Mary inspires, assists those seeking their vocation, pope says

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Signifying his document dedicated to young people, faith and discernment, Pope Francis said Mary, the mother of God, is a source of inspiration and strength for everyone who seeks to understand their vocation and remain faithful to it.

“Mary is the model of every vocation and the inspiration of every vocational pastoral program: Young people who are seeking or questioning their future can find Mary to be the one who helps them discern God’s plan for them and find the strength to follow it.”

The pope chose to visit the Italian seaside town of Loreto on March 25 feast day to sign his pontifical apostolic exhortation—titled in Spanish, “Vive Cristo, esperanza nuestra,” (“Christ, Our Hope, Lives”).

The document, based on discussions and input garnered from the world Synod of Bishops on “young people, faith and vocational discernment,” was to be released to the public on April 2, the anniversary of the death of St. John Paul II. The intention was “to connect two pontificates, so loved by the Church and close to the younger generations,” said Archbishop Christophe Pierre, apostolic nuncio to the U.S., preaches during a March 19 Mass in the chapel of the St. Augustine Home for the Aged in Indianapolis. The liturgy marked the 150th anniversary of the start of ministry in the U.S. of the Little Sisters of the Poor, who operate the retirement facility. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

By Sean Gallagher

Little Sisters of the Poor host apostolic nuncio to celebrate 150 years of order’s U.S. ministry

“It took more than two weeks by boat across the Atlantic Ocean from France to the United States. Finally, they arrived in Brooklyn on Sept. 13, 1869. They spoke no English, these religious women of the Little Sisters of the Poor, an order founded by St. Jeanne Jugan in France just 30 years prior.

How fitting, then, that Archbishop Christophe Pierre, apostolic nuncio for the United States, should celebrate the order’s 150 years of ministry in the United States with a Mass on March 19 at the Little Sisters’ St. Augustine Home for the Aged in Indianapolis. The St. Augustine Home has served the poor aged of Indiana since 1873.

Archbishop Pierre, like the order’s foundress, is a native of France. The parish in which he was baptized and raised, located in the Brittany region of France, was the home parish of St. Jeanne Jugan.

It was also the church in which St. Theodora Guérin, Indiana’s first saint and foundress of the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods in 1840, was baptized.

And the Servant of God Bishop Simon Bruté, the first bishop of the Diocese of Vincennes, Ind., which later became the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, grew up in the Archdiocese of Rennes, France, for which Archbishop Pierre was ordained a priest in 1970.

“For us, to go to America is very far away,” he said after the Mass. “But to know that 150 years ago, some people from [there] decided to go shows what the Church is all about.”

Archbishop Pierre noted that his mother is still living in France—and that he feels especially close to the Little Sisters because she is cared for by members of the religious order.

March 19, the solemnity of St. Joseph, was a fitting day for celebrating the special Mass honoring the Little Sisters of the Poor’s 150 years of ministry in America. The sisters hold great devotion to the spouse of Mary and the foster father of Jesus, a love fostered by St. Jeanne Jugan.

“Her devotion to St. Joseph flowed from her confidence in divine providence,” Archbishop Pierre said.

Called to holiness

Archbishop’s visit to Ritter House brings history to life, page 9

By John Shaughnessy

A joy for life often radiates from the face of Robert “Lanny” Rossman, and it’s on high beam as he stands in front of a house on the near west side of Indianapolis.

Rossman and his nephew Steve Adams spent 14 months tearing down and building up the interior of the once-abandoned house—a complete overhaul that gives the 75-year-old Rossman an overwhelming sense of satisfaction.

Yet what brings the true joy to Rossman is knowing that he not only helped to transform the house, he helped to transform a family’s life. The house became a home for a single mother and her three children, a home that the family couldn’t otherwise afford.

“I remember she was extremely excited and thankful when they moved in,” says Robert “Lanny” Rossman smiles as he stands in front of the once-abandoned house in Indianapolis that he and his nephew Steve Adams spent 14 months transforming into a home for a single mother and her three children. (Photo by John Shaughnessy)

See ROSSMAN, page 2

Award winner uses heart and hands to help others

By John Shaughnessy

Awards winner uses heart and hands to help others

Called to holiness

Archbishop’s visit to Ritter House brings history to life, page 9

By John Shaughnessy

A joy for life often radiates from the face of Robert “Lanny” Rossman, and it’s on high beam as he stands in front of a house on the near west side of Indianapolis.

Rossman and his nephew Steve Adams spent 14 months tearing down and building up the interior of the once-abandoned house—a complete overhaul that gives the 75-year-old Rossman an overwhelming sense of satisfaction.

Yet what brings the true joy to Rossman is knowing that he not only helped to transform the house, he helped to transform a family’s life. The house became a home for a single mother and her three children, a home that the family couldn’t otherwise afford.

“I remember she was extremely excited and thankful when they moved in,” says

See ROSSMAN, page 2

Called to holiness

Archbishop’s visit to Ritter House brings history to life, page 9

By John Shaughnessy

A joy for life often radiates from the face of Robert “Lanny” Rossman, and it’s on high beam as he stands in front of a house on the near west side of Indianapolis.

Rossman and his nephew Steve Adams spent 14 months tearing down and building up the interior of the once-abandoned house—a complete overhaul that gives the 75-year-old Rossman an overwhelming sense of satisfaction.

Yet what brings the true joy to Rossman is knowing that he not only helped to transform the house, he helped to transform a family’s life. The house became a home for a single mother and her three children, a home that the family couldn’t otherwise afford.

“I remember she was extremely excited and thankful when they moved in,” says
IndyCar driver Ed Carpenter to speak at Spirit of Service Awards Dinner

Ed Carpenter

Four individuals will be honored with Spirit of Service Awards during the 14th annual Spirit of Service Award, an honor that he will receive on April 30 in Indianapolis during a celebration that will mark the 100th anniversary of Catholic Charities. Carpenter comes in helping and connecting with others.

The Criterion

Ann Seton Parish in Richmond while the Annunciation to highlight how the faithfulness bring the “Gospel of peace and love” to the world, as well as to the world’s poor and to the world’s children. It is the basis for the foundation of the Annunciation to highlight how the Annunciation to highlight how the

The Criterion

October 20 – 10:30 a.m.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: Criterion Press Inc. 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367

The Criterion Press Inc.

The Criterion Press Inc.

http://www.criteriononline.com

The Criterion

Ann Seton Parish in Richmond while the Annunciation to highlight how the Annunciation to highlight how the faithfulness bring the “Gospel of peace and love” to the world, as well as to the world’s poor and to the world’s children. It is the basis for the foundation of the Annunciation to highlight how the

The Criterion

October 20 – 10:30 a.m.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: Criterion Press Inc. 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367

The Criterion Press Inc.

http://www.criteriononline.com
Deacon Frank Roberts was all about service to other people

By Victoria Arthur

John Elcesser was a school superintendent in Indiana on the day that changed everything. He didn’t recall locked doors in his school facilities prior to April 20, 1999, and he certainly never dreamed of the need for active shooter drills. But the Columbine High School massacre in Littleton, Colo., altered the trajectory of life as everyone knew it. As the nation nears the 20th anniversary of that grim day, just to be present to the people,” Deacon Miller said.

Deacon Roberts often shared that love with residents of the 11 nursing homes in Richmond. This wasn’t enough for him, though, said Deacon Miller.

“We are pleased that our state legislature, encompasses these and other areas. The 18 proposals in the report include requiring active shooter drills in every school, adding security equipment and technology in and around school buildings, increasing local school enforcement presence inside schools, and expanding mental health services for students.

“Columbine made us look at things that we typically took for granted and forced us to rethink them,” said Elcesser, who now serves as executive director of the Indiana Non-Public Education Association (INPEA). Today we have a whole new vocabulary. Sheltering in place, lockdown—these were not part of our vernacular or our practices back then. Now it is critical that schools have plans in place to keep people safe. This is one of the major areas of focus at the Statehouse this year.”

The legislative session began in January with 16 school shootings in the state since the day the Columbine massacre occurred.

Many of the school safety bills introduced this session were in response to a report issued in August by Indiana Sen. Eric Holcomb in the wake of the May 2018 shooting at Noblesville West Middle School that injured a student and a teacher.

Just three months earlier, school safety bills had again dominated the national spotlight when a gunman opened fire at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fla., killing 17 students and staff members and injuring another 17 people.

The 2018 Indiana School Safety Recommendations report was the result of a task force led by the Indiana Department of Homeland Security, the Indiana Department of Education and other state agencies. The 18 proposals in the report include requiring active shooter drills in every school, adding security equipment and technology in and around school buildings, increasing local school enforcement presence inside schools, and expanding mental health services for students.

House Bill 1004, one of the school safety bills moving forward in the legislature, encompasses these and other plans, but it’s the last piece—mental health—that is top of the priority list.

