Pregnancy Care Center celebrates 30 years of helping parents, ‘leaning on God’

By Natalie Hoefer

CLEVES, Ohio—Melanie Bird was invited last year to meet a toddler. His great-grandmother had been caring for him, but was no longer able to do so.

“I was just going to meet him,” said Bird, who is 37. “He put his little arms up when he saw me for the first time and said, ‘Mommy!’ For me, it was history after that—I’ve been Mommy ever since.”

Bird and her husband Leslie, who obtained guardianship of the little boy this year, were overjoyed—and in sudden need of help.

They turned to the Christian-based Pregnancy Care Center of Southeast Indiana (PCC) in Lawrenceburg, where they received diapers, pull-ups, clothes—and so much more.

“They’re an extension of my family,” Bird said. “I just finished parenting classes and earned a car seat. In our last class we made vision boards, what your goals are and what you want to do in life. It was positive and uplifting.

“It’s been a journey. My life is changed for the better.”

Bird is one of the thousands of women, men and babies the PCC has helped in its three decades as the only organization of its kind serving a five-county area in southeastern Indiana.

“It’s all about life and saving those babies,” said PPC board president Jane Noel, a member of St. Lawrence Parish in Lawrenceburg. “Pregnancy Care Center is here to help these young girls, or even older women who find they’re pregnant. They have a place to go where people will love them and accept them, work with them and teach them, and give them support.”

Doubling in size, tripling in space

Dan and Cheryl McMullen shared the PCC’s history at a banquet fundraiser on Sept. 12 in Cleves, Ohio, not far from

Two archdiocesan schools earn honors as national Blue Ribbon Schools of Excellence

By John Shaughnessy

Two Indianapolis Catholic schools added to the outstanding academic tradition of Catholic education in the archdiocese when they recently received national recognition as Blue Ribbon Schools of Excellence by the U.S. Department of Education.

When the communities of Immaculate Heart of Mary School and St. Thomas Aquinas School were recognized on Sept. 26, they extended the archdiocese’s success concerning this national award. Archdiocesan schools have received 35 Blue Ribbon School of Excellence honors since the program started in 1982, according to Gina Fleming, superintendent of the 67 Catholic schools in the archdiocese.

“Each of our Catholic schools have much to celebrate, and it is incredibly exciting to commend such a notable achievement at not one but two Catholic schools in the archdiocese.” Fleming said.

Twelve schools in Indiana received the national award, with four of them being Catholic schools, she noted. Only
Pope Francis declares special Sunday each dedicated to word of God

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—To help the Church grow in love and faithful witness to God, Pope Francis has declared the third Sunday in Ordinary Time to be dedicated to the word of God.

Salvation, faith, unity and mercy all depend on knowing Christ and sacred Scripture, he said in a new document.

Devoting a special day “to the celebration, study and dissemination of the word of God” will help the Church “experience anew how the risen Lord opens up for us the treasury of his word and enables us to proclaim its unfathomable riches before the world,” the pope said.

The declaration to have a “Sunday of the Word of God” was made in a new document, given “motu proprio,” on the pope’s own initiative. Its title, “Aperuit Bing,” is based on a verse from the Gospel of St. Luke, “Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures” (Lk 24:45).

“The relationship between the risen Lord, the community of believers and sacred Scripture is inseparable,” the pope said in the apostolic letter, released by the Vatican on Sept. 30, the feast of St. John the Almoner, patron saint of biblical scholars.

“The Bible cannot just be the heritage of a few; it must be a collection of books for the benefit of a privileged few. It belongs, above all, to those called to hear its message and to recognize themselves in its words,” the pope wrote.

“The Bible is the book of the Lord’s people, so, in line with the feast of the Almoner, it is distributed from dispersion and division toward unity” as well as come to understand God’s love and become inspired to share it with others, he added.

Without the lord who opens people’s minds to his word, it is impossible to understand the Scriptures in depth, yet “without the Scriptures, the events of the mission of Jesus and of his Church in this world would remain incomprehensible,” he wrote.

Archbishop Rino Fisichella, president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting New Evangelization, told Vatican News on Sept. 30 that added emphasis on the importance of the word of God is needed because “the overwhelming majority of Catholics are not familiar with sacred Scripture. For many, the only time they hear the word of God is when they attend Mass, he added.

“The Bible is the most widely distributed book, but it is also perhaps the one most covered in dust because it is not held in our hands,” the archbishop said.

With this apostolic letter, the pope “invites us to hold the word of God in our hands every day as much as possible so that it becomes our prayer” and a greater part of one’s lived experience, he said.

Pope Francis said in the letter, “A day devoted to the Bible should not be seen as a yearly event but rather as an ongoing event, for we urgently need to grow in our knowledge and love of the Scriptures and of the risen Lord, who wants to speak his word and to break bread in the community of believers.”

“We need to develop a closer relationship with sacred Scripture; otherwise, our hearts will remain cold and our eyes shut, strick as we are by so many forms of blindness,” he wrote.

Sacred Scripture and the sacraments are inseparable, the archbishop said; people speak to everyone with his word in sacred Scripture, and if people “hear his voice and open their minds and hearts, then he will enter our lives and remain ever with us,” he said.

Father Francis also encouraged people to read the Second Vatican Council’s de laetissima doctrinam constitution, “Dei Verbum,” and Pope Benedict XVI’s apostolic exhortation, “Verbum Domini,” whose teachings remain “fundamental for our communities.”

The third Sunday in Ordinary Time falls during that part of the year when the Church is encouraged to strengthen its bonds with the Jewish people and to pray for Christian unity. That is why the pope said the celebration of the Sunday of the Word of God “has ecumenical value, since the Scriptures point out, for those who listen, the path to authentic and firm unity.”

WASHINGTON (CNS)—This year’s theme for Respect Life Month, “Christ Our Hope: In Every Season of Life,” is “particularly suited for our times,” said the chairman of the U.S. bishops’ Committee on Pro-Life Activities.

“Atacks against human life seem to grow ever more numerous and callous,” said Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann of Kansas City, Kan., and he urged Catholics to feel discomfort at these attacks to “hold fast to Christ, our hope.”

“We know that Christ has conquered sin and death. Through our Christian hope in the Resurrection, we are given the grace to persevere in faith,” he said in a Sept. 26 statement.

The need to “cherish, protect and defend human life” is year-round. Archbishop Naumann noted, but he said the Catholic Church in the U.S. sets aside each October as Respect Life Month to bring special attention to all life issues.

The first Sunday of October, Oct. 6 this year, is Respect Life Sunday.

Every October, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) launches a new yearlong cycle of the Respect Life Pray恭敬一national effort “to help Catholics understand, value and help cultivate respect for human life.”

The USCCB’s Secretariat of Pro Life Activities has prepared a packet for the 2019-2020 program containing materials and resources. The materials are available online at www.respectlife.org/october

During the year, the Catholic Church will celebrate the 25th anniversary of St. John Paul II’s encyclical “Evangelium Vitae” (“The Gospel of Life”), which addressed the sacredness of all human life, and it considered a social encyclical by many people because it includes strong statements on the need for the political world to do its part in protecting human life.

“The Church’s teaching on the value and inviolability of every human life remains an indispensable source of truth for all people,” Archbishop Naumann said in a letter with the USCCB pro-life materials found online. “As ‘Evangelium Vitae’ highlights,” he quoted the document’s opening sentence, “together we may offer this word of our new signs of hope, and work to ensure that justice and solidarity will increase and that a new culture of human life will be affirmed, for the building of an authentic civilization of truth and love” (#6).

He said the Catholic bishops need the help of the laity and their witness to help “change hearts and minds” and build “a true culture of life” that upholds the sanctity of life from conception to natural death.

Archbishop Naumann said, “Our daily activities take each of us to places only we can go, to people only we will meet. May we allow Christ to renew and strengthen us, that he may work through us in each moment of every day.”

Christ Our Hope: In Every Season of Life is Respect Life Month theme

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October 5 – 16, 2019
Judiciaries meeting at Indiana Interchurch Center, Indianapolis
Oct 10 – 10 a.m.
Leadership Forum, Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center
Oct 10 – 6 p.m.
United Catholic Appeal Mass and dinner at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral and Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center
Oct 12 – 4 p.m.
Confirmation Mass for youth of SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral
October 13 – 2 p.m.
Blessing of new Eagle Scout projects at Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, Indianapolis
October 16 – 10 a.m.
Department heads meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center
(Schedule subject to change.)

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Indiana bishops offer Church’s support after discovery of aborted babies

(Editors’ note: In response to the recent news of fetal remains found in the home of an Illinois doctor, the bishops of Indiana have issued the following statement.)

The horrific discovery last month of more than 2,200 fetal remains of unborn children in the Illinois home of the late abortionist Dr. Ulrich “George” Klopfer, who performed abortions in northern Indiana since the 1970s, is appalling. We mourn the innocent lives lost and pray for all who are involved in the tragedy of abortion.

