



The

# Criterion

Serving the Church in Central and Southern Indiana Since 1960



## Serra Club Vocations Essay

Student sees priest as a guide to heaven and a deeper faith, page 10.

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## A defining age

Hoping to make a difference in the world is one of the defining qualities of young adult Catholics. Here, three members of St. John the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis pose for a photo with a resident of Haiti, second from left, during a service trip to that Caribbean country in 2017. The St. John members are Meghan McCann, left, Alexandra Makris and Homero Santiago Valladares. (Submitted photo)

## Young adults seek a sense of belonging at critical time for them and the Church

Second part in a continuing series

By John Shaughnessy

It's a generation of Catholics that struggles with staggering student debt, the pressures of society and the anxieties of trying to discover their place in the world.

It's also a generation of Catholics—ages 18 to 35—that desires to find and develop lasting relationships with others and with God.

And it's a generation of Catholics that believes its energy, vision and passion can make a tremendous impact on the Church and society—now and in

the future.

That's the overall picture that emerges from the responses of the young adults in the archdiocese who accepted Pope Francis' invitation to answer a survey that will contribute significantly to the Synod on Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment that will take place at the Vatican in October.

The synod is in response to a critical reality in the life of the Church. It's a reality expressed in this assessment from the archdiocese's summary of all the people in central and southern

Indiana who responded to the survey: "About 25 percent of our teens and half of our young adults do not sense that our Church is adept at listening to their lived situations. This consultation process is a good step in that direction."

As the synod nears, *The Criterion* is sharing some of the feedback that was provided by youths and young adults who answered the survey. Today, we share thoughts and insights from the 91 young adults who responded to the following questions on the survey:

**What are one or two of the biggest**  
See **YOUNG ADULTS**, page 8

## Bishops across U.S. condemn separation, detention of migrant children

WASHINGTON (CNS)—From Denver to New York City, the country's Catholic bishops have joined a chorus of organizations, institutions and high-profile individuals urging the Trump administration to stop separating children from their parents as they seek respite in the U.S. from dire conditions in their home countries, largely in Central America.



Archbishop Gustavo Garcia-Siller

None have been more outspoken, however, than the bishops with dioceses on or near the border between the U.S. and Mexico, where many migrants, adults as well as children, are being held in detention centers in geographic areas where many of the prelates come into contact with families affected.

"Refugee children belong to their parents, not to the government or other institutions. To steal children from their parents is a grave sin, immoral [and] evil," said San Antonio's Archbishop Gustavo Garcia-Siller on June 14 via Twitter, the social media platform he has used to daily call attention to the situation.

"Their lives have already been extremely difficult. Why do we [the U.S.] torture them even more, treating them as criminals?" he continued.

In a June 5 interview with CBS News, U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions said: "If people don't want to be separated from their children, they should not bring them with them," meaning they shouldn't bring them along when trying to cross the border, which many do as they seek asylum. The furor over the separation of children from a parent or parents had already started in late May, before Sessions used a Bible passage to justify the actions.

Bishop Daniel E. Flores of the Diocese of Brownsville, Texas, said via Twitter on May 31 that "separating immigrant parents and children as a supposed deterrent to immigration is a cruel and reprehensible policy. Children are not instruments

See **DETENTION**, page 2

## Bishops OK directives, revisions protecting young people at meeting

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (CNS)—New medical directives governing health care partnerships and revisions to the charter on the protection of young people were approved during the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) spring general assembly.

During their June 13-14 meeting, the bishops also approved what is described as a "pastoral response" to Asian and Pacific Island Catholics and, after a long discussion, they decided to supplement their quadrennial document on Catholic participation in public life with a short letter, a video and other supplementary materials.

The meeting opened with a statement decrying Attorney General Jeff Sessions' decision that asylum seekers fleeing domestic or gang violence cannot find

protection in the United States.

"At its core, asylum is an instrument to preserve the right to life," the bishops' statement said. They urged the nation's policymakers and courts "to respect and enhance, not erode, the potential of our asylum system to preserve and protect the right to life."

Sessions' decision "elicits deep concern because it potentially strips asylum from many women who lack adequate protection," the bishops said. "These vulnerable women will now face return to extreme dangers of domestic violence in their home country."

Just after the opening prayer, Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, USCCB president, read the statement from the dais, and

See **BISHOPS**, page 16



Baltimore Archbishop William E. Lori joins other prelates in morning prayer on June 14 during the bishops' annual spring assembly in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. (CNS photo/Bob Roller)

# Synod working document: Young Catholics need Church that listens

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Young Catholics are looking for a Church that listens to their concerns, accompanies them in discerning their vocations and helps them confront the challenges they face, said a working document for the upcoming Synod of Bishops on young people.



Cardinal Lorenzo Baldisseri

The synod's *instrumentum laboris* (working document), published by the Vatican on June 19, stated that young people "want to see a Church that shares their situations of life in the light of Gospel rather than by preaching."

Quoting a presynod gathering of young people who met at the Vatican on March 19-25, the working document said young Catholics "want an authentic Church. With this, we would like to express, particularly to the Church hierarchy, our request for a transparent, welcoming, honest, attractive, communicative, accessible, joyful and interactive community."

The working document is based mainly on comments solicited in a questionnaire last June from national bishops' conferences around the world as well as the final document of the presynod gathering.

An estimated 305 young adults participated in the weeklong presynod meeting, which allowed practicing Catholics and others to provide input for Pope Francis and the world's bishops, who will meet at the synod in October to discuss "young people, faith and vocational discernment." Some 15,000 young people also participated in the presynod process through Facebook groups online.

The meeting, the working document said, "highlighted the potential that younger generations represent" as well as their "hopes and desires."

"Young people are great seekers of meaning, and everything that is in harmony with their search to give value to their lives arouses their attention and motivates their commitment," it said.

Presenting the *"instrumentum laboris"* to journalists at a press briefing on June 19, Cardinal Lorenzo Baldisseri, secretary-general of the Synod of Bishops, said the synod meeting's goal is that young Catholics may find "the beauty of life, beginning from the happy relationship with the God of the covenant and of love" in a world that often robs them of their "affections, bonds and prospective of life."

"The synod dedicated to young people gives us the opportunity to rediscover the hope of a good life, the dream of a pastoral renewal, the desire for community and passion for education," he said.

Divided into three parts, the working document outlines the Church's need to listen to young people, to help guide them in the faith and in discerning their vocational calling, and to identify pastoral and missionary paths to be able to accompany

them. The responses collected by bishops' conferences around the world cited a need for ways to help young men and women confront the challenges of cultural changes that sometimes disregard traditions and spirituality.

The working document also states that while the Church highlights the importance of the body, affection and sexuality, many young Catholic men and women "do not follow the directions of the sexual morality of the Church."

"Although no bishops' conferences offer solutions or indications, many [conferences] believe the issue of sexuality should be discussed more openly and without judgment," it said.

Young people attending the presynod meeting said issues such as contraception, abortion, homosexuality, cohabitation and marriage are often debated both by young Catholics and non-Catholics.

The working document also highlighted the need to reaffirm Church teaching on the body and sexuality at a time when biomedical advancements have pushed a more "technocratic approach to the body," citing examples such as egg donation and surrogacy.

"Moreover, precocious sexuality, sexual promiscuity, digital pornography, the exhibition of one's own body online and sexual tourism risk disfiguring the beauty and depth of emotional and sexual life," the *"instrumentum laboris"* said.

Church leaders, it said, must "speak in practical terms about controversial subjects such as homosexuality and gender issues, which young people are already freely discussing without taboo."

Also, "LGBT [lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender] youths, through various contributions received by the secretariat of the synod, want to benefit from a greater closeness and experience greater care from the Church," while some bishops' conferences are asking what they can recommend to young people who enter into a homosexual relationship, but want to be closer to the Church, the document said.

Regarding the use of the initials "LGBT" in a major Church document, Cardinal Baldisseri told journalists that it was a term used in one of the documents given by the bishops' conferences, "and we quoted them."

"We are open. We don't want the synod to be closed in itself," Cardinal Baldisseri said. "And in the Church, there are many areas, there is freedom for people to express themselves—on the right, left, center, north and south—this is all possible. That is why we are willing to listen to people with different opinions."

Young men and women are also hoping the Church can help them "find a simple and clear understanding of the meaning of vocation," which is often misinterpreted as referring only to priesthood and consecrated life.

While the Church has confirmed that marriage is also a vocation, the document confirms the need for "a youth vocational ministry capable of being meaningful for all young people." †



## Public Schedule of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

June 24 – 30, 2018

**June 24 — 9:30 a.m.**

Mass at St. Isidore the Farmer Parish, Perry County, in celebration of its 50th anniversary

**June 25 — 5:30 p.m.**

Mass at St. Luke the Evangelist Church, Indianapolis, with the Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (F.I.H.) of India

**June 26 — 8:30 a.m.**

Palliative Care Conference, at Marian University, Indianapolis

**June 27 — 11:15 a.m.**

Mass at Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary, Indianapolis

**June 27 — 7 p.m.**

Theology on Tap presentation and discussion, at the Knights of Columbus McGowan Hall, Indianapolis

**June 28 — 10 a.m.**

Leadership Team Meeting, Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis

**June 28 — 5:30 p.m.**

Serra Club cookout and presentation, at St. Augustine Home for the Aged, Indianapolis

**June 30 — 6:30 p.m.**

Mass of Blessing and Missioning, in Sacred Heart Basilica at the University of Notre Dame

(Schedule subject to change.)

## DETENTION

continued from page 1

of deterrence, they are children. A government that thinks any means is suitable to achieve an end cannot secure justice for anyone."

But the outrage began in earnest after the June 14 speech to law enforcement officers in Fort Wayne, Ind., when Sessions said the practice of separating families is consistent with the teachings of the Bible because "persons who violate the law of our nation are subject to prosecution. I would cite you to the Apostle Paul and his clear and wise command in Romans 13 to obey the laws of the government because God has ordained them for the purpose of order."

The following day, New York Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan said during CNN's "Cuomo Prime Time with Chris Cuomo" that while he appreciated Sessions quoting the Bible, the quote he used was not the best.

"For one, St. Paul always says we should obey the law of the government if that law is in conformity with the Lord's law, alright? No pun intended but God's law trumps man's law, alright?" he said.

"And St. Paul himself who gave the quote that the attorney general used, he wouldn't obey Roman law when it said it was mandatory to worship the emperor," the cardinal continued. "He wouldn't obey that law. I don't think we should obey a law that goes against what God intends that you would take a baby, a child, from their mom. I mean, that's just unjust. That's unbiblical. That's un-American. There could be no Bible passage that would justify that."

After Sessions' Bible quote, Bishop Mark J. Seitz of El Paso, Texas, also used the Bible to make a point and compared Christ's time as a refugee in the Holy Land to the migrants.

In a June 15 statement, he compared the distance from his diocese to other localities in Guatemala and Mexico, saying that "if Jesus of Nazareth returned, as at that time, from Galilee to Judea, ... we dare say he would not get as far as Sacred Heart Church downtown [in El Paso] before being detained."

He urged Christians to think about the families fleeing and seeking asylum in the U.S., what they're going through, and said that what's at stake "is the fundamental question of being Christian today, of being a person of faith today in our country and on the continent that is suffering an hour of Christ's passion."

Bishop Seitz announced a public prayerful procession "in solidarity with our sisters and brothers who continue to migrate to our border" planned for the evening of July 20 in El Paso but did not release other details. The U.S. bishops also are talking about the possibility of a delegation of prelates going to the detention centers where many children are being held.

In mid-June, the Associated Press said this year "nearly 2,000 children have been separated from their families at the U.S. border over a six-week period during a crackdown on illegal entries," according to documents from the Department of Homeland Security, which operates Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Two prelates from Colorado, Denver Archbishop Samuel J. Aquila and Denver Auxiliary Bishop Jorge Rodriguez, reaffirmed what other bishops have said in June 18 statement, saying that while borders must be protected, the policy of separating families is "immoral," and urged that it be terminated immediately, saying those being detained are in need of protection.

"These children and their parents are often fleeing violence, and our country should not add to the inhumanity of their situation," they said. †

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# Archbishop Thompson's engaging approach stresses 'tremendous, transformative effect' of confirmation

By Natalie Hoefler

Nearly 50 teenagers rose from their chairs in the former gym and faced the stage where Archbishop Charles C. Thompson stood.

"Now I want to hear you say it loud and strong," he called out over a microphone to the youths gathered in the Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center's assembly hall in Indianapolis.

"I do," they responded in a hesitant chorus.

"It's going to have to be louder than that," the archbishop encouraged. "You want your parents and grandparents in the back of the church to hear you. Let's try it again."

The "I do" was louder this time and grew in volume as the archbishop had the teens repeat the phrase together five times—just as they would do in less than an hour during the rite of confirmation at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis.

This particular scene took place on April 25. But it is not unique. Since last fall, the scene has been—and will continue to be—played out multiple times at the cathedral and in parishes around central and southern Indiana.

With new archbishops come new ideas. And so it is that Archbishop Thompson has begun two practices centered on the sacrament of confirmation: meeting with parish youths immediately before their rite of confirmation, and having them submit letters to him in advance answering specific questions.

"It's reminding the young people and

their families that the sacrament is a part of something bigger than the parish," he explained of the methods. "That they're becoming ... full members of something much larger—the larger Church."

## 'Enriching for them, inspiring for me'

Archbishop Thompson says he got the letter-writing idea from the late Archbishop Thomas C. Kelly, the former leader of the Louisville archdiocese where Archbishop Thompson was ordained.

He asks each youth to be confirmed to send him a letter answering four questions: what does confirmation mean to you; what is your saint's name and why did you choose it; who is your sponsor and why did you choose that sponsor; and what did you do for your service hours.

"Four simple questions, and I get anything from a paragraph to three pages," Archbishop Thompson said with a grin.

The letter-writing is not intended as busy work, he assured.

"What I've found in my own life when I have to give a homily or a talk, is that ... when you articulate [the message] by writing, sometimes you look at what you wrote and you say, 'Wow, I didn't know that was in me.'"

"I want to hear what [the youths] have to say, but I also want them to have an opportunity to hear what's there inside them. Most take it very seriously. I think the ones who do, it's enriching for them, and it's certainly inspiring for me."

## 'In the state of mind to be confirmed'

Archbishop Thompson also believes that what the youths have to say will be inspiring to those gathered at the confirmation Mass, too. That's why he reads aloud a few answers to each question during his homily at confirmation Masses, keeping each responder's identity anonymous.

"I tell the young people that, 'The people who've gone before you, they like to hear your faith,'" he explained. "They've given their blood, sweat and tears to the parish, for the Church, for the mission

of Jesus, and they want to know that that wasn't in vain, that there are those coming after them who will carry out this mission."

Among those confirmed on April 25 was Erin Rooney, a member of Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ Parish in Indianapolis. She said she found writing the letter to the archbishop beneficial.

"It really brought it down to why we are here," she said. "We've been asked these questions before, but having this assignment from the archbishop really put your mind in that area. I think it helped, especially knowing the archbishop was reading them."

Her fellow parishioner, Alex Payne, agreed.

"Instead of viewing this as just a process, it helped me think about what [the sacrament] really means," he said.

Youths from Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Indianapolis were confirmed during the same Mass. Our Lady of Lourdes parishioner Christopher DiGiusto was present to witness his son Seamus receive the sacrament.

"I thought that [reading answers from the letters] was a great way to involve the kids in every aspect of the Mass and show them that he was listening," he said. "I was really impressed that [Archbishop Thompson] was interested individually in each of the kids."

