Relic of St. John Vianney draws thousands to cathedral to view ‘a miracle first hand’

By Sean Gallagher

For hours, the line of people slowly made its way forward to the heart of a saint. They came from across Indiana and beyond to SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis to venerate and pray before the incorrupt heart of St. John Vianney, a French priest who died in 1859 and is the patron saint of parish priests.

From 10 a.m. until 5:15 p.m. on Jan. 4, an estimated 3,000 people of all ages and walks of life came to the cathedral to place themselves in the presence of this special relic held in an ornate brass reliquary.

At first, only two kneelers were placed in front of the reliquary that held the heart. But when the line of people grew so long that it wound its way up the main aisle of the cathedral and down its side aisles, three more kneelers were placed alongside the first two. Still, the line stretched from the entrance of the cathedral to its sanctuary for the entirety of the seven hours the relic was available for veneration.

Emily Brummer brought her daughter Monica, a first-grader at Lumen Christi Catholic School in Indianapolis, to pray with her in the presence of the heart of the saint that has remained the same—in corrupt—as it was when he died in 1859.

“These are really faith-building moments,” Brummer said. “Anytime you can witness a miracle first hand, it’s hard for a person ever to forget that.”

The relic was brought to Indianapolis as part of a tour of the United States sponsored by the Knights of Columbus. It is ordinarily housed at the shrine of St. John Vianney in Ars, France.

Bill Sherman was one among several members of the knights who served as an honor guard beside the relic during its stay at the cathedral.

“This is what the Knights of Columbus is about,” said Sherman. “I feel like it’s more than just a privilege. It’s a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to do something like this.”

Indianapolis was added to the tour because of the SEEK2019 conference that occurred there from Jan. 3-7, drawing 17,000 mostly college-age Catholics from across the country.

 prepared a program where students could have a Catholic education, attend school with their siblings and peers, and feel safe and accepted. I knew that had been achieved during a pep session at Roncalli,” she notes, referring to the moment that involved the school’s principal, Chuck Weisenbach.

“There was a young man with autism that struggled with the sounds at the pep sessions, but loved the energy. We worked it out that he would attend, but be on stage where the sound was not coming directly at him. Mr. Weisenbach happened to be on stage with the student at the time that one of the faculty members was energizing the crowd with a dance from Napoleon Dynamite.

“‘The student on stage was shouting directions to the faculty member when Mr. Weisenbach told him to go out onto the floor and show him how it was done. As the student joined the floor, the entire student body erupted into cheers and stood in unison to cheer him on. This is when I knew that the program at Roncalli had achieved success.’

“‘The biggest success story’

That moment revealed many of the goals that Musgrave had for her students: to make them realize they have strengths, that they could have success, and that they
Pope to U.S. bishops: Abuse crisis requires conversion, humility

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—The clerical abuse crisis and the “crisis of credibility” it created for bishops in the U.S. has led to serious divisions within the Church in America and to a temptation to look for administrative solutions to problems that go much deeper, Pope Francis told the bishops.

Without a clear and adequate focus on spiritual conversion and Gospel-inspired ways of responding to victims and extending mercy, “everything we do risks being tainted by self-referentiality, self-preservation and defensiveness, and thus doomed from the start,” the pope wrote.

In a letter distributed to the bishops at the beginning of their Jan. 2-8 retreat at Mundelein Seminary at the University of St. Mary of the Lake near Chicago, Pope Francis said he was convinced their response to the “sins and crimes of abuse” and “the efforts made to deny or conceal them” must be found through “healing, praying and collective listening to the word of God and to the pain of our people.”

“As we know,” he said, “the mentality that would cover things up, far from helping to resolve conflicts, enabled them to fester and cause new wounds. When the network of relationships that today we are called to heal and restore.”

The buses of power and conscience and sexual abuse, and the poor way that they were handled,” continue to harm the Church and its mission, he wrote, but said “the pain of seeing an episcopal seat lacking in unity and concentrated more on pointing fingers than on seeking paths of reconciliation.”

Such a division, which goes well beyond a “healthy” diversity of opinions, is what was called to recommend a retreat because, the pope said, “this situation forces us to look to what is lacking in unity and concentrated more on pointing fingers than on seeking paths of reconciliation.”

Arenas with the bishops make a retreat in November to have the gathering be led by Archbishop Jose H. Gomez of Los Angeles and Bishop Robert Barron of San Diego. They are scheduled to arrive with the bishops to begin the retreat because, the pope said, “this week, the pope said, “we want to testify that at the darkest moments of our history the Lord makes himself present, opens new paths and anoints our faltering faith, our wavering hope and our tepid charity,” the pope wrote.

The bishops as a group, he said, must have a “collegial awareness of our being sinners in need of God’s grace at a time when we are deeply distressed and preyed upon by all that has happened.”

“Health” will come from the quest of false, facile and futile forms of “profession” and from anything that would “keep us from approaching and appreciating the extent and implications of what has happened.”

“Affective communion with the feelings of our people, with their disheament, urges us to exercise a collegial, diocesan spirit of Good Shepherd that does not offer banal responses or act defensively, but instead seeks to learn—like the prophet Elijah amid his own troubles—to listen to the voice of the Lord.”

Jan. 13 – 10:30 a.m. 50th Anniversary of Dedication Mass at St. Paul Catholic Center, Bloomington

Jan. 14 – 7 p.m. Mass for Volunteers at St. Barnabas Church, Indianapolis

Jan. 15 – 10:30 a.m. Priest Personnel Board meeting at Archbishoph Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center

Jan. 15 – 1 p.m. Council of Priests meeting at Archbishoph Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center

Jan. 16 – 10 a.m. Department Heads meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center

Jan. 16 – 17 National Summit on Economics of Pastoral Leadership at JW Marriott, Indianapolis

Jan. 19 – 10 a.m. Baptisms in Louisville, Ky.

Jan. 20 – 6 p.m. Christian Unity Prayer Service at First Step Church, Indianapolis

Jan. 22 – noon Respect Life Mass at St. John the Evangelist Church, Indianapolis

Jan. 22 – 1:30 p.m. March for Life, from St. John the Evangelist Church to Monument Circle to the Statehouse, Indianapolis

(Schedule subject to change.)
Father Kenneth Taylor was a ‘humble’ leader in the local, national black Catholic community

By Sean Gallagher

Father Kenneth Taylor, pastor of Holy Angels and St. Rita parishes, both in Indianapolis, died on Dec. 19, 2018, at St. Vincent Hospice in Indianapolis. He was 67.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Dec. 28 at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis. Archbishop Charles C. Thompson was the principal celebrant of the Mass. Josephite Father Anthony Bozeman, pastor of St. Raymond and St. Leo the Great Parish in New Orleans, was the homilist.

Buried followed in the priests’ circle at Calvary Cemetery in Indianapolis.

Father Taylor, widely known as “Father K.T.,” was dedicated to parish ministry throughout his 40 years of priestly life and ministry. During that time, he also worked hard to build up the faith of various ethnic communities in the Church in central and southern Indiana, serving as the first director of the archdiocesan Intercultural Ministry office from 1996-2012.

He was honored for his leadership there in 2014, and reflected on the transition the Church was going through when the office was formed.

“The direction I focused on was to have the diversity in the [arch]diocese become more visible, getting the different groups to become more of an active part of the archdiocese and, over time, I think we accomplished a lot in that direction,” Father Taylor said in 2014.

