Standing near a World War II memorial in downtown Indianapolis, Sophia Egold knows the difference that veterans have made in her life and the life of the United States. (Photo by John Shaughnessy)

Touching letters of mutual thanks connect the young and old as Veterans Day nears

By John Shaughnessy

At the age of 20, Sophia Egold is part of a generation that communicates almost exclusively by text, Instagram, Facebook and other forms of social media, yet she has learned that none of them compares to the power of an old-fashioned, rapidly fading alternative. “There is nothing like getting a letter,” she says. “Getting a letter is so much more powerful than a text because it takes more time writing it down and putting it in a mailbox.”

With that belief in her heart, Sophia shares the powerful, personal impact of several letters that have touched her life in ways she never expected.

The first letter is the one she wrote six years ago when she was an eighth-grade student at St. Barnabas School in Indianapolis—a letter of thanks that she penned to a World War II hero for his service to his country.

Another letter is one she recently received in the mail, part of a package that she was stunned to get. With two other letters, they combine for a touching Veterans Day story.

“God bless you for your sacrifice!”

In November of 2013, Sophia was part of a schoolwide, letter-writing project at St. Barnabas School to recognize the World War II veterans of the 95th Bomb Group. Sophia drew the name of Frank Barbour, a Boston native who joined the Army Air Corps at the beginning of the war and became a decorated B-17 pilot by its end. Here is the essence of Sophia’s letter:

There is nothing like getting a letter--” she says. “Getting a letter is so much more powerful than a text because it takes more time writing it down and putting it in a mailbox.”

Prison ministry, death penalty discussion at the heart of Sister Helen Prejean’s Nov. 16 talk in Bloomington

By Katie Rutter

Special to The Criterion

BLOOMINGTON—Less than one month before federal executions are scheduled to resume in Terre Haute, one of the country’s leading activists against the death penalty will speak just 60 miles east of the federal prison where they will take place.

Sister Helen Prejean, a member of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Medaille, will be in Bloomington on Nov. 16 at a conference hosted by the Corrections Ministry of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.

Sister Helen is best known for her 1995 book Dead Man Walking, which chronicled her ministry to inmates on death row and was the basis for an award-winning 1995 film. Her ardent efforts to abolish capital punishment and minister to the condemned span more than three decades.

“Going in there and looking in the eyes of that first person I visited on death row, was like, ‘My God! He’s a human being,’” she described to The Criterion in a telephone interview on Oct. 25.

“We’re made in the image of God. Nobody can be defined by the worst act in their life. Human beings are always going to be worth more than the worst part of their life,” she said.

Sister Helen estimates that she has walked through prison doors thousands of times. She has ministered to numerous death-row inmates in her home state of Louisiana, as well as other nearby states, and is regularly present as a spiritual support during executions.

“Walking with a man to execution and he’s shackled hand and foot, he’s surrounded by six guards and they’re going to kill him. He couldn’t be more defenseless,” she said.

Her person-oriented approach has been a part of a gradual development of Catholic teaching on the death penalty. Prior to recent decades, the Church held that execution was occasionally morally acceptable in order to protect society from those who may be dangerous.

Sister Helen wrote to St. John Paul II to urge him that the modern prison
WASHINGTON (CNS)—Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), in consultation with the members of the USCCB Administrative Committee, has taken the highly unusual step of disinviting a fellow bishop from the conference’s fall general assembly.

The decision affects Bishop Michael J. Bransfield, retired bishop of Wheeling-Charleston, W.Va., who stepped down from his position in September 2018 under a cloud of allegations of sexual and financial misconduct. Pope Francis accepted Bishop Bransfield’s resignation on Sept. 13, 2018. The USCCB meets on Nov. 11-13 in Baltimore.

The action comes under one of the recently adopted “Protocol Regarding Available Non-Penal Restrictions on Bishops.”

Bishop Mark E. Brennan, who succeeded Bishop Bransfield, said he initiated the process under the protocol soon after he was installed on Aug. 22 to head the West Virginia church.

Bishop Brennan told Catholic News Service on Nov. 4 he sent his request to Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo, president of the USCCB, Houston, USCCB president, out of respect for the faithful of his diocese and to prevent any embarrassment to the USCCB if a bishop who is surrounded by serious allegations was welcomed to the fall assembly.

“The people of this diocese would be very upset and angry to think he [Bishop Bransfield] would be present to face the faithful in decisions that might well affect them,” Bishop Brennan explained.

“I can’t say what the reaction of the bishops would be if he showed up,” he added. “I think, one, it would be kind of distressed. Would he be received with Christian charity? One would hope so, but one never knows.”

Bishop Brennan said he told his predecessor he would be making the request to the USCCB leadership. The Administrative Committee consists of the officers, chairmen and regional representatives of the USCCB.

“I communicated with Bishop Bransfield I would be making this request [to formally disinvite him], and he said both orally and in writing that he did not intend to go. I think that’s good. As he put it, it would be embarrassing for him and for faith ‘body.’” Bishop Brennan said.

“Lest there be any criticism that the bishops don’t care about it, well, yeah, we do,” he said. “So I took the formal action to ask that he not be invited. And he wasn’t. His best interest as well as ours as a bishop’s ‘conferees’ are best served by him not being there.”
Celebrating Mass in catacombs, pope recalls all persecuted Christians

ROME (CNS)—In what he said was his first visit to the catacombs, Pope Francis celebrated Mass for the feast of All Souls with special words of remembrance for Catholic who still today must worship in secret.

The website of the Catacombs of Priscilla, used from the second to the fifth centuries, says, "Because of the great number of martyrs buried within it, it was called 'regina catacombarrum'—the queen of the catacombs."

In his homily at Mass on Nov. 2, in the catacombs' small chapel, Pope Francis said, "This is the first time in my life that I've entered a catacomb." Celebrating Mass in the underground burial chamber, Pope Francis said he naturally thought "of the lives of those people who had to hide, who had this culture of burying their dead and celebrating the Eucharist inside here. "It was an ugly moment in history, but it has not been overcome," the pope said. There are "many catacombs in other countries where people even have to pretend they are having a party or a birthday in order to celebrate the Eucharist because it is banned."

"Still today Christians are persecuted—even more than in the first centuries," he said. Much of the pope's homily was focused on reading of the Beatitudes from St. Matthew's Gospel.

WASHINGTON (CNS)—A bill in Congress to require respectful disposition of fetal remains from abortions as well as accountability from the abortion industry "is in keeping with society's treatment of all other deceased persons," said the chairman of the U.S. bishops' pro-life committee.

In an Oct. 31 letter to lawmakers urging them to support the Dignity for Aborted Children Act, Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann of Kansas City, Kan., cited the shocking discovery in September and the following month, additional fetal remains were discovered in various cars in rural Illinois. "The shocking discovery in September and October of fetal remains in rural Illinois further solidifies the argument that we must ascend to the level of mutual respect and accountability from the abortion industry," Naumann wrote. "As a nation, we can at least come to acknowledge the dignity and respect that all human remains deserve."

Such actions make "people on both sides of the abortion debate uncomfortable, sad, and angry," said Archbishop Naumann, who heads the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) Committee for Pro-Life Activities. "Every culture and religious tradition has customs and practices surrounding how to care for and dispose of the dead, he noted in his letter, which was released by the USCCB on Nov. 1.

