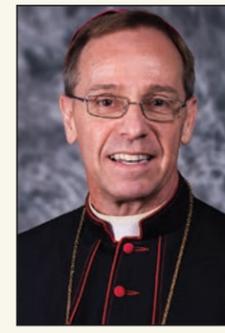




The

# Criterion

Serving the Church in Central and Southern Indiana Since 1960



## Christ the Cornerstone

Jesus' prayers on the cross speak of abandonment, hope, page 5.



As she nears her graduation from Marian University's School of Osteopathic Medicine in May, Ann Schmitt, left, celebrates with her daughter Madeline after receiving the news on March 15 that she has been accepted for a residency in family practice medicine at IU Health's Methodist Hospital in Indianapolis. (Submitted photo)

## Faith and family guide mother of seven to live her dream of becoming a doctor

By John Shaughnessy

When Ann Schmitt graduates from medical school on May 4, the 41-year-old woman will celebrate the occasion with her husband and her seven children who range in age from 20 to 3.

The celebration will mark the end of an improbable journey—and the beginning of another one—that even Schmitt calls “surprising.”

Start with the reality that 12 years ago her first husband walked out of their home and their marriage, leaving her as

a single mother of six children who were then ages 8 to 3.

Add in the fact that Schmitt—a high school graduate and a stay-at-home mom at the time—then decided to move her family from Michigan to the Indianapolis area so she could pursue her childhood dream of becoming a doctor.

There are also the details of how she married her husband Bryan in 2012 as she was earning her college degree, and how she became pregnant with her seventh child in 2015 while she was in medical school.

If all of that seems overwhelming, consider that Schmitt never felt that way because of the one relationship she could always count on at every point of her journey.

“God was always with me,” says Schmitt, a member of St. Malachy Parish in Brownsburg. “I could feel his presence.” Then came the moment when even that relationship changed—for the worse.

It happened in the days after she nearly bled to death while delivering her seventh child, Nathan, on Feb. 26, 2016.

See FAITH, page 8

## Pro-life victories in Indiana could have national implications

By Victoria Arthur

The Indiana General Assembly's passage of two major pro-life bills represents a “milestone moment” that will not only save the lives of unborn children in the state, but possibly lead to a long-term impact on a national scale.

That is the appraisal of Mike Fichter, president and chief executive officer of Indiana Right to Life, who hailed the legislation that now awaits the signature of Gov. Eric Holcomb. As *The Criterion* went to press, the two bills were still sitting on the governor's desk.

House Bill 1211 bans dismemberment abortion, a later-term abortion method that involves tearing a live fetus apart in the uterus and extracting the unborn child piece by piece. Senate Bill 201 expands conscience



Mike Fichter

protection rights beyond physicians and hospital employees to nurses, pharmacists and physician assistants, ensuring that they do not have to participate in abortion procedures if they object on moral grounds. The Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC) supported both

bills and actively lobbied for their passage.

“These were both hard-fought victories that will have far-reaching effects,” Fichter said. “For the first time since the *Roe v. Wade* decision that legalized abortion in 1973, a broad range of health care professionals in Indiana will be protected from being forced to violate their personal beliefs. This is so important, because chemical abortion is rapidly rising, and it puts many pharmacists and nurses in the position of having to act against their conscience. In the long run,

See ICC, page 9

## Tattoo reminds award winner of his life's mission

By John Shaughnessy

Yan Yan smiles as he shows the tattoo that represents his approach to serving others and honoring God.

The 20-year-old's tattoo on his right leg features the Latin phrase *Imago Dei*.

“It means image of God,” Yan says. “Since everyone is created in the image of God, every action I take should be for

God. I got the tattoo on my leg because it's a reminder that every step I take is to serve God.”

That philosophy has guided his volunteer efforts to help children from Burmese families in Indianapolis to improve their English and their academic skills, all in the hope of aiding them to adapt to life in America and pave the way for a better future.

Those efforts have also led Yan to be chosen as the young adult recipient of the

archdiocese's 2019 Spirit of Service Award, an honor he will receive on April 30 in Indianapolis during a celebration that will mark the 100th anniversary of Catholic Charities in central and southern Indiana.

Yan's concern and compassion for youths who are struggling stems from his own struggles upon arriving in the United States when he was 13.

His family's journey to freedom began when his father—a Catholic—fled Burma because of religious and ethnic persecution. Yan and his parents eventually became refugees in Malaysia before moving to America. Their first stop was in Washington state before settling in Indianapolis.

A turning point in his life came when he attended St. Mark the Evangelist School in Indianapolis for eighth grade.

“I was one of the first Burmese to attend the school,” he says. “There were only about five of us. Most of us didn't

See SPIRIT, page 8



Yan Yan tutors a child as a volunteer for Hope for Tomorrow, an Indianapolis organization that helps Burmese children with their homework. (Submitted photo)



Arnold Feltz, left, Kathleen Feltz and Anna Marie Below, all members of St. Barnabas Parish in Indianapolis, prepare oils on April 8 in the rectory of SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral Parish in Indianapolis. The oils are among those to be blessed at the archdiocesan chrim Mass on April 16 at the cathedral. (Photos by Sean Gallagher)

## Volunteers prepare oils to be blessed at chrim Mass

By Sean Gallagher

The annual chrim Mass to be celebrated at 2 p.m. on April 16 at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, 1347 N. Meridian St., in Indianapolis, will arguably be one of the most solemn and joyful moments of worship this year for the Church in central and southern Indiana.

Priests serving in the archdiocese will renew their ordination promises. And Archbishop Charles C. Thompson also will bless oils to be used in sacraments across the archdiocese.

Every celebration of baptism, confirmation, the anointing of the sick, priestly ordination and church or altar dedication in the archdiocese in the coming year will involve oils blessed at this Mass, which is open to the public.

The oils so joyfully and solemnly to be blessed at the chrim Mass were prepared in a rather mundane way at the cathedral rectory on April 8.

For 27 years, Christina Tuley, the executive assistant in the archdiocesan Office of Worship, has overseen a crew of volunteers who annually pour more than 20 liters of olive oil into 750 small bottles and place lids and labels on them. One bottle of each of the three kinds of oils—the oil of catechumens, the oil of the infirm and chrim oil—are then put in small boxes.

They are blessed during the chrim Mass and then distributed to Catholics taking part in the liturgy who take them back to their faith communities across central and southern Indiana.

“We’re preparing the oil for every child that is baptized, for every priest that is ordained, the churches that are built, and for the catechumens, and the oil of the infirm goes for the sick,” Tuley said. “It’s very much an honor.”

Arnold and Kathleen Feltz, members of St. Barnabas Parish and the parents of Father Joseph Feltz, have helped prepare the oils for 18 years. They then attend the chrim Mass where the oils are blessed,

and the celebration of the Easter Vigil at their parish where the oils are used to receive people into the Church.

“It’s moving and rewarding,” said Kathleen. “It makes our service and us being able to do it all a little extra special.”

Karla Hudacek, a pastoral associate at St. Thomas Aquinas Parish in Indianapolis, volunteered for the first time this year. She appreciated the aromatic oils added to olive oil to give chrim oil an attractive smell.

She recalled the effect it had on her twins when they were anointed with chrim oil at their baptism.

“I could smell it for days and days,” Hudacek said. “It was a reminder of how blessed and how present Christ is. In our faith, we have some very tangible means of experiencing Christ.”

Father Patrick Beidelman, executive director of the archdiocesan Secretariat for Worship and Evangelization, stopped in to see the work of the volunteers and thank them for their service.

“They’re offering their time to enable our faith family to be who it is and do what it does by the power of the Holy Spirit,” Father Beidelman said. “You can see them putting their faith into action. It’s their love for the Church, for the sacramental life of the Church. And the kind sharing of their time builds up the body of Christ.” †



Dozens of bottles stand filled with olive oil mixed with aromatic oils on April 8 in the rectory of SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral Parish in Indianapolis.



## Public Schedule of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

April 14 – 24, 2019

**April 14 – 10:30 a.m.**

Palm Sunday Mass at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, Indianapolis

**April 16 – 2 p.m.**

Chrim Mass at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral

**April 16 – 5 p.m.**

Dinner with priests at Primo Banquet Hall, Indianapolis

**April 17 – 10 a.m.**

Department heads meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis

**April 18 – 7 p.m.**

Holy Thursday Mass at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral

**April 19 – 3 p.m.**

Good Friday liturgy at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral

**April 20 – 8 p.m.**

Easter Vigil Mass at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral

**April 22 – 6 p.m.**

Mass on the Grass at Taylor Hall Courtyard, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis campus, Indianapolis

**April 23 – 9:30 a.m.**

Spring business meeting for priests and parish life coordinators, Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish, Greenwood

**April 23 – 2 p.m.**

Priest Council meeting, Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish

**April 23-24**

Metropolitans gathering with Archbishop Dennis M. Schnurr and Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz, Cincinnati

**April 24 – 7 p.m.**

Confirmation for Holy Spirit and Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ parishes, both in Indianapolis, at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral

(Schedule subject to change.)

## Easter liturgies are set at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral and Saint Meinrad Archabbey

Easter liturgies at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis and the Archabbey Church of Our Lady of Einsiedeln in St. Meinrad are open to the public.

Archbishop Charles C. Thompson is scheduled to be the principal celebrant at the Easter Vigil Mass at the cathedral, 1347 N. Meridian St., in Indianapolis, at 9 p.m. on April 20.

Starting times for all liturgies at the Archabbey Church of Our Lady of Einsiedeln in St. Meinrad are Central Time.

Due to space constraints, *The Criterion* is only able to list these Easter liturgical schedules. For information about liturgies at parishes or other religious communities, contact them individually.

**SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral**

- April 20, Holy Saturday—9 p.m. Easter Vigil.
- April 21, Easter Sunday—10:30 a.m. Easter Sunday Mass.

**Archabbey Church of Our Lady of Einsiedeln**

- April 20, Holy Saturday—noon Midday Prayer; 5 p.m. Vespers; 8 p.m. Easter Vigil.
- April 21, Easter Sunday—8:30 a.m. Lauds; 11:30 a.m. Midday Prayer; 5 p.m. Vespers.
- April 22, Easter Monday—9:30 a.m. Mass; noon Midday Prayer; 5 p.m. Vespers.
- April 23, Easter Tuesday—7:30 a.m. Mass; noon Midday Prayer; 5 p.m. Vespers. †

## Share your stories of how mom has influenced your life of faith

In anticipation of Mother’s Day, *The Criterion* is inviting readers to share their stories, memories and thoughts of how their mothers have lived their faith and shared their faith with their children and grandchildren.

Mothers are also invited to share their stories and thoughts of how they have tried to share their faith with their

children and their grandchildren—and why that is important to them.

Please send your responses and stories to assistant editor John Shaughnessy by e-mail at [jshaughnessy@archindy.org](mailto:jshaughnessy@archindy.org) or by mail in care of *The Criterion*, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202. Please include your parish and a daytime phone number where you can be reached. †

**Phone Numbers:**  
 Main office: 317-236-1570  
 Advertising: 317-236-1454  
 Toll free: 1-800-382-9836, ext. 1570  
 Circulation: 317-236-1454  
 Toll free: 1-800-382-9836, ext. 1454

**Price:** \$22.00 per year, 75 cents per copy

**Postmaster:**  
 Send address changes to *The Criterion*, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367

**Web site:** [www.CriterionOnline.com](http://www.CriterionOnline.com)

**E-mail:** [criterion@archindy.org](mailto:criterion@archindy.org)

Published weekly except the last week of December and the first week of January.  
 Mailing address: 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367. Periodical postage paid at Indianapolis, IN. Copyright © 2019 Criterion Press Inc. ISSN 0574-4350.

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*The Criterion* (ISSN 0574-4350) is published weekly except the last week of December and the first week of January.

1400 N. Meridian St.  
 Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367  
 317-236-1570  
 800-382-9836 ext. 1570  
[criterion@archindy.org](mailto:criterion@archindy.org)

Periodical postage paid at Indianapolis, IN.  
 Copyright © 2019  
 Criterion Press Inc.

**POSTMASTER:**  
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# Prayer sent with appeal donations show people's 'burdens, faith'

By Natalie Hoefler

At a table covered with prayer intention cards stacked in piles of varying heights, Dana Stone randomly pulls a few of the handwritten notes and reads a line or two from each.



Dana Stone

"That our son quits drinking."

"For my husband's conversion."

"For all of my family who left the Church."

"For the success of my wife's cancer treatments."

"That I find a good job close to home."

Stone is not a member of a religious order or head of a prayer ministry. No, oddly it would seem—in terms of receiving prayer requests—she is director of appeals and creative services for the archdiocese's Office of Stewardship and Development.

"People send them in every year" with the prayer request card attached to their United Catholic Appeal (UCA) intention form and payment reminders, she says. "Usually it's not that many, though. Last year there were less than a hundred."

Not so this year.

Since the launching of the annual appeal last fall, she says, "we had somewhere around 1,000 [requests] come in," she says. "I've been just floored."

"And they're just so moving—prayers for healing, prayers for family members who left the Church, prayers for people with addictions. I can't just go right back to work after reading them. I am really moved."

## 'Petitions reveal people of compassion'

All prayer intentions Stone receives are passed on to Archbishop Charles C. Thompson.

"I read each intention, then I offer them up in personal prayer as well as Mass intentions," he says.

"I am humbled and honored by the sense of faith, hope and love that permeates these intentions."

"The vast majority are prayers for family members who are ill or no longer practicing their faith."

He says the overall tone of the petitions is compassion.

"'Compassion' comes from two Latin words that mean 'to suffer with.' The petitions reveal people of compassion who care about others and consequently carry burdens of great concern and care for those who are ill, going through difficult times or have abandoned the faith."

Stone says she is especially touched by the intentions "clearly written by an elderly person in shaky handprint asking for prayers for their health or explaining why they aren't able to give as much this year, but they still want to give because it's so important to them."

For example, one person writes, "My age causes health problems. I am 85. ... Please pray so I feel better. I have pain in my hip and back." Yet the person goes on to offer help by noting that "I can stuff envelopes sitting down, just not standing."

Another person writes that they will send a check soon but "had some seizures and got behind on a lot of stuff. ... I'm always thinking of you ..."

## 'Intentions answered thanks to those who give'

As more requests rolled in, Stone noticed a connection between the intentions and the services of the Church in central and southern Indiana that address their needs and concerns.

"What I don't think people realize is that many of the intentions that we see ... are being answered thanks to those who faithfully give to the United Catholic Appeal" that help archdiocesan ministries, she says.

For instance, many prayer requests focused on those suffering from drug addiction, depression and other mental health issues. Funds donated to the UCA benefit the archdiocesan Office of Human Life and Dignity, whose ministries address each of those needs, and Catholic Charities Bloomington, which offers mental health counseling.

Other requests mention a parent or spouse with dementia. One request asked for prayers for "my wife with Alzheimer's, and for me so that I stay healthy so I can care for her." Caregivers can receive help through at least two ministries receiving appeal funds: Catholic Charities in Indianapolis offers caregiver support groups, and the mental health services offered by Catholic Charities Bloomington addresses those dealing with life adjustments, stress and more.

Several intention cards expressed concern regarding infertility issues. Should such a couple be open to adoption, they could seek help from St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities in New Albany or St. Elizabeth/Coleman Pregnancy and Adoption Services in Beech Grove. Both agencies receive UCA funding.

As he read the intentions, Archbishop Thompson says he was struck by "how much people, especially parents for their children, worry about the spiritual well-being of souls." Catholic schools and Young Adult and College Campus Ministry—both direct beneficiaries of the United Catholic Appeal—help address this concern.

Many donors also sought prayers for struggling families and for troubled youths. Becky's Place in Bloomington, Holy Family Shelter in Indianapolis and Ryves Youth Center in Terre Haute all benefit from the appeal.

