Archbishop responds to controversy surrounding Roncalli counselor

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

I regret the pain that has been caused by the recent controversy surrounding the employment of Shelly Fitzgerald, a guidance counselor at Roncalli High School in Indianapolis. We are called as the Body of Christ to pray for and love one another, even in times of disagreement and controversy.

As has been reported in the media and discussed publicly by Ms. Fitzgerald, she is living in a civil marriage to another woman that is not valid in the eyes of the Church. She is on paid administrative leave. The issue concerning Ms. Fitzgerald’s employment is not about sexual orientation, but about the Church’s teaching that marriage is a covenant between a man and a woman as established and revealed by God.

There is nothing in Church teaching that says being gay or lesbian is a sin. God created every human person, including persons with same-sex attraction, who “must be accepted every human person, including persons with same-sex attraction, who “must be accepted by the Church with respect, care, and sensitivity” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, #2558).

At the same time, the Church upholds the dignity and sanctity of marriage, a natural institution established by God. By its very nature, marriage is a permanent partnership between one man and one woman ordered to the good of the couple and the procreation and education of children. It is the foundation of the family, where children are raised and nurtured, and learn values and virtues that help them to grow in maturity.

The archdiocese’s Catholic schools are ministries of the Church. School administrators, teachers and guidance counselors are ministers of the faith who serve and educate young people in the faith. The archdiocese is working to support and protect them so they can carry out their mission in a consistent and authentic manner.

WASHINGOTN (CNS)—The president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) on Aug. 16 announced three key goals and a comprehensive plan to address the “moral catastrophe” of the new abuse scandal hitting the Church in the United States.

The plan “will involve the laity, lay experts, the clergy and the Vatican,” Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston said. This plan will be presented to the full body of bishops at their general assembly meeting in Baltimore in November.

He said the “substantial involvement of the laity” from law enforcement, psychology and other disciplines will be essential to this process.

He also said that right now, it is clear that “one root cause” of this catastrophe is “the failure of episcopal leadership.”

In a lengthy letter addressed to all Catholics, Cardinal DiNardo laid out three goals just established by the bishops’ executive committee in a series of meetings held early during the week of Aug. 13. The first is a “full investigation” into “the questions surrounding” Archbishop Theodore E. McCarrick, a former cardinal and retired archbishop of Washington. He said the executive committee will ask the Vatican to conduct an apostolic visitation into these questions “in concert with” a group of laypeople identified for their expertise by the USCCB’s lay-run National Review Board who will be “empowered to act.”

With a credible allegation that Archbishop McCarrick abused a minor nearly 47 years ago and accusations of his sexual misconduct against seminarians, many have been asking how the prelate could have risen up the ranks of the Church as an auxiliary bishop, bishop, archbishop and finally cardinal.

Cardinal DiNardo described the second and third goals, respectively, as an opening of new and confidential channels for reporting complaints against bishops, and advocacy for more effective resolution of future complaints.

The three goals “will be pursued according to three criteria: proper independence, sufficient authority and substantial leadership by laity,” he said.

“Two weeks ago, I shared with you my sadness, anger, and shame over the recent revelations concerning Archbishop Theodore McCarrick,” the cardinal said. “These sentiments continue and are deepened in view of the Pennsylvania Grand Jury report.”

Pope Francis: Abuse victims’ ‘heart-wrenching pain’ is more powerful than attempts to silence them

WASHINGTON (CNS)—“No effort must be spared” to prevent future cases of clerical sexual abuse, and “to prevent the possibility of their being covered up,” Pope Francis said in an Aug. 20 letter addressed “to the people of God.”

He acknowledged once more the pain of the victims and their families is also our pain,” he said, “and so it is urgent that we once more reaffirm our commitment to ensure the protection of minors and of vulnerable adults.”

In his letter, Pope Francis insisted all Catholics must be involved in the effort to accompany victims, to strengthen safeguarding measures and to end a culture where abuse is covered up.

While the letter called all Catholics to see VICTIMS, page 9

Bishops kneel while praying for victims of clergy sexual abuse during Mass on June 14, 2017, at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis during the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ annual spring assembly. Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, has announced a comprehensive plan to address the new abuse scandal that has hit the Church in the United States. (CNS photo by Sean Gallagher)

Head of bishops’ conference shares plan to address ‘moral catastrophe’ of abuse

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Church in India joins relief efforts as floods wreak havoc in Kerala

COchin, India (CNS)—The Catholic Church has joined relief efforts as unprecedented floods and landslides continue to wreak havoc in India’s Kerala state, killing at least 370 people within a week.

Ucanews.com reported that all 41 Catholic dioceses in the state in the southern part of India have opened schools and other institutions to accommodate flood victims and are cooperating to send food, clothes and other relief materials to affected areas.

Nearly a million people were in temporary relief camps after incessant rain since Aug. 13 filled Kerala’s 33 reservoirs to the brim, forcing authorities to open their dams’ sluices. This caused all 44 rivers in the area to overflow and inundate homes, farms and roads as floodwater gushed to the Arabian Sea on the state’s western border.

“It is an extremely worrying situation,” Pinarayi Vijayan, Kerala’s chief minister, told media members on Aug. 15, noting that heavy rain was forecast for another two days. Ucanews.com reported it was the heaviest rain and floods since 1924. Road and rail lines remain flooded in several parts, and the state’s main Kochi International Airport halted operations following the inundation of runways.

“It is an unprecedented situation in my lifetime,” said 70-year-old Father Jose Plachickal, vicar general of Idulli Diocese, home to the state’s biggest reservoir. “The roads to many parishes are blocked because of massive landslides and uprooted trees.”

Most people living near rivers lost all they had, including homes, when dam shutters were opened.

“Any moment we received with whatever they could carry, fearing landslides from saturated slopes could hit their homes at any time, the priest said. But some believed their homes were the safest place.

“We cannot venture out of our homes — there is no guarantee to come back as you may face flash floods and landslides any time,” said one farmer. “Now we don’t even feel safe in our homes as continuing rains have weakened our old houses. But where could I go?”

Father Thomas Punamadathil, who works with the social service wing of Bathery Diocese in Wayanad district, said rescue and relief teams were unable to reach many places, especially those where tribal people live.

“So many relief camps are now isolated after roads were blocked by landslides,” Father Punamadathil told ucanews.com on Aug. 20, adding that it was difficult to deliver food and water to those in the camps.

Thousands of Catholic volunteers have joined early clean-up efforts to protect communities from the risk of diseases and other health issues, he said.

Caritas India has 10 million Indian rupees ($14,500) to help the flood victims, said spokesman Jaison Joseph.

Cardinal Oswald Gracias, president of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of India, asked the state’s bishops to come together to help the victims.

“We are distressed by the extensive damage to the life and property through a disaster of this magnitude,” Cardinal Gracias said.

On Aug. 19, Pope Francis urged the international community to assist those affected by the flooding.

He said the Church was assisting with relief efforts and urged those gathered at the Vatican to pray for those who had died and those affected by the disaster.

“It is an unprecedented situation in my lifetime. The roads to many parishes are blocked because of massive landslides and uprooted trees.” —Father Jose Plachickal, vicar general of Idulli Diocese in India

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Vatican confirms pope will meet abuse survivors in Ireland

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope Francis will meet survivors of sexual abuse during his trip to Ireland on Aug. 25-26, but it will be up to the survivors to decide whether any information about the meeting will be released, said the director of the Vatican press office.

Greg Burke, press director, told reporters on Aug. 21 that from the moment the Vatican decided the World Meeting of Families 2018 would be in Dublin, it was clear that the pope would have to acknowledge the crimes committed against thousands of Irish Catholics by priests in parishes and by religious brothers and priests in schools, orphanages and other institutions.

The magnitude of abuse inflicted in Ireland is staggering.

Beginning in the mid-1990s, the Church in Ireland was rocked by a series of very public revelations about sexual abuse and, particularly, about how the abuse and allegations of it were mishandled by senior Church leaders. The abuse included thousands of cases of sexual and physical abuse in Catholic residential schools and care facilities, including the so-called Magdalene laundries where young women were sent for having children out of wedlock or being suspected of sexual promiscuity.

The date, time and location of the pope’s meeting and the list of survivors invited will not be released until after the meeting, and then only with the permission of the survivors taking part, Burke said.

Pope Francis wants the trip to focus on survivors, Burke said, which is why he is not going to Northern Ireland on the same visit. Even the moments dictated by protocol—for example, meetings with government officials—will focus on the family, he said.

Asked whether the pope and the Vatican were concerned that with renewed media attention on clerical sexual abuse the theme would overshadow the pope’s focus on the family, Burke responded, “Any trip to Ireland was not only going to be about the family.

“The pope is well rested and ready and wants to talk about the family,” Burke said.

However, in discussing the individual events on the pope’s schedule in Ireland, the spokesman also mentioned that on Aug. 25 Pope Francis would begin his visit to Dublin’s co-cathedral by praying silently before a candle in the Blessed Sacrament chapel that burns for the abuse survivors.

Without providing details, Burke also said the pope would talk about abuse in at least one of his speeches during the trip.

The Criterion (ISSN 0574-1550) is published weekly except the last week of December and the first week of January.

Address changes: 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367.

