Bills offer protections for pregnant women in the workplace

By Victoria Arthur

As a leading pro-life voice in the Catholic Church calls on 2020 to be a “Year of Service” to pregnant women, the Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC) is closely monitoring legislation that would promote safer working environments for employees who are expecting a child.

Companion bills introduced in the Indiana House and Senate this month would prohibit an employer with 15 or more employees from discriminating against a pregnant worker. House Bill 1284 and Senate Bill 342 also would require employers to provide “reasonable accommodations” for their pregnant employees per a doctor’s recommendation—from offering them extra breaks in their work day to being exempt from heavy lifting.

“Passage of this legislation would allow women to be employed without the stress and fear of working in situations that could lead to miscarriage,” said Angela Espada, executive director of the ICC, the public policy voice of the Catholic Church in Indiana. “Additionally, minor modifications and freedom from discrimination could also prevent a pregnant woman from seeking an abortion because she fears losing her job.”

The timing of the proposed legislation coincides with a challenge recently issued by Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann of Kansas City, Kan., chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Committee on Pro-Life Activities. He called upon U.S. bishops to join a nationwide effort titled “Walking with Moms in Need: A Year of Service” beginning in March—the 25th anniversary of St. John Paul II’s groundbreaking encyclical “Evangelium Vitae” (“The Gospel of Life”). The encyclical is arguably the best known and most quoted affirmation of the Catholic Church’s moral teaching on the sanctity of life.

“The 25th anniversary year of...”

Response to Supreme Court’s upcoming Louisiana abortion case reflects sharp divides

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Strong opinions on both sides of the abortion debate are front and center in the paperwork currently filed with the Supreme Court for its upcoming abortion case.

The case challenges a Louisiana law that requires abortion providers to have admitting privileges at a local hospital. The court also will examine a separate petition by the state that questions if the abortion providers have the legal standing to challenge the state law on behalf of their patients.

The 2014 Louisiana law was upheld last year by a panel of the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

The combined cases: Gee v. June Medical Services and June Medical Services v. Gee will be argued on March 4. Rebekah Gee is the secretary of the Louisiana Department of Health and June Medical Services is a Louisiana abortion provider.

More than 70 friend-of-the-court briefs have been filed on both sides of this case with health care professionals, researchers, lawmakers, states, and individuals weighing in.
Supreme Court to re-examine mandate for religious employers

WASHINGTON (CNS)—The Little Sisters of the Poor are once again going to the Supreme Court.

The order of women religious, who care for the elderly poor, have been down this road before, twice defending their right to not comply with the government’s health care law requirement that any employer provide contraceptive, abortifacient and sterilization coverage in their health plans.

This is where the Little Sisters of the Poor come in.

In one of the two consolidated cases, Trump v. Pennsylvania, the administration lacked the legal authority to require religious employers anyone to comply with the government’s mandate that the order had already allowed them to refuse to provide contraceptive, abortifacient and sterilization coverage per their health plans.

It is disappointing to think that as we enter a new decade we must still defend our ministry in court,” said Mother Lorraine Marie Maguire of the Little Sisters of the Poor. “We are grateful the Supreme Court has decided to weigh in, and hopeful that the justices will reinforce their previous decision,” she said in a statement.

Mark Rienzi, president of Becket, a nonprofit religious liberty law firm that represents the sisters, agreed, saying: “It is time for the Supreme Court to finally put this issue to rest.”

The oral arguments, which will be heard by the court later this spring, are the combined cases of Little Sisters of the Poor Saints Peter and Paul Home in Pennsylvania and Trump v. Pennsylvania.

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) filed a friend-of-the-court brief on Nov. 1, siding with the Little Sisters of the Poor and stressing that the court needs to set the record straight particularly with regard to interpreting RFRA.

RFRA—which says, “Governments should not substantially burden religious exercise without compelling justification”—was passed by Congress in 1993 and signed into law by President Bill Clinton.

This is where the Little Sisters come in. They appealed the circuit court’s ruling, and asked the Supreme Court to step in.

In 2017, religious groups and houses of worship were granted a religious exemption by the Supreme Court from the government’s mandate in the Affordable Care Act to include coverage of contraceptives, sterilization and abortion-inducing drugs in their employee health plans.