There is nothing more important in a school’s life than relationships,” said McNamara in presenting her bill before the Senate Education Committee earlier this month. “We can put in all the bulletproof doors we want, but we can buy all the latest gadgets, and we can have a law enforcement officer walking down the hallways, but it all relates to school relationships, and having a social worker or mental health professional available to our kids is, in my opinion, it’s our number-one critical need.”

Elcesser and Elcesser point out that one of the strengths of private school schools, especially Catholic and other religious schools, is that they tend to be smaller and more attuned to individual students’ lives and personal issues.

“Columbine made us look at things that we typically took for granted and forced us to rethink them,” said Elcesser, whose organization, along with the Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC), has successfully advocated for private schools to be included in the public policy voice of the Catholic Church in Indiana.

Donors Have Made Possible

AMAZING THINGS

United Catholic Appeal

Christ Our Hope

1. Provide nearly 900 veterans with food, shelter and clothing

2. Give more than 800 homeless families a safe place to rest

3. Provide education to nearly 1,100 children in the Notre Dame ACE Academy center-city schools

4. Provide support to seminarians at Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary and St. Meinrad Seminary & School of Theology

5. Care for 48 retired priests who have devoted their lives to serving others

6. Plan faith-centered activities for nearly 8,500 youth

7. Help countless mothers choose life instead of abortion

YOUR GIFT CAN

DO EVEN MORE.

www.archindy.org/UCA

United Catholic Appeal

Christ Our Hope

1. Provide nearly 900 veterans with food, shelter and clothing

2. Give more than 800 homeless families a safe place to rest

3. Provide education to nearly 1,100 children in the Notre Dame ACE Academy center-city schools

4. Provide support to seminarians at Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary and St. Meinrad Seminary & School of Theology

5. Care for 48 retired priests who have devoted their lives to serving others

6. Plan faith-centered activities for nearly 8,500 youth

7. Help countless mothers choose life instead of abortion

YOUR GIFT CAN

DO EVEN MORE.

www.archindy.org/UCA

Deacon Frank Roberts, who ministered during his many years as pastor at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Richmond, died on March 19 at 73. In the early 1990s, the deacon oversaw the expansion of St. Andrew Church in Richmond. Archbishop Charles C. Thompson was the principal architect. Deacon Michael Slinger was the homilist. Deacon Roberts was "all about service to other people," said Deacon James Miller, who serves St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Richmond.

Deacon Roberts often shared that love with residents of the 11 nursing homes in Richmond. This wasn’t enough for him, though, said Deacon Miller.

"He just loved sharing his love of God with others," said Deacon Miller, who also serves St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Richmond.

Deacon Roberts often shared that love with residents of the 11 nursing homes in Richmond. This wasn’t enough for him, though, said Deacon Miller.

"He just loved sharing his love of God with others," said Deacon Miller, who also serves St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Richmond.

Deacon Roberts often shared that love with residents of the 11 nursing homes in Richmond. This wasn’t enough for him, though, said Deacon Miller.

"He just loved sharing his love of God with others," said Deacon Miller, who also serves St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Richmond.

Deacon Roberts often shared that love with residents of the 11 nursing homes in Richmond. This wasn’t enough for him, though, said Deacon Miller.

"He just loved sharing his love of God with others," said Deacon Miller, who also serves St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Richmond.

Deacon Roberts often shared that love with residents of the 11 nursing homes in Richmond. This wasn’t enough for him, though, said Deacon Miller.

"He just loved sharing his love of God with others," said Deacon Miller, who also serves St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Richmond.
Love your neighbor

Perhaps, before Lent ends, we could take a few minutes to meditate on what St. Paul called the greatest virtue—love (1 Cor 13:13). We should start with the event that Lent leads up to: the amazing fact that God loved us so much that he sent his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life (Jn 3:16). That’s more than just a sign that is sometimes held up at sporting events; it’s our belief that God loves us so much that he sent his Son. “Who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God something to be grasped” (Phil 2:6), “humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross” (Phil 2:8). In return, what does God ask for? Jesus answered that question very directly: “You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment” (Mt 22:37-39). Love of God and love of neighbor are the most important, and consistent, commands to come from the Gospels and the letters in the New Testament. Perhaps St. John is the most insistent. He wrote, “Those who say ‘I love God’ and hate their brothers and sisters are liars, for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen” (1 Jn 4:20).

St. Paul, besides telling us that love is the greatest virtue, says that “the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. . . . The commandments . . . are summed up in this saying: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ Love does no evil to the neighbor; hence, love is the fulfillment of the law” (Rom 13:8-10).

And who is my neighbor? Surely we know the answer to that question, which a “scholar of the law” asked Jesus. Jesus replied with the story of the man who had been injured by robbers and who was cared for by a much-despised alien from the country of Samaria after both a priest and a Levite passed him by. We know it as the Parable of the Good Samaritan (see Lk 11:25-37).

How do we show love of our neighbor? St. James told us clearly that “just as a body without a spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead” (Jas 2:17), and he gave us a good example: “If a brother or sister has nothing to wear and has no food for the day, and one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace, keep warm, and eat well,’ but you do not give them the necessities of the body, what good is it?” (Jas 2:15-16).

That’s one example. But Jesus was even more explicit. He said that we must feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, welcome the stranger, clothe the naked, care for the ill and visit the prisoner (what we know as the corporal works of mercy). Those who do not do those things, he said, “will go off to eternal punishment” (Mt 25:46).

That’s pretty harsh, to say the least. But that’s what he said will happen “when the Son of Man comes in his glory” (Mt 25:31) at the end of the world and judges us. That’s when the same person who suffered and died for us will condemn those of us who do not perform the works of mercy.

The good news, though, is that Jesus calls those of us who do perform those works “the righteous” and he says that “the righteous [will] go to eternal life” (Mt 25:46).

The way for us to attain eternal life, therefore, is clearly set out for us. We must love God, and we must show our love for God by loving our neighbor, whoever is in need. And we do that through our works of mercy.

It’s something to think about during this Lenten season, and then resolve to do that throughout the rest of the year.

—John F. Fink

Letters Policy

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 informed, 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 based on space limitations, pastoral sensitivity and content, including spelling and grammar. In order to encourage opinions from a variety of sources, frequency of letters may be limited to one letter every three months. Concise letters (usually less than 300 words) are more likely to be published.

Letters must be signed, but, for serious reasons of confidentiality, may not be published.

Send letters to “Letters to the Editor,” The Criterion, 1-400 N. Meridian Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367. Readers with access to e-mail may send letters to vpreyer@archindy.org.
Los fariseos y los escribas acercaban a Jesús para escucharlo. "Ellos reciben a los pecadores y come con ellos" (Lk 15:1-2).

En el cuarto domingo de Cuaresma, la Iglesia proclama la maravillosa noticia de que Dios siempre perdona. La conocida parábola del "Hijo pródigo" (Lc 15:11-32) habla sobre la disposición de un padre para perdonar a sus hijos que han pecado contra él: uno por dilapidar toda su herencia y el otro por sentirse enfadado y resentido de ser el hermano mayor: "Hijo mío, tú estás siempre conmigo, y todo lo mío es tuyo. Es justo que haya fiesta y alegría, porque tu hermano estaba muerto y ha vuelto a la vida, estaba perdido y ha sido encontrado" (Lk 15:32).

La parábola del hijo pródigo nos recuerda que Dios siempre perdona. "No existe una alegría más grande que el hijo que se ha perdido se ha encontrado" (Lk 15:20). Dios, nuestro Padre celestial, está dispuesto a hacer para redimirnos lo que nuestros corazones se negaron a hacer por sí mismos. Dios no quiere que nuestros pecadores, ni que las personas que las somos, se hagan a sí mismos y a otros, a Dios. Dios, nuestro Padre celestial, nos invita y nos desafía a vivir en un mundo sin miedo a sentir el amor y el perdón de Dios. Sí, también nosotros, como los demás, tenemos la oportunidad de sentir el perdón de Dios. Pero al ser seres humanos, cometemos errores, pecemos, y nos arrepentimos de ellos. Después de haber perdido a alguien que queríamos, volvemos a encontrarlo. Así como el padre que perdonó a su hijo pródigo, así lo hace Dios con nosotros. Dios, nuestro Padre celestial, nos invita a vivir en un mundo sin miedo a sentir el perdón de Dios. Sí, también nosotros, como los demás, tenemos la oportunidad de sentir el perdón de Dios. Porque Dios es un Dios misericordioso que siempre nos ama y nos perdona.
April 22-25 St. Meinrad Archabbey Guest House and Retreat Center, 200 Hill Dr. St. Meinrad, Peace, the Benedictine Way, Benedictine Brother Maurus Zoeller presenting, $255 single, $425 double. Information: 812-357-6355 or mzoeller@united strangely.org

Easter Egg run/walk on April 20 will benefit Society of St. Vincent of Paul

Pregnancy Care Center of SE Indiana to host annual Walk for Life on April 27

The Pregnancy Care Center of SE Indiana is holding its annual two-mile Walk for Life at Ivy Tech Community College, 950 Walton St., in Lawrenceburg on April 27.