Periodical postage paid at Indianapolis, IN.

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Jesuit Father Thomas Widner, former archdiocesan priest and editor of The Criterion, dies at age 76

By Sean Gallagher

Jesuit Father Thomas Widner, director of spiritual formation at Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary in Indianapolis and formerly an archdiocesan priest, died on Aug. 13 at St. Vincent Hospital in Indianapolis. He was 76.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Aug. 20 at St. Andrew the Apostle Church in Indianapolis. Jesuit Father Bradley Schaeffer, a provincial assistant of the Missionaries of St. Mary of Jesus of the Apocalypse USA Midwest Province, was the principal celebrant of the Mass.

Burial followed at Calvary Cemetery in Indianapolis.

Ordained a priest of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis in 1969, Father Widner served in parishes in central and southern Indiana until he entered the novitiate of the Society of Jesus in 1985. He also served as editor of The Criterion from 1975-84.

The son of a former editor of the Indianapolis Star, he was the last priest to serve as editor of the archdiocesan weekly newspaper. As a Jesuit, he went on to serve as editor-in-chief of The New World, the newspaper of the Archdiocese of Chicago, and as an editorial writer and reviewer for America, a national magazine published by the Jesuits.

Retired Father Terry Godecke, an ordination classmate of Father Widner, said his friend was “a teacher at heart” who sought to share the Gospel with others through his ministry in journalism.

“It was about communicating the Gospel and Catholic Truth,” said Father Godecke, who added that he “thought he took to that pretty well. He was very loyal to the Church.”

“Tom [also] enjoyed getting to know people. He was a man who made connections,” the pope said during his Angelus.

He did so through parish ministry, especially at St. Andrew the Apostle Parish in Indianapolis, which he served as co-pastor from 1972-75.

Father Widner was also known for making connections with others and helping people make a greater connection with God in spiritual direction and retreats.

This aspect of his ministry will be his lasting legacy in Indianapolis, where he spent the last 14 years of his ministry, said Jesuit Father John Verhey, president of Brebeuf Jesuit Preparatory School in Indianapolis. He noted how Father Widner led the faculty and staff of Brebeuf Jesuit in the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola while serving as the high school’s vice president for mission and identity from 2004-10.

“I’m still hearing from people today how him having gone through the Exercises with them was very life-giving and life-changing for them,” Father Verhey said.

This work of leading people to a deeper relationship with God became most focused upon when Father Widner became director of formation at Bishop Bruté, a role in which he served as the archdiocesan director of dozens of college seminarians from the archdiocese and other dioceses across the Midwest.

He was an excellent spiritual director and did a wonderful job with our seminarians,” said Father Robeson. Bishop Bruté’s rector from its founding in 2004 until 2016. “He was sort of a grandfather figure to a lot of our guys. He always made himself available to the guys. He really loved them and cared for the souls of the young men.

Father Robeson, who now serves as pastor of Holy Name of Jesus Parish in Beach Grove, said that Father Widner’s experience as both an archdiocesan priest and as a Jesuit with the order’s experience as both an archdiocesan priest and as a Jesuit with the order’s experience as both an archdiocesan priest and as a Jesuit with the order’s experience as both an archdiocesan priest and as a Jesuit with the order’s...
Wounds of sexual abuse cause universal Church to suffer

“if one member suffers, all suffer together with it” (1 Cor 12.26).

With those words from Scripture, Pope Francis began his Aug. 20 letter “to the people of God” offering his heartfelt confession after more sexual abuse claims revealed last week through a grand jury report in Pennsylvania rocked the universal Church.

Tragically, the burden of this sin also weighs heavily on those who turn to God when evil rocks our lives of faith.

“These words of St. Paul forcefully echo in my heart as I acknowledge once more the suffering endured by many minors due to sexual abuse, the abuse of power and the abuse of conscience perpetrated by a significant number of clerics and consecrated persons,” the pope said in his letter, “crimes that inflict deep wounds of pain and powerlessness, primarily among the victims, but also among their family members and in the larger community of believers and nonbelievers alike.

Looking back to the past, no effort to heal the harm done will ever be sufficient.”

That there were credible allegations against 301 clergy and religious in cases involving more than 1,000 children in six Pennsylvania dioceses (Pittsburgh, Harrisburg, Allentown, Scranton, Greensburg and Erie) over a 70-year period is heartbreaking, and another wake-up call for our Church that no one—not even members of our clergy—is immune from sin.

In response to the recent abuse claims, Cardinal Blase J. Cupich of Chicago cited the Holy See’s Aug. 16 statement and said that “much has changed over the last 15 years” in how the Church in Pennsylvania approaches claims of clerical sex abuse.

“It appears that the Church is now advising law enforcement of abuse reports more promptly. Internal review processes have been established. Victims are no longer quite so invisible,” the report said. “But the full picture is not yet clear.”

In the days, weeks, months and, yes, even years ahead, the Church must unequivocally commit to being part of the solution.

Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, has laid out a comprehensive plan to respond to the abuse scandal that will involve the laity, lay experts, the clergy and the Vatican.

The three-part plan will include: a full investigation of those “questioning surrounding” Archbishop Theodore E. McCarrick, a former cardinal and retired archbishop of Washington, and sexual misconduct claims made against him; an opening of new and confidential channels for reporting complaints against bishops, and advocacy for more effective resolution of future complaints.

Reflecting on the letter Pope Francis addressed to the Church in which he encouraged penance and prayer, Cardinal DiNardo said, “These words must provoke action—especially by the bishops. We bishops need to—and we must—practice with all humility such prayer and penance.”

The pope is also inviting “all the faithful” to join in prayer and fasting as a way to help foster conversion and genuine change of life wherever it is needed. Even in the shepherds of the Church, Cardinal DiNardo added.

As a former chair of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Committee for the Protection of Children and Young People from 2008-11, Cardinal Cupich says he, like many of us, is asking himself: How could this be happening again? Didn’t the U.S. bishops address this crisis 16 years ago when they met in Dallas? What are they doing now, and why should we trust that this time they will do the right thing?

“These are precisely the questions that ought to be asked,” Cardinal Cupich said. “And sorrow, disgust, outrage—these are righteous feelings, the stirrings of conscience of a people scandalized by the righteous feelings, the stirrings of the universal Church to suffer to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience.”

In response to the growing awareness of climate change, all the nations of the world signed the historic 2015 Paris climate agreement and committed to take actions aimed at keeping the global temperature rise to well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

Even though the promises made in the agreement are not sufficient by themselves to reach that goal, the Paris agreement was an important recognition of the problem and provides a framework for actions.

In June of 2017, President Donald J. Trump announced he would withdraw the United States from the Paris agreement. Almost immediately, a coalition of state and local community leaders, businesses, universities, faith groups, and investors said, “We are still in,” and declared their commitment to take climate action in support of the Paris agreement.

The Catholic Church, both globally and locally, has also acknowledged the need to address climate action.

“The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB),” Cardinal DiNardo said, “are the creation, especially inspired by the faith that this is one of the seven keys through which we can bring all people to encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in the effects of their conversion, whereby the victims, this report is justice.”

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The pope is scheduled to be in Ireland on Aug. 24-26, mainly for the World Meeting of Families. It will be only the second time a pope has visited Ireland.

The first time was 390 years earlier, in 1629. I was in Ireland when Pope John Paul II, now St. John Paul, visited that country. But my presence there was purely coincidental, or perhaps providential.

At the time, I was president of the International Federation of Catholic Press Associations. We had had a federation conference in Vienna, Austria, in 1977, and selected Dublin for the next meeting.

We had scheduled our conference 18 months before it took place, but it turned out that we were going to be there at the exact same time as Pope John Paul II was making his first visit to the United States, stopping in Ireland on the way.

We were asked to meet with the archbishop of Dublin during our conference, and he agreed to have a reception for us. But the archbishop might have to cancel that because of the pope’s visit. He didn’t cancel it at all. We had the reception the day before the papal visit, and the archbishop couldn’t have been more gracious. More than that, he gave us front-row seats at the papal Mass that was going to celebrate in Phoenix Park.

That Mass was some event! An estimated 1 million people were in the park to see the pope, and I had never seen so many people in one place before. The pope’s plane arrived from Rome and flew low over the park before landing. The people went wild. Then the pope arrived at the papal Mass and the heads of the Catholic press had the best seats in the place for the whole liturgy.

The pope was scheduled to be in the archbishop’s home, where the pope was staying. After his dinner, he came out to meet the press, giving us a little red carpet but not answering questions. It wasn’t a real press conference.

The pope toured Ireland before leaving for the United States, and so did we. Our tour took us to the shrine at Knock the day after the pope was there. The place was still a mess from all the trash strewn by those who had seen the pope.

The Ireland that Pope Francis is visiting is far different from the one Pope John Paul II visited in 1979.

Then 87 percent of Catholics attended Mass weekly or more. Today, it’s about 20 percent, and declining.

Then there was a surplus of priests, with many of them becoming missionaries in other countries, including the U.S. But Ireland has less vocations.

The average age of its priests is approaching 70, and the Church there is suffering, as is the case in African countries.

In 1979, contraception, divorce and abortion was not banned by law. Not so today.