For Catholics, he said, the Church has long taught that "the human body shares in the dignity of 'the image of God,' that our bodies are a reminder of the body of Jesus' resurrection of Jesus, and of that resurrection," which we too will experience after death, and of that resurrection, "we are meek, who mourn, who are humble for righteousness, who work for justice and peace."

"The identity of the deceased person in the womb belongs to the dead, because he or she is a human body," Naumann wrote. "Every human being must be treated with basic human dignity." The Dignity for Aborted Children Act was introduced in the Senate on Sept. 27 by Republican Sens. Todd Young and Mike Braun of Indiana. It requires abortion providers to dispose of the remains of unborn children just as any other human being. Failure to do so is punishable by a fine and up to five years in prison. It also requires a consent form so the mother can choose to retain possession of her unborn child or allow the provider to cremate or inter the unborn child. Failure of the provider to execute these forms is punishable by civil penalty.

The measure, S. 2590, has a companion bill in the U.S. House, H.R. 4934, introduced in late October by Republican Reps. Jackie Walorski and Jim Banks of Indiana. The Dignity for Aborted Children Act builds on the Indiana law enacted in 2016 and upheld this year by the U.S. Supreme Court that requires dignified disposition of aborted fetal remains.

Whether you support or oppose legalized abortion, he wrote, "I hope you will agree that these human bodies should not be wantonly discarded as medical waste or preserved at the whim of the abortion doctor." Archbishop Naumann told members of Congress, "Such basic courtesy is in keeping with society's treatment of all other deceased persons including cadavers, donated organs and tissues, remains that are recovered after traumatic incidents, and so on," he wrote. "As a nation, we can at least come together to ensure all human remains are treated with basic human dignity."

Congress urged to pass bill on respectful ‘disposition’ of fetal remains
The four last things: death, judgment, heaven and hell

During the month of November, the Church encourages us to meditate about the “four last things”: death, judgment, heaven and hell. The doctrine of the last things is called eschatology, from a Greek word that means outcomes or ends.

Death is inevitable for all of us; nobody gets out of this world alive. Our challenge throughout our lives is to be ready for what comes next. Death is an end of the first phase of human life. And that first phase—all that we have done in our lifetime—determines all that is to come.

After death, the Church teaches that we will undergo two judgments: the particular judgment, which happens immediately after death, and the general judgment at the end of the world. In the particular judgment, our soul will be prepared before God, and we will be judged on the use we have made of the talents God gave us and how we have conducted our lives.

The final or general judgment will take place after our souls are reunited to our bodies at the resurrection of the dead. This is what we say we believe when we recite the Creed and say that Jesus “will come to judge the living and the dead” and when we say, “We believe in the resurrection of the body.”

We don’t know how our decayed bodies will rise again, but the Church teaches that Christ will change our lowly body into a “spiritual body.”

The bliss of heaven will consist in both the vision and love of God and the knowledge and love of all others in God. We will, therefore, be reunited with our family and friends as well as with the saints from past, and future, generations.

The Church teaches that we will experience perfect happiness in heaven. Yet some people, because of their lives on Earth, will experience greater happiness than others will. Just as both a large glass and a small glass can be filled to capacity but one will hold more than the other, so will some people have a greater capacity for happiness, but all will be completely happy.

That brings us to hell. Yes, the Church teaches that there really is a hell. There are too many references to hell in Scripture to pretend that it doesn’t exist. It’s a place of eternal damnation for those who use the freedom God has given to them to reject God’s love. It’s the state of persons who die in mortal sin, in a condition of self-alienation from God.

The essence of hell is final exclusion from communion with God because of one’s own fault. The fires of hell we see in many cartoons is a metaphor for the pain of eternal separation from God, which must be the most horrifying pain of all.

And who is in hell? The Church has said infallibly, through the process of canonization, that certain people are in heaven, but it has never said that certain people are in hell. Jesus’ parables about heaven and hell lean toward the fact that some people are in hell. The 25th chapter of Matthew says that those who don’t feed the hungry, welcome the stranger, etc., “will go off to eternal punishment” (Mt 25:46). His parable of Lazarus and the rich man indicates that the rich man is in hell.

Things to think about during the month of November:

—John F. Fink

Making Sense of Bioethics

Fr. Tad Pacholczyk

Pushing back against evil

During a recent speech in Texas, I mentioned that “Drag Queen Story Hours” are being sponsored by local public libraries across the country. Toddlers and kids are brought in and placed in front of cross-dressing men who read children’s stories to them, stories that encourage them to reject fundamental gender differences between males and females. The LGBTQ agenda, I also noted, is being energetically promoted to upend and replace public school curriculum for kindergarten and preschool-aged children.

During the question-and-answer time after my talk, one of the parents in attendance, with a measure of frustration in his voice, asked what the average person can do to push back against the seemingly endless expansion of error and evil in our society.

His question is a common one. I usually reply by saying that we cannot yield to discouragement over the apparently widespread moral decline around us, nor dissipate our personal energy in worry and anxiety about the state of the world.

Instead, we need to recognize how God has entrusted to each of us a small garden that he asks us to tend. If we tend that plot well, he will extend the reach of his grace in ways we cannot foresee or imagine, and we will actually contribute to stemming the tide of error and evil we see around the limited confines of our particular plot.

This implies that each of us has divine responsibilities depending upon our particular state in life, our commitments, and our employment and family situations. By attending carefully to those responsibilities and conscientiously tending our gardens, the air around us can indeed begin to change.

A true story I recently heard brought this lesson home in a powerful way. A woman facing complex health issues felt a strong impulse one morning to pray for her oldest son, who was confined to her bed. He lived far away in a large metropolitan area and worked in his spare time for a ride-sharing company.

Later that day, her son called home, and she mentioned that she had felt the need to pray for him earlier. “That’s interesting,” he replied, “because I had something unusual happen today.”

He then told her about picking up a pregnant woman with two young children. After greeting them, he asked at his phone and started driving. The address on his screen subconsciously caused him concern, meanwhile the woman was speaking to someone on her phone in the back seat. After several minutes of uncertainty about the address, the young driver suddenly realized where they were headed: the local Planned Parenthood abortion clinic.

He decided to make a couple of wrong turns to buy some time so the woman would not notice his phone conversation.

When she kept on talking, he pulled the car over and brought it to a complete stop.

As she paused her conversation, he turned and said to her, “I’m sorry, but I have to let you know that because of my religious beliefs, I simply cannot take you where you are going. I will return you to where I picked you up and refund your fee.” The woman was surprised, but seemed to understand, and he drove her and her three children back to the pickup point.

That young driver made an intentional decision, within the confines of the particular garden God had given him to cultivate, to push back against a present evil that he refused to be party to.

Another person of lesser determination might have said, “Who am I to get involved in this person’s choices? Am I my brother’s keeper?”

He recognized, however, that he was already involved, and that each of us, in fact, is our brother’s keeper. He was concerned about a neighbor and her family gathered in the back seat of his car. He knew he could not be party to the wrongdoing she seemed poised to carry out against an unborn child.

We don’t know what happened after he dropped her off. Maybe, sadly, she just ordered another ride. Maybe, however, she reconsidered her choice. Any time we try to do what is right and push back against evil, any time we seek to act with resolve on behalf of what is good and true, new opportunities open up, the air changes around us, and we contribute to renewing our world.

That’s what each of us can do as we take care of our own garden.

Letter to the Editor

Evil of abortion can be countered in different ways to offer pro-life advocacy, reader says

Dedicated advocacy for the sanctity of all innocent human life in the womb is truly a God-given calling. However, the sometimes complex subject of how best to accomplish this noble goal within the pro-life community can be problematic.