Registration begins at 8:30 a.m. with the walk starting at 9 a.m.

The goal of the walk is to raise $32,000 to enable the care center to continue to serve the community and defend the life of the unborn.

For more information, contact Annette Davis, 812-796-4250 or adavis@supportpccindiana.org.
Co-writers, co-producers and co-directors say God planned pro-life film 'for such a time as now'

By Natalie Hoeter

As introductions were made and basic information was gathered, the voices of Chuck Konzelman and Cary Solomon were jovial and lighthearted. But their sound changed as they began discussing their most recent film, Unplanned, to be released on March 29. It tells the true story of Abby Johnson’s conversion from pro-choice abortion facility supervisor to pro-life advocate as told in her 2011 book, Unplanned.

As they spoke about the film, the voices of the two co-writers, co-producers, co-directors and best friends took on tones at times serious, at times incredible, and even at times urgent.

“At one point during ‘Unplanned’ and Solomon’s thoughts on the making and impact of Unplanned during a recent phone interview with The Criterion.”

‘It was a story that needed to be told’

When Solomon moved to Wayne, N.J., in grade school, he made friends with his next-door neighbor. More than four decades later, Konzelman and Solomon are still best friends—and devout Catholic Christians—whom now live on the other side of the country in Los Angeles.

Solomon noted that he and Konzelman are a bit like the television duo Penn and Teller, where “I’m Penn, the one who talks,” he admitted with a laugh.

The two worked together on the secular side of the film industry for about 17 years. Along the way, they wrote for major studios like Warner Brothers, Paramount, Sony-Columbia and 20th Century Fox; for TV; with well-known producers like Joel Silver and Stan Lee; and for famous actors like Bruce Willis and Sylvester Stallone.

But in 2008, both men felt called to come over to serve the Lord with their talents. Solomon said, “Until that point, we’ve co-written and co-produced numerous faith-based box office films. Movieguide listed their 2010 film, ‘What If…’ as one of the year’s top 10 family movies, and their 2014 movie, ‘God’s Not Dead’ film ranked among the top 10 grossing films that year. It also won Movieguide’s top award in 2015. Their last film prior to Unplanned was ‘God’s Not Dead: A Light in the Darkness.’”

Before all the awards, Solomon recalled when, about six years ago, he and Konzelman were at their “usual haunt, a video store in Los Angeles. It was the store that owned the life of their next-door neighbor, a former Planned Parenthood administrator who quit that job to join the pro-life movement after her up-close interaction with abortion. (2016 photo/courtesy Unplanned.)

“The next day, Konzelman ‘came into the office with one of those looks,’ said Solomon. ‘I said, ‘Are you OK?’ And he said, ‘You need to read this.’’”

The way he said it, she could tell something divine had happened: it read it, and I agreed it was destined to be a story that needed to be told on film.

Film is ‘coming out at exact time it’s needed’

Konzelman and Solomon prayed about the project, and both were surprised at the response they received.

“The Lord said, ‘Not yet!’ Solomon recalled, incredulously. ‘What do you mean, not yet? Babies are dying! We were bummed out—we were ready to go.’”

Solomon, in mock words, “Not yet doesn’t mean ‘no.’ It means, ‘Not yet.’”

Four years later, the two were working in the office of their production company, Believe Entertainment, Inc., when a peculiar thing happened:

“We both looked up at each other, and we both knew at that very moment the time (to make the film) was now,” said Solomon.

Both noted in retrospect that the moment happened 10 days before the election of President Donald Trump.

Known for his pro-life stance, President Trump was labeled as “proving to be the most fearless pro-life president in history” in a May 23, 2018 article, by the Washington Post.

“If I may—what’s happening, these infant death laws …” Solomon said, his voice trailing off. “We’ve been praying for a time such as this through prayer. (The film) is coming out at the exact time it is needed.”

Konzelman agreed, even down to the date of the film’s release. While the official box office opening is on March 29, some locations showed the film as early as March 25—the feast of the Annunciation of the Lord when “the Word was made flesh” in the womb of Mary.

“We figure having the film available as early as the Annunciation was likely a decision—but the Lord’s, not ours,” he said.

“If you look at what’s happening, these infant death laws … we’ve been preparing for a time such as this through prayer. (The film) is coming out at the exact time it is needed.”

—Cary Solomon, co-writer, co-producer and co-director of Unplanned

They chose a studio in Stillwater, Okla., far from Los Angeles. And “somehow by the grace of God, in an age of social media, there were no leaks about the film, Konzelman said, despite a cast and crew of 1,000 people.

Media silence is not the only grace that occurred during the process of making the film.

“From day one in the office to when we were on set we had miracles, healings, conversions,” said Solomon. “We could make a movie about making the movie.”

“Do you want the $1 million or not?”

As an example of both a healing and a conversion, Solomon spoke of a woman who was “pro-choice and very, very sick with lupus,” who had somehow gotten hold of a screenplay of Unplanned.

“She said just reading the screenplay, she became pro-life and desperately wanted to be involved in the film,” he said. But when she arrived at the set, it became obvious that her health would not allow her to be part of the 20-hour work days.

Suddenly the woman began to cry. One of the many priests and ministers frequently present on the set was asked to make her a confession.

“I was told: ‘You know that you have to confess for the first time to having an abortion at age 19. She was just standing there crying about this abortion—and right then and there, she was miraculously healed’ of her illness, Solomon said with a bit of awe in his voice. She went on to do office work for the project.”

Solomon’s favorite conversion story hits closer to home.

“My dad is 84, an atheist, liberal, pro-choice, far left, get-along-go-along, everything-is-allowed-and-permissible kind of guy,” he explained.

He asked Solomon to send him a clip from the film, which was still being shot. Solomon sent his dad a 10-second clip from a scene of pro-life advocates holding their hands through a Planned Parenthood fence, praying over a barrel of dismembered baby parts.

“The next day he called,” Solomon recalled. “He said—and he just doesn’t talk this way—he said, ‘The clip you sent me, this movie is going to change the world. You’ve shown us what we didn’t want to see … We need to make the Lord put an end to this abortion thing.”

The movie itself almost came to an end one day when its bank account had a mere $13.17 remaining, with filming yet to go.

“Before 5 p.m. the phone rang,” said Solomon. “The person says, ‘Hey, what’s your routing number? Where can I wire you some money?’ I said, ‘Who is this?’”

The man was Michael Lindell, inventor of My Pillow and CEO of My Pillow, Inc. More importantly, Lindell is a devout Christian. He said he had been praying and felt called to make a $1 million donation to the directors—one-sixth of their $6 million budget.

“My bank closes at 5 p.m.—do you want the $1 million or not?” Solomon recalled Lindell asking. He rattled off the routing number, “then the [computer] screen blinked, and the account balance was $1,000,013.17.”

Grace, forgiveness, hope, healing, redemption

The film has been shown to sample groups hundreds of times, Solomon said. “Every place we [showed it], not one person said it’s not good enough.”

“Some are crying, even men—they’re just as affected if they were involved in abortion. And they say they feel freed, healed.”

Konzelman credits such feelings to the film’s overall message: “That there is grace and forgiveness, hope and healing and redemption no matter what you’ve done, and particularly for post-abortion women and men.”

His hope is that those scarred by abortion will find healing through the film.

And he hopes they will then become pro-life advocates, “telling others concerning abortion. This is the mistake I made. I suffered tremendously for it. You don’t need to make the same mistake. If you find yourself in a crisis pregnancy, let’s find another way to handle it.”

“The great lie,” Konzelman continued, “is that you can walk into an abortion center, they can erase the baby, and you can walk away and forget about it. There’s grief the rest of your life, and this movie helps them get past that.”

Given the current trends and attitude of society regarding abortion, Solomon noted that “it is for a time such as now” that God planned Unplanned to be created.

“If the world doesn’t end abortion, the Lord will,” he said. “And we are not going to like how he does it.”

Unplanned will be available in theaters nationwide starting on March 29. How long the film will continue to be shown depends on how well it does on its opening weekend. For a list of theaters and times, go to www.unplanned.com.
during his homily. “Just as God is the Father who watches over his children, providing for their every need, so too, she saw St. Joseph as the one who could obtain bread for the poor and protect her call and mission.”

In his homily, Archbishop Pierre encouraged his listeners to learn from St. Joseph—“to live in a spirit of sacrifice with respect to our vocation.”