As Irish Cardinal Kevin J. Farrell said, “If we were to follow the Aug. 3 issue of The Criterion, “Ireland is a country that has suffered tremendously, and suffered at the hands of the Church, also —so many cases of abuse: sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional...
“El que ama a su mujer, a sí mismo se apoderará de sus sentimientos” (Eph 5:29). El misterio del matrimonio es un gran misterio de una forma única y bella. El matrimonio cristiano es una unión de amor, lealtad y cooperación que se perpetúa a través de la vida. Es un compromiso entre dos individuos para establecer una vida en la que se apoyen mutuamente y se respeten. El matrimonio es una institución sagrada que se establece en el orden de la Iglesia universal y la sociedad en general. Es una institución que se establece en el orden de la Iglesia universal y la sociedad en general. Es una institución que se establece en el orden de la Iglesia universal y la sociedad en general. Es una institución que se establece en el orden de la Iglesia universal y la sociedad en general. Es una institución que se establece en el orden de la Iglesia universal y la sociedad en general. Es una institución que se establece en el orden de la Iglesia universal y la sociedad en general.
August 27-31
Indiana Prep Retreat Center, 1201 S. St., Indianapolis. Bikes for the Homeless, acceptance of adult bicycles (must be rideable), locks, helmets and backpacks, drop-offs 8 a.m.-3 p.m. Mon.-Fri., pick-up available if five or more bikes are calling Jeff Blackwell, 317-924-5769, ext. 320. Information: www.podny.org.

August 31
St. Paul the Apostle, 501 N. 17th Ave., Beech Grove. Ave Maria Guild, Full Rummage Sale, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Information: 317-223-3687, vetgmi@aol.com.

August 31-Sept. 2
St. Joseph Parish, 1401 S. Micky Ave., Indianapolis. Full Festival, Fri. and Sat. 5-11 p.m., 8 a.m.-11 p.m. American and Vietnamese food, rides, kids' tent, community barn sale, blackjack, poker, beer garden, chicken bingo, silent auction. Information: 317-244-9002.

August 31-Sept. 3
Sacred Heart Parish, gymnasium, 558 Noboker St., Clinton. Spaghetti First, Fri. 4-9 p.m., Sat. and Sun. 11 a.m.-9 p.m.; Mon. 11 a.m.-5 p.m., sauce prepared by Knights of Columbus #4541, air-conditioned dining, handicapped accessible, adults 58, children 12 and younger $5, silent auction, craft booths, free parking. Information: 735-832-4666.

September 1
St. Michael Church, 145 S. Michael Blvd., Brookville. First Saturday Marian Devotion, Group Mass, prayers, rosary, conception, meditation, 8 a.m. Information: 765-647-5462.

September 2
St. Catherine of Siena Parish, Decatur County, St. John the Evangelist Campus, 995 E. Base Road, Greenwood. Empower Church Picnic, 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Fire, food and games, lawn games, soup and games. Information: 812-934-4510.

September 3
St. Peter Parish, 1207 East Road, Brookville. Labor Day Festival, 10 a.m.-8 p.m., family-style fried chicken dinner in air-conditioned hall, handicap accessible, basket raffle, games, music, big money raffle. Information and reservations: 765-647-5462.

September 3-4
St. Anthony of Padua Church, 4773 E. Morris Church St., Morris. Labor Festival, 11 a.m., chicken and roast beef dinner, bean dinner, $10,000 grand prize raffle. Information: 812-934-6218.

September 4
St. Monica Church, 6131 N. Michigan Road, Indianapolis. Holy Hour of Prayer for Vocations, 7-8 p.m. Information: 317-236-1490, ammile@archindy.org.

September 5
Mission 27 Retreat, 132 Leota St., Indianapolis. Senior Discernment Day, every Tuesday, seniors get 30 percent off all purchases, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. The latest support for St. Vincent de Paul Society Food Pantry and Living Lives Forever program. Information: 317-867-8260.

September 5
St. Jude Church, 535 McFarland Road, Indianapolis. Holy Hour of Prayer for Vocations, 7-8 p.m. Information: 317-236-1490, ammile@archindy.org.

September 6

September 7
The Dagmar Club, 10060 North Bent Way, Noblesville (LaFayette Square). Charity Golf Outing, sponsored by the Knights of Columbus, St. Thomas J. Kelly Council #6023, benefiting the Ghislain School, Little Sisters of the Poor and other local charities. 9 a.m. registration, deli lunch buffet, moon shot-gun start, $180 per person, sponsorship opportunities available. Information and registration: www.kofc6922.org/activities/pdf.

September 7-8
St. Thomas Aquinas Church, 6600 W. 16th St., Indianapolis. Ecumenical Prayer Service for the Care of Creation, 7 p.m., free. Information: 317-979-5144. stacreationcare@gmail.com.

September 7-9
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: 317-286-2871 or info@ clgre.org.

September 7-9
St. Mary Parish, 629 Clay St., North Vernon. Community Festival, Fri. and Sat. 5-11 p.m. Sun. 11 a.m.- 4 p.m., Fri. indoor fish fry, Sat. outdoor grilled food, Sun. indoor chicken buffet, carnival rides, live music, beer tent, carnival rides, kickball tournament, silent auction, $10,000 cash raffle. Information: 317-364-1666.
Sinners can become saints, but the corrupt cannot

“David was a saint. He was a sinner. A sinner, and he became a saint. Solomon was a saint. He became a sinner. Someone who is corrupt cannot become a saint. And one becomes corrupt by following the path of weakness of the heart.”

(Pope Francis, homily on Feb. 8, 2018)

Pope Francis is famous for making statements, often “off the cuff,” that can seem to conflict with the way we ordinarily think of things. One such statement was made during his homily at morning Mass at his residence, the Casa Santa Marta, last February.

Speaking about corruption, a theme he frequently addresses, the Holy Father said, “Someone who is corrupt cannot become a saint.”

To illustrate this point, he compared the Old Testament’s King David to his son Solomon. David was a sinner who repented, and is now considered a saint. Paradoxically, Solomon, who appeared to live a “balanced” life as a wise and righteous man “turned away from the Lord” to follow other gods.

How is it that a great sinner like David can be considered a saint whereas a soul that, even revered, leader like his son Solomon, who the pope says was “praised throughout the world,” can distance himself from the Lord? According to Pope Francis, the answer is weakness of the heart. “When the heart begins to weaken, the pope says, “it is not like a situation of sin. You commit a sin and you realize it immediately. ‘I have committed this sin’ (you tell yourself); it’s clear. Weakness of the heart is a slow journey that slides along step by step, step by step. Solomon, adored in his glory, in his fame, began to take this road.”

Paradoxically, the pope continues, “the clarity of a sin is better than weakness of the heart. The great king Solomon wound up corrupted, tranquilly corrupted, because his heart was weakened.”

Corruption is everywhere and in every walk of life. Politicians like Solomon, who start out wanting to do what is best for their people, can gradually slide along step by step into weakness of heart. The same can be true for teachers and lawyers, for priests and bishops. They can start out wanting to make a difference, but because they can become weary, disillusioned and faint of heart. They can become corrupt.

A corrupt religious leader lacks zeal for the things of God. A corrupt politician no longer cares for the common good of the people he or she serves. A corrupt business leader cheats his or her customers or suppliers. A corrupt soldier or police officer fails to “protect and serve” and, instead, places her or his own interest above the needs of the community or nation.

Corruption erodes the fabric of society and contributes to the overall decline of the civilized world. As Pope Francis has repeatedly observed, families can become corrupted too—as in the case of families ensconced in a life of organized crime.

Better to be a sinner who repents than a weak-hearted person who is in denial about his or her complicity with evil, the pope says. “If we do not oppose evil, we feed it tactfully. It is necessary to intervene where evil spreads because evil spreads where there are no daring Christians who oppose evil with good.”

Corruption gradually prevents us from recognizing the presence of evil and reaching out to oppose it with good.

“It is not enough not to hate,” the pope teaches. “It is necessary to forgive. It is not enough not to have a grudge; we must pray for our enemies. It is not enough to not speak badly about others; we must intervene and stop it when we hear someone speaking badly about another.”

Corruption gradually robs us of the courage and strength we need to love God and our neighbor wholeheartedly. It weakens our resolve and blinds us to the truth about ourselves and our world.

What is the solution, the way to salvation? “Let us oppose evil!”

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Mary’s assumption into heaven was a special sign of God’s favor. But it also indicates God’s desire to save all people, body and soul, Pope Francis said.

Regarding the traditional prayer on the feast of the Assumption on Aug. 15, Pope Francis also asked the crowd in the Philadelphia Basilica, “If Mary is the mother of Jesus, is she the mother of all people, body and soul? Is she the mother of all people?”

Speaking on the Assumption, the pope said, the feast day should remind us of the “manifests and confirms the unity of the human family.”

“In the Resurrection of the Body, the Lord manifests and confirms the unity of the human family.”

But he also prayed for all people who are suffering around the world. “To Mary, comforter of the afflicted, whom we contemplate today in the glory of heaven, I want to entrust the anguish and tears of those who, in many parts of the world, suffer in body and spirit.”

“Let us pray that Mary, with her maternal intercession, will help us live our daily journey in the sure hope of joining her one day with all the saints and our loved ones in heaven,” the pope said.

