Archbishop encourages Christ-centered approach to move forward in unity

By John Shaughnessy

In an interview with The Criterion on July 1, Archbishop Charles C. Thompson discussed a range of issues in light of recent decisions by Catholic schools and the Jesuit Preparatory School—decisions involving teachers in a same-sex marriage at the two Indianapolis private schools.

As I’ve said many times as a priest and a bishop, I have to first be Christ-centered. When I’m self-centered or agenda-driven, I’m off the mark. I’m at my best when I remain Christ-centered. Being Christ-centered is only going to happen through prayer, only through being open to the word of God, being open to how the Spirit is working in my life.

All of us—regardless of where we find ourselves—if we strive to be Christ-centered, then I think we allow our minds and hearts to be as open as possible to where the Holy Spirit is leading us, not only as individuals but as a human family again—and what it truly means to be a Body of Christ even amid the woundedness and the brokenness.

If each of us would do that, regardless of where we find ourselves on the spectrum, what a difference that would make in going forward for all people.”

Archbishop Thompson shared that perspective concerning the reactions he has received in connection to the archdiocese’s contractual expectations of all teachers, guidance counselors, administrators and other leaders in Catholic schools. The contract for Catholic schools in the archdiocese requires these “ministerial witnesses” to “convey and be supportive of all teachings of the Catholic Church,” including its teaching on the dignity of marriage as between one man and one woman.

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A day of hope and connections: Vocations camp participants pray at the tomb of Bishop Simon Bruté

By Sean Gallagher

VINCENNES, Ind.—On June 18, 1839, the Servant of God Bishop Simon Bruté knew that the end of his life was near. Suffering from tuberculosis for many years, the first bishop of the Diocese of Vincennes, which later became the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, had a final message for his flock spread across all of Indiana and the eastern third of Illinois.

“I recommend to all the faithful of the diocese to persevere above all trials in the divine faith and in the Catholic, apostolic Church, the Church of God on Earth, having the doctrine of Christ from the days of Peter and the Apostles unto the end of time.”

“Now I, Catholic bishop of Vincennes, by the appointment of the successor of

José Trinidad, left, Jose Ortiz and Brandon Todd kneel in prayer on June 26 during a Mass at St. Francis Xavier Basilica in Vincennes. The three were among 39 high school participants in Bishop Bruté Days, an annual archdiocesan vocations camp. Trinidad and Ortiz are members of St. Bartholomew Parish in Terre Haute. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

With miracle confirmed in Sheen cause, plans for beatification can begin

PEORIA, Ill. (CNS)—With “overwhelming joy,” Bishop Daniel R. Jenky of Peoria announced on July 6 that Pope Francis had approved a miracle attributed to the intercession of Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen.

“Now that the miracle has been confirmed by Pope Francis, the Diocese of Peoria can formally begin planning for the beatification of Archbishop Sheen, which will take place in Peoria,” according to a news release issued by the Diocese of Peoria early on the morning of July 6.

The pope authorized the Congregation for Saints’ Causes to promulgate the decree at an audience on July 5. In addition to affirming the miracle for Archbishop Sheen, Pope Francis recognized the heroic virtues of one woman and six men, and enrolled Blessed Bartholomew of the Martyrs in the catalog of saints, which is equivalent to canonization.

The miracle concerns the healing of James Fulton Engstrom of Washington, Ill., who was considered stillborn when he was delivered during a planned home birth on Sept. 16, 2010. His parents, Bonnie and Travis Engstrom, immediately invoked the prayers of Archbishop Sheen and would encourage others to seek his intercession after the baby was taken to OSF HealthCare St. Francis Medical Center in Peoria for emergency treatment.

Just as doctors were preparing to declare that he was dead, James Fulton’s tiny heart started to beat at a normal rate for a healthy infant at an audience on July 5. In addition to affirming the miracle for Archbishop Sheen, Pope Francis recognized the heroic virtues of one woman and six men, and enrolled Blessed Bartholomew of the Martyrs in the catalog of saints, which is equivalent to canonization.
Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

Q. What is your overall message to young people in the Church, including those at Brebeuf and Cathedral who are working to uphold the teachings of the Church in opposition to same-sex marriage? What do you see as Pope Francis’ approach to these relationships, and do you feel that the teaching of love being consistent with his approach?

A. In my pastoral letter, ‘We Are One in Christ,’ I spoke about the dignity of all persons, the sanctity of all life, and I mentioned people of same-sex attraction then. I’ve spoken of persons identified in the image of God. That’s very much in line with the Church, and Pope Francis has basically said the same thing. Pope Francis talks about accompanying. He talks about dialogue. He talks about about mercy. He talks about about acompaniment. He says, ‘Meet persons where they are. Heal the wounds, heal the wounds. Then turn the things which mean bring them along, lead them to Christ.’

You have to listen to Pope Francis in his entirety—he has said all along. He has said some beautiful things of encouraging and supporting, but he also says something very challenging. People have to read and hear the totality of the message, not just pick and choose what they agree with. Pope Francis appointed me here as archbishop of Indianapolis so I have to communicate the realities of the world, to listen to what he’s saying, and paying attention to what he’s doing—to have that guidance. And I discern it with other bishops. I don’t make decisions in a vacuum. ‘Not only am I concentrating all this prayer, I’m also looking for guidance through the Holy Spirit. But also through consultation, from people within the archdiocese as well as people from outside the archdiocese. People who I believe have a good sense of Pope Francis’ teaching in his positions and the direction he is leading the Church.’

‘I try to keep before me in every situation—how do we accompany, how do we dialogue, do we encounter, do we be instruments of mercy? But there are challenging moments where some hard decisions have to be made, difficult decisions. I firmly believe that we’re in line with Pope Francis. If we’re not, I’d hope they’d let me know. I trust he would, I believe we’re carrying on the vision of Pope Francis as well as any diocese in the Church.’

Q. You have also received considerable support from people about this issue. Talk about that support.

A. Whether it’s e-mails or letters or texts or phone messages or what have you—you both in opposition and those in support—it’s important to pay attention to both. Where do I need to be changed? The challenges are not as easy sometimes, especially when it’s done in a very harsh tone. But then again those are people who probably perceive me as being harsh, or my decision is harsh. ‘The flipside of that—the calls, the texts, the e-mails of support—they’re very much appreciated. The prayers are especially appreciated. Encouragement and the encouragement are also very appreciated. And I’ve gotten that from bishops around the country. I’ve gotten that from priests, religious, laity, young, old, families. Those are easier to reach out to. I understand the criticisms, but both are important.

‘Again, I’m on the journey of faith like everyone else. We are only people without sin—Jesus and Mary. John the Baptist perhaps. I’m a sinner. As a sinner, I think Pope Francis would have interviewed me and he was asked: “How would you describe yourself?” he said: “I’m a sinner. I’m a sinner, too. I don’t have all the perfect answers. My goal is not to carry out Chuck Thompson’s vision or Chuck Thompson’s teachings. I’ve been entrusted with the care of souls in central and southern Indiana, and I’ve been entrusted to do that, and to use all of my teachings the teachings of the Church.’

‘The key thing, too, about encouragement and support is that I don’t want it to be one-sided. We live in such a polarized society. We need to learn to demonize the other. So anybody who supports me, I want to encourage them to pray for everyone involved. We hold everyone in a sense of dignity and the deepest regard of human beings.’

Q. Church teaching on same-sex marriage is in conflict with the perspectives of many Catholics in the United States, according to a recent survey by the Pew Research Center. A fact sheet from Pew that was released in May noted that 61 percent of those people who identify as Catholic now support same-sex marriage. What are your thoughts on this statistic, which according to Pew, has flipped since 2004?

A. ‘I remember one time, of all places, on a door of a science lab, a poster read, “Truth is not determined by majority opinion.” The Church has taught for 2,000 years that marriage by nature is designed by God as one man and one woman. Pope Francis himself has said that same-sex unions will never be equivalent to the Church’s understanding of marriage. So, first and foremost, I have to be guided by what I believe to be revealed by Christ through Scripture and through tradition in Church teaching, regardless of polls. ’

‘The Church’s teaching on marriage as one man and one woman is the same. My understanding is that Pope Francis has not made any attempt and has no intention of changing that. Again, he directly says same-sex unions will never be equivalent to the Church’s understanding of marriage, and I think he’s made that pretty clear. It doesn’t mean we don’t care. We always embrace the person.’

Q. How does the Church get its teaching about marriage across in a way that connects with Catholics who support same-sex marriage? And if it can’t, do you worry about the impact it will have on the Church locally and nationally?

A. ‘It’s a difficult time for the Church. It’s a difficult time for any institution of faith right now. Again, we’re living in such a polarized society—economically, religiously, politically. In every facet, we shift from the center, we move away from each other. Each side believes it has the truth, and therefore we have no dialogue to listen to the other side. Over time, that polarization continues to intensify. There’s even the act of starting to demonize the other side. Those are the challenging times we live in.

‘The Church is a voice among all those. Pope Francis oftentimes says we need to go to the margins, the peripheries. I sometimes think society has pushed the Church to the margins and peripheries. But we must continue to engage the world, engage society and educate the culture with our message, with that Good News, with those teachings, and we believe the word of God and the tradition of the Church has been revealed and brought to us—and we call us to take to others.’