Charles Guynn, a member of St. Rita Parish, knew Father Taylor for more than 40 years.

“For as long as I knew Father [Taylor], he was a fighter and a person of great faith,” Guynn said. “He liked to negotiate problems for the common good. He will be missed by all that knew him.”

Father Nicholas Dant, pastor of St. Matthew the Apostle Parish in Indianapolis, also knew Father Taylor for more than 40 years. They were seminarians for eight years together at the former Latin School of Indianapolis, an archdiocesan high school seminary, and at the former Saint Meinrad College in St. Meinrad.

“He’s leadership on the national level bespeaks of his leadership on the local level,” Father Dant said. “He was never afraid to speak up and lead, offering suggestions of directions we can take. He was very interested in helping Catholic communities remain strong, especially in the inner city and in the poverty-stricken areas that he served all of his life.”

Kenneth Edward Taylor was born on July 10, 1951, in Indianapolis to the late Alvin and Margaret Mary Taylor.

After graduating from Holy Angels School in Indianapolis, he became an archdiocesan seminarian, receiving priestly formation at the Latin School, Saint Meinrad College and at St. Mary’s Seminary and University in Baltimore.

Father Taylor was ordained a priest on May 20, 1979, at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral by Archbishop George J. Biskup. His first pastoral assignment was as associate pastor of St. Monica Parish in Indianapolis, where he served from 1978-83.

He then ministered as associate pastor of St. Thomas Aquinas Parish in Indianapolis from 1983-85. During that time, he also served as chaplain of the Newman Center at Butler University in Indianapolis from 1984-85.

Father Taylor ministered as pastor of the former Holy Trinity Parish in Indianapolis from 1985-2004.

During that time, he also served as the administrator and then pastor of the former St. Bridget Parish in Indianapolis from 1992 until the faith community’s closure in 1994.

He also served as chaplain for the Newman Center at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis in 1993-94.

In 1996, Father Taylor was appointed as the director of what was then the archdiocesan Multicultural Ministry office, now the Intercultural Ministry office. He served in this position until 2012.

He served as pastor of St. Michael the Archangel Parish in Indianapolis from 2004-2006.

During that time, in 2005, he was appointed temporary administrator of Holy Angels Parish in Indianapolis. He became the pastor of the faith community a year later and led Holy Angels until his death.

While ministering as Holy Angel’s pastor, Father Taylor also served as dean of the Indianapolis West Deanery from 2009-12, and as pastor of St. Rita Parish in Indianapolis from 2014 until his death.

Surviving are his siblings Angela Taylor of Atlanta, LaVerne and Renee Taylor and V. Carol Taylor, all of Columbus, Ohio, and Alvin Taylor of Newark, Ohio.

Memorial gifts may be sent to the Holy Angels Building Fund, 740 W. 28th St., Indianapolis, IN 46208.

(Criterion reporter Natalie Hooper contributed to this article.)
Nine days.

That’s the amount of time our bishops in the U.S. are asking us to commit to prayer in preparation for the observance of the annual Day of Prayer for Legal Protection on Unborn Children on Jan. 22.

During this novena—from Jan. 14 through Jan. 22—we are being encouraged to make time to pray for the conversion of hearts as we continue our mission to ensure all human life is respected—from conception until natural death.

As we sadly mark the 46th anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court’s tragic Roe v. Wade and Doe v. Bolton decisions in 1973 that legalized abortion throughout all nine months of pregnancy, we as a people of faith see a society where many have had a conversion of heart where life issues are concerned.

But we still see some of our fellow citizens pushing for the continuation of abortion rights, supporting assisted suicide and euthanasia, and doing all they can to put a halt to our pro-life efforts.

Sponsored by the U.S. bishops’ Committee on Pro Life Activities, the annual “9 Days for Life” prayer and action campaign is an opportunity for each of us to take part in something that is so simple yet can be so powerful.

And although many in the secular media will gloss over or even ignore our efforts on both the local and national levels, we cannot remain silent about life issues. Our faith implores us not to sit quietly on the sickle as we witness injustices around us.

Each day of the “9 Days for Life” novena highlights a different intention and is accompanied by a short reflection, suggested actions and related information.

Since 2013, more than 100,000 Catholics have joined together to pray this annual novena, according to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB).

In addition to praying for the unborn and for an end to abortion, we will pray for respect for life at all stages: for those nearing the end of their lives, for children in need of adoptive homes, for those mourning the loss of a child through abortion, and many others,” the USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities noted about the novena.

The 9daysforlife.com website provides ways for Catholics to join the novena and to access resources. Participants can receive the novena by downloading a free “9 Days for Life” app, or by subscribing to daily e-mails or text messages. A printable version also is available online.

According to organizers, those who join the campaign are invited to pray a multi-faceted novena that includes a new intention, brief reflection, related information and suggested actions for each day. Participants also can follow “9 Days for Life” on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

Nine days.

It seems like such a small amount. But our prayers and commitment offered during that time frame could make a huge difference as we continue our mission to build a culture of life.

—Mike Krokos
Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called sons of God” (Mt 5:9).

We begin each new year with a fervent prayer for peace. We long for the world of tomorrow, the time when there will be no more discord among individuals, families, neighbors or nations. Having just celebrated the birth of the Prince of Peace, we hope that his coming will inspire us all to live differently. We begin each new year with the profound hope that we can set aside our jealousy, our fear, our desire for economic control and political domination, our aversion to strangers from foreign lands and our discomfort with those who are different from us.

What is peace? It’s the absence of violence, certainly, but it’s also much more. St. Augustine called it “the tranquility of order,” which is certainly an important aspect of peace. When we’re at peace, we’re not filled with anxiety; our homes are not filled with loud arguments and discord; our neighborhoods are safe and well-ordered; there’s not threatening or chaotic; and nations, races and peoples live together in harmony and mutual respect without suffering the horrors of prejudice, enmity or war.

True peace is more than just good order or social order.

Second Vatican Council ("Gaudium et Spes, "#78) teaches that peace is the work of justice and the effect of charity. Peace is much more than the absence of war or the coexistence of nations. Peace is a gift from God, the sum total of many gifts from God that helps us live fully with hearts full of justice and love.

What is justice? Justice is structuring human affairs, and the organization of society, in accordance with God’s plan. We are just when we treat others fairly and when we work together to protect the innocent and the vulnerable from violence or evil. We are just when all people (wealthy and poor, strong and weak) live together in mutual respect.

What is charity? The sharing of self that we learn most perfectly from God, who is love, and who shows us how to be fair to others in everything we say and do. Authentic charity is not self-serving or self-gratifying. It is the generous sharing of ourselves (all that we have and all that we are) in ways that connect us intimately with God and with our fellow human beings—those who are closest to us (family, friends and neighbors) and those who are far from us (strangers, social outcasts, even enemies).

We too often pray for peace, forgetting that acceptance and forgiveness (the way of the meek, the way of Jesus Christ) is the only way to peace. Lasting peace—that the is more than a temporary ceasefire or a periodic break between hostile actions—is the effect of charity. As Pope Francis says, “Peace involves work, it is not about staying calm and doing nothing. No! True peace means working so that everyone has a solution to the problems, to the needs, that they have in their land, in their neighborhood, in their family, in their society.”

