Bishop Fabre: Shootings show ‘all communities are affected by racism’

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Three mass shooting incidents in the United States in the span of a week are now showing that “their emotional impact is resonating, understandably, across the nation,” said Bishop Shelton J. Fabre of Houma-Thibodaux, La., chairman of the United States bishops’ Ad Hoc Committee Against Racism. “The effects of the evil and sin, we are all impacted by it.”

Bishop Fabre said many people think of racism as being a matter for blacks and whites, “but I think there are many, many faces to racism, so I think it resonates with the pastoral letter,” assembled by his committee and approved by the bishops last year, “when we say that this evil affects everyone, and all communities are affected by racism.”

The deadliest of the three shootings took place on Aug. 3 in El Paso, Texas, where accused gunman Patrick Crusius opened fire at a Walmart store in the city, with 22 dead and dozens more wounded. Many of the victims were Hispanic. Crusius had posted a manifesto—some called it a screed—online before taking his own life. At a garlic festival in Gilroy, Calif., a gunman shot nine people dead, by Hispanics.

Against an “invasion” of the United States manifesto—some called it a screed—online against an “invasion” of the United States by Hispanics.

Less than 24 hours after the El Paso shooting, a gunman shot nine people dead, including his own sister, at a nightclub in Dayton, Ohio, on Aug. 4 before police gunned him down. On July 28, a gunman killed three people at a garlic festival in Gilroy, Calif., before taking his own life. At least 15 others were injured.


“Many groups are still experiencing prejudice,” Hispanics among them, the pastor said.

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—The upcoming Synod of Bishops on the Amazon is an “urgent” gathering, not of scientists and politicians, but for the Church whose main focus in discussions will be evangelization, Pope Francis said in a new interview.

However, the importance of the Amazon region’s biodiversity and the current threats it faces also will be addressed because “together with the oceans, [the Amazon] contributes decisively to the survival of the planet. Much of the oxygen we breathe comes from there. That’s why deforestation means killing humanity,” he said.

The pope also talked about the dangers of surging nationalism and isolationist sentiments, saying, “I am worried because you hear speeches that resemble those by Hitler in 1934. ‘Us first, We... We...’ ”

Such thinking, he said, “is frightening.”

The pope’s comments came in an interview posted on Aug. 9 by Vatican Insider, the online news supplement to the Italian newspaper La Stampa.

Asked about the dangers of “sovereignism” or nationalism, the pope said it represented an attitude of “isolation” and closure.

“A country must be sovereign, but not closed” inside itself, he said.

National sovereignty, he said, “must be defended, but relations with other countries, with the European community, must also be protected and promoted.”

“Sovereignism,” on the other hand, he continued, is something that goes “too far” and “always ends badly—it leads to war.”

When asked about populism, the pope have embraced in this community, the mission to form saints and scholars.”

During the blessing liturgy, Archbishop Thompson emphasized the mission that informs all that will happen in the new building.

“Of course, we will be the teaching of many things: math, science, geography—along with teaching the faith of our Church,” he said. “But the most important thing that will go on in this building, as well as outside of it, is how we live that faith, how we proclaim the Good News of Jesus by our own witness to a new generation.”

In new interview, pope explains aim of synod, warns against nationalism

Members of St. Nicholas Parish in Ripley County and students at the faith community’s school listen on Aug. 4 as Archbishop Charles C. Thompson preaches during a liturgy to bless the parish’s new education center. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

Parish’s new $3 million education center continues 160-year focus of teaching the faith

By Sean Gallagher

RIPLEY COUNTY—Students returned to school on Aug. 7 at St. Nicholas School in Ripley County like their predecessors reaching back to 1861 when the school was founded as a mission of St. Nicholas Parish.

But those who began classes last week did so in a newly constructed $3 million education center, the latest change in the nearly 160-year history of St. Nicholas School.

Starting with a one-room log cabin, it moved into a brick structure in 1881. An addition to it was constructed in 1953, and modular buildings arrived at the school about 20 years ago.

Hundreds of parishioners gathered on Aug. 4 with their pastor, Father Shaun Whittington, and Archbishop Charles C. Thompson to bless the biggest change in the history of the parish’s school.

Through all the changes, the mission of St. Nicholas School has remained the same. It is there, as its motto says, to “form saints and scholars.”

“That is an incredible day,” said Father Whittington in a homily during the blessing. “It is not just about the building. It is about the mission of our Lord Jesus, the mission that we have embraced in this community, the mission to form saints and scholars.”
Pew survey shows majority of Catholics don’t believe in ‘Real Presence’

WASHINGTON (CNS)—A new study about the level of Catholic belief in the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist shows a majority of Catholics in the U.S. do not believe that the bread and wine used at Mass become the body and blood of Christ.

The report drew a strong rebuke from Cardinal Walter J. Tobin, archbishop of Newark, N.J., praised Pope Francis for his Aug. 4 letter to priests in which the pontiff expressed “gratitude to all those priests who faithfully and generously spend their lives in the service of others.”

The pope acknowledged the shame and frustration felt by priests who are discouraged by the actions of fellow clergy members who betrayed the trust of their flock through sexual abuse and abuse of conscience and power.

“The Holy Father’s letter to all priests is a most welcome gift, coming, as it does, at a particularly difficult time for the Church,” Cardinal Tobin said in an Aug. 7 statement as chairman of the newly formed U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations.

In his letter, which commemorated the 160th anniversary of the death of St. John Vianney, patron saint of priests, Pope Francis also shared his concern that many priests “feel themselves attacked and blamed for crimes they did not commit.”

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THE CRITERION

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August 21 – 10 a.m. Department head meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis.

August 22 – 10 a.m. Leadership Team meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center.

August 22 – 3:30 p.m. Catholic Communio Foundation Advisory Board meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center.

August 24 – 5:30 p.m. Confirmation for youths of St. Luke the Evangelist Parish at St. Luke the Evangelist Church, Indianapolis.

August 25 – 9:30 a.m. Mass to celebrate the new school year at Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary, Indianapolis.

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Bishops of Mississippi condemn ICE raid, roundup of workers

Mississippi’s Catholic bishops joined with the state’s Episcopal, Methodist and Lutheran bishops in condemning the Trump administration’s Aug. 7 raid on seven food processing plants in the state to round up workers living in the country illegally.

Such raids “only serve to ... cause the unacceptable suffering of thousands of children and their parents, and create widespread panic in our communities,” the religious leaders said in an Aug. 9 statement quoting Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), from a July letter he sent to President Donald J. Trump.

“We, the undersigned, condemn such an approach, which, as he [Cardinal DiNardo] rightly states, ‘has created a climate of fear in our parishes and communities across the United States,’ ” they said.

Signing the statement were Catholic Bishops Joseph R. Kopacz of Jackson and Louis F. Klimas III of Biloxi; Episcopal Bishop Brian R. Seage of Mississippi; Bishop James E. Swanson Sr. of the Mississippi Conference of the United Methodist Church; and Bishop H. Julian Gordy of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America’s Southeastern Synod.

In what is the biggest sweep in a decade, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) arrested and detained nearly 680 people. About 300 were released that evening and another 380 people remained in custody.

“These are not new laws, nor is the enforcement of them new,” ICE’s acting director, Matt Albence, said in a statement on Aug. 7. “The arrests today were the result of a yearlong criminal investigation. And the arrests and warrants that were executed today are just another step in that investigation.”

He said the employers could be charged with knowingly hiring workers who are in the country illegally and will be probed for tax, document and wage fraud.

Investigators told The New York Post daily newspaper that six of the seven processing plants were “willfully and unlawfully employing illegal aliens”; many of the workers used false names and had fake Social Security numbers, according to the newspaper.

On NBC’s “Meet the Press” on Aug. 11, Albence acknowledged the timing of the sweep “was unfortunate,” but added it was a result of a yearlong investigation.

The workers who were arrested “had no criminal record,” he said. “Many have lived and worked in our country for several years. This action has created a catastrophe for the families and is spreading fear throughout the immigrant community. Children were left homeless and traumatized by having their parents torn from them. It is unknown if some children remain alone.”

Instead of arresting “these hardworking people who have lived and worked in our country for many years, raised their families, and contributed their talents and resources to our communities,” Couch added, they should be given a path to citizenship.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officers look on after executing search warrants at time of order. EXPIRES: 5/3/19

Other Catholic agencies offering help to the families in need in Mississippi after the arrest of their breadwinner include Chicago-based Catholic Extension, which announced on Aug. 8 it would send help immediately, but also would begin fundraising through its “Holy Family Fund.” katv.com/2ZO07mK

Catholic Extension is the leading national supporter of missionary work in poor and remote parts of the United States. The Jackson diocese, one of the poorest in the country, has long been supported by the organization, including some of its parishes in towns where the raids took place. ↑
When we disagree with the Church

Is it OK for Catholics to disagree with what the Catholic Church teaches? How much of what the Church teaches must we accept? It’s quite clear that Catholics are affected by the values of our secular society. Most of those values are good, but often they are misguided.

Roben Navarrette is a columnist whose columns are syndicated in secular newspapers, including The Indianapolis Star. In his column that appeared in the July 21 issue of the Star, he lamented the results of a Pew Research Center poll that showed that more of the “religiously unaffiliated” said that our nation has a duty to welcome strangers than do Christians.