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Migrants are people, not just a social issue, pope says at Mass

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Christians are called to follow the spirit of the beatitudes by comforting the poor and the oppressed, especially migrants and refugees who are rejected, exploited and left to die, Pope Francis said.

The least ones, “who have been thrown away, marginalized, oppressed, discriminated against, abused, exploited, abandoned, poor and suffering” cry out to God, “asking to be freed from the evils that afflict them,” the pope said in his homily on July 8 during a Mass commemorating the sixth anniversary of his visit to the southern Mediterranean island of Lampedusa.

“They are persons; these are not mere social or migrant issues. This is not just about migrants, in the twofold sense that migrants are, first of all, human persons and that they are the symbol of all those rejected by today’s ‘globalized society,’” he said.

According to the Vatican, an estimated 250 migrants, refugees and rescue volunteers attended the Mass, which was celebrated at the Altar of the Chair in St. Peter’s Basilica. Pope Francis greeted each person present after the Mass ended.

In his homily, the pope reflected on the first reading from the Book of Genesis in which Jacob dreamed of a stairway leading to heaven, and “God’s messengers were going up and down on it.”

Unlike the Tower of Babel, which was humankind’s attempt to reach heaven and become gods, the ladder in Jacob’s dream was the means by which the Lord comes down to humankind and “reveals itself; it is God who saves,” the pope explained.

“The ladder is a refuge for the faithful, who call on him in times of tribulation,” he said. “For it is indeed at such moments that our prayer is made purer, when we realize that the only ladder the world offers has little worth and that God remains. God alone opens up heaven for those who live on Earth. Only God saves.”

The Gospel reading from St. Matthew, which recalled the encounter between God and Joseph in his dream, “is ‘guaranteed and accessible to all.’ However, to climb those steps requires ‘commitment, effort and grace.’”

“I like to think that we could be those angels, ascending and descending, taking under our wings the little ones, the lame, the sick, those excluded,” the pope said. “This same care, he added, must extend to the vulnerable who flee suffering and violence only to encounter indifference and death.”

That same care, he added, must extend to the vulnerable who flee suffering and violence only to encounter indifference and death.

“These least ones are abandoned and cheated into dying in the desert; these least ones are tortured, abused and violated in detention camps; these least ones face the waves of an unforgiving sea; these least ones are left in reception camps too long for them to be called temporary,” the pope said.

Pope Francis said the image of Jacob’s ladder represents the connection between heaven and Earth that is “guaranteed and accessible to all.” However, to climb those steps requires “commitment, effort and grace.”

The least ones, “who have otherwise stayed behind and would experience only grinding poverty on Earth, without glimpsing in this life anything of heaven’s brightness,” the pope said.

The pope’s call for compassion toward migrants and refugees came less than a week after a migrant detention camp in Tepilo, Libya, was bombed in an air raid. The Libyan government blamed the July 3 attack on the Libyan National Army, led by renegade military Gen. Khalifa Haftar.

According to the Pan-Arab news television network Al-Jazeera, the air raid killed nearly 60 people, mostly migrants and refugees from African countries, including Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Somalia.

Pope Francis denounced the attack and led pilgrims in prayer for the victims on July 7 during his Angelus address.

“The international community can no longer tolerate such grave events,” he said. “I pray for the victims; may the God of peace receive the deceased and sustain the wounded.”

Pope Francis names women as full members of congregation for religious

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope Francis named 14 superiors of women’s religious orders, a consecrated laywoman and the superior of the De La Salle Christian Brothers to be full members of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life.

Previously, the members had all been men: cardinals, a few bishops and several priests who were superior of large religious orders of men.

The women named members by the pope were announced by the Vatican on July 8: Sisters Kathleen Appler, the superior of the Comboni Franciscan Missionary Sisters of Mary; Rita Calvo Sanchez, superior of the Company of Mary Our Lady; and Olga Krizova, general president of the Volunteers of Don Bosco, a group of consecrated laypeople.

Brother Robert I. Schieler, the U.S.-born superior of the De La Salle Christian Brothers, also was named a full member of the congregation along with the priests who are superior general of the Jesuits, the Discalced Carmelites, the Augustinians, the Scalabrinians, the Capuchins and the abbot president of the Subiaco Cassinese Benedictine Congregation.

The new members announced by the Vatican also included five bishops and four cardinals: Cardinals Angelo De Donatis, papal vicar for Vatican City; Luis Ladaria Ferrer, prefect of the Dicastery for Laity, the Family and Life; Luis Ladaria Ferrer, prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith; and Ricardo Blazquez Perez of Valladolid, Spain.

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Miracles remind us there is ‘good news’ to share

If you’ve already grown tired of all the political noise that is taking center stage on many forms of communication—newspaper, radio, television and social media—as we approach the 2020 presidential election (which is still 16 months away), encourage people searching for “good news” to look no further than the Catholic press.

In recent years, we’ve seen stories about how intercessory prayers that were answered were led to the upcoming canonization of a saint and the forthcoming beatification of a beloved archbishop.

A Catholic News Service (CNS) story recently shared how Chicago resident Melissa Villalobos’ prayers to Blessed John Henry Newman were answered. The miracle accepted for his beatification in 2010 involved someone from the United States: Deacon Jack Sullivan, 71, of Manhasset, Mass., who was healed of a severe spinal condition in 2001.

The story appeared on page 14 of this week’s issue of The Criterion, reveals how Villalobos’ husband brought home a couple of prayer cards with Cardinal Newman’s picture on it, and Melissa began to “say little prayers to him for whatever our family’s needs were at the time—the children, my husband, myself. I really started to develop a very constant dialogue with him.”

Those prayers were especially important in 2013 when Villalobos started bleeding during the first trimester of a pregnancy. Serious complications followed, and when what appeared to be a possible life-and-death situation arose, the mother offered desperate prayers to Cardinal Newman.

The bleeding suddenly stopped, and a healthy baby girl was born seven months later.

The Archdiocese of Chicago conducted the local study of the alleged miracle and forwarded the case to the Vatican for another series of investigations. The outcome was revealed in February when Pope Francis announced the miracle was accepted and that Cardinal Newman would be canonized in October.

Last weekend, Bishop Daniel R. Jenky of Peoria, III., announced that the pope had approved a miracle attributed to the intercession of Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen.

In a July 6 story posted on CNS, we learned the miracle is the healing of James Fulton Engstrom of Washington, Ill. James Fulton was considered stillborn when he was delivered during a planned home birth on Sept. 16, 2010.

According to the CNS story, his parents immediately invoked the prayers of Archbishop Sheen and would encourage others to seek his intercession after the baby was taken to OSF Healthcare St. Francis Medical Center in Peoria for emergency treatment.

Just as medical professionals were preparing to declare that the child was dead, James Fulton’s tiny heart started to beat at a normal rate for a healthy newborn. He had been without a pulse for 61 minutes.

Despite dire prognoses for his future, including that he would probably be blind and unable to walk, his parents did not give up hope for their child. James Fulton has thrived. Now a healthy 8-year-old, he likes chicken nuggets, Star Wars and riding his bicycle.

“It is truly amazing how God continues to work miracles,” Bishop Jenky said in the statement released by the Diocese of Peoria.

In a recent interview with The Catholic Post, Peoria’s diocesan newspaper, James Fulton’s mother said God had allowed the miracle to happen for his honor and glory.

“I really don’t think it was given to us for,” Bonnie Engstrom said. “I think it was given to the Church, for the Church.”

Political news these days is a necessity; we understand that. And we also realize these are challenging times for our Church. We only need to look to the past year both locally and globally to confirm that hard truth.

Despite the hurt and heartache our faith family has been a part of recently, there is “good news” to share concerning our universal Church family, and we cannot depend on secular media outlets to offer them as headlines. When two miracles happen in the U.S. thanks to intercessory prayers answered by those who have gone before us, it reminds us that God’s providence is with us as well.

May we never forget that fact as we continue to face challenges every day in all walks of life.

—Mike Krokos

Making Sense of Bioethics

Securing the authentic rights of children

Children require extensive support and action to meet their physical, emotional and spiritual needs. They are uniquely dependent on their parents because they are particularly vulnerable. Often they are unable to speak on their own behalf, or effectively defend themselves from various forms of exploitation.

Considerations like these provide the basis for acknowledging the reality of “children’s rights.”

Providing an appropriate family environment, with the presence of both a mother and a father, has long been recognized as one of the paramount examples of fulfilling children’s rights. A proper family environment offers essential safeguards for a child, and helps assure the “full and harmonious development of his or her personality”—to borrow a phrase from the 1990 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child treaty.

The full and harmonious development, however, is becoming more difficult to secure for many children, in part due to growing societal acceptance of powerful new assisted reproductive technologies that can isolate children and deprive them of critical parental and family supports during their childhood.

Children brought into existence using anonymous donor sperm and artificial insemination, to consider one example, often struggle with a sense of isolation as they end up spending years or even decades searching for information about their biological father in the desperate hope of discovering his identity, meeting him in person, and learning more about their own roots and identity.

Katy Faust, founder of the children’s rights organization “Them Before Us,” notes how children emerging from these techniques are “just like every other human child who longs to be known and loved by the two people responsible for their existence.”

Children entering the world through in vitro fertilization are already struggling with their unnatural circumstances in which the hired services of a third-party contractor, rather than their parents’ loving embrace, resulted in their coming-into-being.