If we want peace, we must let go of our desire for revenge, and we must be willing to let old wounds heal through the saving grace of God’s love. Christ has reconciled us with God and with each other. We have been forgiven so that we may forgive others. We have been shown mercy so that we might let go of our desire for vengeance against those who do us harm to a higher form of justice that is informed by love. There is no real peace without forgiveness.

So let it happen when we let go of all anger and let God’s will triumph over our selfishness. When that day comes, nations will unite in a world order that respects the fundamental human rights and authentic cultural diversity of nations and peoples. Neighbors will help and respect one another. Families will live together joyfully. And each woman and man on Earth will be calm, untroubled and at peace.

When that day comes, Christ will come again, and his peace will be established throughout all creation. In the meantime, as we begin this new year, let’s continue our search for peace by recommitting ourselves to the work of justice and by loving God and our neighbor unselfishly as Christ loves us.

May the peace of Christ be with you in 2019 and always. Through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of Peace, may all mankind find happiness and joy in working for justice in God’s gifts with others in Jesus’ name.

Happy New Year!

Cristo, la piedra angular

“Bienaventurados los pacíficadores, porque ellos serán llamados hijos de Dios” (Mt 5:9).

Comenzamos cada nuevo año con una ferviente oración por la paz. Anhelamos el mundo del mañana, el momento en el que no existirán más desavenencias entre personas, familias, vecinos o naciones. A menudo rezamos por la paz, pero a menudo nos olvidamos que la aceptación y el perdón que practica la gente humilde y que es el camino que conduce a Jesucristo, es el único sendero hacia la paz. La paz duradera, aquella que es más que un cese del fuego temporal o un rceso periódico entre actividades hostiles, es el efecto de la caridad. Tal como lo expresa el papa Francisco: “la paz implica trabajo, no se trata de estar tranquilos y no hacer nada. ¡No! La verdadera paz significa trabajar para que todos encuentren la solución a sus problemas, a las necesidades que tienen en sus tierras, en sus patrias, en sus familias, en sus sociedades.”

Si deseamos la paz, debemos abandonar nuestro deseo de venganza y dejarnos ganar por el amor. Christ is way to achieve lasting peace in our hearts, world.
January 14
St. Barnabas Church, 8300 Rabke Road, Indianapolis. Mass for Vocations, Archbishop Charles C. Thompson presides. 7 p.m. Information: 317-811-7464, simon13@sbcglobal.net.

January 15
St. Christopher Parish, Damasus Rd. 510 W. 166th St., Indianapolis. Scripture Study: Psalms and Gospels. 10 a.m. Tuesday through March 19, 7 p.m., $50 payable in installments, all are welcome. Information: Lois Jansen, mf989@gmail.com, 317-241-9169.

Mount St. Francis Center for Spirituality, 101 St. Anthony Dr., St. Francis “Alilde” Adoration Service, sponsored by New Albany Deeney Catholic Youth Ministry. 7:8 p.m., every third Thurs. of the month, for the month of February, a praise, silence, and confessions, child care available. Information and child care reservation: Renee Rogers, chris@nadyouth.org, 812-923-8355.

January 17

January 18

January 19
Sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand, Ind., Gertrude Hall, 802 E. 10th St., Ferdinand (Evansville Diocese). Oblates of St. Benjamin Informational Meeting, 1-3 p.m. Information: Benedictine Sister Brenda Engleman, 812-367-1417, ext. 2827, bened@ins.org.


February 5
Benedict Inn Retreat & Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove.

February 6-10
Oldenburg Franciscan Center, 22143 Main St., Oldenburg. Dealing with Our Guilt, six Tuesdays through March 12, 2:30-4 p.m. or 7:30-9 p.m., $55 includes book. Information and registration: 812-555-2952, reunion@osmp.org or www.osmp.org/event.

February 21
St. John the Evangelist Church, 126 W. Georgia St., Indianapolis. Vigil for Life, worship, eucharistic adoration, procession and confessions, featuring Christian music artist Audrey Assad, 7-9 p.m., free will offerings. Tickets and information: prolifeindy735 (case sensitive), Brie Anne (Evichson) Varick, 317-236-1543, brie@archindy.org.

February 22
Indiana March for Life, Indianapolis, 11 a.m. Indoor Life Rally Red, 100 S. Capitol Ave.; noon: Mass and Memorial Service. St. John the Evangelist Church, 126 W. Georgia St., and Indiana Convention Center, Archbishop Charles C. Thompson and Dean of Lafayette Bishop Timothy Doherty presiding, 1:30 p.m. March for Life, from Georgia St., to the Soldiers and Sailors Monument on the downtown Circle, to the Indiana State Capitol Building, 200 W. Washington St., 2 p.m. Rally, south steps of Indiana State Capitol Building. Information: Brie Anne (Evichson) Varick, 317-236-1543, brie@archindy.org.

January 25
Immaculate Heart of Mary School, 317 E. 57th St., Indianapolis. K-8 Open House, for parents of prospective students. 3-5 p.m., private tours available. Information: Elise O’Brien, 317-255-5468, eliseobrien@iohmd.org.

Benedict Inn Retreat & Conference Center, 1402 Southeast Ave., Beech Grove. Girls Night Out Retreat. Women Helping Women, arts and crafts, shopping, door prizes, pampering night. $50 per person, portion of proceeds benefit Beacon of Hope Crisis Center, 7-9:30 p.m. Registration, information: bit.ly/2RAAXGk (case sensitive), 317-788-7581.

January 26
St. Simon the Apostle Parish, 8155 Oaklawn Road, Indianapolis. Ultrey, sponsored by St. Simon the Apostle and Holy Spirit at Gest (Lafayette Diocese), starting after 5:30 p.m. Mass, bring a dish to share. Information: Blax70@theglobal.net.

January 27
St. Timon School, 4100 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. Open House, for parents of prospective students. 10:30 a.m.-noon, private tours available. Information: 317-251-3997, robinswell@simantmart.org.

St. Simon the Apostle Parish, 8155 Oaklawn Road, Indianapolis. Open House, for parents of prospective students in grades PreK-8, informational sessions and tours. Information: 317-826-6000, sknoop@simontmart.org.

National ‘9 Days for Life’ prayer campaign set for Jan. 14-22
Catholics across the United States are encouraged to join in prayer for ‘9 Days for Life’ starting on Jan. 14 through Jan. 22, the annual Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children. Sponsored by the Committee on Pro-Life Activities of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), the novena and days of prayer are a time of recollection and reparation in observation of the anniversary of Roe v. Wade, the 1973 U.S. Supreme Court decision making abortion legal throughout the United States.

Two Dynamic Catholic ‘Find Your Greatness’ events planned on Jan. 18-19
Nationally known speaker and Catholic author Allen Hunt is the featured keynote at two “Find Your Greatness” Dynamic Catholic events in the archdiocese the weekend of Jan. 18-19.

The events are as follows: Jan. 18: 6-9 p.m. St. Mary Parish, 331 E. Hunter Robbins Way, in Zionsville. “A Free ‘9 Days for Life’ mobile app for Apple and Android phones can be downloaded from the App Store. Additional information, including resources related to the pro-life activities of the USCCB, can be found at www.osmp.org/prolife."
Christian faith is concrete. Pope Francis says at morning Mass in the chapel of the Domus Sanctae Marthae, 

Pope Francis delivered his annual Christmas message to the cardinals and other leaders in the Roman Curia, the Church’s central administrative offices. Using the themes of light and darkness, the pope offered reflections on “the light that links Christmas [the Lord’s first coming in humility] to the Parousia [his second coming in glory], and confirms us in the hope that does not disappoint.”