## 'A chance to interact'

Engaging with youths is something Archbishop Thompson has long enjoyed. "Most of my priesthood before I became a bishop, I was always a chaplain to a high school, and a lot of the parishes had large schools," he said. "So in a lot of ways this interaction with [youths preparing for the rite of] confirmation is my way of keeping connected to that experience. I enjoy the energy and the freshness in perspective of the young people."

He experiences that energy and connection personally through the pre-confirmation Mass meeting he initiated. The meetings take him to parishes

throughout central and southern Indiana.

The meetings also offer "a chance to interact with [the youths] so they can experience the bishop in a normal way," he said, "so they can have a conversation with a bishop, so he's not somebody way out there that you never get close to. ... And I try to make them laugh and smile a little bit."

Archbishop Thompson also uses the meeting as an opportunity to walk the teens and their sponsors through what to expect during the Mass and the rite of confirmation, an effort Our Lady of Lourdes parishioner Ava Frank appreciated before receiving the sacrament on April 25.

"It was really helpful," she said. "I didn't really know what I was doing or where I was supposed to go. Going through the [rite] was a good review."

For most of the meeting, the archbishop weaves in and among the teens. But to practice the "I do" response he stands on a stage, or even on a chair.

"I'm short," he said with a grin. "So I want them to see my face."

## 'Members of the larger Church'

It is not vanity that motivates his desire for the youths to see him. Rather, it is the third reason why the archbishop instituted

See CONFIRMATION, page 10



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson traces the sign of the cross on the forehead of Josie Volpenhein of St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross Parish in Bright during the rite of confirmation for the youths of five parishes in the Batesville Deanery on April 21 at St. Louis Church in Batesville. (Waltz Photography, LLC)



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson prepares to dip his thumb into chrism oil during the rite of confirmation for youths of two Indianapolis parishes on April 25 at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis. During the sacrament, the oil is used to trace a cross on the forehead of those being confirmed. (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)

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In the St. Louis School cafeteria in Batesville, Archbishop Charles C. Thompson stands on a chair to help the youths of five Batesville Deanery parishes practice their responses prior to the Mass in which they received the sacrament of reconciliation on April 21. (Waltz Photography, LLC)



# The Criterion

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## Editorial



Mexico fans in Moscow react after defeating Germany 1-0 in the World Cup on June 17. The monthlong sports event can “become an occasion for encounter, dialogue and fraternity between different cultures and religions, promoting solidarity and peace between nations,” said Pope Francis. (CNS photo/Kai Pfaffenbach, Reuters)

## World Cup offers ‘culture of encounter’

It is a global event held every four years, bringing people together from 32 countries, all walks of life, and various faith traditions, with at least one very strong connection—a passion for “*fútbol*” as our neighbors in Hispanic countries say, or soccer, as we Americans call it.

The 2018 FIFA World Cup taking place in Russia from June 14-July 15 will attract millions of fans—in person and through media outlets—and offer us a pageantry of colors and customs from the nations participating, as well as the opportunity to witness a passion for a sport like many of us in the U.S. have for American football, basketball, baseball and auto racing.

Faces will be painted, flags will fly and fans chanting and singing in unison will be commonplace at these soccer venues.

This festival of nations is a gathering like no other, and Pope Francis recently used this unique opportunity to greet players, organizers and soccer fans who will be following “this event that overcomes all borders.”

During remarks he made at the end of his general audience in St. Peter’s Square at the Vatican on June 13, the Holy Father shared a message of evangelization that he prays many will take to heart.

“May this important sports event

—Mike Krokos

## A hope—and prayer—for peace

Like many of you, we witnessed the endless media coverage of President Donald J. Trump’s June 12 meeting with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un in Singapore.

Various pundits immediately began weighing in, sharing the pros and cons they believe will result from the historic gathering.

We echo the words of Archbishop Alfred Xuereb, apostolic nuncio to South Korea and Mongolia, who said he prayed the first-ever summit between a sitting U.S. president and a North Korean leader begins a new era of peace.

“It marks the beginning of a still long and arduous journey, but we are hopeful because the start has been very positive, very good,” Archbishop Xuereb said.

According to Trump, Kim agreed

to work to end North Korea’s nuclear program. Trump promised to end joint military exercises with South Korea. While we applaud both leaders’ words, we hope and pray what was discussed comes to fruition. We also pray this beginning of North Korean openness to the world might lead to a greater respect for human rights there, especially religious liberty.

We repeat the words that Pope Francis said while leading prayers about the summit in St. Peter’s Square on June 10.

“May the talks,” he said, “contribute to the development of a positive path that assures a future of peace for the Korean peninsula and the whole world.”

—Mike Krokos

—Mike Krokos

## Reflection/Sean Gallagher

# Court case shows importance of Christian vision of humanity

As I’ve grown into parenting over the years, I’ve learned to embrace as an everyday part of my life the fact that my sons are not defined by their actions—and that neither am I.

I’m far from a perfect father, as I’m sure my boys would tell you. And I’m reminded each day by the typical trouble that they get into as boys that they’re not angels either. But all of us live with the underlying conviction that we’re all good people at heart, despite our limitations and daily failings.

Distinguishing between specific moral actions and the inherent worth and dignity of a person is a longstanding part of the Christian vision of humanity.

It helps us to be humble when we do good, knowing that it’s happened through the help of God’s grace and not simply our own power. And it gives us hope when we sin, for we know that God’s mercy is always near and that our sins don’t eliminate the fact that we’re created in God’s image and likeness.

But this time-proven understanding of the human condition is being challenged significantly in our contemporary society. There’s a trend in our culture that equates what we do with who we are.

That was highlighted recently in the 7-2 Supreme Court ruling on June 4 in the *Masterpiece Cakeshop v. Colorado Civil Rights Commission* case. It involved Jack Phillips, owner of Masterpiece Cakeshop in Lakewood, Colo., who respectfully refused a 2012 request from Charlie Craig and David Mullins to create a custom-made cake for their wedding.

Phillips declined the request on the grounds of his religious beliefs. He held that marriage was an institution created by God intended for one man and one woman. Craig and Mullins then filed a complaint with the Colorado Civil Rights Commission, charging that Phillips was unjustly discriminating against them based on their sexual orientation.

The commission ruled in favor of Craig and Mullins, fining Phillips, requiring

him to create custom cakes for same-sex couples in the future, provide public accommodation training to his employees and file quarterly reports to show that his business was in compliance with the state’s non-discrimination laws.

Phillips appealed the ruling all the way to the Supreme Court, arguing that he did not discriminate based on who Craig and Mullins were. He simply could not agree in conscience with what they were going to do, and did not want to contribute to it by creating a custom-made cake for them.

Phillips showed that he did not discriminate against gays as a group because he had served—and continues to serve—gay customers for various occasions: birthdays, graduations, job promotions, etc.

There are other cases similar to Phillips’ case making their way through the judicial system. Perhaps the question of the legal status of distinguishing between a person’s action and a person’s identity will be clarified in the months and years to come.

In the meantime, I think it would be good for all on both sides of cases like Masterpiece Cakeshop to consider deeper questions at play here, and not get wrapped up simply in the typical charges that get bandied about but which do not contribute to the building up of a consensus in society as a whole on questions about conscience, faith and discrimination.

The Christian view of humanity would do much to establish a firm harmony among groups of people in our divided nation.

On the one hand, this vision, consistently embraced, will help us concretely affirm the inherent dignity of all people, even those with whom we might disagree vehemently. On the other hand, this view of humanity would not force us to affirm or contribute to every action of another person, even if it’s one that the other person values highly.

We Christians believe that the Gospel will usher the kingdom of God into this world, even if it happens at a snail’s pace at times. Let’s continue to offer the Gospel’s vision of humanity to our divided society and seek to bring God’s healing to it.

(Sean Gallagher is a reporter for The Criterion.) †

## Letters to the Editor

### Ending abortion must top life issues, reader says

In his column, “Pope’s exhortation calls us to defend all human life,” in the June 1 issue of *The Criterion*, columnist Tony Magliano suggests that Pope Francis “is crystal clear that we are not to subjectively rank the life issues, but rather to objectively link them together.” The issues he uses to support his conclusion are abortion and war.

With respect to his argument about war, I know of no one who would “have no hesitancy about going to war.”

Furthermore, our Church provides us with the “just war doctrine” to guide our hesitancy and decision-making. However, when Magliano compares (i.e., makes comparable) abortion to other life issues, it is a false comparison.

It assumes the impoverished, the immigrant, the imprisoned and others are actively and purposefully killed legally just as unborn children are killed in their mother’s womb with legal sanction.

It is not that the lives of others already born are not just as precious and as worthy of our protection. It is that we must first stop the killing before addressing the quality of life of those already born. It is that our first concern should be to end the

killing, before arguing the proper structure of the welfare system. It is that we should make the killing of precious human life unthinkable before we discuss the merits of our border laws.

If the argument were a life for a life, if it were an authentic comparison, then we would be having a different discussion.

Yes, we need to serve. In fact, it is our duty to serve those already born, but not in exchange for the concern for lives of those not yet born.

Mary Elizabeth Young  
Indianapolis

### Priest’s column on understanding of sex very much appreciated

I subscribe to *The Criterion*, and I want to thank Father Tad Pacholczyk for his recent column in the May 25 issue, “Consenting to Sex.”

Somehow, a true understanding of sex and the sex act got lost in our changing society. Thank you, Father Tad, for clarifying so succinctly what those things really mean.

Your writing, research and preaching are amazing. Please stay the course.

Bob Bestvina  
Indianapolis



# Christ the Cornerstone

## The birth of John the Baptist points us to Jesus

*“He will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother’s womb, and he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God” (Lk 1:12).*

Every new birth is a miracle. God shares with a woman and a man the power of creation, which belongs to God alone, bringing into the world a child endowed with intelligence, freedom and the capacity to love. Every child—born and unborn—should be a cause for wonder and rejoicing in spite of the sad circumstances that may accompany his or her conception and birth.

The birth which we celebrate this Sunday, June 24, as the Solemnity of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist, was a *miracle extraordinaire*, a miracle that transcended the “ordinary” miracle of human birth and marked a special moment in human history.

St. Luke’s Gospel tells us that John’s mother Elizabeth, who was a relative of Mary, and his father Zechariah “were righteous in the eyes of God, observing all the commandments of the Lord blamelessly. But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren and both

were advanced in years” (Lk 1:6-7).

Zechariah, who was a priest, had a vision while serving in the Temple. An angel appeared to him and said, “Do not be afraid, Zechariah, because your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall name him John. And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice in his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord” (Lk 1:13-15).

Zechariah was dumbfounded. He was so incredulous, so skeptical and unbelieving that until the child was born and brought into the Temple to be circumcised on the eighth day, he found himself unable to talk. It was not until his neighbors and relatives asked him to confirm the child’s name and he wrote on a tablet “John,” that “his mouth was opened, his tongue freed, and he spoke blessing God” (Lk 1:64).

Unlike Mary, Elizabeth’s pregnancy came about in the usual way—as the result of marital intercourse with her husband. Still, there was nothing usual about John’s conception and birth. As St. Luke tells us, he was “filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother’s womb” (Lk 1:15), and he was destined

to greatness, “to prepare a people fit for the Lord” (Lk 1:17) from the moment of his conception.

We celebrate the nativity of St. John the Baptist because it reminds us that God is the author of all life. Elizabeth and Zechariah were blessed with a child late in life. Because they were righteous people who feared the Lord and obeyed his commandments, they were chosen by God to be the parents of one who would play a special role in the history of our salvation.

The story of John’s conception, of his encounter with Jesus even in his mother’s womb, and of his unique role as a precursor—the one commissioned to prepare for the coming of the Lord—is a story of God’s active participation in human affairs. Telling this story, and celebrating the mysteries it reveals, is our way of acknowledging that we are sharers in the creation of new life, called to reverence all life and to respect the dignity of each and every unborn and newborn child.

The child we celebrate this Sunday will grow up to be a righteous man like his parents. He will be led by the Holy Spirit to become a witness—a

martyr—to the one whose sandals he is not fit to untie. He will preach a baptism of repentance, a form of conversion that will be superseded by baptism in the Holy Spirit. He will speak the truth in love and be severely punished by King Herod for exposing the vanity and futility of the political forces of his time. He will lose his life, as all martyrs do, confident that the God who is the author of all life will sustain him at the end of his life and beyond.

We celebrate the birth of St. John the Baptist because he points us to Jesus, the way, the truth and the life. “It’s not about me,” John continues to say. “It’s about the one who comes after me to set us free.”

Let’s pray for the wisdom and the courage of Elizabeth and Zechariah, who brought a child into their troubled time with rejoicing and gladness. Let’s pray for the grace to recognize that every child in its mother’s womb is a gift from God to be nurtured, protected and loved. Let’s hope that John’s call to repentance will be heard and that his witness will continually show us the way to Jesus. †



## Cristo, la piedra angular

## El nacimiento de Juan Bautista apunta a Jesús

*“Y será lleno del Espíritu Santo aun desde el vientre de su madre, y hará volver a muchos de los Israelitas al Señor su Dios” (Lc 1:15-16).*

Cada nacimiento es un milagro. Dios comparte con el hombre y la mujer el poder de la creación, algo que le pertenece exclusivamente a Dios, al darles la potestad de traer al mundo hijos dotados con inteligencia, libertad y la capacidad de amar. Cada hijo, nacido o no, debe ser causa de alegría y regocijo, pese a las tristes circunstancias que quizá acompañen su concepción y nacimiento.

El nacimiento que celebramos este domingo 24 de junio como la Solemnidad de la Natividad de San Juan Bautista fue un milagro extraordinario que trascendió el milagro “ordinario” del nacimiento humano y marcó un momento especial en la historia humana.

El Evangelio según san Lucas nos dice que la madre de Juan, Elisabet, pariente de María, y su padre, Zacarías “eran justos delante de Dios, y se conducían intachablemente en todos los mandamientos y preceptos del Señor. No tenían hijos, porque Elisabet era estéril, y ambos eran de edad avanzada” (Lc 1:6-7).

Zacarías, quien era un sacerdote, tuvo una visión mientras servía en el templo. Un ángel se le apareció y le dijo: “No temas, Zacarías, porque tu petición ha sido oída, y tu mujer Elisabet te dará a luz un hijo, y lo llamarás Juan. Tendrás gozo y alegría y muchos se regocijarán por su nacimiento, porque él será grande delante del Señor” (Lc 1:13-15).

Zacarías estaba perplejo. Estaba tan incrédulo y tan escéptico que no podía creerlo hasta que nació su hijo y lo llevó al templo para que lo circuncidaran al octavo día, y no podía pronunciar palabra. No fue sino hasta que sus vecinos y parientes le pidieron que confirmara el nombre del niño y que él escribió en una tablilla “Juan,” que “fue abierta su boca y suelta su lengua, y comenzó a hablar dando alabanza a Dios” (Lc 1:64).

A diferencia de María, el embarazo de Elisabet se produjo de la forma habitual, como resultado del coito con su esposo. Sin embargo, nada de lo concerniente a la concepción y nacimiento de Juan fue normal. Tal como lo relata San Lucas, estaba “lleno del Espíritu Santo, aun desde el vientre de su madre” (Lc 1:15) y estaba destinado a grandes cosas para

“preparar para el Señor un pueblo bien dispuesto” (Lc 1:17), desde el momento de su concepción.

Celebramos el nacimiento de san Juan Bautista porque nos recuerda que Dios es el autor de toda la vida. Elisabet y Zacarías tuvieron la bendición de recibir a un hijo tarde en la vida. Puesto que eran justos, personas que temían a Dios y obedecían sus mandamientos, Dios los eligió como padres de aquel que desempeñaría una función especial en la historia de nuestra salvación.

