s about personality, mostly,” said Massimo Faggioli, a professor of theology and religious studies at Villanova University in Philadelphia, in an interview with Catholic News Service (CNS). He called the presidential campaign “morally confusing. The voice of the values voters, especially on abortion, is not as important as it used to be.”

Clinton’s running mate, U.S. Sen. Tim Kaine of Virginia, also supports the Supreme Court’s Roe v. Wade ruling, which legalized abortion virtually on demand in 1973. As a practicing Catholic, Kaine says he is personally opposed to abortion, but that as a public official he cannot impose his views on his constituents.

The Democratic National Platform, endorsed by Clinton and Kaine, opposes “Republican efforts to defund Planned Parenthood health centers,” and “seeks to roll back federal state laws and policies that impede a woman’s access to abortion, including by repealing the Hyde Amendment.” This represents a shift from that supported by Kaine, who has supported the Hyde Amendment in the past.

Trump’s document makes four promises: that as president, he would nominate pro-life Supreme Court justices; that he would sign into law a 20-week abortion ban known as the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act; would support stopping federal dollars going to Planned Parenthood “as long as they continue to perform abortions,” and support making the Hyde Amendment permanent law. Each year, the ban on using federal funds for abortions must be approved as a rider on the annual appropriations bill.

In the vice presidential debate on Oct. 4, Trump’s running mate, Indiana Gov. Mike Pence, an evangelical, called abortion a “moral issue” and said, “I think if you’re going to be pro-life, you should be pro-adoption.” Kaine said he believed that women should make their own decisions about pregnancy.

On the issue of the death penalty, the Democratic Party’s platform calls for its abolition. The Republican Party platform calls it “firmly settled” as a constitutional issue, and states, “We support the U.S. Supreme Court for what it calls the ‘crossover of the right of the people to enact capital punishment.’

Republican U.S. presidential nominee Donald Trump and Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton are seen in Las Vegas during the final 2016 presidential campaign debate on Oct. 19. (Shayne Robinson/Reuters)

It remains an issue for voters in several states, with references to the death penalty on ballots in California, Nebraska and Oklahoma. Nebraska voters will decide if they want to keep the state’s ban on capital punishment as voted in by its legislature. Nebraska’s governor vetoed it. Lawmakers overrode the veto, so the issue went to the ballot to have voters decide.

California’s Proposition 62 calls for replacing it with life imprisonment with no chance for parole, and Oklahoma voters are being asked if they want to add the death penalty to the state’s constitution.

In all three states, priests were expected to address the issue as a pro-life matter from their pulpits.

“In the past,” says a statement from the California Catholic Conference, capital punishment “was sometimes morally justified in order to protect society, but those times have passed.” California bishops also are asking voters to say no to Proposition 66, which would expedite the review of death penalty cases.

“Any rash to streamline that process will inevitably result in the execution of innocent people,” the conference said.

Kaine, the only major candidate among the four major national candidates, has been outspoken on the death penalty. He defended death-row inmates and opposed the death penalty as a lawyer. As governor of Virginia, however, he approved 11 executions and granted clemency in only one appeal. He says he remains personally opposed to the death penalty, but pledged to uphold the law in Virginia.

“Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship,” the U.S. bishops’ document on political responsibility that guides Catholics on election decisions, states: “Society has a duty to defend life against violence and to reach out to victims of crime. Yet our nation’s continued reliance on the death penalty cannot be justified” (#66).

On the issue of assisted suicide, the Republican platform opposes euthanasia; the Democratic platform, as in past years, has no language on it. The Republican document states, “We oppose the nonconsensual withholding or withdrawal of care or treatment, including food and water, from people with disabilities, including newborns, as well as the elderly and infirm, just as we oppose active and passive euthanasia and assisted suicide.”

“Faithful Citizenship” calls assisted suicide “intrinsically evil,” ranking it with abortion, and adds, “It is a mistake with grave moral consequences to treat the destruction of innocent human life merely as a matter of individual choice” (#22).

According to the Alan Guttmacher Institute, just over 1 percent of all abortions are performed at 21 weeks or later. Eight states already have a 20-week abortion ban.

Trump has promised in writing that he would sign into law a federal 20-week ban known as the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act, and also stop federal funding of Planned Parenthood, but he did not repeat those promises during the debate.

Trump did restate his promise to nominate pro-life justices “of a conservative bent” to the Supreme Court, acknowledging that were the court to rule Roe v. Wade, “it will go back to the states and the states will then make a determination.”

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VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- Pope Francis' recent insistence on "walking ecumenism," the notion that Christians will draw closer to each other as they work together to help the poor, should resonate well with Lutherans and Catholics in Sweden.

"Swedes are known to be people of consensus, pragmatic, so people try to cooperate even if they have different views and backgrounds," said Bishop Anders Arborelius of Stockholm, the country's only Catholic bishop and the first native Swede to hold the post since the Protestant Reformation.

More than 60 percent of Swedes are baptized members of the Lutheran Church of Sweden, and just over 1 percent are registered members of the Catholic Church, although Bishop Arborelius said that with the ever-increasing number of immigrants in the country, the number of Catholics probably is double the official 115,000.

Still, Sweden has become almost famous for being one of the most secular countries in Europe. In surveys, less than a third of Swedes describe themselves as religious, and even fewer participate regularly in church services.

However, "even in the secular society, there are certain Christian values that are very much alive—this wish to help poor people, to protect those who are in danger and to establish equal rights for everyone," Bishop Arborelius told Catholic News Service (CNS) on Oct. 18.

Traditionally in Sweden, most converts come from university circles, Bishop Arborelius said, and are attracted by the Catholic Church's embrace of reason, its theological depth and its social doctrine.

"Somewhere, they think the Catholic Church is a bit more serious about these things, so it's quite common that people who are very well educated, if they turn to Christian faith, they go to a Catholic church," he added.

His family's contact with the Bridgettine sisters had a deep influence on him, he said, and eventually he began taking courses in the Catholic faith.

Entering the Catholic Church at the age of 20, he said, "I had some longing to be a priest—many converts have this idea," but the local bishop urged him to wait. He entered the Discalced Carmelite novitiate less than two years later after becoming Catholic.

While the growth of the Catholic Church in Sweden is due mainly to immigrants, including Chaldean and Maronite Catholics from the Middle East, Bishop Arborelius is part of the smaller, but steadily growing segment of Swedes who have joined the Catholic Church after being baptized Lutheran.

"Not very active" as a Lutheran, he always felt drawn to "the contemplative life or spirituality," the bishop said. "I always had this longing for a life of prayer and silent adoration."