This hope “does not disappoint,” the Holy Father says. “It is the hope on which our individual lives, and the entire history of Church and the world, depend.”

Darkness seeks to overshadow the light that gives us hope, but the light of Christ is stronger than the darkness of sin and death. That’s why the Church, “at once holy and always in need of purification,” must be committed to penance and renewal “so that she may reveal in the world, faithfully, albeit with shadows, the mystery of the Lord until, to the end, it can be manifested in full light.” (Lumen Gentium; #8).

“As Pope Francis says: “Jesus was born in a social, political and religious situation marked by tension, unrest and global conflict, and was personally rejected by others, embodies the divine logic that does not halt before evil, but instead transforms it slowly but surely into goodness. Yet it also brings to light the malign logic that transforms even goodness into evil, in an attempt to keep humanity in despair and in darkness.”

The “malign logic” is “the way of thinking that values self-interest over love of God and neighbor. It is the way of ideologies that place the desires of the wealthy few over the basic needs of the poor and vulnerable. The light of Christ shines in our darkness when we can forgo our selfishness and pursue the “divine logic” that places the good of other ahead of what we judge to be in our own best interests.

“Being Christian, in general and for us in particular as the Lord’s anointed and consecrated,” Pope Francis says, “does not mean acting like an elite group who think they have God in their pocket, but as persons who know that they are loved by the Lord.”

Humility is the pre-eminent Christian virtue because, in casting off our pride, we accept our true relationship to God, to our sisters and brothers and to all God’s creation.

The first reading at Mass also included John’s “admonition: “Do not trust every spirit but test the spirits to see whether they belong to God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.” (1 Jn 4:1).

Such false prophets propose “a ‘soft’ Christ without flesh and a love for one’s neighbors,” the pope said. “The true proclamation of God’s salvation, freely bestowed on all humanity, the Church and in particular on us, consecrated persons, does not act in a soft manner.”

In addition to God’s grace, Pope Francis said, “our freedom and our daily efforts. Salvation is a gift that must be accepted, cherished and made to bear fruit” (cf. Mt 25:14-30).

“All of us, then, in order to make Christ’s light shine forth, have the duty to combat all spiritual corruption,” which the pope says is “worse than the fall of the sinner, for it is a comfortable and self-satisfied form of blindness.

Everything then appears acceptable: deception, slander, egoism and other subtle forms of self-centeredness, for ‘even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light’ (2 Cor 11:14).

It is no surprise that the cardinals and members of the Roman Curia who assist him in carrying out his ministry as St. Peter’s successor, the only way to overcome all the evils (both inside and outside) that threaten our Church is to acknowledge that we are ‘persons who know that they are loved by the Lord despite being unworthy sinners.’”

(Daniel Conway is a member of The Criterion’s editorial committee.)
Bishop Kicanas is keynote speaker for Celebrating Catholic Schools Values

Bishop Emeritus Gerald F. Kicanas of the Diocese of Tucson, Ariz., will be the keynote speaker during the 23rd annual Celebrating Catholic Schools Values: Scholarship and Career Achievement Reception and Awards program on Feb. 7. The program will be held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel Grand Hall of Union Station in Indianapolis. The invitation-only event begins with a reception at 5:30 p.m., with the awards program starting at 7:00 p.m.

Before arriving at Roncalli, she had taught in public schools for 15 years. "I knew that my degree in special education would make it difficult to teach in the Catholic school system as there were very few programs," she says. "When Roncalli decided to start a special education program, I jumped at the opportunity." A leap into a Catholic faith community was also a significant part of the move for her. "I wanted to be in a community that had the same faith values as I had," says Musgrave, a member of St. Roch Parish in Indianapolis and a 1973 graduate of Our Lady of Providence High School in Clarksville. "I had 12 years of Catholic education and I always felt it was a very good, very challenging education. It also challenged me to serve others." Beyond leading the students in the STARS program, she also strived to connect with the other students at Roncalli. Before retiring last year, she also served as a costume coordinator in the theater department, an adult leader on service trips to Appalachia, and an adult leader on spiritual retreats. As much as she contributed to Roncalli, she is equally grateful for the influence of the students and staff who touched her life during her 24 years there. And she is especially thankful for her husband of 41 years, Dennis. "They're all part of her lifetime journey of trying to add a measure of understanding, acceptance and faith to the world. "It's been very rewarding," she says. "I felt like a member of the family at Roncalli. I just enjoyed being part of a community that allowed me to talk to the kids about my faith and their faith—to talk about morals and values." †

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CTSV continued from page 1

are a valuable part of their community. It also revealed her willingness to have them take risks—a quality that defines her, too, says Roncalli’s president Joseph Hollowell. "In 1993, she took a calculated risk and accepted a position at Roncalli where she would be responsible for creating a special education program from scratch," Hollowell notes. "The common sentiment was that a successful special needs program could not be done in a Catholic high school. There certainly were no models in the state of Indiana to emulate at that time."

Twenty-five years later, the special needs program at Roncalli that is called STARS—Students That Are Ready for Success—"may be the biggest success story in our school’s history," says Hollowell. The program that started with five students in 1993 at Roncalli now serves more than 150 students, representing about 15 percent of the school’s enrollment.

"Expanding the scope of the students we serve here has been uplifting, enriching and beneficial on many fronts," Hollowell says. "It also has been challenging. However, Pat never flinched. "Today, Catholic educators come from all across the country to observe and learn from the Roncalli STARS program. Pat’s efforts have truly impacted our nation’s Catholic schools."

A life of promoting acceptance, faith

While coming to Roncalli can be viewed as a risk, Musgrave viewed it as an opportunity—an opportunity to influence the students she loves in an environment that allowed me to talk to the kids about my faith and their faith—to talk about morals and values." †

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‘SEEK’-ing God in Indianapolis

Young people dance on the opening night of SEEK2019 on Jan. 3 at the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis. The biennial conference is sponsored by the Denver-based Fellowship of Catholic University Students. This year’s conference was attended by 17,000 people, most of whom were college students, from across the country. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

A priest incenses a monstrance as part of an evening of adoration on Jan. 5 during the SEEK2019 conference in the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis. Behind the priest, approximately 17,000 college students, from across the country. (Photo by Natalie Hoefer)
across the nation. Archdiocesan leaders helped arrange that the relic could also be venerated by Catholics from across central and southern Indiana at the cathedral.

Father Jonathan Meyer, pastor of All Saints Parish in Dearborn County, has had a great devotion to the saint since the 1950s when he received priestly formation at St. John Vianney College Seminary in St. Paul, Minn. Over the years, he has visited the shrine in Ars six times.

Watching so many people coming to pray in the presence of a relic of a saint so dear to him was moving for the priest.

“It’s so wonderful to see the people of our archdiocese ask for his prayers and intercession, to see the genuine faithfulness and piety of the people,” Father Meyer said. “It’s powerful to see how many people brought their children. So it’s not only about someone who has a devotion, you’re also seeing people teach devotion.”