La historia de la concepción de Juan, su encuentro con Jesús incluso en el vientre de su madre y su rol exclusivo como precursor, es decir, el encargado de preparar a la gente para la venida del Señor, es un relato de la participación activa de Dios en la vida humana. Relatar esta historia y celebrar los misterios que revela es nuestra forma de reconocer que formamos parte de la creación de nueva vida, que estamos llamados a reverenciar toda la vida y a respetar la dignidad de cada niño, independientemente de que haya nacido o no.

El niño al que celebramos este domingo crecerá y se convertirá en un hombre justo, al igual que sus padres. El Espíritu Santo lo guiará para que

se convierta en testigo (en mártir) de aquellos cuyas sandalias no es digno de desatar. Proclamará el bautismo del arrepentimiento, una forma de conversión que será sustituida por el bautismo en el Espíritu Santo. Hablará sobre la verdad con amor y el rey Herodes lo castigará severamente por dejar al descubierto la vanidad y la futilidad de las fuerzas políticas de su época. Entregará su vida, como todos los mártires, confiando en que el Dios que es el autor de toda la vida lo sustentará al final de sus días y más allá.

Celebramos el nacimiento de san Juan Bautista porque él apunta hacia Jesús, el camino, la verdad y la vida. “No se trata de mí—insiste Juan—sino del que vendrá después de mí para liberarnos.”

Oremos para tener la sabiduría y el valor de Elisabet y Zacarías, quienes trajeron un hijo al mundo con alegría y regocijo, en medio de una época de tribulaciones. Recemos por la gracia de reconocer que cada niño que se encuentra en el vientre de su madre es un regalo de Dios que se debe cultivar, proteger y amar. Esperemos que el llamado de Juan al arrepentimiento sea escuchado y que su testimonio continúe mostrándonos el camino hacia Jesús. †

# Events Calendar

For a list of events for the next four weeks as reported to The Criterion, log on to [www.archindy.org/events](http://www.archindy.org/events).

## June 26

Marian University, Evans Center, 3200 Cold Spring Road. **Hospice and Palliative Care Conference**, 8:30 a.m.-noon, opening prayer with Archbishop Charles C. Thompson, presentations and discussions with Franciscan Health and St. Vincent Health palliative care and hospice professionals, light refreshments, free, walk-ins accepted but online pre-registration preferred at [bit.ly/2IOXbjl](http://bit.ly/2IOXbjl) (case sensitive). Information: Keri Carroll, 317-236-1521, 800-382-9836, ext. 1521, [kcarroll@archindy.org](mailto:kcarroll@archindy.org).

## June 30

Nora Christian Community, Fellowship Building, 465 E. 86th St., Indianapolis. **Ecumenical Opportunity: "Coexist—Is that the best you got?"** Bruce Garrison presenting, 5 p.m., free. Registration required: [www.dwellingplaceindy.org/mindfulness](http://www.dwellingplaceindy.org/mindfulness). Information: [dwellingplaceindy@gmail.com](mailto:dwellingplaceindy@gmail.com), 317-669-6100.

## July 3

Mission 27 Resale, 132 Leota St., Indianapolis. **Senior**

**Discount Day**, every Tuesday, seniors get 30 percent off all purchases, 9 a.m.-6 p.m., ministry supports Indianapolis St. Vincent de Paul Society Food Pantry and Changing Lives Forever program. Information: 317-687-8260.

## July 4

St. Mary Parish, 311 N. New Jersey St., Indianapolis. **Fourth of July Ole! Festival**, 4-11 p.m., Latino and American food, family games, beer garden, live music by "Classic Music Indy" and "Sounds of Mike Proctor," disc jockey, face painting, balloon sculpture, mimes, stilt walkers, Zumba dance exhibition, children's area, view of downtown fireworks. Information: 317-637-3983.

St. Matthew the Apostle Church, 4100 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Independence Day Mass**, 9 a.m., followed by continental breakfast. Information: 317-257-4297, [bulletin@saintmatt.org](mailto:bulletin@saintmatt.org).

## July 6

Fairbanks Park, South First St., Terre Haute. **Wabash**

**Valley Rubber Duck Regatta**, benefiting Catholic Charities in Terre Haute, 5 p.m., ducks available at Catholic Charities, 1801 Poplar St., Terre Haute, \$5 each, 6 for \$25, 12 for \$50 and 24 for \$100, winner receives \$10,000. Information: [wabashvalleyrubberduckregatta.com](http://wabashvalleyrubberduckregatta.com), 812-232-1447.

Our Lady of the Greenwood Church, 335 S. Meridian St., Greenwood. **First Friday** celebration of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Mass, 5:45 p.m., exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, following Mass until 9 p.m., sacrament of reconciliation available. Information: 317-888-2861 or [info@olgreenwood.org](mailto:info@olgreenwood.org).

St. Lawrence Church, 6944 E. 46th St., Indianapolis. **First Friday Charismatic Renewal Praise and Mass**, praise and worship 7 p.m., Mass 7:30 p.m. Information: 317-546-7328, [mkeyes@indy.rr.com](mailto:mkeyes@indy.rr.com).

Women's Care Center, 4901 W. 86th St., Indianapolis. **First Friday Mass**, 5 p.m., Father Dan Gartland presiding,

optional tour of center to follow. Information: 317-829-6800, [www.womenscarecenter.org](http://www.womenscarecenter.org).

## July 6-7

Sharonville Convention Center, 11355 Chester Road, Cincinnati, Ohio. **Family Conference: "Families, become what you are!"** celebrating 50th Anniversary of "Humanae Vitae," keynotes and workshops, children's programming, daily Mass and adoration, family activities, Spanish track. Registration \$100-\$250. Information and registration, including conference schedule and lodging options: [www.celconvention.com](http://www.celconvention.com).

## July 7

St. Michael Church, 145 St. Michael Blvd., Brookville. **First Saturday Marian Devotional Prayer Group**, Mass, prayers, rosary, confession, meditation, 8 a.m. Information: 765-647-5462.

St. Bridget of Ireland Parish, St. Anthony Hall, 404 E. Vine St., Liberty. **Yard Sale**, new and homemade items, antiques,

concession stands, 8 a.m.-3 p.m. Information: 765-458-6818.

## July 8

Harrison County Fairgrounds, 341 S. Capital Ave., Corydon. **St. Joseph Tri-Parish Picnic**, 10 a.m.-3:30 p.m., chicken dinner, homemade noodles, pies, children's area, games, booths, silent auction, Granny's Attic flea market, quilts, dinner tickets \$10 adults, \$5 children, raffle for \$5,000 first, \$1,000 second, \$500 third and \$300 fourth. Information: 812-738-2742.

St. Lawrence Parish, 542 Walnut St., Lawrenceburg. **Chicken Fest**, 11 a.m.-5:30 p.m., chicken dinners, \$12 adults, \$10 ages 10 and younger, grand raffle, jumbo split the pot, bid-n-buy. Information: 812-537-3992.

St. Thomas Aquinas Church, 4625 N. Kenwood Ave., Indianapolis. **Mass in French**, 12:30 p.m. Information: 317-627-7729 or [acfadi2014@gmail.com](mailto:acfadi2014@gmail.com).

St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) Church, 4720 E. 13th St., Indianapolis.

**Class of '63 monthly gathering**, 6 p.m. Mass, optional dinner afterward. Information: 317-408-6396.

## July 10

Church of the Immaculate Conception, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods. St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Monthly Taizé Prayer Service**, theme "Praying for Peace in the World and in Our Hearts," 7-8 p.m., silent and spoken prayers, simple music, silence. Information: 812-535-2952, [provctr@spsmw.org](mailto:provctr@spsmw.org).

St. Paul Hermitage, 501 N. 17th Ave., Beech Grove. **Ave Maria Guild**, 12:30 p.m. Information: 317-223-3687, [vlgmimi@aol.com](mailto:vlgmimi@aol.com).

## July 11

Archbishop Edward T. 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. †

## VIPs



**David A. and Eleanor J. (Petrosky) Williams**, members of St. Lawrence Parish in Indianapolis, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on June 29.

The couple was married at the former St. Bernadette Church, in Masury, Ohio, on June 29, 1968.

They have one child, Kristin Stoner. The couple also has three grandchildren. †

## Carmelite nuns to host novena on July 8-16 for feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel

In advance of the feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, the Carmelite nuns of St. Joseph Monastery invite all to come join them for nine evenings of prayer at their monastery, 59 Allendale, in Terre Haute, on July 8-16.

Evening services begin at 7 p.m. with the rosary and Our Lady of Mt. Carmel novena prayer, followed by Mass celebrated by Benedictine Father Thomas

Gricoski of Saint Meinrad Archabbey. He will present on the topic of "From Dust to Heaven," focusing each day on an aspect of how God makes us holy, using the lives of Jesus and Mary as examples.

The sacrament of reconciliation will be available from 6-7 p.m. each evening.

For more information, call 812-299-1410 or visit [www.heartsawake.org](http://www.heartsawake.org). †

## Retreats and Programs

For a complete list of retreats as reported to The Criterion, log on to [www.archindy.org/retreats](http://www.archindy.org/retreats).

### July 10

Benedict Inn Retreat & Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. **Personal Day of Retreat**, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., \$35 includes room for the day and lunch, spiritual direction available for \$30. Information and registration: 317-788-7581, [www.benedictinn.org](http://www.benedictinn.org).

### July 13-15

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guest House and Retreat Center, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **A Step 11 Retreat for Recovering Alcoholics and Alanons**, Dave Maloney presenting, \$255 single, \$425 double. Information: 812-357-6585 or [mzoeller@saintmeinrad.edu](mailto:mzoeller@saintmeinrad.edu).

### July 13-20

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Silent Directed Retreats**, choose from a three- to eight-day retreat, prices range from \$215-\$545 per person, includes accommodations, all meals and snacks, use of common areas, daily Mass and meeting with spiritual director. Information and registration: Dustin Nelson, 317-545-7681, ext. 101 or [www.archindy.org/fatima](http://www.archindy.org/fatima).

### July 20-22

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Twelve Step Weekend Retreat for Women**. Information and registration: Nancy, 317-970-4200.

### July 31-August 2

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guest House and Retreat Center, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Peace, the Benedictine Way**, Benedictine Brother Maurus Zoeller presenting, \$255 single, \$425 double. Information: 812-357-6585 or [mzoeller@saintmeinrad.edu](mailto:mzoeller@saintmeinrad.edu).

### August 3-5

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Retrouvaille Weekend**, \$150. Information and registration: 317-489-6811 or [www.retrouvaille.org](http://www.retrouvaille.org). †

## Archbishop Thompson to celebrate Golden Jubilee Mass on Aug. 5

Archbishop Charles C. Thompson will be the principal celebrant at the 35th Annual Golden Wedding Jubilee Mass, sponsored by the archdiocesan Office of Marriage and Family Life, at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, 1347 N. Meridian St., in Indianapolis, at 2 p.m. on Aug. 5.

All married couples of the archdiocese celebrating 50 years of marriage in 2018 are invited. After the Mass, a reception will

be held in Assembly Hall at the Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center, 1400 N. Meridian St.

The event is free, but registration is required by July 30. Online registration or printable registration forms in English and Spanish are available at [bit.ly/2JNZfcj](http://bit.ly/2JNZfcj) (case sensitive).

For more information, contact Keri Carroll at 317-236-1521, 800-382-9836, ext. 1521 or [kcarroll@archindy.org](mailto:kcarroll@archindy.org). †



## 'Make more happen' honoree

Larry Weaver of Weaver Insurance Group, left, and Pam Dobbin of Safeco Insurance, second from left, present a check representing a \$10,000 award to Providence Sister Barbara McClelland of Miracle Place, second from right, and board member Paul Weaver, Jr., on May 24. Miracle Place received the award from the Weaver Insurance Group through the 2018 Safeco Insurance "Make More Happen Award" program. Miracle Place is a ministry of the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods serving the near eastside of Indianapolis. It was co-founded by Sister Barbara and Providence Sister Rita Ann Wade (not pictured). (Submitted photo)

## St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities in New Albany to host 'An Evening of Art in the Park' on June 28

St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities (SECC) is hosting "An Evening of Art in the Park" at Holy Trinity Heritage Park, 702 E Market St., in New Albany, from 6:30-7:30 p.m. on June 28.

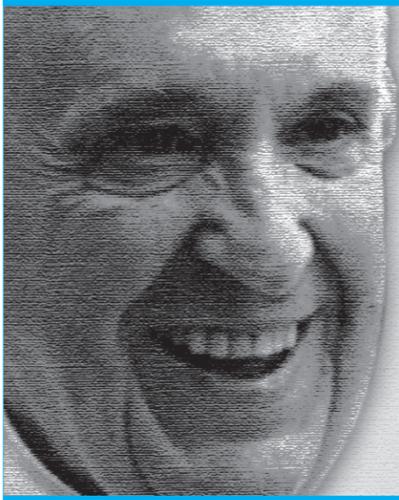
Holy Trinity Heritage Park, located next to the SECC administration building, is a community garden and park at the site of the former Holy Trinity Church that was destroyed by a fire in 1975.

Area artists will be on hand to

display art and answer questions, including Indiana limestone sculptor William Kolok, creator of the park's latest piece titled "Flee."

Some of the pieces on display will be on loan to St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities, while others will be for sale with a portion of the proceeds benefiting the agency.

For more information, contact Dawn Bennett at 812-949-7305 or [dbennett@stcharities.org](mailto:dbennett@stcharities.org). †



# The Face of Mercy

(from Pope Francis' papal bull "Misericordiae Vultus")

By Daniel Conway

## Pope Francis: Critic, comforter and promoter

"Now the real goal is ... an increase in the real presence of the Gospel in the Church and the world. Concretely, I would sum up this goal under three headings: to inform, to correct, and to promote." (Joseph Ratzinger, now Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI).

When the pope speaks, whether from a prepared speech or off-the-cuff, he speaks with and for Christ, the head of the Church. The same can be said for all bishops who are successors of the Apostles and who are responsible—first and foremost—for the pastoral governance of their dioceses but who, when united with the bishop of Rome and with each other, also share responsibility for the universal Church.

Joseph Ratzinger, now Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, has written insightfully about the teaching role of the pope and bishops. He concludes that there is—or should be—no tension between the pope as the vicar of Christ and the bishops as the successors of the Apostles.

The teaching authority of the pope was one of the main subjects of the First Vatican Council. The role of the bishops was a

major topic of the Second Vatican Council. Together, teaching in a collegial manner that does not in any way diminish the pope's primacy, the bishops can speak forcefully, when in unison, about faith and morals, and about the major questions of our time.

In his recent apostolic exhortation, "Gaudete et Exsultate" ("Rejoice and Be Glad"), Pope Francis fulfills the three functions that his predecessor, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, says are fundamental to a bishop's teaching ministry: to inform, to correct and to promote.

Information does not simply mean the communication of data. It means, above all, the formation of conscience. Every Christian is required to act according to a well-formed conscience. The teaching authority of the Church cannot impose its doctrine on anyone, but it can, and must, propose its understanding of the truth to all believers and to the whole world. The following is an example of Pope Francis' efforts to inform consciences:

"Our defense of the innocent unborn, for example, needs to be clear, firm and passionate, for at stake is the dignity of a human life, which is always sacred and demands love for each person, regardless

of his or her stage of development. Equally sacred, however, are the lives of the poor, those already born, the destitute, the abandoned and the underprivileged, the vulnerable infirm and elderly exposed to covert euthanasia, the victims of human trafficking, new forms of slavery, and every form of rejection" ("Gaudete et Exsultate," #101).