Three years later, religious nonprofit groups challenged the requirement they comply with the mandate, and the court sent the cases back to the lower courts with instructions for the federal government and the challengers to try to work out a solution agreeable to both sides.

In 2018, religious groups were given further protection from the mandate through an executive order issued by President Donald J. Trump requiring the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to provide comprehensive exemptions to benefit religious ministries, including the Little Sisters of the Poor, from the mandate.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) provided this exemption in 2018, but several states challenged it, including California, Pennsylvania and New Jersey, saying HHS didn’t have the power to give this exemption.

In 2019, attorneys for Pennsylvania and New Jersey obtained a nationwide injunction against the rules protecting religious organizations from mandates, and the injunction was then upheld by the 3rd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, based in Philadelphia.

This is when the Little Sisters come in. They appealed the circuit court’s ruling, and asked the Supreme Court to step in.

In one of the two consolidated cases, Trump v. Pennsylvania, the administration has argued that the exceptions to the mandate for religious groups were "virtual impotence," referring to RFRA.

"Credible" the allegations made by top Vatican officials, including that, because that's a major thing to say.标志性文件中的安全性和对宗教自由的保护,它添加了。†

Bishop Strickland says he asked Pope Francis about McCarrick report

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Bishop Joseph E. Strickland of Tyler, Texas, said he asked Pope Francis about the Vatican investigation into Theodore E. McCarrick and the release of a promised report on how the former cardinal managed to rise through the Church ranks.

The bishop, who was making his “ad limina” visit to Rome, drew widespread attention in August 2018 for a public statement saying he found “credible” the allegations made by retired Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò, the former nuncio to the United States, regarding McCarrick.

Archbishop Viganò alleged that top Vatican officials, including Pope Francis, knew for years that McCarrick had been accused of sexual misconduct.

“Bishop Strickland at the time called for a thorough investigation, similar to those conducted any time allegations are deemed to be credible.”

“Pope Francis was great” in answering all the questions of the bishops of Texas, Oklahoma, and Arkansas during an audience on Jan. 20. Bishop Strickland told Catholic News Service the next day. But the pope did ask the bishops not to share certain details about the discussion.

Bishop Strickland said he does not regret what he said in his 2018 letter. “Honestly, I guess I didn’t realize how controversial it was at that time,” but as someone who studied canon law and as a bishop, “credible allegations” must be investigated and dealt with. “If I regretted anything, he continued, it would be that Archbishop Viganò called for Pope Francis to resign. “I never intended to embrace that, because that’s a major thing to say. “I certainly didn’t want to validate that,” Bishop Strickland said. “But I said these allegations about McCarrick need to be investigated, and they have been, and the report, according to Pope Francis yesterday, will be published.

“McCallard had been suspended from ministry, followed by dozens of stories detailing his sexual misconduct with seminarians and then allegations of sexual abuse of children. McCarrick’s resignation from the College of Cardinals in July; and the release in August of the Pennsylvania grand jury report on abuse and its cover up in six dioceses.

Bishop Strickland said the priests and faithful of his diocese “were devastated at that time,” and his reaction to Archbishop Viganò’s report could be taken as him “taking on the smell of my sheep,” as Pope Francis would say.

The summer of 2018 had been difficult for Catholics, beginning with the news in June that McCarrick had been suspended from ministry, followed by dozens of stories detailing his sexual misconduct with seminarians and then allegations of sexual abuse of children. McCarrick’s resignation from the College of Cardinals in July; and the release in August of the Pennsylvania grand jury report on abuse and its cover up in six dioceses.

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When the report on McCarrick is published, he said, there will be a “dust up” in the media, and it likely will cause Catholics more pain, but it also could bring “a sense of closure.”

“I’ve always said that what hit the news with McCarrick began this moment of pain and struggle and confusion in the life of the Church. It won’t magically disappear with this report. Bishop Strickland said, but it should help people move forward.” †
Knights, N.Y. Archdiocese and others providing aid to quake victims

WASHINGTON (CNS)—President Donald J. Trump said on Jan. 16 his administration is issuing nine proposed rules to ensure the nation’s faith-based service providers and organizations are not discriminated against by federal agencies’ regulations or in their grant-making processes because of religion.