And, he said, “As a Catholic, the response from my heart is ‘Wrong’” because only 50 percent of Catholics polled recognized a responsibility to accept refugees and 45 percent did not. Yes, 45 percent of the Catholics polled somehow think that it’s OK not to welcome the stranger. How can that be? We cannot understand how any followers of Christ can possibly think it’s OK to turn away refugees. Welcoming and caring for the stranger and alien is one of the most preached commandments in the Bible. It’s one of the things we are going to be judged on, along with feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, clothing the naked, and visiting the sick and those in prison. Jesus said very clearly that those who do not do that will “will be thrown into eternal punishment” (Mt 25:46).

Navarrette was right when he wrote, “The Bible is clear about how we ought to treat the stranger. There is no spin, hedging, musing of words. This isn’t some nonbinding resolution that is open to interpretation. For people of faith, this is the word of God.” He quoted four Bible passages, but he could have quoted more than 100 others.

Christ’s message was very simple. He said that it was sumptuous up as love of God and love of neighbor, and everyone is our neighbor. There is no “Yes, but….” in any Catholic teaching about this. But it’s not only what the Church teaches about welcoming the stranger and the alien with which many Catholics disagree. Another Pew Research Center poll showed that 61 percent of those who identified themselves as Catholics support civil marriage between people of the same sex. The Church, and all Scripture, teach that any true marriage was designed by God as between one man and one woman.

God created man and woman as complementary and ordered them to be fruitful and multiply. Marriage, therefore, “is ordered toward the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of offspring” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, #1601).

We don’t need polls for us to know that many Catholics disagree with other teachings of the Church, including the use of contraceptives, sexual activities outside of marriage, cohabitation before or instead of marriage, in vitro fertilization, and abortion. Yet we claim that the Catholic Church condemns but our society accepts. So what about Catholics who disagree with the Church?

There is a hierarchy of dogmas in the Church. Catholics must believe the doctrines in the Nicene Creed and those that have been declared infallibly, such as the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption. Then they must accept other teachings of the Church that are contained in the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

When Catholics are so affected by our secular culture that they don’t accept what the Church teaches, we believe that they at least have an obligation to learn why the Church teaches what it does. This is similar to what the Church teachings about following one’s conscience. While we must always obey our conscience, we’re also obliged to have a well-formed conscience.

Unfortunately, today many Catholics have grown up without receiving a good religious education. Many simply don’t know what the Church teaches and why it teaches it. Therefore, we suggest that those who disagree with the Church’s teachings check the Catechism of the Catholic Church or the United States Catholic Catechism for Adults to learn why the Church teaches what it does. Of course, every Catholic family should also have a Catholic Bible to learn what Jesus taught. We must conform our minds to his.

—John F. Pilk

Letters to the Editor

Epidemic of shootings must remind us we ‘are our brother’s keeper’

This is in response to Mike Krokos’ editorial in the Aug. 9 issue of The Criterion about gun violence and mass shootings.

We can no longer afford to treat these as isolated incidents that are completely unpredictable and random and therefore unpreventable: we have an epidemic. It’s so much an epidemic that the evening news nowadays simply show up with a shooting—along with its other nightly news items, before moving on to sports and weather. Yet, as we are unable to come together as a country on health care, immigration and global warming, we are in gridlock over gun control. We can only hope that more “thoughts and prayers” in response to another shooting, and hope these shootings will somehow stop on their own.

But there are some things we can do now, at the local level, that do not involve politics. We can be a friend to the lonely and outcast. We can visit them and try to get them re-engaged in life: we can certainly invite them to church. If they have immediate needs, we can try to help or point them to help. As a default, we ought to at least make authorities aware of threatening Facebook posts. And certainly, merchants who see a person buying up guns and ammunition in bulk should contact the police.

Going increasingly to “open carry,” I think the wrong answer, and could quickly lead to our school and malls into “Wild West” shows where the new buzzword is “Draw!”

We can do much better to handle this, and it involves love. In the end, “love conquers all.”

And by the way, yes we really are our brother’s keeper.

Sonny Shanks Corydon

There are parallels between mass shootings, tragedy of abortion, reader says

“Assault on the nation,” the headline read. More innocent people—attending a garlic festival in Gilroy Calif., doing back-to-school shopping at a Walmart in El Paso Texas, having a drink with friends at a nightclub in Dayton, Ohio—killed. The perpetrators take aim with assault weapons, pull the trigger and destroy life—just like they did at the Aurora movie theater in Colorado, the Pulse night club in Orlando, and Sandy Hook Elementary School in Connecticut.

What is the root of this evil in our country? Where does this disrespect for human life originate?

Is it remotely possible for us to look at our acceptance of abortion—the intentional ending of a human life as a solution to an unwanted, unplanned or feared pregnancy—as a factor? Can we allow ourselves to acknowledge the reality of a tiny person, with unique DNA and a God-given right to life, be cut apart by a medical instrument, burned with chemical solution, destroyed by powerful suction, and that this violence against another human being is actually protected by our laws?

Do we justify our neglect to protect life by figuring that this child might have been abused or neglected anyway, may have been poor, may have had a disability? Would we justify any shooter’s selection of his victims based of any of the above?

We rightly mourn the tragic and senseless violence of a domestic terrorist with a high-powered rifle in his hand, slaughtering ordinary Americans. Yet somehow, we cannot bring ourselves to admit a parallel with the taking of innocent life in the womb.

Instead, we light up, in pink, the One World Trade Center in New York City to celebrate that victory of unlimited abortion, which we prefer to call “women’s rights.”

It’s strange to think that every one of us able to watch, read and contemplate the horror of recent mass shootings was given the gift of life by our mothers. Let’s use that privilege to stand up against violence that results in the death of innocent Americans, both in the womb and in our towns and cities.

Let’s be honest with ourselves and not allow either the National Abortion Rights Action League or the National Rifle Association to defend their weapons of choice in assaults against our fellow human beings.

E. Adele Schluger Indianapolis

Letters Policy

Letters from readers are published in The Criterion as part of the newspaper’s commitment to “the responsible exchange of freely-held and expressed opinion among the People of God” (Communion and Conversion). 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-written and temperate in tone. They must reflect a basic sense of courtesy and respect.

The editors reserve the right to select the letters that will be published and to edit letters from readers as necessary based on space limitations, pastoral sensitivity and content (including spelling and grammar). In order to encourage opinions from a variety of readers, frequent writers will ordinarily be 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, names may be withheld.

Send letters to “Letters to the Editor,” The Criterion, 1400 N. Meridian Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367. Readers with access to e-mail may send letters to criterion@archindy.org. †
“La Iglesia es el Cuerpo Místico de Cristo”

La Iglesia es el Cuerpo Místico de Cristo

“La Iglesia es el plan visible del amor de Dios por la humanidad porque Dios desea que toda la raza humana se convierta en un solo Pueblo de Dios, forme un solo Cuerpo de Cristo y se erija en un solo templo del Espíritu Santo” (Papa San Juan Pablo VI).

Durante estas últimas semanas del verano exploramos en esta columna las razones por las que debemos permanecer en la Iglesia que propone el obispo auxiliar de Los Ángeles Robert E. Barron a los católicos “que, comprensiblemente, se sienten desmotivados, escandalizados, sumamente enojados y que también quieren renunciar.

El análisis de la semana pasada de su libro titulado Cura a una Iglesia que sufre, un obispo habla sobre la crisis de abusos sexuales, trató acerca de la función exclusiva de la Iglesia como institución que habla sobre Dios “no solamente el fin de semana, ni una organización o una sociedad donde los seguidores de Jesús se reúnen para transmitir su mensaje y llevar adelante su obra. Creemos que la Iglesia es Jesucristo. Tal como lo expresa el obispo Barron “se trata de un organismo, no de una organización. Quienes se han arraigado a Jesucristo, han sido escogidos por Él para hacer su obra en el mundo”. Es un ser escogido por Jesús, guardador y portador de la visión de Cristo en el mundo, no únicamente en la costa este de los Estados Unidos, sino en todas las esferas de la sociedad en el mundo y en todas las circunstancias que afronta una y otra vez desde que fue creado.”

El cristiano de hoy se enfrenta a las mismas circunstancias que fue experimentado por los primeros cristianos. Pero si realmente entendemos lo que es la Iglesia y quiénes somos como parte del Cuerpo de Cristo, la idea de dejar la Iglesia (¿por qué y por quién?) se torna totalmente inaceptable. Tal como escribió el obispo Barron: “Nunca hay una buena razón para abandonar la Iglesia. Nunca. Hay acaso buenas razones para criticar a la gente de la Iglesia? Muchísimas. Hay acaso razones legítimas para irritarse ante la corrupción, la estafa, la mala administración, la corrupción, la mala conducta sexual por parte de los líderes de la Iglesia? Evidentemente. Pero ¿hay alguna razón para darle la espalda a la gracia de Cristo, en quien encontramos la vida eterna? No. Nunca, bajo ninguna circunstancia.”