“We cannot have our vocation on our own terms. Rather, each vocation is a gift from God to be lived on his terms for his kingdom and for the good of the Church,” he said. “St. Joseph forgot himself and lived for his wife Mary and for his son Jesus. This degree of abandonment to divine providence is not so easy for us.

“And yet, we see the fruitfulness of this forgetfulness of St. Joseph. He forgot himself and remained faithful to God, living his vocation as a husband and as a foster father.”

Archbishop Pierre later said that the way in which St. Joseph protected Mary and Joseph is embodied today in the ministry of the Little Sisters of the Poor.

“In these days, the Little Sisters continue to follow his example in protecting the little ones of the Earth, especially the elderly poor from the throwaway culture that threatens human dignity and the gift of life,” he said. “Your accompaniment of these little ones at the end of life’s journey reaffirms the value of each person and points them to eternal life with God. This is your mission, and we are grateful for it.”

Mother Francis Gabriel King, the superior of the Little Sisters of the Poor in Indianapolis, was grateful that Archbishop Pierre came to celebrate the anniversary at the St. Augustine Home on the feast of St. Joseph.

“It was like having a little bit of France, a little bit of our heritage and our history with us,” she said after the liturgy. “It reaffirms us to live for God at the hands of St. Joseph’s intercession, who has always, in the history of our congregation, been a powerful intercessor.”

In the reception that followed the Mass, three rooms were set up at the St. Augustine Home to highlight the first three cities in the U.S. where the Little Sisters began their ministry in 1868: Brooklyn, N.Y., Cincinnati and New Orleans.

In the New Orleans room, where visitors enjoyed beignets, a French pastry popular in the city, resident Dori Hartter told the story of Mother Marie de la Conception, the Little Sister of the Poor who helped start their ministry in the city known as the “Big Easy.” She was dressed in a habit resembling the one the members of the order would have worn in 1868.

Hartter, 80, has lived at the St. Augustine Home for three years and values the hospitality that the Little Sisters of the Poor show to their residents and all their visitors.

“They continually give themselves in hospitality,” she said. “It’s understanding in a different way what our Lord really means in terms of going out to the poor himself.” 

—Saint John Paul II, The Gospel Life

Project Rachel

Experience Hope and Healing After Abortion

For Confidential Help Contact
317-452-0054 or projectrachel@archindy.org for more information.

All Calls Are Confidential.

A Special Word to Those Who Have Had an Abortion ...

Do not give in to discouragement and do not lose hope.... If you have not already done so, give yourselves over with humility and trust to repentance. The Father of mercies is ready to give you his forgiveness and his peace ...

~Saint John Paul II, The Gospel Life

Archbishop Christophe Pierre blesses Claire Schank during the Mass. Claire is a member of SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi Parish in Greenwood.
NEW ALBANY—As he toured the childhood home of Cardinal Joseph E. Ritter in New Albany, Archbishop Charles C. Thompson focused initially on the major accomplishments of a man who helped shape the archdiocese, the United States and the universal Church.

Archbishop Thompson read the museum display that noted how Cardinal Ritter desegregated Catholic schools in Indianapolis over the opposition of the Ku Klux Klan and even some of his priests—17 years before Brown v. Board of Education, the landmark 1954 U.S. Supreme Court decision which held that racial segregation of children in public schools was unconstitutional.

The archbishop went on to absorb the reference to Cardinal Ritter’s influence before and even some of his priests—17 years before Brown v. Board of Education, the landmark 1954 U.S. Supreme Court decision which held that racial segregation of children in public schools was unconstitutional.

When Archbishop Charles C. Thompson came to the childhood home of Cardinal Joseph E. Ritter in New Albany on March 14, he received a personal tour from David Hock, chairman of the Cardinal Ritter Birthplace Foundation. (Photo by John Shaughnessy)

He then referred to a “listening session” on racism that the USCCB hosted at the University of Dayton in Ohio on March 8.

With this pastoral letter on racism, different dioceses are hosting these listening sessions, and we’re hoping to do one in Indianapolis. We have to listen. Dayton, Ohio, just had one. A lot of people were getting up and sharing their story of how they experienced racial treatment not only in the city, but in our Church. So, it’s important that we listen.”

The importance of listening is an approach that Pope Francis has stressed during his time of leading the Church, the archbishop noted.

“People on both sides tend to misunderstand Pope Francis. He’s never changed one issue of content of our Church. He’s pushing for tone—that we can listen and dialogue, and encounter and come together in those painful, difficult moments.”

“Pope Francis also talks a lot about accompaniment. That word accompaniment implies movement. He said to meet people where they are, listen to their hurts and then start teaching them. We’re called to ‘come to the Archdiocese of Indianapolis where Cardinal Ritter desegregated the schools, that’s kind of a neat connection for me,” Thompson told the audience.

In that regard, the archbishop shared how the archdiocese is currently in the midst of developing an explicit strategy plan to keep and bring young people into a deeper relationship with God and the Church.

“One of the things we’re looking at is evangelization,” Archbishop Thompson said. “That focuses on all ages, but especially youths and young adults. They say today that the average Catholic is leaving the Church by age 13. That says family. You don’t leave at 13 unless your family has left. That is a group we have to focus on.”

Still, the archbishop said that he has reminded the strategic steering committee that “we cannot focus on [young people] to the detriment of not being attentive to children, to senior citizens, to all people.”

“As Pope Francis pointed out, it’s a two-way street,” he said. “It can’t just be, ‘You ought to be heard.’ You’ve also got to be able to listen. It’s not just how do we draw from your gifts, wisdom and strengths, but how are you listening to the Church that’s been around for 2,000 years and the people who have gone before you with your blood, sweat and tears.”

Archbishop Thompson received a warm reception from the audience, many of whom braved a fierce storm to come to the event, a storm that knocked out the electricity on that evening in the Cardinal Ritter House.

“Despite that challenge, Hock and the other volunteers at the event seemed to channel—mostly—Cardinal Ritter’s motto of ‘Work hard, pray hard, don’t worry,’” Hock admitted with a laugh.

“I was worried a little,” Hock admitted with a laugh, “especially when the weather and the lack of electricity.

Still, he kept his focus on the archbishop and his latest accomplishment in the birthplace of his first archbishop.

“For the most part, Cardinal Ritter was always an Indiana boy and an Indiana man,” Hock said. “He really was a humble person. He always said he just wanted to be a priest.

“It’s really nice that Archbishop Thompson is here. He was the bishop of Evansville, and he grew up in Kentucky. He’s from this area. We’re really glad that he’s here to hear Cardinal Ritter’s story.”

At the conclusion of his talk, Archbishop Thompson told the audience, “I know there are some who would like to see ‘We’re all called to holiness. We’re all called to become saints. This man born in a room upstairs over a bakery, above where beer was being made, can go on to do the great things he did in Indianapolis and St. Louis and the Second Vatican Council. It reminds all of us that that potential is in all of us.’”

—Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

first 90 days of the school year if her bill, which passed the House 96-2, is approved by the Senate.

“We need to do that all of us to can secure our schools and help our kids feel safe when they come in through those doors every day,” she said.

House Bill 1004 would expand and adjust safety funding for schools, including Catholic and other non-public schools. The bill would also allow separation of separate funds for school safety measures: The safe schools fund is for public schools only, while non-public schools are eligible for grants from the secured schools fund.

In addition to funding safety equipment and personnel, the state-managed taxpayer-funded funds may be used to provide for mental health services as preventive measures.

The ICC and INPEA support the bill, which was scheduled for a vote by the Senate Education Committee at press time. Another mental health-related bill, Senate Bill 266, authored by Sen. Michael Young (R-Greenfield), passed the Senate Appropriations Committee unanimously and continues to advance in the Senate.

A second piece of school safety legislation, House Bill 1225, passed unanimously in the Indiana House of Representatives and is now under consideration by the Senate. Authored by Rep. Gregory Steuerwald (R-Daville), the bill establishes an active warning system that would automatically notify all law enforcement and other emergency personnel within a county to respond immediately in a crisis, even when they are off-duty. All schools, including Catholic and other non-public schools, would be included within the system. In testimony before the Senate Homeland Security and Transportation Committee earlier this month, Porter County Sheriff David Reynolds described the benefits of the system, which has been in operation in the northwest Indiana county for four years.

All 75 schools in Porter County are equipped with the alert system, including private schools.

“One of the problems in all school shootings is the lack of response time,” Reynolds said. “This system does not circumvent 911 but notifies all on-duty and off-duty local, state and federal officers in the event of an emergency.”

The ICC and INPEA support the bill, which passed the committee by a 7-0 vote and was scheduled for a full Senate vote at press time. To follow priority legislation of the ICC, visit www.indianacc.org. This website includes access to 1-CAN, the Indiana Catholic Action Network, which offers the Church’s position on key issues. Those who sign up for 1-CAN receive alerts on legislation moving forward and ways to contact their elected representatives.