Among those requirements, faith-based service providers have had to give notice that they are religiously affiliated and must make available a list of alternative secular service providers. He made the comments on the proposed rules during an Oval Office event on National Religious Freedom Day after he announced new guidance on prayer in public schools. (See related story, page 7A.)

Trump said his administration “is committed to ensuring religious organizations can compete on a level playing field for funding, without discrimination.”

“The proposed rules would eliminate burdensome Obama-era requirements that unduly imposed unique regulatory burdens only on religious organizations,” he said.

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Trump said the Office of Management and Budget also was releasing a memo requiring federal agencies to ensure the grant-making practices of state recipients of federal funding comply with the First Amendment’s guarantee of religious freedom.

The federal agencies have 120 days to comply and provide evidence of updating their policies.

Supporters of the Trump administration’s proposed rules cite the U.S. Supreme Court decision in Trinity Lutheran Church v. Comer in 2017. The justices ruled Missouri had wrongly determined the church as a religious entity could not receive public funds for a playground used by students no matter their religion.

“Our nation has a proud heritage of religious freedom, and of religious institutions providing care and support to the poor and needy,” U.S. Secretary of Labor Eugene Scalia said in a statement about Trump’s proposed rules. Under these, he added, “religious organizations that receive federal grants may provide aid to the needy without posting a warning label regarding their faith.”

We are wealthy beyond our ancestors’ wildest dreams.

We have enough to share.

Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

2 Corinthians 9:6-8
Progress in the pro-life battle

This week, we observe the 47th anniversary of the Supreme Court’s horrendous Roe v. Wade decision that legalized abortion in the United States. The pro-life movement continues to have marches to protest the legalization of the murder of defenseless life in women’s wombs, and Masses to implore God’s help in fighting this scourge in our country.

Are we making any progress? Is there room for optimism?

There is good news. The number of U.S. abortions has been declining steadily almost every year, but the total was still 862,000 in 2017. That’s good news only when you realize that the number was 1.36 million back in 1997.

There is good news, too, that the number of abortion centers continues to decline, mainly because some states have passed new laws restricting abortion as much as the Supreme Court allowed.

About that Supreme Court. Many people voted for Donald J. Trump for president because they hoped that he would appoint pro-life justices to the Court, and he has done so. It appears that the Court is now composed of five pro-life justices. But what does that mean?

We will find out in the months ahead. On March 4, the Court will hear arguments in the case of June Medical Service v. Gee. It will test the constitutionality of a Louisiana law that requires doctors who perform abortions to have admission privileges at nearby hospitals. The Court will probably hand down its decision in June—which just happens to be in the middle of this year’s presidential race.

Many people, both pro-abortion and pro-life, think that this might be an opportunity for the Court to reverse the Roe v. Wade decision. That’s why some states have enacted restrictive laws on abortion while other states have done the opposite, making sure that abortion in those states will remain legal no matter what the Supreme Court does.

People should be aware that, if the Court does reverse the Roe v. Wade decision, it would not make abortion illegal. It would return the matter to the states, which is why some states have been preparing for the eventuality.

We doubt, though, that the Court will completely reverse Roe v. Wade, at least in the short term. Chief Justice John Roberts seems more likely to try to fashion some sort of compromise. It’s hard to imagine, though, how any compromise will keep the issue from going back to the states. Therefore, it seems clear that the battle over abortion will continue.

That’s why it’s vital that those in the pro-life movement continue to try to convince the general public that abortion is wrong. So far that has been an uphill battle because the pro-abortion crowd has succeeded in making abortion a woman’s rights issue. They stress that a woman must have the right to do what she wants with her body.

But that thinking must stop, we must emphasize, when it involves another person. Some people are ready to get agreement that nobody has the right to kill another person. Alas, that doesn’t seem to be the case. There’s disagreement with some over whether the child in the womb is a human person.

Let’s not say that our religion teaches us that the unborn child is a human person. Let’s say that biology teaches us that. From the moment of conception when a man’s sperm unites with a woman’s egg, a new person is created. That’s basic biology, not religion.

It has become common lately for those who support abortion to claim that pro-life people care only about the unborn baby, that they don’t care about the mother who is convinced that she can’t have a baby at this stage of her life. That claim simply is not true.