Arguably, situational circumstances and venue play an important role.

Interacting with and counseling pregnant women entering a clinic—many of whom may be coerced, desperate and frightened—is not the same thing as raising public consciousness regarding the evil of abortion.

The pro-life advocacy requires regarding nothing less than: attentiveness to their terribly difficult situation; clearly stated information/guidance counseling regarding available pre-natal and post-delivery support; and a heartfelt Christian message that God’s love for them and the unborn child he has created knows no bounds.

Prayer, of course, is always appropriate.

On the other hand, I feel we must also support hard-hitting vocal/written language and graphic imagery within the public arena away from the clinic setting to raise public consciousness that abortion is not just a decision but is torturous and murder.

Powerful street rallies such as the Chicago-based Pro-Life Action League’s “Face the Truth” campaign can be encouraged.

We will know real headway has been made when passers-by seem calmer and state that the message offends them. The message should offend them in their lack of attentiveness to such evil.

David A. Nealy

Greenwich
Por lo tanto, es esencial que todas las personas, hombres y mujeres, superen el prejuicio y la xenofobia que permiten que se reproduzca el racismo en este mundo. Las iglesias y religiones deben enseñar a sus seguidores a promover la tolerancia y la no discriminación. Para evitar que el racismo persista, se requiere el compromiso de todos. El amor y la compasión son los fundamentos que nos ayudarán a superar el mal del racismo y a construir un mundo en el que todos se respeten y se traten con dignidad y respeto.
Volunteers who love giving a hand needed to help with Birthline

Birthline, an archdiocesan pro-life ministry that assists struggling pregnant women and mothers of infants by providing them donated clothes, bottles, blankets, diapers, and other items, is in need of volunteers to work from home with their telephone or at its office at its located in the office of Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. There is also a need for a handyman. To help this ministry support mothers who choose life, volunteers are needed for the following roles:

- **Central Catholic volunteers:** Volunteers work 9 a.m.-3 p.m. on Mondays or Wednesdays (Wednesday volunteers are especially needed). Tasks include sorting and creating outfits from donated clothes. The team is in need of special items for expecting mothers, greeting and helping clients. Volunteers may work from home and will be paid $8 per hour and will be given_ a phone number of extra supplies. The program is open to anyone who wishes to remain. Information: 445-5566, 317-236-8817, or www.archindy.org/corrections.

- **Telephone Helpline volunteers:** Volunteers answer calls to their home phone from 6-10 p.m. on weekdays and 8 a.m.-11 p.m. on weekends. Volunteers answer information that is input into a computerized system and schedule client visits. Callers usually last 5-15 minutes. Volunteers are provided in-home training. At least nine volunteers are currently needed.

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Father Godecker celebrates 50 years of 'being Christ for others'

By Natalie Hoefer

As they grow, many children change their answer to the question, “What do you want to be when you grow up?” But not Father Jeffrey Godecker.

“I never wanted to be anything else,” he says. “I have no memory of wanting to be anything else but a priest.”

His desire was fulfilled when he was ordained an archdiocesan priest on May 24, 1969. Now, after 50 years as a priest of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, he reflects on his multi-faceted—and continuing—ministry of sharing the Good News in central and southern Indiana and beyond.

“It set us out on mission”

Father Godecker grew up in Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in New Albany. His pastor was a “big influence” on him and his desire to become a priest, he says. But his greatest inspiration did not wear clerics. “My Baptist grandmother was such an impressive woman with great faith,” he recalls. “She had a tough life. She used to sit in her rocker and sing ‘The Old Rugged Cross’…. I carry that image with me, and I carried it with me into the priesthood.”

Father Godecker pursued his call to the priesthood as early as possible. Not only did he receive his master’s of divinity from Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad in 1969. He also graduated from Saint Meinrad’s former seminary high school and former seminary college. It was during his college years that a tidal change occurred in the Church.

“Vatican II was wonderful, freeing,” said Father Godecker of the Vatican’s second ecumenical council from 1962-1965. “It loosened up a lot of us to develop ourselves rather than become cookie-cutter priests.

“Theology became very scriptural, whereas before it was very scholastic. It got us out on the streets. It set us out on mission.”

While he ministered in several parishes during his five decades as a priest, many of Father Godecker’s assignments revolved around education. He has served as a teacher; director of high school, deanery and archdiocesan religious education departments; and ministered as a chaplain in Indianapolis Butler University and Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI).

His involvement in education was “not something I planned, for sure,” he says. “I didn’t want to teach. Of course, I got assigned as a [high school] teacher on my first assignment and found out I love it…. It brought me joy. The enthusiasm of the young, their vibrancy as I grew older—that gave me energy.”

‘He’s a renaissance man’

Among those vibrant youths at IUPUI during his chaplaincy there in the late 1980s and early 1990s was a young man named Chris Wadelton. Father Wadelton, who now serves as pastor of St. Bartholomew Parish in Columbus, says Father Godecker was one of the influences on his decision to become a priest.

“He engaged us and was able to relate to college students very well,” he says. “He provided a spring break alternative to West Virginia to do service work. He took us on backpacking, canoeing and camping trips.”

Father Godecker admits he “loves backpacking and canoeing.” He led similar trips for men when he was pastor at Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Indianapolis.

“It was a ministry,” he says. “It got all these men to relax and quit the fast pace and stress of business…. We would have prayer every day, have Mass. Men came back better able to serve.”

He recalls the service trips to West Virginia and the men’s camping trips as “some of the greatest moments of my priesthood.”

“Taking people out of their environment and introducing them to new kinds of environments is very important. It gets them out of themselves, introduces them to different people, different economic conditions and cultures. And that all expands their lives—they certainly expanded mine.”

Father Godecker celebrates Mass at Nuevo Paraiso, a community for neglected children in Honduras, during a parish mission trip while he was pastor of Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Indianapolis. (Submitted photo)

Father Godecker agrees his life and priesthood were expanded by Father Godecker and the experiences he provided.

“If I had to describe him in one word, it would be ‘broad,’” says the younger priest. “He has broad interests from outdoors to travel to food, theater and music. He’s an avid reader. He’s a very creative man, and he uses that creativity effectively in his ministry.”

Immaculate Heart of Mary parishioner Ellen Healey describes Father Godecker in much the same way.

“He’s a renaissance man,” she says. “He has such wide interests in so many fields. His homilies are great—he draws on all his knowledge. He was well-liked by the parish,” where he celebrated his anniversary Mass on June 2. He is also “very kind, kind and understanding,” adds Healey. 92. She recalls a time when there was an emergency in her family, and she called Father Godecker.

“He was on his way to Bloomington, and he offered to come right back,” she says. “I tear up just thinking about it. He’s a renaissance man.”

Father Wadelton flew over to assist him, as well as family members.

Fully recovered and undaunted, Father Godecker hopes to return to New Zealand next year.

‘Being there at significant moments’

As with his trip to New Zealand, Father Godecker says he has “loved the priesthood and loved the journey, but it’s not been without its mistakes and challenges and difficulties,” such as trying to satisfy others as a pastor when “people expect different things.”

Today there are different challenges, notes Father Godecker.

“The culture and the moral divide in the Church are so hard to navigate,” he says. “The key question is, how do we be compassionate toward everybody while sticking by our moral principles? That’s a huge tension.”