Debbie Gregg wanted to give the gift to the eighth-graders of St. Nicholas School in Ripley County that she teaches and is helping to prepare to receive the sacrament of confirmation. She brought the class on a pilgrimage to the cathedral to pray before the relic.

“It’s a great opportunity for them to grow in their faith and to plant seeds,” Gregg said. “We’re always praying for vocations.”

Eighth-grader Will Rees said he wanted to pray for priests before the relic.

“They give us the sacraments and lead us closer to Jesus,” he said.

The sacrament that St. John Vianney is most known for bringing to the faithful is the sacrament of penance. As his fame as a wise and caring pastor grew, thousands of people every year would flock to Ars from across Europe to confess their sins to him and receive God’s mercy. It is said that he spent as many as 18 hours a day in his parish church’s confessional.

So it was fitting that, when his heart was available for veneration at the cathedral, several priests were present for the sacrament of penance.

One was Benedictine Father Luke Waugh, pastor of St. Isidore the Farmer Parish in Perry County in the Tell City Deanery. He spent several hours at the cathedral hearing confessions.

“The blessings that came from hearing confessions all afternoon cannot be counted,” said Father Luke, a member of Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad.

“Like me, St. John Vianney ministered in a far corner of his diocese. His ministry came alive in the confessional. To practice the ministry that he excelled in near his physical heart—a heart for people—was amazing.”

After the time for veneration of the relic at the cathedral ended, it was taken to the SEEK conference for veneration by the thousands who attended it. On the night of Jan. 5, it was placed at the front of the two exhibit halls in the Indiana Convention Center where hundreds of priests heard more than 4,000 confessions of conference participants.

Many of the people who venerated the relic at the cathedral prayed for priests.

Father Jesus Rodriguez, of St. Paul, Minn., who made the trip to Ars to venerate the relic, came at a time when the bishops of the U.S. were at prayer on retreat at Mundelein Seminary at the University of St. Mary of the Lake near Chicago. Last September, Pope Francis encouraged the bishops to pray in Ars six times.

Father Eric Augenstein, archdiocesan vocations director, was amazed at the thousands who came to the cathedral to venerate the relic. He hopes the event will be an aid in his ministry in helping men discern a vocation to the priesthood.

Father Augenstein said the time for veneration of the relic would be a time of renewal and recommitment to the faith.

“Being able to pray in the presence of that relic, the physical heart that had so much love for God and God’s people,” he said, “can encourage other hearts to be open to follow in his footsteps in the priesthood.”

The time for veneration of the relic concluded with Mass. Msgr. William F. Stumpf, archdiocesan vicar general, was the principal celebrant for the liturgy.

In his homily, he reflected on the “extraordinary witness” that St. John Vianney gave “by simply being a faithful, zealous and loving parish priest.”

Msgr. Stumpf ended his homily by inviting his listeners to go forth from the cathedral “to share St. John Vianney’s story, the story of a soul who fell in love with God.

“And may we, too, but especially those called to holy orders, continue to live our lives with the same love for Christ and his people.”
‘Nationalistic tendencies’ threaten peace, pope tells diplomats

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—As it did prior to the Second World War, the rise of nationalism in the world poses a threat to peace and cooperation among nations, Pope Francis said.

During his annual address to diplomats accredited to the Holy See, the pope said that the establishment of the League of Nations nearly 100 years ago ushered in a new era of multilateral diplomacy based on goodwill, readiness among nations to deal fairly and honestly with each other, and openness to compromise.

However, he warned in his speech on Jan. 7 that the lack of one of those necessary elements remains evident in nations searching “for unilateral solutions and, in the end, the domination of the powerful over the weak.”

“The League of Nations failed for these very reasons, and one notes with regret that the same attitudes are presently threatening the stability of the major international organizations,” the pope said.

Clearly, he added, “relationships within the international community, and the multilateral system as a whole are experiencing a period of difficulty with the resurgence of nationalistic tendencies at odds with the vocation of the international organizations to be a setting for dialogue and encounter for all countries.”

In his nearly one-hour speech to the diplomats, the pope warned that the re-emergence of patriotism and nationalistic ideologies is “progressively weakening” multilateral institutions and subsequently creating a “general lack of trust, a crisis of credibility in international political life, and a gradual marginalization of the most vulnerable members of the family of nations.”

An essential aspect of good politics, he said, is in the pursuit of the common good that would enable individuals and the international community as a whole to “achieve the greater material and spiritual well-being.”

“Peace is never a partial good, but one that embraces the entire human race,” he said. ;

Recalling the ongoing humanitarian crises in countries such as Ukraine and Syria, Pope Francis urged the international community to defend the most vulnerable in the world, “and to give a voice to those who have none.”

Among those most affected by instability, he noted are Christian communities in the Middle East where many people have been forced to flee from violence and persecution, particularly due to the resurgence of attempts “to foment hostility between Muslims and Christians.”

The pope expressed his hope that his upcoming visits to the United Arab Emirates and to Morocco would provide an opportunity to “advance interreligious and mutual understanding between the followers of both religions.”

Pope Francis also made an appeal for assistance to migrants who are forced to emigrate due to “the scourge of poverty and various forms of violence and persecution,” as well as natural disasters and climate change.

“All human beings long for a better and more prosperous life, and the challenge of migration cannot be met with a mindset of violence and indifference, nor by offering merely partial solutions,” he said.

Among the most vulnerable in today’s world, the pope continued, are young people who face an “uncertain future” due to lack of employment.

Urging world leaders to take steps to ensure the physical, psychological and spiritual growth of children, Pope Francis acknowledged the Church’s failure to protect children.

Child sexual abuse, especially by members of the clergy, “is one of the plagues of our time,” he said.

“The abuse of minors is one of the vilest and most heinous crimes conceivable,” he said. “Such abuse inexorably sweeps away the best of what human life holds out for innocent children and causes irreparable and lifelong damage.”

The Church is committed to preventing clerical sex abuse and its concealment, he said, expressing hope that his Feb. 21-24 meeting with the presidents of the world’s bishops’ conferences will be “a further step in the Church’s efforts to shed full light on the facts and to alleviate the wounds caused by such crimes.”

Pope Francis also urged the diplomatic community to continue to work toward building peace between nations divided by war.

While there have been significant strides in building peace in some places, such as the end of the decades-long conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea and an easing of relations between North and South Korea, the pope called for peace in areas such as Venezuela and the Holy Land which are still affected by internal strife and divisions.

Citing St. Paul VI’s 1965 speech to the United Nations, the pope said that peace is not built merely through politics and protecting interests but with “the mind, with ideas, with works of peace.”

Hysterectomy can be morally licit in limited situations, Vatican says

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—The Catholic Church teaches that sterilization is morally unacceptable, but a hysterectomy could be morally acceptable if the uterus could no longer be suitable for procreation and medical experts have reached the certainty that an eventual pregnancy will not be viable “is a medical question,” the congregation said.

However, it rejected the idea of performing a hysterectomy in certain cases, “it would be licit to remove the uterus with a hysterectomy.”

“Removing a reproductive organ incapable of bringing about a pregnancy should therefore be qualified as direct sterilization, which is and remains intrinsically illicit as an end and as a means,” it said.

The reason for the change was by the congregation was dated Dec. 10 and signed by its prefect, Cardinal Luis Ladaria, and secretary, Archbishop Giacomo Morandi. Pope Francis approved the congregation’s response and ordered its publication.