(Victoria Aronne, a member of St. Malachy Parish in Brownsburg, is a correspondent for The Criterion.)
When St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities in Indianapolis, praised for its involvement in Hope-Changing Lives’ gala on April 25, it would mostly resemble those of years past. But a few things will be different—a new venue, and for the first time in the event’s history, the archbishop of Indianapolis will offer a keynote address.

After all, this is an event four decades in the making. For 40 years, St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities in New Albany has served women, children, families and others in need.

For more than half of that time, the Giving Hope-Changing Lives gala has served as one of the organization’s major fundraisers.

As in years past, several people will tell their story at the event of how the organization helped them. And as in years past, two of those who helped the organization and in many ways dedicated their lives with the Spirit of Hope Award for their dedicated service.

This year’s Spirit of Hope winners are Tex Very and Page Walker.

Walker served on the organization’s advisory board for three years, 1989-1991, during which time he encountered an unusual task: he had to serve for a few months as the organization’s interim executive director.

“It was a daunting task,” admits Walker, a former banker. “It was an uncomfortable situation, even to the point that for even a few months was a challenge. But everything fell into place.”

Mark Casper, St. Elizabeth Charities’ current executive director, says that during Walker’s time on the board, “Page was very engaged—understanding the issues facing the agency, willing to ask the tough questions and always willing to help with a solution that reflected the ownership he took in St. Elizabeth’s mission.”

Walker, a member of St. Anthony of Padua Parish in Clarksville, retired from the board in 2012 but he still serves on the organization’s development committee, where Casper says Walker “helped lead the agency in community and individual donor growth over the last 20 years to support the growth the agency has experienced to meet the needs [of all the programs] we do today.”

Casper also calls him “a quarterback” at the organization’s annual fall reverse raffle fundraiser, “making sure the event runs smoothly and is financially successful.”

What really impresses me is that roughly 95 percent of all the funds we collect are used in St. Elizabeth’s programs. Not many organizations can say that.”

More comfortable behind the scenes, Walker says he is “uncomfortable with the recognition offered in the Spirit of Hope Award, but that is also the most humbling” and “grateful” to receive the honor.

His co-recipient Very feels the same about receiving the award. “I was surprised, really, because there are a lot of deserving people,” he says. “In fact, it is the people of the organization who inspire him.

“The staff is very dedicated, and they have so many dedicated volunteers,” Very says emphatically. “Mark [Casper] has done an outstanding job. He can get so many balls in the air and yet seem like he’s never in a hurry or stressed.”

Casper has nothing but praise for Very as well. He notes that Very is in his 12th year serving on the advisory board and in his 15th year serving on the development committee—including serving as its chairman for the last 11 years. “For 15 years, Tex’s presence has been vital,” Very says. “Chair, St. Elizabeth has doubled the cost of the event expenses rising as attendance has grown from 300 to 700 supporters, allowing us to engage more people in St. Elizabeth’s mission.

“Tex’s biggest strength is that he is a connector. He knows everyone and is not reluctant to talk about them or how to get them to be involved with St. Elizabeth.”

Very and his wife, members of St. John Paul II Parish in Sellersburg, also serve as members of the St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities’ team that helps the Homeless Coalition of Southern Indiana’s White Flag effort in New Albany. Once a month between November and March, the team helps care for those in need of nighttime shelter when the temperature is below 35 degrees.

Very says he started helping St. Elizabeth years ago because he “saw so many other dedicated volunteers, and these people could help, I would.”

And now those people can say the same about him.

But if the Spirit of Hope Award “shows you’ve been making a difference,” Very says. “I don’t do it for the acknowledgment. But if it comes, it’s appreciated.”

The Giving Hope-Changing Lives gala will take place at the Kentucky International Convention Center, 221 S. 5th St., Louisville, Ky., on April 25. A cash bar and silent auction bidding on more than 100 items will take place from 5:30-7:30 p.m., followed by dinner. A live auction from 7:45-8:30 p.m., Archishop Charles C. Thompson and others will speak. The Spirit of Hope awards will be presented at 9:15 p.m., and the event will end around 9:30 p.m. #S2019 #archindy #info@archindy.org.

Speakers at Georgetown dialogue on child sex abuse look at ‘path forward’

WASHINGTQN (CNS)—Some 60 years later, sexual abuse by a trusted priest is still vivid for Michael Nugent. His 2002 accusation against Father Maron Snieg, who abused Nugent when he was an altar boy at Holy Trinity Parish, described efforts to make it “a place where no child is molested, specialized in abusing boys around the age of puberty. He had a bunch of seventh-graders that he would groom. He was very smooth. Very experienced.

The priest was even known to take certain boys out on vacations. “So he would take two boys on his honeymoon. Every year, practically.”

Father Snieg’s abuse of Nugent involved pinning him up against shelves in the sacristy, with his considerable bulk, blocking any view from anyone else who might walk in.

It took decades of blocking out the painful memories, in addition to an interview with a skeptical Chicago police officer who asked, “Why did you wait so long?” and the painful disclosure to Nugent’s wife and sons for him to start healing.

Finally, he told it was not his fault. “It was the beginning of my healing,” he said.

Father Snieg, a retired international representative for the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, has presented his own list of recommendations for clerical conduct to the archdiocese.

He says, in his view, a victim is someone especially vulnerable, or in need of protection because of the nature of the Church, or if you know of anyone who has been a victim of such misconduct, please contact the archdiocesan victim coordinator. There are two ways to make a report:

• Call 317-236-1584 or 800-382-9363, ext. 1548
carlahill@archindy.org

Online Lay Ministry Formation

The Archdiocese of Indianapolis has partnered with the University of Notre Dame and Catholic Distance University (CDU) to offer a master’s degree in online theology classes:

- Earn a certificate in Lay Ministry
- Complete 12 courses online with ND STEP program
- CDU offers classes on Catechism of the Catholic Church
- 20% discount for all employees, volunteers, and parishioners

For more information, please log on to www.archindy.org/layministry
Prodigal son is a reminder of God’s unconditional love

By Sr. Constance Veit, L.S.P.

As a child, I was an overachiever with a strong competitive streak. I couldn’t stand to lose at anything, not even Candy Land! By the time I entered religious life, I had learned to curb the drive to be first in everything, at least outwardly, but I was still a dichotomizer—until trying to reach perfection through my own efforts led me to the brink of despair.

I was feeling like a complete failure, but my thinking was turned upside down by Pope Francis when I happened to read that his words to cardinals after his election to the papacy were, “I am a sinner, but I trust in the infinite mercy and patience of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

A few months after his election, he responded to a journalist who asked him, “Who is Jorge Bergoglio?” by confiding, “I am a sinner whom the Lord has looked upon.

“I am a sinner.” If the shepherd of the universal Church could speak these words for all the world to hear, then shouldn’t I be able to admit my creatureliness as well? How liberating his words were! How life-changing! They were for me a source of inescapable joy.

I also found the following passage from Pope Francis’ first apostolic exhortation, “Evangelii Gaudium,” (“The Joy of the Gospel”) transformative:

“Whenever we take a step toward Jesus, we come to realize that he is already there, waiting for us with open arms. Now is the time to say to Jesus: ‘Lord, I have let myself be deceived; in a thousand ways I have shunned your love, yet here I am once more, to renew my covenant with you. I need you. Save me once again, Lord, take me once more into your redeeming embrace.’

“How good it feels to come back to him whenever we are lost! … God never tires of forgiving us; we are the ones who tire of seeking his mercy” (#3).

Our Holy Father’s words spontaneously conveyed to mind as I contemplated the Scripture readings for this Fourth Sunday of Lent. It’s Laetare Sunday, a day of rejoicing!

Today, God invites us to don our finest robes, to slaughter the fattened calf and prepare a lavish feast. But why are we rejoicing? Today, God assures us that he has removed our shame (Jos 5:9), and that whoever is in Christ is a new creation (2 Cor 5:17), for our sins have been cast into the depths of the sea (Mt 7:19).

Today, through the parable of the prodigal son, God reminds us that no matter what we have done or how imperfect we may feel, he is always there, waiting for us with open arms, ready to renew us in his love. (CNS photo/Bob Riker)

Is his conversion real, or is he simply hoping to enjoy the comforts of home once again? Is he bedazzled by the fancy robes in which he is clothed, or does he look beyond them to realize the depths of love they convey? We don’t actually know, nor do we know whether his return home is permanent. We are left wondering if the older son will be able to let go of his stubborn resentment and joyless sense of duty in order to accept all that the father has reserved for him.