As they grow up in these situations, they may also face wrenching questions about how many other embryonic siblings were discarded, frozen or otherwise lost through the complex laboratory manipulations that created them.

Surrogate mothering gives rise to yet another approach that can fragment a child’s sense of family connection. This technique frequently relies on multiple parental figures: one who provides sperm, another eggs, and a third a womb for hire. An even greater number of parental figures can be involved in the production of so-called “three-parent embryos.”

When many of the assisted reproductive technologies chip away at the stabilizing presence of maternal and paternal figures in a child’s life, their growing use by same-sex couples to facilitate same-sex parenting raises further serious concerns about harming children and ignoring their best interests.

Nobody denies that two men might each be able to be a father, or a mother, but neither can be a mom. It is part of natural biological fertilization for children to flourish under the loving care of their own mom and dad. No same-sex couple can provide that. As Katy Faust notes, “Until recently, our culture and laws have recognized that children have an innate right to their mother and father. When this right is violated, children become ‘items’ to be cut and pasted into any and every adult relationship as they choose.”

Additional “cutting and pasting” in children’s lives occurs through the growing phenomenon of “triple-parenting.” Because a same-sex couple (two lesbians for instance) cannot have a natural child, a truly innocent process of the missing ingredient of donor sperm, they must rope in a male for the project—perhaps a sperm donor, or a friend who agrees to donate his sperm or an agreeable male friend willing to have sex with one of them.

In any of these scenarios, a de facto relationship comes to exist between the same-sex couple and this third-party individual, raising the prospect of triple-parenting. California was one of the first states to try to pass a law allowing children to have three legal parents. In some cases, the couple will entirely avoid any interaction with any father/donor. In others, they will want their child to have an ongoing relationship with him. Some men may not care; others may be eager and push to get involved with their biological kids.

The acceptance of same-sex parenting has created momentum for these kinds of triple-parenting situations to arise, bringing additional complications into the lives of the children caught in the middle and subjecting them to further ambiguity regarding their own identity and their relationship to their parents.

Notwithstanding rapidly changing societal norms, the Church will never prioritize the desires of adults ahead of the innate rights of vulnerable children.

As Jennifer Roback Morse, a tireless advocate of marriage and family concludes, “We are replacing the natural, pre-political concept of biological parenthood with an artificial, government-created concept of parental authority that can be arbitrarily constructed. … Triple-parenting and genderless marriage are destructive policies. They must be stopped.”

(㎞Father Tadych Pacholczyk, Ph.D. earned his master’s in neuroscience at Lile College and did post-doctoral work at Harvard University. He is a priest of the Diocese of Fall River, Mass., and serves as director of education at The National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia. See www.tcbcenter.org.)

Letters Policy

Letters from readers are welcome and every effort will be made to include letters from as many people and representing as many viewpoints as possible. Letters should be informed, relevant, well expressed and temperate in tone. They must reflect a basic sense of courtesy and respect.

The editor reserves the right to select the letters that will be published and to edit letters from readers as necessary based on space availability, technical considerations, the personal sensitivity of the content (including spelling and grammar). In order to encourage opinions from a variety of people, space and time may be ordinarily limited to one letter every three months. Concise letters (usually less than 300 words) are more likely to be printed.

Letters must be signed, but for serious reasons of anonymity, they will not.

Send letters to “Letters to the Editor,” The Criterion, 1400 N. Meridian Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367. Readers with send letters via e-mail to criterion@archindy.org.
“You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your being, with all your strength, and with all your mind; love your neighbor as yourself” (Lk 10:27).

This Sunday, the 15th in Ordinary Time, the Church invites us to reflect on the familiar parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10: 25-37), which is often used as a reference point for Pope Francis in his homilies and presentations. It’s a powerful story, and the fact that we’ve all heard it many times should not allow us to take it for granted.

Jesus is speaking with “a scholar of the law” (Lk 10:25), a learned and presumably devout man who wants to test Jesus’ knowledge of the complex requirements of Jewish law. The question this scholar asks is an important one: “Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” (Lk 10:25) Jesus gives what the scholar says is the correct answer: “You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your mind, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself” (Lk 10:27).

This is, after all, one of the most fundamental teachings of the Hebrew Scriptures. By loving God and our neighbor, we experience life in all its fullness. “Do this and you shall live” (Lk 10:28). But what is “love” exactly? And who is my neighbor? These are both important questions because, as we know, love can mean very different things, and who we consider our neighbor says a lot about who we are and what our attitudes are toward people who are not like us.

The scholar in St. Luke’s Gospel doesn’t ask about the meaning of love, but he does test Jesus by asking “who is my neighbor?” (Lk 10:29) St. Luke tells us that by asking this question the scholar “wishes to justify himself” (Lk 10:29), which may mean that he was already predisposed to the traditional understanding that a neighbor is a member of one’s own community, someone who shares the customs, values and religious beliefs of his or her own kind.

Jesus answers the question “who is my neighbor?” with the parable we call the Good Samaritan (Lk 10:29-37), which may be full of contradictions. A man is severely beaten, robbed and left alone to die. Two travelers who we would ordinarily expect to offer assistance go out of their way to avoid dealing with this half-dead member of their own community. These “good Jews,” a priest and a Levite, were indifferent to the plight of one of their own. Their hearts were hardened, and in their selfishness they sinned against the commandment to love God in and through their neighbor.

This would be shocking enough—to have apparently righteous men display such callous disregard for one of their own. But the parable goes on to say that a foreigner, a Samaritan despised by the Jews, showed great compassion on the man’s suffering. “He came upon him, was moved with compassion at the sight. He approached the victim, poured oil and wine over his wounds and bandaged them. Then he lifted him up on his own animal, took him to an inn, and cared for him” (Lk 10:33-34).

Whereas the priest and Levite went out of their way to avoid helping one of their own kind, the foreigner went the extra mile and committed his time, effort and money to care for someone whom he didn’t know and the foreigner was one of his fellow Samaritans would say was an enemy not worth the trouble.

As we know, when he was finished telling the parable, Jesus asked, “Which of these three, in your opinion, was neighbor to the robbers’ victim?” (Lk 10:36) The scholar answered, “He who showed pity on him.” (Lk 10:37) Then Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise” (Lk 10:37).

The parable of the Good Samaritan answers both questions: What is love, and who is my neighbor? It tells us that love is action and that my neighbor is anyone who needs my help. It illustrates the fundamental truth that “loving God with all your heart, with all your being, with all your strength, and with all your mind” is not possible unless you also “love your neighbor as yourself.”

The parable of the Good Samaritan teaches us to let go of our preoccupation with self and be attentive to the needs of others, to share our time, talent and treasure with our neighbors. This is the meaning of love—returning to God all the gifts he has given us by sharing them generously (out of justice and charity) with our neighbors.

Let’s imitate this parable with open minds and hearts. Let’s make the Good Samaritan in our daily lives out of love for God and our neighbor. “Do this and you will live!” †
**July 26-27**


Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. Day of Silence, 8 a.m.-4 p.m., $35 per day, includes breakfast and lunch, room to use throughout the day, access to common areas and grounds. Depending on availability, overnight stay can include a single room, $28, $39 cold plate dinner available when information: Kristine Meyer, 317-545-7681, kmeyer@archindy.org, www.archindy.org/fatima.


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August 4-5

Mount St. Francis Center for Spirituality, Spirituality, Lotus House, 510 St. Anthony Dr., Mt. St. Francis. A Worldwide Marriage Encounter, orWWWmarriageministry@gmail.com.†

August 1-2

Mount St. Francis Center for Spirituality, Spirituality, Lotus House, 510 St. Anthony Dr., Mt. St. Francis. Fri.: 7 p.m.-Sat.: 2:30 p.m., $150 per person or $275 per married couple, includes overnight accommodations, evening snacks and breakfast, lunch and dinner. Information and registration: Kristine Meyer, 317-545-7681, kmeyer@archindy.org, www.archindy.org/fatima.

August 8-15

Providence Spiritual Care Conference, 1 Center of Proviences, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, 5301 W. 16th St., Indianapolis. Dementia Series: Learning, Caring, Elizabeth Collings and Kenneth Harsh presenting, three Thursdays, Session 1: Dementia 101: How We Approach is Everything; Session 2: Dementia-Related Caregiver Support, $10 per session, for $25 Information and registration: Kristine Meyer, 317-545-7681, kmeyer@archindy.org, www.archindy.org/wscc.

**July 27**

St. Mary Parish, 7751 S. Meridian St., Mitchell. Hog Roast and Craft Fair, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Information: 317-849-3570.

**July 28**

St. Augustine Parish, 1415 W. 30th St., Leopold. Parish Picnic, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., CF, $15兼includes chicken dinner, sides, music, silent auction, bingo, raffles, quilts, raffle tickets, children’s games, rides. Information: 812-843-5143.†

**August 4-6**

Mount St. Francis Center for Spirituality, Spirituality, Lotus House, 510 St. Anthony Dr., Mt. St. Francis. Mission Weekend, featuring guest speaker, the Rev. Mark and Jill Levine at 317-888-1892 and jbradleylevine@msn.com.†

**August 10**

St. Alban’s Parish, 6011 W. 56th St., Indianapolis. S. Meriden St., in Greenwood, from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. on Aug. 10. Mass will also be available at Greenwood Catholic Church, 1630 S. Meridian St., in the parish chapel. Archdiocese of Indianapolis.†

The conference is one of many enrichment opportunities offered by the Celebrate Marriage Conference at Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish. The cost is $40 per couple, which includes materials, lunch and child care (child care space may be limited).