Here, the pope seeks to help us see the essential connections between right thinking and right acting. Anyone who loves life must defend all human life against all forms of injustice and inequality.

But "Gaudete et Exsultate" also contains examples of the pope's efforts to correct the kind of distorted thinking that leads to serious errors. In fact, the Holy Father uses this apostolic exhortation to challenge those whom he considers "subtle enemies of holiness" to cast off their "narcissistic and authoritarian elitism" and embrace a more open, loving and forgiving attitude toward the struggles of ordinary people who seek to follow Jesus in spite of their weakness, selfishness and sin.

"When somebody has an answer for every question, it is a sign that they are not

on the right road," the pope says. "Someone who wants everything to be clear and sure presumes to control God's transcendence" ("Gaudete et Exsultate," #41).

Pope Francis has been accused of being intolerant of those whom disagree with him, but in fact he is simply exercising his apostolic duty as a shepherd to rebuke those whom he believes are endangering his flock by leading them astray. What Pope Benedict XVI called "the prophetic ministry of rebuking" is essential to the Church's teaching ministry because it allows the pope and the bishops to speak forcefully and in unison about the most controversial issues of our time.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly today, Pope Francis actively promotes the Gospel of joy. He makes it very clear that holiness is not something that only a saint can achieve. All are called to experience joy, and all have the potential—aided by God's grace—to become holy.

No one should be discouraged. God loves us as we are, even as he calls us to be better.

(Daniel Conway is a member of The Criterion's editorial committee.) †

El rostro de la misericordia/Daniel Conway

## El papa Francisco nos critica y nos consuela a la vez

"La verdadera meta es [...] aumentar la presencia real del Evangelio en la Iglesia y en el mundo. Yo resumiría esta meta en tres encabezados específicos: informar, corregir y promover." (Joseph Ratzinger, ahora papa emérito Benedicto XVI).

Cuando el papa habla, ya sea oficial o extraoficialmente, lo hace con Cristo y en nombre de él, quien es la cabeza de la Iglesia. Podemos decir lo mismo de todos los obispos que han sucedido a los Apóstoles y son responsables, primero que nada, del gobierno pastoral de sus respectivas diócesis pero que, al unirse a los obispos de Roma y entre ellos, también comparten la responsabilidad de la Iglesia universal.

Joseph Ratzinger, ahora papa emérito, Benedicto XVI, ha escrito ampliamente acerca de la función de maestros que tienen el papa y los obispos. En sus reflexiones concluye que no existe (o no debería existir) ninguna tensión entre el papa como vicario de Cristo y los obispos como sucesores de los apóstoles.

La autoridad del papa como maestro fue uno de los temas principales del Concilio Vaticano I, en tanto que en el Concilio Vaticano II fue el de la función de los obispos. Juntos, al enseñar de una forma colectiva que en modo alguno atenúa la

primacía del papa, los obispos pueden hablar energicamente y al unísono, acerca de la fe y la moral, y acerca de las principales interrogantes de nuestros tiempos.

En su exhortación apostólica publicada recientemente y titulada "Gaudete et Exsultate" ("Alegraos y regocijaos"), el papa Francisco cumple las tres funciones que su predecesor, el papa emérito Benedicto XVI, señala como fundamentales para el ministerio de enseñanza de un obispo: informar, corregir y promover.

Informar no significa simplemente comunicar información; alude, por encima de todo, a la formación de la conciencia. Cada cristiano tiene la obligación de actuar conforme a una conciencia bien informada. La autoridad docente de la Iglesia no puede imponer su doctrina a nadie, pero sí puede y debe proponer su entendimiento sobre la verdad a todos los creyentes y al mundo entero. El siguiente es un ejemplo de la labor del papa Francisco para formar nuestra conciencia:

"La defensa del inocente que no ha nacido, por ejemplo, debe ser clara, firme y apasionada, porque allí está en juego la dignidad de la vida humana, siempre sagrada, y lo exige el amor a cada persona más allá de su desarrollo.

Pero igualmente sagrada es la vida de los pobres que ya han nacido, que se debaten en la miseria, el abandono, la postergación, la trata de personas, la eutanasia encubierta en los enfermos y ancianos privados de atención, las nuevas formas de esclavitud, y en toda forma de descarte" ("Gaudete et Exsultate," #101).

Aquí el papa procura ayudarnos a ver la relación esencial entre pensar y actuar correctamente. Todo el que ame la vida debe defender toda la vida humana contra todas las formas de injusticia y desigualdad.

Pero "Gaudete et Exsultate" también contiene ejemplos de los esfuerzos del papa por corregir el tipo de pensamiento distorsionado que acarrea graves errores. De hecho, el Santo Padre emplea esta exhortación apostólica para desafiar a aquellos que considera como "enemigos sutiles que la santidad" para que se despojen de su "elitismo narcisista y autoritario" y se entreguen a una actitud más abierta, amorosa e indulgente frente a las dificultades que enfrenta la gente ordinaria que procura seguir a Jesús, aún a pesar de sus debilidades, su egoísmo y el pecado.

"Cuando alguien tiene respuestas a todas las preguntas, demuestra que no está en un sano camino"—advierte el

papa—"Quien lo quiere todo claro y seguro pretende dominar la trascendencia de Dios" ("Gaudete et Exsultate," #41).

Al papa Francisco se lo ha tildado de intolerante con aquellos que no están de acuerdo con él, cuando en efecto solamente ejerce su deber apostólico como pastor para repeler a quienes considera que ponen en peligro su rebaño al intentar descarriarlo. Lo que el papa Benedicto XVI llamó el "ministerio profético del reproche" es esencial para el ministerio de enseñanza de la Iglesia puesto que de esta forma el papa y los obispos pueden hablar energicamente y al unísono acerca de los temas más controvertidos de nuestra época.

Por último, y quizá lo más importante hoy en día, el papa Francisco promueve activamente la alegría del Evangelio. Deja muy en claro que la santidad no es algo que solo puedan alcanzar los santos. Todos estamos llamados a sentir alegría y todos tenemos el potencial, guiados por la gracia de Dios, de llegar a ser santos.

Nadie debe sentirse desalentado. Dios nos ama tal como somos, aunque nos llame a ser mejores.

(Daniel Conway es integrante del comité editorial de The Criterion.) †

## Most fundamental human right is hope, Pope Francis says

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—The theory that well-being will automatically flow down to everyone from the riches of the few is "a lie," Pope Francis said.

The beatitudes show the way, he said, because they show that holiness doesn't concern just the soul, "but also the feet—for going toward our brothers and sisters,

and the hands—for sharing with them."

May the beatitudes "teach us and our world to not be wary of or leave at the mercy of the ocean waves those who leave their land, hungry for bread and justice; may they lead us to not live in excess, devoting ourselves to the advancement of everyone, kneeling with compassion

before the weakest," he said on June 15.

This approach, he said, comes "without the easy illusion that, from the lavish table of the few, well-being automatically 'rains down' for everyone," he said.

The pope's remarks came in an address to people taking part in a national congress of an Italian federation of expert

artisans and craftsmen known in Italian as "maestri."

Pope Francis reaffirmed how important work and making a living are for each person, but he noted how so many are still excluded from today's "economic progress" and are, therefore, deprived of future prospects and hope. †

# YOUNG ADULTS

continued from page 1

## life-challenges young adults in our area are facing?

The challenges of starting a career, paying off student debt, finding a welcoming community, and developing relationships with other young adults were cited often in regard to this question. Other challenges that were stated include:

- “Young adults still struggle with their identity. They struggle with seeing how science and religion connect. They struggle with discovering their vocation, and even more importantly, they struggle with how to love.”

- “Young adults are trying to make their way in the world. Some are discerning their vocation. Some are praying for and looking for their future spouse. Some married, some married with

children. We are a very varied group, which can at times make it difficult to relate to one another even though we are young adults.”

- “Even though we are connected in countless ways via social media, having meaningful and life-giving relationships is difficult. Work and school can be demanding, which causes us to become selfish with our time. When we get chances to meet friends or volunteer, we first ask ourselves, ‘How will this benefit me?’ ”

- “Today’s culture pressures young adults—and all ages in general—with materialistic idolatry and constant distraction to allowing faith to be a part of their modern lives. Being a part of the Church and living with that faith requires being intentional, and the society can so easily distract people from this reality.”

## What are one or two positive things that young adults can offer the Church or society today?

“Energy” was the most frequent response. Other often-mentioned qualities included empathy, enthusiasm, a fresh perspective and skills in technology.

- “They can offer an enthusiasm and a fire for the Church that not many people have. The Church in the [United States] needs to be revitalized, and the young adults today can do that. They really care about what’s going on, but at the same time they want to be engaged.”

- “Young adults are typically energetic and passionate. They come from a generation that wants to make a difference in the world so they typically bring a passion for—and a focus on—social justice and service.”

- “We can think of new ideas and help

## Hoping to strengthen your Catholic faith?

For young adults hoping to deepen their Catholic faith, here is a short list of resources recommended by the staff of the archdiocese’s Young Adult and College Campus Ministry:

- [IndyCatholic.org](http://IndyCatholic.org). “If you are looking for community and ways to get involved, this is where you want to go. You will find all of our events including intramurals, speaker series, Bible studies, retreats, as well as ways to connect with a parish near you with an active young adult group. Fill out a contact form and we’ll be in touch personally.”

- University of Minnesota Duluth (UMD) Newman Catholic Campus Ministry podcast with Father Mike Schmitz. “A compilation of Father Mike’s Sunday homilies given to the students at UMD. Blends truth, reason and humor to help anyone better connect with their Catholic faith.”

- *St. John Paul the Great: His Five Loves* by Jason Evert. “Want to learn more about the life of an awesome saint who was alive during our lifetime? This book will walk you through JPII’s life and explain his five loves: young people, human sexuality, Mary, the Eucharist and the Cross.”

- *The Real Story: Understanding the Big Picture of the Bible* by Edward Sri and Curtis Martin. “If you would like to better understand the Bible and the culture it was written in, this is an excellent resource.”

- Ascension Presents YouTube page. “This YouTube channel brings faith-filled, entertaining and dynamic presenters straight to your news feed.” †



The archdiocese’s Theology on Tap program this summer offers young adult Catholics an opportunity to hear speakers, socialize with each other and deepen their Catholic faith. Before the Theology on Tap program on June 13 at the Knights of Columbus’ McGowan Hall in Indianapolis, Corinne DeLucenay, left, Jon Gritzer, Kayleigh Young and Madison Kinast, associate director of the archdiocese’s Young Adult and College Campus Ministry, are all smiles. (Photo by John Shaughnessy)

follow them through. We are flexible and maybe not as set in our ways as older people can be. The Church is a family that has room for everyone. That doesn’t mean that the Church condones sins, but it does mean that we should have open doors and suspend judgment about someone’s potential. We are meant to all work together, across demographics.”

## Why do some young adults drift away from the Church?

At the archdiocesan level, the young adults’ responses to this question filled more pages than their answers to any other question on the survey. Their responses also seem more wide-ranging to this question than any other.

- “I think lack of faith is the biggest factor. Also, many people see Christians/Catholics acting no different than non-churchgoers. There’s an idea that one can just be ‘a nice person’ without all the extra responsibilities of a faithful Christian life.”

- “Some don’t agree with social teaching—for example, gay marriage—and are against the Church. (Please note that myself and friends strongly in the

Church understand our teachings and embrace them, but we are the few.”

- “As a young adult, I have to put in an extreme effort to be part of the Church community. It can feel like we are not needed there. The adults seem to be the biggest force, and the focus is on them. If I didn’t have strong roots in my faith and I felt unwelcome, I would slowly stop trying to participate.”

- “Honestly, ‘it isn’t fun’ is what I hear. Or, ‘the only people I see are old or young families. No one my age goes.’ ”

- “I think many young people are too busy to devote the time to develop their spiritual selves. Or they are simply not interested because they don’t understand how doing so could help them. It’s a lot easier spending that time catching up on studying, work or your latest Netflix binge.”

- “Lack of connection to other young adults. Music at Mass that doesn’t call to us. Lack of opportunities to get involved.”

- “They think faith is something between them and God, and not something they need to come to church for.”

- “Most parishes do not have a young adult program. If they did, I think there would be more that would come back.”

- “The reasons are many, but the one I notice the most has to do with the changing culture of young adulthood in the U.S. For past generations, the Catholic Church in America has relied on sacramental milestones to keep young adults engaged in the Church.

“People may have drifted in early young adulthood, but were quickly brought back to the fold when they were engaged to be married and needed membership at a parish to embark on pre-Cana and ultimately have a Church wedding. Then once children came along, young adults found themselves again in need of being registered, active members of a parish to have their child baptized.

“However, the culture in the U.S. is shifting, and many young adults are now getting married and having children later in their young adult years—late 20s, 30s. This leaves a 10+ year gap between the time the young person is under the guidance of parents to when they reach the traditional milestones of marriage/baptism that ensure continued parish involvement.

“Catholic young adults who are not married or do not have children often have a hard time finding a place to fit into parish life, and may find themselves floating from church to church without a parish community anchoring them, or worse, drifting away from the Church entirely.”

## What do young adults want from the Church?

The overwhelming repeated response to this question can be summarized in these three connected desires: acceptance, community and a sense of belonging.

Continued on the next page



Erica Heinekamp left, Jeff Ottinger and Maria Cossell show their faith during a Mass at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis. Pope Francis has called for a Synod on Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment to be held at the Vatican in October, to help address the issue of young people leaving the Church. (Submitted photo)

Continued from the previous page

- “A community to pray with, to challenge me, to listen.”
- “Help to grow. Encouragement to try things within our communities. Support during our times of struggle, especially within our economy and starting families. And prayer.”
- “Salvation, and a sense of being needed as part of the congregation.”
- “The same as anyone else: the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the grace of God through the sacraments.”
- “For it to change its teachings. But I beg you not to do this. There is such a disconnect between ‘average’ Catholics and the teachings of the Church. Secular society has made its way into the pews, and if we submit to this, I believe it will be detrimental to the Church.”
- “More support on marriage, career choices, faith, adjusting to adulthood.”
- “Involvement. Young adult groups that are led by young adults and people who are on fire and excited to be there! More praise-and-worship nights.”
- “Opportunities that make them feel valued, resources to help us learn teachings, and how to live them in our daily lives.”
- “They want to feel they are becoming a better person because of their Church involvement. More service and community engagement opportunities.”
- “To experience true mercy, love and passion as Christ did/showed for us.”

#### What would help more young adults grow and stay involved in their Catholic faith?

- “Someone to walk with, and be PATIENT with them. I can’t begin to thank the people who were—and are— patient with me in my journey. It can be lonely trying to grow in faith, and we really are meant to be in community with other believers. What has helped me tremendously is the older parishioners I have become friends with through ministries. A parish really ought to be a family!”
- “Community activities within the Church that are both faith-based and fun. Young adults like going out and being with other young adults, meeting new people and having a good time.”
- “Peer Bible studies. Parish mentors. Digital, easy-to-understand media to continue study of faith.”
- “An exciting service, better music, shorter and concise homilies. Younger people involved in the Church.”
- “Being asked to take on responsibilities in the parish.”
- “Appeal to their need to change even a small part of the world.”
- “Better catechesis. We need to learn why the Church says the things they say.”
- “Intentional community. Young adult parish staff or volunteers reaching out to them, meeting them where they are. Provide childcare so parents can come to gatherings. Make them and their young families feel welcome at Sunday Mass. Stay true to the teachings of Jesus. Acknowledge the state of life they are in, and be patient with them.” †



Elisabeth and Scott Williams of St. John the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis smile as they meet Pope Francis at the Vatican on August 3, 2016. The couple was married in St. Luke the Evangelist Church in Indianapolis on May 28 of that year. (Photo courtesy of L'Osservatore Romano)

## Considering a religious vocation?

For young adults considering a priestly or religious vocation, here is a short list of resources gathered by Andy Miller, associate director of vocations for the archdiocese.