The assumption of Mary, body and soul, into heaven was “a divine privilege” given to her because of her close union with Jesus from the very beginning, the pope said. “It was a corporal and spiritual union that began at the announcement and matured throughout Mary’s life,” leading finally to the foot of the cross.

While Mary was given a special grace, the pope said, the feast day should remind Catholics that the Church professes faith in “the resurrection of the body” for all who are saved by Christ.

“Those who believe in the resurrection of the body believe in a future of the dead and in their resurrection to a life with Mary, paradisal and incorrupt.”

The Criterion  Friday , August 24, 2018

Daniel Conway is a member of The Criterion’s editorial committee.

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El pescador puede llegar a ser santo, el corrupto no


(Pope Francis, homily on Feb. 8, 2018)

El papa Francisco es famoso por sus afirmaciones que a menudo se “saca de la manga” y que parecen contradecir el modo en que normalmente concibimos la vida. Una de esas afirmaciones se produjo durante su homilía en la mesa mantuina en la Casa Santa Marta, el pasado febrero.

Hablando acerca de la corrupción, un tema que aborda frecuentemente, el Santo Padre expresó que “un corrupto no puede convertirse en santo”. Para ilustrar esta afirmación, comparó al rey David del Antiguo Testamento con su hijo, Salomón. David fue un pecador que se arrepintió y hoy se lo considera santo. Parcialmente, Salomón quien parecía llevar una vida “equilibrada” como un hombre sabio y recto, “se alejó del Señor” para seguir a otros dioses.

¿Cómo puede ser que un gran pecador como David sea considerado un santo, en tanto que un líder reconocido e incluso reverenciado como su hijo, Salomón, de quien el papa dice “fue rechazado en todo el mundo” se distancie del Señor? De acuerdo con el papa Francisco, la muesta entrada de la debilidad del corazón. “Cuando el corazón comienza a debilitarse—afirma el papa—no es como una caída súbita. Puede tomar un tiempo para un pecado, y te das cuenta enseguida: ‘Yo he cometido este pecado,’ está claro. El debilitamiento del corazón es un camino lento, que resbalaba poco a poco, poco a poco, poco a poco, poco a poco. Y Salomón, adormecido en su gloria, en su fama, comenzó a recorrer este camino.”

El papa prosigue diciendo que, paradójicamente “es mejor la claridad de un pecado, que el debilitamiento del corazón, porque el gran Rey Salomón terminó corrupto; tranquilmemente corrupto, porque el corazón se le había debilitado.”

La corrupción ocurre en todos lados en cada instancia de la vida. Los políticos como Salomón, que comienzan con el deseo de hacer lo mejor para su pueblo, pueden ir sucumbiendo poco a poco a la debilidad del corazón. Lo mismo se puede afirmar de maestros y abogados, sacerdotes y obispos. Quizá comiencen con el deseo de marcar la diferencia, pero con el tiempo se vuelven escépticos, se desvivian y su corazón se debilita, entonces se vuelven corruptos.

Un líder religioso corrupto carece del cariño y de la fascinación que una persona de corazón débil que niega su complicidad con el mal. Un líder corrupto puede convertirse en santo, pero un líder corrupto jamás logrará llevar la paz donde no exista; no basta hablar mal de los demás, es necesario interrumpir cuando escuchamos hablar mal de alguien.

La corrupción nos roba paulatinamente el valor y la fortaleza que necesitamos para amar a Dios y al prójimo con todo el corazón. Debilita nuestra determinación y nos ciega ante la verdad de nuestros mismos y del mundo.

¿Cuál es la solución, cómo podemos proteger nuestras almas contra la corrupción? “Vigilancia,” dice el papa Francisco. “Vigilar sobre tu corazón. Todos los días, estar atento a lo que sucede en tu corazón. ¿Cómo está mi corazón, mi relación con el Señor? Y gustar la belleza y la alegría de la fidelidad.”

(Daniel Conway es integrante del comité editorial de The Criterion. †)
**Pennsylvania prelate says any bishops who hid abuse should resign**

WASHINGTON (CNS)—In an Aug. 16 interview with Eternal Word Television Network, Bishop Lawrence T. Persico said the only way to regain the trust of the laity after decades-long claims of sexual abuse of priests and others at six Pennsylvania dioceses is by and deeds and one of those deeds may mean getting rid of bishops who hid abuse.

During a report on EWTN’s evening show, reporter Jason Calvi asked him:

“Should bishops who knew about or covered up abuse resign?

“I think they do,” Bishop Persico answered. “I think we need complete transparency if we’re going to get the trust of the people back. We have to be able to demonstrate it.”

Bishop Persico was the only bishop who hid abuse “in person” to be included in the grand jury investigation of decades-long claims of abuse at six Pennsylvania dioceses. In its report released in August, the grand jury said it identified more than 1,000 people who said they were victimized by priests and other church workers in the state.

“I’ve been saying, we can talk about transparency and truth, but much is going to depend upon our deeds, how do we carry that transparency out and how do we act moving forward?” he said during the EWTN interview. “That’s going to be key to all of this, and we have to show we mean what we’re saying.”

Bishop Persico’s Disciple of Erin, as well as the dioceses of Harrisburg, Allentown, Scranton, Pittsburgh and Greensburg were named in the report released on Aug. 14 after an investigation of abuse.

A grand jury does not determine guilt or innocence but whether there may be enough evidence or probable cause to support a criminal charge. Almost all of the cases in the report were too old for charges to be brought, but members of the 301 clergy and religious named are dead or no longer in ministry. But Catholic law has been insisting on some form of accountability for those who may have known of and hidden the abuse.

“We need this transparency, and we also need action, so that if there were other bishops or leaders who were negligent, then they need to be removed because the more we cover up, the less credibility we have,” Bishop Persico said.

He said it was “very disappointing” to read the report documented 70 years of abuse, most of it from 1970s into the 1990s.

Following the sex abuse crisis in 2000 in the U.S., the country’s bishops in 2002 approved procedures and protocols for addressing allegations of abuse.

“There’s less [abuse]” since then, Bishop Persico said, “but we still have to be on guard.”

In an interview with CNN’s “New Day” news show on Aug. 17, Bishop Timothy L. Doherty of Lafayette, Ind., who is chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Committee for the Protection of Children and Young People, identified and likely more offending priests it does not know about. It identified 301 clergy and religious in the report. Whatever we can say, though, is that despite some institutional reform, individual leaders of the Church have largely escaped public accountability,” the report says. "Priests were raping little boys and girls, and the men of God who were responsible for them not only did nothing they hid it all. For decades, monsignors, auxiliary bishops, bishops, archbishops, cardinals have mostly been protected, many, including some named in this report, have been promoted. Until that changes, we think it is too early to close the book on the Catholic Church sex scandal.”

A grand jury does not determine guilt or innocence but whether there may be enough evidence or probable cause to support a criminal charge. If not yet clear.”

In a screen grab taken from video, Pennsylvania Attorney General Josh Shapiro speaks during an Aug. 14 news conference to release a grand jury report on a month-long investigation into abuse claims spanning a 70-year period in the dioceses of Harrisburg, Pittsburgh, Scranton, Allentown, Greensburg and Erie, Pa.

As members of the Church, he said, all Catholics should “beg forgiveness for our own sins and the sins of others.”

But this has come out in the public, “a light has been shined on part of the culture that allowed this to happen, and there is a great resolve not to let it happen again,” he said. ✩
ABUSE

We are faced with a spiritual crisis that requires not only spiritual conversion, but practical changes to avoid repeating the same mistakes and tragedies that are so evident in the recent report," he added. Cardinal DiNardo said the members of the executive committee “have already begun to develop a concrete plan for accomplishing these goals, relying upon consultation with experts, laity and clergy, and as well as the Vatican.” In addition to this plan being presented to the full body of bishops at their Baltimore assembly, the cardinal said he will go to Rome to present these goals and ask that they be incorporated, and to urge further concrete steps based on them. “The overarching goal in all of this is to develop a set of principles that the bishops in the Church and anyone who would conceivably protect, or make sure that those who have harmful secrets don’t continue to harm others,” he explained. “The statement in the bishops’ ‘Charter for Protection of God’s Creation’ from 2002, approved by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, has not been fully updated, and neither has the 2002 report, but we are examining the full text of the charter.” The cardinal said the church should be held accountable for protecting itself from individuals who have failed to follow the charter. “We need to ensure that they are held accountable, and that we have the mechanisms in place to hold them accountable,” he said. “This is a laboratory setting for the church.”

There are several questions to be answered:

**What are the answers to necessary?**

- Prevent a recurrence of the crisis
- Address the ‘substantial involvement’ in the current failure
- Approach the question of transparency and accountability
- Address the question of papal authority
- Address the question of the church’s ability to respond to accusations of misconduct
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“Let me also ask you to pray for us, and for myself,” Cardinal DiNardo said. “We are facing a crisis that is unparalleled, and the stakes are high. But I am confident that together, we can overcome this crisis.”

To find out more about the “Statement of Episcopal Commitment,” visit www.catholicnewsagency.org. Please also follow our coverage on Twitter @CatholicNews.