To register—preferably by July 27—go to bit.ly/22D3s6e and scroll to the middle of the page. For more information, contact Marcie and Tom Renken at 410-307-2661 or olgemarriageministry@gmail.com.†

**August 11-18**

Providence Eucharistic Weekends are presented at Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish on Nov. 1-3, visit www.wscc.org/event.†

**August 12-18**

B & G ice cream truck.

**August 16-18**

**August 24-25**

**August 25-27**

St. Christopher Parish, 5301 W. 16th St., Indianapolis. Mid-Summer Festival, Thurs.: carryout available 4 p.m.-6 p.m.; Fri.: festival 4-7 p.m. Festival 4-7 p.m. Information: 317-420-5304.

**Seasonal Calendar**

Events Calendar

**For a complete list of events for the next four weeks as reported to The Criterion, log on to www.archindy.org/events**

**VIPs**

Announcements for couples celebrating 50, 55, 60, 65, 70 or more years of marriage are accepted. Go to bit.ly/2M4MQms or call 317-238-1385.
Opioid crisis reaches all corners of West Virginia, leaving few untouched

WHEELING, W.Va. (CNS)—West Virginia leads the nation in drug overdose death rates. With an average of 57.8 deaths per 100,000 residents, the state’s drug-fatality rate was nearly three times higher than the national average of 21.7 deaths.

The numbers were released in mid-June by a study conducted by the Commonwealth Fund, covering the year 2017.

In Indiana, the overdose death rate per 100,000 people rose from 9.8 in 2005 to 16.6 in 2013, and to 29.9 in 2017.

The crisis has been devastating for the state, and Baltimore Archbishop William E. Lori, as apostolic administrator of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, said the Catholic Church in West Virginia is committed to helping those suffering.

“Through the work of Catholic Charities, the Catholic Church in West Virginia has made a commitment to helping those who have been impacted by drug addiction, most especially the children and other family members of those suffering from drug addiction,” the archbishop said.

“Many parishes also have programs and efforts in place to address this crisis,” he added. “My office has been in discussions with representatives from the Department of Health and Human Resources and with our ecumenical partners through the council of churches to determine how the diocese can further help in the statewide effort to address the root causes and impact of drug addiction throughout West Virginia.”

The crisis has reached all corners of the state, leaving very few parts untouched. “It’s terrible,” said Sara Lindsay, chief program officer for Catholic Charities West Virginia. “It happens to anyone, to any person who has not had experience with the opioid crisis.”

Based in Wheeling, Lindsay recently traveled four hours south to Huntington in Cabell County to attend a regional health summit which touched on the state’s opioid crisis.

“It’s horrible in Huntington,” she told The Criterion, the diocesan newspaper. “In Cabell County, there are 178 overdose deaths per 100,000 people. Is that not staggering?”

She learned of the grim numbers at the health summit she attended at Cabell Huntington Hospital, which provided the findings based upon research from 2017. The summit looked at the root causes of the epidemic—especially poverty.

“From the Catholic Charities standpoint, we aim to address the opioid crisis on both ends of the spectrum,” Lindsay said. “From a preventative standpoint, we’re there to fill gaps and [meet] basic needs for people that are currently in the cycle of substance use, but also for their family members. It really affects the whole family. We see people coming to us that have suffered greatly.

“The other end of the spectrum,” she said. “‘Being a safety net for folks when they fall back, when they relapse into substance abuse—we’re there to help, to provide case management services and help them get back on track.’

“Case management helps individuals or families develop healthy interdependence and stability, and works with them to set goals toward improving their physical, emotional, and social well-being,” program officials said.

Catholic Charities West Virginia operates career readiness services at its Community Center for Learning and Advancement in Huntington, and found a disturbing trend among applicants.

“Sixty-nine percent of the people who are in our learning program reported a history of substance use in the past on their applications for our services, and then 46 percent of those individuals report long-term substance use as being a problem,” Lindsay said.

Because of this, Catholic Charities is working on expanding its career readiness services in Huntington, Lindsay said, to work with substance use and mental health treatment providers in the city to serve their clients through its education and training services program.

Emily Robinson, western regional director for the agency in Charleston, said the Community Center for Learning and Advancement, or CCLA, works closely with the addiction recovery organizations in Huntington.

“This is an important relationship,” she said, “because many in the addiction recovery community must have barriers to enrolling in post-secondary education or entry into the workforce. The staff of the CCLA can help ease all these barriers through providing academic instruction, career readiness certifications, and advising. The CCLA provides an important step in aiding people working through recovery.”

One individual, she said, enrolled in the learning center after receiving a referral from Cabell County Drug Court. The woman was very transparent about her substance abuse and needed assistance with increasing her work readiness skills, strengthening her resume and finding a job.

“During her time at the CCLA, she was able to take full advantage of the career certifications the program offers at no charge to the learner,” Robinson said. “She earned customer service, hospitality, and computer literacy certifications. She also worked with staff to create a professional resume and attended several job fairs. She has since landed a position with a local employer and now, having accomplished all her goals, has completed her work at the CCLA.”

Catholic Charities West Virginia also offers adult education for McDowell County area residents in Welch.

The Catholic agency also recently wrapped up a conference series on the substance abuse epidemic through its parish social ministry program. Sessions were held at four locations around the state, and focused on how substance abuse affects the brain and discussed healing in communities, reducing stigma, as well as showcasing different ways that communities have come together to respond to the crisis.

“Although this is a nationwide problem, the solution requires nothing less than local relationships and responses. We hope that people who attended the conference are passing the information along and taking action locally,” Jesuit Father Brian O’Donnell, executive director of the diocese’s Department of Social Ministries, said the sponsors will be looking into the possibility of more conferences in parts of the state that were not close to the previous sites. He said there are ways the community can be of aid for those impacted by the opioid crisis and, through the conference series, many links were created among those attending.

“I judge folks emerged from conferences knowing that substance use abuse really is the result of brain changes due to using drugs, that there are ways of aiding those raising children whose parents have been taken out of their lives by drug usage, and that there are models of counseling which have been showing good results,” he said.

In February, Catholic Charities West Virginia expanded its case management services in Wheeling to offer a new Relatives as Parents program to help meet the needs of caregivers and the children they are raising.

Thousands of children in West Virginia are currently being raised by relatives other than their biological parents, program officials said. Census data shows that this number is on the rise, and many cases are linked to drug addiction.

“For more information on the Archdiocese of Indianapolis’ Substance Abuse Ministry, including a Recovery Mass with the archbishop on Aug. 14 at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis at 7 p.m., go to bit.ly/2nH3fud or call 317-226-1521,” he said.

Catholic Charities West Virginia’s Center for Community Learning and Advancement office is seen in downtown Huntington, W.Va. on June 27. Many people suffering from opioid addiction have been referred to the center. (CNS photo/Catholic Review, The Catholic Spy

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**For more information? Go to [www.smithm.org](http://www.smithm.org) to see the full brochure and itinerary!**

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**St. Margaret Mary Church**

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Join Fr. Dan Bedel as he leads a trip in celebration of the Centennial Anniversary of St. Margaret Mary Parish, and to commemorate the Centennial Anniversary of St. Margaret Mary being declared a Saint!

$4,649 from Indianapolis (11 days). This Pilgrimage includes: Round trip airfare on Delta and RoyalDutch Airlines Breakfast and dinner per itinerary · Specially selected hotel accommodations, air-conditioned motor coach · Full-time tour manager · Departure tax and current fuel charge.

For information contact Jerry Moorman at jmoorman@smmh.org or visit the St. Margaret Mary Website at [www.smithm.org](http://www.smithm.org) to see the full brochure and itinerary!
Peter, the vicar of Christ on Earth and visible head of his Church, I do in life or in death humbly rejoice before my God.” Bishop Bruté died eight days later on June 26, 1839. His last wish for the Church in Indiana continued to be fulfilled 180 years later when dozens of teenage boys from the Archdiocese of Indianapolis took a pilgrimage to the Basilica of St. Francis Xavier in Vincennes and prayed at the tomb of Bishop Bruté there.

They were participants in the annual Bishop Bruté Days vocations camp sponsored by the archdiocesan vocations office.

Father Joseph Newton, archdiocesan vicar judicial and vice postulator of the beatification and canonization cause of Bishop Bruté, preached about Indiana’s first bishop during a homily at the Basilica of St. Francis Xavier in Vincennes.

“Throughout all his missionary work here in Indiana, he planted the seeds of the faith life of our local community, so much that the Diocese of Evansville and the Archdiocese of Indianapolis still derive so much from Bishop Bruté,” Father Newton said.

“Father Eric Augenstein, archdiocesan vocations director, spoke during the pilgrimage about the importance of taking Bishop Bruté Days participants to Vincennes.

“It was a day of hope and connections,” he said. “Hope in continuing the legacy that was begun by Bishop Bruté even today through a new generation of young men who are discerning the priesthood.