Y sin embargo, tristemente las estadísticas muestran que muchos de nuestros hermanos nos han abandonado, algunos en un rapto de ira, otros simplemente se han apartado de la Iglesia como si estuvieran en el derecho a criticarlos, al contrario: debemos rezar por ellos y aprovechar cada oportunidad que se nos presente para recordarles de vuelta como integrantes plenos del cuerpo de Cristo, la Iglesia.
August 20
Mount St. Francis Center for Spirituality, 101 St. Anthony Dr., Ms. St. Francis. "AlIde Adoration Service," sponsored by Catalyst Catholic, 7-8 p.m., every third Tues. of the month, featuring guest speaker, praise band, silence and confessions, child care available. Information and child care reservations: Chris Rogers, chris@nadyouth.org, 812-923-8355.

August 21
Knights of Columbus Mater Dei Council #437, McGlynn Hall, 1395 N. Delaware St., Indianapolis. Theology on Tap, sponsored by the archdiocesan Young Adult and College Campus Ministry, doors open 6:15 p.m., 7 p.m. presentation followed by social time, all faiths welcome, free admission, welcome, free admission, parking, and food drink available for purchase. Information: indyhotcible.org, 317-261-3373.

August 22-24
St. Ann Parish, 6350 S. Moorewood Road, Indianapolis. Parish Festival. Thurs. 5-10 p.m., Fri. 5-11 p.m., Sat. 5-11:30 p.m., rides, food, family games. Information: 317-821-2909.

August 23
St. Paul Hermitage, 501 N. 17th Ave., Beech Grove. Ave Maria Guild, Fall Rummage Sale, 8:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. Information: 317-223-3607. vlgminim@aol.com.

Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish, 1459 Oak Ridge Road, Carmel (Lafayette diocese). Two events featuring psychologist, author and Catholic speaker Dr. Greg Botaro, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., 5:30-7:30 p.m., student-oriented mindfulness, noon-1:30 p.m., for Catholic school administrators and counselors regardless of diocese; lunch included, no cost, registration required by Aug. 20 at mcvicspcallcenter.org. "Smartphones, Kids and Anxiety: Should We Panic?" 7-8:30 p.m., all invited, no charge, registration not required. Information on both events: mcvicspcallcenter.org, 317-663-4039, ext. 3171.

August 24
St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish Social Hall, 10655 Haverstick Road, Carmel (Lafayette diocese). Trustful Surrender: A Seminar on Catholic Mindfulness, featuring psychologist, author and Catholic speaker Dr. Greg Botaro, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., noon-1:30 p.m., all invited, registration required by Aug. 20. Information and registration: mcvicspcallcenter.org, 317-663-4039, ext. 3171.

Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish, 5692 Central Ave., Indianapolis. Neighborhood 5K Run/Walk 9 a.m., $20 entry fee, Fall Festival 4-11 p.m., local music, children's games, restaurant food, beer and wine, $2 admission. Information: 317-257-2266.

August 24-25
St. Mary Parish, 1331 E. Hunter Robbins Way, Greenwood. On Eagles Wings 5K Walk/Run 9 a.m. (registration online at www.onewings5k.com), Festival, Sat. 5:30-11 p.m., Sun. 11 a.m.-4 p.m., only adults age 21 and older, no charge, registration required by Aug. 20. Information: 317-663-8427.

August 25


St. Joseph Church, 10655 Haverstick Road, Carmel (Lafayette diocese). Retreats and Programs

August 31
Mount St. Francis Center for Spirituality, 101 St. Anthony Dr., Ms. St. Francis. Music at the Mount, featuring Todd Hildreth Trio, outdoors on the lake, 6-8 p.m., bring lawn chairs or a blanket, beer, wine, cheese, and fruit trays available for purchase. 812-923-8817.

September 4
Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5533 E. 50th St., Indianapolis. Marian Consecration Program: 33 Days to Morning Glory, free program to guide small group in Marian consecration, seven weeks (Sept. 9, 16, 23, 30, Oct. 7 and 13), 7-8 p.m. Information: Khrisnie Meyer, 317-545-7681, kmeyer@archindy.org.

September 9
Mount St. Francis Center for Spirituality, 101 St. Anthony Dr., Ms. St. Francis. Mondays at the Mount, (Sept. 16, 23, 30), 10:30 a.m. and 7 p.m., learn about Scripture, saints and liturgical seasons. Information: www.mountmariansport.in, 812-923-8817.

Sisters of Providence in Terre Haute to host golf scramble on Sept. 27
The Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, in St. Mary-of-the-Woods, are hosting their 14th annual Scramble-at-One Golf Scramble at Hulman Links Golf Course. 900 Chamberlain St., in Terre Haute on Sept 27. Registration begins at 10:30 a.m. followed by lunch at 11 a.m. and a noon tee time. The awards ceremony with prizes will begin at 4:30 p.m. The cost is $125 for a single player or $500 for a foursome. Teams can be male, female or mixed. Sponsorships are available for $400. Registration is required by Sept. 20. Information: golf@providence.org or by calling 812-355-2817. For more information, e-mail pscress@providence.org.
Marian apparition claims not endorsed by diocese, local bishop

WASHINGTON (CNS)—The Diocese of Fort Worth, Texas, said claims that Bishop Michael F. Olson has confirmed alleged apparitions of Mary in Texas are not true. It said the bishop “does not encourage anyone to offer credence or support for these claimed apparitions.”

A website about the reported apparitions, made by the visionary and others, claimed to have received warning messages from Mary about a cleansing of the Church and a “removal of bad shepherds who had taken the place of true shepherds.” The website said these messages and oral and written accounts of what had happened were given to the Fort Worth Diocese.

While the diocese did not endorse its blessing to these reports, the statement does note “true apparitions” of Mary throughout history.

“While from time to time apparitions do occur [Lourdes, Fatima, Tepeyac], all true apparitions are simply an appeal to obey the command of Christ: Repent and believe in the Gospel,” it said, referring to Marian apparitions approved by the Church that took place in Lourdes, France, in 1858, Fatima, Portugal, in 1917, and the Hill of Tepeyac in Mexico City (Our Lady of Guadalupe) in 1531.

The statement also cautioned that one should “assist claims of apparitions and miracles with prudence, always presuming the goodwill of anyone making such a claim but with due regard for the integrity of the Catholic faith.”

Today, nearly 40 years after the initial reports of apparitions of Mary in Medjugorje, Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Church has not recognized the authenticity of these claims.

This May, the pope lifted the ban on official pilgrimages to the site, but an interim director of the Vatican press office said care must be taken to ensure the pilgrimages are not “interpreted as an authentication of well-known events, which still require examination by the Church.”

And in early August, senior Vatican representatives joined the first officially approved Church festival at Medjugorje.

The pope’s apostolic visitor to Medjugorje, Archbishop Henryk Hoser, retired archbishop of Warsaw, Poland, told KAI, Poland’s Catholic information agency, in Spanish include:
• “Lesson Planning with Scripture;”
• “That’s Just Your Opinion: Teaching about Truth and Goodness in a Relativistic Society;”
• “10 Things a Disciple of Jesus Does;”
• “An Evangelization Resource.”

The day will end with a panel of local Catholic artists discussing how their medium draws them closer to God. The panel will include a poet, fiction writer, painter, musician and dramatist.

The cost, which includes light morning refreshments and lunch, is $30 for those in Indianapolis deaneries, and $25 for all others.

Participants do not need to pay in advance, as the cost will be assessed at parcels. Registration is required by Sept. 6. For more information or to register, go to hit.ly/2YWNPqR (case sensitive).

For questions, e-mail catechesis@archindy.org.

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**New sessions added to archdiocesan event on evangelization and catechesis**

By Natalie Hoefer

Three new sessions have been added to the archdiocesan event on evangelization and catechesis. The 17th annual Gathering of Disciples event at Roncalli High School, 3300 Prague Road, Indianapolis, from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. on Sept. 7.

The yearly event provides formation and training from rack and ministry—especially catechists, school teachers, liturgical musicians, parish evangelization teams and those interested in evangelization.

The theme for the event is “The Gathering of Disciples is ‘Beauty, Goodness and Truth are Grown to Discipleship.’”

The keynote speaker is St. Francis of the Martyr George Sister Johanna Paruch, associate professor of theology at Franciscan University of Steubenville, Ohio.

The keynote address, “How Beauty Evangelizes and Draws Us to Discipleship—by God’s Grace,” will be presented in English and translated for Spanish speakers. Breakout sessions, however, will be offered in both languages.

The three new sessions added to the roster focus on music in Mass, the Church environment during different liturgical seasons, and the importance of retreats. They will be offered in English with Spanish translation available.

In the “Dressing the Church: Environments for Liturgical Seasons” session, participants will be challenged to revisit what the Church asks of this ministry and to reimagine spaces that enrich worship. The presentation will consider best practices, and the broad types and experiences of archdiocesan parishes.

In “Two Sessions: Building in Liturgical Seasons,” two sessions, before and after lunch, will explore broad principles of sacred music, including appropriate music to the liturgy, and how to handle transitions, how to choose music to challenge in music ministry, such as

The keynote session will be titled “Music in the Sacred Liturgy,” liturgical musicians will

The keynote speaker will be Andrew Motyka.

With Spanish translation available.

###

**St. Catherine of Siena Enochburg 82nd Annual Church Picnic Sunday, September 1, 2019 (The Sunday of Labor Day Weekend)**

“Famous Fireside Inn Fried Chicken” or Tender Roast Beef Dinners

Dinner served 11:00am-3:00pm EST

AdULTs - $12.00; Children 12 & under - $5.00

Additional items from 3:00-5:00pm

Mock Turtle Soup, Pies, Sandwiches and more!