The Catholic Church has numerous ways of helping mothers who need help, especially through Catholic Charities agencies, including those here in central Indiana and southern Indiana. We hope that those who read The Criterion are aware of them, but we must do a better job of letting the general public know about them. We must prove that “pro-life” includes multiple issues and not only abortion.

There are indications that more young people are becoming pro-life. Certainly many of them participate in marches. Let’s pray that their unwavering commitment helps convert those with hardened hearts.

—John F. Fink

Letters Policy

Letters from readers are published in The Criterion as part of the newspaper’s commitment to “the responsible exchange of freely held and expressed opinion among the People of God” (Communion of Progressio, 116).

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

The editors reserve the right to select the letters that will be published and to edit letters from readers as necessary based on space limitations, pastoral sensitivity and content (including spelling and grammar). In order to encourage opinions from a variety of readers, frequent writers will ordinarily be limited to one letter every three months. Concise letters (usually less than 300 words) are more likely to be printed.

Letters must be signed, but for serious reasons, names may be withheld.

Send letters to “Letters to the Editor,” The Criterion, 1400 N. Meridian Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367. Readers with access to e-mail may send letters to criterion@archindy.org.

Reflection/Sean Gallagher

A Hidden Life answers the question, ‘What does Christ want of us?’

In 2016, legendary filmmaker Martin Scorsese made a movie called Silence. It was an adaptation of the 1966 novel of the same name by a Catholic Japanese novelist Shusaku Endo. The novel and the movie tell the story of 17th-century Jesuit missionaries to Japan who, under tremendous pressure, give in to persecutors in the Japanese government and actually cooperate with them.

When the film was released, filmmaker Terrence Malick, legendarily in his own way, wrote Scorsese a letter in which he asked him, “What does Christ want from us?”

It seems that Malick may have answered that question himself in A Hidden Life, his movie inspired by the life of Blessed Franz Jaegerstetter that was released last year. Jaegerstetter was an Austrian farmer during World War II. A husband and the father of three young children, he opposed the rule of Adolf Hitler on the grounds of his faith. When he was called up for duty in the German army, he refused to swear loyalty to Hitler. After immediate arrest, he was tortured and eventually executed in 1943.

The Church beatified him as a martyr in 2007 in a liturgy that his then-aged widow, Fani, attended.

Amid the beauty of both the Austrian mountains and Franz and Fani’s marriage, Malick dramatically portrayed how Jaegerstetter faced pressure from many sides to go along with everyone else and swear loyalty to Hitler.

His fellow villagers turned their backs on him, considering him a traitor. A Nazi official and others tried to reason with him, suggesting that he was motivated by pride, thinking that he knew better than everyone else. His parish priest tried to convince him that his sacrifice would accomplish nothing and leave his family without a husband and father. His bishop told him that he had a “duty to the Fatherland.”

Even Fani, who showed him so much support, pleaded with him to try to find a way to satisfy the Nazi authorities and still be true to his conscience.

Franz, however, couldn’t find such a pathway. He never wavered in his convictions, even though he experienced great pain in paying the cost of doing so. Up to the last minute, he had chances to give in and save his life. “Sign this paper and you’ll go free,” his attorney tells him. “But I am free,” Franz says in reply.

With the help of God’s grace, we embrace the logic of the Gospel over the wisdom of the world, we are truly free. The world may do its worst to force us to walk its path. But through the love of Christ and joy of the Gospel that can fill our hearts, we can be free of the world’s seemingly irresistible power.

Embracing the logic of the Gospel in the face of mortal threats has nonetheless been a tremendous challenge for believers from the earliest days of the Church. And it remains so today.

We may not face the same dire consequences when we stand firm in our faith but Franz Jaegerstetter experienced. But the growing secularization of our society and its hostility toward the application of faith in public life presents this generation of Catholics and other Christians in America with significant challenges that cannot be ignored.

Thankfully, we have a great cloud of witnesses who can help us with their example and prayers, especially those who lived either in or close to our own time: Christians in the Middle East who have given their lives for Christ in recent years; Franz Jaegerstetter and others who opposed the Nazis; Mexicans who died as martyrs for the freedom of the Church during the Cristero War in the 1920s.

