Pope: Pray to protect Church from devil, step up fight against abuse

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Signaling his belief that the Catholic Church is facing a serious crisis, Pope Francis asked every Catholic in the world to pray for the protection of the Church from attacks by the devil, but also that the Church would be more aware of its sins and stronger in its efforts to combat abuse.

Pope Francis asked Catholics to pray the rosary each day in October, seeking Mary’s intercession in protecting the Church, and “at the same time making her [the Church] more aware of her sins, errors and the abuses committed in the present and the past, and committed to fighting without hesitation so that evil would not prevail,” the Vatican said in a statement released on Sept. 29, the feast of the Archangels.

United “in communion and penitence as the people of God,” the statement said, Catholics should plead for protection against “the devil, who always seeks to divide us from God and from one another.”

Pope Francis met earlier in September with Jesuit Father Federico Fornos, international director of the Pope’s Worldwide Prayer Network, formerly known as the Apostleship of Prayer, to ask that the recitation of the rosary in October conclude with “the ancient invocation ‘Sub Tuum Praesidium’ [‘Under your protection’] and with the prayer to St. Michael the Archangel, who protects us in the battle against evil.”

The first prayer, to Mary, has a variety of translations. One reads: “We turn to you for protection, Holy Mother of God. Listen to our prayers and help us in our needs. Save us from every danger, glorious and blessed Virgin.”

The prayer to St. Michael reads: “St. Michael the Archangel, defend us in pro-life fight, says 40 Days for Life Founder

By John Shaughnessy

The glow of his smile and the light in his eyes reflect just how much the moment will forever mean to Father Juan Valdes.

It was the day when he became an American citizen, the day when the administrator of St. Anthony Parish in Indianapolis was also chosen to speak on behalf of the other 104 immigrants who were becoming American citizens during this naturalization ceremony in Indianapolis.

Looking out on their faces, Father Valdes savored the joy and the pride that he shared with these immigrants from Australia, Brazil, China, England, France, Honduras, India, Mexico and Nigeria. He also noticed the joy and pride of their loved ones.

His thoughts that day returned to his own family, growing up with 10 siblings on his parents’ farm in Mexico. He remembers it as a happy time in his life—a time when the roots of his faith were planted, nurtured and grew into a call to the priesthood and his ordination in the Archdiocese of Guadalajara in Mexico in 1991.

He also recalled coming to the United States in 2006 to become the associate pastor of St. Mary Parish in Indianapolis—a journey he made following an agreement between the archbishop of Guadalajara and then-Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein of Indianapolis.

Then it came time for Father Valdes to speak the words he had taken the time to write down—words touched with reverence, appreciation and love for the country he could now call his own.

“Today, we belong to the United States”

“Today we are going to show loyalty to the United States of America,” he said in his opening remarks. “Today, we come to celebrate our integration as immigrants to this nation.

“I want to welcome all of you. Welcoming means recognition of the other as different, but in the differences makes a point during his keynote address at the Right to Life of Indianapolis “Celebrate Life” dinner and fundraiser at the Indianapolis Downtown Marriott on Sept. 25. (Photo by Natalie Hoefer)
Catholic aid agencies respond after quake, tsunami in Indonesia

JAKARTA, Indonesia (CNS)—Catholic aid agencies were among those working to assess the needs and get relief to the island of Sulawesi after a Sept. 28 earthquake and tsunami left more than 1,200 people dead.

Indonesia’s disaster agency said on Oct. 2 the death toll from the magnitude 7.5 earthquake and tsunami was expected to rise, and nearly 50,000 people had been displaced by the disaster. The death toll was expected to rise as rescuers pulled bodies from the rubble.

Yenny Suryani, country manager for Catholic Relief Services (CRS), the U.S. Church’s international relief and development agency, said humanitarian groups were struggling to get aid to people in the hard-hit cities of Palu and Donggala.

“With the airport damaged, getting access to Palu and Donggala is a huge problem,” Suryani said. “Responders and local aid agencies are having to drive overland 10-12 hours. That means a bottle of water for the drive is supplied in 10-day supply. That’s the reality. Resiliency toward road travel is in some places. There’s very limited electricity in Palu, but power is out almost everywhere. Some mobile phone towers have been repaired, allowing limited communication, but it’s unreliable.”

CRS and Malteser International were among Catholic aid agencies sending emergency response teams to Indonesia. Central Sulawesi Gov. Longki Djanggola declared a state of emergency until Oct. 11, reported wamena.com.

Father Derry Clement, chairman of the Socio-Economic Commission of Manado Diocese in North Sulawesi, told wamena.com some areas in the province have been heavily hit, and at least two churches in Palu were partially destroyed.

“They’re walls are cracked. In some cases, heavy steel pillars have become detached from their brackets,” he said, adding a number of priests suffered minor injuries due to the quake.

At the Vatican, Pope Francis prayed for the deceased and he recited the Angelus on Sept. 30.

He prayed “for the deceased ... for the wounded, and for those who have lost their homes and employment. May the Lord console them and sustain the efforts of the many people who are taking part in the relief efforts.”

(To donate to relief efforts for those affected by the earthquake and tsunami in Indonesia, go to www.crs.org.) †

Respect Life Sunday to be marked by archdiocesan Mass, Life Chain events

Respect Life Sunday, always the first Sunday in October, is on Oct. 7 this year.

Each year on this day, the archdiocesan Office of Human Life and Dignity celebrates a special Mass during which an adult or married couple is honored for their service and leadership in respecting human life. The Mass will be held at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, 134 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, at 10:30 a.m. on Oct. 7, with archdiocesan vicar general Msgr. William Stumpf as the principal celebrant.

Two honorees were selected this year for the Archdiocese Edward T. O’Meara Respect Life Award: Tom McBroome of Columbus, Greencastle, Greensburg, and local aid groups are having to drive overland 10-12 hours. That means a bottle of water for the drive is supplied in 10-day supply. That’s the reality. Resiliency toward road travel is in some places. There’s very limited electricity in Palu, but power is out almost everywhere. Some mobile phone towers have been repaired, allowing limited communication, but it’s unreliable.”

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St. Mary-of-the-Knobs to host annual ‘Morning with Mary’ on Oct. 13

Catholic Center staff report

The annual archdiocesan “Morning with Mary” event will take place at St. Mary-of-the-Knobs Church, 5719 St. Marys Road, in Floyds Knobs, from 9 a.m.-noon on Oct. 13. Doors will open at 8:30 a.m.

This bilingual event will focus on the love of the Blessed Mother through a procession, speakers, witnesses, songs, the praying of the rosary and a talk.

Singing and praying will be done in English and Spanish, and both witnesses will offer their testimonies in English and Spanish. For the keynote address, participants may attend in English or one in Spanish.

The English keynote speaker will be Benedictine Father Denis Robinson, president-rector of Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad. The Spanish keynote speaker is Eva Gonzalez, director of Catholic aid agencies respond after quake, tsunami in Indonesia

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Synod aims to renew the Church to help young Catholics, cardinal says

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—To strengthen and support young people in the faith, members of the Synod of Bishops will need to listen to their real-life stories, interpret what they bear in the light of the Gospel and make decisions that will lead to an authentic renewal of the Catholic Church, said Brazilian Cardinal Sergio da Rocha.

"Often, we hear voices that blame young people for moving away from the Church. But many of them have lived in situations that led them to affirm that it was the Church that moved away from them," said Cardinal da Rocha, archbishop of Brasilia and relator general of the Synod of Bishops 2018.

The Brazilian cardinal will introduce the work of the synod on Oct. 3 and, midway through the gathering, will summarize the speeches individual bishops have made in the synodal hall. The synod will meet on Oct. 3-28 to discuss “young people, the faith and vocational discernment.”

Introducing the synod at a Oct. 1 news conference, Cardinal Lorenzo Baldisseri, synod general secretary, said it will have 267 voting members, including two bishops from mainland China. While Chinese bishops always have been invited to the synod, he said, the agreement signed by the Vatican and the Chinese government on Sept. 22 made it possible for bishops to attend.

The synod’s members include 15 heads of Eastern Catholic churches, 16 heads of religious orders, 181 members elected by national bishops’ conferences and the permanent council, 15 members of the synod’s Vatican offices, 15 members of the synod’s men’s Union of Superiors General, and 40 members named by Pope Francis. Eighteen of the voting members are priests; two are religious brothers.

The synod released on Oct. 1 a new “Instruction of the Celebration of Synodal Assemblies and on the Activity of the Secretary General of the Synod of Bishops.” The document specifies that religious brothers may be voting members of a synod, but women may not.

Cardinal Baldisseri said, however, that the synod observers, which include women and 34 young people between the ages of 18 and 29, can participate in the synod’s working groups and are encouraged to help formulate the synod’s final resolutions.

The instruction and Pope Francis’ new constitution on the synods, which was published on Sept. 18, looks to the future, but “first of all looks to the past, to the deposit of faith and the tradition of the Church,” the cardinal said. “It is the structure of the Church for a synod of bishops. Obviously, there is an increasing effort to involve the entire people of God.”