And the many prayer requests for an increase in vocations are directly affected by works of the archdiocesan Office of Vocations and Bishop Simon Bruté



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson reads one of more than 1,000 prayer intentions stacked on his desk that have been sent in so far with this year's United Catholic Appeal pledge intentions and payments. He reads and prays for the intentions each year. Usually there are less than 100 requests.

(Photo by Natalie Hoefler)

College Seminary in Indianapolis, both appeal fund recipients.

## People with burdens, and steadfast faith

Not only were there far more prayer intentions sent in with UCA donations this year, says Stone, but also the listing of a new intention from years past: requests for prayers revolving around the priest sex-abuse scandal.

"Purification of our Church!" reads one request in all capital letters. "For the victims of child sex abuse by priests and for a swift decision to hold those accountable ..." reads another.

One reader used all of the lines on the intention card to pray for "healing and justice for abuse victims; renewal of the Church and her leaders; that bishops and pastors, sisters and brothers, recognize this time of crisis and be willing to implement changes if necessary ..."

Stone suspects emotions regarding this issue played a large role in the drastic

increase in prayer intentions submitted with appeal pledge cards and payment slips this year.

"Look at all that's happened over the last six to nine months" in terms of the Church she says. "Maybe it just has people in a different mindset."

For Archbishop Thompson, the number of intentions speak to the state of people's hearts.

Through the prayer requests, he says, "People share their hopes and concerns, especially for the Church, the world, their families and their friends."

"It's obvious that many people carry tremendous burdens, but remain steadfast in faith."

(For more information about the annual United Catholic Appeal or to contribute, go to [storybook.link/UCASTorybook](http://storybook.link/UCASTorybook) or call the Office of Stewardship and Development at 800-382-9836, ext. 1415, or 317-236-1415.) †

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# The Criterion

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John F. Fink, *Editor Emeritus*

## Editorial



Mourners attend a candlelight vigil on Aug. 7, 2012, at the Sikh Temple in Brookfield, Wis., in memory of the victims of a mass shooting at the Sikh Temple in Oak Creek. (CNS photo/John Gress, Reuters)

## Our faith calls us to uphold religious liberty

Sikh Temple of Wisconsin in Oak Creek; Mother Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, S.C.; Dar Al-Farooq Islamic Center in Bloomington, Minn.; First Baptist Church of Sutherland Springs, Texas; Tree of Life Congregation in Pittsburgh, Penn.; and Congregation Shaarey Tefilla in Carmel, Ind.

They are houses of worship in the United States where heinous acts of evil have taken place in recent years, resulting in the loss of lives in several instances and vandalism in others. The tragedies left many of us reeling, wondering what led individuals to do such things. They also resulted in a call for our diverse communities of faith to come together and support one another.

We can add other houses of worship in our nation and around the world in recent weeks that have faced similar situations: A March 15 attack on two mosques in New Zealand during Friday prayer that killed 50 Muslims and injured 50 more. An assailant stabbing a Catholic priest in a Montreal church during Mass on March 22 (Father Claude Grou, the rector of St. Joseph's Oratory of Mount Royal, is expected to make a full recovery). A California mosque set on fire and vandalized on March 24 with graffiti referencing the New Zealand attacks.

We again pause and wonder why there is a lack of compassion and understanding for so many of our brothers and sisters here and abroad who practice different faith traditions, and just as important, where the religious liberty that was promised to many of us has gone—especially those of us who reside in the United States.

That question was raised by three chairmen of U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) committees and more than 140 other religious leaders who last week called on President Donald J. Trump, Vice President Mike Pence and congressional leaders to uphold principles of religious freedom following the latest attacks on people of faith, clergy and houses of worship.

Among those signing the letter were Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz of Louisville, Ky., Bishop Joseph C. Bambera of Scranton, Penn., and Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio of the U.S. Archdiocese for the Military Services. They are respectively the chairmen of the committees for Religious Liberty, Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, and International Justice and Peace.

The signers span a broad spectrum of political views and include Muslim, Jewish, Baptist, mainline Protestant and evangelical leaders as well as academics, former government officials, three former U.S. ambassadors (including two to the Vatican) and heads of faith-based organizations.

In the April 4 letter the leaders wrote, "We are a diverse group of advocates for

religious liberty for all. We sometimes differ about what religious freedom requires, but we are united around the bedrock principle of ensuring that all individuals and communities are able to exercise their faith in safety and security. We write to ask you to take action to uphold this principle."

The group cited words used in a 1790 letter from President George Washington to the members of Touro Synagogue in Newport, R.I., insisting that the government of the United States must give "to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance." All Americans should be able to "sit in safety under [their] own vine[s] and figtree[s]," with "none to make [them] afraid," Washington said.

"We ask you to uphold these principles," the letter writers said. "As governmental leaders, you have a special duty to ensure that your words comport with the spirit of the Constitution and help to unify, strengthen and keep Americans safe."

The letter also outlined several other principles the group asked the president, vice president and congressional leaders to affirm. They include:

- Individuals of all faiths and none have equal dignity, worth and rights to religious freedom.
- A person is not more or less American because of his or her faith.
- Individuals must be able to exercise their religion without fear for their physical safety.
- Scapegoating, stereotyping and spreading false information about any person or community, including religious individuals and communities, is unacceptable.
- Americans should never foment fear about groups based on attributes like religion, race or ethnicity, and they should speak against fear-mongering by others.
- The civic and religious virtue of humble dialogue with those with whom one disagrees should be encouraged.
- Leaders should avoid using violent imagery because it can encourage violence.
- An attack on one religion should be treated as an attack on every faith.

Sadly, these acts of evil show us there is still darkness in the world. Our mission must always be to bring the light of Christ to these circumstances, including in cases where religious liberty is concerned.

As we approach the darkest day in humanity (Good Friday), we also know Easter joy is only a few days away.

May we always shine that light of Christ on our brothers and sisters in need during not only the Easter season but every day—despite our differences.

We are all made in the image and likeness of God. May our lives of faith always reflect that.

—Mike Krokos

## Be Our Guest/Art Berkemeier

# Collaboration between college seminary, university offers strong educational environment

The most deciding factor for human growth is the opportunity of education. As Catholics, we want that education to prepare us for a life with Christ. Regardless of chosen career, it is based upon service to others.

Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary in Indianapolis, which partners with



Art Berkemeier

Marian University, also in Indianapolis, offers an array of faith-based educational opportunities that are rapidly gaining respect within the Midwest.

At Bruté Seminary, young men are challenged

to grow in four pillars of formation: spiritual, intellectual, pastoral and human. These four formation aspects are essential for leadership in our Catholic communities. A healthy priest is strong in each aspect.

Students attend Marian University for the intellectual growth open to all. It is within a faith-based coeducational environment that focuses on the dignity of every human person regardless of their differences. Seminarians enjoy that same intellectual growth on campus while also living within a community that forms each in spirituality, pastoral care and human interaction. As founding Bishop Bruté rector Father Robert Robeson would say, "We learn to love God and one another."

Why is this educational environment on the west side of Indianapolis a treasure for us?

You may not realize this, but Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary exists not for itself, but for each and every parish, each and every Catholic.

For the Church to continue, priests are needed. Without priests, we have no Eucharist.

Parish leaders, please learn about and value this treasure. Plan a visit to Bishop Bruté Seminary and Marian University. See this treasure for yourself.

Invite Father Joseph Moriarty, the seminary's current rector, or one of his assisting formation priests, to talk at your parish. Provide materials about Marian University and Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary to your young men and women who are looking for a Catholic faith-based education.

For a treasure to have value, it must be cherished. Do we cherish our Catholic faith? Do we take time to talk about it? To pass it along to our children?

If so, I encourage you to take time to learn about Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary and Marian University. Pray for their success, and support them as you are able.

(Art Berkemeier is an advisory board member at Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary and a member of St. Mark the Evangelist Parish, both in Indianapolis.) †

## Letters to the Editor

### Too many black lives are lost through abortion, reader says

There is one horrific consequence of the specter of "white supremacy" that has seemed to have flown beneath the public consciousness radar for far too long.

That is the tragic and disproportionate loss of innocent black babies through the evil of abortion. Far more black lives are lost at the hands of abortionists within their mother's womb than through street violence of all types—including conflicts with police officers.

Arguably, a significant contributing factor to this tragedy would be the very successful efforts of white eugenicist Margaret Sanger. Sanger—a true believer in "survival of the fittest" and a co-founder of Planned Parenthood—passionately advocated "improvement" of the U.S. population through dramatic reduction in the African-American population by birth control and abortion.

Today, Planned Parenthood is our nation's largest provider of abortions, and the overall elimination of innocent black lives through abortion (percentage wise) greatly exceeds that of the general population.

In fairness, it is recognized that, subject to certain constraints, abortion is legal, and Planned Parenthood is not solely responsible for this terrible statistic.

However, all young black lives do truly matter, and moral outrage—within both the black and white communities—unfortunately seems to be lacking.

We owe much more to the precious and innocent black lives lost through abortion than to do nothing.

David Nealy  
Greenwood

### We need more guidance in assisting our neighbors at the southern border

I recently read Editor Emeritus John F. Fink's editorial in the March 29 issue of *The Criterion* about loving your neighbor.

As I was reading it, I thought to myself, "Finally, an article about the human disaster at our southern border," but unfortunately it stopped short.

Is our Church helping to feed, clothe, and shelter these people? Is Catholic Relief Services involved? As a Catholic, what should I think about this issue?

Many of us are confused.

Tom Stiens  
Richmond

(Editor's note: Catholic agencies along the U.S.-Mexico border continue to bolster refugee aid efforts as thousands of people in multiple migrant caravans continue to trek north through Mexico to the border. Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley began a humanitarian crisis relief effort last summer and with the assistance of Sacred Heart Parish in McAllen, Texas, opened a respite center. For more information, go to [www.catholiccharitiesrgv.org](http://www.catholiccharitiesrgv.org) or [sacredheartchurch-mcallen.org/immigrant-assistance/general-information](http://sacredheartchurch-mcallen.org/immigrant-assistance/general-information).) †



# Christ the Cornerstone

## Jesus' prayers on the cross speak of both abandonment, hope

*"Jesus cried out in a loud voice, 'Father, into your hands I commend my spirit;' and when he had said this, he breathed his last" (Lk 23:46).*

This Sunday, Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord, begins the holiest week of the Church's year. Taking our final steps on the journey to Easter, we recall Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem, quickly followed by his ignominious passion and death on a cross.

Jesus died praying. His whole being was handed over to the Father in a profound act of love and worship. The Passion narrative that we will hear this Palm Sunday (Lk 22:14–23:56) does not include the familiar cry of Jesus, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Mt 27:46; Mk 15:34), but it does speak of his sense of abandonment by his disciples (especially Judas) and of his struggle to do his Father's will. His final outcry in St. Luke's Gospel is one of faith-filled surrender, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit" (Lk 23:46).

The bystanders who heard the Lord's words quoted by St. Matthew

and St. Mark misunderstood him. They thought he was calling on Elijah or one of the prophets to come and save him. They didn't realize that his words of abandonment were also words of profound hope. On the cross, Jesus speaks of *both* abandonment and hope.

Standing before the cross this week, we will understandably ask ourselves, what did Jesus mean when he prayed these words of abandonment and hope? Did he really think that his Father had abandoned him? What was the source of his hope? What did this final act of worship mean—for him and for many of us who have felt God's "absence" (especially during the scandals of the past year) and who are desperately seeking hope?

Jesus died as he lived—in constant dialogue with his Father, in communion with the One whose love sustained his every word and action as the Son of the Living God and as our brother. Jesus lived, and died, praying. That means he lived and died in intimate communion with God. Every word he spoke, every action he performed was indivisibly linked to the will of his Father.

Unlike you and me, there was no division between Jesus' intentions and his actions. Although his human nature struggled with the terrible demands placed on him as he entered into the loneliness and bitter pain of his passion and death, Jesus accepted his Father's will and did what was required of him. Why? To save us from our sins. To show us what it means to surrender our will and let God our Father raise us up into loving communion with him.

Jesus' prayer of loving surrender on the cross transformed his suffering and death into an act of love and worship. By his wounds, we are healed. By his cruel death, we are set free. His prayer was the source of his freedom. His acceptance of the Father's will is what made it possible for him to descend into hell and liberate by his tremendous act of unselfish love all who were waiting to be set free.

Psalm 21, the prayer that Jesus prays in the passion narratives of Matthew and Mark, is a prophetic psalm that affirms the ultimate goodness of God in spite of life's pain and sorrow. Jesus prays these words in solidarity with all who suffer and all who fear that

they have been abandoned by God. But the Lord also prays this great psalm of messianic hope with complete confidence that its promises of freedom and salvation are being realized even as these bitter words of abandonment are being spoken on the cross in the midst of his greatest suffering.

Jesus died praying. He died sharing with his Father all the hopes and sufferings of his people—all of us who share in his passion, death and resurrection. The great prayers that the Lord proclaimed in a loud voice from the cross are also our prayers. We know their hopelessness and their hope. We know their loneliness and their promise of intimate communion with God.

As we stand before the cross during this Holy Week, let's thank our Father for the wondrous gift of love that his Son has given to each of us. Let's pray that his prayers of abandonment and hope will be ours as well.

Finally, let's ask the Father for the grace to surrender our selfishness and sin so that with Jesus we, too, may rise again in glory—on this Easter Sunday and at the hour of our death. Amen. †



## Cristo, la piedra angular

### Las oraciones de Jesús en la cruz hablan de abandono y de esperanza

*"Jesús, con un grito, exclamó: 'Padre, en tus manos encomiendo mi espíritu.' Y diciendo esto, expiró" (Lc 23:46).*

Este domingo, el Domingo de Ramos de la Pasión del Señor, marca el inicio de la semana más santa del año eclesial. A medida que damos los últimos pasos de nuestro camino hacia la Pascua, recordamos la entrada triunfal de Jesús en Jerusalén, seguida rápidamente de su ignominiosa pasión y muerte en una cruz.

Jesús murió rezando; entregó la totalidad de su ser al Padre en un profundo acto de amor y alabanza. La narrativa de la pasión que escuchamos el Domingo de Ramos (Lc 22:14–23:56), no incluye el conocido grito de Jesús "Dios mío, Dios mío, ¿por qué me has abandonado?" (Mt 27:46; Mc 15:34) pero habla sobre la sensación que le causa el abandono de sus discípulos (especialmente Judas) y de su lucha interior por cumplir con la voluntad del Padre. El último grito de Jesús, tal como lo narra el Evangelio según san Lucas, está colmado de entrega: "Padre, en tus manos encomiendo mi espíritu" (Lc 23:46).

Las personas que se encontraban allí y que escucharon las palabras que pronunció el Señor, según citan san Mateo y san Marcos, tergiversaron su significado. Pensaron que llamaba a

Elías o a uno de los profetas para que vinieran a salvarlo y no se daban cuenta de que sus palabras sobre el abandono eran, al mismo tiempo, de profunda esperanza. Desde la cruz, Jesús habla de abandono y de esperanza.

Al pararnos frente a la cruz la semana que viene, con toda razón nos preguntaremos ¿qué quiso decir Jesús cuando pronunció estas palabras de abandono y esperanza? ¿De verdad creyó que su Padre lo había abandonado? ¿Cuál fue la fuente de su esperanza? ¿Qué significa este último acto de alabanza, para él y para muchos de nosotros que hemos sentido la "ausencia" de Dios (especialmente durante los escándalos de este último año) y que buscamos desesperadamente un atisbo de esperanza?

Jesús murió de la misma forma que vivió: en un diálogo constante con su Padre, en comunión con aquel cuyo amor respaldaba cada una de sus palabras y de sus acciones como Hijos del Dios Viviente y nuestro hermano. Jesús vivió y murió rezando. Esto significa que vivió y murió en una comunión íntima con Dios. Cada palabra que pronunciaba, cada acción que realizaba estaba intrínsecamente vinculada a la voluntad de su Padre.