May these martyrs help us as we face our own particular challenges to our faith to give the same answer to the question, “What does Christ want from us?” that Franz Jaegerstetter gave so heroically.

(Sean Gallagher is a reporter for The Criterion.

A Hidden Life

August Diehl and Valerie Pachner star in a scene from the movie A Hidden Life. The Catholic News Service classification is A—adults and adolescents. The Motion Picture Association rating is PG-13—parents strongly cautioned. Some material may be inappropriate for children younger than 13.

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August Diehl and Valerie Pachner star in a scene from the movie A Hidden Life. The Catholic News Service classification is A—adults and adolescents. The Motion Picture Association rating is PG-13—parents strongly cautioned. Some material may be inappropriate for children younger than 13.
“The disciples approached Jesus and said, ‘Who is the greatest in the Kingdom of heaven?’” He called a child, placed him in their midst, and said, ‘Amen, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever receives one child such as this in my name receives me’.” (Mt 18:1-5).

Two days ago, on Wednesday, Jan. 22, the Church in the United States observed a day of prayer for the legal protection of unborn children. This liturgical observance has two purposes. First, because every Mass is a celebration of thanksgiving (which is what the word eucharistia means), we give thanks for the gift of life which is always precious and inviolable. Second, because our Lord affirmed the place that children occupy in God’s kingdom, we mourn the loss of all children who have died, and we pray most fervently that all children (especially the unborn) will be protected by laws enacted and enforced by our local, state and federal governments.

The moral principles are clear. When we fail to protect children from all forms of abuse or to safeguard our communities against all forms of violence, we fail in our most sacred duties as members of society. And the Church has repeatedly warned, the sin of indifference weighs heavily on our consciences as missionary disciples because whatever we do (or fail to do) to these brothers and sisters, we do (or fail to do) to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

As we Indiana bishops note in the introduction to our 2015 pastoral letter, “Poverty at the Crossroads: The Church’s Response to Poverty in Indiana”: “As bishops who serve the people of God, our concern is for everyone, regardless of their religious affiliation, race, ethnic background, economic or social status. Christ came to save all humankind. As his ministers, we have been given the responsibility to carry on Christ’s work in service to all our sisters and brothers here in the state of Indiana.

“At the same time, we bishops have a particular obligation to care for the most vulnerable members of God’s family. That is why we pay special attention to the sick and the elderly, to prisoners, to those who suffer from various forms of addiction or mental illness, and to the education of people from many different backgrounds and circumstances. That is also why we care, in a very special way, for those brothers and sisters of ours who are poor.”

There is a “consistent ethic” that requires us to safeguard all human life, and it begins with our most vulnerable sisters and brothers: our unborn children, the elderly and infirm, those with severe physical and mental disabilities, and all who are social, political or legal “outcasts” on the margins of our society. No matter who they are, where they came from, or what they have done, their lives are sacred and must be protected absolutely by the laws and customs of our society.

No one is more vulnerable or more worthy of legal protection than a child in his or her mother’s womb. Progress has been made in recent years as many states have passed laws that have increased legal safeguards. Abortion rates have declined in recent years—thanks, in part, to increased awareness of the sanctity of every human life and the new legal and moral norms. But much more is needed. The loss of even one innocent child is unacceptable to all who believe in the dignity and inviolability of every human life.

When Jesus was asked “Who is the greatest in the Kingdom of heaven?” (Mt 18:1) he did not hesitate to answer that children—and those who are childlike—hold the places of honor in God’s realm. Innocence, humility and vulnerability are characteristics that every society should cherish and respect. The alternative is chaos and brutality, whether overt or hidden from view.

This is why once a year, on the anniversary of the U. S. Supreme Court’s fatal decision in Roe v. Wade, our Church observes a special Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children. One day of prayer is not nearly enough, of course. We should pray constantly, and we should supplement our prayers with advocacy and action on behalf of all our unborn brothers and sisters.

As Jesus told us (cf. Mt 18:1-5), “Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever receives one child such as this in my name receives me.”

Let’s pray for both the humility and the courage to protect our unborn children Always. ✝

Praying for the protection legal of unborn children

“En aquella ocasión, los discípulos se acercaron a Jesús y le dijeron: “¿Quién es el más importante en el reino de los cielos?” Jesús les respondió: ‘A mí me trae a un niño como este, y si lo recibo en mi nombre como a un niño, a él me recibe’” (Mt 18:1-5).