Direct abortion is not health care. It is the intentional killing of innocent and defenseless human beings and is never acceptable. Innocent children are not the only victims. Women and men are victims, too. The wounds of abortion are deep, often resulting in emotional, psychological and spiritual suffering.

The Church offers hope and healing to all who suffer from the pain of abortion and its aftermath through our post-abortion ministry, Project Rachel. In addition to post-abortion ministry, the Church supports pregnancy centers, such as the Women’s Care Center, to provide assistance to ensure that dignity and proper disposal is accorded them.

All human life has dignity and deserves to be treated with respect from the moment of conception until natural death, including reverential handling of the dead. We trust Indiana authorities to treat the dead with respect from the moment of their passing. We rely on authorities to investigate the origins of the remains and to bring to justice all who are responsible.

The Church supports Project Rachel, a pregnancy loss and post-abortion ministry, whose mission is to help all who suffer from the pain of abortion.

“Project Rachel is a wonderful service for the Church, in both prayer and action,” says Reverend Michael J. Yadron, D.D., S.T.L., Diocese of Evansville—Diocesan Administrator, Diocese of Evansville. “It’s very humbling to be tasked with this. We definitely want to propel this forward.”

Please pray for all those involved in the tragedy of abortion. We also encourage all to support Project Rachel and other pregnancy centers to support and help for mothers-to-be and new mothers needing help in caring for their newborn child. We also encourage the Church to continue to support pregnancy centers providing post-abortion ministry, Project Rachel.

“Even if we do not always agree, we are the Church,” says Bishop David J. Malloy, Diocese of Rockford. “We are called to the service of others. We are to support those in need and to proclaim the Gospel of God’s love to all.”

For questions, contact: David Proctor, FOL Associate State Leader david.proctor@fameoflove.com  (765) 276-7500

For sponsorships and tickets, visit www.archindy.org/cc or contact Cheri Bush at 217-256-7441. Donations can also be made through the website or by contacting Bush.†
A young woman holds a rosary as people wait for Pope Francis’ arrival for a meeting with bishops, priests, religious, seminarians and catechists at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception in Wepmana, Mozambique, on Sept. 5. (AP photo/Paul Haring)

The month of the rosary

The Catholic Church has long observed October as the month of the rosary. If you haven’t included the rosary among your devotions, perhaps now would be a good time to start.

The rosary has been around since the late 12th century when laity began to pray 150 Hail Marys in imitation of the 150 psalms that monks chanted—and still do. St. Dominic and his followers popularized it in the 13th century, adding the meditations about the life of Jesus and Mary.

In the early 15th century, the Carmelite monk Dominic de Prussia divided the 150 Hail Marys into three sets of 50. He also began to call each of the 50 points of meditation a rosary (rose garden) because the rose was a symbol of joy and Mary was “the cause of our joy” for bearing Christ. Thus, the “Hail Mary” became the name for the devotion.

Another 15th-century Carmelite monk, Henry of Kalkar, then divided the 50 Hail Marys into decades with an Our Father between each.

In 1483, a Dominican priest wrote a book on the rosary called Our Dear Lady’s Psalter. It listed the same 15 mysteries that we meditate on through the 20th century, except that the fourth glorious mystery combined Mary’s assumption and coronation, and the fifth glorious mystery was the Last Judgment.

For most of the past 500 years, there were 15 official rosary mysteries—five joyful, which concern the beginning of our redemption (the annunciation, the visitation, the nativity of Jesus, the presentation of Jesus in the Temple, and finding the child Jesus in the Temple); five sorrowful, which pertain to Christ’s passion (the agony in the garden, the scourging, the crowning with thorns, the carrying of the cross, and the crucifixion); and the glorious (the resurrection, the ascension, the descent of the Holy Spirit, the assumption and the coronation of Mary).

A change in the mysteries was made at the beginning of this century, in 2002, when St. Pope John Paul II, recognizing the obvious gap between the finding of Jesus in the Temple when he was 12 and his passion and death, added the five luminous mysteries, or mysteries of light, recalling events in Jesus’ public ministry (his baptism, the wedding feast at Cana, the proclamation of the Kingdom of God, the transfiguration, and the institution of the Eucharist).

With those additions, the rosary really is what St. Pope Paul VI called it in his 1974 apostolic exhortation Marialis Cultus, “a compendium of the entire Gospel.”

During the 19th and early 20th centuries, the family rosary was a common practice among Catholic families, especially among the Irish. This devotion was especially promoted by Holy Cross Father Patrick Peyton, widely known as the “rosary priest.” He conceived the idea: “the family that prays together stays together,” and he led rosary crusades that attracted millions of people throughout the world for the rosary.

Another Holy Cross priest, who helped Father Peyton get started when both were seminarians, was Father Theodore Hesburgh. As president of the University of Notre Dame, he had great devotion to the mother of God and made sure he said the rosary daily. In his later years, when macular degeneration prevented him from praying the Liturgy of the Hours, he substituted with three rosaries every day.

Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen was another man known for his love of Mary and his devotion to the rosary. One of his books was The World’s First Love, an eloquent tribute to the Blessed Virgin and dedicated to “The Woman I Love.” As national director of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith (SPOF), he designed a World Mission Rosary, with different-colored beads for each of the five continents that Catholics prayed for and worked in. They were distributed to those who contributed to the SPOF. More than a quarter-million of them were mailed within a couple years.

This coming Monday, Oct. 7, the Church celebrates the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary. It was established because on that date in 1571 a Christian fleet defeated a Turkish fleet at the Battle of Lepanto while Pope St. Pius V and the people of Rome fasted and prayed the rosary.

Our Lady of the Rosary, pray for us.

—John F. Fink

Making Sense of Bioethics/Fr. Tad Pacholczyk

Palliative sedation while approaching death

Because suffering almost always imposes itself on us during life, and especially at the end of life, it can be helpful to reflect on the need to accept some personal suffering as we die, even as we recognize the importance of palliative steps and other comfort measures.

In the last week of life, more than 90 percent of patients experience management of symptoms such as pain, nausea, delirium, spasmatic contractions of muscles, vomiting, hallucinations or generalized agitation.

Many of these symptoms can be addressed with medication, and serious pain can often be managed with powerful opioids like morphine or fentanyl. These remedies, however, call for discretion in their use because at higher dosages they can limit mental clarity and induce an extended semi-dreamland state as death approaches.

The Catholic bishops in the U.S. offer an individual observance for people participating in our own dying process in their “Ethical and Religious Directives.” “Since a person has the right to prepare for his or her death while fully conscious,” it says, “he or she should not be deprived of consciousness without a compelling reason.”

In some cases, the harsh symptoms associated with dying may prove refractory to treatments, prompting physicians to consider, during a patient’s final stretch of days, the possibility of a globalized form of sedation known as “palliative sedation.” This approach, which relies on the monitored use of sedatives, barbiturates, narcotics, benzodiazepines or other anesthetic medications, entirely deprives the patient of consciousness as he or she enters into a deep coma state until death.

One concern is that the reception of the sacraments, whether confession, the anointing of the sick or the Eucharist/viaticum becomes problematic for an unconscious person.

This painful and complete shutting down of consciousness also raises broader ethical and spiritual concerns about a consciousnessless participation in one’s death, as well as the last days of life.

While for some dying patients, severe pain can almost entirely preclude their ability to think, once the intensity of their pain has been moderated, the possibility of reflection returns, as the mind no longer focuses on mere survival. Medications can thus be helpful to dying patients by keeping the harmful effects of pain within narrower limits. The decision, however, definitively to shut down, through palliative sedation, that very faculty by which we exercise the conscious “parenting of our actions” surely requires the gravest of motives.

St. John Paul II once remarked that the most important thing to be done to man in the cross of Jesus Christ. The Church has indeed ascribed a certain primacy to the way he endured and sanctified the sorrowful and painful events surrounding his crucifixion, even before he presented himself alive to his disciples or forgiving those through their sufferings. Jesus brought about the redemption of humanity and the mystery of crossing over to the other side.

Paradoxically, his redemptive activity upon the gibbet of the cross was pre- eminently an inward, interior movement of his will. Since he could not so much as budge a limb, his chief action and motion upon the cross was the surrender of his innermost being, embracing and assevering fully to God the Father’s designs.

He example reminds us how the movement from external activity to the acceptance of God’s will, from outward action in the world to inward activity of the soul, is one of the most important movements during our life’s journey.

When Christians speak of “the value of redemptive suffering,” they are hinting at, even in the midst of great personal suffering, human activity that can redeem an individual, corporal-looking glance to an inward, spiritually directed transcendence.

The inward movement of our final days and hours can involve a kind of transformation or conversion, sometimes quite dramatic in the case of the good thief.

We are justified for not to be entirely deprived of our consciousness except for the most extreme reasons. That’s why it’s so important for us to be prepared to learn how to endure some pain so that we can more fully cooperate with the redemptive meaning of suffering.