A diferencia de lo que nos ocurre a usted y a mí, no existía ninguna

división entre las intenciones de Jesús y sus acciones. Si bien su naturaleza humana se rebelaba contra las terribles exigencias que le fueron impuestas a medida que se adentraba en la soledad y el amargo dolor de su pasión y muerte, Jesús aceptó la voluntad de su Padre e hizo lo que tenía que hacer. ¿Por qué? Para salvarnos de nuestros pecados; para demostrarnos lo que significa entregar la voluntad y dejar que Dios, nuestro Padre, nos eleve en una piadosa comunión con Él.

La oración de entrega amorosa de Jesús en la cruz transformó su sufrimiento y muerte en un acto de amor y alabanza. Mediante sus palabras, fuimos sanados; mediante su muerte cruel, hemos sido liberados. Su oración fue la fuente de su liberación; su aceptación de la voluntad del Padre es lo que permitió que pudiera descender al infierno y liberar, mediante su enorme acto de amor desinteresado, a todos aquellos que esperaban ser liberados.

El salmo 21, la oración que Jesús pronuncia en las narrativas de la pasión de Mateo y Marcos, es un salmo profético que afirma la suprema bondad de Dios aún a pesar del dolor y el sufrimiento de la vida. Jesús reza con estas palabras en solidaridad con todos aquellos que sufren y

todos los que temen que Dios los ha abandonado. Pero el Señor también reza este magnífico salmo de esperanza mesiánica con la plena confianza de que sus promesas de libertad y salvación se están cumpliendo, aún a pesar de pronunciar estas amargas palabras de abandono en la cruz, en medio de un sufrimiento indecible.

Jesús murió rezando; murió compartiendo con su Padre todas las esperanzas y sufrimientos de su pueblo, es decir, todos los que compartimos su pasión, muerte y resurrección. Las maravillosas oraciones que el Señor pronunció a viva voz desde la cruz también son nuestras; conocemos su desesperanza y su esperanza. Conocemos su soledad y su promesa de una comunión íntima con Dios.

Al pararnos frente a la cruz durante esta Semana Santa, demos gracias a nuestro Padre por el maravilloso obsequio de amor que su Hijo nos ha dado a cada uno de nosotros. Recemos para hacer nuestras también sus oraciones de abandono y esperanza.

Por último, pidámosle al Padre la gracia de poder entregar nuestro egoísmo y pecado para que, junto con Jesús, nosotros también podamos resucitar nuevamente en gloria en este Domingo de Pascua y en la hora de nuestra muerte. Amén. †

# Events Calendar

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

**April 15**  
St. Mark the Evangelist School, door one, 541 E. Edgewood Ave., Indianapolis. **Caregiver Support Group**, sponsored by Catholic Charities Indianapolis, open discussion for family and friends caring for adults age 60 and older, 5:30-7 p.m. Information: Monica Woodsworth, 317-261-3378, [mwoodsworth@archindy.org](mailto:mwoodsworth@archindy.org).

**April 16**  
Mount St. Francis Center for Spirituality, 101 St. Anthony Dr., Mt. St. Francis. **"Abide" Adoration Service**, sponsored by Catalyst Catholic, 7-8 p.m., every third Thurs. of the month, featuring guest speaker, praise band, silence and confessions, child care available. Information and child care reservations: Chris Rogers, [chris@nadyouth.org](mailto:chris@nadyouth.org), 812-923-8355.

**April 18**  
Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. **Holy Thursday Simple Soup and Bread Lunch**, benefiting the Catholic Charities Indianapolis Crisis

Office, 11:30 a.m. prayer and reflection, 11:45 a.m.-1 p.m. lunch, \$10 suggested donation. Information: 317-236-1411 or Cheri Bush, [cbush@archindy.org](mailto:cbush@archindy.org).

St. Joseph Church, 1401 S. Mickley Ave., Indianapolis. **Third Thursday Adoration**, interceding for women experiencing crisis pregnancy, 11 a.m.-7 p.m., with Mass at 5:45 p.m.

**April 19**  
St. Jude School cafeteria, 5353 McFarland Road, Indianapolis. **Fish Fry**, sponsored by Boy Scout Troop #51, 5-7 p.m., fish filet plate or sandwich, choice of sides, drink, dessert, \$7 one-piece meal, \$9 two-piece, cheese pizza and grilled cheese sandwiches available *a la carte*. Information: [haggenjos04@gmail.com](mailto:haggenjos04@gmail.com).

Church of the Immaculate Conception, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Way of the Cross for Justice**, 10:30-11:30 a.m., freewill offering, no registration required.

Information: 812-535-2952, [provctr@spsmw.org](mailto:provctr@spsmw.org) or [www.spsmw.org/providence-center/events](http://www.spsmw.org/providence-center/events).

Knights of Columbus Hall, 2100 E. 71st St., Indianapolis. **Catholic Business Exchange**, state Sen. John Ruckelshaus presenting, Mass 7 a.m., buffet breakfast and program following, \$15 members, \$21 non-members. Register by noon on April 18. Information and registration: [www.catholicbusinessexchange.org](http://www.catholicbusinessexchange.org).

**April 20**  
Military Park, 100 N. West St., Indianapolis. **5K Easter Egg Run/Walk and Children's Fun Run**, benefiting the Indianapolis Society of St. Vincent de Paul; 10 a.m., \$45 April 12-19, \$50 day of (plus \$3 registration fee), \$20 children thru April 19, \$25 day of (plus \$2.50 registration fee), includes T-shirt, medal, all-ages egg hunt, beer/soda. Information: Darlene Sweeney, 317-924-5769, [darlene.sweeney@svdpindy.org](mailto:darlene.sweeney@svdpindy.org). Registration: [www.svdpindy.org/event/third-annual-easter-egg-5k-runwalk](http://www.svdpindy.org/event/third-annual-easter-egg-5k-runwalk).

**April 25**  
Indiana Interchurch Center, 1100 W. 42nd St., Indianapolis. **Caregiver Support Group**, sponsored by Catholic Charities Indianapolis, question and answer session for family and friends caring for adults age 60 and older, 5:30-7 p.m. Information: Monica Woodsworth, 317-261-3378, [mwoodsworth@archindy.org](mailto:mwoodsworth@archindy.org).  
  
St. Paul Hermitage, 501 N. 17th Ave., Beech Grove. **Ave Maria Guild Card Party**, 11 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Information: 317-223-3687, [vlgmimi@aol.com](mailto:vlgmimi@aol.com).

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish Social Hall, 10655 Haverstick Road, Carmel (Lafayette Diocese.) **Day of Reflection: Ageless Discipleship**, for those in the second half of life, author Barbara Lee presenting, 9:30 a.m. registration, program 10 a.m.-3 p.m., \$15 includes lunch. Register by April 18: [bit.ly/setonageless](http://bit.ly/setonageless). Information: 317-846-3850, [carole.kimes@setoncarmel.org](mailto:carole.kimes@setoncarmel.org).

**April 26**  
Marian, Inc. Ballroom,

1011 E. St. Clair St., Indianapolis. **Society of St. Vincent de Paul Annual Fundraiser: Struttin' Our Stuff**, celebrity fashion show for men and women featuring styles from the Mission 27 Resale shop, cocktails, dinner, silent and live auction, 6-10 p.m., \$75 per person, sponsorship opportunities available. Reservations and information: Jenny Matthews, 317-289-3324, [jmattbogey@gmail.com](mailto:jmattbogey@gmail.com) or Mary Ann Klein, [Klein.j@sbcglobal.net](mailto:Klein.j@sbcglobal.net), 317-796-6325.

**April 27**  
Sisters of Providence Motherhouse Grounds, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Earth Day Festival and Crafts Fair**, food, crafts and family-friendly educational activities, 10:30 a.m.-3 p.m., freewill offering. Information: 812-535-2931, [wvc@spsmw.org](mailto:wvc@spsmw.org), or [www.spsmw.org/providence-center/events](http://www.spsmw.org/providence-center/events).

St. Bartholomew Church, 1306 27th St., Columbus. **Easter Celebration Concert**, featuring St. Bartholomew

Choir, Brass Choir and Children's Choir, 7:30 p.m., freewill offering. Complete list of all concerts: [www.saintbartholomew.org](http://www.saintbartholomew.org) (choose Music Ministry) or [bminut@stbparish.net](mailto:bminut@stbparish.net).

Ivy Tech Community College, 50 Walnut St., Lawrenceburg. **2-Mile Walk for Life**, benefiting the Pregnancy Care Center of SE Indiana, 8:30 a.m. registration, 9 a.m. walk, all ages welcome, free. Information or to donate: 812-537-4357, [www.supportpccindian.org](http://www.supportpccindian.org).

**April 28**  
St. Luke the Evangelist Parish, 7575 Holliday Dr., E., Indianapolis. **Pancake Breakfast**, sponsored by the Knights of Columbus Council #14895, after 7:30 a.m. and 9:30 a.m. Masses, pre-sale tickets available after Masses two weekends prior, \$25 per family (\$30 at the door), \$7 adult (\$8 at the door), \$4 children 6-12, children through age 5 free; free family admission with donation of one large box of diapers. Information: 317-259-4373, [matkins@stluke.org](mailto:matkins@stluke.org). †

## Retreats and Programs

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

**May 3-5**  
Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guest House and Retreat Center, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Being Creative, Being Divine: Freedom and an Ethics of Creativity**, Benedictine Father Adrian Burke presenting, \$255 single, \$425 double. Information: 812-357-6585 or [mzoeller@saintmeinrad.edu](mailto:mzoeller@saintmeinrad.edu).

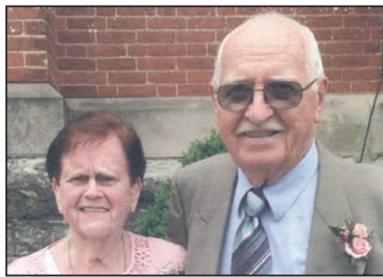
**May 4**  
Providence Spirituality & Conference Center, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Aging Gracefully: Exploring the Gift of Years**, Elizabeth Collins, RN, and Providence well-being coordinator Katie Harich presenting, 9:30-11:30 a.m., \$10. Register by May 1. Information and registration:

812-535-2952, [provctr@spsmw.org](mailto:provctr@spsmw.org) or [www.spsmw.org/event](http://www.spsmw.org/event).

**May 7-9**  
Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guest House and Retreat Center, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **The Jesus Prayer**, Benedictine Brother Zachary Wilberding presenting, \$255 single, \$425 double. Information: 812-357-6585 or [mzoeller@saintmeinrad.edu](mailto:mzoeller@saintmeinrad.edu). †

## VIPs

Announcements for couples celebrating 50, 55, 60, 65, 70 or more years of marriage are accepted. Go to [bit.ly/2M4MQms](http://bit.ly/2M4MQms) or call 317-236-1585.



**Leonard and Catherine (Martin) Eckstein**, members of St. Louis Parish in Batesville, will celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary on April 18. The couple was married in St. Anthony Church in Morris on April 18, 1959. They have six children: Mary Gehring, Margaret Suding, Anthony, Daniel, Leonard and Timothy Eckstein. The couple also has 14 grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren. †



**James and Jeanne (Huesing) Huser**, members of Holy Name of Jesus Parish in Beech Grove, will celebrate their 70th wedding anniversary on April 30. The couple was married in St. Philip Neri Church in Indianapolis on April 30, 1949. They have 10 children: Maureen Bogard, Marilyn Haywood, Jean O'Gara, Mary Huser Stewart, Chris, Gerry, Jim, Joe, John and Terry Huser. The couple also has 41 grandchildren, 81 great-grandchildren and two great-great-grandchildren. The couple will celebrate with a Mass and reception. †

## Catholic Charities Terre Haute's new foodbank to open with blessing by Archbishop Thompson on April 29

All are invited to attend a blessing of the new Catholic Charities Terre Haute Foodbank building by Archbishop Charles C. Thompson at 430 N. 14 1/2 St., in Terre Haute, on April 29 from 5-7 p.m.

The event will include a ribbon-cutting ceremony and open house. The mayor and other officials will be on hand to mark the completion of this project, which will double the size of the foodbank.

Ucabbi will provide shuttle service

from the parking lot north of Catholic Charities' Bethany House at 14th and Locust streets in Terre Haute beginning at 4:30 p.m. and will run through the end of the open house.

Guests are encouraged to arrive early and take advantage of the shuttle to and from the new foodbank warehouse.

For more information, contact Jennifer Buell, Catholic Charities Terre Haute's development director, at 812-232-1447, ext. 7107. †

## 'Drawing the World' art exhibit at Saint Meinrad Archabbey runs through May 12

"Drawing the World" is the theme of an exhibit by artist Kathryn Waters at the Saint Meinrad Archabbey Library Gallery, 200 Hill Drive, in St. Meinrad, through May 12.

An Evansville, Ind., native, Waters' works reflect her love of drawing and the subjects and themes that she has explored over the years. It includes landscapes, archetypal American scenes and still life.

Her work has been exhibited at the regional and national levels, including

Mind, Spirit: 12 Contemporary Indiana Women Artists at the National Museum of Women in the Arts in Washington, D.C.

The exhibit is free and open to the public. Those wishing to view the exhibit may want to arrive at least 30 minutes before closing time.

For library hours, call 812-357-6401 or 800-987-7311, or visit the Archabbey Library's website at [www.saintmeinrad.edu/library/hours](http://www.saintmeinrad.edu/library/hours). †

## 'Catholics Returning Home' to be offered at SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi Parish starting on April 30

An ongoing series called "Catholics Returning Home" will be offered in the Junipero Serra Room of SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi Parish, 5901 Olive Branch Road, in Greenwood, on six consecutive Tuesday evenings from 7-8:30 p.m. beginning on April 30.

These sessions are for non-practicing Catholics who are seeking answers to questions about returning to the Church. There will be informal sharing and an update on the Catholic faith.

For more information, call 317-859-4673, ext. 119 or e-mail [jburiemek@ss-fc.org](mailto:jburiemek@ss-fc.org). †

## All-school reunion for former St. Ann School in Terre Haute set for May 11

Students of the former St. Ann School, located at 14th and Locust streets in Terre Haute, are invited to an all-school reunion at Collett Park Pavilion, 7th and Maple Ave., in Terre Haute, from 11:30 a.m.-3 p.m. on May 11.

Attendees should bring a lawn chair, beverages (non-alcoholic) and a snack to share.

For information, contact Dena (Brown) Samm at 812-449-4122, Sharon (Klotz) Clark at 812-466-5029 or Joe McKee at 812-249-9021. †

# Book shares stories of key figures in Cristero War in 1920s

Reviewed by Sean Gallagher

It may surprise many Catholics living in the U.S. today that less than 100 years ago, dozens of clergy and laity were killed for their faith just across the southern border in Mexico.

In a secularist persecution, the Mexican government seized Church property, closed Catholic schools and sent nearly the entire Mexican episcopate into exile, mostly to San Antonio, Texas. The few who stayed continued to minister on the run, living in hiding.

The height of this persecution in 1920s also saw the first large-scale immigration of Mexicans to the U.S., nearly 250,000 fleeing during the period for safety and the freedom to practice their faith.

By 1926, the intensity of the persecution was sharp enough that the Mexican bishops suspended all public worship across the country as of Aug. 1 of that year.



Msgr. James Murphy

Within a few months, large groups of Mexican Catholics had had enough and led an armed rebellion against their persecutors in a civil war known as the *Cristiada*. The *Cristero* fighters, as they were known, had as their battle cry, “*Viva Cristo Rey!*” (“Long live Christ the King!”)

Although the story of the *Cristiada* was told in part in the 2012 movie *For Greater Glory*, it did not draw large audiences.