He also was asked about an article Archbishop Charles J. Chaput of Philadelphia had printed in the magazine First Things presenting an anonymous theologian’s critique of the synod’s working document. In a later exchange in the magazine, the archbishop wrote that he agreed with the critique, which claimed the document had a “pervasive focus on socio-cultural elements” rather than religious and moral issues, that it emphasizes the Church’s obligation to listen over its obligation to teach and that its understanding of vocation is heavily focused on “private meaning and truth,” rather than service.

Cardinal Baldisseri, who did not refer to Archbishop Chaput by name, noted that the bishop who complained is a member of the synod’s permanent committee and was present when a draft of the document was presented before publication. “If he had any objection, he could have said so; we would have included that, calmly. But I don’t understand why, later, he made a declaration. It’s a matter of loyalty and honesty.”

Asked whether the ongoing clerical sexual abuse crisis should or will dominate the synod’s discussion, the cardinal said the synod is an opportunity to explain to young people and everyone that “this is not the Church.”

Certainly, the scandals in the Church that have come to light recently strike the mind and the heart,” the cardinal said, but he is certain young people are “able to understand human fragility.”

“I honestly do not think it [the scandal] is an impediment” to the synod’s task, he said. “In fact, perhaps it is an occasion to awaken the Church.”

Having bishops from around the world gathered in Rome with the pope, Cardinal Baldisseri said, “is a unique opportunity to explain and help young people and adults understand what the Church is. The Church is not represented by some who make mistakes.”

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Sex abuse cases are tragic; most are not recent

With all the news that has been reported about the clergy sex-abuse scandal in the Church, we feel that we have to comment on one important misapprehension.

Sometimes during discussions about this subject, someone will say, “I can’t believe that this is still going on.” Or someone will elaborate, “This was first reported 15 years ago, and nothing has been done about it!”

The facts are that most of the cases are from decades ago, and it’s not true that nothing has been done about it.

The majority of cases being reported by the Church in the United States today are the same cases that were reported when the scandal was first brought to light in Boston in 2002: and most of the new allegations against priests are about things that happened decades ago.

The Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) at Georgetown University has analyzed 8,694 allegations of sexual abuse. According to Mark Gray, the researcher who did the study, the peak years of reported incidents are from the 1950s when the revelations of abuse began in the Boston area in 2002.

(Full disclosure: This editorial writer once served on the CARA board of trustees. Further disclosure: Former Cardinal Theodore E. McCarrick was on the board at the same time.)

There were relatively few incidents of sexual abuse prior to 1960. But during the 1960s, when the so-called “sexual revolution” hit our society, there were 2,257 cases, according to allegations made later. That number jumped to 2,710 during the 1970s. That was the peak.

In the 1980s, the number of cases, according to allegations made later, dropped to 1,520. During the 1990s, there were 346 cases. During the 2000s, there were 179 cases, and during the present decade, 123 cases.

Of course, even one case is too many, and we aren’t trying to excuse the priests who committed those sins or crimes.

We only want to emphasize that most of those cases happened decades ago because some people have talked with think that they were recent.

Gray, CARA’s researcher, made that same point. He said that many Catholics remain unaware that “abuse cases were more common before 1985 than since. The fact that any abuse occurred at all, regardless of when, is horrifying. Yet, this detail is important in understanding the causes of the scandal, what legal actions are possible, and the steps that can be taken to prevent any future abuse.”

Perhaps we should also clarify who the victims of the child abuse are. Some of the priests who committed these crimes are called pedophiles, adults who prey on pre-pubescent children. But most of these cases involved priests abusing teenagers or adults, sexually mature men or women, not children.

That was the case with former Cardinal McCarrick, who was accused of improper activities with seminarians. Again, that doesn’t excuse what was done. It was wrong then, and it is wrong now.

Some of the priests undoubtedly were pedophiles, who were unable to conquer their sickness. But other cases involved a single incident of a priest with an adult.

As for the charge that nothing has been done since this scandal became public, that simply isn’t true.

The U.S. bishops have set up many procedures to prevent men with tendencies to abuse children or teens from entering seminaries. And once there, seminarians are evaluated to try to ensure that they will be able to live celibate lives.

Finally, we must say a word about the secondary victims of this scandal: the 96 percent of priests who are faithful to their vows and who have not, and will not, abuse anyone. A study made after these charges became public showed that only 4 percent of priests were involved.

Yet, as they walk down the street wearing clerical garb, priests know that people are looking at them with suspicion. Msgr. Owen Campion, a retired priest who was a longtime editor at Our Sunday Visitor, wrote that he “feels tired, and angry, about the necessity to refrain from using a public restroom if there was the possibility of a child or young man in there by himself.”

So let us pray for all the good priests who are faithfully serving us.

—John F. Funk

Letters to the Editor

When it comes to Church division, truth has power to unify, reader says

In the Sept. 21 edition of The Criterion, several commentators argued that Catholics should “come together” to solve the current clergy sex-abuse crisis and that the issue should not be framed in terms of “we” or “them.”

The question I would ask, though, is this: How is it even possible to find unity in the present circumstances?

Whether we like it or not, there is a culture war going on in the Catholic Church. One side believes that sodomy is a sin that “cries to heaven for vengeance” while the other side—almost 70 percent—believes that the gay lifestyle is morally acceptable. How is it possible for these two sides to come together?

This same drama is being played out at the highest level of the Church’s hierarchy. Some bishops and cardinals are pushing for transparency and speak publically about a powerful homosexual network among their peers; others of the same rank avoid the topic altogether and say there should be no transparency.

Clearly, unity is possible among Catholics only insofar as they accept the Church’s teachings on sexual morality, including the teaching that homosexual behavior is disorder. This is true for all Catholics, regardless of their identities. To accept the Church’s teachings is to promote unity, to reject them is to promote division.

The broader point is that truth has the power to unify. Catholics can come together on that basis by asking the appropriate questions of Church leaders and their response to the sex crisis:

Who wants the facts, and who is stonewalling? Who blames the perpetrators, and who blames the whistleblowers? Who worries about the Church’s integrity, and who defines the problem as “homosexualism”, and who defines it as “clericalism”?

Lay Catholics can play a role in ending this sex-abuse crisis. They can be accountable for accepting moral truth, conducting a thorough investigation, following the facts, and however it leads and acts on that evidence.

Stephen L. Bussell

Letters Policy

Letters from readers are published in The Criterion as part of the newspaper’s commitment to “the responsible exchange of freely-held and expressed opinion among the People of God” (Concilio en Progressu, 116). Letters from readers are welcome and every effort will be made to include letters from as many people and representing as many viewpoints as possible. Letters should be relevant, well-expressed and temperate in tone. They must reflect a basic sense of courtesy and respect.

The editors reserve the right to select the letters that will be published and to edit letters from readers, as necessary, on space limitations, pastiche quality, and content. (Copyrighted material is not normally published.)

Letters from readers are published in The Criterion, 1400 N. Meridian Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367.

Readers with access to e-mail may send letters to criterion@archindy.org.
Las características fundamentales de una escuela católica

¿Cuáles son características fundamentales que distinguen a una escuela católica? ¿Qué constituyen las “identidades católicas” de una escuela? No se trata de los signos externos: los crucifijos en las paredes de las aulas, las imágenes y las estatuas de santos, los hábitos que visten los religiosos, las capas o las canastas que se usan para recoger dinero para las misiones. Estos son símbolos físicos (sacramentales) importantes que nos recuerdan verdades más profundas, pero no son los elementos esenciales que hacen que una escuela sea católica.

La identidad católica puede describirse de muchas formas, pero he aquí tres elementos fundamentales: evangelización, catequesis y justicia social.

Primero, una escuela católica debe dar testimonio público acerca de la persona de Jesús Cristo y su mensaje (evangelizar). Las escuelas católicas existen para proclamar el Evangelio. Todo en la escuela —el plan de estudio, los deportes y retiros, las actividades de servicio y sus programas de servicio— deben ofrecer a los alumnos (así como al personal y a las familias) oportunidades para conocer a la persona de Jesucristo, ayudarnos a entender el bienestar de toda la creación divina (justicia social). Esas escuelas no tienen por objeto beneficiarse a sí mismas, sino que son instituciones para el bien de los alumnos y las comunidades que atienden.

A menudo una escuela católica se considera un “bastión” en su barrio, una fuente de estabilidad e integridad moral. Existen motivos socioeconómicos que provocan este efecto bastión, pero fundamentalmente, una escuela verdaderamente católica prestaba servicio a su barrio y a su comunidad porque reconocemos que no podemos amar a Dios como deberíamos a menos que también amemos al prójimo. La justicia social es un elemento constitutivo del Evangelio. La ejemplifican las enseñanzas de Jesucristo, según se están plasmadas en las Escrituras y en nuestra tradición católica, representan la verdad y cómo son realmente las cosas. Las escuelas católicas deben ser vibrantes entornos de formación que fomentan la curiosidad y la apertura a nuevas formas de vivir y aprender.