As we usually think of the younger son in the parable as the one who went astray, but both brothers have distanced themselves from their father’s love. Although he remained in his father’s house physically, the older boy also wandered far from home by isolating himself behind a wall of resentment and anger.

We don’t know why the younger son left home in the first place—maybe he was bullied by his older brother or felt crushed by his harsh judgments. Perhaps he knew that no matter how hard he tried, he would never live up to his father’s expectations.

In any case, having hit rock bottom, the younger son humbles himself before his father and begs for mercy.

Will he allow his hardened heart to be softened by his father’s assurances of love? Will he finally leave his judgments and his sterile perfectionism behind so that he can enter into the joy of his brother’s homecoming? Jesus allows each of us to finish the parable of the prodigal son.

Whether we identify more with the older son or the older boy, through the sacraments of the Church—especially the sacrament of penance—each of us has the opportunity to come home and to write the end of our own story based on the undying, unconditional love of our heavenly Father.

On this Fourth Sunday of Lent, how will your story end?

(Sister Constance Veit has been a member of the Little Sisters of the Poor for 32 years. She has served in various capacities in the direct care of the elderly and now serves as communications director for the Little Sisters’ U.S. communities.)
Growing up on Los Angeles, I never really appreciated the seasons. As the old joke goes, Southern California has only two: bushfire season and midscale season. This isn’t really true these days, whether the underlying cause is climate change or a failure to rake the forests. As a kid growing up in a large portion of my life in the Midwest and East, I have grown to appreciate what I missed as a kid. I never saw snow fall and East, I have grown to appreciate what I missed as a kid. I never saw snow fall and instead get to experience the muffled softness of a city draped in white. I missed that as a kid. I never saw snow fall and instead get to experience the muffled softness of a city draped in white. But if you’re feeling down during the Lent season, you have a few options to cheer you up... and maybe a few to save for later.

**For the Journey/Effie Caldera**

**Lent is a good time for spring cleaning, soul cleansing**

By now, almost everyone has heard of Marie Kondo, and her penchant for decluttering. Apparently Kondo’s success has given birth to a genre. Something about getting rid of stuff that “touches on a deeper, more fundamental part of this issue.”

“I often ask myself, ‘why are we so attached to things? Why do they matter so much to us?’”

At the library, I noticed an entire display dedicated to books about decluttering. Apparently, the success of the book has been so great that it has spilled over into our everyday lives. But if you’re feeling down during the Lent season, you have a few options to cheer you up... and maybe a few to save for later.

**Intellect and Virtue/John Garvey**

**Get hooked on fasting—and fish on Fridays—in Lent**

I probably wouldn’t admit this in front of my grandchild, but I am a fan of McDonald’s fish sandwiches. When I was a young lawyer in the mid-80s, my firm’s office was right across Market Street from the one at the Old Town Mall. Every day for a year, I had two fish sandwiches with a chocolate shake for lunch. I am ashamed. In all likelihood it was fish and chips.

As it happens, theFileName-O-Fish book was invented in 1962 for people like me. At that time, Catholic schools did not serve fish on any regular basis. It was still Lent. The business of fasting and abstinence has inspired some other, more religiously significant menu alternatives too. The Swiss Reformation began in 1522 over “the affair of the Augsburg Confession.” The one in Zurich, a pastor in Zurich, defended a local printer for eating sausage in violation of the Lenten fast. This was long before the invention of the computer. So, I don’t think it would have mattered to Zwingle. For him, there was a principle at stake. He thought, as Lutherans often do, that grief was justified by faith and not by works; and that the guide to Christian life is Scripture alone, not Church rules. Christians, he maintained, have the freedom to do what he wishes. And so, “touched on a deeper, more fundamental part of this issue.”

**Faith and Family/Sean Gallagher**

**Family members can encourage each other in their Lenten journey**

We’ve been in Lent for a good three weeks and have used this time to reflect yet go before we joyfully celebrate the resurrection of Christ East Friday.

At this point in our Lenten journey, the enthusiasm we might have had at the start of the season has probably faded, while the joy to be known at its completion can still seem distant.

For me, this midpoint in Lent can be a time for me as a father of five growing boys. I’ve been a father now for 16 years, which at times seems like a long time.

And with my youngest son being only 5, I know I have many more years to go before he turns 18 and, theoretically, goes off on his own.

(know well, of course that one continues being a parent after one’s children become adults according to the law.)

My wife Cindy and I have experienced many great joys in our marriage and together as parents. They range from once-in-a-lifetime events like births, baptisms and first communications to seeing the unique personalities of our boys blossom before our eyes in the everyday life of family life. It’s been a joy in faith that many more are to come.

Yet, in this life marked by the effects of original sin, parenting—as any other walk of life—is a sharing in the cross of Christ: in moments of blessing and frustration, in moments of success and disappointment.

Then there’s the countless ways we sacrifice ourselves to serve the needs and desires of our boys. Sometimes it’s hard to see how others benefit from them, let alone the rest of the world.

All of these challenges might easily overwhelm us. And so our triumph in parenting were not our faith that God poured into our hearts when Cindy and I exchanged our wedding vows on June 9, 2001.

Like the loving Father of us all that he is, God encourages each of us during Lent—and during the Lenten aspects of each of our vocations—to continue on the path of faith and family.

In our home, we’ve put up a chart on the refrigerator that lists the spiritual disciplines each class that we each have chosen to take up during Lent. We don’t use it as a way to check up on each other, but as a tool to help us keep our feet on the ground and not stumble in a Lenten discipline. Instead, it’s intended to motivate us to encourage each other.

To further that worthy goal, we have a jar on the mantle of our fireplace where we save our pennies as a family to see if we can make a sacrifice for others during the Lenten season. It’s been a Lenten tradition in our family for the year growing slowly higher since Ash Wednesday.

None of the changes to the fact that we’ve gone through a good bit of Lent and still have a good part to go. Lent, like life itself, is hard. There’s no way around that.

Never forget, though, that grace makes it possible for us not only to endure the crosses of life and Lent, but to see the very low, near invisible, and sometimes less than invisible things the way the Lord created them to be. We must be kept away from the attractions of Christ East Friday.

**See Garvey for more...**
**The Sunday Readings**

**Sunday, March 31, 2019**

- **Joshua 5:9a, 10-12**
- **2 Corinthians 5:17-21**
- **Luke 15:1-3, 11-32**

This weekend, the Church observes Laetare Sunday, the name being derived from the first word in Latin of the entrance antiphon for Mass this week. This is the Latin word for “rejoice.” The Church rejoices that salvation, finalized in the sacrifice and resurrection of Jesus, is near.

Priests may wear rose vestments. Rose is red and blue, purple, with a tinge of gold, reminding us of the first rays of the sun as they creep across the horizon after a dark night. Pink blends red and white. Gold, the color of daybreak, is essential, reminding us that Christ, the light of the world, is coming.

The Book of Joshua, the source of the first reading, looks far back to the time when God’s people finished the long, threatening trip across the Sinai Peninsula, then, as it is now, bleak in sterility and danger.

Along the way, they disobeyed God, but God still rescued them from starvation, sending manna from the sky. Scientifically speaking, what was manna? No one knows, but it was real and appeared unexpectedly. The people could not have created it. It was God’s gift. With it, the people survived.

St. Paul’s Second Epistle to the Corinthians furnishes the second reading. In the reading is Paul’s urgent appeal to the Corinthian Christians to be reconciled with God in Christ. Imagine Paul’s frustration as he saw the Corinthians toying with their old pagan ways. Of course, urgency literally flowed in his words.

They revealed his belief that nothing else matters but life in union with God. Thus, he implored the people to return to God to be “new creations” in Christ (2 Cor 5:17).

For its final reading on this weekend, the Church gives us from Luke’s Gospel a parable of prodigal son. The parable is self-evident. God is the unqualified, constant love of the Father. There is no anger, no judgment, only love.

The prodigal son was not the older son. Therefore, he was not his father’s heir. The prodigal son had no right to an inheritance, whether he was good or bad. He also had no right to abandon his father. This especially would have disgusted Jews at the time of Jesus, who prized loyalty to parents.

Most of all, the prodigal son rejected the privilege of being part of the people of God. He repudiated the primary obligation of this status, to bear witness to God. Finally, he consorted with prostitutes, scoring the sanctity of marriage, so precious to Jews, and risked defiling the pure stock of God’s people by begetting children who would be reared by pagans, unbelieving mothers.

His sins brought him no reward. He had to serve not humans, not just animals, but pigs, filthy, ugly predators, the lowest of the low, in Jewish eyes.

Nevertheless, the father forgave all and lavishly gave him an undeserved inheritance.

**Reflection**

The Church is joyful. Salvation, to be with God in and through Jesus, is near.

Wisely, the Church realizes that all its members, to some degree at some time, have been prodigal children, wandering away as the Corinthians wandered.