“They can see how that [legacy] has continued to be lived even today through those who are striving to follow the legacy of our pioneer bishop and the pioneer priests and lay people of the diocese.

Members of the Indianapolis Serra Club and of councils of the Knights of Columbus support Bishop Bruté Days, which took place this year on June 25-27.

“Thirty-nine high-school age boys from 16 parishes across central and southern Indiana and three outside the archdiocese participated in Bishop Bruté Days. A one-day track for junior high-age boys took place on June 27 and drew 19 participants.

Parents of the participants came to the seminary for a closing ceremony and supper on June 27.

“I just think that it’s a good group of people, good fraternity for the young men,” said Amy Tenhundfeld of All Saints Parish in Dearborn County. “It’s a good sense of community and is great to see all that support for our sons and our faith.”

To learn more about a vocation to the priesthood in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, visit www.HearGodsCall.com. To learn more about Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary in Indianapolis, visit www.bishopsimonbrute.org. To learn more about the beatification and canonization cause of the Servant of God Bishop Simon Bruté, visit www.archindy.org/brute.

Archdiocesan seminarians James “JJ” Huber, left, and Andrew Alig pray on June 25 while touching the tomb of the Servant of God Bishop Simon Bruté in the crypt of St. Francis Xavier Basilica in Vincennes. They were chaperones on a pilgrimage to Vincennes that was part of Bishop Bruté Days, an annual archdiocesan vocations camp for teenage boys open to a call to the priesthood.

(Bishop Bruté Days continued from page 1)

Archdiocesan seminarian Nick Rivelli, left, and his brother Louis view a crosier that belonged to the Servant of God Bishop Simon Bruté on June 25 in a library and museum on the grounds of St. Francis Xavier Basilica in Vincennes.
Boot camp strives to help teens build community

By Katie Rutter

Warm goodbyes and hugs were exchanged between two vastly different groups at the Unleavened Bread Café in Indianapolis on June 20. Three middle-aged black women hugged and waved to the departing group of energetic high schoolers, mostly white and Latino, as if they had been family.

“We love you!” affirmed the founder of the café, Elease Womack. “Thank you! God bless you!” some of the students replied.

The students had just spent several hours with the women as part of the Missionary Disciples Institute (MDI), a weeklong evangelization boot camp sponsored and hosted by Marian University in Indianapolis.

The goal of this experience was to have these teenagers encounter others—especially those whom they may not usually come into contact with—and find ways to build community.

“We’re all accompanying each other on our own journeys,” explained Billie Donis, a student at Mooresville High School and a member of St. Thomas More Parish, both in Mooresville. “Everybody’s growing with God in a different way, but it’s like we’re all helping each other.”

The Unleavened Bread Café is a gathering place and a home for women recovering from addictions, imprisonment, homelessness and other challenging circumstances.

In addition to hearing stories from some of the women, the students also tended the next-door community garden that supplies fresh produce for the café.

“I had this guy in my group, his name was Jerome, and he was very shy,” recalled Saul Cruz, an MDI attendee and member of St. Patrick Parish in Indianapolis. “He didn’t want to talk. And then when I opened up to him, he opened up to me, and that to me is an encounter. ‘It’s an encounter of a friend, I could say,’” Saul continued. “I think the easiest way to do it is just [by] opening up yourself to other people, because they’re more likely to open up to you.”

Throughout the week, the students also spent time listening to keynote speakers about ministry and evangelization. They processed these lessons in small groups led by a Marian University theology professor.

The fourth day of the camp, June 20, also gave the students an opportunity for an encounter with the shepherd who leads the Church in central and southern Indiana. Archbishop Charles C. Thompson celebrated Mass with the teenagers, then stayed to speak with them, hear their experiences and answer their questions.

“I thank you for such a great witness that you give, in giving up this time when you could be doing so many other things,” said the archbishop at the conclusion of the liturgy.

“The fact that you’re making Christ the center and [that] service in his name a priority in your lives gives a tremendous witness,” he added.

On the last day of the camp, the teenagers were commissioned to be missionary disciples in their own communities. They were challenged to make a “mission plan” that outlined concrete actions they would take to evangelize.

A number of students have shared their stories after MDI [and] what they’ve done with their mission plans, whether it be a small retreat that they did or sports and Bible studies,” explained Patrick Verhiley, the director of MDI.

“There’s another small community that brought it to their parish [that] we want to be more involved in the life of the Church,” and because of that the pastor made room for them in their parish council, so youth now have a spot at the parish council,” he recalled.

This year marks the third MDI. Verhiley said that plans for the fourth camp, to take place next summer, are already in motion.

“The whole point of this [institute] is that our young people have experienced joy in Christ, and they should be talking about it with other people,” Verhiley said. “They’re rising to the challenge, and that’s what we’re excited about.”

(Katie Rutter is a freelance writer and a member of St. Charles Borromeo Parish in Bloomington.)
Mom says miracle that saved her son a gift to whole Church

PEORIA, Ill. (CNS)—As Bonnie Engstrom watched lifesaving measures being taken for her son, who had been breathing for moments before without a pulse or drawing breath, she asked for help from the person whose prayerful support she knew he sought throughout her pregnancy: Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen.

After 61 minutes, just as emergency room personnel were about to pronounce him dead, James Fulton Engstrom began to breathe and his heart rate shot up to a normal level for a newborn. Despite dire prognoses for his future, the child has thrived and is now a healthy 8-year-old with a minuscule heart murmur, Star Wars and riding his bicycle.

Those who have heard the story of the Washington, Ill., boy call it a miracle, and Pope Francis has made it official. At a July 5 audience with Cardinal Angelo Becciu, prefect of the Congregation for Saints’ Causes, the pope formally approved the miracle attributed to the intercession of Archbishop Sheen, moving him one step closer to beatification.

With the miracle confirmed, the Diocese of Peoria can formally begin planning for the beatification of Archbishop Sheen.

In a recent interview with The Catholic Post, Peoria’s diocesan newspaper, Bonnie Engstrom said God had allowed the miracle to happen for his honor and glory.

“I really don’t think it was given to us, for us,” she said. “I think it was given to the Church, for the Church.”

After a “beautifully easy” pregnancy, Bonnie Engstrom went into labor with James Fulton on the evening of Sept. 15, 2010. Mother and baby had been healthy, and as his planned home birth progressed, he had a “perfect” heart rate.

As they prepared to welcome this baby into their family, which already included daughter Lydia and son Bennet, Bonnie and Travis Engstrom made room for another special friend—Archbishop Sheen.

“I remember Travis and I were watching YouTube videos of Bishop Sheen preaching, and there’s old footage of him on a television game show,” Bonnie said. “We were so impressed—he’s funny, he’s smart, and he’s just so approachable and warm. We were just so engaged with him.”

While Archbishop Sheen was a world-famous media pioneer who also had taught at The Catholic University of America in Washington and headed the U.S. branch of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, his roots were just down the road in El Paso, Ill. They knew his cause for canonization was being sponsored by the Diocese of Peoria, so the Engstroms decided if their unborn child was a boy they would name him James Fulton.

“I started asking, basically on a daily basis, for Fulton Sheen’s prayers, for his intercession in the life of my child and in our marriage—to walk with us and to walk with my son, that he would be a lifelong Catholic who would love God and love his faith, that he would be a man of integrity,” Bonnie said. “I was asking him to intercede every day while I was pregnant.”

She counted on that intercession again when, unknown to them, a rare true miracle formed in James Fulton’s umbilical cord and tightened during the final stages of labor. He was blue and lifeless when he arrived at 1:48 a.m. on Sept. 16, 2010.

“I remember sitting on my bedroom floor and watching them do CPR and in my head repeating over and over and over again, ‘Fulton Sheen, Fulton Sheen, Fulton Sheen,’” Bonnie said. “I really think it was the Holy Spirit giving me the words I needed to say in that moment, because I had no words.”

And after months of asking for Archbishop Sheen’s intercession, she said it was the most natural thing in the world to turn to him again and ask him to pray for her son.

Taken to OSF HealthCare St. Francis Medical Center in Peoria, James Fulton was given advanced medical treatment, but doctors determined he couldn’t be revived. After 61 minutes, however, his little heart started to beat.

The Engstroms were told he would probably be blind, and never walk, talk or be able to feed himself, but in the days and weeks that followed the boy defied them all and continued to make progress.

In September 2011, the Diocese of Peoria initiated an investigation into the events of James Fulton’s recovery, hearing testimony from family members, first responders, doctors, nurses and others present at his birth. Each testified that there was no medical explanation for the infant’s recovery.

The case was sent to the Congregation for Saints’ Causes in December 2011, and reviewed by panels of medical experts, theologians, and the cardinals and bishops of the congregation. The miracle received a unanimous recommendation from them all.

Although the date of beatification is not known at this time, Bishop Jenky said that it will be announced soon. The statement said he continues to be hopeful that it will take place during the 100th anniversary year of Archbishop Sheen’s ordination to the priesthood.

The El Paso, Ill., native was ordained on Sept. 20, 1919, at St. Mary’s Cathedral in Peoria, and would go on to teach at The Catholic University of America in Washington and lead the U.S. branch of the Society of the Propagation of the Faith.

The day after Archbishop Sheen’s remains returned to Peoria, Bonnie Engstrom brought five of her eight children, including James Fulton, to pray at his tomb.