Hace dos días, el miércoles 22 de enero, la Iglesia de los Estados Unidos observó una jornada de oración para la protección legal de los niños en gestación. Esta observancia litúrgica cumplen dos propósitos: primero, porque cada misa es una celebración de agradecimiento (el verdadero significado de la palabra eucaristía), damos gracias por el don de la vida que siempre es precioso e inviolable. Segundo, puesto que nuestro Señor afirmó el lugar que ocupaban los niños en el reino de Dios, lamentamos la pérdida de todos los niños que han muerto y rezamos con intenso fervor para que todos (especialmente los que no han nacido) puedan al amparo de las leyes promulgadas y aplicadas por el gobierno local, estatal y federal.

Los principios morales son muy claros: cuando no protegemos a niños y adolescentes contra todas las formas de maltrato y abuso o no protegemos a nuestras comunidades contra todas las formas de violencia, fracasamos en nuestro deber de ser fieles a nuestros miembros de la familia de Dios. Tal como lo ha advertido en repetidas ocasiones el papa Francisco, el pecado de la indiferencia pesa enormemente en nuestras conciencias como discípulos misioneros porque todo aquello que hagamos (o dejemos de hacer) a esos hermanos, se lo hacemos (o se lo dejamos de hacer) a nuestro Señor y Salvador, Jesucristo.

Según lo expresamos los obispos de Indiana en la prefacía de nuestra carta pastoral publicada en 2015, “Pobreza en la Encrucijada: la respuesta de la Iglesia ante la pobreza en Indiana”: “Como obispos que sirven al pueblo de Dios, nos concierne todo el mundo, independientemente de su credo, raza, origen étnico o situación socioeconómica. Cristo vino para salvar a toda la humanidad. Como sus ministros, se nos ha entregado la responsabilidad de progresar con la labor de Cristo al servicio de todos nuestros hermanos y hermanas aquí en el estado de Indiana.

“Al mismo tiempo, los obispos persiguen el propósito de promover la protección legal, el empleo y el derecho a vivir la vida de los más vulnerables de la familia de Dios. Así que, en el año que está por comenzar, nuestra intención especial va a aquellos seres que todavía no han nacido, a los enfermos y los ancianos, a los prisioneros, a aquellos abandonados por deserción o adicción, padres de maltrato...”

Hay una “coherencia ética” que nos exige que protegamos toda la vida humana y esto comienza con nuestros hermanos más vulnerables: los niños en gestación, los ancianos y los enfermos, los que padecen trastornos físicos o mentales graves y todos aquellos que son marginados sociales, políticos o jurídicos en nuestra sociedad.

Independientemente de quiénes sean, de dónde provengan o qué han hecho, sus vidas son sagradas por lo que las leyes y los costumbres de nuestra sociedad deben brindarles una protección completa. Nadie es más vulnerable y más digno de protección jurídica que un niño que no ha nacido. Cuando preguntamos a Jesús “¿Quién es el más importante en el reino de los cielos?” (Mt 18:1) no dudó en responderles que aquellos que actúan con la inocencia de los niños, tienen un puesto de honor en el reino de Dios. La inocencia, la humildad y la vulnerabilidad son características que toda sociedad debe valorar y respetar pues la alternativa a esto es el caos y la brutalidad, ya sea explícita o oculta.

Por ello, una vez al año, en el día del aniversario de la fatídica decisión de la Corte Suprema de los EE. UU. con respecto al caso Roe v. Wade, nuestra Iglesia observa un día especial en la Jornada de Oración para la Protección Legal de los Niños en Estación. Por supuesto que solo un día de oración no es suficiente. Debemos rezar constantemente y complementar nuestras oraciones con defensoría y acción en nombre de nuestros hermanos en esta lucha.

Jesús nos dijo que “el más importante en el reino de los cielos es aquel de los que creen en la dignidad y la inviolabilidad de cada vida humana.”