A new book by Msgr. James Murphy of the Diocese of Sacramento, Calif., has the potential to open the eyes of contemporary readers to the fierceness of a persecution against the Church not so long ago and far away, and the courage and holiness shown by many Mexican Catholics in response to it.

*Saints and Sinners in the Cristero War: Stories of Martyrdom from Mexico*, with a forward by Archbishop Jose H. Gomez of Los Angeles, was published earlier this year by Ignatius Press.

Msgr. Murphy, who is now retired, earned a master’s degree in journalism from the University of California, Berkeley, and served as his diocese’s

communications director, the managing editor of its newspaper and pastor of three bilingual parishes. He also founded the first Spanish-language diocesan newspaper in the U.S. in 1979.

While the stories he tells of the saints and sinners of the Cristero War are compelling, Msgr. Murphy does so in the broader context of the rebellion as a whole, the history of Mexico that led up to it and how it was ultimately resolved, largely through the efforts of the U.S. ambassador to Mexico and an American priest.

Msgr. Murphy’s book is particularly relevant to the faithful in central and southern Indiana.

Many Mexicans who have immigrated to the U.S. and live in the archdiocese came from Jalisco, a state in west-central Mexico where the anti-Catholic persecution and the resulting Cristero War were especially fierce.

And the many members of the Knights of Columbus in the archdiocese belong to a Catholic fraternal organization that made great efforts in the 1920s to raise awareness of Americans of the persecution south of the border and to move American government leaders to persuade their Mexican counterparts to bring it to an end.

Some of the saints Msgr. Murphy portrayed have been either beatified or canonized: Blessed Miguel Pro, St. Toribio Romo and Blessed Anacleto González Flores.

St. Toribio has an interesting contemporary relevance for many Hispanics who have immigrated to the U.S. across the southern border.

Msgr. Murphy recounts how many immigrants who were in danger of death in desert areas around the border encountered a man in black who led them to safety. When leaving them, he invited them to visit him in his hometown of Santa Ana in Jalisco.

When they traveled there, they discovered at the shrine of St. Toribio an image of the priest who was martyred in 1928 and canonized in 2000 that looked just like the man in black who had saved their lives.

Others have not yet been recognized as saints. They include Archbishop Francisco Orozco y Jiménez of Guadalajara and the many largely nameless members of the Women’s

Brigade, who went to great lengths and braved many dangers to bring material support to the fighters.

Among the sinners described by Msgr. Murphy are many Mexican government leaders of the time, including President Plutarco Elías Calles and Tomás Garrido Canabal, governor at the time of Tabasco, a state in southern Mexico where the persecution of the Church was particularly brutal.

But he also includes a priest among the sinners: Father José Reyes Vega, a priest of the Guadalajara Archdiocese who took up arms in the Cristero War directly against the orders of Archbishop Orozco who, while suffering great persecution himself, was wholly opposed to violent resistance to the government.

Father Vega, who became a general in the Cristero army, easily made it to the list of sinners for several reasons, not the least of which included his ordering of an attack on a train thought to be carrying a shipment of gold and money in which 51 civilians died.

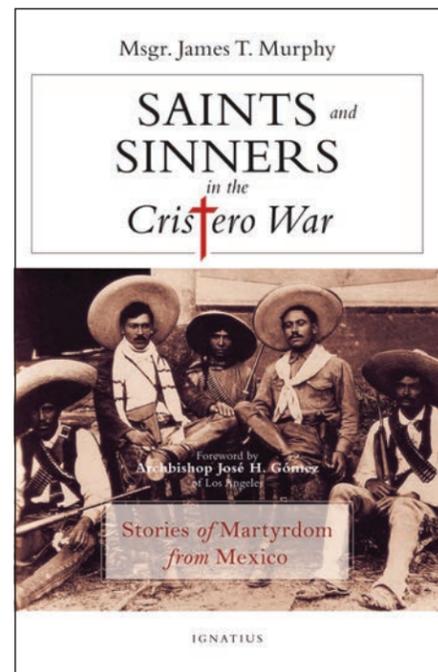
The Cristero War did not end with a culminating battlefield victory by either side in the struggle. By 1929, the two sides had fought to a stalemate, even though government troops were easily superior to the ragtag Cristeros in numbers and armaments.

The conflict—and the heightened persecution that brought it about—came to an end in 1929 largely through the intervention of Dwight Morrow, who served as U.S. ambassador to Mexico, and Paulist Father John Burke, who earlier led the effort to start what later became the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

In particular, it was the positive working relationship that Father Burke built with President Calles, despite the latter’s strong anti-Catholicism, that paved the way for peace.

Msgr. Murphy describes well the careful diplomatic tightrope walked by Morrow and Father Burke. Even though such details can be dry for many readers, Msgr. Murphy recounts them in ways that keeps their attention.

The entire lack of involvement of the Mexican bishops in the secretive peace process until close to its end, and then only in a limited manner, suggests an approach to theology in marked contrast to that commonly held today.



Msgr. James Murphy’s book, *Saints and Sinners in the Cristero War: Stories of Martyrdom from Mexico*, shares the stories of some of the people who were involved in Mexico’s war in the 1920s, many who were killed because of their faith.

Since at least the Second Vatican Council, the theological understanding of the Church has emphasized a communion among all the faithful. From this is understood that, while the bishop of Rome is still recognized as the universal shepherd of the Church, all bishops form with him a college of co-equals, serving (in most cases) as the chief shepherd of their local Church.

Such an understanding of the episcopate seemed wholly absent in Father Burke’s peace efforts in which the Mexican bishops were largely kept in the dark and on the sidelines.

At the start of his book, Msgr. Murphy explained that he was motivated to write *Saints and Sinners of the Cristero War* in part because of a lack of works in English that tell the stories of key figures in the struggle.

That hole has now been ably filled by Msgr. Murphy who tells English-language audiences the compelling stories of these men and women in the broader context of Mexican history.

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



## Birthday celebration

Father Todd Riebe, pastor at Christ the King Parish in Indianapolis, celebrated Mass at Kesslerwood Place in Indianapolis on March 25, recognizing Agnes (Barton) Brake’s 102nd birthday. Brake is the daughter of two Irish immigrants. Dennis Barton was from Kerry, and his wife Nora was from Galway. Brake raised seven children with her late husband Bill, and has been a member of St. Joan of Arc Parish in Indianapolis for the last 71 years. (Submitted photo)

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## FAITH

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### 'It shook my faith'

During that time, Schmitt felt a loneliness she had never experienced before, a feeling that often left her in tears.

Part of it was the physical pain from the emergency C-section that was needed to deliver her son, and the several hours of efforts to save her life following the loss of five liters of blood from her body.

Yet it was an even deeper spiritual pain that troubled her—the feeling that God had abandoned her for the first time in her life.

"It shook my faith," she says. "I used to feel God was with me. I didn't feel his presence. I didn't understand why that happened. I couldn't understand why I couldn't take care of my children. It was a long recovery.

"Through the divorce and other things, I always felt God was giving me a lesson, a next step, a way to show my children you could go on to the next thing."

She pauses before referring to the near-death moment. "I didn't know what lesson I had to learn from that."

Prayer had always helped her before, especially when her first husband had left their family.

"Ever since I became a mother, whether I'm under stress or joyful, I pray the Hail Mary," she says. "A sense of calm comes over me, and the answers come to me. I distinctly remember sitting in the rocking chair next to the Christmas tree in 2007. I prayed the Hail Mary, and something just clicked. I said, 'I'm going back to school, and I'm going to med school.'"

She chose Indianapolis for two reasons. It moved her closer to her parents and her best friend, her brother Dan. The city also had colleges and a medical school—Indiana University School of Medicine—so she wouldn't have to move her family again, she reasoned.

It happened just as she had planned—almost.

She graduated with a bachelor's degree in biology from Marian University in Indianapolis in 2013. Yet instead of entering IU's medical school, she entered Marian's new School of Osteopathic Medicine in 2014.

The dream was in reach until the nightmare of nearly dying rocked her world and her faith. During that time, even her prayers didn't help. Yet a touch of providence did.

### 'There must be something more here for you to do'

One of the best friends that Schmitt has made during medical school is Providence

Sister Arrienne Whitaker, who is following her dream of being a religious sister and a medical doctor.

Sister Arrienne helped to comfort Schmitt during her time of recovery and her crisis of faith. She is also the one who helped Schmitt see that God hadn't abandoned her.

"She helped me recover emotionally, mentally and spiritually," Schmitt recalls. "Arienne said, 'Well, he *didn't* take you away. There must be something more here for you to do.'"

That purpose began to unfold for Schmitt during the medical rotations she has done to help her decide which specialty was the right one for her future as a doctor. The more patients she dealt with, the more she realized that her own time of pain, suffering and doubt helped her better connect with them and care for them.

"Because I had gone through something major, it makes me have more compassion for my patients," she says. "A lot of patients think doctors are better than them. This brings me down to my patients. I know how they're feeling."

Her rotations included one in the family practice medicine unit at IU Health's Methodist Hospital in Indianapolis—the same unit where she delivered her seventh child, the same unit that she credits with saving her life following the delivery.

So when it came time for the Marian medical students who will be graduating this year to list their potential "matches" for a residency next year, Schmitt placed the family practice medicine unit at Methodist at the top of her list.

"I love taking care of kids. I love taking care of the elderly. I love to take care of newborns and families. In family practice, I can do all of that."

On March 15, an ecstatic Schmitt learned she had received her first choice. Her thoughts quickly turned to God.

"I thought, 'OK, this is where you want me to be. This is what you want me to do.'"

She pauses before adding, "I try to lead my life with my faith. I try to listen to that voice where God says, 'This is why you're here.'"

### 'No dream is too big'

As graduation nears, Schmitt sometimes looks back and marvels at the challenges she's overcome to get into medical school and get through it.

She also understands why some people say it would have been easier for her to take on this dream in her twenties instead of as a 40-something mother of seven.

Yet in her heart, Schmitt believes that she couldn't have made it through medical school without her husband Bryan and

English, so we're able to help the students with homework," Yan says. "When I see the kids smiling and doing their homework, it's just so joyful to me. And I like seeing the joy of the parents when they tell me that their kid's grades are improving. That keeps me going."

Yan also works as a teacher's aide at St. Mark School, focusing on the Burmese students. He has also volunteered at a legal clinic, helping serve as an interpreter for Burmese people applying for permanent residency.

Yan views all these efforts as a way of "paying back" for all the agencies that have helped his family resettle in the United States, including the assistance of Catholic Charities in helping his parents find jobs.

Yan's admirers say he represents the spirit of Catholic Charities.

"It would be exceptionally difficult to find a person who so genuinely has exemplified the Catholic Charities' mission of serving the vulnerable in the community without anything in return," notes Julie Albertson, St. Mark's director of youth ministry. "The vast amount of people from all ages and backgrounds that Yan has given so much time and love to is such a gift to the Indianapolis community."



The seven children of Ann Schmitt are all smiles on Christmas morning in 2018. (Submitted photo)

her children—Corrina, 20, Madeline, 18, Sydney, 16, twins Audrey and Joseph, 14, Benjamin, 13, and Nathan, now 3.

"It was a hard adjustment being in medical school," she says. "I don't know if I would have been able to do this without their support."

At the same time for Schmitt, becoming a doctor still doesn't match what she will always consider as the most important role in her life—being a mother.

"I have always looked at my kids as a gift. They're what has driven me. I knew I couldn't feel sorry for myself when my first husband left. For whatever reason, God entrusted me with these kids, and it's up to me to show them how to go on, that even when things are bad, they're not *that* bad. Having the support of family is the most important thing in your life."

Her husband Bryan says, "There have been challenges, and she worries that she doesn't spend enough time with the kids, but overall it's been good for the family. Family is the motivation for her. She not only wants to provide for the kids, she wants to set an example for them. The kids will be able to see that hard work pays off."

No one has had a more front-row view of Schmitt's journey during the past 12 years than her oldest child, Corrina.

"Growing up watching her, she's one of the main reasons I'm not afraid to pursue my dreams—that no dream is too big, no matter what your circumstances," says Corrina, a sophomore at Butler

University in Indianapolis. "She's the reason I'm pushing myself so hard in college.

"I don't know how in the world she does what she does. She's always busy, but not too busy for us. It's amazing what she has done—going to undergrad, going to med school, and now she's graduating. I'm sure there will be a lot of happy tears that day from all of us."

### 'My relationship with God has changed'

Schmitt even extends her definition of family to include friends from Marian's med school, such as being a sister to a Sister.

"There have been rough patches for both of us, and she's always been there for me in those moments," Sister Arrienne says. "She'll often send me videos of Nathan doing something silly when I most need it.

"From day one, I was just so amazed by her spirit and determination. She's been through so much in her life. I count myself lucky I got to meet her. I know we'll be great friends throughout life."

There's one other relationship that has deepened for Schmitt during her time in med school.

"My relationship with God has changed a lot," she says. "It's changed for the better. I've always felt close to him since I was little. Now I trust him more. It feels like a partnership. He's given me the strength to do this." †

## SPIRIT

continued from page 1

know English, but because we are a small school, they were able to help us, which was nice."

Another quality of St. Mark School also made an impact on him.

"At first, I didn't want to go to a Catholic school. But then I saw the great aspect of it. I learned about the Catholic religion, and I was able to go to Mass. Looking back, I grew from those experiences. It strengthened my faith."

It also strengthened his resolve to make a difference during his years as a student at Roncalli High School in Indianapolis. Even while being involved in the theater and fine arts programs at Roncalli, he served as an English instructor for younger Burmese children in his free time.

That volunteer commitment has continued while he's a college student at Marian University in Indianapolis. He's the after-school program coordinator for Hope for Tomorrow, an organization on the south side of Indianapolis that helps Burmese children with their homework and their language proficiency.

"Most of their parents don't speak

Yan considers it a gift to be in the United States and Indianapolis.

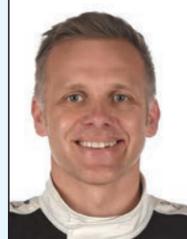
"It's amazing to be able to speak your mind and worship the way you want to," he says. "We have so many great things that have happened to us here. But there are so many potentials our Burmese community has, too. I'm

trying to lift that up in any way I can."

(The Criterion will feature Spirit of Service Award recipient James Morris in our April 26 issue. Robert "Lanny" Rossman was featured in a March 29 story. Liz Stanton was featured in an April 5 issue.) †

## IndyCar driver Ed Carpenter to speak at Spirit of Service Awards Dinner

IndyCar driver Ed Carpenter will be the keynote speaker during the Spirit of Service Awards Dinner in Indianapolis on April 30.



Ed Carpenter

The dinner benefits Catholic Charities Indianapolis, which this year is marking 100 years of helping people in need in the archdiocese. The dinner will be held at the Indiana Roof Ballroom, 140 W. Washington St., in Indianapolis. Doors open at 6 p.m. and the evening's festivities begin at 6:30 p.m.

Four individuals will be honored

with Spirit of Service Awards during the event: Liz Stanton of St. Luke the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis, Yan Yan of St. Mark the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis, Robert "Lanny" Rossman of St. Agnes Parish in Nashville and St. Barnabas Parish in Indianapolis, and James Morris, vice chairman of Pacers Sports & Entertainment.

Individual tickets are available for \$250 while tables of eight are available for \$800. There are also opportunities to help sponsor the event.

For tickets, visit [www.archindy.org/cc/indianapolis](http://www.archindy.org/cc/indianapolis). For information, contact Cheri Bush at [cbush@archindy.org](mailto:cbush@archindy.org) or 317-236-1411. †

# After unrest and anger, new archbishop wants to rebuild trust

HYATTSVILLE, Md. (CNS)—Archbishop Wilton D. Gregory, set to become the new head of the Archdiocese of Washington, promised to serve with truth, love and tenderness in a region where he acknowledged “unrest and anger,” after the downfall of former Washington Cardinal Theodore E. McCarrick and the Church’s current sex-abuse scandal.