“I still need his prayers. That’s what I was sitting there telling him: ‘I need you to stick by me and help me. Don’t stop interceding for James,’” she told The Catholic Post. “We need his prayers. I feel like we need his prayers just as much now as we did then.”

Online Lay Ministry Formation

The Archdiocese of Indianapolis has partnered with the University of Notre Dame and Catholic Distance University (CDU) to offer not-for-credit online theology classes:
• Earn certificate in Lay Ministry
• Complete 12 courses online with ND STEP program
• CDU offers classes on Catechism of the Catholic Church
• 20% discount for all employees, volunteers, and parishioners
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For more information, please log on to www.archindy.org/layministry.
England: “Good Luck to @roselavelle ’13 before the semifinal on July 2 against excitedly cheering her on via Twitter, and National Women’s Team that won their number 16, as part of the United States book sharing project. Today, this amazing dressed up as her hero, Mia Hamm, for a former superstar Mia Hamm: with a photo of a young Lavelle dressed as with a photo of a young Lavelle dressed as the Year her senior year.

Cincinnati.com. Mount Notre Dame was dazzling on the field, according to Cincinnati.com. Mount Notre Dame celebrated Lavelle’s high school athletic accomplishments, including her four-year-varsity performance, during which she earned First Team Honors, All-State player, and Cincinnati Enquirer Player of the Year her senior year.

But her passion for soccer dates back even earlier to her elementary school days. St. Vincent Ferrer School posted this along with a photo of a young Lavelle dressed as former superstar Mia Hamm: “Once upon a time, this little girl dressed up as her hero, Mia Hamm, for a book-sharing project. Today, this amazing woman won her own golden medal, wearing the number 16, as part of the United States National Women’s Team that won their 4th World Cup Championship, AND she won the Bronze Ball as the third-best player in the tournament! Now, little girls everywhere look up to her, and will be working hard to become like Rose.”

Hamm was a forward for the University of Wisconsin, a separate invitation from the Russian president, she was voted Most Athletic Celebrity: “Congratulations @USWNT! @roselavelle! #FIFAWWC19.”

On July 7, the U.S. won its record fourth FIFA Women’s World Cup title and second in a row, beating the Netherlands 2-0 on July 7. (CNS photo/Benoit Tessier, Reuters)

Lavelle skyrocketed from a star player, to a superstar: “Congratulations @USWNT! Couldn’t be prouder of our very own @roselavelle! #FIFAWWC19.”

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On July 7, the U.S. won its record fourth FIFA Women’s World Cup title and second in a row, beating the Netherlands 2-0 on July 7. (CNS photo/Benoit Tessier, Reuters)

The ongoing war in Eastern Ukraine, which carries out pastoral service both at home and in various places in the world.”

The meeting, it said, would look “at the life and needs of Ukraine in particular the Catholic Church of the Latin rite, in particular the Greek-Catholic Church, and in particular the Catholic Church of the Latin rite and with other churches and Christian communities.”

In 2016, Pope Francis asked Catholics throughout Europe to take up a special collection for people suffering from the war in Eastern Ukraine, and he made a $5 million donation of his own. The ongoing “Pope for Ukraine” project continues to assist people in the warzone and those displaced by the fighting.
Perspectives

Joyful Witness/Kimberly Pohovey

University of Mass unites us as one community in Christ

I believe there is more that unites us than divides us. A recent experience at Mass made this realization even more evident to me.

Last month, my husband and I were enjoying a belated 25th wedding anniversary trip to St. Lucia, an island paradise of the British Commonwealth. On the Sunday morning of our trip, we ventured into the village of Gaspé near St. Joseph the Worker Church. As our driver was about to drop us off outside the church, he asked, “Do you know where we are? We’re only going to preach longer than we were used to in the United States. My husband and I shivered at each other. “How much longer can that be?” I thought to myself.

As we entered the church dressed in our casual vacation clothing, we noted that we were very underdressed compared to the parishioners who were decked out in their Sunday finest. The ladies especially were very underdressed compared to the casual vacation clothing, we noted that we were always in slow motion.

Our Works of Charity/David Bethuram

Growing up in poverty impacts one’s emotions as an adult

I met Marilyn about eight years ago. She went through a lot at a young age to handle what she called the “dark cloud over her head.”

Marilyn grew up in poverty, in a family of nine children in a rural part of Indiana. She and her family lived on a sustenance diet and owned a very large garden. She said she had no memories of being hungry but, looking back on it, she remembers their diets were very restricted and simple.

She and her siblings did not bring lunch to school—either they skipped it or ate a piece of fruit. Other times, they ate a peanut butter sandwich with thick government commodity peanut butter. When Marilyn turned six, her mother noticed for the first time that other children did not bring clothing, food and matching socks! She and her family were very restricted and simple.

At school, she preferred to be alone. Growing up in poverty, she said, “It’s not a situation you simply brought dred. The long walk up the doorstep seemed like miles. She was always tired in school. What was in store for her was vulnerable during that time. She would get a slap, kick or knock daily.

She and her family were very restricted and simple.

If a child grows up in a crowded home in a rural area, the potential for neglect and abuse by her mother. She turned to the animals for comfort and companionship. She believes she had depression even as a small child. She was always in slow motion.

Faith at Home/Laura Kelly Fanucci

If this age of distraction, pay attention and see God in all things

“Behold” is my favorite word in Scripture. Every time I see or hear it, I am summoned to snap to attention and take notice. God is about to do something. Let’s not miss it.

But how can we be attentive when we are doing what we’re taught in a culture of constant distraction at our fingertips? I could cite statistics to shock you; we’ve all read them. If you’re like me, your stomach sinks whenever you hear how much time we spend on screens. I could draw from neuroscience or psychology, the latest findings on how our current relationship to technology is reshaping our brains. I could draw from neuroscience or psychology, the latest findings on how our current relationship to technology is reshaping our brains. I could draw from neuroscience or psychology, the latest findings on how our current relationship to technology is reshaping our brains. I could draw from neuroscience or psychology, the latest findings on how our current relationship to technology is reshaping our brains. I could draw from neuroscience or psychology, the latest findings on how our current relationship to technology is reshaping our brains. I could draw from neuroscience or psychology, the latest findings on how our current relationship to technology is reshaping our brains. I could draw from neuroscience or psychology, the latest findings on how our current relationship to technology is reshaping our brains.

But instead I will tell you a story.

While I was trying to finish this column on a steamy summer afternoon with a hula hoop, I observed every three-to-five minutes to witness their late-stage elaboration. “You have to see this!” a messenger would insist at my office door. “It’s so much better than last time.”

So I smiled, leave my work, follow them and witness what they wanted me to see.

The first few rounds were delightful. But after an hour of interruption after interruption, I was getting anxious. Agitation crept into my voice: “Guys, I have to finish this. Can I work for 10 minutes and then see what you’ve made?”

Blank stares, as if we were speaking a tongue I did not understand.

All they wanted was my attention in the present moment. If I could give it then, it didn’t matter.

So I sighed and left my computer to watch the same line of dominos knock down neatly one by one as kids cheered. Right then it clicked in my mind, too: Why not ask the ones who mattered what attention means to them?

“Use an example from a baseball game,” suggested one fan. “You have to pay attention or you might get hit in the face by a foul ball.”

Fair enough.

But then his younger brother knocked it out of the park: “You just have to look at someone and stay close to them.”

Beholding is holy looking, the spiritual practice of paying attention. Trying to glimpse God in everyday life can get us away from goodness in each other and the sacredness of the present moment, of being present to one another. Simply stop once a day and notice those around you as they are. Not as you hope they will be, not as you imagine they were in the past. But beholding them fully in the present and noticing God alive in them is profound.

Beholding is one of the most profound gifts we can offer to each other—in our marriages, families, and friendships. The simple act of seeing with love softens our gaze.

Twenty Something/Christina Capecchi

Living in largo: in praise of a slower pace

There is an art and a science to slow living. This summer, I’m trying to learn both.

In music you can measure it. The tempo called largo—Italian for slow and broad—ranges from 40 to 60 beats per minute.(Allegro, by contrast, moves at a fast pace, while presto races up to 200.) In an art form comes after the practice, once you turn off the metronome, you will love you. For me, that meant playing Mozart’s Clarinet Concerto with my grandpa, our horns and hearts in sync.

Now 88, my grandpa has tucked away his clarinet but keeps the tempo, experiencing the gift of largo as a listener, enjoying the younger music makers in his midst.

Sometimes I am astonished by the pace of life: how quickly we can make online purchases, how readily we can outsource, how we can disconnect.

This summer, I’m being shown another way, discovering little invitations to slow down. I’ve found a silver lining in spending time with a demented, long-lost cousin, hand-written on narrow sheets of a grocery-list pad. It was simple and new: a new piece, a new rhythm for the year’s longings for the home she sold last year.

The length surprised me, pausing me on the sofa in the cool of an Indiana August morning. It was simple:

So much of the spiritual journey is simply remembering—good and—being present, I told her. Writing about those memories helps me to process and learn. David Bethuram sent me a package from his cousin arrived: 10 black ballpoint pens, a collector from JetPens.com. I was bowled over by the elegance of the gift, the luxury: to try out each one and determine a favorite, comparing the ink flow and tip size.