Por último, para poder considerarla verdaderamente católica, la escuela debe enseñar a sus alumnos a amar a los demás, a acercarse al prójimo y a asumir la responsabilidad por el bienestar de toda la creación divina (justicia social). Las escuelas católicas no existen para beneficiarse a sí mismas, sino para el bien de los alumnos y las comunidades que atienden.

Una escuela es verdaderamente católica cuando reconoce que está llamada a cumplir con estos tres objetivos fundamentales: presentarnos la persona de Jesucristo, ayudarnos a entender el mundo a través de sus enseñanzas y ensañarnos a atender las necesidades de los demás, tal como lo hizo Jesucristo.

En el Arquidiócesis de Indianápolis tenemos la bendición de contar con excelentes escuelas católicas y programas parroquiales de formación religiosa que se distinguen por su identidad católica. Receremos para que nuestros maestros y catequistas, nuestros pastores y padres, y especialmente los niños, jóvenes y jóvenes adultos de nuestras parroquias y escuelas en todo el centro y el sur de Indiana, que Dios les bendiga y les guíe en su vida y en su cometido de seguir a Jesucristo. Y que Dios a través de su maestro Jesucristo nos ayude a convertir nuestro mundo en un mejor lugar. ♦
Sisters of Providence to offer ‘Come and See’ weekend on Oct. 26-28

Catholic women between the ages of 18 and 42 seeking to explore a vocation with the Sisters of Providence at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods are invited to a “Come and See” weekend retreat Oct. 26-28 at the order’s motherhouse in Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, 1 Sisters of Providence, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. During the three days, participants will learn more about the life and legacy of St. Mother Theodore Guerin, meet other women seeking a deeper relationship with God and share in the life of the sisters. There is no cost to attend.

Register online at ComeAndSeeSistersofProvidence.org. For additional information, contact Providence Sister Editha Ben at 812-230-4771 or eben@spsmw.org.

‘Catholics Returning Home’ to be offered at Greenwood parish starting on Oct. 9

An ongoing series called “Catholics Returning Home” will be held each of the sessions will cover a different topic and updates on the Catholic faith, attendance at all six sessions is recommended.

Light refreshments will be served. For more information, contact Jo Hurbanek at 317-859-4673, ext. 119 or e-mail hurbanek@sccsf.org.

Pro-life film viewing and panel discussion planned at Catholic Center on Oct. 23

A showing of the documentary Fatal Flaws: Legitimating Physician-Assisted Suicides will take place at the Archibishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center, 1400 N. Meridian St., in Indianapolis, on Oct. 23. The evening will begin with a simple meal at 5:30 p.m. followed by the viewing and panel discussion from 6:30-8:30 p.m. The event is sponsored by the archdiocesan Office of Human Life and Dignity and the pro-life committees of St. John the Evangelist and Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary parishes, both of Indiana, as part of their ongoing pro-life film series.

The film is a thought-provoking journey through Europe and North America to ask one of the most fundamental philosophical questions of our time: Should doctors be given the legal right to end the life of others with due and necessary assistance or assisted suicide? The film uses powerful testimonies and expert opinion from both sides of the issue to uncover how these highly disputed laws affect society over time.

Panels will include Father C. Ryan McCarthy, Indiana Catholic Conference executive director; Glenn Tebbe, Catholic legislative affairs assistant; and Dr. Rafael Rosario and a hospice/palliative care nurse. There is no charge to attend. However, free will offerings will be accepted. All funds collected will be donated to the office of educational outreach by Indiana state legislators.

Registration is requested online by Oct 16 at www.catholiccenterindy.com/events. For additional information, contact Beichi Horn at 317-359-4673, ext. 119 or beichhorn@archindy.org.

Retreat for a list of events for the next four weeks as posted to The Criterion, log on to www.archindy.org/events.

October 9
Church of the Immaculate Conception, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods. Holy Prayer Service, theme “That All May Be One”; 7-8 p.m., silent and spoken prayers, simple music, silence. Information: 812-535-2952 or mgovac@spsmw.org. St. Paul Hermanite, 50 S. 17th Ave., Beech Grove. Ave Maria Guild. 3:30-8:30 p.m. Information: 317-235-3887 or vglenn@archindy.org. Oldenburg Franciscan Center, 22143 Main St., Oldenburg. Biblical Archaeology in Jordan, presented by Father Christopher Craig of Prince of Peace Parish in Madison, information and artifacts from archaeological digs, be joined in Jordan and how they provide insight on Scripture, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m., $20 includes lunch. Information and registration: 812-357-6585 or ebben@spsmw.org. October 10
Father Thomas Seccia Memorial High School, 5000 Nowland Ave., Indianapolis. Open House, for prospective students and families, 6-8 p.m., welcome pep rally, scholarship information, tours, meet and greet. Registration requested. www.seccia.org/openhouse. Information: 317-352-3255, mndina@seccia.org. October 11
Father Thomas Seccia Memorial High School, 5000 Nowland Ave., Indianapolis. Open House, for prospective students and families, 6-8 p.m., welcome pep rally, scholarship information, tours, meet and greet. Registration requested. www.seccia.org/openhouse. Information: 317-352-3255, mndina@seccia.org.

October 12-21
Downtown Square, Rockville. St. Joseph Parish, Riviera Club, 5640 N. Illinois St., in Indianapolis will be held at the Riviera Club, 5640 N. Illinois St., in Indianapolis. The program will help deepen an understanding of the importance of belonging and help participants discover and affirm that God is with them in their struggles and hope. The retreat is open to all faiths. The cost to attend is $190, which includes room and board, simple meal at 5:30 p.m. followed by prayer, 6 p.m. Information: 317-352-2952, mejvanvelse@archindy.org.†

October 13
CYO Camp Rancho Framasa, 2230 Clay Luck Road, Nashville. Father/Daughter Day, climbing tower, canoeing/kayaking, games, cake, archery, night hikes, campfire, prayer service, 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m., $25 per child, $45 for adults. Information: 317-237-4297, kathy@psfr.org.

October 14
St. Thomas Aquinas Church, 4625 N. Kenwood Ave., Indianapolis. Mass in French, 12:30 p.m. Information: 317-627-7729 or forad2014@gmail.com.

October 15
St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) Church, 4270 E. 13th St., Indianapolis. Class of ’63 monthly gathering, 6 p.m. Information: Mass, optional dinner after. Information: 317-408-6396.

October 16
Our Lady of Peace Cemetery and Mausoleum, 9091 Homeravest Road, Indianapolis. Moonlight Memorial, 2 p.m. at Oak Ridge Road, Carmel (Laayette Cemetery). †

October 17
Catholics Returning Home: A Retreat for separated and divorced Catholics offered at Fatima on Oct. 26-28“Being and Belonging: A Retreat for Separated and Divorced Catholics” with Father Brie Anne (Eichhorn) Varick at 50 S. 17th Ave., Beech Grove, Indianapolis. Our Lady of the Rosary Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., in Indianapolis, on the weekend of Oct. 16-20 starting Friday evening and ending by 1:30 p.m. on Sunday. The retreat is sponsored by the archdiocesan Office of Marriage and Family Life. Father James Farrell and a team of divorced men and women will facilitate. The program will help deepen an understanding of the healing process, increase a sense of belonging and help participants discover and affirm that Catholics who are seeking answers to questions about returning to the Church, each of the sessions will cover a different topic and updates on the Catholic faith, attendance at all six sessions is recommended.

Light refreshments will be served. For more information, contact Jo Hurbanek at 317-859-4673, ext. 119 or e-mail hurbanek@sccsf.cc.

October 18

October 19
The Thomas More Center, Bellarmine University, 2001 Newburg Road, Louisville, Ky. “Awakening the Creative Spirit: Inspired by Thomas Merton,” Conference, commemorating the 50th anniversary of Merton’s death, $75 includes refreshments, lunch and cheese farewell reception. Registration required for workshop and speaker list: www.mertonawakening.org/eellyn@archindy.org.†

October 20
Holy Name of Jesus Parish, 21 W 16th St., Beech Grove. Altar Society Fall Rummage Sale, linens, clothing, electronics, dishes, jewelry and more, 8 a.m.-4 p.m. Information: 317-784-8660, pitfcmater@archindy.net.

October 21
St. Charles Borromeo Parish, 213 W Ripley St., Milan. Harvest Dinner and Fundraiser, roast pork dinners with sides and dessert, country store, great prize raffle, quilts, cash prizes, 4-7 p.m., $10 adults, $5 ages 5-12, infant to age 4 free. Mass 5 p.m. Information: 812-654-7051, st.charlesborr@yahoo.com.