Our concluding time on Earth may thus serve an important role in our own eschatological development. Our human activity and hours can and should powerfully affect the course of that fulfillment in others around us, as we are called as living examples of how patients may engage in our final days and hours.

Letters Policy

Letters from readers are published in The Criterion as space and other considerations allow. The criterion’s commitment to “the responsible exchange of freely-held and expressed opinion among the People of God” (Comunio et Progressio, 116).

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“Los apóstoles dijeron al Señor:— ‘Aumenta nuestra fe’. El Señor les contestó:— ‘Si tuviera fe, aunque sólo fuera como un grano de mostaza, le dirían a esta morera: “Quítate de aquí y plántate en el mar”, y lo haría’. (Lc 17:5-6).

La lectura del Evangelio de este domingo, el 27° del tiempo ordinario, nos habla acerca del poder de la fe. San Lucas nos dice que los apóstoles le pidieron a Jesús que aumentara su fe. Podemos imaginar que se sentían bastante inadecuados al observar las maravillas que hacía Jesús, quien a menudo les decía a las personas que curaba “tu fe ha salido”. La respuesta de Jesús seguramente los dejó atónitos: “Si tuvieran fe, aunque sólo fuera como un grano de mostaza, le dirían a esta morera: ‘Quítate de aquí y plántate en el mar’, y lo harían”. (Lc 17:6).

La mayoría de nosotros puede nombrar uno o más de estos santos de todos los tiempos. ¿Qué nos deja esta enseñanza? ¿Cómo podría ser mejor nuestra fe? ¿Cuál es el reconocimiento de que Dios, que es amor, nos conoce por nombre, nos ama incondicionalmente y nos invita a compartir este gran amor con los demás? No podemos ver a Dios, pero existen pruebas indiscutibles de la presencia de Dios a través del testimonio de hombres y mujeres cuya fe es tan fuerte que es capaz de obrar milagros en sus vidas cotidianas. La mayoría de nosotros puede nombrar a uno o más de estos santos de todos los días, personas que nos inspiran a ser mejores y a anhelar aumentar nuestra fe.

“Por la fe comprendemos que el universo ha sido modelado por la palabra de Dios, de modo que lo visible tiene su origen en lo invisible” (Heb 11:3). En otras palabras, el mundo que conocemos y el que nos rodea se ha conformado bajo el poder de la fe. Podemos aumentar nuestra fe a medida que lo encontramos en la oración, en las escrituras, en los sacramentos y en el cuidado de nuestros hermanos necesitados.

La fe que aumentó considerablemente fue alentada por la confianza en que Dios les concedió la fuerza para hacerlo. “Nuestra fe es una base sobre la que nos apoyamos en nuestra vida diaria. ¿Qué es la fe para nosotros?” (Heb 11:1).

“La fe, aunque sea como un grano de mostaza, puede obrar maravillas. Mediante un aumento de la fe podemos soportar una enfermedad que debilita nuestra fe. De la misma manera, una mayor fe nos permitirá perdonar a alguien que nos ha herido sin exigir algo a cambio. Una fe ampliada podría darnos el valor para cambiar de una vida de inactividad a una más activa. La fe nos desempeña un papel importante en nuestras vidas. La fe es un poderoso agente que nos permite hacer cosas que antes no podíamos” (Heb 11:1).

Por encima de todo, lo que esperamos es amar y ser amados. Con fe, podemos alcanzar esta meta, primero y principal, mediante el reconocimiento de que Dios, que es amor, nos conoce por nombre, nos ama incondicionalmente y nos invita a compartir este gran amor con los demás.
Motorcycle ride to benefit Little Sisters of the Poor for Oct. 13

A motorcycle ride benefiting the Little Sisters of the Poor in Indianapolis will take place starting at Harley-Davidson Indianapolis, 12400 Reynolds Dr., in Fishers (Lafayette Diocese) on Oct. 13.

Registration begins at 11 a.m. and the ride starts at noon. The ride will end at 3 p.m. with a reception to follow.

Children’s activities will also start at noon at the dealership.

The cost is $20 for a single rider or $30 for a two-up and includes a commemorative T-shirt. T-shirts will also be available for purchase.

For more information on the event, call Jeanmarie Kane at 317-545-5767 or e-mail jeanmarie@little sistersofthepoorindy.org.

Announcements for couples celebrating 50, 55, 60, 65, 70 or more years of marriage are accepted. Go to bit.ly/54MyQm or call 317-236-1555.

Nancy and John Hirschman will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on Oct. 4.

The couple was married in the former St. Anne Church in Hamburg on Oct. 4, 1969.

They have three children: Bridget, Virginia and Samuel. They also have 11 grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

Robert and MaryAnn (Bedel) Niese, members of St. Mary Parish in Greensburg, celebrated their 55th wedding anniversary on Sept. 5.

The couple was married in Immaculate Conception Church in Millisoon on Sept. 5, 1964.

They are the parents of Bradley, Patricia Louagie, Jennifer Slagle, Sandy Sneed, Christopher, Matthew, Samuel, Vincent and the late Bernard Rennekamp.

They also have 34 grandchildren and one great-grandchild.
Sisters of Providence celebrate significant jubilees

Citation staff report

In 2019, 19 Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods celebrated significant milestones in the congregation.

75-year jubilarians

Sister Rita Clare Gerardot, a native of New Haven, Ind., in the Fort Wayne-South Bend Diocese, entered the congregation on July 21, 1944, and professed perpetual vows on Jan. 23, 1952. She graduated from Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College with a bachelor’s degree in English. She also has a master’s degree in education from Indiana State University in Terre Haute.

In the archdiocese, Sister Rita Clare served in Indianapolis as a teacher at the former St. Catherine of Siena School (1947-51) and at St. Simon the Apostle School (1973-77), as principal of St. Luke the Evangelist School (1967-73) as a parish minister to the poor and elderly at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral Parish (1981-1999), and in Terre Haute as a volunteer at the Federal Correctional Complex, St. Ann Clinic and Helping Hands.

She also served in the Indiana dioceses of Evansville, Fort Wayne-South Bend and Gary, and also in Illinois. Sister Rita Clare served at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods in healthcare and as director of the Sisters’ Wellness Center. She currently ministers as a volunteer at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods.

Sister Mildred Giesler, a native of Jasper, Ind., in the Evansville Diocese, entered the congregation on Jan. 10, 1944, and professed perpetual vows on Aug. 15, 1951. She graduated from Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College with a bachelor’s degree in education. She also has a master’s degree in English.

Sister Mildred also served as a volunteer. At Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, she has served as a volunteer, and currently ministers there as an English as a Second Language teacher.

Sister Miriam Clare Stoll, a native of Clyde, Mo., entered the congregation on Aug. 12, 1944, and professed perpetual vows on Jan. 23, 1952. She graduated from Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College with a bachelor’s degree in education.

In the archdiocese, Sister Miriam Clare served as teacher at Holy Spirit School (1954-62) and St. Philip Neri School (1966-71), both in Indianapolis. She also served as home and activities coordinator at St. Elizabeth/Coleman Pregnancy and Adoption Services in Bloomington (1971), helper at St. Matthew the Apostle Parish in Indianapolis (1971-72), a visitor at St. Vincent Hospital in Indianapolis (1972-74), and in ministry to aging shut-ins and the sick at St. Patrick Parish in Terre Haute (1986-94).

Sister Miriam Clare also served in Illinois, Missouri and Oklahoma. At Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, she served in community service and as a volunteer. Sister Miriam Clare currently ministers in prayer at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods.

70-year jubilarians

Sister Barbara Ann (formerly Sister Mary Martha) Bluntzer, a native of Chicago, entered the congregation on Jan. 10, 1944, and professed perpetual vows on Aug. 15, 1951. She graduated from Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College with a bachelor’s degree in education. She also has a master’s degree in elementary education from Indiana University in Bloomington.

In the archdiocese, Sister Barbara Ann served as a teacher at St. Joan of Arc School in Indianapolis (1952-54) and at the former Sacred Heart of Jesus School in Terre Haute (1954-56). She also served in Illinois, Kentucky, Missouri, Oklahoma and Texas. Currently, she ministers as a tutor for St. Patrick School in Terre Haute.

Sister Marian Brady, a native of Washington, D.C., entered the congregation on Feb. 11, 1949, and professed perpetual vows on Aug. 15, 1956. She graduated from Trinity Washington University in Washington, D.C., with a bachelor’s degree in English. She also has a master’s and Ph.D. in philosophy from The Catholic University of America.

In the archdiocese, she served as a teacher at the former Ladywood Academy in Indianapolis (1951-55), Our Lady of Providence High School in Clarksville, and the former Paul C. Schulte High School in Terre Haute (1955-56).

At Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College, she served as assistant and associate professor of philosophy (1962-67) and also as dean of students (1966-67). She also served as a professor and president at the former Immaculata College, operated by the Sisters of Providence in Washington (1968 through its closure in 1979), and in professorial, lecture and director roles at The Catholic University of America in Washington (1981-2016).

Currently, she ministers as the coordinator for the alumnae organization of the former Immaculata College in Washington.

Sister Suzanne (formerly Sister Mary Judith) Buthod, a native of Fort Worth, Texas, entered the Congregation on Feb. 2, 1949, and professed perpetual vows on Aug. 15, 1956. She graduated from Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College with a bachelor’s degree in English. She also has a master’s degree in religion from Manhattanville College in Purchase, N.Y.

Sister Suzanne served in the archdiocese as a teacher at St. Michael School in Greenfield (1956-62), as a principal and teacher at the former St. Catherine of Siena School in Indianapolis (1962-68), as a teacher at the former Paul C. Schulte High School in Terre Haute (1969-74), and as a pastoral associate at Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary and St. Patrick parishes in Indianapolis (1985-88).

She also served in the Evansville Diocese and in Alabama and Illinois. At Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, Sister Suzanne served as director of novices and as a volunteer. She currently ministers in prayer at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods.
PREGNANCY continued from page 1

Lawrenceburg, to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the organization they founded in 1989.

It started in the basement of the retirement home the couple owned and operated, said Cheryl.

“We would call, and we’d have to ask if they were calling for the retirement home or the pregnancy center,” she said, “to a burst of laughter from the crowd of roughly 880 people. As the PCC grew, it moved to a building on Main Street in Lawrenceburg. Next came the not-so-successful ‘bat house’—a large house that ended up being so infested with bats and mold that it was eventually condemned.

From there, the organization moved to its current location. They began by leasing one-third of the office building’s second floor. In 2016, they expanded by taking over an adjacent office space, and as of this year, PCC now leases the entire second floor of the office building.

The expansion was needed, said Pregnancy Care Center executive director Kayla Griffin in an interview with The Criterion.

“Comparing our 2017 numbers with what we have now for [2018], most of our statistics have doubled,” she said.

‘Leaning on God’

The organization operates through the efforts of four staff members, 30 volunteers—and God.

“We’re always leaning on God and seeing where he wants the organization to go,” said Griffin. “I’m the director, but every day I have to be in constant touch with God, asking, ‘What is your goal today?’ not, ‘What do I want to do?’”

She said she’s seen “placing his hand on this organization” throughout its history.

“Thirty years ago, it was just in a basement offering pregnancy tests and handing out diapers. Now we’re doing that, plus ultrasounds, a parenting program, a men’s program. ... I think God has brought on pieces at a time.”

One of those “pieces” recently changed formats. The parenting classes used to consist of “putting a woman in a room and having her watch a DVD,” said Griffin. Now the classes are taught in group sessions.

“It creates an environment of saying, ‘We want more of a relationship with you. We care about you and want to get to know you. We want to make sure we are setting you up for success as a parent,’” Griffin explained.

The Dadhood Program “teaches the men how to be better dads,” she said. “And it’s all faith-based, so it looks at how do you be better dads through Christ.”

Keynote speaker Abby Johnson, a former Planned Parenthood facility director-turned-pro-life advocate, lauded the effort to create better fathers.

“I can’t tell you one of the solutions to abolishing abortion is fatherhood.”

“All about life and saving those babies”

Within the Pregnancy Care Center’s five-county region are several Catholic parishes, including All Saints in Dearborn County. Father Jonathan Meyer, the parish’s pastor, came to show his support of the organization at the Sept. 12 banquet.

“It’s a tremendous ecumenical, interfait-supported resource that we as Catholics support,” he said. “It’s great for us because we’re able to be actively engaged in the pro-life ministry and pro-life cause,” a fact made evident by the nearly 20 tables filled with All Saints parishioners at the banquet.

Father Benjamin Syberg attended the event as well, with many members from the two parishes he serves as pastor—St. Lawrence in Lawrenceburg and St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception in Aurora.

“When I moved to the area [in 2018], I was delighted to find that people here knew just how they have to be involved in the fight against abortion—that was just ingrained before I got here,” he said.

“They don’t let you fail”

In her keynote address, Johnson praised the efforts of the pregnancy center and its staff.

“Lives are on the line,” she said emphatically. “If you could see what I’ve seen, … if you could hear the jokes made [by abortion doctors and workers] about the innocent children and their mothers, … there would be a fire in your soul that could never be extinguished.”

BLUE RIBBON continued from page 1

362 schools in the country received the distinction, including just 50 non-public schools.

“The criteria a school must meet to be eligible for this award is appropriately ambitious, and both Immaculate Heart of Mary and St. Thomas Aquinas met or exceeded expectations on both fronts,” the superintendent said. “This does not happen by accident. It is through God’s grace and the daily diligence and care of teachers, staff members, school and parish leadership, parents, and students that such a prestigious honor can be achieved.”

After the news became known near the end of the school day, both schools celebrated immediately. Immaculate Heart of Mary announced its recognition during a school-wide pep rally in the gym while St. Thomas Aquinas assembled everyone on its playground to share the news, including providing ice cream treats.

“Total excitement!” said Immaculate Heart of Mary principal Ronda Swartz, noting the reaction at the pep rally. “The gym was echoing with the celebration of students and staff alike. We also plan to host a celebration for our entire community, because we could not have gone so far without the support of the BVM parents, parishioners and community.”

Swartz also saluted the contributions of Immaculate Heart of Mary’s pastor Father Robert Sims, describing him as “an anchor in our BVM family.”

“My most proud of is that our school was able to achieve one of the most prestigious academic honors while remaining dedicated to our mission—to making God known, loved and served in all that we do,” she said. “All Catholic schools are blessed with this understanding and the opportunity to weave faith into all that we do.

“This honor reinforces our approach and commitment to educating the whole child, academically, spiritually and emotionally. I could not be more proud of my amazing team and all of the students at Immaculate Heart of Mary.”

At St. Thomas Aquinas, principal Nancy Valdiserri made 200 blue ribbons that were distributed to students and staff during the celebration on the playground.

“We wanted to make it fun. We made a big deal out of it,” said Valdiserri. “The kids were all clapping like crazy. They were really happy about the ice cream.”

She was thrilled for the school.

“I’m very proud of the achievements of our students, the challenging work created by our teachers, and the support of our parents,” Valdiserri said. “It takes a village!”

She also noted the “super support” of St. Thomas Aquinas pastor Father Michael Hoyt. And she invited Cara Swinehart—last year’s principal at St. Thomas Aquinas—to join in the playground celebration. Similar to Immaculate Heart of Mary, a larger-community celebration is also being planned at St. Thomas.

For Valdiserri, the Blue Ribbon recognition is another blessing for the school and parish community.

Daily, we try to remember our blessings—that we are here to serve God and each other,” she said. “We are very lucky to belong to a diverse, loving community that promotes social justice, high standards and the love of learning.”

Leaders from both schools will be in Washington on Nov. 14-15 to participate in the awards ceremony hosted by the U.S. Department of Education.

Fleming noted that the selection of St. Thomas Aquinas and Immaculate Heart of Mary for this national honor reflects the comprehensive approach that Catholic schools in the archdiocese take to education.

“In our Catholic schools, we focus on the holistic development of every young person we serve,” she said. “Given that all are made in the image and likeness of God, it is our responsibility to help students develop their gifts fully so they can love and glorify God in all they do.

“We partner with students and their parents and guardians to ensure their spiritual, intellectual, emotional, social and physical growth in ways that help them become the best versions of themselves.”

Students and staff of St. Thomas Aquinas School in Indianapolis join together on Sept. 26 to celebrate the school’s national recognition as a Blue Ribbon School of Excellence by the U.S. Department of Education. (Photo by Natalie Hoefer)

FATHER JONATHAN MUEYER chats with members from his parish, All Saints in Dearborn County, during a banquet on Sept. 12 celebrating the 30th anniversary of the Pregnancy Care Center of Southeast Indiana, located in Lawrenceburg. (Photo by Natalie Hoefer)
God is truth. God is goodness. God is beauty.

And in our roles as his disciples, we can use these tenets of the faith as we evangelize others, said the keynote speaker at the fourth annual archdiocesan Gathering of Disciples at Roncalli High School in Indianapolis on Sept. 7.

“Since Pope Paul VI, we’ve talked about a re-evangelization or a new evangelization,” said St. Francis of the Martyr St. George Sister Johanna Paruch, associate professor of theology at Franciscan University of Steubenville in Steubenville, Ohio.

Since 1965, popes have talked about the importance of catechesis and urged members of the Church to step up their evangelization efforts. Sister Johanna noted that Pope Francis’ words carried the stamp of his nature, “in whom ‘the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily’” (#2502).