Carry Outs available all day

Beer Garden from Noon-5pm

COME AND JOIN THE FUN!!!

St. Catherine of Siena Catholic Parish
9995 E. Base Rd., Greensburg IN 47240

Take New Point Exit 143 off I-74,
Go North on County Road 850 E for 1/2 mile,
Turn Right on Base Road, Go 2 miles

Lic. # 150003
relationship with him, an encounter with the person of Jesus Christ. This is why many of St. Nicholas Parish experienced during the blessing of their new education center was one of the two decades of dreams, plans, stewardship and hard work. The late Msgr. Bernard Schmitz, St. Nicholas' pastor from 2000–2005, proposed to his parishoners in February of that year the construction of a new school building. The idea, pastor Andy Hudepohl had been married for about a year and a half and was looking forward to sending any children of which he and his wife Angie might be blessed to the school in the years to come. Nearly 20 years later, he has had two children graduate from St. Nicholas School and two more who are currently students there.

“It’s awesome,” he said on the day of the blessing. “It’s so good to see. This building will be used for what matters to God. Without God, we wouldn’t have had it. It’s amazing to see.”

After the blessing liturgy, the education center was open for tours. Those who walked its halls viewed its nine classrooms, a space used both as a library and music room and a space that will serve as both a science, technology, engineering and mathematics laboratory and art room. It is a huge change from the 1881 building, demolished over the summer, that continued to be used until the end of the last academic year. Sherri Kirschner, St. Nicholas School’s principal, saw the large crowd on hand for the blessing as a sign of the parish’s support for the school.

“This community is all about Catholic education,” she said. “The number of people who have come out to volunteer to make this happen has been amazing to me. It’s amazing how much this community has come together to make this happen today.”

Most of the funds were raised for the new education center in 2017 as part of phase one of St. Nicholas’ Parish Heritage Project. Phase two will involve fundraising for and construction of a $2.8 million building that will feature a new gymnasium, cafeteria and meeting rooms.

St. Nicholas seventh-grade Leanne Ludwig has heard about the dreams of the parishioners for her entire life. So, she was overflowing with joy on the day it was blessed.

“This school building was like a star way out in the universe for the past 20 years,” Leanne said. “But in the past couple of years, it’s been like a shooting star. It’s just completely changed the campus. God has answered so many prayers. It’s been such a blessing to be a part of it.”

Seeing so many of her fellow parishioners contribute to its construction has affected her faith.

“I’ve spent more time praying about [the school],” Leanne said. “It really means a lot that all these people really cared so much about this and what’s going to happen in the school building. I’m so excited to be taught my faith in there and grow in my faith here.

Leanne’s parents were both students at St. Nicholas School and are glad to have their daughter and two other children enrolled there.

“St. Nicholas makes you feel part of a family,” said Christy Ludwig, Leanne’s mother. “They teach the faith. And every day, they practice the faith. That’s what’s important. They talk about Jesus all the time. What goes on inside the walls is amazing.”

Much more will happen inside the new education center than the teaching of St. Nicholas School students. The parish’s many ministries will also utilize it. That is a primary reason the building was called an education center rather than a school.

That impressed archdiocesan school superintendent Gina Fleming, who attended the blessing and Msgr. William F. Stumpf, archdiocesan vicar general, and archdiocesan chancellor Annette “Mickey” Lentz. Fleming also took note of the fact that a rural parish with less than 500 households took on a construction project that often only happens in much larger faith communities in suburban or urban areas.

“What this community has proven is that, with God’s grace and the determination of his people, so many amazing things can happen,” said Fleming. “The inspiration that this community has provided in terms of growth of ministry is one that can be replicated anywhere with God’s grace and the fortitude of the people.”

For more information about St. Nicholas Parish and its Heritage Project, go to stnicholas-summan.org/heritage-project

Elizabeth Vollmer, center, and Kendra Maple, right, stand at the entrance to their classrooms on Aug. 4 in the new education center at St. Nicholas Parish in Ripley County as Archbishop Charles C. Thompson blesses the facility. Assisting Archbishop Thompson is Deacon Michael Shumway of the Archdiocese of Louisville, Ky. [Photo by Sean Gallagher]

Father Shaun Whittington, right, ceremonially cuts a ribbon on Aug. 4 to open the new education center of St. Nicholas Parish in Ripley County. Looking on are Msgr. William F. Stumpf, archdiocesan vicar general, left, Deacon Michael Shumway of the Archdiocese of Louisville, Ky. [Photo by Sean Gallagher]

Father Shaun Whittington, right, ceremonially cuts a ribbon on Aug. 4 to open the new education center of St. Nicholas Parish in Ripley County. Looking on are Msgr. William F. Stumpf, archdiocesan vicar general, left, Deacon Michael Shumway of the Archdiocese of Louisville, Ky. [Photo by Sean Gallagher]

Elizabeth Vollmer, center, and Kendra Maple, right, stand at the entrance to their classrooms on Aug. 4 in the new education center at St. Nicholas Parish in Ripley County as Archbishop Charles C. Thompson blesses the facility. Assisting Archbishop Thompson is Deacon Michael Shumway of the Archdiocese of Louisville, Ky. [Photo by Sean Gallagher]

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Seminarians build fraternity during annual convocation

By Sean Gallagher

There has been a brotherhood among priests in the Church from its earliest days. In recent years, that fraternity has been encouraged more actively in part to help priests have the mutual support they need once they are ordained and enter into ministry.

The annual convocation of archdiocesan seminarians is an important way of building up this brotherhood before these possible future priests are ordained. It takes place shortly before the seminarians return to the two seminaries where they are enrolled: Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary in Indianapolis and Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad.

This year’s convocation took place on Aug. 5-7 at Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House in Indianapolis. During that time, the seminarians had meetings, prayed together, shared meals and took part in recreation.

Archbishop Charles C. Thompson met with the seminarians on Aug. 5 and was the principal celebrant of a Mass for the convocation that day. “This is the future leadership of our Church,” he said in an interview after the Mass. “They’re quality guys who are taking their vocations very seriously. They’re showing great courage and humility while discerning a call to the priesthood, to serve the people of God in central and southern Indiana.

“It’s important that we accompany them and walk with them in this formation and education journey.” He especially appreciates the willingness of the 25 archdiocesan seminarians from across central and southern Indiana to enter into priestly formation during a difficult time for the Church.

“If we look back at the history of the Church, it’s sometimes in those challenging moments that people stepped up,” Archbishop Thompson said. “Moments of challenge can cause people to discern, think about their faith and think about how their lives are meant to respond to the challenges. People are discerning and seeds are planted, but it sometimes takes challenges to bring that awareness and a willingness to act on that call forward.”

New seminarian Sam Strohmier was a bit anxious at the start of the convocation. The gathering was the first event as a seminarian for Strohmier, a member of St. Michael Parish in Brownsburg who will be a freshman at Bishop Bruté and the nearby Marian University.

“I’m looking forward to it, but I’m a little nervous,” he said about his upcoming first year in seminary. “I just want to make sure that this is what God’s calling me to.

“The fellowship is very nice. It feels like that they’re all there for me. I’m no longer by myself.”

Six year ago, seminarian Matthew Perrone was in Strohmier’s position, a nervous new seminarian attending his first convocation. With several years of priestly formation under his belt, including spending time this summer learning Spanish and Hispanic culture in Cuernavaca, Mexico, he enjoys the convocation.

“It’s an opportunity to just relax,” said Perrone, a member of St. Malachy Parish in Brownsburg who is entering his second year of formation at Saint Meinrad.

“When we’re in seminary, we’ve got the pressures of school work and other things we’re working on. But I can come here and just relax and enjoy their company. It’s awesome to have that experience.”

Knowing he is closer to priestly life and ministry now than he was when he started six years ago, Perrone recognizes the importance of fraternity among his fellow future priests.

“We need those times to get away together and have this community because one day, God willing, as a priest in a parish I’m going to need time to reconnect with my brother priests and take that time to refresh and rejuvenate with them,” he said.

Archdiocesan vocations director Father Eric Augenstein took a break on Aug. 6 from sharing in duckpin bowling with the seminarians to reflect on the fun of the convocation—and its importance.

“A lot of fraternity is built in casual settings, over a meal or a game of some kind,” Father Augenstein said. “So this is just an opportunity for us to just be with one another and not have any purpose or agenda other than just spending time with each other and getting to know each other. It builds good community.

“To see them grow in fraternity and get to know each other and spend time with each other makes for stronger seminary communities and a stronger presbyterate one day.”

(To learn more about a vocation to the priesthood in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, visit HearGodsCall.com.)
A man pays his respects on Aug. 8 at a memorial five days after a mass shooting on Aug. 3 at a Walmart store in El Paso, Texas. (CNS photo/Calgary D’Homs, Reuters)

It was emotionally warm and heartbreakingly heartrending” to tell families news they didn’t want to hear, but Father Marquez felt it important to be there to “minister to those suffering most.

“In the darkest moments, our faith was with them; it’s what we do as Christians,” he told Catholic News Service.

“But it’s not just the families,” he said. “It’s the community, the country. We must be there with the loved ones.”

“In the darkest moments, our faith was with them; it’s what we do as Christians,” he told Catholic News Service.