Yet giving and receiving compassion remains one of the highlights of Father Godecker’s 50 years as a priest.

“It’s those one-on-one experiences with people, being there with people at the significant moments of their lives—weddings, funerals and other kinds of growth points and crises.”

“I love being Christ for others in some way, and allowing them to be Christ for me.”

Father Jeffrey Godecker poses with Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin in Rome on Nov. 19, 2016, after the former archbishop of Indianapolis was installed as a cardinal. (Submitted photo)

Father Godecker hopes to return to New Zealand next year.

‘Retired in theory’

That tendency has not stopped. Father Godecker says he is “retired in theory,” and a look at his recent activities proves his point.

At 76, Father Godecker completed five years of directing continuing education for priests. He is now helping with spiritual formation for archdiocesan deacons.

He lives in a home on the grounds of Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House in Indianapolis. With Cathedral High School next door, Father Godecker says he celebrates Mass there occasionally, and also at other parishes.

But he also makes time to continue hiking throughout the United States and abroad. On Jan. 1 this year, he traveled to New Zealand for a hiking trip. He had just debarked the plane when the unthinkable happened.

“I was standing in line and a doctor was right behind me when I had a cardiac arrest,” he recalls. He had open heart surgery and spent six weeks recuperating in New Zealand.

“I was well-cared for,” he says. Father Wadelton flew over to assist him, as well as family members.

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Father Jeffrey Godecker celebrates 50 years of ‘being Christ for others’
In court briefs, Catholic leaders urge court to keep DACA in place

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Catholic leaders joined more than 35 other groups that have filed friend-of-the-court briefs urging the Supreme Court to support the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals policy, known as DACA.

Supporters of the program, initiated by President Barack Obama in 2012, want the high court to keep in place three separate appellate court rulings that have blocked President Donald J. Trump’s 2017 order to end DACA. The program has protected about 800,000 young people, known as “Dreamers,” who arrived in the U.S. as children with their parents but without legal documentation. Qualifying recipients place children with same-sex couples. They have said the USCCB called the decision reprehensible and another moral and humanitarian crisis. “The proposed rule would better align immigration regulations on small entities.”†

“Children raised in America knowing no other country should not have to face deportation into such conditions,” the brief added.†

Representing the government, the solicitor general has filed a brief arguing that DACA cannot be reviewed under an “arbitrary and capricious” standard because the choice to end DACA is at the absolute discretion of the Department of Homeland Security.

The government also explained in its brief that it had several different responses to shut down DACA, stressing that it believed DACA violated federal law.

DACA students who spoke at a panel discussion this fall at Trinity Washington University said they have felt in limbo since the Trump administration announced two years ago that it was shutting down the program many of them have benefited from. Catholic groups and leaders advocated against such a combination of frustration and dogged perseverance, but they also spoke of the fear and uncertainty that weighs on them almost daily.

A decision in the case is expected by next June.†

DACA recipients demonstrate in front of the U.S. Supreme Court in Washington on Oct. 8, 2019. (CNS photo/Tyler Orsburn)

Noting a few of the many amicus briefs in support of DACA, the brief said the USCCB called the decision reprehensible and another moral and humanitarian crisis. “The proposed rule would better align immigration regulations on small entities.”†

DACA recipients demonstrate in front of the U.S. Supreme Court in Washington on Oct. 8, 2019. (CNS photo/Tyler Orsburn)
Plaque honoring Latin School veterans dedicated at Lumen Christi

By Sean Gallagher

Indianapolis is known for its many memorials to American military veterans. A new one was dedicated and blessed on Sept. 23 at Lumen Christi Catholic School on the city’s near south side in Indianapolis.

The building in which Lumen Christi students now learn and are formed in the faith previously served as the Latin School of Indianapolis, which was the archdiocese’s high school seminary from 1955-78. It is located on the campus of Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Parish in Indianapolis.

The new plaque on the outside of the school honors the four Latin School students who died while serving in the U.S. military.

They are Petty Officer Donald Cors, who died in 1963 in an airplane accident on the U.S.S. Saratoga; Warrant Officer Richard H. Barr, who was killed in 1965 when the helicopter he was piloting was shot down in Vietnam; Private Dennis Reuter, who drowned in the White River in the helicopter he was piloting; and William Hartwell, who died in 1968 when a plane hit him during training.

Attending were Lumen Christi students, Latin School alumni, veterans, Holy Rosary parishioners and friends of those honored on the plaque.

Jim Bixler, who graduated from the Latin School in 1974 and later served in the U.S. Air Force, spoke at the dedication.

“We hope that current and future students of Lumen Christi will read this plaque and know that the dedication and character of these four men were formed in this building while going to school at the Latin School. taught by outstanding teachers just like your teachers today,” he said. “We also hope that the family and friends of these four men will cherish the plaque, knowing that their loved ones, their classmates and friends, are remembering them for service to their country.”

Judge David Certo, who serves in the Marion County Superior Court and leads its Veterans Court, spoke at the ceremony, saying that there are three “essential duties,” that those who did not serve in the U.S. military have for those who did.

He encouraged his listeners to perform the first of the three duties—to thank God for all veterans, “for the gifts of their lives and their examples of selflessness, thanks for these men for their faithfulness and value, thanks for their families for their courage, even amid their loss.”

The next duty Certo stressed was the importance of daily remembering the service of veterans.

“We honor those who have exercised our rights,” he said, “by practicing our religion, by proclaiming Christ to people everywhere, by living freely as an example of the freedom of every man’s God-given rights protected in this country by our Constitution and by everyone who defends it against freedom’s enemies.”

Certo, a member of St. John the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis, reflected on the many memorials to veterans in Indianapolis, but noted that “they mean nothing unless we stop to read the inscriptions and pray for loved ones who died to keep us free.”

The final duty to veterans, Certo said, was “to build on the firm foundation of Christ’s love and our freedom.”

“It is our duty to practice our faith as good citizens with joy and generosity, that we may be light and salt in a world that needs Christ now as much as ever,” he said. “But if we shrink from sending our best and brightest into the military, teaching, public service and the priesthood, if we shrink from sacrificing for the greater good God’s gifts to us of time, talent and treasure, then we fail to live up to the standards set by our beloved dead and deeme their heroism by our selfishness.”

Attending the ceremony was Terri Maude, the wife of Timothy Maude, who was the highest-ranking officer to die in the terrorist attack on the Pentagon.

“I thought it was wonderful,” she said of the promise to never forget. “Although I’ve been measured in years, I see that ‘never forget’ has a short shelf-span. This just helps to reinforce that ‘never forget’ promise that our nation made to every soldier when they went into the service.”

Bob Collins, Lumen Christi’s headmaster, said the plaque was dedicated to helping its students to never forget the dedication of the veterans who were educated and formed at the Latin School.

“We were really happy for the opportunity to teach the students about how they’re a part of the University of Dayton studying middle childhood and intervention specialist education. It really is amazing how much time has passed since I wrote that letter, but I have not forgotten. It honestly made an impact in my own life because Mr. Barbour wrote back to me. I felt a connection to someone that I did not know.”

“I have a lot of respect for Mr. Barbour and his service that he did in World War II, Korea and Vietnam. I would have loved to be able to meet Mr. Barbour and thank him for his heroic acts in not just one war, but three.”

“I wanted to thank you for reaching out to me because with all the craziness going on in our everyday lives, this was a great reminder that I would not be where I am today without the men like Mr. Barbour giving me and everyone else in my life our freedoms. I do not get that kind of reminder every day, so this was an amazing reminder not to take life for granted.”