The congregation reaffirmed the three responses it gave in 1993 to questions concerning “uterine isolation” or tubal ligation and “related matters.”

That document, signed by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, the future Pope Benedict XVI, said that because sterilization was not the primary objective it was morally licit to remove a “seriously injured” uterus when it posed an immediate serious threat to the life or health of the woman even though permanent sterility would result.

However, it rejected the idea of performing a hysterectomy or tubal ligation (“uterine isolation”) when uterine damage did not pose a present risk to the life or health of the woman, but would pose a danger only in case of a future pregnancy. In those cases, it said, such medical procedures would amount to being direct sterilization, which remains illicit.

In the latest response to “a question on the liceity of a hysterectomy in certain cases,” the congregation said, “in recent years some very specific cases have been submitted to the Holy See concerning ‘a different issue from that examined in 1993, because they regard situations in which procreation is no longer possible.”

What made the new question different was “the certainty reached by medical experts that in the case of a pregnancy, it would be spontaneously interrupted before the fetus arrives at a state of viability. Here it is not a question of difficulty or of risks of greater or lesser importance, but of a couple for which it is not possible to procreate,” the congregation said.

“The precise object of sterilization is to impede the functioning of the reproductive organs and the malice of sterilization consists in the refusal of children,” it said.

But, in the cases referred to in the new document, “it is known that the reproductive organs are not capable of protecting a conceived child up to viability, namely, they are not capable of fulfilling their natural procreative function.”

“The objective of the procreative process is to bring a baby into the world, but here the birth of a living fetus is not biologically possible,” it said. “Therefore, we are not dealing with a defective or risky functioning of the reproductive organs, but we are faced here with a situation in which the natural end of bringing a living child into the world is not attainable.”

“The medical procedure should not be judged as being against procreation, because we find ourselves within an objective context in which neither procreation nor, as a consequence, an anti-procreative action, are possible,” it explained.

Evaluating whether a pregnancy could or could not be “viable” is a medical question,” the congregation said, and “one must ask if the highest degree of certainty that medicine can reach has been reached” so as to recognize whether the medical response has been made “in good faith.”

The congregation added that its note was not an endorsement of a hysterectomy as being the only or best option since there are other morally licit options in cases of severe uterine damage such as abstaining from sexual intercourse during fertile periods or total abstinence.

“The decision is the spondees, in dialogue with doctors and their spiritual guide, to choose the path to follow, applying the general criteria of the gradualness of medical intervention to their case and to their circumstances,” it said.†

† Segments of this story previously appeared in the Criterion.
All people find a universal bond in being loved by God

By Fr. Herbert Weber

The small plane flew to the Atlantic coast of Panama, stopping on a landing strip at water’s edge. I was on that plane with my sister and brother-in-law, visiting the Kuna people of the San Blas Archipelago.

Although the people were very friendly, they were shy and retiring, reluctant about having pictures taken. When a group of women, however, learned that I was a Catholic priest, they became engaged.

All of the members of this particular group were Catholic. They walked me to their unpainted wood-framed church, which they proudly displayed to me. They were even willing to have a photo taken with me, honoring the occasion of my visit.

My sister later accused me of playing the priest card to ingratiate myself with the Kuna. Of course, I denied it, but what I did was let them know that, North American or Central American, we shared the commonality of faith. It inspired them and truly reminded me of the universality of our faith and Church.

The Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord, which we celebrated on Jan. 6, is a perfect time to reflect on a universality of faith. In the Church in the U.S., this day begins National Migration Week (Jan. 6-12). In light of everyday news about immigrants and refugees, there is a need to reflect prayerfully on a humanitarian response to those leaving their home countries for safety purposes.

That, however, requires people to reflect on the common bond that all humans have, regardless of point of origin, language or ethnicity.

The responsorial psalm for the Mass on the Feast of Epiphany, proclaims “Lord, every nation on Earth will adore you,” (Ps 72:11). This not only expresses the universal manifestation of God’s salvation to all people of the world. It also depicts all nations finding the same awareness of God’s goodness and love.

Put another way, it means that we adore God who loves all people. As such, we need to love and show respect for all people.

Perhaps the Kuna women warmed up to me because they discovered that bond of the Catholic faith. The same “warming up” has to be present regardless of the particular faith people profess. All people are loved by God. People of all nations are to praise God. This is our universal bond.

Understanding a universality of humanity—that human bond—leads to two seemingly opposite thoughts.

First of all, people have to discover similarities with others. Admitting that people of other backgrounds have something in common with us is a major step toward bringing people together.

I felt I have been blessed not only in traveling to other countries, but also to have known immigrants personally. When Miguel fled El Salvador during that country’s civil war, he resided with me for more than a year. After the war ended, he was fearful about returning to his home.

Consequently, I offered to go with him, spending more than a week in his remote village that can hardly be found on a map. When Miguel was at my parish in Ohio, he was accepted and loved. I felt the same thing with the people in the mountains of El Salvador: the oneness of our humanity.

I witnessed that Miguel and his family had the same love for each other that I had experienced growing up. And when I celebrated Sunday Mass with the community, something that was rare for the people, I also knew that God’s grace does not stop at national borders.

Sadly, as one studies various genocides that have taken place throughout the world, one side is often coaxed into believing that members of the other side are less than human.

In her book, Left to Tell, Immaculée Ilibagiza writes about the Rwandan genocide and how she, as a Tutsi, was saved by a Hutu pastor who hid her and other women in a bathroom. The genocide was characterized by Tutsis being referred to as cockroaches and vermin, as opposed to being human.

Such terms or attitudes are not uncommon in war as people feel a need to dehumanize others. The common bond of humanity among all people is forgotten.

The second necessary step in accepting universality is to know that, although similar in needs, humans are different. This difference, moreover, is a source of strength, not weakness.

Universality does not mean uniformity. People have differences in backgrounds and various ways of looking at life. In accepting differences, people can go beyond themselves and know they don’t have all the answers.

A devout Muslim family invited me to their house along with other Christians and Jews for a sunset dinner. The Muslims were mostly immigrants, but had come from various countries in the Middle East and Africa. There was warmth in the room as each person shared some aspect of faith.

As I listened, it became incredibly clear to me that our differences did not need to drive us apart. In diversity, there is also unity, a unity of understanding.

That dinner reflected Psalm 72 and how every nation can live in God’s love and adore God’s majesty.

(Father Herbert Weber is the founding pastor of St. John XXIII Parish in Perrysburg, Ohio.)
Therapist’s message is that it’s OK to start 2019 with you

I’ve always appreciated the notion of self-care in an Oprah Winfrey, hot-baths-and-expensive-chocolate kind of way. We work so hard, the thinking goes, that we deserve a break here and there. So splurge on that full-price gift- to-self spa day and call it self-care. Bingo! On the new season.

But it was recently challenged when I encountered the writings of Julia Hogan, a 30-year-old therapist whose book “It’s OK To Start With You presents self-care through a Catholic, worldview lens.” Hogan views readers to take it up with greater resolve by understanding it in a clearer light.

It’s a philosophy that I’ve embraced, and I’m happy to share how it helps her focus her perspective.

Julia had a message for them.

“True self-care is much more than a collection of sayings or self-indulgent, surface-level practices,” she writes in her collection of sayings or self-indulgent, surface-level practices,” she writes in her book. “It’s a way of life that reinforces the fact, rooted in our baptism, that we are children, that we are worth love and care.