I prefer the 0.7 mm Uni Jetstream Sport. Every letter-writing, blessedly berries, certificate signee offers a favorite pen. This is mine.

In our busy modern world, to sit down and write a letter is a profound affirmation of that person’s dignity. The recipient is worth each pen stroke, each thought—written for her or him alone.

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The Book of Deuteronomy, the source of the first reading for Mass this weekend, is one of the first five books of the Bible, collectively called the Pentateuch, from the Greek word meaning “five.” These five books have been venerated for millennia as containing the revelation of God to Moses, the greatest of all the ancient Hebrew prophets.

In this reading, Moses speaks to the people on God’s behalf. Moses speaks the word of God. He calls the people to obey God’s commandments. But, he is clear, no mere lip service or insincere motions or masquerade of devotion is acceptable. Again speaking for God, Moses summons the people to heartfelt, honest and total dedication to God. Obeying commandments therefore becomes a visible expression of a genuine attitude of the soul.

Moses also makes clear to the people that God, while almighty and invisible, and neither human nor bound to the Earth, is aware of human lives and communicates with humans.

For its second reading, the Church presents a passage from St. Paul’s Epistle to the Colossians. Colossae was a relatively important city in the Roman Empire’s northern Mediterranean world. A Christian community had formed in Colossae, and its spiritual vitality was Paul’s concern that led to the writing of this epistle.

The reading builds on the revelation given centuries earlier by Moses and by other prophets. God is invisible. Mortals see God, however, in the Lord Jesus who lived and breathed as a human. Risen and glorified, Jesus rules over all creation and creatures. He is the Head of the Church. Discipleship means accepting Jesus, but it also means uncompromising commitment to Jesus.

The Christian community in Colossae, brimming with the very life of the Holy Spirit, was much more than a coincidental gathering of persons professing Jesus as Lord. It was the gathering of people bonded together in Jesus and living in the spirit of Jesus. St. Luke’s Gospel provides a very basic concept of Christian theology. Jesus says that the true disciple must love God above all things and must love neighbor as oneself. At times, people assume that this admonition was uniquely from the New Testament. It was not. Ancient Judaism concerned itself not only with outward manifestations of obedience to God and formal worship of God, but also with the deep intentions of the heart.

Historic belief among Hebrews, as evidenced in this weekend’s first reading, required a genuine commitment of the mind and heart to God. This reading gives us the familiar and beautiful story of the Good Samaritan, with its powerful message of the availability of God’s love and the value of that love to bring about human life.

First-century Jews at the time regarded Samaritans as almost incapable of holiness or goodness. Invariably, inevitably, Samaritans simply were no good. In this parable, Jesus taught the virtue actually could be in a Samaritan, and more broadly, that anyone can love God and love others.

Reflection

Over the years, American culture has advanced so that today many Americans are more alert to and rejecting of prejudice. Admittedly, however, as evidenced sadly every day by hate-filled actions and words, prejudice is not dead in this country. Just follow the news, day by day.

The story of the Good Samaritan has components not utterly absent from American culture today.

So the story is relevant. So is the lesson. No one is beyond Christ’s love or is essentially bad. Anyone can be empowered to act in the example of Christ and follow the ancient admonition about loving others. The grace of the grace of the Spirit can heal and strengthen anyone.

It was the message that Paul preached, and that presents living examples around the world every day. †

Canon law allows bishops conferences to determine holy days of obligation

Am I puzzled that the Ascension is no longer observed on Thursday (40 days after Easter) as a holy day of obligation, while the feasts of the Assumption and of the Immaculate Conception are considered to be obligatory.

The story of the Ascension surely has a scriptural basis, while there are no direct scriptural references to the Assumption or the Immaculate Conception. In fact, to me, the Annunciation is more significant than these other two Marian feasts (since there is a scriptural basis), and yet on the Annunciation (on March 25) Catholics are not obliged to attend Mass. (Virginia)

A canonical #1246 of the Church’s Code of Canon Law allows national conferences of bishops to determine the number of holy days of obligation, as well as to determine the observance to a Sunday. As a result, there is considerable variation from country to country: Vatican City has 10 obligatory holy days, for example, while Canada has two.

Regarding the feast of the Ascension, in most of the United States that celebration has been transferred to the following Sunday. In the ecclesiastical provinces of Boston, Hartford, New York, Newark, Omaha and Philadelphia, the Ascension is still marked on the Thursday itself, with obligatory Mass attendance.

To your point about the Assumption and the Immaculate Conception, the papal decrees proclaiming these teachings affirmed what had been the historical and consistent belief of the Church. (Both decrees have their root, in part, in the archangel Gabriel’s proclamation in the Gospel of St. Luke of Mary as God’s “favored one” [Lk 1:28], sometimes translated “full of grace.”)

The Immaculate Conception (on Dec. 8) is the patroanal feast of the United States and, as in Ireland on the feast of St. Patrick, Catholics are required to participate at the Eucharist.

Q: My fiancé and I are Jewish. Is it possible to have a wedding ceremony recognized by the Catholic Church, and who from the Church would be willing to perform the wedding in a venue such as a hotel? We will be raising our future children in the Catholic Church.

My Journey to God

Believe

By Stephanie Jackson

He doesn’t ask for much for the path that he paved. It’s just that, he has requested from the lives that he saved. He made it easy for us to follow ten simple commands. He has a particular way that that echo across the lands. He never breaks his promises. Blessings, graces, and everlasting life for those who truly believe.

Stephanie Jackson is a member of St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Bedford. Photo: A halo around the sun is seen in Santiago, Chile, in 2017. Pope Francis said during his homily at Domus Sanctae Marthae on April 27, 2018, that heaven is not an eternally dull existence, but rather the completion of a journey toward a promised encounter with the Lord. (CNS photo/Mario Racc, EPA)
A police officer with a New York Police Department honor guard carries a casket containing the remains of a pre-born girl following her funeral Mass on June 29 at St. Mary-of-the-Knobs, Floyd County, June 27. The 1-year-old baby girl was believed to be a victim of a botched abortion that occurred around 5 months gestation when found in a bag on a Brooklyn street corner in February. The child was named Baby Monica by the Life Center for Youth, a Brooklyn-based pro-life crisis pregnancy agency that arranged the funeral service and subsequent burial at Cemetery Staten Island, N.Y. (CNS photo/Anthony DeStefano)

Woman’s healing is miracle in Cardinal Newman’s sainthood cause

CHICAGO (CNS) - A few prayers to Blessed John Henry Newman became a “constant dialogue” and then a desperate response to an emergency for Melissa Villalobos of Chicago.

Villalobos, who saved her life and the life of her unborn child, was accepted as the miracle needed for the 19th-century British cardinal’s canonization.

Pope Francis announced on July 1 that he will declare Blessed John Henry Newman a saint on Oct. 13. Coincidentally, the miracle accepted for his beatification in 2010 also involved someone from the United States: Deacon Jack Sullivan, 71, of Marshfield, Mass., was healed of a spinal condition in 2001.

Recounting her own story, Villalobos, 42, told Chicago Catholic that in 2011, “my husband brought home a couple of holy cards with Cardinal Newman’s picture on them. I put mine in the family room and one in our master bedroom.”

“I would pass his picture in the house, and he would pray to him for whatever our family’s needs were at the time—the children, my husband, myself. I really started to develop a very constant dialogue with him,” she said Villalobos, a mother of seven.

Her prayers produced a miraculous result in 2013 when she started bleeding during the first trimester of a pregnancy. At the time she had four children—ages 6, 5, 3 and 1—and a previous pregnancy that had ended in miscarriage.

“When I went to the doctor, he did an ultrasound and he said the placenta had become partially detached from the uterine wall, so there was a hole in the placenta and that hole was allowing blood to escape,” she said.

Villalobos also developed a subchorionic hematoma, which is a blood clot in the fetal membrane. It was two-to-half times the size of the baby. The doctors recommended bed rest.

On Friday, May 10, 2013, Villalobos went to the emergency room because the bleeding was worse. Again, the doctor recommended strict bed rest, which was difficult to imagine with four small children and a husband who had to work. The doctor also told the couple that a miscarriage was likely, but if the baby survived the pregnancy, she would likely be born prematurely because she would be too small.

Added to the stress was the fact that Villalobos’ husband, David, had to leave for work. “Wednesday morning I woke up in bed in a pool of blood. My husband was already on an airplane on his way to Atlanta,” Villalobos said.

She put off calling 911 because she didn’t know who would care for the children if she was taken in an ambulance to the hospital.

She made them breakfast and told them to stay put before going upstairs.

“Now the bleeding was really bad because I had just gone up the stairs, which I really shouldn’t have done. I kind of collapsed on the bathroom floor out of weakness and desperation,” Villalobos said.

Villalobos laid there thinking she should now call 911, but she realized she didn’t have her cellphone. She also knew the force of yelping for her kids would cause more damage and bleeding.

She was hoping one of her children would wander into her room so she could ask them for her phone to call 911, but they didn’t. She heard nothing from her husband, and the silence made her even more worried.

With thoughts of losing her unborn baby, sorry for her children downstairs and wondering if she could die, Villalobos uttered her fatal prayer.

“That then the scent of roses filled the bathroom,” Villalobos said. “The strongest scent of roses I’ve ever smelled.”