“Pope Francis says goodness tends to flower. It is not enough to know about Jesus, to lead a dignified and friendly, faith-filled and joyful co-workers of serving God’s people, that we have to change. We have to turn to him. We have to have this demands conversion. ‘Goodness attracts goodness.’ If we wish to lead a dignified and fulfilling life, we have to reach out to others and seek their good.”

While some in society follow their own truth—“I can do whatever I want”—there’s only one truth: Jesus Christ,” Sister Johanna noted.

Beauty, she said, is the goodness of the truth and the good. “When truth and goodness are coming forth from somebody, obviously it’s beautiful.” An example of this is St. Teresa of Calcutta. “There was a truth and a goodness in her that the whole world recognized, and she was beautiful.”

Quoting the late author Father Thomas Dubay, Sister Johanna said, “Truth, beauty and goodness have their being together.”

Sons offer a great example, she added.”Saints are people who the light shines through, who that beauty shines through, who that goodness shines through,” Sister Johanna said truth, beauty and goodness are seen in Christian art, which can also serve in planting seeds of discipleship. She cited the Catechism of the Catholic Church to show how our faith embraces it.

“Sacred art is true and beautiful when its form corresponds to its particular vocation: evoking and glorifying, in faith and adoration, the transcendent mystery of God—the surpassing invisible beauty of love and truth visible in Christ, who ‘reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of his nature,’ in whom ‘the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily’” (CCC 420).

In our roles as disciples, we must follow what Scripture and most recently Pope Francis have instructed us to—“to go and teach others. ‘We have to go proclaim the Gospel,” Sister Johanna said.

“We can’t stand around looking at the sky.”

There will be challenges, she added, including when the devil uses beauty to entice humankind into sinfulness.

“The devil doesn’t want us to look at what is true, beautiful and good.”

Sister Johanna said he “tried to sever the beauty of Christian art from the truth of the dogmatic creed and the goodness of moral virtue.”

Besides several breakout sessions, the day also included a panel discussion with local Catholic artists. The group included an author, music director, poet, sacred artist and artistic director in theater, and they shared how faith plays an integral role in their ministries.

Ken Ogorek, archdiocesan director of catechesis, said attendees were appreciative of Sister Johanna’s message and how she delivered it.

“Quite a few catechists tend to lead with truth, use goodness as an example and goodness and are not even get to beauty,” he said. “It’s refreshing for folks to hear that sometimes starting with the beautiful can be an excellent way of accompanying the faithful, by God’s grace, to draw accurate and life-changing conclusions about what’s true as well as what is authentically good.”

He added he hoped attendees came away with “practical tips and examples to help them be fruitful, by God’s mercy, in their ministry efforts, and a sense of camaraderie and providing assurance that we have companions on our journey of serving God’s people, that we have friendly, faith-filled and joyful co-workers in the Lord’s vineyard.”

A former student of Sister Johanna at Franciscan University, Kristina Seipel attended the Gathering of Disciples for the first time with some of her parish’s catechists. She was happy they made the two-hour trip, and she came away with a strong reminder of what discipleship is about: keeping the focus on Jesus.

“We need to be leading everybody to Jesus because he is the truth, doing that through things that are good, and things that are beautiful,” said the director of evangelization at St. John Paul II Parish in Sellersburg. “That looks different for everyone because we come from different places in our lives. But at the end of the day, it’s all about Jesus.”

Katelyn Smulter, left, director of music at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in New Albany, and Courtney Selvrett, director of music and pastoral catechist at St. Ann, St. Joseph and St. Isidore parishes in Jennings County, take part in a panel discussion on sacred music. Both are also members of the Archdiocesan Music Commission. (Photo by Mike Krokos)
Sister Rosemary (formerly Sister Mary Luke) Eyler, a native of Canton, Ohio, and a member of the Congregation of St. Joseph, in the Lafayette Diocese, entered the congregation on Feb. 2, 1949, and professed perpetual vows on Aug. 15, 1956. She graduated from Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College with a bachelor’s degree in education. She also has a master’s degree in education and in education administration supervisory from Indiana State University.

In the archdiocese, Sister Rosemary served as a teacher at St. Michael Schools in Greenfield, and in Indianapolis as a teacher and principal at the former St. Bridget School (1966-70) and as a principal at St. Matthew the Apostle School (1979-93). She also served in the Evansville and Lafayette Dioceses, and in Illinois, Massachusetts and New Hampshire.

Sister Rosemary currently ministers as a director of religious education at Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish (1972-73) and as a director of religious education at Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish in Terre Haute (1970-72, 1981-82). She also served as a volunteer at the Federal Correctional Complex in Terre Haute as a prison chaplain, staff chaplain, director of religious education and as coordinator for the Life Connections Program.

At Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, Sister Dorothy served as a music assistant in the Sisters’ infirmary. She also served in the Evansville Diocese, and in California, Michigan, Texas and West Virginia.

Sister Dorothy currently ministers at the Federal Correctional Complex and as director of The Connecting Link.

Sister Therese Guerin Sullivan, a native of Malden, Mass., entered the congregation on July 22, 1949, and professed perpetual vows on Aug. 15, 1956. She graduated from Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College with a bachelor’s degree in education. She also earned a master’s degree in personalized learning from DePaul University in Chicago, as well as a doctorate in ministry from the University of St. Mary of the Lake in Mundelein, Illinois. She also has a litcianate of canon law and a master’s in Roman Catholic Theology, both from St. Paul University in Ottawa, Canada.

She has served in the Gary Diocese, and in Illinois, North Carolina and Ohio. She currently ministers as a canonical consultant in Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio.

50-year jubilarians

Sister Katherine Francis French, a native of Trenton, N.J., entered the congregation on Sept. 15, 1969, and professed perpetual vows on Sept. 27, 1975.

Sister Katherine from the Immaculata College in Washington, D.C., with an associate degree in 1966, and from Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College with a bachelor’s degree in English in 1971. She also earned a master’s degree in religious education from St. Thomas Aquinas Pontifical University in Rome, as well as her licensed practical nursing (LPN) degree from St. Thomas Aquinas Pontifical University of the Holy Name, and her bachelor’s degree in education. She currently serves at St. Mary of the Woods College as an honors advisor.

Sister Dorothy (formerly Sister Rose Martin) Rasche, a native of Jasper, Ind., in the Evansville Diocese, entered the congregation on July 9, 1959, and professed perpetual vows on Aug. 15, 1967. She graduated from Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College with a bachelor’s degree in education. She also has a master’s degree in religious studies from the University of St. Mary of the Lake in Mundelein, Ill.

In the archdiocese, Sister Dorothy served as a teacher at St. Michael the Archangel Parish in Terre Haute (1972-73) and as a teacher at St. Joseph Parish in Alliant, Indiana, St. Malachy School in Brownsburg (1967-70), and the former Sacred Heart of Jesus School in Terre Haute (1970-72). She also served two ministries of the Providence of Providence, as a director of religious education at Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish (1972-73) and as a director of religious education at Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish in Terre Haute (1982-83), both in Terre Haute, St. Lawrence Parish in Indianapolis (1973-77) and in Holy Rosary Parish in Seymour (1979-81).

Sister Dorothy also ministered at the Federal Correctional Complex in Terre Haute as a prison chaplain, staff chaplain, director of religious education and as coordinator for the Life Connections Program.

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...
Angels are God’s messengers between heaven and Earth

“In my old age ‘angels,’ as I call them, have come to me,” a 95-year-old woman named Erminia told Pope Francis during his March 2013 visit to Naples, Italy. Her angels included “young and not-so-young people,” she explained. They “help me, visit me, support me in my daily struggles.”

Erminia found herself “alone, increasingly fragile and in need of help” after her husband died. But she encountered a Christian community “where affection and gratitude are lived,” and where her angels brought her “strength and courage.”

Why did Erminia think those aiding her resembled angels in their generous friendship? Possibly she just found them God-like. Psalm 91 speaks of angels God sends to guard people. “With their hands they shall support you, lest you strike your foot against a stone,” it confidentially states (Ps 91:11-12).

Did Erminia welcome her angels because they so hospitably welcomed her, not considering her age an obstacle? Hospitality, a virtue often judged especially timely today, is linked in Scripture at one point with an incident involving angels.

The patriarch Abraham demonstrated generous hospitality in Genesis 18 when three strangers stopped outside his tent. We learn that this threesome actually included God and two angels. Abraham’s hospitality prompted the author of the New Testament Letter to the Hebrews to advise early Christians not to “neglect hospitality, for through it some have unknowingly entertained angels” (Heb 13:2).

Angels appear in Scripture a remarkable number of times, good angels who remain close to God and some bad angels, whom Scripture says warred against God (Rv 12:7-9).

Sometimes, Scripture’s angels keep silent; only their actions are witnessed. Other times, angels announce tremendous news. Typically, Scripture’s angels bear some kind of message. Scholars observe that the Greek and Hebrew roots of our word “angel” signify a messenger of God.