“God Bless, Sophia Eogol”

The connection between Frank Barbour and Sophia continues as another Veterans Day nears.

“I don’t really have a lot of veterans in my life,” Sophia says. “Now that I have him, he’s still someone I can look up to. It makes me think of the great impact that veterans have on our country. They have made great sacrifices for us.”  

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Young Church, heed our Holy Father's call: Make a ruckus!

( Editor’s note: “Make a ruckus!” That’s what Pope Francis implored young people to do in his post-synodal apostolic exhortation, “Christus Vivit!” or “Christ is Alive!” which was released following the 2018 Synod of Bishops on “young people, the faith and vocational discernment.” Marian University educators Dr. Arthur D. Canales and Mark Erdosy, and Ricardo Gonzalez, a teacher at Montigneur Edward Pace High School in Miami, have written a three-part essay based on the exhortation, which is both a letter to young people about their place in the Church and a plea to older adults to offer guidance rather than stifle the enthusiasm of their place in the Church and a plea to older adults to offer guidance rather than stifle the enthusiasm of young people of faith.

By Dr. Arthur D. Canales, Mark Erdosy and Ricardo Gonzalez

Special to The Criterion

Part Two: Key themes within the document

There are four key themes within the document: (a) listening to young people, (b) dialogue with young people, (c) working toward common ground, and (d) kerygma. It is important to briefly address these four themes.

—Listening to young people: The document is written to young people all over the world ages 16-29. The Holy Father encourages young people to look to the Church for guidance and support, but also for the people of God to guide, mentor and support them. It also discusses how young people do not need to follow the same path as their adults, but can be useful resources to the Church.

—Dialogue with young people: Another theme of “Christus Vivit” is the importance of becoming a synodal Church, or a Church that dialogues and walks with young people. An essential first step toward meaningful sharing is to create a welcoming atmosphere. Pope Francis declares that “we need to make all our institutions better equipped to be more welcoming to young people” (“Christus Vivit,” #216).

Creating an environment where young people can feel at home must become a pastoral priority, such as in youth center nights where young people gather to socialize with peers and have conversation. Another practical way of finding common ground with young people is through small group interaction. Pope Francis suggests loosely structured and non-judgmental sharing environments have the potential “to strengthen social and relational skills,” and can lead to personal stories, concerns, struggles and deep questions which young people often struggle to grapple with (#219).

—Common ground: The theme of common ground is one that is woven throughout “Christus Vivit.” One of the ways that the Holy Father worked on common ground between young people and the rest of the Church was through his discussion of vocation (chapter 8) and discernment (chapter 9) of “Christus Vivit.”

The themes of vocation and discernment give us all a common ground to work toward as sisters and brothers in Christ. Themes such as service, work and love, family, listening and accompaniment are highlighted within these two chapters. Common ground is something that can, and should be accomplished if the Church, as a whole, upholds young people as an important and necessary part of the universal Church.

—Kerygma: Another major theme of “Christus Vivit” is the importance of the kerygma or proclamation of Jesus Christ (#213).

At the National Dialogue Conference this past summer, Bishop Frank J. Caggiano of the Diocese of Bridgeport, Conn., stated that the essential message of the kerygma can be best expressed in the memorial acclamation in the Catholic liturgy: “Jesus Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.” While it was made abundantly clear by the various speakers and panelists that sharing the faith tradition with others is important, personal witness has always been most highly regarded. The effective presentation of the kerygma more than any eloquent exposition of faith.

Ministers of young people must, according to Pope Francis, “be witnesses to the Gospel wherever they find themselves, by the way they live” (#175). As part of this culture of encounter described earlier, ministers must prioritize sharing personal faith in the formation process of young people. Sharing one’s faith story is the most effective way to show young people that everyone is on their journey toward becoming disciples of Jesus.

Next week: Our tasks as Catholics

(De Dr. Arthur D. Canales is associate professor of pastoral theology and ministry at Marian University in Indianapolis and an expert on Catholic youth and young adult ministry. Mark Erdosy is the executive director of the San Damiano Scholar Program at Marian University, and a specialist on discernment and vocation. Dr. Ricardo Gonzalez, is a theology teacher at Montigneur Edward Pace Catholic High School in Miami who has more than 20 years of Catholic teaching and youth ministry under his belt. All three have been part of the National Dialogue on Youth and Young Adults since its inception in 2017 and were part of the National Dialogue Conference at Franciscan University in Steubenville, Ohio, this past summer.)

By Paul Sifuentes

I can still recall my first experience of the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC). I wasn’t a parish youth minister or a young Catholic student from this archdiocese, as I am now. I was a freshman in high school who had recently met my current ministry position cut from the parish budget. My mom, however, would not let that stop me from being involved in youth ministry events that my diocese was involved in. So she, along with a fellow mom in my parish, made sure that I and another teenager made it to NCYC in Kansas City 22 years ago.

I will never forget that experience, and many things from that experience: I can put myself back into the room where I heard Doug Brummel share the faith in a way I have never seen before. It was fascinating for me to walk around the thematic village and talking with and meeting people from Catholic organizations all over the world.

The thing I remember the most, however, was my time with those with whom I was traveling: the conversations as we walked to the city, the meals we shared (and the distances we walked to find them), the time in our hotel, gathering as a group to pray and celebrating the Mass. It was the relationships in the group that would lead me to be a part of two different mission trips to Sucre, Bolivia. My relationship with Rhona (one of our leaders on the trip) gave me the inspiration that one day I might want to be a youth minister.

This year on Nov. 21-23 marks the fifth time in a row that NCYC will be held in Indianapolis. We talk about how many people will descend on the city. Perhaps we have seen the crazy hats these teenagers wear, or heard how many people will fill the site for all our pilgrims: The themes of vocation and discernment give us all a common ground to work toward as sisters and brothers in Christ. Like any pilgrimage, you can’t find your way out of the Church that they are priceless (#122)!

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want to be a youth minister. By going to NCYC, I was able to have a better understanding of the value of kerygma more than any eloquent exposition of faith.

Ministers of young people must, according to Pope Francis, “be witnesses to the Gospel wherever they find themselves, by the way they live” (#175). As part of this culture of encounter described earlier, ministers must prioritize sharing personal faith in the formation process of young people. Sharing one’s faith story is the most effective way to show young people that everyone is on their journey toward becoming disciples of Jesus.

NCYC is your opportunity to be another as we encounter Jesus Christ.

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With many of the tasks that are needed so that these adults can help, some groups of teens can concentrate on these, not on safety details. Just go to www.ncyc.info to volunteer to sign up!

—Invite a friend to be involved with you. During previous NCYC gatherings, I encouraged many people to volunteer, and each of them came away energized about their faith and the Church.

—Pray for our teens who are making a pilgrimage here, just that at the discourses on the road to Emmaus (NCYC’s Scripture theme for 2019) they encounter our Lord and experience their hearts on fire for Him.

—Pray for our adults that their hearts be prepared to walk alongside our teens as Christ walked alongside the disciples on the road, asking questions and intently listening as teens share their hearts.

Many in our young Church are eager to grow in their lives of faith. Please join us at the Indiana Convention Center and Lucas Oil Stadium on Nov. 21-23, and pray that NCYC again bears much fruit.

(Paul Sifuentes is archdiocesan director of youth ministry.)