“May the Lord comfort them, console them, and guide them on their journey,” the priest said, “and comfort and console those who remain behind.”

The priest said he had offered the “Peace of Christ, the Peace of the Lord,” to the families and that the priest had said, “Peace be with you,” the priest said. He then invited the families to the reunification center where he stayed from 1 p.m. on Aug. 3 until about 5:30 p.m. the next day. Some slept during the night in the school building, but mostly they just waited, anxious to hear about friends or family members.

Father Marquez didn’t sleep. He said the initial crowd thinned as people were gradually reunited with their families, but by the next morning, those who remained were tired, frustrated and growing more fearful.

At 10 a.m. the next day when the tensions and emotions were high for those who had not received news, he suggested the group, several of whom were Catholic, have 30 minutes of prayer together, especially since it was a time when many people across the city would be at their respective churches.

Then they prayed, joined by some of the police officers who were at the center, he told them the moment was akin to when the Apostles were hiding after Jesus’ crucifixion.

“They were hurt, just like we are, and he showed up and said, ‘peace be with you,’” the priest said he told the group, stressing: “We need peace now in our community. … We need peace to change this tragedy.”

He said everyone hugged each other, which they did in their 24-hour vigil together, and he said that peace was a visible sign of the power of prayer and of faith which in turn helped them cope with tragic news they would later receive.

Vocation, mission of ‘people of God’ is focus of consultation’s statement

WASHINGTON (CNS)—The North American Orthodox-Catholic Theological Consultation has released a new agreed statement titled “The Vocation and Mission of the People of God: ‘A Chosen Race, a Royal Priesthood, a Holy Nation.’”

The consultation is co-chairs by Cardinal C. John Quinn of New York, Cardinal Kodwo Nsiah-Abban of Accra, Ghana, and Bishop Methodios of Boston, a native of Greece.

The final agreement was issued on Aug. 3 and was finalized at the most recent meeting of the consultation, which took place in late May of this year at the St. Methodios Faith and Heritage Center in Contoocook, N.H.

It says: “The members of the North American Orthodox-Catholic Consultation want first to affirm the vocation and ministry of each member of the Church:

A vocation and a ministry rooted in Christ’s call, first given through baptism and chrismation (a term used in Orthodox and Eastern Catholic Churches for ‘confirmation’), and lived out through the relationships, responsibilities and obligations each of us encounters in daily life, in family, church and society.

“More than five years in the making, this new text is an important approach to ecclesial dialogue,” according to a news release from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB).

“This document represents a consensus issue that has prevented full communion between the Churches, here the Catholic and Orthodox theologians examine together challenges that affect both Churches, in this case the role of the laity in the two traditions and the problem of clericalism.

“In both our Churches in recent decades,” says the document, “there have been continuing discussions about the proper role of the laity in worship, administration and witness.”

The Second Vatican Council in its 1963 “Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy” (“Sacrosanctum Concilium”), it says, expressed the Catholic Church’s desire “that all believers be brought to that full, conscious and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is required by the nature of the liturgy itself and to which the Christian people … have, in virtue of baptism, a right and a duty.”

“We recognize that both of our Churches have often been affected by a strong emphasis on the vocation and ministry of the clergy, even to the neglect of the ministry of the laity,” it continues. “A layperson has frequently been assumed … simply to be one who is not ordained. … This perspective appears to neglect the proper, wider vocation of every Christian disciple, as that is rooted in Christ’s call and in baptism.”

The consultation’s members, it says, “have come, therefore, to recognize the need to articulate together a common perspective on the people of God and the vocation and ministry of laity and the ordained within it, especially in light of contemporary challenges both in the Church and in society.”

It notes that from the consultation’s beginning in 1965, “lay theologians, both women and men, have been full and active participants.”

We gratefully affirm their contributions, and believe that our North American consultation can take a distinctive part in this important discussion. It is in that spirit that we respectfully submit this statement to our Churches,” it says.

The document emphasizes “the sacrament of baptism is foundational to our understanding of the Church, both Catholic and Orthodox, as the People of God, and that each person in the Church is a ‘people of God’ as a result of their baptism.”

The hallmark of the laity, the document says, is to be “a community of believers in Christ who have received the Holy Spirit in baptism, which unites the people of God as a single spiritual body.”

The document concludes: “ ‘There is one body and one Spirit,’ St. Paul reminds us, ‘just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call: one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all. But grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ’s gift’ (Eph 4:4-7). Enlivened by those particular gifts of God, may we continue to seek ways toward the unity in Christ of which Paul speaks.”

The North American Orthodox-Catholic Theological Consultation is sponsored jointly by the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States of America, the USCCB Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs and the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Since it was established, the consultation has issued 30 agreed statements on various topics. Like most such agreed statements, this new text does not speak officially for either Church. “However, it has been drafted by a highly competent group of theologians from both traditions and submitted to all the members of both Churches for their prayerful reflection and discussion,” said a USCCB news release.

(The full text of the statement can be found at bit.ly/3YDzZ9K)
Faith leaders ask end to hate, urge gun control

WASHINGTON (CNS)—The bells at the Cathedral Guadalupe in the Diocese of Dallas rang 31 times on the night of Aug. 7 for those killed in the mass shootings in El Paso, Texas, and Dayton, Ohio, as hundreds of people gathered inside the cathedral to pray for the victims, survivors and their families.

Dallas Bishop Edward J. Burns was the main celebrant of the evening bilingual Mass. He said the mass shootings have caused great pain and have “wounded” the communities in which they occurred, but also “for the hope of goodness around the country.”

Bishop Burns said in announcing the special mass that special liturgies, prayer services and other memorials have taken place at houses of worship across the country since the Aug. 3 and 4 shootings in Texas and Ohio that left 31 dead and dozens more injured.

In addition to statements from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), El Paso Bishop Mark J. Seitz and Cincinnati Archbishop Dennis M. Schnurr issued immediately after the shootings, remarks flowed to the president and Congress forth from other faith leaders across the country.

Many of these statements express sorrow and ask for prayers for the victims and their families, decry the rise of “racism and white supremacy” and call for “common sense gun control.”

Here are excerpts of some statements:

• General Council of the Adrian Dominican Sisters in Adrian, Mich.: “We weep with and pray for the families of the latest victims of murderous rampages in our country—this time in El Paso and Dayton. We cry out in anguish and sorrow for the destruction and pain that claims the lives of hundreds of victims each year and at the racial hatred and white nationalistic that is fueling horrific acts of domestic terrorism. This ‘new normal’ is not normal. It goes against the grain of every value of decency and goodness we claim as a nation and strive for as people of faith, as brothers and sisters created in the image and likeness of our one God. We insist on the presence of God in rebuilding our relationships, communities. None of these organizations have done a thing by us in a just society.”

• Sisters of Providence and Sisters of Providence of the Mother of Peace in the United States—speech that does not glorify violence rather than one that glorifies mass public communication, usually in the media, as a way to address serious issues facing our country by using meaningful and effective policies to end the violence. This includes keeping on the books assault weapons, out of the hands of those who would use them to inflict devastating harm on our communities and who address inadequate mental health care in this country. Finally, we must work toward a more responsible society just as we reject all forms of violence and hatred in our country. The fabric of our national conscience is at stake.”

• Metropolitan Archbishop Borys Gudzak of the Ukrainian Catholic Archdiocese of Philadelphia: “The shock of the wanton violence and massacres calls us to conversion. The gun culture, violence on every level of our lives, lack of personal morality, in general, in our country—all need conversion. The complex factors which stand behind a lot of rejection of immigrants, the compulsions and addictions, the mental illness and escalating aggression are not one common social denominator—other than a spiritual and moral one—the rejection of God, a lack of love for neighbor. The free-for-all in our popular culture, the use of guns as toys or instruments of revenge, the glorification of violence is simply because they were perceived to be abhorrent that some victims were targeted for gun violence prevention research, and for the passage of laws that ban assault weapons, require universal background checks for all gun sales, provide funding for gun violence prevention research, and makes the trafficking in weapons a federal crime.”

• Sisters of Mercy of the Americas Leadership Team: “It is impossible to ignore the sickening, racist motives of the El Paso shooter. This horrific violence was fueled by racist rhetoric, irresponsible gun laws and dehumanizing policies toward immigrants. We must, as a people, understand that we must stand together to condemn the white supremacist ideology that motivated that act and the values that it represents. It is the soul of our nation. We must further stand together to condemn the inflammatory, hateful speech voiced almost daily by public figures—including the president of the United States—speech that does nothing but fan the flames of violence. We agree with those who say we need to address the mental health problems that drive some to commit violence with guns. But let us not also be ignorant to the fact that for far too long, weapons designed for war have been far too easily accessible to civilians. Let us demand that, at a minimum, our legislators enact gun safety laws like H.R. 8, a bipartisan measure that calls for strict background checks for those purchasing guns. We... The Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, believe that we must all be actively working toward a culture that promotes peace and non-violence rather than one that glorifies violence and hate.”

• Catholic Charities USA: “Hate and violence have no place in our society. It is abhorrent that some victims were targeted simply because they were perceived to be immigrants. As an organization committed to helping vulnerable people, Catholic Charities USA stands in solidarity with others committed to overcoming painful divisions that lead to such disregard for human life. We join other leaders and people of good will in calling our elected officials to take immediate action to address the scourge of gun violence and xenophobia. We pray for the victims and their families, for the first responders and for healing in our suffering communities.”