Inadequate heating can cause hardships for the poor and elderly

I’m from central Indiana. So, I don’t consider myself an expert on cold weather like those in Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota—or even South Carolina.

I do know the weather in Indiana can take a turn for the worse. In my younger life, I remember witnessing dangerous conditions like the blizzard of 1978, and times when temperatures dropped below a brisk nine degrees Fahrenheit with a wind chill that made it feel like 10 degrees below zero.

January is historically the coldest month when the average temperature overnight is 18.5 degrees Fahrenheit. According to the Farmer’s Almanac, a winter-chilling arrives mid-February this year.

Growing up, in the winter months, my mother would open a window in our Chicago apartment and framed by gold opened warming centers for those who needed shelter. In many cases, they opened warming centers for those who needed a place to stay to out of the bitterly cold nights. St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Bedford worked with other churches and civic organizations in its community to open a warming shelter the day after a homeless man died during a very frigid cold spell. All archdiocesan Catholic Charities in the state work closely with other community leaders to support and provide emergency shelter during cold temperatures.

Older people also experience extreme hardship during the colder months. Individuals unable to leave their apartments due to weather conditions become isolated for extended stretches of time. For elderly adults without family support, who are unable to afford care services, this can be life threatening. Older adults are also more susceptible to hypothermia, which can be deadly if not treated quickly, according to the National Institute of Health. Furthermore, families with children living below the poverty line and elderly household incomes. The increased cost of heating, combined with the health and safety consequences of cold weather, has significant and potentially deadly consequences for those unable to access appropriate shelter. In many cases, they can create a downward economic spiral where the inability to afford proper heating leads to higher health costs, which further hurts those who cannot afford appropriate shelter and leads to worse health conditions and so on and so on. As we begin anticipating much colder temperatures, take a moment to consider the luxury of heating, and consider ways to support those who do not have the benefit of a warm home. Please support the emergency programs of Catholic Charities in your area. I know I am.

(David Bethuram is executive director of the archdiocesan Secretariat for Catholic Charities. E-mail him at davidbethuram@archindy.org.) ♦

Make the time to work on relationships with God, others in 2019

I have a clever girlfriend who introduced me to a “New Year’s Resolution” alternative: It’s OK to try it this year.

Admittedly, I’m accustomed with setting my New Year’s resolution by week two. During this time, I set my goals of mine directs each to New Year, or to a friend, or two. I explained that it helps her focus her energy where it’s most needed throughout the year.

Last year, her word was “courage.” She surprised me, but delightfully, learned that she would be a mother again. Her two children were starting middle school, and they needed a lot of baby items long ago. She was also in the higher category for pregnancy since she was older than “normal.”

On top of that, she was only about a year in a new full-time job, and so she decided the word to use was “courage” as her mantra for the coming year.

During bouts with morning sickness or to exhaustion when she knew that sometimes required travel, she would inhale deep breaths and breathe out the word “courage.”

I liked this idea of giving a year purpose by naming it. I decided to give it a try myself in 2019. I’m not a religious person or one who would say how important a word or phrase to use. There are so many worthy areas of my life that need attention and improvement, so I’m not sure whether I’m nurturing a relationship or strengthening it with my words and actions. When I fail to give relationships their proper importance, I ask for grace, push “reset” on my brain and try again, with more effort and patience.

This brings me to the key reason I picked the word “relationship.” The most important relationship that any one of us will ever have is with God, our creator. I attend Mass and I say my prayers, but I don’t think he knows that I have an argument in a quiet room and just talk to God. I need to stop viewing him as this remote being.

The concept I fail to wrap my tiny human brain around is that, even though God made every type of creature and flower and planet throughout all of time, he is divine and he can and wants to have an intimate, unique relationship with each and every one of us.

In a lesson from our fifth-grade religious education center, we read the following passage which illustrated this point:

“We are persons of great dignity. God loves each of us as his children. Because of this, each of us has great worth and value. It makes no difference if someone is disabled or unloved by other people. Even a tiny unborn baby growing within her mother’s womb is more important than all the works of science, all the works of art. Each of us is known and loved by God. That knowledge moves others to do more.

God loves us more than the sun or the moon! (And those are pretty important in my house.)

I invite you to join me and say “Cheers” to 2019. The year of working on relationships with God, others and ourselves. Here’s to deepening our ties—to repairing them, and renewing them.

(Patti Lamb, a member of St. Susanna Parish in Plainfield, is a regular columnist for "The Criterion.")
The Solemnity of the Baptism of the Lord is important to the Church’s mission of bringing us to Christ. It reveals both the identity of the Lord, and begins the Gospel revelation of the Lord’s work of salvation.

Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River by John the Baptist. The Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke report this event. It is not recorded in John, although John’s Gospel clues to John the Baptist’s baptism in the Jordan. It also presents John the Baptist referring to Jesus as the “Lamb of God” (Jn 1:36).

The first reading for this feast is one of the four songs of the “suffering servant.” It is found in Isaiah. These poetic passages are prominent in the liturgies of Lent, particularly on Good Friday. They convey an ominous overtone. Who was this suffering servant? To whom do these passages refer? The future Messiah? One of the prophets? The author? Was it a collective reference to the people of Israel? No one knows.

Regardless, the Church’s liturgy over the centuries has seen Jesus in the suffering servant songs. Certainly this is the message for this feast. In this Scripture passage, God reveals that a faithful and pure servant will come, who will endure an outrageous fate. Many will suffer, but he will endure and be saved.

In the great revelation of the Epiphany, celebrated last week, the Church continued to tell us about Jesus. Son of Mary and therefore human, the Lord also is God, as the Magi realized.

Now, on this feast, the Church instructs us further about Jesus. He is the instrument of God’s love for us. Doomed to suffer, he delivers us.

Practically speaking, Jesus comes to us through Peter and the Apostles, the Lord’s disciples, whom Jesus commissioned to bring salvation to all people.

Reflection

In Advent, the Church called us to renew ourselves in holiness and grace. The Church joyfully has led us to Christmas, the celebration of the Lord’s birth. If we responded in Advent, Christmas was much more than a commemoration. It was a personal event in which faithful hearts and souls truly received Christ and were restored, healed and freed from the inevitability of death.

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Question Corner

Q Would you please explain the apparent contradiction in the verse in St. Matthew’s Gospel (Mt 1:25) that says, “He [Joseph] had no relations with her until she bore a son, and he named him Jesus”? The use of the word “until” would seem to indicate that conjugal relations may have occurred after the birth of Christ. This is confusing to those of us who have constantly heard Mary referred to as “ever-virgin” (New Jersey)

A You are correct on the Catholic teaching that Mary remained a virgin—before, during and after the birth of Jesus. The Catechism of the Catholic Church quotes St. Augustine, who said that Mary “remained a virgin in the act of conceiving her, a virgin in giving birth to him, a virgin in carrying him, a virgin in nursing him at the breast, always a virgin” (Mt 1:25). As regards the verse to which you refer (Mt 1:25), current usage of the word “until” often does imply that the action in question did happen later on, but that is not the meaning of the original language. The Greek word that is translated “until” in Matthew (”heストレス”) says nothing one way or the other about what happened afterward.

Note that it is the same word used in the Greek translation of 2 Samuel 6:23, where we read that “Michal, the daughter of Saul, had no children until the day of her death.” (We are not to assume, of course, that she had children after her death!)