By Dr. Arthur D. Canales and Mark Erdosy

INDIANAPOLIS prepares to host an estimated 20,000 high school students from across the country Nov. 21-23. Part one of the series can be found online at www.CriterionOnline.com.

Indianapolis and an expert on Catholic youth and young adult ministry. Mark Erdosy is the executive director of the San Damiano Scholar Program at Marian University, and a specialist on discernment and vocation. Dr. Ricardo Gonzalez, is a theology teacher at Montigneur Edward Pace Catholic High School in Miami who has more than 20 years of Catholic teaching and youth ministry under his belt. All three have been part of the National Dialogue on Youth and Young Adults since its inception in 2017 and were part of the National Dialogue Conference at Franciscan University in Steubenville, Ohio, this past summer.)
First Vatican Council’s interruption left ‘unfinished business’

Dec. 8, 2019, will mark the 150th anniversary of the opening of the First Vatican Council. On Dec. 8, 1869, more than 700 bishops gathered in St. Peter’s Basilica at the Vatican for the Church’s 20th ecumenical council and, most famously, defined the doctrine of papal infallibility.

Though the council engaged topics that remain highly relevant, it is often overlooked due to a sense that its teachings are out of step with contemporary views. The faithful and scholars alike frequently disregard Vatican I in favor of its successor, Vatican II.

This preference reveals itself in the fact that a Google search for “Vatican I history” can yield the question: “Did you mean Vatican II history?” Despite a general neglect of Vatican I, a renewed engagement with the council in its sesquicentennial year promises to advance many enduring questions for the Church today.

As with any council, appreciating the historical backdrop of Vatican I is important. The council unfolded during a time of intellectual and political upheaval. Many of the structures and institutions that had long brought order to European society were diminished in the aftermath of the French Revolution.

The revolution’s wake brought the rise of rationalism, atheism and relativism, these developments, coupled with growing aggressions by secular authorities, set Rome in an extremely defensive posture. Pope Pius IX gathered the bishops hoping that a united Church could address these challenges.

The assembled bishops approved two constitutions. The first was “Dei Filius” (“The Son of God”), which treated the relationship between faith and reason. The second was “Pastor Aeternus” (“Eternal Shepherd”) which treated the Church. Both should be seen in the context of the chaotic climate of the day.

“Dei Filius” engaged the rationalists’ claims that human reason was the ultimate arbiter of truth, including the reliability and status of revelation. The decree asserted the supremacy of revelation, arguing that revelation was neither subject to human reason nor contrary to it. “Pastor Aeternus” defined the doctrines of papal primacy and infallibility as a way of establishing the Church’s authority, stability and independence in a time when those things were openly debated. These definitions did not intend to usurp the authority of bishops or curtail the freedom of Catholics; rather they sought to give clarity to papal authority to secure those things.

Properly understood, these teachings are not about power. They illumine a close relationship between Christ and the Church that is manifest in a unique way in the papal office.

The chaotic times that prompted Vatican I also provoked its premature suspension. The council’s agenda called for extensive deliberations on the nature of the Church that would set the teaching on papal authority in their proper context.

The outbreak of the Franco-Prussian war forced an interruption of the conciliar proceedings in 1870, leaving work on the draft document on the Church incomplete. Though a resumption of the council was considered at least twice in the 20th century, its work was never resumed.

Understanding Vatican I’s context allows us to appreciate its intentions and teachings. The council sought to preserve the Church’s ability to advance its mission in a rapidly changing and often hostile environment. Working from a defensive posture, it produced strong statements about the nature of revelation and papal authority to demonstrate the Church’s ability to overcome the errors of the day.

Yet, the council was unable to complete its work. As a result, scholars often say that Vatican I’s teachings are true but incomplete or one-sided. It is this one-sidedness that motivates some to try to leave the council behind and Google “Vatican II history” instead.

Vatican I is, nevertheless, part of the larger conciliar tradition guided by the Holy Spirit in which each council is meant to be seen in light of the others.

The council provides authoritative teachings, yet its positions find full expression in their harmonization with other conciliar statements.

For example, Vatican I is largely silent on the role of the bishops in relation to the pope. That silence is not a negation of episcopal authority, but represents “unfinished business.”

Vatican II engaged this unfinished business by considering the nature of episcopal collegiality. Therefore, while some try to posit Vatican I’s teachings on the pope and Vatican II’s teachings on the bishops as an either/or choice, in reality, by virtue of the nature of the conciliar tradition, they must be seen as both/and.

Pope Francis continues this work of bringing greater harmonization to the various forms of ecclesial authority.

Pope Francis has called for a “sound decentralization” of Church structures, yet he is clear that moving in this direction requires a deeper understanding of Vatican I’s teachings.

He recognizes that Vatican I is not an obstacle but a necessary and valuable resource for considering how the diversity that comes with decentralization can be facilitated and held together by a central authority in Rome.

Viewed in the context of its own day and as part of the larger tradition, we can recognize that Vatican I’s teachings are less rigid than generally presumed and meant to be seen as part of a larger whole.

One hundred and fifty years later, we cannot afford to leave this historic event in the past because, properly understood, it holds key insights for our future.

(Kristin Colberg is associate professor of Theology at St. John’s School of Theology and Seminary in Collegeville, Minn. She is author of the book Vatican I and Vatican II: Councils in the Living Tradition.)

A tiara of Blessed Pius IX is displayed during a media presentation for a 2018 exhibit of vestments and sacred objects from the Vatican at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Pope Pius opened the First Vatican Council 150 years ago. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)
I love the Feast of All Souls. I realize that might sound odd. However, when you’ve lost someone close to you, you cherish opportunities in which to remember him or her.

Every parish celebrates All Souls Day with its own unique observances. My parish lays out a large altar cloth in the narthex for a couple weeks prior to the feast day, and parishioners are asked to write their loved ones’ names on the cloth. It is then draped over the altar during the month of November. I am reminded of the representation of the hundreds of souls on that cloth says to me that these people live on in the memories of someone still very much loves them.

Through my own experience with grief, I have learned a very simple but valuable lesson—it is important to show up and remember. When my infant son passed away many years ago, a neighbor barely knew me to the visitation. Amidst all the words of consolation I heard that day, what she shared had a profound effect on me. She said, “Tell me one wonderful thing about Matthew that I can remember when I pray for him.”

It sounds so simple, but to someone in the throes of grief, it meant the world to me. It allowed me to acknowledge, in what I thought was most wonderful about him. I try to remember to do the same for others when I attend funerals. I tell another neighbor, with whom I did not really even have a relationship, showed up, and together, we remembered. My parish’s visitation for my son’s vigil Mass, I was surprised when I looked up to see Father Joseph Mortuary standing in front of me. I worked with Father Joe at Bishop Simon Brude College Seminary in Indianapolis. My son’s funeral was held in Cincinnati. St. Jude Parish in Indianapolis. I knew he was not drive from here. I did not know he was coming, nor did I expect him to make the trip. I was so happy to reconnect with a fellow staff member at the seminary that every week and his sister’s imminent death from cancer, he came and conlearned the funeral Mass. He showed up. And he helped me remember how important it is to be there for others.

The father of my closest friend from high school recently passed away, again in Cincinnati. When I found out the date and time of the funeral, I hesitated making plans to attend because I had a full schedule of meetings that day. But I thought back to the people who have supported me, and realized how important it was to attend. I rearranged my schedule and headed east.