In St. Luke’s Gospel, the archangel Gabriel delivered astonishing news to Mary, an as-yet-unmarried young woman. “Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus.” Indeed, “of his kingdom there will be no end” (Lk 1:33).

When Mary asked how this could be, Gabriel replied, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you” (Lk 1:35).

Where will you find angels in Scripture? Think of the time after Jesus’ ascension when the Apostles were jailed (Acts 5:19). Also, as St. Paul sailed toward Italy, aiming to bring the Gospel to Rome, a fearsome storm arose at sea, threatening all on board. Nonetheless, Paul urged everyone to keep their courage, saying:

“If you’ve heard of “Jacob’s ladder,” you know something about Jacob’s dream. The translators of the New American Bible insist, though, that the term ‘ladder’ be translated instead as “stairway.” In Jacob’s dream “a stairway rested on the ground,” its top reaching toward the heavens. “God’s angels were going up and down” it (Gen 28:12).

Awakening, Jacob declared this place “the gateway to heaven” (Gen 28:17). The angels on Jacob’s staircase were unheard. But with them was “the God of Abraham” and “of Isaac, Jacob’s grandfather and father” (Gen 28:13).

“In you and your descendants all the families of the Earth will find blessing,” God promised in the dream (Gen 28:14). Since the angels on Jacob’s staircase moved “up and down” it, they were not ascending only out of this world. The staircase “represents the connection between the divine and the human,” Pope Francis affirmed.

He delivered his homily on the sixth anniversary of his 2013 visit to Lampedusa, a southern Mediterranean island. His hope there had been to alert the world to the tragedy of countless, desperate migrants who drowned while attempting a voyage in unsafe or overcrowded crafts from African coasts to European shores. Climbing Jacob’s staircase “requires commitment, effort and grace. The weakest and most vulnerable must be helped,” said the pope.

He connected Jacob’s staircase with the life of the world to come, yes, but with faith’s expression in this world as well. “I like to think,” he said, “that we could be those angels ascending and descending, taking under our wings the little ones, the lame, the sick, those excluded.” who otherwise might never experience “in this life anything of heaven’s brightness.”

(David Gibson served on Catholic News Service’s editorial staff for 37 years.)
As Catholics, we cannot tolerate the sin of anti-Semitism

The world reacted with horror and outrage earlier this year when a town in Poland marked Good Friday with the burning of a Judas effigy. The effigy was cremated, transforming a stereotype of an Orthodox Jew. Adults dragged the body through the town while children beat it with sticks while adults stood by and hanged and then buried it.

Both the Polish Church and the Polish government condemned the incident, but the event heightened a growing concern with the rise of anti-Semitic violence around the world. Almost 75 years after the last of the Nazi death camps were liberated, the world is witnessing a new wave of anti-Semitism.

In Europe and the United States, anti-Semitic incidents are on the rise. Verbal and physical abuse have increased, along with the reports of anti-Semitic incidents in France increased more than 70 percent in 2018, in Germany by 20 percent. City dwellers saw a new doubling of violent attacks.

Here, the massacre at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh and the shooting in Poway, Calif., are the most recent and violent examples of the kind of hate that is sweeping across the West. In Europe and the United States, anti-Semitic violence is increasing and sometimes knock you out of your seat.

Sirens sound more like a bass French horn. It’s hilarious to watch irritated drivers pound their horns in traffic going nowhere. And ironically a friend told me, while waiting for the light to change, “You should see the reactions of other drivers. It’s such a comedy.”

I have been present in a number of situations where the sound of sirens was disturbing. Sometimes it is a blessing to have the signal to let people know that something is going on, but at other times it can be a nuisance. In the case of the Capitol Hill police patrol, sirens squeal whereas Capitol Hill police tell that she’s in pain, and that I hated tears involuntarily from the corner of my right eye.

The band of prayer warriors storming the Capitol were overcome by the sheer volume of sirens. It seemed as if every sound was a call to action, to a “new normal,” restricted from what we are used to.

I men’s basketball players was 47 percent. For Catholic University, by contrast, our capacity to properly do her statement justice. “This is a good reminder that this is our temporary home, and we shouldn’t get too comfortable here.”

That’s a new thing I’m telling myself when I encounter setbacks and learn of friends’ disappointments. I understand that this isn’t our forever home, but that thought resides more in the back of my mind. Accepting that truth as true is a good reminder to focus on my spiritual life and my relationship with God.

We don’t give athletic scholarships. I used to notice it at all.

More than 150 athletes at Catholic University are on national television and covered in the student media. Our loss to Kenyon got only a paragraph in The Washington Post, buried several pages in The Los Angeles Times, and didn’t notice it at all. But to come back to the interesting thing: When I taught at those Division III schools, a loss might have put me out of a funk, but in a very different way. It had nothing to do with the players—on the contrary, I held them responsible for their own success and failure. At Catholic basketball (or whatever) was tied up with my sense of self-worth, and with the team’s. I felt somewhat more important as a professor for being associated with the national champion.

Playing a game for love

We began our football season on Sept. 7 in a loss in double overtime to Kenyon College, the alma mater of President Rutherford B. Hayes. It was a beautiful day for football. It should have been perfect, but for the score. It left me with a longing, a drip of love for a few hours afterward.

I am reminded of the old saying that “the spiritual beings having a human experience.” St. Paul wrote it beautifully to the Corinthians: “Therefore, we are not discouraged; rather, although our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this momentary light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as Cor 4:14 says. C.S. Lewis said it another way, when he wrote, “Our Father refreshes us on the journey with some pleasant inns, but will not encourage us to mistake them for home.”

When mortal life deals its blows, remember the happy ending for which we were all created—eternity.

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I am reminded of the old saying that “the spiritual beings having a human experience.” St. Paul wrote it beautifully to the Corinthians: “Therefore, we are not discouraged; rather, although our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this momentary light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as Cor 4:14 says. C.S. Lewis said it another way, when he wrote, “Our Father refreshes us on the journey with some pleasant inns, but will not encourage us to mistake them for home.”

When mortal life deals its blows, remember the happy ending for which we were all created—eternity.
The first reading for Mass on this weekend is from the Book of Habakkuk, by comparison among the prophets a short work, including only three chapters. In some cases, little is known about the author of a given book. In this case, the prophet identifies himself by name (Hab 1:1). More generally accepted is that Habakkuk wrote this work in the latter part of the seventh-century B.C. At that time, the struggles among the great powers of the Middle East were numerous and intense, and the small Jewish community was threatened in the accompanying clash. It is not hard to imagine fear and anxiety among the people of God, and desperation and confusion easily led them away from strict obedience to God. Like many other Old Testament prophets, he appealed to his contemporaries to rely on God's grace, to stand firm and unwavering. Through detours and obstacles lie before us, but we are not as capable of finding the right path as we think. We are called to show our trust in God. Habakkuk lets us know that many detours and obstacles lie before us, but God will lead us, if we allow it. Our resolve must be, with the help of God's grace, to stand firm and unwavering in our conviction to follow Christ. †

My Journey to God

Hail Mary/My Marian Prayer

By Natalie Hofer

Hail Mary, full of grace, Mary, make my heart a place
The Lord is with thee, like yours, pure and holy.

Blessed art thou among women, Help me to seek only heaven,
And blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus, And blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

Do thy will, and peace, Holy Mary, Mother of God,
Ark of the covenant, humanity unfueled, Pray for us sinners, now,

Seek me, like you, to know And at the hour of our death.
To God’s will with my every breath, Amen. Amen.

(Hail Mary is a member of St. Monica Parish in Indianapolis and a reporter for The Criterion. Photo: A statue of Mary with the Child and a rosary to show Jesus the Good Shepherd Church in Dunlap, Ind. October is dedicated as the month of the Holy Rosary with the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary on Oct. 7. CNS photos/ Bob Burdett)

Submit prose or poetry for faith column

The Criterion invites readers to submit original prose or poetry relating to faith or experiences of prayer for possible publication in the “My Journey to God” column. Seasonal reflections also are appreciated. Please include name, address, parish and telephone number with submissions.

Send material for consideration to “My Journey to God,” The Criterion, 1404 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367 or e-mail to criterion@criterionindy.org.

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, October 6, 2019

- Habakkuk 1:2-3; 2:2-4
- Sunday, October 6
- Malachi 3:13-20b
- Psalm 1:1-4, 6
- Luke 11:5-13

The overall theme is that following Jesus requires strong determination and much faith. The Lord has many disciples who stumble and fall. We live in a world of sin and selfishness. Temptations are rampant. Security and success result from faith, which we ourselves must nourish and preserve.

In the second part of the reading, Jesus employs a parable, speaking of a farmer and shepherd who has engaged a servant. Scholars cannot agree on the term used to describe the servant. Is he “worthless,” or lazy, “unprofitable,” or “unproductive” (Lk 17:10)? One ancient Greek text has “owing nothing.” It is clear, however, that the servant is not so worthless as to be beyond God’s love.