October 22
Holy Spirit Parish, 7243 E. 10th St., Indianapolis. Fall Family Tour, Stream Cliff Tea Room and Winery in Comiskey, Elfert Collage Winery in Batesville, Holfkamp Winery in Summam, 8:30 a.m. downtown, $75 per person, includes wine tasting, lunch and snacks. Reservations: Rose Schellhorn, 317-356-4412, rosed4239@comcast.net.

October 23
Oldenburg Franciscan Center, 22143 Main St., Oldenburg. Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods. Sacred Heart Retreat for separated and divorced Catholics, 8:30 a.m.-noon, $55 includes refreshments, lunch and cheese farewell reception. Registration required for workshop and speaker list: www.mertonawakening.org/eellyn@archindy.org.†
Napoleon parishioners set their faith on fire, hope to spread it to others

By Sean Gallagher

NAPOLEON—“Set your faith on fire.” That is what the members of St. Maurice Parish in Napoleon have sought to do during the past year.

That goal was a theme for the life of the Batesville Deanery faith community, shaping adult faith formation presentations, a parish mission, homilies and prayers of the faithful at Mass.

T-shirts that featured the theme were made and distributed among parishioners.

About 100 parishioners of all ages gathered at the parish on Sept. 22, the feast of St. Maurice, to celebrate the completion of the year in which the theme guided the life of the faith community. Parishioners shared a pitch in dinner.

During a sing-along, they sang several classic Gospel songs such as “I’ll Fly Away” and “Just a Closer Walk with Thee.”

A candlelight procession to the parish’s church followed. And there prayer service took place in which a new theme for the year to come was introduced. It is “Growing in Faith, Living in Hope, Acting in Love.”

Franciscan Sister Shirley Gerth, St. Maurice’s parish life coordinator, said the year just completed was “something that needed to be celebrated by all.”

“They take their faith seriously here,” Sister Shirley said. “The past year was a way to demonstrate and live out their faith. The camaraderie and unity in the parish is very important.”

She experienced that camaraderie in the way they sing out their faith, which was on display during the Sept. 22 celebration and at every Mass.

“The entire parish is the choir,” Sister Shirley said. “And it’s not just the singing. They’re participating fully in the Mass.”

St. Maurice’s faith formation committee formed both themes, helped guide the implementation of the first theme and is now considering ways to implement the current one.

St. Maurice parishioner Laurie Husted is a member of the committee. Looking back over the past year, she admired how parishioners, at the invitation of parish leaders, wrote about what their faith means to them, statements which were published in the weekly bulletin.

“Every event through the year, we tried to touch on the theme of setting your faith on fire,” Husted said. “Reading what fellow parishioners—what it is that animates their faith life—was fruitful.”

Parishioner Jack Firkenhoff, who leads the faith formation committee, offered a reflection during the prayer service. He suggested that the theme of the year just completed presents a challenge.

“Throughout the year, all of us came to recognize that the faith being on fire is not a static thing,” he said. “We must individually and as a parish continue to stoke the flames unless it diminish and go out.”

Regarding the theological virtue of hope, Firkenhoff said that it is “confidence in the promises and goodness of God.”

“Hope is confidence in the promise of eternal life,” he said. “Hope is confidence is the self-giving action of Jesus. Hope is confidence that one’s sins are forgiven. Hope is confidence in the unlimited love of God.”

Firkenhoff closed his reflection by speaking about Christian love. “Acting in love must comprise all of God’s adopted children, loving all of our brothers and sisters,” he said. “We’re even called to love our enemies. … We are expected to treat them … as a fellow son or daughter of God.”

Before the prayer service, Husted expressed her hope that the “set your faith on fire” theme at St. Maurice in the past year will spread to people beyond the parish.

“We want to start looking out in how we can be of service to others,” Husted said. “How can we bring our faith that has been animated to others in the community?”

Sister Shirley shares with Husted hope for the members of the parish she leads.

“I hope [the year to come] is another opportunity for them to deepen what happened this past year,” she said. “It’s exciting.”
40 DAYS

continued from page 1

but he credits its founding to the story of one person committed to ending abortion.

"My wife and I were having a dinner party, and this one guy, David, asked if I could talk to me privately," he said.

David ranted about the killing of innocent babies "right in his backyard." He couldn't understand "why people and whole communities are praying day and night to stop this butchering of babies right in their mother's womb."

The next day, Bereit discoursed with other pro-life advocates about how to make a more concerted effort to rid their town of Planned Parenthood through prayer.

"There was one thing that God convicted on our hearts," he said. "It was the time frame of 40 days."

He noted the repeated use in the Bible of 40 days as indicating both a time of transition and a time of testing faithfulness.

"I believe that God is testing our faithfulness in this time of need in this nation that once upon a time was founded on the unchangeable right to life," Bereit stated. "And look how we've fallen from that."

David took the night shift for all 40 days of that first campaign. Bereit asked him why he was so passionate about the subject that night at the dinner party.

The answer left him speechless. David's daughter had been conceived the year before that he, David, had almost been aborted.

David realized "abortion is not some abstract issue," he said. "It's not just some debate about the Supreme Court. This is not an election issue. This is not a once-a-year thing we talk about on Sunday. It's life and death, good and evil, heaven and hell.

"Some young man made it personal, ... a movement was spawned that is now in all 50 states, 50 countries, 76 countries abroad, with more than 14,000 lives, closed 96 abortion centers and helped 177 abortion workers out of the abortion industry. -Because of one person answering the call."

"Is it you? And if not, then who?"

To further exemplify the impact one person can have, Bereit shared the story of an event that took place in the town of Salem, Ill., in 1837.

That evening, a young man went to a religious camp meeting. There, he heard a preacher named Dr. Peter Ackers rally against a "great injustice," as he looked to the possibility that perhaps someone in their midst might be the one to end it.

"The next day, Bereit said, the young man walked into his place of work and told his partner about the prior evening. "When they heard that story, he said, "I couldn't shake from myself the conviction that indeed I have a role in helping to end this great injustice."

"The young man was Abraham Lincoln, and the "great injustice" was slavery. "I'll bet I'd like to ask that question to Ackers," said Bereit. "Who can tell but perhaps the man or the woman that God calls to life on Day 14, God calls to end abortion in Indianapolis, in Indiana, across the nation, in the world? Is it you? And if it's not you, then who?"

"It is you. It is here. It is now. The entire mid-August release of the Pennsylvania grand jury report covering decades of alleged sexual misconduct of former Cardinal Theodore E. McCarrick, the Catholic Church in the United States is still coming to grips with the time frame of 40 days."

"We're looking at the possibility that perhaps someone in their midst might be the one to end it."

"When you and I decide not to treat [abortion] as an issue, but decide to make it something... and answer, 'God, show me what you want me to do with my time, my talent, my treasure,' that's when the truth starts to happen, that is when lives will be saved, and that when abortion will begin to end. It's you. You are the one God is calling to."

"To those students questioning the value of their role in the fight against abortion, Bereit offered assurance.

"There are gifts you have that I don't have," he said. "There are people you can reach that nobody else can reach.

"Whether it's volunteering or educating yourself or others, I want you to reach out to your peers who are all the crosses of Planned Parenthood and the abortion industry. You're the one who can speak to them, to help them see if they find themselves in an unexpected pregnancy.""

"Is it hard? Yes. Is it worth it? Yes?"

But Bereit didn't leave the fight entirely in the hands of the students. "There are two things I want everyone to commit to, number one, is..."

The day after delivering a keynote address at the Right to Life of Indianapolis "Celebrate Life" dinner and fundraiser, 40 Days for Life founder and former CEO David Bereit rallied the crowd for the first day of the 40 Days for Life fall campaign in front of the Indianapolis Planned Parenthood abortion facility on Sept. 26. (Photo by Natalie Hoeter)

The woman who was with her, "This young lady was one of the ones who was saved because of these people right here. This lady's mom chose life because of the prayers and the love and support of those people."

The two women Bereit spoke with earlier in the day were also at the event. "I introduced Larelle to them," he said. "Their eyes filled with tears, because they had never seen any proof that their suffering was still alive because of their choices."

"I hope you one day you get to meet a child who is not a product of abortion, or you fulfilled your call, and you said, 'yes,' he told the audience. "And when you meet that child, you'll understand how incredibly worth it all of your efforts are.""

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When 40 Days for Life founder David Bereit spoke in Indianapolis on Sept. 25 at a Right to Life of Indianapolis fundraiser, he shared stories to emphasize how one person can make a difference in the pro-life movement.

He knows such stories from around the world. But one of the greatest examples he said he knows took place in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.

Two years ago, Bereit met 18-month-old Larelle Thompson, whose mother, Larelle, is one of the many individuals participating in the spring 40 Days for Life campaign in 2018.

"She was due in October, March 16, 2018. But they found out that the pregnancy had a problem, that in fact, what they had was a malformation," he said. "Larelle's mom called from inside Planned Parenthood to her abortion appointment, and said, 'The baby is not viable. I am not going to continue with it."

"The woman who was with her said, 'Wait. You can still choose.' ""We're going to pray for the baby," she said.