• The Rev. Jennifer Butler, CEO Faith in Public Life: “On the seventh anniversary of the attack on the Sikh temple in Oak Creek, Wisconsin, which killed six people, we mourn continued mass murder in El Paso and Dayton. People of faith are in the ongoing discussions and conversations that others had condemned as racist. We are called to confront rhetoric that stokes racism and hatred of anyone perceived to be ‘different’ than we are. We are all responsible for monitoring our own language and actions and calling attention when the language and actions of others cross the line. We implore all legislative bodies to pass legislation that effectively prevents gun violence. We call for the passage of laws that ban assault weapons, require universal background checks for all gun sales, provide funding for gun violence prevention research, and makes the trafficking in weapons a federal crime.”

• Bishop Fabre said, “but I don't know anyone who uses an assault weapon.”

• Bishop Burns said in an ongoing series of listening sessions that started before the pastoral letter was approved—Bishop Fabre said those who have shared their experiences of racism and listened to those stories are “building bridges” to counteract racism. “We have many, many challenges and many, many struggles, but I don’t think that hope is lifted up enough,” he added.

“I think that healing can continue from the encounter that has begun in the listening session. That is where I see hope myself,” he added. “I have seen it, I have experienced it, and I just know that there are people who are doing wonderful things out there who aren’t getting recognition for what they’ve accomplished.

“If we have the kind of substantive discussions and encounters that we need to have,” Bishop Fabre said, “headlines that we see today will be the day of the past.”

(The full text of the U.S. bishops’ pastoral on racism can be found online at bit.ly/3UVG3eI)†
Worship and Evangelization Outreach/Teresa Venetta

**Spiritual direction and the traditions of listening**

Author Rachael Remen said, “Listening creates a holy silence. When you listen genuinely, you and the other can hear the truth in yourselves, often for the first time. In the silence of listening, you can know yourself and everyone. Listening is the oldest and perhaps the most powerful tool of healing.”

As a spiritual director, this resonates with me. The mind and the soul go where the direction is that of honoring a directee’s life story in the “sacred silence” of listening.

Through the loving accompaniment of a spiritual director, the directee can find the safe space to connect their unique journey with God’s love and mercy.

The basic premise of spiritual direction is universal. However, there are some traditions that carry out certain niches in this ministry. The following are two noted traditions.

In the Benedictine tradition, a theological vision is rooted in the Rule of St. Benedict, and spiritual direction is viewed as a form of prayer and worship. The practice of hospitality in spiritual direction opens both the director and the directee to receive God in unexpected ways when the director welcomes the directee as Christ.

In the Ignatian tradition, a spiritual direction is a flexible partnership of mutual respect and openness. It is a space to uncover and explore the directee’s relationship with God with the understanding that our most profound desires are shaped by the Holy Spirit and points to new practices for spiritual growth and service.

Often, the exercises are used in a time of personal discernment. They introduce methods for identifying inner movements or stirrings, and provide space to reflect on why they come from and where they are heading.

Oftentimes, a directee is unsure of this because they are overwhelmed by the distraction and chaos of everyday life.

*Festival of Faiths* allows us to embrace diversity in our midst

It’s good to be back from my July hiatus from this column! It’s always good to have a “sabbath rest.”

The *Festival of Faiths* is coming again this year, and the seventh annual celebration will be held on Sunday, Sept. 22, on the plaza in Indianapolis. I will be holding booths. See how the universal Church celebrates the diversity in our midst.

If you have a comment about the human side of faith and how it affects your journey, please reach out to me. It’s good to be back from my July hiatus from this column! It’s always good to have a “sabbath rest.”

*The Human Side*/Fr. Eugene hammick

**Reality checks helps us live a more prudent and orderly life**

“I have observed Satan falling like lightning from the sky” (Lk 10:18).

Jesus instructed his disciples, “When you travel light, I am sending you like sheep in the midst of wolves. Be as simple as serpents and simple as doves” (Mt 10:16).

This changed dramatically at the Second Vatican Council (1962-65). Spurred on by the “signs of the times,” the church embraced the “new evangelism” as a tipping point for humanity. Too many people died because of ethnic and religious hatreds. This was not the way of Christ.

Through the lens of the Gospel, St. Paul’s writings and Old Testament biblical texts, the church came to propose updated interpretations.

This led to a greater taking to heart the notion that all may be one” (Jn 17:21), such as recognizing the faith of Abraham as a common foundation for Jews, Christians, and Muslims, and the faith of the Canaanite woman—a non-Jew begging Jesus to cure her daughter of a demon (Mt 15:21-28), to cite just a few examples.

From the council came four important documents on embracing religious diversity. They include:

- Nov. 21, 1964: “Decree on Ecumenism” (“Unitatis Redintegratio”), and the “Dogmatic Constitution on the Church” (“Lumen Gentium”)

These documents made it abundantly clear that the Church sees a relation between it and all people seeking God through faith. It should help us to build the bridges that are necessary to reach all people who are leading.

Many of these churches and synods were an outgrowth of the Ecumenical Council of 1962-65 that remained in place in the Catholic Church and is fundamentally optimistic. It affirms the beauty of our differences, the search for the one God.

The Human Side

**Amid the Fray/Greg Erlandson**

A news junkie hits the beach

It’s good to be back from my July hiatus from this column! It’s always good to have a “sabbath rest.”

More and more people are telling me that they just can’t get away from the news. Like me, they find it overwhelming and depressing. It makes news. They must be doing this because it attracts an audience, but more than a few of us seem to be saying “enough is enough.”

The chronicle of disasters, offerings, tragedies, outrages and impending crises is sapping our spirits. The occasional heartwarming anecdote only serves to make the rest of the news even darker.

One factor for it, I think, is that most news junkies are so accustomed to keeping up with the news that they feel as though it is their job. They are so accustomed to keeping up with the news that they feel as though it is their job.

In my case, my decision to fast from daily news has been reinforced by a family vacation and my children. Seeing something that maybe I wasn’t, all requested that I throttle back from the newspapers and radio and TV that were part of my daily news consumption. For me, the news is more like work than a hobby—like I stuck to my mid-summer Lenten resolution.

And my reward for this sacrifice from hearers was a heightened sense of time with my kids and assorted significant others. I traded prose for poetry, and what a treat it was.

We had agreed to plant ourselves on a beach—an unusually stationary vacation plan. We would lay out our towels, roll up in the sand, tried to bodysurf some limp Atlantic Ocean waves, read books and played games. We could not escape the urge to peek at my smartphone in the bathroom or checking in with Twitter. Patish, I know. But for the first time, I stuck to my mid-summer Lenten resolution.

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The Book of Jeremiah is the source for the first reading for Mass this weekend. Jeremiah is regarded as one of the most important prophets. Along with Isaiah and Ezekiel, Jeremiah is traditionally identified as a “major prophet.” Jeremiah lived active as a prophet during the reign of King Josiah of Judah, or between 640 and 609 BC, some 2,600 years ago.

Generally, Josiah was seen as a good and upright king, loyal to God. It is good to remember that kingship in the eyes of the dominant ancient Hebrews was not a matter primarily of governing the country politically, or of conducting foreign alliances, or of commanding the military. Instead, for the faithful, the king’s responsibility, regardless of the person who was wearing the crown at any given time, was to see that the law of God was obeyed and that the people of the kingdom were aware and attentive to the covenant with God. Very often, this expectation meant that prophets placed themselves in conflict with the powerful.

Jeremiah in this reading is certainly involving himself in controversy. He made enemies. Not everyone appreciated his demands for fidelity, above all else, to religious obligations. Indeed, enemies gathered to plot his death.

Despite the personal risk, however, ignoring the scheming of his enemies, Jeremiah spoke with utter determination to religious obligations. Indeed, enemies ignoring his demands for fidelity, above all else, to religious obligations.

The Epistle to the Hebrews provides the second reading. Written for a Jewish audience, eloquent and even magisterially so with strong references to Hebrew history and symbolism, this epistle splendidly proclaims the Lord Jesus to be the Redeemer, the Lamb of God and the High Priest.

The Church is always inviting us to follow the Lord. Indeed, its most magnificent liturgical moments are in Holy Week when it tells us so brilliantly of the Lord’s love for us, given in the Eucharist and on Calvary and of the Lord’s identity as Son of God, affirmed by the resurrection. Nevertheless, in inviting us to discipleship, the Church never leads us down a primrose path. It is honest. It is straightforward in these readings. Following Christ means often fighting with the enemy. Putting us the other way will be the setting in which we live, people whom we love, or ourselves. As with Jeremiah and Christ, we must withstand all that is contrary to God.

The final bout with cancer lasted seven long journeys around the sun. Not one of those days passed without her fingers sliding slowly over her rosary beads as she entrusted all to the Queen of Heaven. Her husband joined her as his conditioned worsened.

The woman, too, became physically worn and emotionally tattered was the agony of seeing her husband suffer. He could not even smile at her during his final year—his condition robbed him of the use of those facial muscles. It was at night on Aug. 14 when the woman begged Mary Most Holy in prayer, “Please, Mary,” she implored, “end my husband’s misery.” Tomorrow is the feast of your Assumption. Please take him with you to Heaven.” Then she fell asleep.