If you have any questions or concerns about the church’s response to the scandal, please feel free to reach out to the church’s national office at 410-559-9700 or via email at info@ncatholicnews.org.

**Response to the “Statement of Episcopal Commitment”**

Cardinal DiNardo said the document is a “statement of principles” that the church should follow to prevent a recurrence of the scandal. “We are committed to addressing these principles, and to working with our sister churches to ensure that they are followed,” he said. “We are committed to being transparent and accountable, and to working with our sister churches to ensure that they are followed.”

To find out more about the “Statement of Episcopal Commitment,” visit www.catholicnewsagency.org. Please also follow our coverage on Twitter @CatholicNews.

If you have any questions or concerns about the church’s response to the scandal, please feel free to reach out to the church’s national office at 410-559-9700 or via email at info@ncatholicnews.org.
Chadart's first home football game ever is a time of celebration

By John Shaughnessy

During a night of celebration, the memorable scenes kept unfolding on Aug. 17 as Bishop Chadart High School in Indianapolis had its first true “home” football game in 55 years of playing the sport.

Throughout the game, the overflowing student section pulsed with the energy of teenagers smiling, cheering and waving blue-and-white spirit towels—all the students wearing white T-shirts with the messages, “Making History. We’ve waited 55 years for this.”

At the game’s end—a 38-7 win over the team from Brebeuf Jesuit Preparatory School in Indianapolis— the Trojan football players raced toward the stands, raising their helmets in celebration as they led their fans in singing the school’s fight song.

Then there was the far more low-key scene that defined the night for Bill Sahm, the president of Bishop Chadart, the archdiocesan high school for the Indianapolis North Deanery.

As darkness fell, Sahm looked out from the north end zone and saw the field that was bathed in the stadium’s glowing lights. He savored the sea of blue-and-white on the home sideline, noticed the crimson and gold on the visitors’ side, and saw the Chadart students in their white T-shirts behind the opposite end zone. That’s when the specialness of the night finally sank in for him.

“Very few of us thought it was possible, and here we were,” Sahm says in recalling that moment. “It was such a great night, and I had so many wonderful conversations with people. It was great to be around so many happy people.”

The journey to the night began six years when the school opened in 1961 and began playing football. Sahm knew it would be a special moment for the current football team and students. Yet even more, he views the school for the Indianapolis North Deanery.

And while Sahm viewed the first home football game with an eye to the future, he also recognized the moment as a time to pay tribute to the past and present supporters of the school that opened in 1961 and began playing football in 1963.

“I would like to thank all the people who were part of the school from the beginning who created the history that we have that allows us to do the things we are doing today. It truly is a culmination of 57 years of support and contribution from a lot of people.”

classes holding their reunions this year have scheduled them around home football games. It also helps us create an environment where North Deanery parish families could come and enjoy the evening. We want to create an experience that makes it feel like home for them for the future.”

An estimated 3,500 people attended the school’s first home game, including a large number of students from North Deanery grade schools who receive free passes to attend all the school’s games and events, Sahm says.

And while Sahm viewed the first home football game as a moment of celebration, the memorable scenes kept unfolding…. (Photo by John Shaughnessy)

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CLIMATE continued from page 1

dioceses) for the greater good of respecting life and caring for God’s creation. In many ways our world has created a much more multicultural and pluralistic society than it was 39 years ago. In this respect, of course, it is like the rest of Europe and increasingly like the United States.

Pope Francis has recognized the way our world has become more secular, and continues to strive to see how the Catholic Church can play its rightful role in such a society. It will be interesting to see what he says and does during this visit to the Emerald Isle.

(John F. Funk is editor emeritus of The Criterion.)

IRELAND continued from page 4

abuse.” In other words, the Church in Ireland has largely brought its problems upon itself.

But the blame shouldn’t be placed totally on the Church in Ireland. I have been back to Ireland since 1979, most recently in 2015, and I can attest that Irish society isn’t what it once was. What was once a poor country is now thriving economically, and immigration has created a much more multicultural and pluralistic society.

Ireland, therefore, has become a much more secular society than it was 39 years ago. In this respect, of course, it is like the rest of Europe and increasingly like the United States.

Pope Francis has recognized the way our world has become more secular, and continues to strive to see how the Catholic Church can play its rightful role in such a society. It will be interesting to see what he says and does during this visit to the Emerald Isle.

(Religious abuse is a separate story. I have made many trips to Ireland and have frequently reported on what I have seen and experienced. I have been to a number of Irish Catholic schools and universities, and I have met hundreds of Irish Catholic priests and nuns. I have visited the Irish Catholic Church in Ireland. I have been back to Ireland since 1979, most recently in 2015, and I can attest that Irish society isn’t what it once was. What was once a poor country is now thriving economically, and immigration has created a much more multicultural and pluralistic society.

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Pope Francis has recognized the way our world has become more secular, and continues to strive to see how the Catholic Church can play its rightful role in such a society. It will be interesting to see what he says and does during this visit to the Emerald Isle.

(John F. Funk is editor emeritus of The Criterion.)

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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
   www.archindy.org/ethicspoint or 888-939-6810

2. Carla Hill, Archdiocese of Indianapolis, Victim Assistance Coordinator
   317-236-1414, Indianapolis, IN 46206-1410

chill@archindy.org
Sept. 8 evangeline event to highlight listening to God
By Natalie Hofer

The archdiocesan Secretariat for Worship and Evangelization is planning the “Gathering of Disciples” day of reflection that will take place place at Roncalli High School, 3300 Prague Road, in Indianapolis, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Sept. 8. The event is open to catechists, parish evangelization team members, liturgical ministers and all who are interested in evangelization. Tracks will be available in English and in Spanish.

This year’s theme is “God is Calling— How Do We Listen?” The keynote speaker will be Damon Owens, founder of Joy Toll and the first executive director of the Theology of the Body Institute in Philadelphia.

“Damon is well-known for his ability to make the (Catholic) faith accessible for ordinary, lay Catholics—helping bridge the gap between faith and everyday life,” says Ken Ogorek, director of the archdiocesan Office of Catechesis.

He says the goal of the event is to “encourage and equip folks who serve in our parishes, helping to draw folks closer to Jesus through various ministries.”

But Ogorek also notes the event is not limited to those who serve in an official capacity in a parish or on a team.

“We’re defining catechist and related ministries broadly in that all Catholics are called to share the message of a Heart that is compassionate,” he says. “So anyone interested in teaching, sharing and celebrating the Catholic faith—either as a parent and a primary educator of their children—will be enriched by this day.”

In addition to the keynote address by Owens, the day will feature five breakout sessions in English, and five in Spanish. The five English sessions will be:

- “Theology of the Body for Everyday Life” by Damon Owens.
- “Discernment: Teaching the Art of Listening to God’s Voice” by Father Eric Augenstein, archdiocesan director of vocations.
- “Lesson Planning 101: The Ecclesial Method” by Theresa Inoue, on an intern for the archdiocese through the University of Notre Dame’s Echo program.
- “You Can Do This: Being a Disciple-Maker Within Your Parish” by Matt Foley, archdiocesan director of young adult and college campus ministry.
- “Spirituality for Liturgical Ministers” by Father Patrick Bedelmann, executive director of the archdiocesan Secretariat for Worship and Evangelization.

The five breakout sessions in Spanish are:

- “Supporting All to Respond to God’s Call: Sacraments and Persons With Disabilities” by Efren Garcia, National Catholic Partnership on Disability.
- “Great Gospel Passages for Evangelizing Conversations” by Father Nino Aquapacza Taxe, associate pastor of Holy Spirit Parish in Indianapolis.
- “Discernment: Listening to God in Everyday Life” by Erick Carrero, certified lay spiritual director.
- “Lesson Planning 101: The Ecclesial Method” by Emily McFadden, parish catechetical leader for St. Anthony Parish in Indianapolis.
- “Ovenos: An Introduction to the Roman Missal in Spanish” by Oscar Castellanos, director of the archdiocesan Office of Intercultural Ministry.

To highlight a few of the talks, The Criterion reached out to three speakers about their sessions.

Father Augenstein’s talk on discerning closely follows the day’s theme of listening.

“We will be discussing the topic of discernment in general and discernment of vocations in particular...” he explains. “Specifically, we will be discussing how to teach the art of discernment to young people, so they can build a solid foundational relationship with God throughout their lives, so that the tools and skills are in place to help them discern a lifelong vocation when that time comes.”

Castellanos’ talk addresses the new Roman Missal in Spanish released by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops on May 1. In his session, he hopes to “reflect on the importance that this step has made to the Hispanic-Latino Catholics in the U.S.”

Foley hopes his session about being a disciple-maker will leave participants “inspired to fulfill the call the Lord has put in our lives.”

“So often in my own life discipleship can become a good intention,” he says. “I know what the Lord teaches, but often do not know how to make it a focal point of my life... I have come to find discipleship, while not easy, is simple. Jesus offers us a way to live this life in communion with him and the mission of the Gospel exactly where we are in our lives.”

Foley will also lead all participants in prayer and worship to close the event.

Ogorek hopes that after the event, all participants feel “renewed enthusiasm for their disciple relationship with Jesus, lived in full communion with his Body, the Church.”