When I arrived at the visitation and mass attended by the Standing Committee of All Souls, I did not tell her I was coming, and she was overwhelmed by the gesture. I just showed up. And it was so good to see the friends remembering with her and her family.

I am uncomfortable with the business of death and grief. However, if you’ve lost someone you love, more than likely you will find great comfort in others who are willing to walk the journey with you. You don’t need to know the exact thing to say or do. Just show up and remember with me. (Kimberly Pohovey is a member of St. Jude Parish in Indianapolis. She is the director of mission advancement for Archdiocesan Education Initiatives.)

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Our Works of Charity/ David Bethuram

Problems of hunger and homelessness remind us to invest in others

Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week, on Nov. 16-24, is an annual program where people take part across the country to draw attention to the problems of hunger and homelessness. I’d like to share a real story of a woman that illustrates how hunger and homelessness impact people. Maggie is one of hundreds of thousands of people who has worked hard and had a story of how, with caring help along the way, she was able to break the cycle.

Maggie spent most of her childhood battling hunger, food insecurity, poverty and sometimes homelessness. She spent many days hungry, scared and not knowing where her next meal would come from, or where she might be living on a particular day.

When she was young, she didn’t understand what was happening in her family, but she knew that it wasn’t how people were supposed to live.

When Maggie’s world had forgotten about her, her family and their problems, but then they would meet someone who treated them with respect, like the workers at a soup kitchen where they would get two meals a day when they were homeless and sometimes enough money that they would give them groceries when there were more days in the month than there was money in their pockets.

The kindness shown to her and her family in the food pantries, meal programs and homeless shelters cannot be overstated.

When someone would give her a snack and ask her what she wanted to be when she grew up, they were not just nourishing her mind, but her spirit. Maggie says, “They gave me a sense of being normal for the first time.” The most importantly, helped me to believe that there was a future for me where I got to grow up and have the life that I wanted to accomplish with my life.”

That spirit guided her as she dealt with hunger and homelessness. After all, hunger limits you in a way that is difficult to describe because you are constantly thinking about getting your next meal and you are not only surviving but in a way that allows you to grow and achieve your goals.

Maggie said that hunger, poverty and homelessness stole her childhood. It took away my innocence and my sense of security, but I was one of the lucky ones. I not only survived but learned to thrive.”

When she had money as she traveled the way but in the end, found successful help with the help of many people who came to her aid. She has accomplished my childhood dream of being a lawyer, but there are so many millions of people who continue to struggle like my family struggled.

Maggie is one of hundreds of thousands of people who has worked hard and had the support of her family, especially her wonderful grandmother. But without charity and the social safety net, she would not have been able to achieve her dreams. She needed school lunches, wellness benefits, food stamps, Section 8 Housing, subsidized applications for college, financial aid and student loans. She is giving back to the community, and helping others in need so they, too, have a future.

No one makes it alone. Everyone has help in some way.

The Church and Catholic Charities will continue to improve in a way that allows them to live in dignity and can achieve their goals for a better life.

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

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Amid the Fray/Greg Erlandson

The fleeting ‘nones’ and an indifference to institutional religion

I grew up in a family of seven kids, which I considered tough Catholic brood. I knew families that could field entire baseball and even football teams. As a kid, I kept score of such matters and felt superior when Dad was lagging.

I keep a different kind of score these days. I still ask folks how many kids or sibs they have. When they say they have 110 students. H.V. Kaltenborn on the radio with her circle back to her milestone birthday. “I have accomplished my mission: It’s become a four-generation tradition Christmas. The lake danced behind us, and I circled back to her milestone birthday. “I feel pretty much the same as 70,” she said.

Grandma stimulates her mind and soul—“In her generation, there was no journaling, weekly adoration, frequent phone calls and chocolates. She credits “God’s grace and the luck of the Irish, which includes my genes.” She does not look 90. She is spry, places a focus on family, supports up-growing grandbabies, serving guests. She is beloved by everyone she encounters—a happy, warm and trusting stand-in with a ready hug and listening ear, a candy dish and a crackling fireplace. Everyone feels welcome and at home.

But she recalls times of need and lost and embraced. That is her superpower: She remembers. She is 90 and also 50 and 20. She recalls each stage—whether not only where she was and what she did, but how she felt. She remembers how it feels. She is still a redheaded girl living in St. Paul with her grandchildren, tormented by the neighbor boy Donny Stullman, determined to prove she is taller than he (though she is not). She is still a teenager, dreaming of mermaid tails and mermaid tails. She is news of World War II, listening to H.V. Kaltenborn on the radio with her grandpa.

She is still a kindergarten teacher, overviewed and inspired to teach the students. She is still a newlywed, deeply in love, merging two lives.

The family is back at home—humbled by the task of raising children. She is still a Girl Scout leader, teaching the third graders, and the girls will sing when they are new moms soothing colicky babies.

She is still a school teacher at 45, given to fits of uncontrollable crying, triggered by daily reminders like shoes in a closet, and also a woman of extraordinary kindness. (“I never knew there was such compassion,” she said.” “I’ll never be the same.”

She is still a program coordinator at a social service agency called Neighbors,

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Twenty Something/ Christina Capечci

Grandma remembers: the secret of 90

It’s become a four-generation tradition to head south of the cities and take in a small town celebration of All Souls. For, the route winds between sorrowful bluffs and a shimmering lake, feels like a narrow passageway, a tunnel back to the past.

We perused antique dolls at a whimsical toy shop in Beloit. Mrs. McMahon recognized a Shirley Temple doll on display, she’d had the same one.

Then we climbed aboard the hand-carved carousel. Grandma got a giggled chariot pulled by an ostrich, the baby on her lap. It seemed a fitting placement for a freshly married woman who turns 90 this month: a few musical loops for the woman who has circled the sun 90 times, all while remaining in close orbit with the Sun.

On the drive home, we gazed at blazing maples and listened to “How Great Thou Art”—a song played at Grandpa Jim’s funeral, she told me. In the back of the van, a great-grandchild snatched her Reverie, and stories of toddlers antics ensued. Again she seamlessly spanned the decades, recalling her days with young children. She laughed about the time her son Michael got stuck in a muddy field at farmer Farmer’s. A neighbor boy breathlessly alerted her, “Volunteer 180. How Great Thou Art!” The lake danced behind us, and I circled back to her milestone birthday.

“My soul feels pretty much the same as 70,” she said.

Grandma stimulates her mind and soul—“In her generation, there was no journaling, weekly adoration, frequent phone calls and chocolates. She credits “God’s grace and the luck of the Irish, which includes my genes.” She does not look 90. She is spry, places a focus on family, supports up-growing grandbabies, serving guests. She is beloved by everyone she encounters—a happy, warm and trusting stand-in with a ready hug and listening ear, a candy dish and a crackling fireplace. Everyone feels welcome and at home.

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Ten Things To Do When You’re...
The Sunday Readings
Sunday, November 10, 2019

**2 Thessalonians 2:16-3:5**

**2 Maccabees 7:1-2, 9-14**

Sunday, November 10, 2019

The Sunday Readings

The Church has its first reading for Mass on this weekend a section from the Second Book of Maccabees. Maccabees, First or Second, rarely appears as a reading at Mass. These books are late in the formation of the Scriptures as we now have them. They date from a period only two centuries before Christ, describing a very dark period in the history of God’s people.