“I want to offer you hope. I will rebuild your trust,” Archbishop Gregory said during an April 4 news conference. “I cannot undo the past, but I sincerely believe that together we will not merely address the moments we’ve fallen short or failed outright, but we will model for all the life and teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ and we will reclaim the future for our families, for those who will follow us. That is my greatest, indeed, it is my only aspiration.”

Archbishop Gregory was introduced to media gathered for the announcement at the Archdiocese of Washington’s pastoral center in Hyattsville by Cardinal Donald W. Wuerl. Pope Francis accepted Cardinal Wuerl’s resignation as Washington’s archbishop in October and named him apostolic administrator. The cardinal, now 78, had submitted his resignation, as is mandatory, to the pope when he turned 75, but it had not been accepted until last fall.

Cardinal Wuerl had faced pressure to resign following an Aug. 14, 2018, grand jury report detailing past sexual abuse claims in six Pennsylvania dioceses, which showed a mixed record of how he handled some of the cases when he was bishop in Pittsburgh from 1988 until 2006.

Cardinal Wuerl also recently faced questions about what and when he knew about past accusations involving McCarrick, who was stripped by Vatican officials of his clerical status on Feb. 16 after months of accusations that he may have sexually molested minors and abused seminarians at various times and places in his 60 years in ordained ministry.

Cardinal Wuerl remains apostolic administrator until the scheduled May 21 installation of Archbishop Gregory, who offered kind words for his predecessor while acknowledging shortcomings.

“It’s difficult to come into a situation where there is unrest and anger,”

Archbishop Gregory said. “I’ve known Donald Wuerl for over 40 years. He is a gentleman. He works very hard for the Church. He’s acknowledged that he’s made mistakes. That’s a sign of the integrity of a man. If I can shed light on what I think we need to do in response to some of the mistakes that he’s acknowledged and asked forgiveness for, I’ll do that.”

As he begins his tenure in Washington, following a 14-year stint in Atlanta, Archbishop Gregory said he wants to spend time “in the field.”

“For the foreseeable time, I’m not going to spend too much time in the office,” he said. “I have to be in the parishes, I have to meet with my priests. Why? Because I can’t be their archbishop if I don’t give them an opportunity to tell me what’s in their hearts, to come to know me and to establish a bond.”

He said he wanted to communicate to them his support, affection and yearning to work for Catholics of the region. He acknowledged that Washington, as the country’s seat of political power, may ask for political savvy from its archbishop.

“I see this appointment to be the pastor of the Archdiocese of Washington. I was not elected to Congress, and so I intend to speak and promote the Church’s moral and doctrinal teaching that comes with the job. But I think my involvement with the political engines that run here has to be reflected through that prism,” he said. “I’m here as pastor. The pastor must speak about those things that are rooted in the Gospel, but I’m not going to be at the negotiating tables. That’s not my place. My place is in the pews with my people.”

Archbishop Gregory, 71, who will become the first African-American to head the Washington Archdiocese, fielded questions about civil rights icon the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., how he would handle dissatisfaction in the pews, about him becoming Catholic when he was a teenager, and about clericalism and its role in the sex-abuse scandal. He spoke of advice he had received from a priest before he went to study in Rome.

The priest told him that if he went to Rome, he would face three temptations.

“You will face the temptation for self-aggrandizement, temptation for pleasure and the temptation for power,” Archbishop Gregory recalled. “And he said the most



Cardinal Donald W. Wuerl, retired archbishop of Washington, who has been apostolic administrator of the archdiocese, looks on as Archbishop Wilton D. Gregory speaks during a news conference in the pastoral center at the Archdiocese of Washington on April 4 after Pope Francis named him to head the archdiocese. Archbishop Gregory had headed the Atlanta Archdiocese since 2005. (CNS photo/Bob Roller)

damaging temptation and seductive is that for power. And I think so much of what we are facing now was a misuse of power, an abuse of power, clerical power. Power that was [used] in too many cases to dominate and destroy lives.”

In some cases, clericalism manifested itself by “circling the wagons, so the episcopacy wouldn’t call one another to task,” he said.

“I think this moment has shown the folly of that approach to episcopal governance and episcopal collegiality,” he said.

And while “technical and structural responses” are necessary to combat the abuse scandal the Church is facing, “they alone will never heal the heart of our people,” he said.

In the Archdiocese of Washington, which he called “home to the poor and the powerful,” he promised transparency and truth and said that during a time when the Church had given the people in the pews many reasons to leave, “I want to give them a few reasons to stay.”

“I want to assure the people that I will be honest with them,” he said. “I’m an ordinary human being, and I have to acknowledge those things that I simply can’t handle perfectly or even at all, but I always have to tell you the truth. And that’s been a theme here. I have to tell you the truth, and I will.”

Rebuilding trust during a moment fraught with challenges throughout the Church is not an easy task, he said, but added that he would rely on the grace of God to do so at the local level.

“When my service to you has ended, you will know I came to serve you with love, truth and tenderness in the name of the Lord Jesus,” he said.

Catholic Church chronicler Rocco Palmo, who writes the popular blog “Whispers in the Loggia,” was sitting in the press area for the announcement. He called the archbishop the “healer-in-chief” and a calming presence, who would serve well the uneasy waters of Washington.

On the day of the announcement, Sister Patricia Chappell, executive director of the Washington-based Pax Christi USA, who has worked with Archbishop Gregory on various initiatives in the past, said “there’s good news today.”

“We’re rejoicing,” she said in a phone interview with Catholic News Service.

Sister Patricia, a member of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, said that with his penchant for transparent communication and accountability, “I’m hoping we can move through this.”

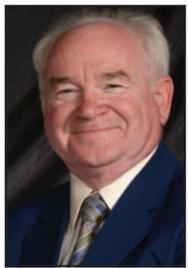
“We welcome and congratulate him,” she said. “Our prayers and support are with him as he provides reconciliation and healing to a Church deeply wounded.” †

## ICC

continued from page 1

this will make Indiana a very attractive place—a magnet—for pro-life health care professionals.”

The landmark *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court decision in 1973 paved the way for unfettered access to all types of abortions, including the method that House Bill 1211 now prohibits, except in cases



Glenn Tebbe

where a physician “reasonably believes” that performing the procedure is necessary to prevent serious health risks to the mother or to save her life. Dismemberment abortion, also known as dilation and evacuation

(D&E) abortion, is a particularly brutal procedure that occurs in the second trimester of pregnancy, when the first-trimester methods—suction abortion and the abortion pill—are no longer possible because of the unborn child’s growing size.

“It’s tragic that it took 46 years to get to this point, but House Bill 1211 will immediately save lives in Indiana and could in the long term be a vehicle for bringing about the end of *Roe v. Wade*,” Fichter said.

That’s because the American Civil Liberties Union and Planned Parenthood, the nation’s leading provider of abortions, have vowed to challenge the bill upon its passage. Fichter said he is encouraged by the “more conservative nature of the Supreme Court” today as legal challenges to

legislation like this make their way through the court system.



Sen. Liz Brown

“We can expect a lawsuit, and Indiana should not be afraid of that suit,” Fichter said. “We are on very solid constitutional ground.”

Glenn Tebbe of the ICC described the passage of House Bill 1211 and Senate Bill 201 by both chambers of the General Assembly as a “monumental step forward” for the pro-life cause in Indiana.

“There is nothing more important than protecting the sanctity of human life, and this groundbreaking legislation speaks volumes about the values that the majority of people in this state hold dear,” said Tebbe, executive director of the ICC, the public policy arm of the Catholic Church in Indiana.

Tebbe applauded the efforts of the lawmakers who brought the legislation forward. Sen. Liz Brown (R-Fort Wayne) was the primary author of Senate Bill 201, which she has described as essential to updating the state’s quarter-century-old conscience protection laws. In particular, she



Rep. Peggy Mayfield

has cited the 2000 launch of RU-486, the so-called “abortion pill,” as a driving force for extending conscience protection beyond doctors and hospital employees to nurses,

pharmacists and physician assistants.

House Bill 1211 was authored by Rep. Peggy Mayfield (R-Martinsville), Rep. Ben Smaltz (R-Auburn) and Rep. Christy Stutzman (R-Middlebury). If Gov. Holcomb signs the legislation, Indiana will join 10 other states in banning



Rep. Ben Smaltz

dismemberment abortion, which is considered the method of choice to terminate a pregnancy after the first trimester.

“Many people think abortion is a tidy little procedure that’s simple and safe,” said Mayfield, the bill’s lead author. “When I had to explain dismemberment abortion in our caucus, I tried to avoid the graphic nature of it, but it was impossible. There were people who had their heads in their hands as they listened to the details.”

The legislation’s passage comes at a pivotal time, as the movie *Unplanned*—which shines a light on the inner workings of the abortion industry—is exceeding all expectations at the box office. The film chronicles the true story of Abby Johnson, a former Planned Parenthood clinic director, who fled the organization after being asked to assist with an ultrasound-guided abortion and witnessing a 13-week-old fetus fight against the instruments used in the procedure.

“All of a sudden, she said the scales fell from her eyes,” said Jodi Smith, a lobbyist for Indiana Right to Life and a personal friend of Johnson. “For the first time, she saw the baby behind the procedure.”

Smith texted Johnson—now an outspoken pro-life advocate—to congratulate her before the film’s March 29 nationwide release. Its unexpected success at the box office speaks to the power of the pro-life movement at the grassroots level, according to Smith.

Indiana Right to Life affiliates drew significant crowds to theaters around the state for preview screenings ahead of the movie’s official opening, as well as in the days that followed. Smith says that the film could not have come at a better time given the momentum at the Statehouse.

“Indiana is ripe for this legislation,” said Smith, who also serves as state director of the Susan B. Anthony List, a national organization that supports pro-life lawmakers and educates Americans about where their



Rep. Christy Stutzman

legislators stand on protecting the unborn. “I’m so proud and so excited that Indiana is finally taking these bold steps.”

To follow priority legislation of the ICC, visit [www.indianacc.org](http://www.indianacc.org). This website includes access to I-CAN, the Indiana Catholic Action

Network, which offers the Church’s position on key issues. Those who sign up for I-CAN receive alerts on legislation moving forward and ways to contact their elected representatives.

(Victoria Arthur, a member of St. Malachy Parish in Brownsburg, is a correspondent for The Criterion.) †

# Priest who ministers at Medjugorje shares Mary's message of love

By Jennifer Lindberg  
Special to *The Criterion*

He asked the Blessed Mother to never allow him to lapse from his Catholic faith again. She took him at his word, leading him to change his white coat of an emergency room doctor for the white habit of a Dominican priest.

Dominican Father Leon Pereira spoke at St. John the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis on March 7 about the love the Virgin Mary has for all her children, and about how the “Five Stones and Five Messages of Our Lady” helps one in their spiritual life.

Father Leon was only a 20-year-old army private when he heard the Virgin Mary speak to him. Growing up in Singapore with his Indian parents, he was required to do a mandatory stint in the army in Singapore, which led to a spinal injury. While recuperating, he traveled to Medjugorje.

“I am your mother, the Mother of God,” Father Leon said he heard while in Medjugorje. “Tell everyone you meet that I am their mother, and that I love them.”

“When she said this,” Father Leon said, “you felt immediately how she loved you. Watching her was to be loved by her. She made me feel how she loves everyone like you are her only child.”

Father Leon, the official chaplain for all English-speaking pilgrims in Medjugorje, says he owes his priesthood to Medjugorje, a village in Bosnia where many believe that the Virgin Mary has been appearing for the past 38 years. While the Church has not declared the apparitions to be of supernatural origin, a Vatican commission voted in 2017 in favor of recognizing the first seven apparitions that occurred in 1981.

That same year, Pope Francis appointed Archbishop Henryk Hoser of Poland as a papal envoy to Medjugorje. In December 2017, Archbishop Hoser declared that parishes and diocese were permitted to lead official pilgrimages to the site.

Father Rick Nagel, pastor of St. John the Evangelist Parish, said Father Leon’s talk was to “provide hope and light, especially in our time for our Church.”

Father Leon was traveling on a six-state tour with the message that he said the Virgin Mary asked him to convey. Sharing his experience, he described

seeing the Virgin Mary on Cross Mountain in Medjugorje.

“She looks very young,” he said. “Small, petite. She wore a veil on her head that hung straight down. It did not droop over her shoulders. It was a very simple dress; her hand had the palms facing upward like the Immaculate Conception pose.”

The priest said everything about her was “golden and gleaming.” It wasn’t until he was in St. James Church in Medjugorje that he said he heard the Virgin Mary speak to him and give him instructions to tell everyone of her love.

While he tells this story as Our Lady asked, Father Leon wants to deflect attention from himself.

“What I really want to talk about is the context of the Five Stones,” he said, referring to five means of conversion. “There is nothing special about me.”

It took many years for Father Leon to fulfill this mission or tell anyone of his experience. It was so overwhelming, he said, that he hesitated to even mention it. In England, while studying to be a doctor, people would make fun of Medjugorje and he would laugh with them, he said. But that encounter in Medjugorje never left him, making everything else he wanted to do with his life seem insignificant in comparison.

Leaving the medical world, he was ordained as a Dominican friar of the order’s English province. He served as prior and parish priest of Holy Cross Priory in Leicester, England, and as subprior of St. Dominic’s Priory in London. He also taught moral theology in England to seminarians at Blackfriars at Oxford University and at Oscott College in Birmingham. In 2015, Father Leon was appointed the chaplain for English-speaking pilgrims in Medjugorje.

In Medjugorje, he has lived the five stones way that he preaches about. The five stones are named after the ones David picked up to slay Goliath in the Old Testament. These stones are “weapons Our Lady gives us to aid in our conversion,” said Father Leon.

Those stones are: praying with the heart, holy Mass, reading the holy Bible, fasting and confession.

Father Leon said we often pray for what we think we should—such as for world peace—but we often don’t tell God what is in our hearts and what we really need. He said praying from the



Dominican Father Leon Pereira, chaplain to the English-speaking pilgrims at Medjugorje poses on March 7 with Father Rick Nagel, pastor of St. John the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis. (Submitted photo by Jennifer Lindberg)

heart also involves praying the rosary every day, noting that in Medjugorje, Our Lady asked for the joyful, sorrowful and glorious mysteries to be prayed every day.

“This is only 45 minutes out of your day,” he said.

“The rosary is a time machine,” Father Leon said. “When you pray the third mystery of the joyful mystery, you are getting the power of that first Christmas that comes to you now as you pray the third joyful mystery. Exorcists will tell you that the demons hate the rosary. It weakens the demon’s power on this Earth.”

As for Mass, he told the story of a priest friend martyred in Iraq whose cause for canonization is before Pope Francis. His friend was told not to celebrate Mass or he would be killed.

“He told them, ‘Without the Mass, we cannot live,’ and they shot and killed him,” Father Leon said. “We need to understand the importance of the Mass.”

The Bible is to be in a place where you will read it, said Father Leon.

“We need to know the Bible better because it is our book,” he said. “If you read it every morning, you are stronger.”

Father Leon also encouraged his listeners to follow the ancient Christian

practice of fasting on Wednesday and Friday, which he said Mary likely would have done.

Lastly, he said our Lady asked for more frequent confession, at least once a month.

“She said whole regions would be converted if we went to confession once a month,” he said.

“Do you just wash your clothes on Easter and Christmas?” he asked. “So why not go to confession more regularly?”

Father Leon’s role as chaplain requires him to look after every English-speaking pilgrim to make sure they have Mass and confession properly. He reports to the Franciscans who oversee the parish church of St. James and to Archbishop Hoser, who now serves as apostolic visitor to St. James Parish in Medjugorje.