- *Discerning the Will of God* by Timothy M. Gallagher. “A general book that’s good for all Catholics who are asking basic discernment questions,” Miller notes.
- *Lord Teach Us to Pray* by Father Jeffery Kirby. “This resource is about developing a prayer life, which is foundational to all Christian life.”
- *To Save a Thousand Souls* by Father Brett A. Brannen. “Great resource to be used in a group or for individual discernment.”
- [HearGodsCall.com](http://HearGodsCall.com). “The archdiocesan vocation office’s website is a great local resource. One can find information about events, spiritual direction, religious communities and seminaries—really all aspects of discernment.”
- [DiocesanPriest.com](http://DiocesanPriest.com). “The website for the National Conference of Diocesan Vocation Directors. Created to be a one-stop shop for diocesan priesthood discernment. Great links to books, Church documents and other resources.” †

## Seeking to make your marriage closer?

For young adults preparing for their marriage or wanting to deepen their marriage, here is a short list of resources recommended by Scott Seibert, director of the Archdiocese’s Office of Marriage and Family Life.

- “*Amoris Laetitia*” (“*The Joy of Love*”). “Pope Francis’ apostolic exhortation on marriage and family life is a great summary of the Church’s understanding of the truth and beauty of marriage and family life,” Seibert notes.
- *Head and Heart* by Katie Warner. “Provides reflections on spiritual leadership of husbands and wives as well as practical tools for leading and getting our loved ones towards heaven.”
- *Three Secrets to Holiness in Marriage* by Dan and Amber Dematte. “A 33-day at-home retreat for couples that will strengthen your marriage, your relationship with God, and improve your walk with Jesus. It’s a book with many prayers and practical tips.”
- “For Your Marriage” website by U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). “A great website with resource lists, blogs, reflections and more to help you enrich your marriage and family life.”
- “Marriage: Unique for a Reason”, website by USCCB. “Offers resources to assist with the education and catechesis of Catholics on why marriage is unique, and why it should be promoted and protected as the union of one man and one woman. This website is full of compelling videos and a companion guide for group discussion/reflection.” †

## Searching for fun and faith-filled evenings with other young adults?

Food trucks, local breweries and insightful speakers will combine to create a relaxed atmosphere this summer for young adults to consider how the Catholic faith can touch their lives and deepen their relationship with God.

It’s all part of the archdiocese’s *Theology on Tap* series, an outreach of its young adult and college campus ministry. The five remaining evenings will focus on:

- **Being engaged in the Church.** A presentation by Archbishop Charles C. Thompson. “Where do we as young adults find our place in both the Church and the world?” June 27 at 7 p.m. in the Knights of Columbus’ McGowan Hall at 1305 N. Delaware Street in Indianapolis.
  - **Dating.** A screening and discussion of “The Dating Project” documentary that examines the challenges of dating in today’s culture. “Traditional dating has become outdated, yet men and women still seek meaningful relationships. People are frustrated in love, but does anyone really know how to connect in today’s virtual world?” July 11. Location hasn’t been confirmed yet. Check [www.indycatholic.org](http://www.indycatholic.org), for updated information.
  - **Being Present.** A presentation by Marcia Murphy. “How do we open ourselves up to grace and beauty of what is before us in every moment and not define ourselves by what we are not or do not have?” July 25 at 7 p.m. in McGowan Hall.
  - **Making a Decision.** A presentation by Father Coady Owens. “Does God care what decision we make? Even deeper, can God help us make these decisions—and how?” Aug. 8 at 7 p.m. in McGowan Hall.
  - **My Sexuality.** A presentation by Vicki Thorn. “As the late St. John Paul the Great told us, ‘The body and only the body makes visible the invisible realities of God.’ What does it all mean? We are starving for the truth, beauty and goodness our humanity represents.” Aug. 22 at 7 p.m. in McGowan Hall.
- The New Albany Deanery offers *Theology on Tap* on the first Tuesday of every month at Wick’s Pizza, 225 State St., in New Albany from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. For more information, call 812-923-8355. †



The archdiocese’s young adult and college campus ministry has an intramural sports program that’s designed to offer young adult Catholics a combination of community, friendly competition and faith-building. The volleyball and bowling leagues have drawn about 380 participants in the past year.

(Submitted photo)

# CONFIRMATION

continued from page 3

the meeting: catechesis.

“I have them practice the [‘I do’] answers to the profession of faith because I want them to take [the profession of faith] seriously, and I want them to see me so they know I take it seriously,” he explained. “It’s easy to make a profession of faith when your family and Church [members] are around you. But it’s not so easy to live that faith when you’re out on your own.

“Even though it’s just five simple ‘I do’s,’ it is profound. I think sometimes culturally we tend to equate simplicity with not being too important or too profound. In our Church, some of the most profound things we do may seem very simple, but they have a tremendous, transformative effect.”

During the meeting, Archbishop Thompson also explains that of the 24 Catholic liturgical traditions, only the Latin rite separates confirmation from baptism. The reasons are two-fold, he told the youths.

The first reason, he said, was for bishops to stay connected with their flock as the Church spread and local priests were commissioned to administer the other sacraments.

The second reason was “so that the bishop’s presence would remind those being confirmed of their bond beyond the parish to the universal Church,” he explained.

Archbishop Thompson later told *The Criterion* that the same is true of him.

“I hope my presence to confer the sacrament helps the young people and their families [realize] that the sacrament is part of something bigger than the parish, that they’re becoming not just full members of their particular parish, but full members of something much larger—the larger Church,” he said.

Teens, parents, sponsors and priests alike have expressed appreciation for the pre-confirmation Mass meetings, which Father Rick Ginther, pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, called “very pastoral.”

“He connects very well with the students,” he said after the April 25 confirmation Mass. “His ability to be so comfortable with them has got to be endearing to them. When he’s energetic, he’s very energetic, but when he’s serious, he’s very serious.”

Sue Lynch, both grandparent and



Prior to confirming youths of Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ and Our Lady of Lourdes parishes, both in Indianapolis, Archbishop Charles C. Thompson walks among the teens and their sponsors during his homily on April 25 in SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis. (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)

sponsor of Seamus DiGiusto, agreed.

“He relates to the young people very well,” she said. “He’s very open, has a good sense of humor, but didn’t take things lightly. He made everyone feel relaxed, ... and he made it more personal so that when they go up to get confirmed, hopefully it will be a more personal experience.”

It seemed to be so for Erin, who said it was “really nice to get to know [Archbishop Thompson] a little bit, his sense of humor.”

**‘Three or four confirmations a week’**

As the season for confirmations comes to an end in an archdiocese that

consists of 39 counties and 11 deaneries, Archbishop Thompson has had time to review the process.

“I’m trying to do all the confirmations, but the schedule doesn’t always work out,” he said, noting there were three or four confirmation Masses he was unable to celebrate.

During the spring months, the archbishop was “doing three or four confirmations a week, which gets a little overwhelming with all the other stuff I have to do,” he said. “We may try to spread them out more during the fall and winter so I can do as many as possible.”

Through his continued involvement

in the confirmation process, Archbishop Thompson said he hopes to help youths and families understand the importance of the sacrament and its profound effect.

He capsulized that impact at the close of his homily on April 25:

“I’ll make you this one guarantee: If you dare to embrace the gifts of the Holy Spirit in your lives; if you dare to live your life to the full, to leave your mark on the world; if you dare be bold like those first Apostles—not that it will be easy, not that there won’t be challenges, not that you will be popular—but in the end you will have no regrets, and you will realize just how much better you are for it, as well as the world.” †

## Serra Club Vocations Essay

# Student sees priest as a guide to heaven and a deeper faith

By Mary Kate Ketcham

Special to The Criterion

Men and women who are in the priesthood or consecrated life are an inspiration for all people to follow God’s will.



Mary Kate Ketcham

One man that is not only an amazing priest but also a close family friend who is accompanying me through my life journey to get to heaven is Father Pascal (Nduka).

I believe that God has sent Father Pascal into my life to speak to me and to help me in my journey to heaven by helping me grow in my faith and by ministering to my family.

When I was in the second grade, Father Pascal came to St. Nicholas Parish in Ripley County and St. Anthony of Padua Parish in Morris to become our new priest. My family and grandparents became close family friends with him.

The first week he moved here, I learned that he loved

eating at Golden Corral, reading Scripture and competing in games.

He always taught me something new about the Bible. A Bible verse that always sticks out to me because of Father Pascal is Psalm 23:1: “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.”

When I was 8, Father challenged us to memorize the whole psalm. I recited it for him at daily Mass, and he gave me a beautiful crucifix made of wood and metal, which I treasure. The look on his face made me feel so proud, and I knew that I wanted to follow God all of my life.

Over the years, I grew closer to Father Pascal and he ministered to my family. One day, I received the news that my grandfather was dying. The man who blessed him before his passing was Father Pascal.

I never knew how thankful I was for him until that moment. Not long after my grandfather’s death, Father Pascal was assigned to a new parish. I was crushed. I thought that I would be lost in my faith without the guidance of Father Pascal.

About two months after he left, I walked into my grandma’s house and he was there. I felt peace and joy. I

gave him the biggest hug, and we began playing cards.

His laugh is contagious, and his presence makes everything peaceful, even in times of hardship. I was so blessed to have God bring Father Pascal back into my life.

Every once in a while, we have a visit from Father Pascal. No matter what arguments or struggles are going on, it all ends when he comes back for a visit. If I call, he is always there to pick up the phone. This reminds me of God. Whenever we call to him, he is ready to listen.

I am blessed to have Father Pascal in my life, and I am blessed to have an amazing example of why I should make heaven my goal. I hope everyone can find someone in this life to help guide him or her to heaven. I am just thankful to have found mine at such a young age.

God bless Father Pascal.

(Mary Kate and her parents, Paul and Krista Ketcham, are members of St. Nicholas Parish in Ripley County. She completed the eighth grade at St. Nicholas School in Ripley County last spring, and is the eighth-grade division winner in the Indianapolis Serra Club’s 2018 John D. Kelley Vocations Essay Contest.) †

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### REPORT SEXUAL MISCONDUCT NOW

If you are a victim of sexual misconduct by a person ministering on behalf of the Church, or if you know of anyone who has been a victim of such misconduct, please contact the archdiocesan victim assistance coordinator. There are *two* ways to make a report:

- 1 Ethics Point Confidential, Online Reporting**  
[www.archdioceseofindianapolis.ethicspoint.com](http://www.archdioceseofindianapolis.ethicspoint.com) or 888-393-6810
- 2 Carla Hill, Archdiocese of Indianapolis, Victim Assistance Coordinator**  
P.O. Box 1410, Indianapolis, IN 46206-1410  
**317-236-1548 or 800-382-9836, ext. 1548**  
[chill@archindy.org](mailto:chill@archindy.org)

## Data on Mass attendance is more complex than it seems

By Mike Nelson

“Facts are stubborn things,” said Mark Twain, “but statistics are pliable.”

With that in mind, let us examine a recent Gallup survey that reported a continued and disconcerting (or so it would seem) drop-off in Mass attendance by Catholics, continuing a trend that has been going on for decades.

Approximately every 10 years—beginning in 1955—Gallup has reported a steady decline in the percentage of Catholics who report attending Mass regularly. From a high of 75 percent in 1955, the figure tailed to 46 percent in 1983-86, and reached an all-time low of 39 percent in 2014-17, according to the most recent survey issued in early April.

The disappearance of younger Catholics from Sunday Mass continues to show up in Gallup’s survey. Only 19 percent of Catholics ages 21-29 attend Mass once a week or “almost every week,” versus 44 percent who say they “seldom” attend and 11 percent who “never” attend.

The “weekly or almost weekly” figures are higher, but not terribly higher, among Catholics ages 30-39 (47 percent), 40-49 (37 percent), 50-59 (33 percent) and 60-plus (49 percent).

“Given that young Catholics are even less devout,” Gallup reported, “it appears the decline in church attendance will only continue. One advantage the Catholic Church has is that the overall proportion of Americans identifying as Catholic is holding fairly steady. However, that too may not last, given the dwindling Catholic percentage among younger generations.”

A particularly jolting—and, to those who claim any religious faith, disconcerting—finding of Gallup’s survey is the response among U.S. adults ages 21-29 to “religious affiliation.”

The segment claiming Catholic as their “affiliation” has declined in the past six decades by a third—from 29 percent in 1955 to 19 percent in 2014-17. Conversely, a full one-third of those ages 21-29 currently claim “none” or “undesignated” as their faith affiliation, according to Gallup; six decades ago, that figure was 1 percent.

None of this should be taken lightly, of course, if the Church in the U.S. is expected to maintain and even flourish in the years ahead. But let’s take, for example, the 56 percent of Catholics ages 21-29 who (according to Gallup) attended Mass regularly in 1965-66 and follow them to the present.

In 1975, when these Catholics were in the 30-39 age bracket, 52 percent attended. A decade later, when they were 40-49, Mass attendance was 48 percent—declines, admittedly.

But in the mid-1990s, when they were 50-59, Mass attendance among these Catholics jumped to 58 percent. And in 2005-08, when they were 60-plus, it increased to 59 percent—a higher percentage than when they were

ages 21-29.

Let’s follow another group, the 35 percent of Catholics ages 21-29 in 1975, who regularly attended Mass. In the 1983-86 survey, when these folks were 30-39, the attendance figure climbed to 49 percent, and in 1995-96 to 52 percent.

It declined to 46 percent in 2005-08 (immediately following the clergy sex-abuse scandal reports), but it increased again in 2014-17, when they are 60-plus, to 49 percent—again, higher than when they were 21-29.

Looking at two other groups whose age ranges mesh with these surveys, we see similar results:

—There were 25 percent of Catholics ages 21-29 who attended Mass regularly in 1995-96; in 2014-17, when this group was 40-49, the figure is 40 percent.

—The 29 percent of regular Mass attendees in the 21-29 age bracket in 2005-08 are now 43 percent in 2014-17 as 30-39-year-olds.

Granted, it is unlikely that Gallup has surveyed the exact same people every decade, and the decline in Mass attendance is not to be taken lightly. But these decade-to-decade progressions do suggest a faith “stability” among many Catholics that should not be dismissed.

Still, the greater question may not be how many attend Mass, or get involved with their parishes, but why—or why not?

Is the Catholic faith irrelevant, in today’s world? Is the Church too political? Not political enough? Did its opposition to birth control, its social justice advocacy, its males-only clergy, its sex-abuse scandal, its Second Vatican Council, turn people away, or prevent them from coming in? Or was it something as simple (and disturbing) as a run-in with a particular pastor, principal, religious education director or person in the pew?

All have been cited in various surveys over the decades, but after 2,000 years, there is precious little that is going to change about the faith and how it operates in the real world. Given that, then, how do we, as Catholics, make our parishes, liturgies, programs and processes more appealing to Catholics and non-Catholics alike?

Numerous books, articles, studies and surveys have



Worshippers are scattered among pews at a church during Mass. Approximately every 10 years—beginning in 1955—Gallup has reported a steady decline in the percentage of Catholics who report attending Mass regularly. From a high of 75 percent in 1955, the figure tailed to 46 percent in 1983-86, and reached an all-time low of 39 percent in 2014-17, according to the most recent survey issued in early April. (CNS file photo)

addressed that subject. What they boil down to, however, is relatively simple: Welcome. Invite. Include. Empower. Appreciate. Celebrate.