“I thought to myself in that moment, ‘Oh, my goodness! My baby is OK. We’re all OK.’ And I said, ‘Thank you, Cardinal Newman.’” Villalobos said.

That afternoon, Villalobos’ cure was confirmed during a weekly ultrasound. The doctor told her everything was “perfect” and there was no more hole in the placenta.

“I was able to resume my full active life as a mom,” she said.

Baby Gemma was born on Dec. 27, 2013, after a full pregnancy, weighing 8 pounds 8 ounces. She had no medical problems.

Villalobos waited until after Gemma was born to report the healing to the promoters of Cardinal Newman’s canonization. In the fall of 2014, representatives from Newman’s cause visited Chicago and met with Villalobos and her husband.

Officials from the Archdiocese of Chicago conducted the local study of the miracle. Villalobos was cured through the intercession of Cardinal Newman. The miracle was accepted and that Cardinal Newman would be canonized.

“I was cured through Newman’s intercession so that I could continue an ordinary life, if you will, but at the same time be completely devoted to him and especially God himself and our Church,” she said.

Remembering Baby Monica

A police officer with a New York Police Department honor guard carries a casket containing the remains of a pre-born girl following her funeral Mass on June 29 at St. Mary-of-the-Knobs, Floyd County, June 27. The 1-year-old baby girl was believed to be a victim of a botched abortion that occurred around 5 months gestation when found in a bag on a Brooklyn street corner in February. The child was named Baby Monica by the Life Center for Youth, a Brooklyn-based pro-life crisis pregnancy agency that arranged the funeral service and subsequent burial at Cemetery Staten Island, N.Y. (CNS photo/Anthony DeStefano)
Tri-Parish Mass

Above, Father Aaron Pfaff, right, celebrates a Mass on June 23 on the grounds of St. Bernard Parish in Frenchtown for members of that faith community along with those from St. Joseph Parish in Crawford County and St. Michael Parish in Bradford. Deacon John Jacobs, left, assists at the Mass. The three New Albany Deanery faith communities have built a cooperative relationship through the Connected in the Spirit planning process. (Submitted photo)

Above, children from St. Bernard Parish in Frenchtown, St. Joseph Parish in Crawford County and St. Michael Parish in Bradford take part in a sack race on June 23 on the grounds of St. Bernard Parish in Frenchtown. Lunch, games and horse-drawn wagon rides followed a Mass celebrated there. (Submitted photo)

Seymour Baby box becomes a reality thanks to Knights

By John Shaughnessy

As a member of the Knights of Columbus, Dave Eggers is proud of the Catholic organization’s commitment “to protect children, both born and unborn.”

So when Knights Council 1252 in Seymour became aware of an opportunity to support an effort to save the life of a newborn baby, Eggers and the other local members didn’t hesitate.

The council gave its emotional and financial support of a Safe Haven Baby Box that was installed at Seymour Fire Station 3 on June 14.

The baby box is “a safety device provided for under the state’s Safe Haven Law which legally permits a mother in crisis to safely, securely and anonymously surrender her unwanted newborn” without fear of criminal prosecution, according to the Safe Haven Baby Box organization.

“It’s a great program,” says Eggers, treasurer of the Knights of Columbus council in Seymour. It allows an opportunity for a mother who wants a better life for her child.

Once a baby is put in the box at the Seymour fire station, a silent alarm notifies 911 dispatchers. Firefighters are then immediately alerted to retrieve the baby from the box, which has heating and cooling mechanisms for the child’s safety.

The purchase of the box was made possible by Hunter Wart, a 2019 graduate of Columbus North High School who raised $10,000 as part of his senior project.

Seymour’s Knights of Columbus Council paid for installation of the baby box at the fire station. The council has also provided for a yearly maintenance fee to operate the box for years to come.

The baby box was blessed during the June 14 dedication by Father Daniel Staablin, pastor of St. Ambrose Parish in Seymour.

“I never expected all the people who showed up for the dedication,” says Eggers, a member of St. Ambrose.

“There were well over 100 people there, including parishioners from St. Ambrose. This is a big deal for Seymour.” It’s also an important part of the Knights’ mission, Eggers says.

As Catholics, as Knights, the protection of life in general and the protection of newborn babies in general is utmost to us.”

Hike, mountaintop Mass about praying, evangelizing, father-son bonding

WARREN, N.J. (CNS)—As the early morning fog lifted over the top of Mountain Tammany, the crackle of twigs being snapped underfoot mingled with light conversation and prayer.

But most often, the soft sounds of the woods were enveloped in a peaceful quiet, as about 150 men of all ages hiked North Jersey’s Dunningfield Creek Natural Area, Warren County, to the summit in silent contemplation.

At the peak, men from the Diocese of Trenton, many of whom were joined by their sons, knelt on the rocky ground as a bilingual Mass was celebrated.

Josue Arriola, director of the diocesan Department of Evangelization and Family Life, who sponsored the “Mass on Top of the Mountain” hike, said the day was about prayer, evangelization and creating bonds.

“Part of the goal was to strengthen men’s groups and to help them recruit new members,” he said, explaining that in addition, at least two parishes represented that day left with plans to start their own men’s groups where one didn’t previously exist.

“God’s presence was felt,” he told The Monitor, Trenton’s diocesan newspaper. “Men who started the hike alone reached the top with a new friend or a group.”

The principal celebrant of the June 15 Mass was Father Jorge Bedoya, associate pastor of St. Joan of Arc Parish in Marlton. The concelebrants were Father Javier Diaz, pastor of Christ the King Parish in Long Branch, and Divine Word Father Krzysztof Pipa, who is administrator of St. Ann Parish in Browns Mills.

John Muka, who helped organize the event, said he was grateful for all who helped make the event a success, and it made some ripples.

At the end of the hike, Muka said, “I kept thinking how we threw one rock in the pond, and it made some ripples. Now let’s figure out some other things to do. We have to keep throwing rocks in the pond. We have to keep making those ripples. There’s too much against us—the world is trying to pull us all apart.”

Andria said he was grateful for all who helped make the event a success, and the family and spousal support the men received.

“The encouragement of the wives was instrumental to making this possible,” he said. “They saw this as a beautiful opportunity for fathers and sons to interact.”

Men from the Diocese of Trenton, N.J., and their sons hike Mount Tammany in Knowlton Township, N.J., on June 15. About 150 men of all ages took part in the retreat and Mass focused on bringing men together for prayer, camaraderie and worship. (CNS photo/Jeff Brant)

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smoothing the rough edges of our imperfections.
We notice something new about our spouse, or we see how our children are changing and growing. We discover the difference it makes when we offer uninterrupted attention to a friend. The days are changing and growing. We discover smoothing the rough edges of our porch. I’m taking my time. The days are hymn “Our House.” I’m sitting on the porch. I’m taking my time. The days are stretching out before me with blue skies and bird songs. I’m trying to live in largo. I’m letting the word Waltz in my mind, looking upon its meaning. The Italian word, it turns out, derives from a Latin word, largus, meaning abundant. And this rings true: There is abundance to be found in slow living. (Christina Capriceci is a freelance writer from Inver Grove Heights, Minn.) †

Chicago Public Schools urged to take lesson from Catholic action on abuse

WASHINGTON (CNS)—The Chicago Public Schools (CPS) system should take lessons from the Catholic Church in dealing with child sexual abuse allegations, according to an op-ed in the Chicago Tribune.

The Catholic Church is by no means alone in its current battle against child abuse, nor is it ineffective in its preventative measures, said the author, Kristen McQueary.

CPS, out for rampant child abuse in the Chicago Tribune’s 2018 “Betrayer” series, has been both uncooperative and uninterested in conversations with the media in their classrooms. During the Chicago Tribune’s investigation into the sexual abuse scandal, school officials and former Mayor Rahm Emanuel fought to keep information out of the hands of journalists, until compelled by a lawsuit, McQueary noted.

Even then, CPS only provided what McQueary termed “heavily, ridiculously, redacted” documents to reporters. In response to CPS’s behavior, lawmakers passed a bill requiring more reporting and information-sharing in and about schools.

CPS currently faces 523 reports that child sexual abuse occurred within public schools from 2008 to 2017. That equates to one report per week, according to McQueary. She compared CPS’s response to the scandal to that of the Catholic Church.

“As despicable as the Catholic Church sex abuse scandal has been, the archdiocese here implemented a protocol for dealing with it, and strengthened that protocol repeatedly, beginning in the early 1990s,” she wrote on June 24.

To combat abuse, the Church publishes updated lists of all priests with allegations surrounding them, it has outed all priests with credible sexual abuse allegations, and it requires in-depth background checks for any person who might come in contact with children.

The Church’s protocol also requires anyone whose work in the Church involves children to participate in a training course. Straight from the mouths of convicted child sex abusers, the course presents video interviews explaining how sex offenders lured, gamed and eventually abused their targets. A separate segment also warns kids about what kind of behavior to be aware of and how to report inappropriate conduct.

“It is an ongoing, annual, expensive—but necessary—component of the Catholic Archdiocese’s response to the global child abuse scandal,” McQueary wrote.

CPS, on the other hand, has only just begun to require comprehensive background checks for its employees. Further, it has yet to publicly identify most of the accused teachers and faculty, and a new, pending law, requiring more comprehensive reporting, does not require that their names be released.