When she awoke after midnight on Aug. 15, she rose and walked to her husband's bedroom. She was astonished at what she saw. Her husband's face was white, his hands, his neck, his eyes wide open and glistening. And he wore a broad, full-tooth smile that had been physically impossible for the last year.

His pain had left him, as had his soul. She knew then that God had given them a most profound gift: On the feast of our Lady's Assumption, the Mother of Grace, in the person of Mary, our Lady, had given him a foretaste of the joy of her glory-bound rise to Heaven.

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, August 18, 2019

- Jeremiah 38:4-6, 8-10
- Hebrews 12:1-4

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Daily Readings

Monday, August 19
St. John Eudes, priest
 Judges 2:11-19
Psalm 106:34-37, 39-40, 43ab-44
Matthew 19:16-22

Tuesday, August 20
St. Bernard, abbot and doctor of the Church
 Judges 6:11-24a
Psalm 83:9, 11-14
Matthew 19:23-30

Wednesday, August 21
St. Pius X, pope
 Judges 9:6-15
Psalm 21:2-7
Matthew 20:1-16

Thursday, August 22
The Queenship of Mary
 Judges 11:29-39a
Psalm 40:5, 7-10
Matthew 22:1-14

Friday, August 23
St. Luke of Zamora, virgin
Ruth 1:1, 3-6, 14b-16, 22
Psalm 146:5-10
Matthew 22:34-40

Saturday, August 24
St. Bartholomew, Apostle
Revelation 21:9-14
Psalm 145:10-13ab, 17-18
John 1:45-51

Sunday, August 25
Twenty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time
 Judges 6:12-13
Psalm 117:1-2
Hebrews 12:5-7, 11-13
Luke 12:22-30

My Journey to God

A Gift on the Feast of the Assumption
By Natalie Hoefer

I know a woman who has long had a devotion to the Blessed Mother. Time and again she sought Mary’s intercession while raising her children, managing the budget and coping with everyday life.

And time and again she placed her prayers and trust in the lap of Mother Mary as her husband suffered through several bouts of cancer. Persistently through her years, she offered rosaries, tears and pleas to Our Lady of Love.

As with Jeremiah and Christ, we must withstand all that is contrary to God.

Question Corner
Fr. Kenneth Doyle

While having reverence for Christ, Muslims deny his divinity

Earlier this year, I saw a person at Mass take the host and proceed to dip it into the consecrated wine before consuming it. Is this acceptable? I had never seen it before. (Virginia)

No. What you saw is not permissible—unless the one receiving Communion happened to be a priest concelebrating the Mass. The “General Instruction of the Roman Missal,” which includes the Church’s norms for the celebration of the Eucharist, does not allow for what you witnessed, which is called “intinction,” but limits self-communicating to priest-concelebrants.

The directions for intinction for other indicators that “each communicant, holding a Communion plate under the mouth, approaches the priest. . . . the priest takes a host, intincts it partly in the chalice and, showing it, says the body and blood of Christ,” before placing the host in the communicant’s mouth (#827).

The priests who are concelebrating, however, are permitted to dip the host into the precious blood and, holding a purificator under the mouth, self-communicate (#349). All of this is premised, of course, on the Church’s reverence for the Eucharist, taking care that no drops of the precious blood not be spilled.

In a 2002 document titled “Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion Under Both Kinds,” the U.S. bishops highlighted this caution saying, “The communicant, including the extraordinary minister, is never allowed to self-communicate, even by means of intinction. Communion under either form, bread or wine, must always be given by an ordinary or extraordinary minister of holy Communion” (#50).

It should be noted that intinction is a rare practice in most parishes outside Eastern Catholic Churches.

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


Franciscan Sister Mary Ann Miles served as an organist, in music education for decades

Franciscan Sister Mary Ann Miles, formerly Sister Tobie, died on Aug. 5 at the motherhouse of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis in Oldenburg. She was 94.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Aug. 8 at the Motherhouse Chapel in Oldenburg. Burial followed at the sisters’ cemetery.

Sister Mary Ann was born on April 29, 1925, in St. Meinrad, Ind. She entered the Congregation of the Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis in Oldenburg in 1942. She was professed on Aug. 6, 1942, and solemnly professed on Aug. 6, 1951. She was superior of the motherhouse from 1991 to 2000.

Sister Mary Ann ministered as a music educator for 50 years in Catholic schools in Indiana and Ohio. She also served as an organist in her various assignments and at the motherhouse for 65 years.

In the archdiocese, Sister Mary Ann served at St. Louis School in Batesville from 1947-50, and in Indianapolis at the former Holy Trinity School from 1954-59 and at St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) School from 1959-63. She ministered at the Oldenburg Academy of the Immaculate Conception in Oldenburg from 1968-73 and 1982-97. She served as a communications clerk at the motherhouse from 1991-2012, at which time she retired from ministry.

Memorial gifts may be sent to the Sisters of St. Francis, P.O. Box 100, Oldenburg, IN 47876-0100.

Helen Staublin, 89, mother of Father Daniel Staublin, died on Aug. 5

Helen R. (Kocher) Staublin, the mother of Father Daniel Staublin, pastor of St. Ambrose Parish in Seymour, died on Aug. 5 at St. John the Evangelist Methodist Hospital in Indianapolis. She was 89.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Aug. 10 at St. Ambrose Church in Seymour. Burial followed St. Ambrose Cemetery in Seymour.

Sister Mary Ann was born on Jan. 2, 1930, in Harrison, the daughter of Fred and Rose Kocher. At the time of her death, she was a member of St. Ambrose Parish. Previously, she was a member of St. Bartholomew Parish in Columbus.

Sister Mary Ann is survived by her husband William Staublin; her children Nancy Morgan of Glasgow, Ky.; Jenny O’Bryam of Mason, Ohio; Julie Sertich of Columbus, Father Daniel Staublin, David Staublin of Elizabethtown and Tony Staublin of Scipio, Ind.; nine grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

Memorial contributions may be made to St. Ambrose Parish, 325 S. Chestnut Street, Seymour, IN 47274-2329.

Rita Fritsch, 95, mother of Father Michael Fritsch, died on Aug. 6

Rita (Deal) Fritsch, the mother of Father Michael Fritsch, pastor of Mary Queen of Peace Parish in Danville, died on Aug. 6 at Union Hospital in Terre Haute. She was 95.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Aug. 10 at Annunciation Church in Brazil. Burial followed at Clearview Cemetery, also in Brazil.

Fritsch was born on Nov. 28, 1923, in Brazil. A lifelong member of Annunciation Parish, she was a 1942 graduate of Brazil High School. Fritsch worked in Indiana for the Indiana State Highway Department, the national headquarters of the American Legion and the Indianapolis Department of Forestry.

It was in her work as secretary in the last of these jobs that she met her future husband, Lee Fritsch. The two were married Jan. 23, 1954, and eventually had two children, their sons Donald Fritsch of Brazil, and Father Fritsch, both of whom survive. Lee Fritsch died on April 29, 2003.

Fritsch enjoyed going out dancing with her husband and cooking, especially holiday treats and candies she offered to family and friends. She and her late sister, Providence Sister Dorothy Deal, loved traveling as a pair, taking more than 30 trips together. 

The beauty of God’s creation

A butterfly lands on a xenia flower in a garden in rural Decatur County on Aug. 3. (Photo by Sean Golabek)
Vatican officials among Church leaders at Medjugorje youth festival

WARSZAW, Poland (CNS)—Senior Vatican representatives participated in the first officially approved Church festival at Medjugorje, three months after Catholic pilgrimages to the site in Bosnia-Herzegovina were authorized by the pope.

“We are called to share the difficulties of our contemporaries, and we have a responsibility to care for them,” Archbishop Rino Fisichella, president of the Pontifical Council for New Evangelization, told 60,000 young people from 97 countries on Aug. 5.

“For something to happen, we have to offer something: our poverty, our misery, our borders, our contradictions. But God will change all that because God works miracles,” he said during the final evening of Mladifest, or Youth Festival.

Cardinal Angelo De Donatis, papal vicar of the Rome Diocese, formally opened the event on Aug. 2. Fourteen archbishops and bishops from 140 Catholic priests joined the festivities, which concluded on Aug. 6.

Meanwhile, the pope’s apostolic visitor to Medjugorje, Archbishop Henryk Hoser, who presided over the festival on Aug. 3, said the hilltop shrine had become “a place of meeting and knowing,” adding “that the secret of Medjugorje” was “an invisible reality, but intense and very present.”

More than 40,000 apparitions have been claimed over 38 years at Medjugorje, where six teenagers reported an apparition of Mary on May 24, 1981, while herding sheep.

Some of the visionaries say Mary still appears to them daily with messages at the town, which was largely untouched by the 1992 to 1995 civil war in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

In May 2018, Pope Francis named Archbishop Hoser as apostolic visitor after a papal commission recommended that Medjugorje, which attracts up to 3 million visitors annually, be designated a pontifical shrine with Vatican oversight.

A ban on pilgrimages organized by Catholic dioceses and parishes was lifted under a papal decree on May 12, making possible the five-day festival.

Archbishop Jose Rodriguez Carballo, secretary of the Congregation for Institutions of Consecrated Life, said in an Aug. 2 address that the young pilgrims were “in deep unity” with the pope and grateful to him for “opening up the possibility of coming to pray here.”