Father Leon said that living in Medjugorje and ministering to the pilgrim’s needs has taught him a deep truth: “To trust in divine Providence and in Our Lady and her care of me.”

(Jennifer Lindberg is a freelance writer and a member of St. Joseph Parish in Shelbyville.) †

## People can call Jesus at any moment; he is always there, pope says

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Everyone has a direct line to Jesus, who is always nearby, ready to listen and help, Pope Francis said.

“Jesus likes to see the truth of our heart. Don’t pretend in front of Jesus. With Jesus, always say what you are feeling,” he said during a visit to a Rome parish on April 7.

Pope Francis met with young people, newlyweds, volunteers, the sick, the elderly and other members of the parish of St. Julius in Rome before celebrating Mass in their newly restructured church, blessing and anointing the new altar.

Before Mass, he took time to listen to and answer parishioners’ questions, receive drawings and gifts as well

as celebrate the sacrament of reconciliation with three young people and a mother.

The pope said a young man had asked him if there was any truth to what his grandfather had told him, “that the pope, as successor of Peter, has Peter’s phone number and calls him.”

While the pope said he didn’t have St. Peter’s number, “We all have Jesus’ mobile phone number,” and all of us can connect with Jesus, who always has ‘good reception,’ always!”

“He always listens because he is so close to us,” which means he is always easy to find, the pope said. “He sees us, he loves us” and understands everything, he added.

Never be afraid to tell Jesus the truth, to get mad at him, to express your doubts and fears, the pope told young people.

Answering a question about what to do when faced with a crisis of faith, the pope said people must always seek the help of others—a parent, a friend, a catechist—as well as speak to Jesus.

A person should never stop talking to Jesus, even when they are angry with him because even “getting angry with Jesus can be a kind of praying.” He is always patient and will listen, he added.

The pope told a young catechist how important it was to help young people express and deal with doubt in a healthy and constructive way.

Otherwise, when young people receive their confirmation, the sacrament will become what some people in Rome call “the sacrament of farewell,” marking the end of the person’s active participation in Church life.

“They leave because they do not know how to handle doubt. Instead if you, as a leader, teach them to doubt well and look for solid, true answers, you will prepare them so confirmation will not be the ‘sacrament of farewell,’” he said. †

THE ST. AUGUSTINE GUILD PRESENTS

## HATS OFF TO SPRING

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ARCHDIOCESE OF INDIANAPOLIS  
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## Palm Sunday witnesses to the humility, humanity of Jesus

By Mary Marrocco

Not far from where I live is a donkey farm. It's highly popular because of the donkeys' beauty. Donkeys, often mistreated, have a gentleness that draws and heals people. The farm is a sanctuary for the donkeys, but also for the people.

When the Gospels were written, no therapeutic donkey sanctuaries existed, but the donkey was a common animal of service, humble and ordinary. The donkey who took part in Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem appears in every Gospel. All four evangelists show Jesus entering the holy city to a great welcome—riding, not a majestic horse that a king or warrior might ride, but a donkey.

In our day, it would be like a world leader, instead of coming on a private jet welcomed by military bands and ribboned officials, putt-putting in an old faithful station wagon. Like the pope rejecting fine limousines and driving a humble compact car.

The Church gives us this glimpse of Christ at the end and beginning of a special journey together. We are coming close to the end of Lent, the journey into the desert. We are beginning Holy Week, the end of which includes the solemn Easter triduum. To mark the end of the Lenten journey and the beginning of this year's Easter journey, we open our gates (like the people of ancient Jerusalem) to welcome Christ—and be surprised.

It's the perilous journey. And we are in it together.

Now, at Palm Sunday, it's time to be accounted for. It's time to take up something. Our Lenten journey has been mainly hidden. We've been meditating, praying, doing works of mercy in secret,

fasting in our own ways—trying, failing, trying again.

Now it's time to act, to take up palms and go out, as the people who welcomed Jesus did. They didn't stay home and watch him on their newsfeed. They went into the streets, picked palm branches and met him singing "Hosanna!"

Palm branches are reminiscent of victory parades. But more important, they point us to martyrdom, which means "witness." We are asked to witness to Christ, not only in inward, hidden ways, but also publicly with the way we live.

For some, this witness is even unto death. The Coptic Christians who were beheaded in 2015 by Islamic State militants are painted holding palms in their hands because they showed by their lives who Christ is. They met violence with love.

They remind us that being Christian is not just "all about me" and making myself a better person—though it does allow and challenge me to become more God-like. Christianity is also about bettering one's world, laying down one's life for others, and in this way following Christ.

We see today the joy of letting Christ in. He is welcomed with exultant joy and singing. How overjoyed we are to know God and to know that God loves us and will never disappear or give up on us.

We can't keep it in, so we have to go out to meet him waving green branches and singing to him.

It's so beautiful, so glorious, it bubbles to the surface and overflows for the whole city to see. We are welcoming God! More astonishing still, we are welcoming humanity.

The early Gospel commentators saw the donkey as a symbol of Christ's humanity, as with the donkey on which the good Samaritan placed the wounded



Father Jose Kentenich holds palm fronds as he rides a donkey during a Palm Sunday celebration outside Our Lady of Schoenstatt Sanctuary in Ypacarai, Paraguay. The donkey Jesus rode on his triumphal entry into Jerusalem expressed the humility of the Son of God in taking on a human nature. (CNS photo/Jorge Adorno, Reuters)

traveler. When we see Christ riding a donkey, we see God taking up humanity. Like the donkey, our humanity becomes a bearer of God. Christ enters into Jerusalem in a state of humility, because God enters the world carrying our humanity.

Ultimately, then, rejection of Jesus is not only rejection of God, but also of humanity, for Christ is truly human as well as truly God.

Why should we reject Jesus? Because it's not easy to be with him. To enter Jerusalem on a donkey, as he did, is not glorious like entering on a fine horse or a jet airplane. Jesus' donkey ride shows us that this is a journey of humility. It will make us a laughingstock.

This journey will lead us through who we truly are as human beings. Along this path, we will find God even in those parts of us that are most frightened to let God in, most resistant to being changed, most inclined to cling to power and fight back.

Today as we pick up our palms, we share our joy in Christ. At the same time, we pick up the cross. In the Byzantine liturgy of some of Eastern Catholic Churches, as the people pick up the palms they sing: "Today we all take up your cross."

As the perilous journey ends and begins, let's enter Holy Week together. Let's risk accepting the joy of welcoming both God and humanity. God will not disappear on us. He gives us the capacity to love, no matter what.

Let's not be ashamed of him or of our humanity, but claim them. Let's look for victory not in pomp and military might, but by way of humility, powerlessness, love and forgiveness. Here is true joy. Here is the way to meet the early dawn of Easter Sunday.

Let's be unafraid to wave the palm, to pick up the cross and to meet the new life that awaits.

(Mary Marrocco is a theologian, writer and practicing psychotherapist. She is involved in spiritual formation of seminarians and lay pastoral workers in Toronto, and founded St. Mary of Egypt Refuge, a place of hospitality and welcome for people in need. She is an ecumenist who specializes in the relationship between Eastern and Western Christianity.) †



A father and daughter wait for their palms to be blessed on Palm Sunday in Suchitoto, El Salvador. The palms used to greet Jesus in his triumphal entry into Jerusalem are a reminder that all believers are called to be witnesses to him in their daily lives. (CNS photo/Octavio Duran)

## Joyful Witness/Kimberly Pohovey

## Conversation leads to epiphany that we are kissed by God

I couldn't help but look at the beautiful little girl with the mop of curls happily sitting on the doughnut shop counter.



I'm sure her mother thought I was rude for staring.

Not wanting them to be self-conscious, I stepped closer and told Mom that I too had a large red birthmark on my face. Though mine is conspicuously

hidden on the side of my face, normally concealed by my choice of hairstyle, this little girl had one that covered her forehead and snaked down her nose. I showed the wiggly toddler mine. Then I told her mother what my own mom told me long ago.

When I was about 7 years old, I came home from school one day and burst into tears. My alarmed mom asked what was wrong. I told her that kids at school kept picking on me because of my birthmark, and said it looked like the side of my face was bleeding. There was name-calling

involved. I asked her why I had to have this mark.

My mom gathered me in her arms and told me that my birthmark was where God kissed me before I was born. "Really?" I said. And instantly I went from feeling inflicted to believing I was special.

Years later, my son was sitting on my lap and asked about my birthmark. Again, I shared with him what my mom said to me. Excitedly, he asked, "Did God kiss me, Mom?" Admittedly, I was trying to do some fast thinking since he doesn't have a birthmark. Before I could answer, he said, "I know, it's my double crown. Maybe God gave me the noogies before I was born!"

My younger son, not wanting to be left out, decided God must have used a Sharpie to make a dot on his thumb—a large mole he referred to as his "lucky freckle." And he, too, felt special.

Sometime later, I pondered our collective need to feel special in God's eyes. My mom simply told me a story to make me feel better, but the truth is, we are all marked by God. A verse in

Scripture tells us that God has "anointed us" (2 Cor 1:21) with his Holy Spirit.

In the Bible, being anointed means to be God's chosen one. You don't get any more special than being specifically chosen by God. Drenched with the Holy Spirit, we have been set apart for a special calling—to know, love and serve him. God has set us apart for himself—to act as caretakers, following him all our days, and standing firm in faith.

A verse from the prophet Jeremiah comes to mind: "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you" (Jer 1:5). How wonderful to think God knew us from before we were even born? I love the imagery of God leaning over to kiss me the way a parent does, his face full of love and the promise of my life ahead.

Perhaps we feel special because we came from him, we were molded in his image, and, after a faithful life of service, we trust that we will one day return to him.

(Kimberly Pohovey is a member of St. Jude Parish in Indianapolis. She is the director of mission advancement for Archdiocesan Education Initiatives.) †

Twenty Something/  
Christina Capecci

## Giving joyful witness: how the Holy Spirit stirs the restless

When Pope Francis talks about evangelization, his poster child may well be an immigrant in North Dakota.



Sister Brenda Hernandez Valdes, a 34-year-old Daughter of Immaculate Mary of Guadalupe, lives more than 1,500 miles from her home in Coahuila, Mexico, serving the sprawling Diocese of Bismarck, N.D., and ministering

to the Hispanics working in its booming oil industry.

Sister Brenda's smile embodies the pope's call for joyful missionary disciples: Her eyes disappear, and dimples appear at each upturned corner of her mouth. There is something magnetic about the small woman in the gray habit. She is Exhibit A for Pope Francis' apostolic exhortation "Evangelii Gaudium" ("The Joy of the Gospel") and a reminder for all Catholics of how to effectively evangelize.

Most of the Hispanics who relocated to North Dakota to work at an oil field are young. Some are only 18. Many are single; others are new parents. All are yearning for a sense of home.

Among the makeshift homes and temporary work, the early mornings and the English lessons, they are seeking something stable, something familiar. It is a more extreme version of a search we all undertake: the quest for something more.

Sister Brenda recognizes their quest, and Pope Francis names it. "The world of our time," he writes in "Evangelii Gaudium," is "searching, sometimes with anguish, sometimes with hope." The "desolation and anguish" of a secular life, he writes, offers an entryway for evangelists—for "the Holy Spirit works on restlessness."

When the restless meet Sister Brenda, her joy is irresistible. They can't help but wonder, "How do I get that? Where does that come from?"

These encounters are only possible because Sister Brenda has ventured "out on the streets," as Pope Francis put it, unafraid to get "bruised" and "dirty." For her, that means the Walmart parking lot, where she carries grocery bags and distributes fliers, extending a personal invitation to each shopper to join her for Mass.

She approaches with humility. She is not there to dispense wisdom. She believes she can learn even more than she'll teach.

That begins by listening, according to "Evangelii": "We need to practice the art of listening, which is more than simply hearing. Listening, in communication, is an openness of heart which makes possible that closeness without which genuine spiritual encounter cannot occur."

This enables Sister Brenda to enter into their world, because "an evangelizing community gets involved by word and deed in people's daily lives," Pope Francis writes.

For Sister Brenda, that begins by fielding questions about warmer jackets and better cell-phone plans.

"They approach the Church for different needs," she said. "Our people sacrifice a lot by living in small spaces, leaving their family or bringing it to live in extreme weather conditions."

She takes her time with each encounter, heeding one of the most practical tips in "Evangelii": "Evangelization consists mostly of patience and disregard for constraints of time."

The teenagers ask about her habit, and she talks freely, happily about religious life. Her message is bold: "Do not be afraid to open the doors to Christ!"

She encourages their parents, too. "It is very important to strengthen the

## Our Works of Charity/David Bethuram

## Catholic Charities plays role in homeless family's story of hope

(Editor's note: The name used in this column has been changed to protect the individual's privacy.)

"Laura" had a hard time keeping up with bills while trying to juggle a job and taking care of her kids while her husband



was incarcerated. She ended up losing her job because her car broke down, and she did not have the money to get it fixed. Then she and the children were evicted from their home.

There were no family members for her to

turn to that could help her and her children.

She talked to a friend and got their permission to allow them to sleep on their floor for a while. It was a tight fit and an uncomfortable living arrangement. The children were frightened and sad most of the time. Eventually, they had to leave because her friends were being threatened with an eviction due to Laura and her children staying there.

Unfortunately, Laura's story is far too common. As of January 2018, Indiana had an estimated 5,258 individuals experiencing homelessness on any given day, as reported by Continuums of Care to

the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Of that total, 481 were family households, 539 were veterans, 268 were unaccompanied young adults (ages 18-24), and 449 were individuals experiencing chronic homelessness.

Public school data reported to the U.S. Department of Education during the 2016-17 school year shows that an estimated 17,863 public school students experienced homelessness over the course of the year.

It can be argued that there are many more individuals and families that experience homelessness—depending on when the count is made and the time of year—but no one can argue that there are an incredible number of our neighbors of every age and background who are homeless.

Catholic Charities sees a variety of reasons why people like Laura and her children become homeless. Lack of housing that low-income people can afford is one of the primary causes. Without housing options, people face eviction, instability and homelessness. Low-income households often do not earn enough to pay for food, clothing, transportation and a place they can call home. Health problems can cause a person's homelessness as well as be exacerbated by the experience. Many survivors of domestic violence become homeless when leaving an abusive relationship.

Laura came to Catholic Charities for help. She and her children stayed in one of our shelters. While they were there, she was provided help with applying for assistance with affordable child care. She was still able to go to work at a local convenient store while working with an employment specialist to search for a job with a higher wage. Then we helped her with her resume, so she could pursue other employment opportunities that could lead to a career, not just a job. In addition, her children were able to continue to attend their school.

Last week, Laura came back to see us after she moved into her new home. She shopped at our food pantry and selected healthy food and fresh produce to take to her family. Laura starts a new job close to her kids' school and day care next week.

She told us that she and her children are a lot happier and more relaxed knowing they have a place and will continue to have a place to call home in a very welcoming neighborhood. They are settling in with routines and loving their new community. They are more hopeful than they have been in a very long time.

(David Bethuram is executive director of the archdiocesan Secretariat for Catholic Charities. E-mail him at [dbethuram@archindy.org](mailto:dbethuram@archindy.org).) †

## For The Journey/Effie Calderola

## We are encouraged to welcome the Lord by loving his world

Near the end of "Thirst," one of my favorite volumes of Mary Oliver's poetry, she speaks to the Lord in the epilogue:



"Love for the Earth and love for you are having such a long conversation in my heart."

When Oliver died in January, I felt a great loss, as if I would be no longer privy to that marvelous

conversation that has aided my own dialogue with the Lord and the Earth.

Her death provoked an outpouring of grief on social media. Oliver was America's best-selling poet, and tributes consisted of people reprinting her own words.

They alone would suffice, along with the occasional heartfelt comment, "I loved her."