"Larelle lived, dammit," he said. "I quipped. 'I was driving that morning, and this [Planned Parenthood abortion facility in Indianapolis] was our actual destination.' "

Kile's phone is also used as the Gabriel Project hotline. While driving to the abortion facility, they discussed the medical risks of abortion, the tendency of post-abortive women to become addicted to alcohol or drugs, their tendency to suffer from depression and from an inability to develop and maintain long-term relationships.

"There is also discussion of ultrasound technology available through the Gabriel Project. ""We do whatever we can as far as offering to talk, to pray,"' he said. "'Larelle had an ultrasound, and she came back several times for more ultrasounds. We like to have them do that as often as they can to develop a relationship with their baby."

She even set up and took Larelle's mom to her doctor's appointment, and a pregnant mother did not have a doctor.

"Needless to say, her mommy chose life. Larelle lived, dammit. Larelle smiles at the little girl in her arms."

"It is truly love."

"My husband Greg and I both fell in love with her first sight," said Kile. "We can now call and get her pretty much whenever we want."

The couple, empty-nesters who are members of St. BARNABAS Parish in Indianapolis, have kept Larelle overnight many times since her birth.

"There is nothing I wouldn't do for this little girl," she said. "She's beautiful, smart and healthy. I love spending time with her. I wanted to take her here [at the 40 Days for Life rally] for David to be able to see her again."

Bereit even announced Larelle's presence at the rally, walking over with a broad smile to give her a hug and a kiss on the head. "Her dad has told me time and again that she is his daughter's life," said Kile. "I say, 'I did not God did. I was just an instrument.'"
By Natalie Hoefer

This October is a noteworthy month for St. John Paul II. The 40th anniversary of his election as pope falls on Oct. 16, and his feast day is just six days later, on Oct. 22.

It stands to reason, then, that St. John Paul II Parish in Sellersburg will host an event in October to celebrate its patron. They have invited speakers to lead a presentation and holy hour—not on the saint’s life, not on his papacy, but on ... Divine Mercy?”

If the theme seems a bit astray from the topic of St. John Paul II, think again. It was a big proponent of the Divine Mercy devotion—he’s the one who instituted it, explains Father Thomas Clegg, pastor of St. John Paul II Parish. “It will be a great way to celebrate our patronal feast day.”

The Divine Mercy devotion springs from apparitions and internal messages (known as locutions) of Christ to Our Lady of Mercy Sister Faustina Kowalska in Poland in the 1930s. She documented the messages in a diary, messages that focused on mercy and his desire for Sister—now Saint—Faustina to spread this message and devotion to the Divine Mercy throughout the world.

After her death, the diary was translated and sent to the Vatican. But the translation, due to errors in the translation, the Divine Mercy devotion was banned by the Vatican in 1959. Enter Archbishop Karol Wojtyla of Krakow, Poland. In 1965, he ordered investigations into the heroic virtues of Sister Faustina. He also requested a critical analysis of her diary in its correctly translated form.

Thanks to his efforts, the Vatican lifted the ban on the Divine Mercy devotion in April of 1978. Six months later, then-Cardinal Wojtyla became Pope John Paul II. Parishioner Phyllis Burkholder, who helped organize the event, says it is “really going to celebrate the life and legacy of the patron saint of our [parish].”

“It was the mercy of mercy and the Divine Mercy devotion that defined his pontificate,” she explains. Referring to paragraph 172 of the diary, she notes that Christ “told St. Faustina that from Poland would come the spark that prepares the world for his final coming—which of course we have no idea when it will happen. The three Polish saints of the 20th century—St. John Paul II, St. Maximilian Kolbe, St. Faustina—have kept that ‘spark’ alive, leading up to the election of Pope John Paul II.”

The free, public event on Oct. 21 will be presented by Dave and Joan Maroney, founders and directors of Mother of Mercy Messengers (MOMM).

Founded in 1999, MOMM is an apostolate of the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception’s National Shrine of Divine Mercy in Stockbridge, Mass. Its mission is to share and assist others in sharing the Divine Mercy message and devotion.

“The Divine Mercy message is so relevant today because so many people are realizing they’ve made serious mistakes in the past or are living in difficult situations,” says Joan. “People are falling into despair and losing hope. They need to know that the Lord ... wants to reconcile us all back to him, to help us find peace in our families, our hearts, our country and our world.”

The event at St. John Paul II (one of six MOMM events scheduled in central and southern Indiana in October—see related article on this page) will begin with a multi-media presentation from 6-7 p.m. called “The Spark from Poland Ignites Young Hearts and Families.” From 7-8 p.m. the Maroneys will lead participants in a holy hour of hymns, prayers and meditations before the Blessed Sacrament. Priests will also be available for the sacrament of reconciliation.

“We try to do a day of reflection—or an evening, in this case—every fall,” says Father Clegg. “There’ve always been speakers. With the holy hour, this one will be more spiritual and devotional, which I think will be good for the parish.”

The next day—St. John Paul II’s feast day—the Maroneys will offer two age-appropriate presentations similar to the previous night’s topic but geared for students of the parish’s school. “Christ told St. Faustina, ‘By means of this image I shall grant many graces to souls,’” says Joan, quoting from page 742 of the saint’s diary. “From 7 to 8 p.m., we will give all the students blessed images of the Divine Mercy.”

Burkholder hopes that by focusing on Divine Mercy in honor of the feast of St. John Paul II, parishioners “will have a greater understanding of God’s mercy;” and “see the connection between their parish patron and the Divine Mercy message. St. John Paul II was such a gift. He wrote so much and contributed so much.”

Father Clegg states his goals for the event through the lens of the parish’s mission statement.

“As with all parish spiritual opportunities, we hope [this event] inspires growth,” he says. “We want people learning more about Jesus, following him more closely.

“Our number one mission is to form people who have a personal relationship with Jesus and feel comfortable sharing their faith with others. With this event, as with all we do, we hope to draw people into that relationship.”

(The Divine Mercy presentation, which is free and open to the public, will take place in the church at the parish’s St. Paul Campus, 218 Sellers Ave., in Sellersburg, on Oct. 21. The presentation is from 6-7 p.m., followed by a holy hour and confessions from 7:40 p.m. For more information, contact Phyllis Burkholder at 812-246-2252 or Esther Endris at 812-883-1563.)

Divine Mercy presentations scheduled in October at area parishes, schools

Joan and David Maroney, founders of Mother of Mercy Messengers (MOMM), will present on the topic of the Divine Mercy message and devotion multiple times in central and southern Indiana in October.

MOMM was founded in 1999 as an apostolate of the Marian Fathers’ National Shrine of Divine Mercy in Stockbridge, Mass. Its goal is to share the message of Divine Mercy and to assist others in doing the same.

Throughout the month of October, they will offer presentations and holy hours in the archdiocese at parishes and their schools. They will also share their message in schools in Indianapolis (private event), and at a parish in Hamilton, Ohio, in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.

Unless otherwise noted, all events are free and open to the public:

Oct. 7-10, St. Peter Church, 1207 East Road, Broville. • Oct. 7: 7-8 a.m., Mass, 6 p.m. “The Spark from Poland Ignites the World.” 7 p.m. Holy Hour for America including the Rosary Church to Coast and confessions.

• Oct. 8 at St. Michael Church, 145 S. Michael Blvd., Brookville: The Spark from Poland Ignites Young Hearts,” 12:45 p.m. grades K-4, 2 p.m. grades 5-8. While all are welcome, presentations are geared toward students.

• Oct. 9: 6:45 p.m. “The Spark from Poland Ignites Young Hearts.” Parents are encouraged to attend with students so that the entire family may benefit.

Information: Clara Moody, 812-623-6700 or claramoody@msa.com


• Oct. 16: morning, “The Spark from Poland Ignites Young Hearts,” 9-10 a.m. grades K-4, 10:15-11:15 a.m. grades 5-8. While all are welcome, presentations will be geared toward students.

• Oct. 16, evening: 6-6:30 p.m. Mass, 6:45 p.m. “Divine Mercy for America,” followed by holy hour and confession.

• Oct. 17: 6:30-7:45 p.m. “The Spark from Poland Ignites Young Hearts and Families.” Similar to the Oct. 16 morning presentations but geared toward the age groups present and family life. Information: St. Louis Parish office, 812-934-3204 or riehlinge@stlouisparish.org

Oct. 19-20, St. Joseph Church, 312 E. High St., Corydon. • Oct. 19: 7-9 p.m. free family event, “The Spark from Poland Ignites Young Hearts” and holy hour. Register by Oct. 17 by contacting Mary Olges at 812-225-8306 or marolges@msa.com, or Mary Hall at 812-267-0200.

Oct. 21-22, St. John Paul II Parish, St. Paul Church, 218 Sellers Ave., Sellersburg. (See related article.)

• Oct. 21: 6-7 p.m. “The Spark from Poland Ignites Young Hearts and Families,” 7-8 p.m. holy hour.