In other words, be the Catholic joyful, faith-filled presence Jesus calls us to be to one another.

(Catholic journalist Mike Nelson writes from Los Angeles.) †

## Parishes can take various steps to attract more people to Mass

By Fr. Herbert Weber

I recognized the man in the pew as an active member of a neighboring parish. After Mass, I greeted him and asked what brought him to our parish, somehow assuming it was the quality of our liturgy. His two-word answer was, “air conditioning.”

We don’t always know why people do or do not come



People pray during a Mass at Our Lady of Sorrows Church in the Queens borough of New York City. We don’t always know why people do or do not come to Mass. Nonetheless, parishes can take special steps to improve attendance. (CNS photo/Gregory A. Shemitz)

to Mass. Nonetheless, parishes can take special steps to improve attendance. With the provision that we already have the Eucharist, parishes can improve in several ways.

The first is hospitality. This means much more than simply offering coffee and cookies after Mass. We emphasize welcoming all people, making room for visitors, helping people feel at home and consciously greeting people from parking lot to entrance to participation to departure ... and coffee and cookies after every Mass.

One young couple who had attended another parish for several weeks said after their first visit to our parish that 13 people had said “hello” to them by the time they sat down. What’s more, they felt warmth and welcome.

Second, the preaching at every Mass has to be worth listening to. As a weekly homilist, I work on the homily all week long. But I don’t work alone. I explore the Sunday readings with a Tuesday morning group, as I do with the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults program. The parish staff often gives feedback on my preliminary homily thoughts.

In short, I try out various ideas on anyone who will listen. It takes time for ideas and appropriate illustrations to surface.

Music can make a major difference in a Sunday celebration. There are different tastes, but the common denominator is that it has to be done well and have the invitation to include others’ participation. Pastors must make liturgical music a high priority and invest in it accordingly.

Added to those three big challenges, Sunday liturgies become more inviting if the following three steps are also taken: basic needs are met, children are welcomed and weekly preparation for Sunday Mass is done by all parishioners.

Basic needs include good sight and good sound in the church building as well as air conditioning, accessibility and a clean environment. When people don’t have to overcome such obstacles, they more quickly make the effort to come.

Children are an important part of any parish. We have children’s Liturgy of the Word, child care with trained staff and a Sunday morning preschool. What’s more, we welcome kids and never complain if kids cry out. There is a “respite space” for parents to take their little ones who need to run or make noise, where the kids’ noise disrupts no one while the parents can still see and hear.

And finally, parishioners have to do their own preparation for Sunday Mass. During each week, we provide reflections on the readings and a taste of the music list, all sent out through e-mail blasts or on our parish app. Our weekly podcast allows people to hear the readings with a simple commentary. And multiple parish groups study the readings well before coming to church. This, along with all the other steps, helps attendance and conscious participation.

(Father Herbert Weber is the founding pastor of St. John XXIII Parish in Perrysburg, Ohio.) †

Amid the Fray/Greg Erlandson

## Gift of love is at heart of family moment at wedding

"It is a profound spiritual experience to contemplate our loved ones with the eyes of God and to see Christ in them."



Pope Francis may not have had a conga line in mind when he wrote these words in his apostolic exhortation, "*Amoris Laetitia*," but it worked for me.

Weaving my way through a wedding reception with my six brothers and sisters in a long conga line swaying to the music of Harry Belafonte, I felt such a deep affection for them all. Bound not by the ordinary ties of friends and workmates, but by ties of flesh and blood, the moment felt like a gift of love, an undulating chain that visibly represented the genetic bonds that can never be denied or revoked.

Being family is hard these days for many people. It isn't just the age-old tensions of kith and kin described in so many novels and plays. It is the modern pressures of distance, distraction and fragmentation.

My wife and I live far from our families, so such gatherings are infrequent and a little bittersweet—a coming together that is a reminder of longer apartness. We

are both oldest children, so it's possible our siblings occasionally perceive our distance as a blessing of sorts!

Yet we are welcomed back as annual prodigals returning home. The fatted calf is slain, and our ever-expanding clans gather around food and drink and conversation. We all take each other's emotional temperature, catching up on job developments, marital twists and turns, and of course the status of our many nephews and nieces.

No family is perfect, so we all fit right in. Among us all, we have had marriages and divorces and remarriages. Some have chosen other faith traditions. There have been bouts of unemployment and illnesses. Every one of our siblings have experienced hardship, loss, pain. We know both the "for better" and the "for worse."

My wife and I have lost our fathers. Our mothers are on solitary journeys after so many years of walking hand in hand with another. My mother sometimes remembers my name, and sometimes asks me to remind her of it. She who gave birth to eight children and raised seven to adulthood now lives in a kind of timeless present.

A font of a mother's love and wisdom who shepherded her teeming brood from grammar school to high school and beyond, she now listens quietly to our stories, watches as our conga line wends around the

tables groaning with platters of appetizers and desserts, thinking thoughts we cannot share. Yet still she is a loving center.

My family is a study in diversity, and our dad rejoiced in it. Whatever our path—journalist or musician, manager or Church worker—he delighted in us all. I'd like to think he saw us with the eyes of God, recognizing in each of us a bit of himself, yet delighting more in the new and unexpected discoveries that were truly our own.

Pope Francis, again writing in "*Amoris Laetitia*," says "all family life is a 'shepherding' in mercy. Each of us, by our love and care, leaves a mark on the life of others." My parents were such shepherds, and they have left their mark on us.

Now we shepherd each other. We listen to our stories of joy and heartbreak, we embrace our moments together, we offer support where we can. Time's tide carries us relentlessly forward, but there are those moments, like that swaying dance on a clear California evening, when we are bound to each other by shared joy and celebration, and we see each other perhaps as God sees us, manifestations of a love that is greater than us all.

(Greg Erlandson, director and editor-in-chief of Catholic News Service, can be reached at [gerlandson@catholicnews.com](mailto:gerlandson@catholicnews.com).) †

For The Journey/Effie Caldarola

## Sacramentals as a door to the sacred

It was near the end of a long vacation, a road trip that took us to visit a priest friend at the University of Notre Dame, the sights at Niagara Falls and an Italian cousin who was visiting my husband's extended family.



We had driven hundreds of miles, but this day we were merely out doing errands, picking up household necessities for a daughter moving

into a new apartment.

The crash came, like they all do, suddenly. We must have been in the lady's blind spot, the lady who suddenly threw on her blinker and turned directly into our path. Taking evasive action, my husband swung the car dramatically to the right.

Like a movie car chase, we bumped roughly over a curb and came to an abrupt stop. Unlike a movie, we did not slam the car into reverse and speed off merrily down the street. Two tires were collapsed, and fluid leaked ominously.

The other driver was irritatingly nonchalant. I don't think she realized that our car was close to being totaled from this misadventure.

When events like this happen, we often wonder where God was. Of course, we were very grateful that we and the other driver and her passenger walked away safely.

But still, I recalled that at the beginning of our road trip, I had taken a little vial of holy water that I had obtained on a recent trip to Ireland and blessed our car with it. The water came from the site at Knock where an apparition of Mary was said to have occurred in the 19th century as the country was recovering from famine.

I examined my motivations for this act of private devotion. I love the sacramentals of our faith—the symbols that the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* defines as "sacred signs that ... signify effects, particularly of a spiritual nature, which are obtained through the intercession of the Church" (#1667).

I have a lively Catholic imagination, and love the bells and whistles—the medals, pilgrimages, the candles lit in dusky churches, the relics, the holy water. If it's not your cup of tea, that's OK. But for me, it's a source of solace and closeness to the sacred.

The important thing is to remind myself that these sacramentals open my heart to God, and are not superstitious assurances that I am somehow magically protected from the world's threats.

In his new book, *Barking to the Choir*, Jesuit Father Greg Boyle, who has made a career out of helping ex-gang members reclaim their lives, offered a comment I have meditated over.

"God does not protect [us] from anything," he wrote, "but he sustains [us] through everything."

Father Boyle was remembering how, during the World Trade Center bombings, many people were killed in the towers but many, for reasons as mundane as oversleeping or stopping to buy doughnuts on the way to work, were spared death. Did God somehow "protect" some people? No, God's grace was operating with all those who died and with those who lived. How this works is part of the mystery of our God.

We have a natural inclination to ask God to protect us. In tight situations, I say the Hail Mary like a mantra. I believe, if anything, God offers us protection from the evil one, the very real presence of wickedness that pursues us.

But we're all going to suffer, and we're all going to die. We don't ask to be spared this, just as Jesus was not spared, but we ask to trust the will of God who sustains us.

(Effie Caldarola writes for Catholic News Service.) †

Emmaus Walk/Debra Tomaselli

## Doctor's visit helps patient prescribe remedy for suffering soul

Recently, I made an appointment with a dermatologist, hoping to confirm that a little spot on my arm wasn't suspicious.



Surprisingly, I needed to be there. ... God had a plan.

As I waited to see the doctor, a young nurse entered the exam room, introduced herself and began reviewing my medical history.

"You have cancer?" she asked, staring at my records. "What kind?"

"Blood cancer," I said. "It's called Waldenstrom's Macroglobulinemia."

She pushed a lock of brown hair behind her ear, grimaced and looked up.

"Tell me," she began.

"It's a God-story," I said. "I was diagnosed over 20 years ago, when my youngest child was in kindergarten. They found the cancer early and said they could only attack it once, so we waited to start chemo."

Wide-eyed, she stared at me.

"Nobody knew if I'd get five weeks, five months or five years," I said, "but I got 20 years!"

My eyes sparkled with delight.

"All that time," I said, "I thanked God for the gift of yet another day. Both my parents died of cancer, so I know this life isn't forever. I knew I'd better prepare for eternity. I leaned into my faith, and I thanked God for each day ... still do!"

She laid her papers down and suddenly turned away.

"Maybe that's what I need to do," she murmured. "Maybe I need to start thanking God."

Passion ignited my response. "God is the answer to everything," I said, leaning forward. "Our lives are in the hands of the Lord. ... It's a great place to be."

She looked up. Our eyes met. Instantly, I felt her pain.

"God is everything," I said. "Ev-er-y-thing," I punctuated each syllable.

"I know that," she said. "I was raised in the Church, but I have been away for a long time."

Fighting tears, she spoke: "I think that's what's missing."

Her voice trembled. "Life's tough right now."

I got up and hugged her.

"I pray," she added, wiping tears. "I do pray."

I coached her like a daughter.

"It's good to pray," I said, "but we need to listen. We need to get to know

God. We need to know what God wants from us."

I urged her to return to church, listen to sermons, maybe join a Bible study.

"Surround yourself with people of faith," I said.

Then, pointing heavenward, I added, "Because his will ... his will ... is the only way to peace."

We completed the medical forms and she advised the doctor would be in shortly. Exiting, she paused, looked at me, and spoke.

"I feel like God sent you here to me today," she said. "I needed to hear that." She shook her head. "I'm sure that's why you are here."

I smiled and nodded.

Maybe she's right. God only knows. I certainly had no dermatology issues. Fortunately, the spot on my arm wasn't suspicious.

Probably you, too, are exactly where God wants you today. Indeed, the very hairs on your head are numbered. Go ahead. Tell your story. Inspire others.

After all, our God really is an awesome God.

(Debra Tomaselli writes from Altamonte Springs, Fla. She can be reached at [dtomaselli@cfl.rr.com](mailto:dtomaselli@cfl.rr.com).) †

The Human Side/Fr. Eugene Hemrick

## Mother's life lesson showed there is a time, place for tough love

"Get that idea out of your head!"

While growing up, my mother was forever shouting out commands like this to keep me on the right track.



When I complained, she would reply, "That's tough love. Some day, you will thank me for it." To which I replied, "If you keep beating on me, I'll never reach that day."

Another phrase for "tough love" is fraternal correction. In his treatise on charity, St. Thomas Aquinas points us to its attributes: joy, peace, mercy, beneficence, almsgiving and fraternal correction.

Fraternal correction is correcting a wrongdoer who is harming self through sinful actions, or who is detrimental to

the common good.

Most of today's unlawfulness and folly could be avoided had someone nipped it in the bud through fraternal correction. Why is it then that we seldom hear of it?

One reason is it requires humility that reminds us, "Before you correct another, correct yourself!" The pharisaical feeling we are holier than thou should never be permissible in a corrective situation.

Fraternal correction is difficult because it involves prudence: finding the right time and place so that it is well-received and fruitful. It also requires heartfelt reflection to craft it effectively.

As Christ reminds us to be gentle and meek of heart, so too are we prompted to avoid harsh words and coarseness. The maxim, "You can capture more bees with honey than vinegar," must be kept in mind. And talking with rather than about another personalizes correction, making

it easier to accept.

Fraternal correction can be rejected and it can also create animosity. Here it challenges us to know how much of a stomach we have for being patient and accepting consequences, whatever they may be.

Most important, love must be the ultimate reason behind fraternal correction. How deeply are we willing to endure its painfulness to help another get back on the right road? How intensely do we desire the new joy this creates when practiced?

My guess is all of us at one time have experienced fraternal correction. When it occurred, no doubt it hurt at first. And no doubt, looking back on it, we can truthfully say, "I needed that; it caused a necessary change in my life."

(Father Eugene Hemrick writes for Catholic News Service.) †

**Solemnity of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist/**

Msgr. Owen F. Campion

# The Sunday Readings

Sunday, June 24, 2018

- Isaiah 49:1-6
- Acts of the Apostles 13:22-26
- Luke 1:57-66, 80

The scheduling of celebrating a saint's feast day on any Sunday sends a message. The Church long has preferred to observe Sundays in their proper sequence in its various



liturgical seasons. When a saint's feast pre-empts this pattern, the Church is saying that the saint and his or her life have extraordinary lessons for us.

This weekend, instead of observing the Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time, the Church calls us to reflect upon St. John the Baptist, prominent in the Gospels, a kinsman of Jesus and Mary, and highly revered among Christians since the time of the Lord on Earth.

The readings for this feast enable us to think about John the Baptist's special place in Christian minds and hearts all through the centuries, and about the reasons for this ancient devotion.

In the first reading, the Book of Isaiah sets the stage. Typically eloquent, this book fairly soars in its expectation and joy, revealing the Hebrew people's longing for the redeemer. Their trust endures. God will rescue them.

They have brought the worst upon themselves. Their enemies have been mighty, but God is almighty, and God forgives.

For the second reading, the Church presents a lesson from the Acts of the Apostles. St. Paul speaks in this reading, telling his audience that God always has intended that humans possess eternal life, that Jesus made this life available, and that John the Baptist boldly gave the criteria by which eternal life could be realized. John called for rejection of sin.

Again, this reading asserts the majesty of God and proclaims that God forever is merciful and life-giving.

St. Luke's Gospel, the site for so much detail concerning the conception, birth

and childhood of the Lord, supplies the final reading.

It is about the birth of John the Baptist, the son of Zechariah and Elizabeth.

A noteworthy moment is when Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, loses his ability to speak. It is not a cruel act of a harsh god. Instead, it reveals that John the Baptist has been created by God, and he will be sent by God, for in that time and place salvation will come in the person of Jesus.

This special role of John the Baptist, and of its origin even in his conception and birth, is emphasized in the fact that God names him.

Naming of persons, as of things, for the ancient Jews had a proprietary quality. Parents asserted this, and still assert it in this culture, when they name their children, one of the most cherished privileges of being parents.

John the Baptist belonged to God.

In turn, this aspect of John the Baptist's life and mission reflects the fact that God wills that people be saved. He wills that they have eternal life. God sent John.

Of course, we may circumvent or negate altogether God's will.