A keen observer of the natural world, Oliver was a herald for our time, combining a love for nature with a quest for transcendence. She and Pope Francis are contemporary prophets of the environment, he with his well-researched

"Laudato Si", on Care for Our Common Home," she with her eye for the deer, the hummingbird, the sunflower and their meaning in our lives.

"My work is loving the world," she tells us in "Messenger."

She let us know what was important: "Are my boots old? Is my coat torn?/ Am I no longer young, and still not half-perfect? Let me/ keep my mind on what matters/ which is my work/ which is mostly standing still and learning to be astonished."

I am no longer young and certainly not half-perfect. Environmental calamity can keep me up at night. The recent "60 Minutes" reports on plastic filling our waterways horrified me. By 2050, at the present rate, there will be more plastic in our oceans than fish, and the breakdown of plastic results in seafood consuming that plastic. That delicious fillet of salmon you love? Enjoying the plastic micro-particles in it?

I rejoice when my parish commits to zero waste at celebrations and potlucks, contracting with the same company that composts paper and food waste for a local Catholic girls school. We wash utensils. We

carry canvas bags to the grocery store and our own reusable mugs to the coffee shop. We turn the heat down, bring reusable "doggy bag" carriers to restaurants, save and reuse bread wrappers.

We try to remain people of hope believing that through the cross we are ultimately people of resurrection.

Mary Oliver didn't talk about these practical steps.

Instead, in her poem "Making the House Ready for the Lord," she talked about the creatures of the natural world and said that when she welcomed them—the sparrow, the lost dog—she could tell the Lord, "really I am speaking to you whenever I say, as I do all morning and afternoon: Come in, Come in."

These early spring mornings, I keep my eye on the empty bird's nest that has perched all winter on a barren tree branch outside the window where I pray. Little birds visit, as if checking out a bird condo open house.

In the front yard, a rabbit has made a home in some bushes and thinks she is keeping this a secret from me.

Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord/Msgr. Owen F. Campion

# The Sunday Readings

Sunday, April 14, 2019

- Luke 19:28-40
- Isaiah 50:4-7
- Philippians 2:6-11
- Luke 22:14-23:56

The Church this weekend leads us to the climax of Lent, the observance of Holy Week, by offering the impressive liturgy of Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord.

Recalling the triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, for St. Luke the utter apex of the entire ministry of the Lord since in Jerusalem the crucifixion and resurrection would occur, these readings bring us to the heart of the Church's teaching regarding salvation. Jesus is eternal Lord and Savior.

When the palms are blessed, and the solemn procession forms (ideally of all in the congregation), the Church offers us a reading from Luke. This passage recalls the plans for the arrival of Jesus in the Holy City as well as the arrival itself.

An element of inevitability—of providence—surrounds the event. Jesus tells the Pharisees who object to it all that even if the disciples were silent, the very stones would shout the good news of salvation in him. God wills that we have everlasting life in him.

For the first reading in the Liturgy of the Word, the Church gives us the third of the four "songs of the suffering servant" from the third section of Isaiah. Scholars debate the identity of this servant. Was he a prophet? A collective symbol for the people of Israel? In any case, Christians have always seen in these songs the image of the innocent, constantly loyal servant of God, the Lord Jesus.

The second reading is from St. Paul's epistle to the Philippians. These verses are thought to have been an ancient Christian hymn, used in early liturgies, eloquent in declaring intense faith.

As its last reading, the Church dramatically offers a passage from Luke's passion narrative. The rubrics provide for the congregation to be involved.

Each Gospel contains a highly detailed and lengthy account of the trial and execution of Jesus. Each evangelist was

an individual person who, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, had his own insights into what happened on the first Good Friday.

In general, Luke's Gospel sees Jesus as the embodiment of God's mercy, literally God in human flesh, the son of Mary, a woman and not an angel or a goddess. Jesus bears eternal life. He makes all things right. He seeks out the wayward and the despondent. He reconciles sinners with God. All this is completed in the Lord's sacrificial death on Calvary, so everything so far has been a prelude to those final days in Jerusalem.

Jesus had his enemies. People are obtuse, at times devious, and even vicious. Still, the love of God will not be thwarted. Salvation will come. It is God's will for us.

## Reflection

Few sections of the Scriptures are as powerful as the Passion narratives presented to us in the four Gospels. Luke's passion narrative is definitely among these in its capacity to teach us and to call us to Christ.

The readings from Isaiah and Philippians brilliantly focus our minds upon Jesus. He is Lord!

On Palm Sunday, the crown of the Liturgy of the Word is the awesome proclamation of the Passion of Jesus as presented by St. Luke. The Church takes us most movingly to the Lord's entry into Jerusalem. He is destined to redeem the world. Salvation had to come. He was promised. He is king. Some people responded. Some did not, burdened by their ignorance, sin or pride.

Finally, magnificently, the Passion narrative reveals the depth of the Lord's giving of self despite the intrigue of the trial and the awfulness of the crucifixion. We are flawed by our own sin. Figuratively, because of our sins, we stand with the enemies of Christ. God nevertheless loves us with a perfect, uncompromising, unending love. He forgives us, offering us eternal salvation if simply we turn to him with love. †



## Daily Readings

### Monday, April 15

Monday of Holy Week  
Isaiah 42:1-7  
Psalm 27:1-3, 13-14  
John 12:1-11

### Tuesday, April 16

Chrism Mass, 2 p.m.,  
Archdiocese of Indianapolis,  
SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral,  
1347 N. Meridian St.,  
in Indianapolis  
Isaiah 61:1-3a, 6a, 8b-9  
Psalm 89:21-22, 25, 27  
Revelation 1:5-8  
Luke 4:16-21

### Tuesday of Holy Week

Isaiah 49:1-6  
Psalm 71:1-4a, 5-6ab, 15, 17  
John 13:21-33, 36-38

### Wednesday, April 17

Wednesday of Holy Week  
Isaiah 50:4-9a  
Psalm 69:8-10, 21-22, 31,  
33-34  
Matthew 26:14-25

### Thursday, April 18

Holy Thursday  
Evening Mass of the Lord's  
Supper  
Exodus 12:1-8, 11-14  
Psalm 116:12-13, 15-16c,  
17-18  
1 Corinthians 11:23-26  
John 13:1-15

### Friday, April 19

Good Friday of the Passion of  
the Lord  
Celebration of the Lord's  
Passion  
Isaiah 52:13-53:12  
Psalm 31:2, 6, 12-13, 15-17, 25  
Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9  
John 18:1-19:42

### Saturday, April 20

Holy Saturday  
Holy Saturday Night—The  
Easter Vigil  
Genesis 1:1-2:2  
or Genesis 1:1, 26-31a  
Psalm 104:1-2a, 5-6, 10, 12-14,  
24, 35c  
or Psalm 33:4-7, 12-13, 20, 22  
Genesis 22:1-18  
or Genesis 22:1-2, 9a, 10-13,  
15-18  
Psalm 16:5, 8-11  
Exodus 14:15-15:1  
(Response) Exodus 15:1-6,  
17-18  
Isaiah 54:5-14  
Psalm 30:2, 4-6, 11-12a, 13b  
Isaiah 55:1-11  
(Response) Isaiah 12:2-3, 4bcd,  
5-6  
Baruch 3:9-15, 32-4:4  
Psalm 19:8-11  
Ezekiel 36:16-17a, 18-28  
Psalms 42:3, 5bcd; 43:3-4  
or, when baptism is celebrated,  
(Response) Isaiah 12:2-3, 4bcd,  
5-6  
or Psalm 51:12-15, 18-19  
Romans 6:3-11  
Psalm 118:1-2, 16ab-17, 22-23  
Luke 24:1-12

### Sunday, April 21

Easter Sunday of the  
Resurrection of the Lord  
Acts 10:34a, 37-43  
Psalm 118:1-2, 16ab-17, 22-23  
Colossians 3:1-4  
or 1 Corinthians 5:6b-8  
John 20:1-9  
or Luke 24:1-12  
or, at an afternoon or evening  
Mass,  
Luke 24:13-35

## My Journey to God

# Grand Entrance

By Michael Barrett

Children jump and sing.  
Their dogs gambol and wag.  
Mothers lift infants to be blessed.  
Palm fronds bend in raised hands.  
Hosannas ring from stone to stone.  
A donkey brays. Hearts soar as  
Jesus, more king than Christ this day,  
threads needle-narrow streets.

No Sadducee wades among this throng  
which Pax Romana fails to pacify.  
Pockets of Pharisees see for themselves  
the lowly lift the carpenter's son  
on a beast of burden.  
None know how this path will twist  
Nor the bath that awaits the Anointed.



(Michael Barrett is a member of St. Philip Neri Parish in Indianapolis. Photo: Christians carry palm branches on March 25, 2018, while walking the traditional path that Jesus took on his last entry into Jerusalem during the Palm Sunday Procession on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem.) (CNS photo/Debbie Hill)

## Question Corner/Fr. Kenneth Doyle

# Hardness of heart can lead to failing to accept God's forgiveness

Recently I heard read at Mass these words from St. Mark's Gospel:

"Amen, I say to you, all sins and all blasphemies that people utter will be forgiven them. But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never have forgiveness, but is guilty of an everlasting sin" (Mk 3:28-29). This puzzled me. How does one blaspheme against the Holy Spirit? (Ohio)

On the surface, the quote you reference from the Gospel of Mark would seem to clash with what we grew up learning: that God can forgive anything if we're sorry. And so, not surprisingly, this passage has sparked considerable commentary.

The first thing I should say is that God, indeed, can forgive anything; that's the very reason Jesus came. Early in the Gospel, the angel of the Lord tells Joseph in a dream: "You are to name him Jesus because he will save his people from their sins" (Mt 1:21).

What then does the Marcan passage

mean? It means that the one who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit is one who refuses to accept God's forgiveness.

As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* explains: "There are no limits to the mercy of God, but anyone who deliberately refuses to accept his mercy by repenting, rejects the forgiveness offered by the Holy Spirit. Such hardness of heart can lead to final impenitence and eternal loss" (#1864).

As St. John Paul II explained in his 1986 encyclical letter "*Dominum et Vivificantem*": "Blasphemy" does not properly consist in offending against the Holy Spirit in words; it consists rather in the refusal to accept the salvation which God offers to man through the Holy Spirit, working through the power of the cross" (#46).

So "blasphemy against the Holy Spirit"—I believe and would hope—is rather unusual; it would mean rejecting God's offer of forgiveness all the way to the end of one's life.

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

# Rest in peace

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

**ALLEN, Lura**, 96, St. Michael, Brookville, March 27. Mother of Debra Turner, Mary Race, Mark, Michael and Robert Allen. Sister of James Hyde. Grandmother of 13. Great-grandmother of 13.

**BUGHER, Jack D.**, 91, St. Pius X, Indianapolis, March 25. Husband of Nancy Thompson Bugher. Step-father of Kathleen Schabacker and William Thompson. Uncle of several.

**CORNELIA, Ann P.**, 85, St. Pius X, Indianapolis, March 26. Mother of Joan Wallace, Joseph and Robert Cornelia III. Sister of Maureen, Gerard and Joseph Hurley. Grandmother of three. Great-grandmother of one.

**DAVIES, Charles**, 81, Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Indianapolis, March 22. Husband of Rita Davies. Father of Jennifer Bailey, Kathryn and Thomas Davies. Grandfather of 10.

**ENGLE, Laura Ann (Missi)**, 58, St. Mary-of-the-Knobs, Floyd County, March 29. Wife of Donald Engle. Mother of Tara Martin, Greg and Tony Engle. Daughter of Mary Lucille Missi. Sister of Lisa Huber, Debbie Naville, Donnie, Pat, Rick, Sr., and Tim Missi. Grandmother of seven.

**KING FERRIELL, Carolyn Y.**, 83, St. Joseph, Corydon, March 28. Wife of Joseph Ferriell. Mother of Deborah Gentry, Dawn Lewis, Allan and Ricky King, Darin and Doug

Ferriell. Grandmother of 15. Great-grandmother of nine.

**HOOVER, Esther E.**, 80, St. Louis, Batesville, March 25. Wife of Donald Hoover. Sister of Margaret and George Ertel. Aunt of several.

**KOORS, Rita P.**, 76, St. Mary, Greensburg, March 30. Wife of Louis Koors. Mother of Karen, Shirley, Cletus, Kevin and Ryan Koors. Sister of Betty Brown. Grandmother of nine.

**NOLAN, Anna R. (Gavaghan)**, 94, Holy Spirit, Indianapolis, March 24. Mother of Terry Hergenrother, Mary Ann Mitchell, Donald, Jr., and Michael Nolan. Grandmother of eight. Great-grandmother of 12. Great-great-grandmother of three.

**PEARSEY, Dolores A. (Dailey)**, 88, Holy Spirit, Indianapolis, March 25. Mother of Sheri Dallas and Angie Wolf. Grandmother of three.

**PRESUTTI, Vera M.**, 87, St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower), Indianapolis, March 22. Mother of Diana DeMore, Joanne Farson, Suzanne Paris, Mary Ann Snelson, Marilyn Taylor and Carolyn Watson. Sister of Freida Monday. Grandmother of 13. Great-grandmother of eight.

**RENNER, Ronald E.**, 85, St. Joan of Arc, Indianapolis, March 22. Husband of Marilyn Renner. Father of Chris and Eric Renner. Grandfather of three.

**RINGHAM, Linda S.**, 63, SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi, Greenwood, March 16. Wife of David Ringham. Mother of Joseph Ringham. Daughter of Thelma Murray. Sister of Sandy Fitzgerald, Belinda Kay Greene, Carol Kelley, Mary Kern, Earl Hall, Thomas Murray and Theresa Ringham. Grandmother of two.

**SMITH, Mark A.**, 54, St. Mark the Evangelist, Indianapolis, March 29. Father of Nichole Slick and Brittani Smith. Brother of Carol Carter, Elaine, Lesley, Stephanie and A.L. Smith.

**SWIEZY, Rita A. (Boyle)**, 88, Holy Spirit, Indianapolis, March 26. Wife of Joseph Swiezy. Mother of Maria Krach, Michele Nichols and Michael Swiezy. Sister of Mary Ann Bennett. Grandmother of eight.

**VICK, Dorothy R.**, 89, St. John Paul II, Sellersburg, March 25. Mother of Sharon Smiddy, Delbert and Donald Vick. Grandmother of eight. Great-grandmother of 16. Great-great-grandmother of four.

**VOSMEIER, James**, 75, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Richmond, March 23. Brother of Janet and John Vosmeier. Uncle and great-uncle of several.

**WILHELM, Edward J.**, 82, St. Louis, Batesville, March 30. Brother of Helen Eckstein, Alvin, Art and Robert Wilhelm. Uncle of several.

**WOLFSCHLAG, Phyllis A. (Wilson)**, 75, Prince of Peace, Madison, April 1. Wife of David Wolfschlag. Mother of Julie Wolfschlag Niezer and Mark Wolfschlag. Sister of Judy Monroe. Grandmother of five.

**ZOBEL, Sue**, 92, St. Vincent de Paul, Shelby County, March 14. Mother of Teresa Burrows. Sister of Ginnie Riddle, Eva Turner, Clyde and Harry Wilkerson. Grandmother of two. Great-grandmother of three. Great-great-grandmother of two. †



## Memphis welcome

Bishop David P. Talley is greeted by members of the Missionaries of Charity following his installation Mass at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Memphis, Tenn., on April 2. Bishop Talley became the sixth bishop of the Diocese of Memphis. (CNS photo/Karen Pulfer)

# Supreme Court's recent actions reveal its death penalty divide

WASHINGTON (CNS)—In two recent actions, the U.S. Supreme Court revealed its death penalty decisions are hardly cut and dried.