• Oct. 22 (at St. John Paul II School, 105 St. Paul St., Sellersburg): “The Spark from Poland Ignites Young Hearts,” 11:30 a.m.-12:15 p.m. grades 6-8, 12:30-1:15 p.m. grades 1-5.

Information: For more information, contact Phyllis Burkholder at 812-246-2252 or Esther Endris at 812-883-1563.

Oct. 23-24, Cathedral High School, Indianapolis (private event).


• Oct. 26: Holy Spirit School presentations, 9 a.m. grades K-5, 10:30 a.m. grades 6-8. (Similar to Oct. 25 topic, all are welcome, but presentations are geared toward students.)


• Oct. 14: 3:30-8:30 p.m. “Divine Mercy for America.”

Information: For Oct. 15: 10 a.m. “The Spark from Poland Ignites Young Hearts” (Similar to Oct. 13 presentation but geared toward students and parents).

Information: Birdie Ramsey, 513-460-6226 or birdie.ramsey@gmail.com. If your group, parish or school would like to have the Mother of Mercy Messengers give a presentation on Divine Mercy, fill out a form at www.thedivinemercy.org/mommm/contact.php, or contact Joan Maroney at maroneyjane@gmail.com or 830.654.7765.
is richness. Today, we belong to the United States. Belonging relates to the goal of respecting cultural differences and describes how relationships across cultural boundaries take shape. Today, we practice ownership. Ownership relates to the goal of healthy interaction. There is a sense of joint ownership and trust that allows for generous interaction with one another.

Father Valdes then shared a message that President Ronald Reagan delivered during his inauguration address in 1981.

“President Ronald Reagan wrote: ‘If we look to the answer as to why for so many years we achieved so much—prospered as no other people on Earth—it was because here, in this land, we unleashed the energy and individual genius of man to a greater extent than has ever been done before. Freedom and dignity of the individual have been more available and assured here than in any other place on Earth. The price for this freedom at times has been high, but we have never been unwilling to pay that price.’”

Father Valdes then turned to thoughts of “the American dream” that has captivated and inspired people since the country’s earliest history.

“Our American dream is fulfilled as we make the Oath of Allegiance during this naturalization ceremony,” the priest declared. “As we become citizens, we are going to make a promise to obey the law of the United States, because the United States is a country of laws.

“Today, this is a special occasion and special day because our American dream becomes true.”

‘To live our lives in freedom’

In closing, Father Valdes focused on the promise, the hope and the responsibilities that have always marked the lives of Americans.

“The pioneers came here because they wanted to live in freedom, and to have freedom of religion, to have economic opportunity and to escape persecution. From now on, as citizens, we can participate in [this] democracy by voting in elections and serving in a jury. We have the right to life and liberty. There are two rights of everyone living in the United States that we can practice: freedom of speech and freedom of religion. Religious freedom is one of America’s core tenets. I came here from Mexico [so] I can enjoy the freedoms guaranteed by this early vision of America as a haven for tolerance.”

Father Valdes finished by saluting his fellow new American citizens for their persistence in pursuing their American dream.

“Self-determination and an independent spirit are still two main attributes of the American character. The Rio Grande flows along the border between Mexico and Texas before finally emptying into the Gulf of Mexico. At Big Bend, the river makes a U-turn. The canyon, formed by erosion, proves that even mountains are no match for the power of persistence.”

Father Juan Valdes is sworn in as an American citizen during a naturalization ceremony in Indianapolis on Dec. 13, 2017. (Submitted photo)

“Our American dream is fulfilled as our American citizen is one of America’s core tenets. I came here from Mexico [so] I can enjoy the freedoms guaranteed by this early vision of America as a haven for tolerance.”

Father Valdes became an American citizen and delivered his talk on Dec. 13, 2017. The thrill of that honor and his new status haven’t diminished in the nearly 10 months that have passed.

“It was incredible—a dream come true,” says Father Valdes, who has also previously served in the archdiocese as associate pastor of Holy Spirit Parish in Indianapolis and as administrator of St. Mary Parish in Lanesville.

As Election Day nears, he’s looking forward to voting for the first time as an American citizen.

He’s also focused on leading the members of St. Anthony Parish, where about 75 percent of the parishioners are Hispanic and originally came from Hispanic backgrounds.

For many of them, he says, there are the challenges of learning a new language and adapting to a new culture. But there is also the foundation of their Catholic faith.

“Faith means a lot,” says Father Valdes, who has also assisted in Hispanic ministry in the archdiocese. “They find strength and comfort in their faith. Their faith encourages them to have hope and to endure the challenges of their lives.”

So does their belief in the American dream that has connected immigrants for generations.

“The American dream is still there,” Father Valdes says. “This country means having a better life, having a way of living, and having the opportunity for work and study and health care. Everyone wants to have the things they cannot have at home. When they come here, it brings them happiness.”

See your ad here next week!
Saints show that holiness can be found in everyday life

By David Gibson

The gunman who fired the shot in El Salvador on March 24, 1980, that killed San Salvador’s revered Archbishop Oscar A. Romero while he celebrated Mass in a hospital chapel surely did not aim to help create a martyr, whose life and legacy one day would be honored throughout the world. Instead, the gunman aimed to dull the social effects of Archbishop Romero’s complete commitment to his nation’s poor and to all those suffering the harms of continuing assaults on their human rights.

The gunman’s shot will reverberate again in a way he would not have welcomed when the archbishop, declared a martyr for the faith in February 2015, is canonized in Rome on Oct. 14. On that day, Archbishop Romero’s legacy of committed love and service will be on full display for the entire world to see.

His legacy matters in the Church, for as Pope Francis writes in “Gaudete et Exsultate” (“Rejoice and Be Glad”), his spring 2018 apostolic exhortation on the assembly that will focus on the difficult challenges young people encounter in contemporary societies when discerning what to make of their lives and how to live by faith.

Oh, and did I mention that a saint’s legacy may be complex and far-reaching to this world? A canonization constitutes an emphatic but plain and clear statement that holiness can be found in this world; holiness is within our reach with the help of God’s grace.

“God asks everything of us, yet he also gives everything to us.” He enters human lives “to bring them to fulfillment,” Pope Francis states in his apostolic exhortation (#175). He writes, “We are all called to be holy by living our lives with love and by bearing witness in everything we do, wherever we find ourselves” (#14).

Canonized together with Archbishop Romero will be the very pope who in 1977 named him to lead the San Salvador Archdiocese, Blessed Paul VI. Their canonizations will take place during a world Synod of Bishops assembly that will focus on the difficult challenges young people encounter in contemporary societies when discerning what to make of their lives and how to live by faith.

Oh, and did I mention that a saint’s legacy may be complex and far-reaching?

It was Pope Paul who, as the Second Vatican Council neared its 1965 conclusion, restored and re-established the Synod of Bishops as a body representing the Church around the world, a body asked to examine and deliberate key questions and developments in today’s Church and world.

So the Synod of Bishops is part of this pope’s legacy, along with his noble efforts to bring the Second Vatican Council to a successful conclusion after the death of St. John XXIII. It was Pope Paul, too, whose 1968 encyclical “Humanae Vitae” (“On Human Life”) stirred concern and respect for human life in the womb, for the meaning and value of married love, as well as for the worth of all human life.

Then there was “Evangeli Nuntiandi” (“On Evangelization in the Modern World”), his 1975 apostolic exhortation proclaiming the Gospel in our times. That message could be viewed as a seedbed for the major focus in today’s Church on “the new evangelization.”

A glance at Blessed Paul’s legacy, moreover, cannot overlook his social justice writings, particularly the 1967 encyclical on the development of nations, “Populorum Progressio” (“On the Development of Peoples”). Development is “the new name for peace,” the encyclical famously proclaimed (#76).

A pope’s legacy, almost by definition, is vast, multifaceted, and it is in the case of the Church’s new “St. Paul”—St. Paul VI. It is customary on the occasion of a canonization to recall a saint’s legacy. Equally important, however, is remembering the saint’s holiness and what that might mean now for the lives of Christians.

For, while a canonization is first about someone, in this case about Archbishop Romero and Pope Paul VI, it is also a declaration too about this basic purpose of life in Christ—about holiness. Because canonizations are all about holiness, they have a basic religious educational dimension. A canonization asks who is holy and what holiness looks like.

To recognize the holiness found in our surrounding world it is necessary to take ordinary life seriously. Pope Francis indicates in “Rejoice and Be Glad.” After all, holiness may rather simply mean finding “a more perfect way of doing what we are already doing,” he writes (#17).

There is, moreover, nothing to fear about holiness, he affirms. “It will take away none of your energy, vitality or joy” (#32).

Thus, Pope Francis proposes that people who are married can find holiness “by loving and caring” for each other, “as Christ does for the Church.” Those working for a living are counseled to “be holy by laboring with integrity and skill in the service” of others, and those in positions of authority are encouraged to work “for the common good” and to renounce “personal gain” (#14).