**Reflection**

The Church offers John the Baptist as a great model of discipleship. He is a figure, human in every respect as are we, who fully understood the purpose of life, namely to be with God, and who devoted everything in his life, and finally his life itself, to serving this purpose.

John's life calls us to imitation, to see nothing as more important than to be with God.

The readings remind us that God wills that we experience eternal life. He never impedes us in our way to salvation. The exact opposite is true. He gave us Jesus, his Son, as our Savior.

The choice remains with us, Paul would insist. We must accept the fact that eternal life is everything. We must will to be with God. †

## Daily Readings

**Monday, June 25**

2 Kings 17:5-8, 13-15a, 18  
Psalm 60:3-5, 12-13  
Matthew 7:1-5

**Tuesday, June 26**

2 Kings 19:9b-11, 14-21,  
31-35a, 36  
Psalm 48:2-4, 10-11  
Matthew 7:6, 12-14

**Wednesday, June 27**

St. Cyril of Alexandria, bishop  
and doctor of the Church  
2 Kings 22:8-13; 23:1-3  
Psalm 119:33-37, 40  
Matthew 7:15-20

**Thursday, June 28**

St. Irenaeus, bishop and martyr  
2 Kings 24:8-17  
Psalm 79:1b-5, 8-9  
Matthew 7:21-29

**Friday, June 29**

SS. Peter and Paul, Apostles  
Acts 12:1-11  
Psalm 34:2-9  
2 Timothy 4:6-8, 17-18  
Matthew 16:13-19

**Saturday, June 30**

The First Martyrs of the Holy  
Roman Church  
Lamentations 2:2, 10-14, 18-19  
Psalm 74:1-17, 20-21  
Matthew 8:5-17

**Sunday, July 1**

Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary  
Time  
Wisdom 1:13-15; 2:23-24  
Psalm 30:2, 4-6, 11-13  
2 Corinthians 8:7, 9, 13-15  
Mark 5:21-43  
or Mark 5:21-24, 35b-43

**Question Corner/Fr. Kenneth Doyle**

## A variety of security forces protect the Holy Father in public settings

Who are the men protecting Pope Francis who are wearing suits and ties? Are they part of the Italian national police force, Swiss Guards or a private security firm? They seem to protect the pope not only at the Vatican, but they travel with him on papal trips. (New Jersey)



The men you see in suits and ties protecting the pope—especially on trips outside of Rome—come from a variety of security forces. The storied 500-year-old Swiss Guard, clad in colorful uniforms when they guard the entrances to the Vatican, also have armed plainclothes members who travel with the pontiff.

In addition, the Vatican has its own 130-member police force, the gendarme corps, who are assigned to accompany the pope. Domenico Giani, the inspector general of this corps, is the pope's personal bodyguard and is often seen off the front fender of the popemobile. Also, on foreign visits, the host nation's own security force—as per diplomatic protocol—is heavily involved in orchestrating the pope's protection.

The difficulty comes in trying to balance security interests with a pope's

desire to minister in a personal way to his flock. Once, shortly after the 1981 attack on St. John Paul II's life at an audience in St. Peter's Square, I asked a Swiss Guard if there would be stricter security protocols in place going forward. The guard said, smiling but with a touch of frustration, "You can keep people away from the pope, but you'll never be able to keep this pope away from the people."

I saw this exemplified in 1995 when St. John Paul visited New York City. I had been charged with managing the movements of the "tight pool," the handful of videographers and still photographers who were given close-up access at each of the papal sites, and I had a U.S. Secret Service agent assigned to me.

When the pope came out of St. Patrick's Cathedral, the plan had called for him to get into the popemobile and ride the one long block to the residence of the archbishop of New York. Instead, St. John Paul decided to wade into the crowd on the sidewalk and began shaking hands. I said to the agent, "That must terrify you when he departs from the plan." To my surprise, the agent said, "Actually, it's the safest thing of all. If we don't know what he's going to do, then nobody else can know either."

(Questions may be sent to Father Kenneth Doyle at [askfatherdoyle@gmail.com](mailto:askfatherdoyle@gmail.com) and 30 Columbia Circle Dr., Albany, New York 12203.) †

## My Journey to God

### All I Need

By Luke Skartvedt

If I was a flower, beaming very bright  
The world would turn to me for beauty  
and turn away at night  
But instead I am a small shrub, blinded  
by the sunlight  
As my dreams are as big as a tree  
My worries take away my might

If I was a lion, the leader of the crowd  
The animals would be nervous around  
me, forcing them to bow down  
But instead I am a small rodent, ugly and  
profound  
Nobody wants to see me for I am not  
worthy to even touch a crown  
As my thoughts make me feel like a lion  
My looks bring me down

If I was a highway, and everyone follows  
the path shown  
People would use me as a guidance, the  
way that is very known  
But instead I am a small pathway, dirty  
and alone  
As my words make me a well known  
highway  
My actions make sure my words are  
blown

As everyone wants a perfect world,  
And they want to be well known,  
I love the world the way it is,  
I love the world no matter how gray it is,  
Although the world in the future is hard  
to see,  
The world right now is all I need

(Luke Skartvedt is a member of St. Barnabas Parish in Indianapolis, and will be in the eighth grade at St. Barnabas School this fall.)



### Aloysius Gonzaga

c. 1568 - 1591  
feast - June 21

Born to a noble Italian family, Aloysius served as a page in Spain and Italy. His father opposed a religious vocation, planning instead a military career for his oldest son. But Aloysius joined the Jesuits in Rome in 1585, taking his vows two years later. His health had been compromised by kidney disease, but he served in a Jesuit hospital opened in Rome when plague struck the city. He died of plague while ministering to the sick. St. Robert Bellarmine, his spiritual director, said the young Jesuit's austere religious practices and penances were so extreme that others should not follow them. Canonized in 1726, Aloysius later was declared protector of young students and patron saint of Catholic youths.

## Rest in peace

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

**BECKER, Dennis**, 63, St. Louis, Batesville, June 12. Husband of Shirley Becker. Father of Katie, Ben, Brad, Chris, Landon and Zach Becker. Brother of Cindy Feller, Diane Holderman, Virginia and Dan Becker. Grandfather of one.

**CLARK, Morris L.**, 86, St. Joseph, Rockville, May 28. Husband of Iva Clark. Father of Mary Jo Harkrider, Patricia Mosier, Kathleen Rayborn, John, Marcus, Michael and Scott Clark. Brother of Nadine Johnson and Janet Kay Monk. Grandfather of 28. Great-grandfather and great-great-grandfather of several.

**COMLEY, David F.**, 60, Good Shepherd, Indianapolis, June 6. Husband of Denise Comley. Father of Nate Comley. Brother of Joyce Adcock and Linda Glenn.

**CONNORS, William F.**, 59, St. Christopher, Indianapolis, June 4. Husband of Miriam Connors. Father of Sunshine Ellis. Brother of Kathy Schied.

**DOLL, Alois P.**, 85, St. Anthony of Padua, Morris, June 7. Father of Karen Bedel, Deborah Higham, Alan, Dan, David, Eric, Jerome, Kurt and Randall Doll. Brother of Anna Mae Erhart and Shirley Doll. Grandfather of 32. Great-grandfather of 15.

**FENTON, John J.**, 61, St. Jude, Indianapolis, June 10. Husband of Vicki Fenton. Father of Heather Meyer, Winston Hubbard, Christopher and Joseph Fenton. Brother of Daniel and Michael Fenton. Grandfather of seven.

**FOLEY, Frances I.**, 90, St. John Paul II, Sellersburg, May 29. Mother of Cynthia Allen, Cheryl Hardison, Debora Johnson, Denise Libbert,

Maureen Melton, Nancy Stoess and Leo Foley, Jr. Grandmother of 14. Great-grandmother of 21.

**HAYNES, Helen M.**, 88, St. Pius X, Indianapolis, May 28. Mother of Thomas and Robert Haynes. Grandmother of five. Great-grandmother of three.

**HESTER, Robert W.**, 87, St. Bartholomew, Columbus, June 6. Father of Melissa Davis, Gail McCoy, Marci Weber, Michelle, Bernard and Shawn Eder, David, Dennis, Eric, Robert and William Hester. Grandfather of 29. Great-grandfather of five.

**KOSCHNICK, Susanne B.**, 90, St. Luke the Evangelist, Indianapolis, June 8. Mother of Peggy, James, Richard and William Koschnick. Grandmother of two.

**LAMANTIA, Carl H.**, 92, St. Barnabas, Indianapolis, June 14. Father of Jean Kiesel, Janet Sanders, Ann Sidener, Anthony, Carl, Joseph and Peter LaMantia. Brother of Josephine Rolman. Grandfather of 11. Great-grandfather of 10.

**MANKUS, Joseph**, 87, St. Barnabas, Indianapolis, June 12. Husband of Elsa Mankus. Father of Christine Cummins and Joseph Mankus. Grandfather of six. Great-grandfather of five.

**MUNS, Andree**, 91, St. Jude, Indianapolis, May 4. Mother of Susan Faulkner. Grandmother of 11. Great-grandmother of 25.

**NOBBE, Edward J.**, 75, St. Louis, Batesville, May 18. Husband of Barbara Nobbe. Father of Alisha Salatin and Brad Nobbe. Brother of Rosina Forthofer, Evalena Kuntz and Mary Jo Wuestefeld. Grandfather of three.



## World Cup celebration

Performers in Moscow dance during the opening ceremony of the World Cup on June 14. Pope Francis said he hopes the monthlong worldwide soccer tournament promotes "solidarity and peace between nations." (CNS photo/Grigory Dukor, Reuters)

(correction)

**PAUL, Charles D.**, 66, St. Barnabas, Indianapolis, June 13. Husband of Diane Paul. Father of Lori Taylor, Kelly Williams and Joe Paul. Brother of Peggy Paul Baker and William Paul. Grandfather of five.

**PEPPER, Jean A. (Hettich)**, 75, St. Anthony of Padua, Clarksville, June 12. Wife of John Pepper. Mother of Angela Tate and Michelle Wyzard. Sister of Judith Burkhardt. Grandmother of five.

**SEAL, Mary L.**, 79, St. Jude, Indianapolis, April 23. Sister

of Pat Crouch, David and John Seal. Aunt of several.

**SMITH, John M.**, 67, St. Martin of Tours, Martinsville, June 9. Husband of Helen Smith. Father of Jennifer Setser, Clyce and Max Smith. Brother of Wilma Jean Duliba, JoEllen Rowe, Don and Mark Smith. Grandfather of six.

**STAUBLIN, Paul A.**, 81, St. Mary, North Vernon, May 29. Father of Toni McNulty, Mark, Martine and Mathew Staublin. Brother of Bill Staublin. Grandfather of 10. Great-grandfather of two.

**STEWART, Nicholas L.**, 84,

St. Louis, Batesville, May 31. Father of Pamela Hatakar, Patricia Rauscher and Elizabeth Ruehl. Grandfather of three.

**STIRN, Joseph C.**, 53, St. Louis, Batesville, May 30. Husband of Kimberly Stirn. Father of Aaron and Ethan Stirn. Brother of Beth Barger, Patty Kohlman, Donna Salyer, Carol Voegele, Andy, Dave, Mark, Paul and Tim Stirn.

**WILBERT, Charles E., Jr.**, 78, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, New Albany, June 9. Husband of Rose Marie Wilbert. Father of Christina Springer, Charles, Michael and William Wilbert. Grandfather of nine.

Great-grandfather of four. Step-grandfather of two.

**WILSON, Catherine A.**, 53, St. Roch, Indianapolis, June 8. Mother of Ashley Backus, Allison, Joseph and Stephen Wilson. Daughter of Susan Johnson. Step-daughter of Wayne Johnson. Sister of Michele and Michael Bobele. Grandmother of five.

**WOLVERTON, Dorothy A.**, 80, St. Joseph, Rockville, June 1. Wife of Raymond Wolverton. Mother of Nancy Wolverton Gale, Janet, Joseph and William Wolverton. Grandmother of seven. Great-grandmother of five. †

## Vatican team returns to Chile to 'ask forgiveness' for clergy sex abuse

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Arriving on his second visit to Chile, Archbishop Charles Scicluna of Malta said his mission to the country was a sign of Pope Francis' closeness to the local Church



Pope Francis

following devastating reports of sexual abuse and cover-ups by members of the clergy.

Speaking to journalists in Santiago on June 12, the archbishop said his team's pastoral mission includes providing "concrete

technical and legal assistance to the dioceses in Chile so they may give adequate responses to each case of sexual abuse of minors committed by clergy or religious."

Archbishop Scicluna, president of a board of review handling abuse cases within the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, and Father Jordi Bertomeu Farnos, an official of the doctrinal congregation, visited Santiago on June 12-13 before going to Osorno on June 14-17.

On June 11, Pope Francis accepted the resignation of 61-year-old Bishop Juan Barros of Osorno and two other Chilean bishops. Bishop Barros' appointment as head of the Diocese of Osorno in

January 2015 sparked protest because of the bishop's connection to Father Fernando Karadima, his former mentor. Father Karadima was sentenced to a life of prayer and penance by the Vatican after he was found guilty of sexually abusing boys.

Several of Father Karadima's victims alleged that Bishop Barros—then a priest—was present when the abuse occurred.

Pope Francis named Auxiliary Bishop Jorge Concha Cayuqueo of Santiago as apostolic administrator for the Diocese of Osorno.

On June 13, police raided the offices of the Archdiocese of Santiago's judicial officials—a move archdiocesan officials told media they were not expecting—and the offices of the bishop of Rancagua.

Bishop Alejandro Goic of Rancagua was forced to suspend 14 of the diocese's 68 priests on May 19 after an investigative report by Chilean news channel Tele 13 alleged there was a sex-abuse ring made up of clergy and known as "La Cofradia" ("The Brotherhood").

Although presented with evidence of the group's existence by a local youth minister on several occasions, Bishop Goic failed to act, it was reported.

After Tele 13's report, he apologized for his failure to act, and he resigned as president of the bishops' commission for abuse prevention.

Regarding the Vatican team's visit

to the Diocese of Osorno, Archbishop Scicluna said he and Father Bertomeu have "the task of manifesting the pope's closeness" to the diocese and the people of the city "in a sign of service and communion in a context of prayer, liturgical celebration and mutual listening and cordiality."

Upon his arrival in Santiago, Father Bertomeu told journalists, "We have come to ask forgiveness in [the pope's] name."

Among the other resignations accepted by Pope Francis were Archbishop Cristian Caro Cordero of Puerto Montt and Bishop Gonzalo Duarte Garcia de Cortazar of Valparaiso. Both had reached the customary retirement age of 75.

However, several former seminarians in Valparaiso reacted negatively to the announcement that Bishop Duarte's resignation was accepted due to age and not for allegedly covering up their abuse at the hands of members of the clergy.

In an interview with Chilean radio station Radio Bio Bio, Marcelo Soto, a former seminarian who studied at the San Rafael de Lo Vasquez seminary, alleged his report of abuse by Father Humberto Henriquez was ignored by the bishop, who at the time served as vicar general of the Diocese of Valparaiso.

He also claimed that he was asked by Bishop Duarte what he did to provoke the priest's sexual advances and was

advised "to keep quiet."

Several other former seminarians also accused Bishop Duarte of sexual abuse and abuse of conscience and power; they said they sent their complaints directly to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith after the Diocese of Valparaiso and the apostolic nunciature refused to accept them.

In a June 6 statement, the Chilean bishops' conference denied receiving complaints against Bishop Duarte and said there was "only one complaint made to civil authorities several years ago against him and other bishops and priests that were dismissed."