Also clear is that the master in no way depends upon the servant, but the context is that the servant is kept, not discharged. Indeed, the relationship between the servant and master is so close that the servant assumes to have a place at the master’s table.

Reflection

For weeks, through Scriptures proclaimed at Mass, the Church has been summoning us to discipleship. It has offered us no promise of a primrose path ahead. It has not exalted human nature above and beyond what human nature is in fact. Rather, it has been frank, even somberly warning at times. This is the background from which these readings appear. Taken together, they are instructive, alerting us to dangers, but also consoling us with assurances of hope and of life.

Each sincere follower of Jesus must see herself or himself as like the servant mentioned this weekend in Luke’s Gospel. As sinning so well demonstrates, we are not as capable of finding the right path as we think. We are called to show our trust in God. Habakkuk lets us know that many detours and obstacles lie before us, but God will lead us, if we allow it. Our resolve must be, with the help of God’s grace, to stand firm and unwavering in our conviction to follow Christ. †

A friend has just informed me that she is going next month to Medjugorje in Bosnia. She says that the Blessed Mother has been appearing there to six visionaries since 1981, and that Our Lady gives them messages on the 2nd and 25th days of each month.

Can you shed some light on this for me? Is this something that is sanctioned by the Church? Has someone ever verify that it is not a hoax? (Virginia)

A match is difficult with historical precision to determine the exact journey of the cross of Christ from Calvary and the present-day locations of all of its fragments, but the most common belief of scholars is as follows.

During the second century, the emperor Hadrian built a pagan temple over the site of Christ’s death and burial. About the year 326, St. Helena—the mother of Emperor Constantine, who allowed Christianity to be practiced in the Roman Empire—journeyed to Jerusalem in an effort to locate the true cross. According to tradition, she crucified three crosses favored by Calvary. To determine which was the cross of Jesus and which ones belonged to the two thieves, Helena arranged for a dying woman to touch the crosses and, when the woman touched the cross of Christ, she healed of her illness.

A portion of the cross traveled with St. Helena back to Rome, and the rest of it was enshrined deep within the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem. During subsequent centuries, remnants of the cross changed hands several times during battles with Persian and Muslim forces and, later, with those of the Sultan Saladin.

Remains of the cross remain today in Jerusalem’s Church of the Holy Sepulcher as well as Rome’s Basilica of the Holy Cross, while the largest remaining piece is thought to be in Greece on Mount Athos.

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

The Daily Readings

Monday, October 7
Our Lady of the Rosary
Jonah 1:1-2, 11
(Responsorial) Jonah 2:2-3, 8
(luke 10:25-37)

Tuesday, October 8
Jonah 3:1-10
Psalm 130:3-4, 7-8
Luke 10:38-42

Wednesday, October 9
St. Denis, bishop, and companions, martyrs
St. John Leonardi, priest
Jonah 4:1-11
Psalm 86:3-6, 9-10
Luke 11:1-4

Saturday, October 12
St. John XXIII, pope
Psalm 97:1-2, 5-6, 11-12

Sunday, October 13
Twenty-eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time
2 Kings 5:14-17
Psalm 98:1-4
2 Timothy 2:8-13
Luke 17:11-19


GERTH, Larry J., 82, St. Mary, Lanesville, Sept. 9. Brother of Phyllis Conm and Leroy Gerth,Uncle of several.


HEBERT, Robert J., 82, St. Mary, Greensburg, Sept. 25. Brother of Dennis and Lotus Herbert. Uncle and great-uncle of several.

MCGREEY, Michael V., 63, St. Roch, Indianapolis, Sept. 8. Father of Michael McGreery. II. Brother of Kathleen McGreery.


WHITE, Kathleen J. (O’Gara), 87, St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower), Indianapolis, Sept. 11. Mother of Colleen Allgood, Maureen Battles, Mary Margaret Curren, Kathleen Foley, Ann Land, Kelly, Bruce, Kevin, Michael, Patrick, Sean and Thomas White. Grandmother of 37. Great-grandmother of five.


Benedictine Father Sebastian Leonard served as a professor, chaplain and parish priest

Benedictine Father Sebastian Leonard, a monk of Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad, died on Sept. 21 at the monastery. He was 88. The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Sept. 25. Burial followed at the Archabbey Cemetery.

Father Sebastian was a jubilarian of monastic profession, having celebrated 67 years of monastic profession. He was also a jubilarian of ordination, having celebrated 62 years of life and ministry as a priest

Father Sebastian was born on Sept. 4, 1931, in Indianapolis and grew up as a member of the former Holy Cross Parish. He entered Saint Meinrad’s minor seminary in 1944 and was invested as a novice at Saint Meinrad Archabbey on July 31, 1951.

Father Sebastian professed temporary vows on Aug. 1, 1952, and solemn vows on Sept. 8, 1955. He was ordained a priest on May 3, 1957. Father Sebastian earned a bachelor’s degree in sacred theology in 1958 from The Catholic University of America, a master’s degree in modern European history in 1962 from Georgetown University, and a doctorate in modern history in 1968 from Oxford University in England.

At Saint Meinrad Archabbey, Father Sebastian served as chapter master. At Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology, he served as an associate dean of students, director of Conley Hall and taught history during periods from 1983 to 1987.

Father Sebastian then served as associate pastor of St. David Parish in Davie, Fla., from 1983 to 1995. Starting in 1995, he began ministry as chaplain and professor at Canterbury School in New Milford, Conn., where he served for the next 20 years. Since 2015, he has resided in the monastery’s infirmary.

Father Sebastian is survived by a sister, Margaret Maxwell. Memorial gifts may be sent to Saint Meinrad Archabbey, 200 Hill Drive, St. Meinrad, IN 47577.

Guard against doubt, fatigue by being with Christ, pope tells volunteers

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Francis told volunteers and social workers that they can guard against discouragement by always being with Christ when working with people in difficulty.

Nearly 40 years ago, “your community was founded on Christmas day and it expresses faith incarnated in service,” the pope told those who work with and have been served by the Emmanuel Community in Lecce, Italy. Founded by Jesuit Father Mario Marafioti, the community welcomes and provides care for hundreds of people, including minors with no family support, migrants and people with addictions or disabilities.

“The Lord knocks on the door with the face of brothers and sisters who live in poverty, abandonment and slavery, and you opened” that door, the pope said in an audience with the group at the Vatican on Sept. 26.

He thanked them for the way they welcome, accommodate and work with the people they serve, by being rooted in God’s word and moments of reflection and fraternity.

“This is important; otherwise, one becomes an aid agency or a business,” he said.

But, “the hardest thing is perseverance, to keep going,” he said, reminding them that the strength and power behind their efforts come from God, not themselves.

Just as Emmanuel means “God with us,” those involved with the Emmanuel Community must follow that path of being both with Christ and with those in difficulty, he said.

“This is the key,” he said. One must always be with both at the same time.

A life of “God with us” and giving witness of God’s love provides the strength needed to not lose hope, joy or the courage of self-sacrifice.

It helps people working in difficult circumstances from hurting each other, helps them pick up the pieces after failure or disappointment and helps them keep working “with joy even if it is exhausting and you feel tired,” he said.

The pope thanked the group for its visit and said, “It is always a gift and consolation for me to meet communities that seek to live the joy of the Gospel. Thank you and have a good journey!”
NEW YORK (CNS)—To those who ask why the Catholic Church seems to be “obsessed” with the poor, the Vatican’s secretary of state said, “The answer is simple. Because this is who we are.”

“Because taking care of the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked and the imprisoned,” Cardinal Pietro Parolin said, “is the yardstick that our Lord Jesus will use to measure how much we shall have lived the greatest commandment of love.”

Cardinal Parolin addressed guests at the Sept. 27 Pro Pontifice Dinner at Jesuit-run Fordham University during a visit to New York to lead the Vatican’s delegation to the opening of the 74th U.N. General Assembly.

Cardinal Parolin accepted the 2019 “Fordham’s Pope Francis Global Poverty Indictor” from Fordham University, a university’s graduate program in international political economy and development.

The index is a multidimensional measure of international poverty inspired by Pope Francis’ address to the U.N. General Assembly in 2015. At that time, the pope said water, food, housing and employment are essential for material well-being, and religious freedom, education and other civil rights are essential for spiritual well-being.

At the invitation of the U.S. affiliate of the Vatican Foundation Centesimus Annus Pro Pontifice, known as CAPP-USA, Fordham University research manager Donna Odra and the graduate students identified measures for each of the seven needs and aggregated them into material and spiritual well-being indices.

They then developed a Fordham Francis Index that is closely related to many of the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals.

According to the report given to Cardinal Parolin, this Fordham Francis Index has a stronger emphasis on basic human needs than other measures of poverty and favors outcomes that benefit marginalized. It also includes indicators of spiritual well-being, such as education, religious freedom and gender equity, which it says may play an important role in empowering the poor to be champions of their own destinies.