The Lord “wants us to be saints,” but he does not want us to settle for a “bland” existence. Pope Francis states. He believes this is what makes saints so surprising and confounding.

For, through their enthusiasm about sharing true life,” saints inspire us “to abandon a dull and dreary mediocrity” (#138).

(“Evangeli Nuntiandi” is famously proclaimed (#76).)

Then-Archbishop Oscar Romero is pictured in an undated photo greeting worshipers in San Salvador, El Salvador. Gunned down in 1980 for his public defense of the poor and of human rights, Archbishop Romero was declared a martyr in 2015, and will be canonized a saint on Oct. 14 at the Vatican. (CNS photo/Oscar Daza)

A canonization constitutes an emphatic, but plain and clear statement that holiness can be found in this world; holiness is within our reach with the help of God’s grace.
The Human Side
Fr. Eugene Hemrick

We must remember in life that one thing leads to another

American essayist and poet Ralph Waldo Emerson said, “Sow a thought and you reap an action; sow an act and you reap a habit; sow a habit and you reap a character; sow a character and you reap your destiny.” Within this quote is a facet of life: What we think, believe and practice impacts our life consequences.

Postulant Alexander DiFiore expresses this thought in stating, “As a twig is bent, so is the tree inclined.”

Both poets point out the progression of one thing leading to another. When we apply this principle to the qualities of love, it paints a beautiful picture of peace and self-repair. Sow beneficence and you reap mercy, sow peace and you reap joy; sow the joy of almsgiving and you reap the good-giving excellence. Beneficence is beingheartedness leading to mercy, then peace, joy and almsgiving. Our world is filled with heartheaded people practicing the above progression of love that could change a lot of hearts. Unfortunately, there also exist some hearthardened people who mirror its antithesis: the heartless people. This heartlessness gives us one reason for this: They indirectly warn against focusing on one’s present well being with light concern where it will lead in the future. Envisioning a progression of events leading to the future is massively important.

St. Ioseph, a Franciscan, stated, “A prudent man is one who sees as it were from afar, for his sight is keen, and he foresees the event of uncertainties.” Here prudence encourages us to leave our little world and look down the bigger picture to better handle future challenges.

One way to describe our postmodern times is a here-and-now age that often ignores fixed or unchanging concerns, leaving the future to care for itself.

Take, for example, those who rationalize their conservative positions by President Theodore Roosevelt that can be found in the Cox corridor of the House of Representatives: the “religion of money” promises, “The nation behaves well if it treats the natural resources as assets which it may exploit to their utmost benefit and improve.”

Biggermindedness looks at the connection between personal concerns and the Church’s reasons, reminding us that one thing leads to another and to take seriously what might otherwise be ignored.

I want to plead with all of my fellow priests in the Church, even to their people and discerning a path forward.

It is more important than ever before to pray for our entire Catholic family as we advocate for reform and accountability. This is a moment of great pain, but as Father McGuire said, we must address this futility and careful communications in our own suffering and hurt our pastors and our bishops, but to do so respectfully.

Many bishops, including Father McGuire’s own, are listening to the people and discerning a path forward.

83 years ago, when I interviewed Patti Lamb, an exemplary woman who founded a network of shelters in New Jersey for homeless teenagers. She was encouraged by her mother, a woman who demonstrated how the inspiration for her mother moved her to say, “Lord, make me a channel of your peace.”

This prayer, normally attributed to St. Francis of Assisi, but not written by him, shows humility in recognizing that we are God’s and that we are peace-bearers we need to think of others’ needs first. Given today’s climate and the tremendous need for healing, justice and peace, reflecting on this prayer helps me a little.

Since Oct. 4 is the feast day of St. Francis, I wanted to reflect more on how the patron saint of ecology is also a person who cared about the poor and inspired thousands to follow Jesus.

St. Francis began his life as a son of a wealthy banking family in Assisi, but after experiencing war and captivity, he started a conversion process. In 1205, he prayed in the chapel of San Damiano and had a mystical experience where he heard God say, “Francis, repair my Church, which as you see is falling into ruin.”

He took this charge literally, and began to rebuild the church’s dilapidated structure, but later realized they were not meant to help repair the 13th-century Church, which was affected by corruption. “When praying before the crucifix, St. Francis asked God for a heart that is clean from darkness and for ‘true faith, certitude, and perfect charity’ to do God’s will.

Like many saints and holy people, St. Francis was not a godly person all the time. He had aинаsthetic life, and for his cloister of St. Francis of Assisi provides a concrete example of living the mission of peace, justice and nonviolence, jeden apart by suffering, hatred and violence.”

As and Franciscan Father Richard Rohr said, “The mark of a true Franciscan is devotion to the Gospel.”

Like other peacemakers, St. Francis knew that ‘power does not announce peace; justice and solidarit announce peace; Hammond said. That might be why he is also a symbol of peace for people of many faiths today.

Years ago, Brazilian theologian Leonardo Boff wrote: “Lord, where there is darkness, may I bring light. You are the true light that enlightens every person who comes into the world.”

I am praying on the part asking that “truth shine through our sincere hearts, our humanizing gestures, our pure intentions shine through our sincere hearts, our certain hope and perfect charity to do God’s will.”

I’ve been thinking a lot about the progression of events leading to the future. Envisioning a biggermindedness looks at the connection between personal concerns and the Church’s reasons, reminding us that one thing leads to another and to take seriously what might otherwise be ignored.

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The Book of Genesis is the source of the first reading for this weekend. Among the first five books of the Bible, Genesis reveals that God is the creator of all. He gives life. God also created humanity, in the genders of male and female. Further, it was God’s will that the two genders, united in one male and one female, complement each other and live with each other. The Scriptures at times are accused of belittling women. Certainly, the Scriptures were all written within varying cultural contexts. To an extent, they were influenced by these cultural contexts. The culture surrounding the development of Genesis was not strictly Hebraic. Rather, it was enveloped by paganism. In this paganism, women were little better than animals. Genesis, however, takes pains to declare the dignity of women equal to that of men. This is the meaning of the story that Eve was created from Adam’s rib. Adam and Eve, man and woman, were one in their nature. It was a revolutionary, fundamental basis for looking at both men and women. All genders possess an equal dignity, because all are created by God and infused with an eternal soul. Finally, every person, regardless of everything else, holds the supreme dignity of being God’s own, God’s created, each a physical, earthly sign of God. This reading is a powerful testament to the historic, Jewish and Christian concept of marriage. Orndained by God, marriage should never be defiled by exploitation, selfishness or insincerity. For its second reading, the Church offers us a passage from the Epistle to the Hebrews. It also reaffirms the dignity of each human. According to the reading, humans who love and are faithful to God will one day rejoice in the presence of God. They will be with God. The key to attaining a place in God’s presence is Jesus.

Because Jesus is human as well as God, Jesus loves all people as brothers and sisters. St. Mark’s Gospel provides the third reading. It is a familiar passage. The question centers upon the legality before God of divorce itself, not the grounds for divorce. Often it is assumed that this question put to Jesus opened an entirely new debate, and that in replying, Jesus set aside the Law of Moses. Actually, the debate was vigorously underway at the time among persons learned in the Mosaic tradition. No universal agreement remained as to what the Law of Moses meant in this regard. By settling the question, by ending the debate, Jesus appeared in the role of the divine constituted and divinely-empowered representative of God the Father. Jesus set the question in its proper context. Marriage is God’s creation. It is subject to God’s will, and ideally marriage in the hearts of the spouses reflects God’s love. In the same passage, though on another occasion, Jesus blessed the children. Like children everywhere and at all times, these children were innocent, vulnerable, but with great potential, not simply “to succeed” in this life, but to live with God in the eternal life.

Reflection

Fundamentally, these readings call us to a divinely revealed truth so often and so outrageously ignored in the world. Each human being is God’s precious child, God’s priceless masterpiece of creation. No one and no society has the right to demean or compromise this dignity. The agonizing problems of this day and time all spring from refusing to honor all humans as beings of God’s own. So tortured and prejudice reign instead.

My Journey to God

By Kate Burnell

To anyone
From anyone
Sometimes I ask for help and it comes like the Son of God in Revelation or Ezekiel, with fiery eyes that shine like gemstones and victory that flares like flames. Down are cast the devils and demons but I am left in his presence. The fear of the Lord
The fear of the Lord and I look away from his brillance and magnificence and there scared I find the find the peace.

(Chair Kate Burnell is a member of St. Malachi Parish in Broomwood. Photo: A statue of Our Lady of Fatima graces the grounds of Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House in Indianapolis in this Aug. 25 photo.) (Photo by Natalie Hoefier).