Its message this weekend, however, is not of denunciation and divine revenge. Instead, in the reading from Joshua, precisely with its reference to the manna and in the Gospel, with its thrilling story of the forgiving father, the Church reassures us. Although we may sin, God never abandons the promise to protect us.

God loves us. He is forever merciful, regardless of how far we stray—if we repent.

In Jesus, the sacrificial victim of Calvary, God aways us with the Eucharist, manna for our starving souls, for which there is no substitute, without which we starve.

Use Lent, and turn to God. †

Q

My mother was very religious and the always told us that Lent whatever you gave up—ice cream, candy, etc.—you could have on Sundays. Is that true? Sundays count as part of Lent? (Wisconsin)

A

I’ll answer your second question first, because that’s the easier one: “Do Sundays count as part of Lent?” The clear answer is “Yes.” In the liturgical books of the Church, the season of Lent begins on Ash Wednesday and ends just before the Mass of the Lord’s Supper on the evening of Holy Thursday. In the Roman Missal, for example, March 10 this year was designated as the “First Sunday of Lent.”

Now, for the more complicated part. If you’re fasting from candy for Lent, may you eat it on Sundays? The answer is: It’s your own call. Fasting is required in a general way to do penance, but the particular manner in which this is done is personal choice. There’s no Church law involved or a question of sinfulness—you’re offering a small sacrifice to God in return for the sacrifice Jesus made for us.

Now it’s true that the Church has always viewed Sunday as a day of celebration in remembrance of the Resurrection, a kind of “little Easter,” and has never required fasting on Sundays—so I suppose there’s some warrant, on the one hand, you’ve adopted a Lenten penance, for “taking Sundays off.”

But I think it’s probably better to continue the practice throughout the whole Lenten season. Sundays included. If I gave up candy for Lent, may I eat it on one of the six Sundays, that doesn’t seem like much of a sacrifice. (Which reminds me that a couple of years ago at a school Mass on Ash Wednesday, I asked the kids what they were giving up for Lent. One little boy raised his hand and said “Hitting my sister” I hope that he didn’t take Sundays off!)†

Q

Recently, Pope Francis signed a document with Muslim leaders about there being one world religion. How can this be? Some of my non-Catholic friends are accusing the pope of being out of line. What really happened? (Arkansas)

A

I have read the document to which you refer, and nowhere can I find a call for “one world religion.” Instead, it is a plea for peace and nonviolence, a call to Catholics, Muslims and all believers “to unite and work together” in order to serve “as a guide for future generations to advance a culture of tolerance, mutual respect and in the peaceful enjoyment of the great divine grace that makes all human beings brothers and sisters.”

The joint declaration, “A Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together,” was signed by Pope Francis and Sheikh Ahmed el-Tayeb, a grand imam of Sunni Muslims, during a visit by the pope to the United Arab Emirates in early February. It calls on world leaders “to work strenuously to spread the culture of tolerance and loving together in peace; to intervene at the earliest opportunity to stop the shedding of innocent blood and bring an end to wars, conflicts, environmental decay and the moral and cultural decline that the world is presently experiencing.”

The declaration condemns “all those practices that are a threat to life such as genocide, acts of terrorism, forced displacement, human trafficking, abduction and euthanasia.” It notes “that among the most important causes of the crises of the modern world are a dis人性化 human conscience, a distancing from religious values and a prevailing individualism accompanied by materialism in the philosophy of life.”

Far from urging, as your question says, “one world religion,” the document states instead that “the pluralism and the diversity of religions, color, sex, race and language are willed by God in his wisdom”—an observation that has been taken by some Catholic commentators simply to mean that the variety of religions comes under the permissive will of God and indicates the natural desire of humans to know God.

(Questions may be sent to Father Kenneth Doyle at askfatherkennedy@gmail.com and 30 Columbus Circle Dr., Albany, New York 12201.) †

**Daily Readings**

**Monday, April 1**

- **Isaiah 65:17-21**
- **Psalm 30:2, 4-6, 11-12a, 13b**
- **John 4:43-54**

**Tuesday, April 2**

- **St. Francis of Paola, hermit**
- **Ezekiel 47:1-9, 12**
- **Psalm 46:2-3, 5-6, 8-9**
- **John 5:1-16**

**Wednesday, April 3**

- **Isaiah 48:9-15**
- **Psalm 145:4-8, 10, 13c-14, 17-18**
- **John 5:17-30**

**Thursday, April 4**

- **St. Isidore, bishop and doctor of the Church**
- **Exodus 32:7-14**
- **Psalm 106:19-23**
- **John 5:31-47**

**Question Corner**

By Natalie Hoefer

My Journey to God

Hope in Spring

By Natalie Hoefer

O barren tree in winter gray,
“Life is no more,” you seem to say. But cardinal red says, “On the Precious Blood won victory. Be not afraid—the spring has come. Have hope in life through Christ the Son.”

(Natalie Hoefer is a member of St. Monica Parish in Indianola and is a reporter for The Criterion. Photo: A cardinal sits in a leafless tree. Spring began on March 20) (Photo by Timothy Dykes on Unsplash.com)

Readers may submit prose or poetry for faith column

The Criterion invites readers to submit original prose or poetry relating to faith or experiences of prayer for possible publication in the “My Journey to God” column.

Seasonal reflections also are appreciated. "Poems should be no longer than 25 lines (includes titles between stanzas if applicable) of either 44 characters (including spaces) to allow room for a staff selected photo, or 79 characters (including spaces) if no photo is desired." Please include name, address, parish and telephone number with submission in the "My Journey to God" column.

Readers may submit prose or poetry for faith column

The Criterion invites readers to submit original prose or poetry relating to faith or experiences of prayer for possible publication in the “My Journey to God” column.

Seasonal reflections also are appreciated. "Poems should be no longer than 25 lines (includes titles between stanzas if applicable) of either 44 characters (including spaces) to allow room for a staff selected photo, or 79 characters (including spaces) if no photo is desired." Please include name, address, parish and telephone number with submission in the "My Journey to God" column.
Please submit in writing to our office by 10 a.m. Thursday before the week of publication. Be sure to state date of death. Obituaries of archdiocesan priests serving our archdiocese are listed elsewhere in The Criterion. Order priests and religious sisters and brothers are included here, unless they are natives of the archdiocese or have other connections to it; these are separate obituaries on this page.


FIELDS, Richard E., 74, Christ the King, Indianapolis, March 11. Husband of Sandra Fields. Father of Sabrina White and Steven Fields. Grandfather of one.


Faith and generosity sustain flood victims in Omaha Archdiocese

OMAHA, Neb. (CNS)—For Naoma Bormann, the first sign of trouble was the look on her husband’s face.

Although 60-mile-per-hour winds were howling and a 12-foot wall of water was crashing on the banks of the Missouri River near their home on March 13, it was the sight of the water on the ground that shocked her husband the most.

“He said, ‘Naoma, I don’t know how to save this, but we are running by water,’” So, she and her husband, Hubert, witnessing the sudden rise of floodwaters, quickly took refuge in the upper level of their home in far northeastern Nebraska where they prayed and waited for rescue.

Strong faith and generous spirits are placed on the table.

“We believe in prayer, and we have a deep faith,” Naoma Bormann said. While they awaited rescue, they prayed The Lord’s Prayer and the rosary and gazed upon a crucifix she placed on the table.

“As we were leaving, I looked at that cross, and there was my strength,” she said.

Members of St. William Parish in Niobrara, the Bormanns are thankful for the local farmer and his father who rescued them and the generosity of friends who helped them by providing a rent-free, temporary home in Creighton about 37 miles to the south, where their floral and home decor business is located.

“This was not the first time the couple has faced tragedy. Their teenage daughter died in a car crash 25 years ago, and their previous home was destroyed in a 2011 flood.

“You do question why this is happening again,” Naoma Bormann said. “But you have to ask yourself what you have done. We’re here, we got out together, and we’re still together. You look at what you have and not what you’ve lost.”

After the initial flooding began on March 13, failure of the upstream dam the next day brought a destructive, 11-foot wave of water and huge slabs of ice into the small town of Niobrara. washing away and damaging many commercial buildings. Another bridge across the Niobrara River was also washed out, cutting off one route into town.

“Niobrara is like a war zone,” said Father Kizzii Okhunaya, pastor of St. William and St. Wenceslaus parishes in Verdigre, a town south of Niobrara that also sustained major damage.

But people are working hard to get things back to normal, he said.

“There’s been an outpouring of generosity and kindness from neighboring towns,” Father Okhunaya said, “and the community is coming together.”

He said the parish held an ecumenical prayer service on March 15 “to bring people together and speak a message of hope and faith... knowing that even now, God walks with us through the waters, and reassuring people of God’s love and presence.”