He also expects them to gain knowledge regarding sacred Scripture and sacred tradition, and practical tips for sharing the Catholic faith. To assist with this, exhibitors will be on hand to offer materials useful for sharing the faith.

“For anything, contact us,” Ogorek says. “We know that we serve in our parishes deserve a day that will replenish them for their ministries throughout the program year.”

While online and independent study has a role to play in equipping us for ministry, there’s nothing quite like personally participating in an excellent Gathering of Disciples.”

Roncalli is located at 3330 Prague Road in Indianapolis.

The cost is $25 per person assessed to parishes in the Indianapolis deaneries, and $20 per person assessed to parishes in other deaneries.

Registrations received by Sept. 1 will guarantee a lunch; walk-ins are welcome.

The registration link, along with a complete list of breakout session topics and information on Spanish translation options can be found at goo.gl/SST513 (case sensitive).

For additional information, contact Rose Ruiz at 317-236-1550, 800-382-9836, ext. 1550, or e-mail catechesis@archindy.org .

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Celebrate Life Dinner
TUESDAY
SEPTEMBER 25, 2018
Marriott Downtown Indianapolis
Registration – 6:00 p.m.
Dinner and Awards – 6:45 p.m.
Keynote Speaker, David Bereit – 8:00 p.m.

D avid Bereit is the co-founder and former CEO of Right to Life of Indianapolis. Bereit has dedicated his life to removing the barriers that prevent the pro-life movement from reaching its goal of ending abortion. Bereit is a frequent speaker at church retreats, diocesan events and seminaries. He has spoken at influential pro-life conferences and forums, and has appeared on numerous television and radio programs. Bereit is a member of the National Right to Life Committee and has received numerous awards for his work in the pro-life movement.

Right to Life of Indianapolis invites you to the 36th Annual
Celebrates Life Dinner
September 25, 2018
Marriott Downtown Indianapolis
Registration – 6:00 p.m.
Dinner and Awards – 6:45 p.m.
Keynote Speaker, David Bereit – 8:00 p.m.

Right to Life of Indianapolis Art Contest – 1st Place

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Amid the Fray/Greg Erlanda

Response to an angry friend admits Church needs healing

My friend, thank you for writing. You have every right to be angry. The recent revelations about the clerical sexual abuse crisis have revived an older debate: whether that crisis. Priests moved around. Cover-ups and becomes cumulative. Our patience even a kind of multiplier effect: Our anger came out in 2002 and its aftermath. But in it, hopeful, that bishops are speaking out. Bishops from Albany, Fort Worth, Pennsylvania-Tallahassee, Oklahoma City and Houston are not just managing and leaking their own statements expressing shame and calling for investigations. Some call for a greater role for the laity. They have been plain in their criticism and their sorrow. The president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, Archbishop DiNardo has committed himself and the Church to “pursue the many questions surrounding Archbishop McCarrick’s conduct to their full extent of authority.” Because the real authority to investigate and punish bishops resides with the pope, the authority of the Catholic conference is limited, “the conference will advocate with those authorities.” Bishops are speaking up, but I am not sure how many Catholics are hearing them. The secular press pays little attention, and there are fewer diocesan news outlets these days. Bishops are having a harder time getting their voices heard. One day went so far as to tell me that the bishops have lost the communicative war.” Meanwhile, the Boymans scandal broke in 2002, social media was in its infancy. Today, social media is driving a great as the number of the faithful, and all sorts of accusations are floating about that confuse and dishearten people farther.

You are right that we need a thorough cleansing of the Church. My hope is that this papal commission will work, that trust is restored and renewal. This great institution we once called holy mother Church cared for her people. She built schools, hospitals and storage of their souls, for their bodies, for their souls. Today our mother is tremendously weakened by self-inflicted wounds. For purification to take place, we need serious programs where the exemplars, not platitudes. We need leaders who model the faith, not just CEOs. One thousand years ago, St. Peter Damian faced sexual abuses far worse than anything we have seen. He chronicled both his sins and flaws. He challenged popes. Pursuing transparency, reforming procedures, admitting painful truths and facing our actions. But to ignore the moment is far more dangerous. We need to pray for our Church, pray for her purification, and our own. I find these words of St. Bridget of Sweden particularly powerful: “You know me the very moment you make me ready to follow it. It is dangerous to delay, yet perilous to go forward. Answer my petition and show me the way. . . . Give peace, O Lord, to my heart!”

Greg Erlandon, director and editor-in-chief of Catholic News Service, can be reached at geraldandon@catholicnews.com

Emmaus Walk/Debra Tomasselli

Like everything else, author’s plan for first book is God-story

Daily Mass provides clarity in the confusion of my life. It’s how I dump my worries and burdens, only to leave with a song in my heart. It’s what I look forward to each day. It’s how I know I’m on my step. It’s here that the Lord speaks to me. So I go to Mass. I go to church. When my writing life took a turn, I ran here for comfort.

It all began when I recently attended a local Christians Writers Critique group, where I was asked to introduce myself. “I’ve been writing devotional columns since 2003,” I said. “Some of you might remember me. I belonged to the group back then, and in reality, my writing and treatments have rendered me too weak to attend.” I took a deep breath, “until today.”

I went to church that day. At my local parish, I saw a group of women. I approached them. They introduced themselves. They talked about their work.

“Is there a priest who is calling the Lord?”

“Is there a priest who is calling the Lord?”

I said, “I know you will help me discover it. Maybe write a book? Maybe it will be for God’s glory?”

That very day, Jeanne, another member, directed me to a local self-publishing service. I began developing a manuscript according to their online submission guidelines. In a month, I had 90 chapters. They said they would list the book on Amazon. No Kindle. No free author copies. Another local publisher offered print books only. No Amazon. No Kindle.

“What? Which way to go?”

Remember the previous discussion, I headed to Mass one weekday evening. As I grabbed my car keys, a suddenly thought popped into my head: Maybe Bert Ghezzi will be there. Bert is a well-known Catholic author who attends our parish. I walked into the church parking lot, the random thought re-surfaced: Maybe Bert Ghezzi will be there. As I stepped into the church foyer, guess who was there? Bert!


I explained how I was about to sign a contract, but knowing nothing about this process, was frozen with indecision. He offered to review the agreement.

Ultimately, Bert directed me to three national publishers, suggesting I sign with one. He was leaving town for a few days, and we agreed to talk upon his return.

Meanwhile, I began my research. I learned a lot. One of the national publishers offered everything I wanted—physical books, Amazon web bookstore and all e-reader versions including Kindle—all for a competitive rate.

Bingo! By the time Bert and I spoke, my decision was made. He agreed wholeheartedly.

The Walk, True Stories of Faith, Hope, and Inspiration, will soon be available at bookstores and on Amazon, in print or e-reader formats like Kindle.

My head is spinning. Amazing, how God works, isn’t it? But God doesn’t always send us the writers’ group meeting, I’ll have the copy of my first book in hand, ready to finalize publication.

Who would have guessed? I’ve always felt that someday I’d write a book. I never knew that someday was now.

Like everything else in life, it’s a God-story. It’s all a God-story.

(Debra Tomasselli writes from Alatamont Springs, Florida. She can be reached at dtomasselli@cfl.rr.com.)

A More Humane Society/Richard Doerflinger

National Catholic newspaper on wrong side of abortion debate

The Senate debate over a new U.S. Supreme Court nomination has reignited an older debate: whether that nomination is not the answer.” The court should overrule its 1973 Roe v. Wade decision that made abortion a “right” to abortion. A publication called National Catholic Reporter (NCR) has criticized Church teaching on sex and procreation for many years. But its July 27 editorial against protection for its July 27 editorial against protection for guidance. When my writing life took a turn, I ran here for comfort.

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The court should overrule its 1973 Roe v. Wade decision that defined abortion as a “right.”

Roe v. Wade was an unjust law. It has no moral authority and should be reversed, like other laws draining vitality from the black Americans, people with mental disabilities, members of minority religions and Americans of Japanese descent.

NCR ignores this human rights teaching, relying instead on practical arguments Borrowed from Planned Parenthood’s former research affiliate, the Guttmacher Institute. Let me comment on three.

Claim No. 1: “Criminalizing abortion is not the answer.” The court should not criminalize this “unborn” in recent years, abandoning the inchoate term “potential life” used in Roe.

So Roe v. Wade is an unjust law. It has no moral authority and should be reversed, like other laws draining vitality from the black Americans, people with mental disabilities, members of minority religions and Americans of Japanese descent.

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Claim No. 1: “Criminalizing abortion is not the answer.” The court should not criminalize this
The Book of Joshua provides the first reading for Mass this weekend. The book draws its name from the ancient Israelite leader, Joshua, who followed Moses and was the one to guide the Hebrews into the land God had promised them. Fleeing from slavery in Egypt to settlement in the promised land was long, difficult and, at times, chaotic. Natural problems, such as the lack of water and food in the Sinai desert, accounted for much of the trouble. Another serious problem was the restlessness of the people, who were apt to stray away from the path given them by God. They had no map or navigation to guide them. In short, they were wanderers.

The greatest task before Moses, and later Joshua, was to reinforce the people’s trust in the guidance given by God. In this weekend’s reading, Joshua summons the leaders of the people. He bluntly calls them to be true to God and to one another. Those who enter the promised land will be subject to certain laws, he says. Any violation of those laws will result in the punishment of God. In short, they were wanderers.