In late March, the court blocked an execution because an inmate's religious adviser wasn't permitted to be present, which directly contradicted an execution that the court did not block the previous month also involving a spiritual adviser's presence at an execution. Three days later, the court narrowly rejected a death-row inmate's request for an alternative to execution by lethal injection saying this method was not "cruel and unusual punishment."

On March 29, the Supreme Court stayed the execution of Texas death-row inmate Patrick Murphy while he was appealing the state's refusal to allow a Buddhist spiritual adviser to be present at his execution.

Murphy, a former prison escapee put on death row for his involvement in the death of a police officer, converted to Buddhism while in prison. He was the driver of a getaway car during a robbery in 2000—with six other escapees known as the Texas 7—when two members of the group shot and killed the officer.

The court's decision in Murphy's case contrasts with its February action, where it allowed the execution of Domineque Ray, a Muslim, to proceed even though Ray had appealed Alabama's decision to deny an imam's presence at his execution.

The difference in the two similar cases came down to timing, according to Justice Brett Kavanaugh's concurring opinion, in which he said: "Murphy made his request to the state in a sufficiently timely manner, one month before the scheduled execution."

Kavanaugh, the only justice to comment separately on this case, said

Texas officials moving forward should either allow all inmates to have a religious adviser of their faith in the execution room or allow all religious advisers to only be present in the viewing room, not the execution room.

In Murphy's case, Justices Neil Gorsuch and Clarence Thomas dissented.

The Texas Catholic Conference, the public policy arm of the state's bishops, said in a March 29 statement they were pleased with the court's decision to temporarily block Murphy's execution.

"Our country was founded on the rights of each individual to exercise his faith, regardless of whether in prison or in a church. May Mr. Murphy find peace and wise counsel in his search for purity and truth," the statement said.

Another aspect of Murphy's case highlighted by Sister Helen Prejean, a Sister of St. Joseph of Medaille and longtime opponent of the death penalty, is that he did not shoot the officer.

She said Murphy was convicted under the "Law of Parties," a Texas law which allows for a death sentence even if a person didn't actually participate directly in the murder.

The Texas Legislature is currently considering a bill that would change this law, Sister Helen tweeted, saying that although it would "not apply retroactively, it would likely give Patrick Murphy a new avenue to challenge his death sentence."

In death penalty cases, she said, the Supreme Court has said that a jury must determine that a person was a "major player" in a conspiracy when the person didn't actually kill or intend to kill a victim. "Patrick Murphy's jury was never asked to make this determination," she said.

Murphy's and Ray's cases have been

described as religious liberty issues.

The court's refusal to allow an imam to be present at Ray's Feb. 7 execution was "unjust treatment" that is "disturbing to people of all faiths," said two U.S. bishops.

"People deserve to be accompanied in death by someone who shares their faith. It is especially important that we respect this right for religious minorities," said Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz of Louisville, Ky., and Bishop Frank J. Dewane of Venice, Fla., in a Feb. 8 statement. They are the chairmen, respectively, of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee for Religious Liberty and Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development.

The court ruled 5-4 on Feb. 7 to allow Ray's execution to proceed without an imam present as Ray had requested. He was on death row for the 1995 rape and murder of a 15-year-old and was

## CALDAROLA

continued from page 12

We are, all of us, part of the whole creation and part of the crisis that confronts our natural environment. We are all encouraged to welcome the Lord by loving his world.

While we commit to being activists, we also commit to "learning to be astonished." We learn to quiet down and pray. We learn to understand the nearness of the Creator to the things of this Earth and the interrelatedness of all.

From this respect and astonishment, we draw strength for action.

(Effie Caldarola writes for *Catholic News Service*.) †

allowed to meet with an imam before his execution, and the religious leader watched from an adjoining room as Ray was executed by lethal injection.

Spencer Hahn, one of Ray's attorneys, told *The Associated Press* on March 29 that he hoped his client had helped bring attention to the fact some inmates are treated differently when it comes to religious advisers present during executions.

"I'd like to think Mr. Ray's death was not in vain," he said, adding that the decision in Murphy's case sends a message that: "The Supreme Court doesn't want to see people mistreated like this in their final moments."

In another case, the Supreme Court ruled 5-4 on April 1 that Russell Bucklew, who is on Missouri's death row for a 1996 murder, can be put to death by lethal injection despite his argument that this method of execution would cause him severe pain because of his rare medical condition. †

## CAPPECHI

continued from page 12

vocational culture in parents," she said.

Sister Brenda lives with two other Daughters of Immaculate Mary of Guadalupe. This spring, they hosted a gathering for Hispanic youth at St. Joseph Parish in Dickinson, N.D., to share their stories and perform a concert. Together, they made beautiful music.

Standing in the Walmart parking lot, greeting them at church, Sister Brenda is a guidepost for the lost and lonely. "In the Church," she said, "they find family."

(Christina Capocchi is a freelance writer from Inver Grove Heights, Minn.) †

# Asylum-seeker credits new home in Iowa to prayers

STORM LAKE, Iowa (CNS)—Darwin Josue Mejia Montoya could have been shot during protests in Nicaragua last



Darwin Josue Mejia Montoya

year. He also could still be languishing in a detention center in Arizona, after escaping the violence.

But Montoya credits prayers—particularly to Mary—for enabling him to be one of the few individuals granted asylum

in the United States from the Central American country.

Speaking through interpreter Araceli Reyes, assistant for Hispanic ministry at St. Mary Parish in Storm Lake, Montoya recalled his calmness while waiting to hear if he would be granted asylum.

“I was never nervous that day,” he told *The Catholic Globe*, newspaper of the Sioux City Diocese. “I had previously been nervous at the other court dates, but that day, I earlier turned to Psalm 70 and just knew whatever was going to happen, I would be all right.”

The youngest of six children, Montoya grew up in Boaco, Nicaragua. His parish is *Parroquia de Santiago Apostol* (Parish of St. James the Apostle)—where he received the sacraments of baptism, Communion and confirmation. One of the priests who served at Santiago was Father Sergio Antonio Alvarez Aleman, with whom “Darwin is a good friend,” explained Father Tim Friedrichsen, pastor of St. Mary Parish in Storm Lake and Sacred Heart Parish in Early.

“Padre Sergio is now the pastor at Santa Lucia,” Father Friedrichsen said of his church’s sister parish. “I met both Padre Sergio and Darwin when I first visited Nicaragua in January of 2016.”

Montoya would join Father Friedrichsen and Father Sergio on some of their day trips three years ago.

“Darwin did the same when I visited

again in January of 2018,” Father Friedrichsen said. “We have been Facebook ‘amigos’ since 2016.”

Following his high school graduation, Montoya studied computer engineering and got a job at a diocesan Catholic school.

“During this time, I did a lot of service work,” he said. “I joined the Association of the Miraculous Medal, and we evangelized in the rural areas.” He ultimately became president of the group and learned more about the struggles people were experiencing.

He started working for a cellular company, which encouraged employees to peacefully protest the recent taxation and social security policies of President Daniel Ortega.

“I was never into politics, but a memo was sent out and everyone was asked to participate on behalf of the company,” he said. “Within three days, seven or eight people were killed.”

The violence escalated and about 40 people were killed, he added, noting that he was threatened by paramilitary personnel, who held a gun to his head and promised they would kill him at the peaceful demonstration.

“I imagine I was targeted because I was wearing the work badge of the company. We would travel to our accounts, not even protesting, and saw armed police,” Montoya continued.

By this time, Montoya estimated more than 1,000 juveniles were missing.

“I was living with my mother and my aunt and supporting them financially,” he said. “They were concerned for my life and the threat associated with my job.”

Montoya had considered a move to Costa Rica, but realized life would not be better in that Central American nation.

“A friend of mine had a brother in the U.S. who could help us gain entry,” he said, adding that it never crossed his mind to enter the country illegally.

Montoya shared his plans with Father Friedrichsen, who advised him not to come because the trip was long and too dangerous. But Montoya made the journey to Mexico anyway with



Darwin Josue Mejia Montoya, left, recounts his journey in achieving asylum in the U.S. at St. Mary Church in Storm Lake, Iowa, as the pastor, Father Tim Friedrichsen, and translator Araceli Reyes, listen on March 13. Montoya left his country of Nicaragua to make the arduous trek north and seek asylum in the U.S. (CNS photo/Jerry L. Mennenga for the *Catholic Globe*)

the clothes on his back, a small bag of items and a miraculous medal around his neck.

He and a friend arrived in Nogales, Mexico, at a port of entry, and asked for asylum. They ended up in a detention center in Eloy, Ariz., about 100 miles from the border.

Father Friedrichsen wrote letters and worked with lawyers to facilitate Montoya’s case while the young man went through several lawyers during his stay at the detention center and prayed the rosary every day.

He had numerous meetings and court dates that resulted in no decision or postponement. On the Jan. 22 court date, he had spent six months and five days in detention.

“That day, a miracle of God and Our Lady took place,” Montoya said, noting that when he was granted asylum, “even the lawyers were surprised.”

“I have to believe that Vice President Michael Pence’s condemnation of the

Ortega government’s violence against the people who were exercising their freedom of speech, as well as violence against their freedom of religion, was very helpful in Darwin’s case,” Father Friedrichsen speculated.

With tears in his eyes, the priest said he was happy his friend was safe. He also said he was glad Montoya didn’t follow his advice and stay in Nicaragua.

“This ordeal has weighed heavily on my heart and mind, as do the ordeals of so many who will not be as fortunate as Darwin has been,” Father Friedrichsen said.

Montoya now calls Storm Lake home and is beginning the process of getting a Social Security number, a job and taking English classes.

When asked about the biggest adjustment, Montoya, wearing blue jeans, a T-shirt, a black leather jacket and his miraculous medal, shivered and said: “The cold.” †

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# From the ARCHIVES



## Holy Thursday procession in Franklin County

Children prepare for a Holy Thursday procession in this photo from St. Peter Parish in Franklin County on Apr. 11, 1895. St. Peter Parish was founded in 1838.

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

## Lenten penance services are scheduled at archdiocesan parishes

Parishes throughout the archdiocese have scheduled communal penance services for Lent. Below is a list of services reported to *The Criterion*.

### Bloomington Deanery

- April 17, 4-9 p.m. for St. Charles Borromeo, Bloomington and St. Paul Catholic Center, Bloomington, at St. Paul Catholic Center

### Indianapolis South Deanery

- April 13, 9 a.m. at SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi, Greenwood
- April 15, 7 p.m. at Our Lady of the Greenwood, Greenwood

### Indianapolis West Deanery

- April 12, 7 p.m. for St. Michael the Archangel, St. Gabriel the Archangel and St. Monica, at St. Michael the Archangel
- April 17, 6-7 p.m. at Mary, Queen of Peace, Danville

### New Albany Deanery

- April 12, 7 p.m. at St. Mary, New Albany
- April 13, following 8 a.m. Mass and at 4-4:45 p.m. at Holy Family, New Albany
- April 14, 1 p.m. at St. John the Baptist, Starlight
- April 14, 5-5:50 p.m. at Holy Family, New Albany
- April 17, 5-7 p.m. with adoration at St. Michael, Charlestown
- April 17, 6:30-7:30 p.m. at St. Mary-of-the-Knobs, Floyd County
- April 17, 6:30-7:45 p.m. at St. Mary, New Albany

### Terre Haute Deanery

- April 15, 7 p.m. at St. Paul the Apostle, Greencastle
- April 17, 11 a.m. at St. Joseph, Rockville

(An updated version of this list, along with other Lenten resources, can be found at [www.archindy.org/lent](http://www.archindy.org/lent).) †



Mousa Kamar, front right, helps carry a large wooden cross during the Good Friday procession on the Via Dolorosa in Jerusalem's Old City on March 25, 2016. Mousa Kamar and his sons are continuing the tradition of his grandfather and father, carrying the cross on Good Friday. (CNS photo/Debbie Hill)

## Family tradition: Carrying the cross on Jerusalem's Via Dolorosa

JERUSALEM (CNS)—For four decades, Mousa Kamar has taken his place at the head of the heavy wooden cross used during the Franciscan Good Friday procession on the *Via Dolorosa*.

Kamar, 55, can be seen every year at the front of the cross, the same position where his father used to carry the cross. His grandfather also helped carry the front of the cross. The scores of old black-and-white pictures, color photographs and magazine photos Kamar has collected and uploaded onto his Facebook page attest to the long-held family tradition.

"We do this not only because it is the tradition, but because we are religious and we truly believe in it," said Kamar, looking over some of the photographs scattered on a coffee table as he sat in his mother's living room in Jerusalem's Old City, near the ninth station of the cross. This is the home where he grew up and where his paternal grandmother was born.

It takes about 20 men to carry the 3-meter (3.3-yard) cross on Good Friday, and traditionally each position on the cross was taken by a representative of a different family. Kamar is the only one who has continued with the tradition. As the older generation died off, the younger members of the other families did not continue with the tradition, he said.

The cross, though still large and heavy, is smaller than the one used generations ago, he said.

Even in the pushing and shoving of the procession, which sees local Catholics and pilgrims packing the cobblestone streets of the Old City as they make their way along the *Via Dolorosa*, Kamar said he is able to find a space within himself where he can reflect on the significance of the moment and on the life of Jesus.

"When I am carrying the cross I remember Jesus, how he died for us and how he walked all this way by himself," said Kamar. "We are 20 people carrying it, and he carried it by himself. Especially as we stop at each station and it is mentioned where he fell [or other detail], it makes me feel like I am following the footsteps of Jesus."

Kamar's parents had run a family grocery store near the eighth station of the cross, and Graciella Matulleh Kamar, today 83, recalled the pride she felt as she would stand in the doorway of their shop on Good Friday and watch as her husband carried the cross during the procession. Her husband, Kamar's father, was killed during the 1967 war in which Israel took over control of Jerusalem from the Jordanians.

"After he was killed, I couldn't watch the procession anymore. It was too painful," she said.

Only when Kamar, at age 15, stepped in to fill his father's place was she able to once again watch the procession, she said.

Kamar was 5 when his father was killed.

"Especially on Good Fridays, my mother would tell me about how my father carried the cross and that one day I would carry it, too," he said. "The first time I carried it I couldn't sleep the night before, I was so excited about carrying the cross and filling that space my father had had."

Several years ago, Kamar's oldest son, Youssef, 20, also joined the group of men carrying the cross, but during the procession, he steps aside to let others take their turn. More recently, Kamar's youngest son, Ramez, 15, began taking part in the carrying of the cross. One of the pictures shows a 13-year-old Ramez at the end of the cross, his head barely peeping over the top of the cross among the crowd of men surrounding it. With his dark curly hair and full cheeks he looks just like his father did in earlier pictures.

"It was very exciting to be able to carry the cross," said Youssef Kamar. "In the future maybe I and my [future] sons will continue the family tradition. Although this is a tradition, it also helps me feel closer to Jesus and what he went through before being crucified."

"It is also a burden and an honor to do this," he added. "Since I was young, I heard stories about this family tradition and, since my father, and his father and his grandfather have done this, I think it is important to keep the tradition and to keep our religion alive."

In preparation for the procession, Mousa Kamar spends Holy Week in prayer, visiting the Church of the Holy Sepulcher every day after work and participating in the liturgical ceremonies, including the traditional veneration of the pillar of Jesus' flagellation, the washing of the feet pilgrimage to the Cenacle, and holy hour on Holy Thursday at Gethsemane.

He said he uses the time to meditate and pray for Christian unity and a strengthening of Christian religious identity, which he feels is being lost.

"All week I am praying, preparing to carry the cross, linking how Jesus suffered for us to the Palestinian situation. He fought for us, sacrificed himself for us but, unfortunately, we are losing our Christianity. I always pray for that, that people will return to the foundations of Christianity," he said, noting that Christians in the Middle East are living a difficult reality with close to 50 percent of the Christian population having emigrated. "We love Jesus and we feel we are a part of Jesus. Every corner, every stone in Jerusalem is directly about Jesus." †

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