However, Father Eugenio de la Fuente Lora, a survivor of abuse who along with several Chilean priests met with Pope Francis on June 2, said the bishops' statement "did not conform with the truth."

"An ecclesiastical complaint dated May 19, 2010, was delivered to the apostolic nunciature in Santiago de Chile," Father de la Fuente told the Chilean newspaper *El Mercurio*.

When asked by journalists whether any more resignations from the country's bishops will be accepted, Father Bertomeu said that decision was up to Pope Francis.

"We must leave that in [Pope Francis'] hands, but we must be very hopeful that things will go well," he said. †

# Catholics continue MLK's legacy in latest march for the poor

WASHINGTON (CNS)—For almost 40 days, and some nights, a group of religiously affiliated people have prayed, marched, rallied, faced arrest or been arrested—all of it to call attention to what they believe is one of the fiercest battles waged by the powerful against the poor. And that battle, to many of them, seems to have gotten harder, not easier to fight since 1967 when civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. first organized a national movement made up of the poor and their advocates, who publicly shared

their stories of injustice and camped them at the doorstep of lawmakers in Washington.

Back then, King began what he called the Poor People's Campaign in Memphis, Tenn., and he had planned to have it culminate on April 22, 1968, with a large-scale march on Washington, disrupting the nation's capital until lawmakers moved to use the country's resources not to fund war nor to enrich those who already were rich, but for adequate housing, health care, education, jobs and fair wages for all. This year, organizers of a modern-day Poor People's Campaign plan to carry out what King was not able to finish in 1968.

His plan was disrupted when he was assassinated on April 4, 1968, days before the planned event. Though the campaign and its activities were momentarily postponed, advocates still headed for Washington and met with lawmakers, handing them a list of demands. But the killing of Robert F. Kennedy weeks later, along with infighting among organizers, brought King's original vision to a halt on June 19, 1968. However, 50 years later, those who believe King's battle remains relevant have brought the campaign back to life, organizing events around the country prior to a large-scale march on June 23 voicing King's original concerns and adding new ones.

Even after King's victories against desegregation in the south, poverty remained a great obstacle on the path toward the promised land he yearned for, and he saw economic justice as the next step.

"We aren't merely struggling to integrate a lunch counter now," King said in Los Angeles in 1967. "We're struggling to get some money to be able to buy a hamburger or a steak when we get to the counter."

In Washington and around the country, Catholics have joined that massive chorus of thousands calling for the economic justice King wanted and have participated nationwide in the modern Poor People's Campaign, which has the added title of "a national call for moral revival."

Many of them began participating in the events as soon as they began on Mother's Day this year, and have attended rallies and protests in 30 state capitals around the country as well as the District of Columbia. At those events, organizers and participants have addressed racism, xenophobia, health

care, war, gun violence, the environment, militarization, immigration, education, jobs and housing.

"I think the disparities, the economic and racial disparities that I've witnessed ... are very stark," said Myles Duffy, vice president for the Washington-based Faith in Public Life during a June 13 interview with Catholic News Service (CNS), explaining why he got involved with the movement.

Because he is Catholic, Duffy said, he feels the need to speak out with others against what he sees as a clear war, not against poverty, but against the poor. Take, for instance, he said, lawmakers' recent plan to cut \$20 million from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, which provides food for poor children, seniors and people with disabilities, among other vulnerable populations. The cuts could affect up to 2 million people. At the same time, lawmakers wasted no time last fall, he said, in approving a tax bill that benefited the wealthy as it cut the top corporate tax rate from 35 percent to 21 percent—a move that the Congressional Budget Office said will cost the U.S. \$1.3 trillion over the next 10 years.

"As a Catholic, I believe it's wrong to treat people this way because they're poor," and because those who can make laws "are powerful," he said.

Duffy has attended a couple of events organized by the campaign, including one that led him to come into contact with a woman from Alabama who had struggled with homelessness and lost custody of her child.

"Hearing her story really touched my heart," Duffy said.

And hearing it led him to an act of civil disobedience that resulted in his arrest.

"I learned that there's a lot of pain and suffering that America isn't used to listening to, but we need to hear these voices," he said, and bear witness to those "tremendous injustices," even if that means being arrested so that the powerful will pay attention.

The original campaign's elements of highlighting personal stories told by the poor have led Catholics like Duffy, and Marianne Comfort of Takoma Park, Md., to welcome arrest, if that's what it takes to show solidarity.

Comfort said that after she heard testimony from people who had no access to clean water in places such as Flint, Mich., or to the poor who struggled to find clean water and other necessities following natural disasters, she made a choice about risking arrest during an act of civil disobedience at the U.S. Capitol as part of the Poor People's campaign.

"We were expressing concern about people who don't have access to health care, clean water and sanitation," she recalled. "We stopped by a statue of Martin Luther King Jr. and chanted and sang our concerns. It's one thing to call and write a letter saying 'I'm concerned,' and it's another to take bold action."

Those who didn't disperse when authorities asked them to leave that day were arrested, even if they were just praying.

Being in the capitol's rotunda with the people who suffered injustices and standing physically next to them



The Rev. Liz Theoharis, co-chair of the Poor People's Campaign, walks with the Rev. Jesse Jackson toward the Capitol in Washington on May 21. The group gathered to demand elected officials take immediate steps to confront systemic racism. (CNS photo/Tyler Orsburn)

felt like the right thing for a person of faith to do, she said, adding that it was a direct connection to the Catholic teaching that says a Christian has an obligation to care for the poor and vulnerable.

Comfort, who works for the Sisters of Mercy based in Silver Spring, Md., said she has great hopes that the campaign will result not just in more people hearing about the plight of the poor, but in leading them to take action toward the eradicating economic injustice.

Jason Miller, of the Washington-based Franciscan Action Network, said he, too, sees hope in the renewed effort to continue King's work.

"I believe that it's going to take both advocacy and direct action to bring about change, and the Poor People's Campaign has given me hope," he said in an e-mail interview with CNS. "This is a broad coalition [both faith-based and some other folks] who have come together for this massive undertaking that is going on in state capitals across the country and they're asking for a lot."

Fighting for causes such as the environment, immigration, against military spending and for health care, is "a really tall order," he said.

"But I have the belief that together we can work to improve the lives of the most vulnerable in our country and around the world, and these direct actions are bringing attention to these important issues which will bring about further progress," he said. †

## Trenton bishop decries mass shooting that took place during N.J. arts festival

TRENTON, N.J. (CNS)—No motive "can justify these ongoing, seemingly relentless acts of gun violence plaguing our cities," Bishop David M. O'Connell of Trenton said after a mass shooting took place in the early morning hours of June 17 during a city arts festival.

"The epidemic of gun violence has struck once again, this time close to home," he said in a statement.

Gunfire broke out at 2:45 a.m. on June 17 during a 24-hour festival called "Art All Night Trenton 2018." Police confirmed on June 18 that 22 people had suffered gunshot wounds. Of that number, a 13-year-old boy and three other people were hospitalized and remained in critical condition.

Police also said there were three suspected shooters. One identified as Tahaj Wells, 33, was killed. Mercer County Prosecutor Angelo Onofri said his office's Homicide Task Force was investigating if he was fatally shot by police.

Two other suspected shooters also were shot. One identified as Amir

Armstrong, 23, remained hospitalized in stable condition. The third suspect, who was not identified, remained in critical condition.

"How many times can our hearts break" over such

violence, Bishop O'Connell asked.

"Once again, we fall to our knees to beg the Almighty to help us end these senseless assaults on innocent life in our communities," he said.

"We pray for the injured and

their families, for comfort and healing. We pray in thanksgiving for the first responders and emergency workers.

"And we pray for our community here in Trenton that God's peace and our

love for one another might prevail," the bishop added.

Police were still investigating what the shooters' motive may have been. According to News reports, Wells was recently released from

prison and had been on parole since February on homicide-related charges. Armstrong was charged with a weapons offense. No information was released as to whether the third suspect had been charged. †

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## First Communion at St. Andrew in Indianapolis

This photo depicts the first Communion class at St. Andrew the Apostle Parish School in Indianapolis in 1967. St. Andrew the Apostle Parish was founded in 1946, and the school was dedicated in 1948. Father Richard Mode, seen in the photo, served as pastor of the parish from 1966-1971. To view additional first communion photos, check out the weekly “First Communion Friday” feature on the archdiocesan archives Facebook page at: [www.facebook.com/archindyarchives](http://www.facebook.com/archindyarchives).

(Would you like to comment on or share information about this photo? Contact archdiocesan archivist Julie Motyka at 800-382-9836, ext. 1538; 317-236-1538; or by e-mail at [jmotyka@archindy.org](mailto:jmotyka@archindy.org).)

## Scientists, believers should admit how little they know, pope says

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Scientists and people of faith always must admit they don’t know everything, and they must never be afraid to explore and discover more, Pope Francis told astronomy students and experts.

“As people who love what we do, we can find in our love for this universe a foretaste of that divine love which, in contemplating his creation, declared that it was good,” he said on June 14.

The pope spoke to dozens of young astronomy students who were taking part in a monthlong summer school sponsored by the Vatican Observatory.

The summer program in astrophysics, held every two years, accepts a small group of promising university and graduate students, mostly from developing nations, who are specializing

in astronomical sciences.

During a private audience in the apostolic palace, the pope praised the way the study program brings together people from so many different countries, cultures and areas of specialization.

This endeavor shows how “diversity can be united by a common goal of study,” and how success in that work depends precisely on this diversity, he said.

“Whether as scientists or believers, it is always important to start by admitting there is much that we do not know. But it is equally important” to never be satisfied with sticking with a “complacent agnosticism,” the pope said.

“Just as we should never think we know everything, we should never be afraid of trying to learn more,” he said. †

## BISHOPS

continued from page 1

the bishops voiced their support.

In his remarks, Cardinal DiNardo said he joined Bishop Joe S. Vasquez of Austin, Texas, chairman of the bishops’ Committee on Migration, “in condemning the continued use of family separation at the U.S.-Mexican border as an implementation of the administration’s zero tolerance policy.”

“Our government has the discretion in our laws to ensure that young children are not separated from their parents and exposed to irreparable harm and trauma,” the cardinal said. “Families are the foundational element of our society and they must be able to stay together.

“Separating babies from their mothers is not the answer and is immoral,” he added.

The bishops voted 183-2 with two abstentions to revise ethical and religious directives governing key moral questions when Catholic and non-Catholic institutions are preparing to cooperate or merge.

Under development since 2015, the changes are limited to Part 6 of the “Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services” developed by the USCCB.

Bishop Robert J. McManus of Worcester, Mass., chairman of the bishops’ Committee on Doctrine’s Subcommittee on Health Care, told the assembly the new directives will help bishops decide whether a health care partnership can occur under the Church’s moral teaching.

The revisions offer more specific guidance to health care administrators confronted with an increasingly complicated business environment and widespread consolidation within the industry.

The bishops also approved changes in language to clarify several articles of the “Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People.” The changes are the first since 2011 as the work to update the document took several years longer than planned to wind through the review process established by the bishops.

The vote was 185-5 with one abstention to enact the changes.

Bishop Timothy L. Doherty of Lafayette, Ind., chairman of the Committee for the Protection of Children and Young People, presented the changes, saying that they will strengthen protections for young people.

A provision changing the review of the charter from every two years to seven years was among the approved changes.

The changes generally tighten requirements for all individuals working with children and add wording to individual articles of the charter or clarify terms used in the document.

In the lead up to the vote, Francesco Cesareo, chairman of the National Review Board, cautioned the bishops to guard against complacency in carrying out the charter’s requirements. He urged them to “never waver” in their commitment to protect minors and vulnerable adults from sexual abuse.

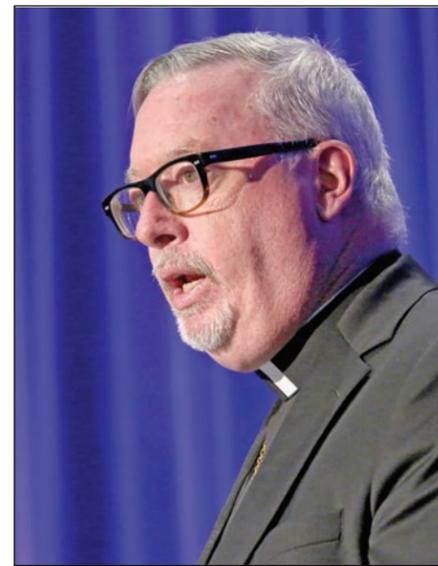
Cesareo said signs of complacency surfaced in some dioceses and eparchies as auditors compiled an annual report on compliance with the charter during the period of July 1, 2016-June 30, 2017. While progress is being made as the number of allegations during the period declined from the two previous years, he cautioned the bishops to remain vigilant.

“Despite the progress we have made in the Church and the ongoing efforts of dioceses, many among the faithful and in society at large question the commitment of the Church, and in particular the bishops, in addressing the sexual abuse of children,” he told the assembly.

In another vote, the bishops accepted a new document focused on guiding the Church in America in addressing the pastoral needs of Asian and Pacific Island Catholics.

Adopted 187-2 with two abstentions, “Encountering Christ in Harmony” is meant to provide support and offer ideas for ministry to the nation’s nearly 3 million Asian and Pacific Island Catholics.

Bishop Oscar A. Solis of Salt Lake City, chairman of the bishops’ Subcommittee for Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs, told the assembly the document addresses the



Bishop Christopher J. Coyne of Burlington, Vt., gives a presentation on Catholic News Service on June 13 during the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ annual spring assembly in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. (CNS photo/Bob Roller)

fastest growing minority community in the Church in the U.S.

“Asian and Pacific Islanders are ready for pastoral engagement in the Church’s mission of evangelization,” he said.

“Our approval of this document is indicative of an essential pastoral outreach to the mission of the Church in the United States. It’s a response to the call of Pope Francis to go to the peripheries to proclaim the Gospel,” he added.

The document has been in the works for more than two years.

The bishops engaged in an 85-minute discussion before agreeing to develop new supplementary materials and a video to complement its long-standing document guiding Catholic participation in public life.

The new materials were proposed by a working group that included the chairman of USCCB committees that work on public policy issues. They would supplement the bishops’ “Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship,” and will “apply the teaching of Pope Francis to our day.”

The document traditionally has been updated and released about a year before the presidential election every four years, with its last update in 2015. The new materials are expected to be completed in time for the bishops to approve them at their November 2019 general assembly.

The bishops heard a planned pastoral letter addressing racism is on schedule for a November vote during their fall meeting.

Bishop Sheldon J. Fabre of Houma-Thibodaux, La., chairman of the bishops’ Ad Hoc Committee Against Racism, said the pastoral letter is on schedule for a November vote when the bishops reconvene in Baltimore.

He said drafts of the document have been reviewed by various parties, and that their suggestions have been incorporated into it. The document will focus on contemporary concerns affecting Native Americans and African-Americans and the “targeting” of Hispanics with racist language and actions, he said.

The pastoral letter will be rooted in the clear message of the prophet Micah, who calls on the faithful “to act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God” (Mi 6:8), he added.

On the religious freedom front, Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz of Louisville, Ky., chairman of the bishops’ Committee for Religious Freedom, said challenges to religious liberty continue to emerge, and the Church in the U.S. will remain steadfast in addressing them to serve the common good.

In response, he explained, the committee has developed a plan to change the narrative about what religious freedom truly means.

The effort will include “choosing our language carefully” through the use of “inspiring and relatable language” that promotes the “gift” of religious freedom, he said. He used the example of faith-based agencies that face the threat of government shutdown because of their religious or moral convictions.

A second component will focus on telling stories of people facing questions of conscience, such as a nurse who was forced to assist in carrying out an abortion. †



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