But to avoid the understandable confusion that you point out, I myself prefer the translation in the New Jerusalem Bible: “When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had told him to do; he took his wife to his home; he had not had intercourse with her when she gave birth to a son, and he named him Jesus.”

6 A very dear friend of mine died recently. She was a Methodist, and I do not know whether they have services—as we have Masses—to mark the anniversary of someone’s death. If they do not, I was wondering if it would be appropriate for me, as a Catholic, to have a Catholic Mass celebrated for her on the anniversary of her passing. (Pennsylvania)

A The national website of the United Methodist Church notes that “recurring memorial acts and services are occasions both of healing and of celebration. Mourners are especially open to supportive ministries on such occasions as anniversaries of marriage, birthday anniversaries of marriages or anniversary of death.” So you might want to inquire whether your deceased friend’s local church might be open to conducting a memorial service on her anniversary.

But your other option is to have a Catholic Mass celebrated for her intention, and that is certainly allowed by the Catholic Church. (In fact, with the permission of the bishop or vicar general, and “provided the minister of the church or other person to whom the deceased person was a regular member or communicant is unavailable.” (“Order of Christian Funerals,” #189), a Catholic funeral service may be conducted for a baptized non-Catholic Christian—not infrequently, for the spouse of a Catholic.)

Some Catholics might worry about offending the Protestant family because Protestants generally reject the notion of purgatory as a period of purification. But the United Methodist Church acknowledges that it has “no one clear teaching on what happens to the dead between their death and the resurrection and judgment at the last day.” I shouldn’t think anyone would mind your praying for your friend’s quick passage to heaven, and when I have sent Mass cards on such occasions, people have been universally grateful.
Three years ago, the Catholic Conference of Ohio said it was neutral on this bill. It said it supported “the life-affirming intent” of the legislation, but it had to “take into account the opinion of legal experts, who caution that the provisions in the proposed legislation are likely to be found unconstitutional.”

In a statement at the time, the conference said it was unlikely “a complete ban of abortions after a heartbeat has been detected will be able to withstand court challenge.”

The Ohio Catholic Conference, the public policy arm of the state’s bishops, also said it “encourages the enactment of effective laws that will provide maximum protection for unborn persons,” adding that “legislation often involves prudential judgments as to the most effective and timely means for advancing the protection of unborn children.”

Marshall Pitfield, chairman of the Ohio Right to Life board of directors, said in a Dec. 27 statement prior to the Senate vote that if the General Assembly did not override the governor’s veto, Ohio Right to Life would support the pro-life organizations working tirelessly to pass this bill during the next General Assembly.

“We make this public commitment today,” to get this bill to Gov.-elect Mike DeWine’s desk, he said. †
As U.S. bishops meet, Vatican may be deciding fate of former cardinal

WASHINGTON (CNS)—As Archbishop McCarrick gathered in early January at a seminar in Illinois to pray, talk about the Church’s sex abuse crisis, report to U.S. bishops about abuse allegations involving him and others and discuss the possible fate of his own being decided overseas, the Vatican may be exercising the priesthood.

Archbishop McCarrick’s name has been a recurring topic in the news as the Catholic Church’s sex abuse crisis continues to reverberate around the world.

Prior to the retreat’s start, Msgr. Jeffrey A. Boyer, chancellor of the Archdiocese of Washington, said the Vatican may be deciding McCarrick’s fate.

The website of Mundelein Seminary urged Catholics who could attend the retreat to pray for the bishops, specifically, that “the ‘sins and crimes’ of abuse and wrongdoing. While he cannot be criminally prosecuted because the statute of limitations has expired.

McCarrick and a minor, now 22, had been sent to live in the U.S. after being found guilty of child abuse.

Cardinal Donald Wuerl of Washington, a constant McCarrick defender, tweeted praise for the retreat’s “pause, pray, reflect and convert.”

Cardinal Donald Wuerl, the Church’s top American Catholic, has been heavily criticized for his handling of abuse allegations, and the Vatican may be exercising the priesthood.
Vigil for Life, Indiana March for Life set for Jan. 21-22 in Indianapolis

The annual Vigil for Life and Indiana March for Life will take place on Jan. 21 and 22 in Indianapolis. The events are held in solemn observance of the 1973 Roe v. Wade Supreme Court decision to legalize abortion in the United States. Both events draw attention to the inherent dignity and respect for the lives of all unborn children.

The Vigil for Life will take place from 7:09 p.m. on Jan. 21 at St. John the Evangelist Church, 126 W. Georgia St., in Indianapolis. This year’s evening of praise, worship and reflections will feature Christian singer and songwriter Audrey Assad.

The event, sponsored by the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, the Diocese of Lafayette and Right to Life of Archdiocese of Indianapolis, the Diocese of Lafayette and Right to Life of Indianapolis, is free, although financial donations will be accepted and split between the archdiocesan Office of Human Life and Dignity and the Lafayette Diocese’s Office for Family Life. Parking will be available at two adjacent garages—Plaza Park Garage on Capitol Avenue, or the World Wonders Garage (mail parking) on Illinois Street. Registration is not required, although for planning purposes it is requested. To register, go to bit.ly/3WfXN2K (case-sensitive).

The second annual Indiana March for Life will take place the next day, on Jan. 22. Events begin with a pre-rally at 11 a.m. in the Indiana Convention Center, 100 S. Capitol Ave., across from St. John the Evangelist Church.

Mass will be celebrated in the church at noon, with Archbishop Charles C. Thompson as the principal celebrant. Lafayette Bishop Timothy L. Doherty will concelebrate. A memorial for the unborn, sponsored by Right to Life of Indianapolis, will take place at the same time in the Indiana Convention Center.

The march will begin on Georgia Street between the church and convention center at 1:30 p.m. It will proceed from there to the Soldiers and Sailors Monument—the downtown Circle—then on to the Statehouse at 2 p.m.

A rally with speakers will take place on the south steps of the Statehouse at 2 p.m. All are invited to show their support for the dignity of the unborn by taking part in both the vigil and the march.

Groups planning on taking buses to the event should contact Brie Anne Varick for more information.

Police investigate swastika-painting vandalism at Bridgeport cathedral

BISHOP Frank J. Caggiano of Bridgeport, who has been on a seven-day retreat with the rest of the U.S. bishops in Mundelein, Illinois, said he only learned of the incident the afternoon of Jan. 5. In a statement issued later that day, Bishop Caggiano said: “I am appalled and outraged by this act of vandalism against the mother Church of our diocese and this brazen and disgusting display of anti-Semitism, which is morally abhorrent and an affront to our Catholic faith.”

He added, “I am deeply disturbed and outraged that someone would violate the sanctity of our church.”

Bishop Caggiano also reached out to Jews in the Bridgeport area. “My thoughts and prayers are with our Jewish brothers and sisters in the city of Bridgeport and beyond,” he said. “We stand with you and condemn every form of anti-Semitism, racism, and bigotry wherever it may be found.”

Which came first? The chicken or the egg?

In this photo, third-grade students at Holy Family School in New Albany watched baby chicks hatch from eggs. The students studied the life cycle of chickens and had been monitoring the eggs during their 21-day incubation period. This photo originally appeared in The Criterion on April 27, 1984.

(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 jmottyka@archindy.org.)