The Criterion Friday, October 5, 2018

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Daily Readings

Sunday, October 8

Galatians 1:6-12
Psalm 111:1-2, 7-10
Luke 10:25-37

Tuesday, October 9

St. Denis, bishop, and companions, martyrs
St. John Leonard, priest
Galatians 1:3-24
Psalm 199:1-2, 13-15
Luke 10:38-42

Wednesday, October 10

Galatians 2:1-2, 7-14
Psalm 117:1-2
Luke 11:1-4

Thursday, October 11

St. John XXIII, pope
Galatians 3:1-5
(Responsory) Luke 1:69-75
Luke 11:5-13

Various methods available to focus the mind during praying the rosary

Q: Would appreciate your help with a question I’ve had for a long time. When I am praying the rosary, should I be thinking of the words to the Hail Mary or about the particular mystery I am then on? (Arkansas)

A: I think it’s a matter of personal choice. Whatever best helps to make these moments a time of prayer and of peace, whatever makes you more aware of the presence of God and his love, that is the way to go. I myself like to change it around.

Other times—particularly if I’m tired and creative thought eludes me—I think about the words of the Hail Mary: the angel Gabriel’s greeting to the faith-filled girl of 14 or 15, or Elizabeth’s praise of the one “blessed among women.” I don’t pretend that my technique is fail-safe. Often enough, my thoughts drift to the phone calls I need to make, to the homily still to be written. Distractions are always the challenge, and so sometimes I pray just a decade at a time. I have a “ring rosary” with just 10 beads, and, often, when I’m driving, I put it on my finger and it helps me to focus on Jesus and Mary.

Q: I have always thought it would be better if the Church undid the rule by which we are obliged to attend Sunday Mass under pain of mortal sin. That way, I believe, more people would come to church.

A: I would agree that this is true but, in that scenario, it seems unlikely to me that Church attendance has fallen sharply. But it is only in the fourth century that there began to be any written rules about Church attendance, and this happened first through regional Church councils. Much later, when the first Code of Canon Law was written in 1917, this legislation was defined as a universal rule.

St. John Paul II, in his 1998 apostolic letter “Dies Domini” (“The Lord’s Day”) noted that at first no written rule was necessary due to the “inner need felt so strongly by the Christians of the first centuries,” and that “only later, faced with the falsity of the teaching of the Christian faith, the Church felt it necessary to make explicit the duty to attend Sunday Mass (#47).”

To be sure, over the 52 years I have been ordained a priest, Sunday Mass attendance has fallen sharply. But it seems unlikely to me that Church leaders would cede to this trend by lifting the obligation—especially seeing that the original reason for the rule was that some had fallen away from regular practice.

To your belief that more Catholics would come to Mass if the obligation were lifted, I have not seen any studies that would document this or refute it. I would hope, though, that Catholics who do attend now are motivated more by the good things that happen at Mass. They can be instructed by the word of God, inspired by the presence of other Catholic Christians at prayer and—most of all—strengthened by receiving the Lord in the Eucharist.

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

My Journey to God

From the Memorare

By Kate Burnell

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From anyone
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The fear of the Lord and I look away from his brillance and magnificence and there scared I find the find the peace.

(The Kate Burnell is a member of St. Malachi Parish in Broomwood. Photo: A statue of Our Lady of Fatima graces the grounds of Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House in Indianapolis in this Aug. 25 photo.) (Photo by Natalie Hoefier).

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Volunteer help with cleanup after Florence called an act of ‘faith, love’

NEW Bern, N.C. (CNS)—Nancy Sciara’s ‘insides were shaking’ She woke up one day, unsure of what to expect from the day. Sciara, 84, was widowed 12 days earlier and, as it turned out, a day after that, she sat in her home and watched as wind and rain from Hurricane Florence raged outside a window. It flooded the garage and workshop of her River Bend home and damaged her living room.

Her son, from his home in New Jersey, made calls to try to hire someone to clean. “Nobody came,” she said. “Even for money. We couldn’t even get people to hire.”

But on Sept. 22, four members of the Knights of Columbus arrived at her home armed with wheelbarrows, work gloves and time and service. The volunteers from St. Paul Parish in New Bern lined the street with once-treasured possessions, such as the vise from Sciara’s husband’s workbench, that had become trash.

It was a common scene on Plantation Drive, a residential street in the previously serene golf community, where curbs were buzzed in neighbors’ yards as fallen trees were dealt with. Large, makeshift signs created with spray paint thanked the volunteers. "Unselfishly [created].”

Before the storm, the Johnson family evacuated to Atlanta, where they stayed with family members. When they returned home five days after Hurricane Florence hit, they could not go back to live in their house, which was uninhabitable.

For the time being, they were living with a local couple who opened two rooms in their house to the family. “We’re figuring it out,” Megan Johnson said about their situation. “There’s not any temporary housing. There’s not a hotel room anywhere. It felt helpless being away [in Atlanta]. Coming through the house and working—as grumpy as it is—at least I feel like I am moving to the next step. I know tomorrow is going to be hard, but we are doing it together and we are going to get through it.”

Johnson said that she and her husband are homeowners and were required to have flood insurance because their home was in a flood plain. However, she added, they didn’t have coverage for the contents in the house.

“Everything that’s on that curb, we don’t have a backup plan for,” she told NC Catholics, magazine of the Diocese of Raleigh.

Near historic New Bern, Catholic Charities USA delivered a mobile truck that held six washers and six dryers. The trailer was parked on Sept. 27 at Craven Terrace, an affordable housing area. Operated by a generator, the washers and dryers were free to those who sought them, and staffed by Catholic Charities staff from regional offices and volunteers. It’s been two weeks since the storm came through, and many families don’t have the ability to wash their clothes. Either their washing machines were damaged, or they no longer had the financial resources to clean their clothes,” said Daniel Altenau, director of disaster services for Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Raleigh.

The availability of the trailer, he said, makes the washing process easier for families impacted. And a Catholic Charities Case manager is on hand to assist those in need of additional services.

Kimberly White, a day care teacher, was evacuated from her home and has been living at a shelter near Craven Terrace. For White, who lives with her 24-year-old daughter and two grandchildren, laundry is an ever-present family task.

White was looking for change so a neighbor could drive her to a laundromat when she spotted the trailer walking distance.

“A tenant told me it was a mobile laundry unit,” she wrote in a text. “I told him he was a God-send because I only found five cents to dry all these clothes. We sang. We talked about how it’s important to reach out to others.”

(To contribute toward efforts to help those affected by Hurricane Florence, go to bit.ly/2xStDqJ, call 800-919-9338, or send a check made out to Catholic Charities USA with “Hurricane Florence” in the memo line and mail it to: 2050 Ballenger Ave., Suite 400, Alexandria, VA 22314.)
INCORPORATION OF THE HISTORY, CULTURES AND TRADITIONS OF PEOPLE OF COLOR INTO THE PRIESTHOOD AND RELIGIOUS LIFE—ONCE MORE—

The ad-hoc committee’s pastoral letter will affirm the Church’s commitment to the transformation of the Church, with an emphasis on the incorporation of the history, cultures and traditions of people of color into the priesthood and religious life. The letter will call for a renewed commitment to the inclusion of people of color into the priesthood and religious life, and will urge the Church to address the ongoing issues of racism and discrimination.

The letter will also call for a renewed commitment to the education of future priests and religious, with an emphasis on the incorporation of the history, cultures and traditions of people of color. The letter will call for a renewed commitment to the education of future priests and religious, with an emphasis on the incorporation of the history, cultures and traditions of people of color.

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Tell City Deanery Catechists’ Dinner

This photo shows a group of catechists from St. Boniface Parish in Fulda at a Catechist Recognition Dinner hosted by the Tell City Deanery on May 10, 1984. The evening included a talk by Father Bill Deering of Holy Rosary Parish in Evansville, Ind., in the Evansville Diocese. The catechists who had participated in the archdiocesan catechist certification program received their certificates at this dinner.

(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.)

U.S. urged to end funding of research using tissue from aborted babies

WASHINGTON (CNS) — The chairman of the U.S. bishops’ Committee on Pro-Life Activities praised a decision by the U.S. Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to end a Food and Drug Administration contract with a company “whose business is to procure aborted baby parts for research.”

After this important “first step,” it “remains incumbent” on the Trump administration “to act quickly to cease all funding for research involving body parts from aborted babies,” New York Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan said.

The cardinal was referring to the Sept. 24 announcement by HHS Secretary Alex Azar that his agency was terminating an FDA contract with Advanced Bioscience Resources in California to provide human fetal tissue to develop testing protocols.

HHS also said it will do an audit of “all acquisitions involving human fetal tissue” and “all research involving fetal tissue” to make sure the statutes and regulations governing such research are being followed.

Homecoming fun

Christ the King Parish in Indianapolis hosted a Homecoming Mass and picnic on Sept. 16 at Broad Ripple Park in Indianapolis. Besides the liturgy and food, the 600 people who attended enjoyed fun and fellowship that included games and a tug of war. Pictured in the top photo are parishioners giving their all during the tug of war. Pictured above is Father Todd Riebe, the parish’s pastor, awarding the winning team a trophy after the friendly and hard-fought competition. (Photo courtesy of Matt Henninger)

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