Cardinal Parolin said compassion for the suffering of the poor defined the apostolic journey. It also inspired the students to devise the Index “with the aim of knowing the situation of the poor, in order to help them to become dignified agents of their own development, so that they may live a life worthy of the children of God,” he said.

Cardinal Parolin said the Catholic Church plays a “fundamental role as thelargest provider of quality education” in many countries. He said the Church “runs approximately 220,000 schools at all levels, from kindergarten to graduate school, educating approximately 68 million students across the world, many of whom are not Catholic or even Christian.”

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**ECCLESIASTICAL NOTARY**

The Tribunal is seeking a full-time Ecclesiastical Notary. Responsibilities include clerical duties, assembling marriage cases according to canonical and office procedures and interacting with clients on the telephone or in person.

Qualifications include strong typing skills, experience using personal computers, ability to maintain a high level of confidentiality and well-developed interpersonal and organizational skills. A college degree or commensurate work experience is required.

Canon law requires that the person in this position be a baptized Catholic and, if married, be validly married according to the laws and teachings of the Catholic Church.

The position is an opportunity to work directly in Church ministry that serves people’s human and spiritual needs. Please e-mail cover letter, resume, and list of references, in confidence, to:

**Human Resources**

Archdiocese of Indianapolis

1400 N. Meridian St.

Indianapolis, IN 46202

E-mail: hr@archindy.org

Applications will be accepted through October 18, 2019.

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**DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS AND ADMINISTRATION**

Our Lady of Providence High School, the high school of the New Albany Deanery, is conducting an executive search for this key leadership role to manage all aspects of the school’s financial operations. This full time ministry seeks a skilled professional with 5-10 years of financial leadership experience and appropriate professional credentials.

Send CV and letter of interest to: d bacon@providencech.net.

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**RONCALLI HIGH SCHOOL SEARCH FOR PRESIDENT**

Roncalli High School, an archdiocesan parochial Catholic high school serving grades 9-12, is currently accepting applications for the president position. Located on the near southside of Indianapolis, the school serves a growing, diverse student population of 1,200 and is accredited by the State of Indiana. The institution is blessed with exceptional teaching and administrative staff and a dedicated group of parents, friends, and alumni.

The president is the chief executive of the operational vitality for the institution, including development/advancement, marketing/enrollment, finances, and capital projects. The president leads and articulates the school’s mission and vision, creates and implements strategic plans, and builds and nurtures relationships. The president reports to and is evaluated by the Superintendent of Catholic Schools for the archdiocese with input from the board of directors.

Applicants must foster a strong Catholic identity, value diversity, and possess strong leadership and interpersonal skills. Applicants must be practicing Roman Catholics who have demonstrated their commitment to servant leadership. Preferred candidates will have a master’s degree and/or equivalent work experience and a track record of building community and serving others.

Interested, qualified candidates are encouraged to apply by October 15; applications will be accepted until the position is filled.

To apply:

1. Please submit the following items electronically to Joni Ripa (ripa@archindy.org):
   - Letter of Interest, addressed to Gina Kuntz Fleming, Superintendent of Catholic Schools
   - Resume
   - Three letters of recommendation or contact information for three professional references

2. Complete the online application using the following link:

For questions about this Catholic leadership position, please email or call:

Rob Rash

Office of Catholic Schools

rrash@archindy.org

317.236.1544
who survive, nor does it mitigate the loss of a loved one. And it precludes the possibility of reconciliation and rehabilitation. As Pope Francis has stated, “A just and necessary punishment must never exclude the dimension of hope and the goal of rehabilitation.”

The application of capital punishment also calls for its discontinuance. The problems are well documented. These include: Its unequal application to minorities, the poor and mentally ill; its cost, which is more expensive than a lifetime of incarceration; the more than 160 persons since 1977 serving time on death row who have been exonerated of their guilt; and the instances of innocent people being wrongly executed. Moreover, its application also impacts those who are associated with it, particularly correctional officers and those who are obligated to participate in taking a human life. The psychological and spiritual harm that these persons experience is real.

We join our brother bishops of the United States in calling for an end to the death penalty. Twenty-five states no longer use it as a form of punishment. We ask the federal government to continue its moratorium until it can be rescinded formally as a matter of law.

—Most Reverend Charles C. Thompson, D.D., J.C.L., Archdiocese of Indianapolis
—Most Reverend Kevin C. Rhoades, D.D., Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend
—Most Reverend Timothy I. Doherty, S.T.L., Ph.D., Diocese of Lafayette-in-Indiana
—Reverend Michael J. Yadron, Diocesan Administrator, Diocese of Gary

Obispos de Indiana solicitan renovación de la moratoria de las ejecuciones federales
(Nota del editor: En respuesta a la decisión reciente del gobierno federal de poner fin a la moratoria de ejecuciones de reos federales, los obispos de Indiana han emitido la siguiente declaración.)

La decisión del gobierno federal emitida en julio de poner fin a la moratoria de 16 años con respecto a la ejecución de reos federales es lamentable, innecesaria y moralmente injustificada. Durante el mes de conmemoración de Respeto por la Vida de la Iglesia Católica y puesto que en nuestro estado se llevan a cabo ejecuciones federales, los obispos de Indiana solicitamos al presidente Donald J. Trump que rescinda la decisión del Departamento de Justicia de los Estados Unidos de retomar la pena capital más adelante este año. Respectuosamente, imploramos que las sentencias de todos los reos federales que se encuentran en el corredor de la muerte sean conmutadas a cadena perpetua.

A través de la solicitud de poner fin al uso de la pena de muerte, no desestimamos el mal y el daño que han causado las personas que han cometido crímenes horribles, especialmente el asesinato. Compartimos el dolor y la pérdida que han sufrido las familias y las víctimas de tales crímenes y pedimos a nuestra comunidad de fe y a todas las personas de buena voluntad que acompañen a las víctimas y les proporcionen apoyo espiritual, pastoral y personal.

Toda vida es un don de Dios y posee dignidad. Tal como lo confirmó recientemente el Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica, “la pena de muerte es inadmisible, porque atenta contra la inviolabilidad y la dignidad de la persona” (#2267).

La pena capital socava la dignidad de la vida humana. Tomar una vida humana es algo que solamente se justifica en defensa propia, cuando no hay ninguna otra manera de protegerse, de proteger a un inocente o a la sociedad contra un acto de violencia extrema o la muerte. En el caso de los presoneros, se ha detenido al agresor y la sociedad está protegida; por lo tanto, no es admisible tomar esa vida. Además de los problemas morales que plantea la pena capital, perpetúa el ciclo de la violencia: no ayuda a las víctimas supervivientes ni tampoco mitigá la pérdida de un ser querido, e impide la posibilidad de reconciliación y rehabilitación. Tal como lo expresó el papa Francisco: “una pena justa y necesaria jamás debe excluir la dimensión de la esperanza y la meta de la rehabilitación”.

La aplicación de la pena capital también justifica su eliminación ya que los problemas que acarrea están bien documentados, entre ellos: Su aplicación desigual a las minorías, los pobres y los enfermos mentales; su costo que es más elevado que el de la prisión de por vida; las más de 160 personas que, desde 1977 estuvieron en el corredor de la muerte y a quienes se las exoneró de culpa; y las instancias de personas inocentes que fueron ejecutadas por equivocación. Más aún, su aplicación también afecta a las personas asociadas a esta, especialmente a los funcionarios de los penales y a quienes están obligados a participar en la ejecución de una vida humana. El daño psicologico y espiritual que sufren estas personas es real.

Nos unimos a la voz de nuestros hermanos obispos en los Estados Unidos para poner fin a la pena de muerte. Veinticinco estados ya han dejado de utilizar esta forma de castigo; solicitamos que el gobierno federal continúe con la moratoria hasta que pueda ser rescindida formalmente como legislación.

—Reverendísimo Charles C. Thompson, D.D., J.C.L., Arquidiócesis de Indianapolis
—Reverendísimo Kevin C. Rhoades, D.D., Diócesis de Fort Wayne-South Bend
—Reverendísimo Timothy I. Doherty, S.T.L., Ph.D., Diócesis de Lafayette-in-Indiana
—Reverendo Michael J. Yadron, administrador diocesano, Diócesis de Gary

Bishops sign pledges to end the death penalty at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops building in Washington on May 9, 2017. (CNS photo/Tyler Orsburn)

Every other year, 20,000+ Catholic young people and their chaperones come together to pray, learn, and grow in their faith at the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) in Indianapolis

This year’s conference will be held November 21-23 at the Indiana Convention Center and Lucas Oil Stadium. As the host diocese, we need 1000 volunteers throughout the three days to serve in a variety of roles.

A complete list of volunteer needs including descriptions, requirements, shifts and times can be found at: www.NCYC.info/volunteer

1000 VOLUNTEERS NEEDED AT NCYC IN INDIANAPOLIS