The people respond by declaring their will to follow God. They realize that God alone has led them out of the misery of Egypt. He has guided them so far. They trust that God will guide them until they are secure in the promised land.

St. Paul’s Epistle to the Ephesians supplies the second reading. This reading often is misunderstood in the modern context, in which the human rights of women are much noticed and appropriately demanded. To understand Paul’s message, it helps to know the environment in which the human rights of women are often is misunderstood in the modern context, in which the human rights of women are much noticed and appropriately demanded. To understand Paul’s message, it helps to know the environment in which the human rights of women are often discussed. Paul was writing to the second-century church in Ephesus, a great center of Roman culture generally converts from paganism who lived in Ephesus, a great center of Roman culture and of the Roman pagan religion. In the Roman culture, women were little better than animals. Elders arranged marriages. Brokers negotiated prices for brides. Love in marriage was accidental, if it existed at all. Wives had few rights. Abuse and infidelity were to be expected. Paul, then, was utterly revolutionary, calling upon spouses, male or female, to see marriage as a true union, characterized by mutual love, coming to give both spouses the means to happiness and eternal life amid the realities of the times.

St. John’s Gospel is the source of the last reading. It makes a point often forgotten. Never did Jesus meet total acceptance. He was disputed. He was ignored. He was criticized. Perhaps just as many if not more rejected Jesus as those who accepted the Gospel. The Gospel, and this particular reading, do not end with reporting the opposition to Jesus. They conclude with faith.

In answer to the Lord’s question as to their faith, the Apostles profess their trust in him. It is important to know that Jesus sought their testimony. Their absolute faith was crucial in their roles as builders of the Church. It also is important to note that Peter spoke for them.

Reflection

The three readings together remind us that the Gospel will never universally be accepted. People at times will prefer their own will and perspective on life. People will sin.

God’s love has been proven. He has come to people in need again and again. He offers us life each day. His love never ends. Nor does he ever forsakes us or forgets us. His strength still comes to us. Our contact with God is through the Apostles and the Church they left behind them, with Peter as their head.

We respond with the help of God’s grace by loving him wholeheartedly, without qualification, despite the temptations to sin.

Q

One of the parishes where we sometimes attend Mass does not have the “lavabo” (the washing of hands) during the Eucharist. The priest has been asked about it, and he simply says that they don’t do it at this parish. But isn’t the lavabo a standard part of every Mass? Is it done everywhere else that I’ve been. (New York)

A

Yes, you are right. The lavabo is, in fact, a standard part of every Mass and has been so since the fourth century. The “General Instruction of the Roman Missal”—which set forth the Church’s norms for the celebration of the Mass—says: “Then the priest washes his hands at the side of the altar, a rite in which the desire for interior purification finds expression” (#76). No option, as you see, is offered for skipping this prayer and ritual action.

From time to time, I have heard a rationale offered for eliminating the lavabo—namely, that the gesture stems from the days when loaves of baked eucharistic bread were carried to the altar at the offerory, and the priest needed to cleanse his hands of crumbs before proceeding with the sacred eucharistic prayer.

Since premedate hosts are now used instead, this argument runs, the washing of the fingers has become unnecessary and obsolete. It may sound like a plausible argument, but it has the disadvantage of being wrong: Far from being just a practical and physical washing, the gesture symbolically expresses the interior need of the priest and, by extension, the entire congregation, for purification.

Many churchgoers may not know the prayer the priest is saying at the moment—since it is inaudible—but the words are these: “Wash me, O Lord, from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.” Indeed, the term “lavabo” (Latin for “I will wash”) for this ritual originates in the first word of the prayer during this ritual in the Latin text of the form of the Mass celebrated before the liturgical renewal following the Second Vatican Council.

Q

One of the beatitudes in Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount is “Blessed are the poor in spirit” (Mt 5:3). Does that mean those simple-minded people who don’t ask any questions? (Virginia)

A

I like it when people ask me about the Beatitudes because I don’t think we focus enough on them. They are central to the lives of those who would try to follow Jesus.

If you were to ask Christians to name the Ten Commandments, most of them would list them, but if you asked those same Christians to list the Eight Beatitudes, we might not do as well. And yet the Beatitudes could in a sense be described as the “Christian commandments.”

Most of the Ten Commandments given to Moses directed people not to do—a sort of “least common denominator.” But the Beatitudes tell us instead, in a positive way, what we should be spending our time doing—as a consequence, we might be making a mistake.

But to answer your question: No, to be poor in spirit does not mean to be simple-minded and unquestioning. It means not being attached to a lavish lifestyle and material wealth as the goal of human existence. But even more, it signifies an attitude—a conscious awareness of our need for God. We didn’t create ourselves, nor do we sustain ourselves in being. God does that.

Once, some years ago, someone asked Father Kenneth Graha, with regard to this particular beatitude, “Shouldn’t we strive to be rich in spirit, not poor?” Graha suggested substituting in the text the word “humble” in place of “poor.”

We must not be self-satisfied or proud of heart, he said, but instead recognize our own dependency, our weaknesses and our need for God’s continual forgiveness.

Question Corner

Fr. Kenneth Doyle

Hand washing ritual has been part of the Mass since the fourth century

Readers may submit prose or poetry for faith column

The Criterion invites readers to submit original prose relaying the meaning of faith, in a way that can be published in the “My Journey to God” column. Seasonal reflections also are appreciated. Please include name, address, parish and telephone number with submissions.

Send material for consideration to “My Journey to God,” The Criterion, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367 or e-mail to nhoefer@archindy.org.

My Journey to God

Look up Child

By Ann Wolski

Look up my child. Let me see your smile.

Tell me what is happening, no distractions, no ring tone,

No one tells me to put away my cell phone.

Look up Child.

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Rest in peace

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


BEYER, Roberta, 95, St. Vincent de Paul, Shelby County. Aug. 5. Sister of Marian Welter. Aunt of several.

BUDWITZ, John, 75, St. Vincent de Paul, Shelby County. June 15. Father of Michael Budweitz.


GOEBEL, Rebecca J., 89, Prince of Peace, Madison, Aug. 6. Mother of Theresa Collins and William. Great-grandmother of eight. Great-grandfather of four. †


MALATESTA, Mary Margaret, 96, St. Joan of Arc, Indianapolis, July 28.


TROESCH, Virgi, 82, St. Meinrad, St. Meinrad, Aug. 6. Wife of Wilfred Troesch. Mother of Lisa Elizabeth Shipman and Steve Troesch. Sister of Ruth Duchosal and Dorothy Schafer. Grandmother of six. †

Devotion to Mary

A woman prays as she takes part in celebrations on the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary on Aug. 15 at Jasna Gora Monastery in Czestochowa, Poland. (CNS photos/Kazimier Pepeka, Razan)

‘We didn’t have food,’ say Venezuelan families at Colombian shelter

BOGOTA, Colombia (CNS)—After getting Guevara sat at the dining room table at a shelter for migrants, sipping hot chocolate, holding her 1-year-old son and devouring a chocolate bar, said. “You can’t get food or medicines,” she said. “The situation was terrible,” Cazar said. “The children were malnourished. We didn’t have food.”

That was a common refrain among the 250 or so Venezuelan migrants who arrived at a shelter run by Scalabrinian sisters on July 23, the same day as Cazar and his family.

Most had been traveling for several days on foot, in trucks and by bus, sometimes sharing rides with smugglers. At the Bogota bus terminal, the migrant ministry staffs a small office that offers assistance and sometimes acts as a broker to help people who can stay for a few days while they look for housing or make arrangements to continue their journey or to go back home.

All are flewing a struggle that is growing increasingly desperate, said Scalabrinian Sister Teresinha Monteiro, who welcomes new arrivals at the shelter with basics such as towels and soap.

Venezuela’s spiraling economic and political crisis has left shelves bare in stores, including supermarkets and pharmacies.

“You can’t get food or medicines,” says 14-year-old Elizer Rojas, who had arrived with his mother after crossing the border on foot and spending three nights in the bus terminal. “People use natural remedies, because there’s no medicine.”

The Scalabrinian sisters started their bus-station ministry in 1989 and opened the shelter in 1995 in response to Colombia’s decades-long civil war that was resolved in 2016. Since then, the sisters have largely served Venezuelan migrants, which have been arriving in increasing numbers since mid-2017.

Most Venezuelan migrants in the past were men or single women who left the country alone to seek work and send money home, now many of the new arrivals are senior citizens or entire families with children.

For the newcomers, leaving their homes and most of their possessions and starting all over again is not the only strain.

“Many are much relieved when they arrive,” Sister Teresinha said, and some have medical problems that have gone untreated for lack of medicine in their home country.

That can be especially dangerous for children and for older adults who have chronic illnesses that require ongoing treatment, she said. Some infectious diseases are also following migrants on the move.

With Venezuelan migrants, getting care in Colombia is not easy. Many are insured while they are here, Sister Teresinha said, and some have medical problems that have gone untreated for lack of medicine in their home country.