Radio Medjugorje reported on Aug. 5 that parts of the festival had been watched via the Internet by more than 2.8 million people worldwide.

Speaking at an Aug. 2 press conference, Archbishop Hoser said the pope had “opened a great door to enter Medjugorje” with his May decree, adding that he was “persuaded and convinced” the Marian center offered “a model for new evangelization.”

“The fact apparitions are still continuing is the main obstacle to a final ruling, since it’s hard to decide on something which hasn’t finished. For now, the question of recognizing the authenticity of the apparitions remains in the hands of the Secretariat of State.”

“The Holy Sees’ position has crystallized clearly and has two aspects: the pastoral aspect, which is fully accepted, and the doctrinal aspect, meaning study of the apparitions,” he told KAI, Poland’s Catholic information agency.

“We are called to share the difficulties of our contemporaries, and we have a responsibility to care for them,” Archbishop Rino Fisichella, president of the Pontifical Council for New Evangelization, told 60,000 young people from 97 countries on Aug. 5. "For something to happen, we have to offer something: our poverty, our misery, our borders, our contradictions. But God will change all that because God works miracles,” he said during the final evening of Mladifest, or Youth Festival.

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The sun sets behind a statue of Mary on Apparition Hill in Medjugorje, Bosnia-Herzegovina, in this Feb. 26, 2011, file photo. Senior Vatican representatives joined dozens of bishops and hundreds of priests at the first officially approved Church youth festival at the site on Aug. 2-6, three months after Catholic pilgrimages were authorized by the pope. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)
Cornerstone laid in Yorkville

A cornerstone is laid for the new St. Martin Church in Yorkville in this photo from 1850. The former St. Martin Parish was founded in 1850 and is now part of All Saints Parish in Dearborn County. The church, which was constructed more than a century ago, is still in use.

(From the Archives)

WASHINGTON (CNS)—In 2014, a science project sparked the compassion of a 10-year-old girl from Colorado. So, she set out on a walk that would change the lives of an entire town of people in Kenya.

From that auspicious day in 2014 to the present, Jennifer Stuckenschneider, partnering with Unbound, raised more than $16,000 to build pumps and sanitary outhouses and latrines in Kenya, Honduras, India and Uganda.

Jennifer was in the midst of a Catholic school science project studying microorganisms through a microscope, when the thought popped into her head. She wondered about her Unbound pen pal, Rose, who lived in Kenya. She knew Rose had to walk a long way from her home to find water. She corresponded with Rose, that the Walk for Water was something that Rose, who lived in Kenya. She knew Rose had to walk a long way from her home to find water. She corresponded with Rose, that the Walk for Water was something that other people from her village who were not able to walk 5 kilometers to the nearest well also used Rose’s water.

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In that moment, Walking for Water was born. Four hundred people attended that first walk in September of 2014, and Jennifer raised enough money to install a pump for Rose and her family.

“I thank Jennifer for bringing us water so that I save on time after school. I do my washing and I have enough time for my studies,” Rose said. “I would also request her to visit us, for me to see her.”

Rose, now 12, is studying to be a surgeon one day.

But Jennifer discovered in her continued correspondence with Rose, that the Walk for Water didn’t just help her pen pal Rose’s mother, Rebecca Kangendi, said that other people from their village who were not able to walk 5 kilometers to the nearest well also used Rose’s water.

“They wrote this one letter when they talked about how it helped the people in the community as well.” Jennifer told Catholic News Service, “and I wanted to help more people.”

Then, Jennifer’s philanthropic endeavors began on a large scale. Now 16, Jennifer partners with Unbound and raised $3,200 to build 32 water tanks in Honduras.

The next year she raised $5,000, which Unbound used to build latrines in Kampala, Uganda, and last year she continued to raise funds and put three wells and a fan in a school in India.

Most of the money comes from donations and T-shirt and water bottle sales, which Jennifer, a budding artist, designs herself. Jennifer still heads a Walk for Water every September at Colorado Mesa University to raise awareness for the cause. Mesa Catholic campus ministry helps sponsor the event.

Founded by lay Catholics, Unbound is based in Kansas City, Kan., and serves the world’s poor through a sponsorship program.

(To donate, visit Jennifer’s website: https://stuck1011.wixsite.com/walkforwater
More information about Unbound can be found at www.unbound.org)

Pope Francis greets children who ride in the popemobile during his general audience in St. Peter’s Square at the Vatican on June 26. The Wednesday general audience offers the pope the opportunity to help people understand the fundamental teachings and beliefs of the Catholic faith.

(VATICAN CITY (CNS)—The Wednesday general audience offers the pope the opportunity to help people understand the fundamental teachings and beliefs of the Catholic faith.

Usually given in a clear and simple style, each catechesis is part of a longer series of talks dedicated to a major theme, which together form a deep, detailed overview of basic tenets or can offer a more analytical commentary and examination of Catholic teaching.

After a monthlong hiatus for the summer, Pope Francis returned with his weekly reflections on Aug. 7, marking his 280th catechesis in his six years as pope.

Following the tradition of his predecessors, Pope Francis has used the weekly gathering to get back to basics. In his talks, he continues a series of pontiffs started by Pope Benedict XVI on core Catholic beliefs for the Year of Faith as just Pope Benedict similarly conducted the series St. John Paul II had before he began his death on the Psalms and Canticles of Vespers.

The Wednesday general audience talk represents “an important weekly appointment” and, together with the pope’s other reflections before the Sunday Angelus or in his daily homilies, “they represent the spiritual heart of his Petrine ministry,” Vatican News said on Aug. 6.

It suggested people go back and read or listen to the complete texts, utilizing original Vatican sources at vatican.va or your www.youtube.com/user/vatican.va, in order to know “what Francis says, beyond certain mainstream interpretations that only amplify certain subjects.”

Elected just before Holy Week, Pope Francis dedicated his first catechesis in 2013 to Jesus’ journey from the cross to his resurrection, and how following Jesus means having to “come out of ourselves in order to go to meet others, to go towards the outskirts of existence, to be the first to take a step toward our brothers and our sisters” just as God did “to come among us.”

Right after, the pope picked up where the retired pope left off with catechesis for the Year of Faith, with multiple series on the Creed and the nature and mystery of the Church.

In 2014, he continued his reflections for the Year of Faith with a series on the sacraments, the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the Church, recalling Pope Benedict’s description of the Church “as an ecclesial ‘we’” because there is no “do it yourself” or “free agents” who only worry about their own relationship with Jesus “outside the communion and mediation of the Church. These are dangerous and harmful temptations,” Pope Francis said.

With a synod of bishops on the family in 2015, Pope Francis chose the theme “family, community and vocation” for his talks on the family. Introducing the series at his general audience on Dec. 10, 2014, he said no speech at the synod “called into question the fundamental truths of the sacrament of marriage, namely indissolubility, unity, fidelity and openness to life.” His audience talks also reflected on God’s plan for families and the real challenges they face.

He introduced a new series of 38 talks on mercy in 2016 for the Year of Mercy and, during Advent, ushered in a lengthy series on the nature of Christian hope that continued into 2017.

Christians are powerful witnesses to hope “each time we take the side of the least and of the marginalized, or do not respond to evil with evil, but rather with forgiveness, without vengeance, forgiving and blessing”—each time we do this—we shine forth as living and bright signs of hope, thus becoming instruments of solace and of peace, according to God’s heart. Thus, let us go forth with kindness, meekness, being amiable and doing good even to those who do not love us or who hurt us,” he said on April 5, 2017.

Of his talks starting in 2017, Pope Francis began a series of talks on the Mass, saying it was “fundamental that we Christians clearly understand the value and significance of the Holy Mass, in order to live ever more fully our relationship with God.”

“Although we are the ones who stand in procession to receive Communion,” he said in his catechesis on March 21, 2018, “in the Mass we believe in the very body, blood, soul and divinity of Jesus as we come to assimilate us to us in Him. There is an encounter with Jesus! To nourish oneself of the mysteries of Jesus and be transformed oneself to be changed by what we receive.

“As it unites us to Christ, tearing away from our obsessions, our preoccupations, our complicity, this Mass opens us and unites us to all those who are a single thing in him. This is the wonder of Communion: we become what we receive!” he said.

The Easter season of 2018 saw the start of a series of reflections returning to the sacraments, but focusing specifically on baptism and confirmation.

This was followed in June by the start of a series on the Ten Commandments and Jesus’ reminder that he has come “not to abolish [the law or the prophets] but to fulfill them” (Mt 5:17).

During Advent in 2018, Pope Francis started a series on the Lord’s Prayer, saying “even if we may have been praying for many years, we still have to learn!” Man’s prayer, this yearning which arises so naturally from his soul, is perhaps one of the deepest mysteries of the universe.”

On May 29, 2019, he began his reflections on the Acts of the Apostles, saying it speaks about the journey of the Gospel in the world, showing “the marvelous bond between the Word of God and the Holy Spirit, who inaugurates the time of evangelization.”

The week before his last general audience on June 26, 2019, Pope Francis referred to Pope Benedict, as he often does, saying “The Spirit works through divine attraction: God captivates us with his love and thus engages us, in order to move history and set in motion the processes through which new life seeps in.”