Two days later, the town held a clean-up day with people from other communities coming to help.

Both parishes he serves are located on high ground, so they did not sustain damage and were able to continue with Sunday Masses, he said. These parishes are raising money for relief efforts.

“This is the time we need to turn to God in prayer,” Father Okhunaya said, “and although people are hurting, they are hopeful and are focusing on the big picture.”

“They have faith that we’re going to bounce back as a town,” he said. “It could be worse, so people are thanking God but are grieving their losses and cleaning up. Their spirit is good overall, so I’m thankful to God for that.”

Honoring persecuted Christians

The Colosseum in Rome is lit in red to draw attention to the contemporary persecution of Christians around the world. The ancient Roman stadium was the site of the martyrdom of Christians in the earliest days of the Church. (CNS photo/Remo Casilli, Reuters)
Pope in Morocco: Highlighting Catholic-Muslim ‘dialogue of solidarity’

VAUTICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope Francis wanted to go to Morocco in December to draw attention to the need for international cooperation in assisting migrants, and in alleviating the situations that force people to seek a better life outside their homeland. Protocol dictated that he could not fly to Marrakech just for the United Nations meeting on migration, so instead migrants will be one group that receives his special attention during a more formal visit to Morocco on March 30-31.

His meeting on March 30 with migrants at the Rabat archdiocesan Caritas center also will highlight the very practical form Catholic-Muslim relations take in the country of more than 35 million people, almost all of whom are Muslim.

“This is the dialogue of solidarity,” said Father Daniel Nourissat, spokesman for the Archdiocese of Rabat. Christians and Muslims work together to assist the migrants housed in the Caritas’ Migrant Reception Center, which the pope will visit, as well as in the neighborhoods and informal settlements where many migrants live.

Perhaps 80,000 migrants are currently in Morocco, Father Nourissat said. The numbers have been increasing steadily since 2017 when Italy and Libya began cooperating to prevent migrants from setting off from Libya to cross the Mediterranean and reach Europe.

By mid-2018, the number of migrants landing in Spain, usually from Morocco, had surpassed the number arriving in Italy. Morocco has been criticized by human rights groups for forcibly busing migrants who want to reach Europe out of informal settlements in the north, but the country has accepted tens of thousands of migrants and refugees, given them residency permits and allowed them to work.

The influx of migrants has mobilized the Catholic community, including the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary, an order with 45 sisters from 18 nations working in Morocco.

Sister Mary Elizabeth Donlon, the provincial, told Catholic News Service (CNS) that in a country where illiteracy rates are high among people over 50, especially among women over 50, the sisters run a center for women’s literacy; they have nurses and social workers serving in public hospitals and clinics; they teach in the nation’s Catholic schools—where all of the directors, most of the staff and most of the students are Muslims.

One of the biggest challenges for the sisters, she said, is to learn Arabic and “enter into the local culture.”

The faith of Moroccan Muslims “evidently nourishes and is vibrant,” she said. So, the sisters must try to discover “what is the Lord trying to tell us as Christian women religious today through our contact with their Muslim faith, with men and women who are ordinary, faithful Muslims?”

Sister Day Elizabeth said she’s been struck by how Muslims focus on reconciling with each other during Ramadan, the month of fasting, and by how naturally and seriously the Moroccan Muslims take their obligation to pray five times a day.

“The faithfulness to prayer does attract me. It’s so natural, like a skin,” she said.

The Moroccan constitution recognizes the right to religious freedom and freedom of worship, but proselytism is illegal. Most of the sisters wear a “discreet” version of their congregational symbol, which is a cross on a round medal, she said.

“We don’t feel we must deny who we are,” she said. The people they work with and serve know they are Christian, but in sharing what that really means, “there is a certain limit.”

The Catholic community in Morocco numbers about 20,000 people, almost all of whom are foreigners, said Father Nourissat. A significant portion of those Catholics are students from sub-Saharan Africa studying at Moroccan universities.

“Our Christian community is very mobile,” the priest said. “People stay in Morocco on average four years.”

The influx of Christian students led the country’s Council of Christian Churches to establish Al Mowafaqa, the ecumenical institute of theology, in Rabat. Catholic, Anglican and Protestant students study theology, ecumenism and interreligious dialogue together and make a four- or five-year commitment to serving their fellow Christians in Morocco.

Members of the group will join Catholic priests and religious for a meeting with Pope Francis on March 31 in the Rabat cathedral.

An international group of Muslim students will have their own audience with the pope when he visits the Mohammed VI Institute, a school for imams—Muslim prayer leaders—and “mursiids”—men and women trained as Muslim teachers and guides.

The Moroccan government opened the school in 2015 to promote religious education and to counter what it believes are fundamentalist interpretations of the faith. Like in most officially Muslim countries, the government employs the country’s imams and mursiids and writes the sermons used as the basic text for the imams at Friday prayer across the country.

CALDAROLA
continued from page 12
pleasure, insecurity. Does this spark joy? What about all those who do not have the money? I have no doubt that more people could be better spent on them? That’s a fundamental Lenten question.

The same preacher who read Chapter 16

to us offered this quote from Jesuit Ignacio Ellacuría, who was martyred in El Salvador in 1989: “Always remember that there is no conversion to God if there is no conversion to the oppressed.”

Lent is all about conversion. How does my consumption afflict my conversion?

(Ellie Caldarola writes for Catholic News Service.)

GARVEY
continued from page 12
Our mortifications were once quite severe. They have been significantly relaxed. (I doubt I get half credit for eating fish sandwiches on Fridays.) But fasting is something Jesus instructed us to do.

We would look askance at a Christian who worked on Christmas Day instead of reveling in seasonal joy. For similar reasons, we should welcome the modest penitential practices that the Church enjoins on us in the season leading up to Christ’s passion.

(John Garvey is president of The Catholic University of America in Washington. Its website is www.cua.edu.)
Bishops say EPA plan to roll back pollution rule would harm the unborn

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Unborn children would face greater health risks if the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) moves to rescind a rule regulating hazardous air pollutants emitted by power plants, said the chairman of two U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) committees.

The bishops argued in a March 22 statement that the Mercury and Air Toxics Standards (MATS), or MATS, are needed to protect pregnant women as well.

“The proposed change to the Mercury and Air Toxics Standards rule is troubling since it is well-documented that pregnant mothers and their unborn children are the most sensitive to mercury pollution and its adverse health effects,” said Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann of Kansas City, Kan., chairman of the bishops’ Committee on Pro-Life Activities.

Bishop Frank J. Dewane of Venice, Fla., chairman of the Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development, added, “The MATS rule reflects a proper respect for life of the human person and of God’s creation—a great example of integral ecology called for in, “Laudato Si’,” on Care for Our Common Home.”

The bishops’ comments coincided with a March 18 letter sent by a USCCB official in response to the publication of the revised EPA rule in the Federal Register on Feb. 7.

The EPA said it had concluded that it is not “appropriate and necessary” to regulate hazardous air pollutants from power plants because the cost of what it termed “grossly outweighs” the benefits gained by doing so.

Archbishop Naumann, USCCB associate general secretary and general counsel, opposed the change in a detailed six-page letter, writing that the current standards “align strongly with key principles of Catholic social teaching.”

He expressed concern that although the proposed rule change does not remove power plants from the list of regulated pollution sources under the Clean Air Act, it “greatly weakens legal justification for the rule and could ultimately cause great harm to human health and the environment.”

Pascaliro said that Church teaching “calls us to care of God’s creation and protect the common good and the life and dignity of human persons, especially the poor and vulnerable, from conception until natural death.”

In short, by failing to take into account the full range of costs, especially those imposed on the most vulnerable, the proposed rule fails to respect the life and dignity of the human person,” Pascaliro’s letter said as it outlined a series of technical findings on the danger to health posed by mercury and other hazardous air pollutants.

The USCCB supported the standards when they were proposed by President Barack Obama’s administration in 2011 because “even small amounts of these harmful pollutants in the environment are linked to health problems, particularly in children before and after birth, the poor and the elderly,” Pascaliro’s letter said, quoting from the bishops’ original comment on MATS.

Lenten penance services are scheduled at archdiocesan parishes

St. Anthony softball champions

In 1963, the junior boys’ softball team from St. Anthony Parish in Indianapolis defeated the team from St. Philip Neri Parish, also in Indianapolis, by a score of 18-7 to win the CYO championship. The championship came at the end of an undefeated season for the team. In the back row on the far left is Father James Byrne, the priest moderator. In the back row on the far right side is Joe Fox, the head coach. This photo was originally published in the Sept. 6, 1963, issue of The Criterion.

(The would like to comment on or share information about this photo? Contact archdiocesan archivist Julve Mervika at 800-852-9836, ext. 1358, 317-236-1538, or by e-mail at jmotyka@archindy.org.)