When Alexander the Great—who had conquered so much of the present-day Middle East—died, his generals scrambled to succeed him. One of them, Seleucus, became the pharaoh of Egypt. Another of them, Seleucus, became king of Syria. Antiochus, the successor of Seleucus, Antiochus IV, believed himself to be divine. He demanded that his subjects, including the Jews, worship him. Anyone who refused this demand paid dearly. This weekend’s reading vividly reports the penalty. Antiochus reserved for those who denied that he was a god.

Maccabees I and II were written about matters that received attention by two books lionize the pious Jewish martyrs who refused to forsake the one God of Israel. Herodism, therefore, is one lesson. Another is about the afterlife, which is mentioned as a reward for holy living on the Earth. The afterlife as a doctrine was not very refined in the more ancient Hebrew writings. Maccabees expands the notion.

St. Paul’s Second Epistle to the Thessalonians provides the second reading. This work, too, was written when times were hard for true believers. The epistle is challenging but encouraging. Regardless of whatever may lie ahead, Paul insists that disciples must hold firm in their faith. For the Thessalonians, imperial Rome appeared to be the end, however, the just triumphed, not with bow and sword but with their faith and hope.

**My Journey to God**

**Thank you for Being Here**

By Thomas Lamb

I have been in a dark valley, God knows where.
I met no man there.
I could hear the roar of the foe.
I had nowhere for solitude.
And every one in a great while
Through the darkness
I saw a sun.
And now that time is over
And I come into the light
And I see you there in all my sight,
Here, inside a man.
I now understand your plan:
Here, in the person sitting next to me,
And in every tree.
Here, everywhere—
I thank you for being there.
Here, very near—
I thank you for being here.

(Thomas Lamb resides at the Little Sisters of the Poor, Rehabilitation Home in Indianapolis. He wrote the poem 55 years ago. Photo: A tree stands in Kudum, a village in the Nuba Mountains of Sudan, on April 30, 2018.) CNS (photo/Phil Jeffreys)

**Question Corner/Fr. Kenneth Doyle**

The Church continues to seek to receive converts into its full communion

At the Second Vatican Council, the Catechisms of the Church were published, noting that we should accept non-Catholics as our “separated brethren,” and that we shouldn’t be overly concerned if they don’t want to join the Catholic Church. But I was taught since childhood that the only way to salvation was through the Catholic Church. Why the change? (Texas)

Q When I attended parochial school, we were taught that a priest could not celebrate Mass by himself and needed at least one other person as his “congregation.” But lately I have been told that priests are required to celebrate Mass every day, even if there are no others to present. Which is correct? (Wisconsin)

A Actually, neither statement is completely correct. Let me explain. As to whether a priest can celebrate Mass without a congregation, the Church’s Code of Canon Law, reflecting the fact that the Eucharist is primarily an act of public worship rather that a private devotion, says, “Except for a just and reasonable cause, a priest is not to celebrate the eucharistic sacrifice without the participation of at least some member of the faithful” (#906).

The code leaves it to the priest to measure the “just and reasonable cause,” and I will tell you what I do. Most days, even as a retired priest, I have Mass obligations at one or another parish.

But let’s say that it’s day when I’m not obligated, and it happens to be the anniversary of the death of one of my parents. I would consider that a “just and reasonable cause,” and I would celebrate Mass all by myself at the desk in my apartment.

I could feel comfortable celebrating so particularly since, in answer to your second question, a priest is encouraged to celebrate Mass every day even though he is not required to do so.

Here’s what the code says about that: “Remembering always that in the mystery of the eucharistic sacrifice the work of redemption is exercised continously, priests are to celebrate frequently, indeed, daily celebration is recommended earnestly since, even if the faithful cannot be present, it is the act of Christ and the Church in which priests fulfill their principal function” (#904).

I should note that priests are under the same obligation that applies to all the faithful to attend Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation. He may do this by celebrating Mass or attending one.

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

Francis Brother Joseph D’Amato, right, and members of the football team at St. Anthony’s High School in South Huntington, N.Y., lead fans in singing the national anthem prior to a home game against Christ the King High School of Queens, on Oct. 27. (Photo: Gregory A. Shemitz)

**ERLANDSON continued from page 12**

The picture of the growing number of Catholics who are becoming “nones” he told them that 50 percent of Catholics under the age of 30 have left the Church. “Half the kids that we baptized and confirmed in the last 30 years are now ex-Catholics or unaffiliated,” he said, and “one out of six millennials in the U.S. is now a former Catholic.”

This checks with my informal family surveys. Families are often smaller, but if 30 percent of your kids are still practicing Catholics, that seems about average.

He said, “One thing I’ve learned is that there may be a silver lining, however. Many people are spiritually hungry. An intellectually rigorous and engaging presentation of the faith may work for some. A witness that is both humble and constructive may engage others.

Authenticity counts for a lot. What is both honest and authentic is that which is both humble and constructive may engage others.

There may be a silver lining, however. Many people are spiritually hungry. An intellectually rigorous and engaging presentation of the faith may work for some. A witness that is both humble and constructive may engage others. Authenticity counts for a lot.

As parents know, there are no guarantees. Living the faith, encouraging the faith, teaching the faith is what we must do. Then we leave it up to God. And as every parent knows, that can be the hardest of all.

(Greg Erlandson, director and editor-in-chief of Catholic News Service, can be reached at geraldson@catholicnews.com.)†
In war, human dignity must be protected, pope tells military chaplains

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Military chaplains are called to educate the consciences of members of the armed forces so that even in war, the opposing side is not viewed merely as “an enemy to be destroyed,” Pope Francis said.

“Let yourselves be guided by the words of the Gospel: ‘I was in prison and you came to me.’” (Mt 25:36), the pope said.

Pope Francis, who is in Asia, is celebrating the feast of Our Lady of Loreto universal calendar

Pope Francis prays before a statue of Our Lady of Loreto at the Sanctuary of the Holy House on the feast of the Annunciation in Loreto, Italy, on March 25. Pope Francis has approved adding the feast of Our Lady of Loreto to all calendars and liturgical books for the celebration of the Mass and the Liturgy of the Hours. (CNS photo/Alvaro Vicente via Reuters)

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Employment

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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 position of president. 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 November 15; applications will be accepted until the position is filled.

To apply:  
1. Please submit the following items electronically to Joni Ripa (jripa@archindy.org):  
   - Letter of interest, addressed to Gina Kurtz Fleming, Superintendent of Catholic Schools, including responses to the following two questions:  
     - How can you be a champion for the Catholic education and formation of young people in the role of president?  
     - Resume  
   - Three letters of recommendation or contact information for three professional references  
2. Complete the online application using the following link: http://ocf.archindy.org/office-of-catholic-education/employment/job-postings.aspx

For questions about this Catholic leadership position, please email or call:  
Rob Rash  
Office of Catholic Schools  
rrash@archindy.org  
317-236-1544

In war, human dignity must be protected, pope tells military chaplains

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United Catholic Appeal Prayer

Loving and merciful Father, we come before you with grateful hearts, for all that we are and all that we have is a gift from you. You sustain us with your grace and mercy and you lead us with the wisdom of your truth. May we always strive to remain in communion with Christ the Cornerstone and with His Church, our spiritual home. Help us to respond to your call to be missionary disciples in the world. Sustain us amid the challenges of this life, and by the gifts of your Holy Spirit, strengthen us in compassionate service to one another, so that we may continue to build up your Kingdom before the eyes of the world as faith-filled and hopeful witnesses to Jesus Christ. May all we do be for your glory. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Text UCA to 84576 to see a video about how your gift impacts others.