For those who go to a hospital may have the energy and strength to go on.” †

Staying at the shelter can be life-changing for migrants, Sister Teresinha said. She often-prays in the first-floor chapel with people facing difficulties. “I, one man sought her out to ask, ‘Who is that ‘Señor’ you were talking to in the chapel?’ she asked. ‘Señor,’ which means ‘master’ in Spanish, is also the word for ‘Lord,’” but the man had never heard of God.

He began religious instruction and will soon be baptized—an unexpected but welcome fruit of the migrant ministry.

Besides the shelter and the bus station outreach, the migrant ministry includes a workshop where people learn skills that they can apply in jobs. Asked what kind of assistance the staff needs most, Sister Teresinha responded without hesitation.

“Help us with prayer,” she urged, “so we have the energy and strength to go on.” †

Scalabrinian Sister Teresinha Monteiro greets a boy who arrived on July 23 at a shelter in Bogota, Colombia, after fleeing Venezuela’s spiraling political and economic crisis. (CNS photo/Eduardo Verdugo)
Last month, I shared with you that the American Council on Gift Annuities (ACGA) has increased suggested maximum payout rates for charitable gift annuities, effective on July 1, 2018, and the Catholic Community Foundation is honoring these new rates. This column will address questions we receive from donors regarding charitable gift annuities.

Q. What is a charitable gift annuity?
A. A charitable gift annuity is a contract between an individual and a charitable organization in which the donor makes a contribution of property in exchange for fixed lifetime payments.

Q. Instead of cash, can I give stocks or other marketable securities to fund the charitable gift annuity?
A. Yes. In fact, there could be tax benefits from gifting appreciated securities because capital gains that would be due upon selling the property could be reduced or delayed.

Q. What determines the size of the annuity payment?
A. In addition to the dollar amount of the property gifted, the age(s) of the annuitant(s) at the time the annuity is created determines the payment amount.

Q. Are my annuity payments taxable?
A. During the annuitant’s life expectancy, a portion of the payout is considered ordinary income, and a portion is tax free. If the annuitant exceeds their life expectancy, the payments are considered ordinary income. If a donor funds a gift annuity with appreciated property, the taxability of payments will need to take into consideration the long-term capital gain.

Q. Are there any other tax benefits in establishing a charitable gift annuity?
A. Yes. The donor receives an immediate income tax deduction for the gift portion.

Q. Can my spouse continue receiving the annuity after my death?
A. Instead of a single life agreement, a donor may establish a two-life agreement with their spouse whereby if the annuity is paid to the donor and the spouse survives the donor, the annuity is then paid to the spouse.

Q. In establishing a charitable gift annuity with the Catholic Community Foundation, what charity(ies) can I name as beneficiary?
A. A charitable gift annuity created with the Catholic Community Foundation can provide for your parish, school, other Catholic agency or ministry of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.

Please contact the Catholic Community Foundation at 1-800-382-9836, ext. 1482, or visit our website at www.archindy.org/CCF, for more information.

(Elisa Smith is director of the archdiocesan Catholic Community Foundation. Tax information or legal information provided herein is not intended as tax or legal advice and cannot be relied on to avoid statutory penalties. Always check with your legal, tax and financial advisors before implementing any gift plan.)

Investing with Faith/Elisa Smith

Frequently asked questions about charitable gift annuities

LCWR reaffirms commitment to addressing ‘the sin of racism’

ST. LOUIS (CNS)—Drums punctuated a prayer search by almost 800 Catholic women religious leaders on Aug. 10 as they processed two blocks from a hotel ballroom to the Old Courthouse in downtown St. Louis, the site of the first two trials of the historic Dred Scott case. This call to action at the general assembly for the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) emphasized the conference’s commitment to a 2016 resolution that recognized “racism as a systemic, structural cause underpinning and contributing to the multiple situations of injustice identified in the LCWR Call.”

“In the presence of constant and painful reminders of the sin of racism in our country,” reads the 2018 statement of recommitment, which echoes the wording of the 2016 resolution, LCWR pledges “to go deeper into the critical work of creating communion, examining the root causes of injustice and our own complicity, and purging ourselves, our communities, and our country of the sin of racism and its systemic manifestations.”

The conference unanimously affirmed the recommitment just before marching to the courthouse, which was two blocks away from the hotel where the sisters convened on Aug. 8-10 for the LCWR annual assembly. In the 1857 Dred Scott decision, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that no African-American, free or slave, could claim U.S. citizenship and was therefore unqualified to petition for freedom in court. Opposition to the decision was a catalyst for the Civil War and led to the adoption of the 13th, 14th and 15th amendments to the Constitution.


Following five minutes of standing on the courthouse steps in silence, the sisters began to sing the lyrics that had echoed in the assembly: “We stand in communion, we stand in grace. We stand in communion with the human race. As we gather here today, let us recall that it has been 50 years since the great civil rights legal battle, and the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. … was gunned down in Memphis,” Sister Donna Gribschaw, a Sister of Divine Providence of Allison Park, Pa., and chair of LCWR’s Global Concerns Committee, said to the assembly participants before marching.

“And still we are confronted today with the sin of racism and the persistence of white privilege,” she added. “In our work, the Global Concerns Committee recalled the desire expressed by members for additional time to go deeper into the work of paying for women dying from legal abortions since Roe was ruled. Stake magazine is among those documenting this tragedy in its 2011 series ‘The Back Alley: How the Politics of Abortion Protects Bad Clinics.’

Editors at NCR do endorse material assistance for pregnant women’s needs, and that is welcome. What they ignore is the question: Why should a government bother with real assistance, as long as it elevates to a constitutional right the solution that is simple, basic, for women and unjust?”

(Richard Doerrfnger worked for 26 years in the Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. He writes from Washington, D.C.)

DEBATE

Claim No. 2: The way to reduce abortion is more contraception

NCR even claims that a decline in abortion rates after 2011 was due to contraceptive, abortifacient and sterilization mandate in the Obama health care plan.

Yet studies have shown no decline in abortions from contraceptive programs or contraceptive coverage mandates.

The abortion rate has declined steadily since 1981, regardless of different administrations’ birth control policies. The most recent decline seems largely due to a dramatic decline in teen sexual activity and an increase in the proportion of women who let their babies live.

Claim No. 3: Laws against abortion only lead to dangerous “back-alley” abortions.

This claim was made against bans on public funding of abortion in the 1970s, and was disproved.

Even Guttmacher has admitted that such bans reduce abortions among the women affected.

NCR also ignores the hundreds of women dying from legal abortions since Roe was ruled. Stake magazine is among those documenting this tragedy in its 2011 series ‘The Back Alley: How the Politics of Abortion Protects Bad Clinics’.

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For more information about rates for classified advertising, call (317) 236-1454.
Network of homes provides love, hope, help for pregnant women

WASHINGTON (CNS)—When Chris Bell was working in Times Square in New York City in the late 1970s, he was shocked to repeatedly see young mothers entering crisis shelters with their children, and he decided that he had to do something.

With the help of Father Benedict Groeschel, a member of the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal, and his spiritual director at the time, Bell founded Good Counsel, a network of pro-life maternity homes.

Currently, Good Counsel operates seven homes—four in New York state, one in New Jersey, one in Alabama and one in Connecticut—and works with other homes all over the country. It is also looking to both grow and expand its network.

“Good Counsel is one of the founding members of the National Maternity Housing Coalition,” Bell told Catholic News Service (CNS). “Most of the homes are small and limited in what they can do, but we can help find a place for any pregnant woman in the country.”

Bell said that any pregnant women can enter the maternity homes for free, and the homes will help provide them with opportunities to go back to school and become self-sufficient.

Good Counsel will even assist pregnant women with treatment for drug addictions and other mental illnesses.

They also can help plan adoptions. Bell said that many women don’t realize that they can choose the couple who would adopt their child and fear that the child will be placed in the foster care system.

Bell said that many women are told that their child will have genetic defects and can benefit from maternity homes.

“I don’t know why the only response so many medical people have is to tell the mother to get rid of it if it looks like the child will have genetic defects,” he said. “Especially in the United States, where we’re rich and have the technology to help them.”

He told the story of a woman whose doctor told her that her unborn son had a defect in every cell in his body, and the doctor recommended she abort.

She then called Good Counsel, saying “I just want to be a good mother.” Good Counsel took her in, found a different medical facility for her, and prayed with her because she wanted to pray.

When the boy was born, the fears of the doctor were dispelled. He had a hole in his heart, which required two surgeries, but by the time the mother left the home her son looked like any other 1-year-old.

Bell also told another story of a mother who already had a 3-year-old when she came to Good Counsel.

When she told the father that she was pregnant, he kicked her in the stomach. She left him.

Within her first few months, she had obtained a home health certificate, and, after having the baby and staying with him for a few months, she found a job.

“When I think about where she was when she came to us and where she was when she left, it was a total turnaround,” Bell said.

Bell said he thought that media coverage was one reason for a lack of awareness about maternity homes.

“I think the media has a strong bias against anything anti-abortion,” he said. Despite that, he intends on continuing his work.

“The question I ask: Isn’t there enough love in the world for another baby? Where there’s love, there’s life, and where there’s life, there’s hope. We can change things by looking at one life at a time and one family at a time.”

(Information about the Good Counsel network of homes can be found by going to goodcounselhomes.org or by calling 800-723-8331.)