Cuando le preguntaron a Jesús “¿Quién es el más importante en el reino de los cielos?” (Mt 18:1) no dudó en responderles que aquellos que actúan con la inocencia de los niños, tienen un puesto de honor en el reino de Dios. La inocencia, la humildad y la vulnerabilidad son características que toda sociedad debe valorar y respetar pues la alternativa a esto es el caos y la brutalidad, ya sea explícita o oculta.

Recemos para recibir la humildad y tener el valor para proteger a nuestros niños en gestación. Siempre ✝

Recemos por la protección legal de los niños en gestación

ARCHBISHOP/ARZOBISPO CHARLES C. THOMPSON

The Criterion Friday, January 24, 2020  Page 5A

rísto, la piedra angular
February 1
Providence Spirituality and Center Conference, Foley Room, 1 Sisters of Providence, St. Mary-of-the-Woods, 512 Breckenridge Rd., Ferdinand, Louisville 40204, ATTN: Cindy Clark, or by fax at 812-367-1411.

February 2
St. Louis de Montfort School, 216 Schiller Ave., Sellersburg.

February 3
Mount Saint Francis Center for Spirituality, 101 St. Anthony Dr., Mt. St. Francis.

February 4
Archbishop O’Meara Catholic Center, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis.

February 5
Mount Saint Francis Center for Spirituality, 101 St. Anthony Dr., Mt. St. Francis.

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Mount Saint Francis Center for Spirituality, 101 St. Anthony Dr., Mt. St. Francis.

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Mount Saint Francis Center for Spirituality, 101 St. Anthony Dr., Mt. St. Francis.

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February 10
Mount Saint Francis Center for Spirituality, 101 St. Anthony Dr., Mt. St. Francis.

February 14-16
Mount Saint Francis Center for Spirituality, 101 St. Anthony Dr., Mt. St. Francis.

February 17
St. Rose of Lima Parish to show documentary on Holocaust survivor Eva Kor on Feb. 8. A screening of the documentary "The Story of Eva" about Holocaust survivor Eva Kor along with a discussion will be shown at St. Rose of Lima Parish, 114 Lancelot Dr., in Franklin, from 9 a.m. on Feb. 8.

February 18-22
Art exhibit at Saint Meinrad Archabbey Library Gallery runs through Feb. 28.

February 19
Prayer

February 11
Providence Faith and Art exhibit at Saint Meinrad Archabbey Library Gallery, 200 Hill Drive, in Saint Meinrad, through Feb. 8.

February 12
Mount Saint Francis Center for Spirituality, 101 St. Anthony Dr., Mt. St. Francis.

February 13
St. Rita Parish, 1733 Mt. St. Francis.

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WASHINGTON (CNS)—President Donald Trump announced his administration’s new guidance on prayer in public schools during a Jan. 16 event in the Oval Office on National Religious Freedom Day.

Primarily, it will require states to report cases where public school students have been denied their right to pray.

Ahead of the event—which was delayed from a 2 p.m. (EST) start to about 4 p.m.—material on the guidance was provided to reporters in a background briefing on the morning of Jan. 16.

In a separate proposed rule, the administration aims to protect the rights of religious student groups at public universities, giving them equal treatment with secular student groups.

For schools to receive federal funding, they will need to certify once a year with state education departments that they do not have policies in place that would prevent students from constitutionally protected prayer, a senior administration official said.

State departments of education also would have to report to the U.S. Department of Education each year with a list of local school boards that failed to make the required certification as well as complaints made to that department about a local school board or school that has been accused of denying students or teachers their right to engage in constitutionally protected prayer.

The new guidance also stipulates that state education offices provide a clear process for people to report complaints about school boards or schools that have denied students or teachers their right to prayer, which will in turn be sent to the federal Education Department. Similarly, state education offices will need to report to the Education Department any lawsuits against a local school or school board concerning rights to pray.

At an evening event marking National Religious Freedom Day, Jennie Bradley Lichter, deputy assistant to the president for domestic policy, said the guidance was important because “you don’t lose your constitutional rights when you walk in a public school.”

She said the event included students—Muslims, Jewish, evangelical and Catholic—who had been punished for something related to religion.

One of the students, William McLeod, a Catholic at a public school in Utah, told those at the ceremony: “So it all started when I walked in the classroom. ... It was Ash Wednesday, and I had my ashes on my forehead, and all the kids in the classroom was, ‘Is that dirt on your forehead?’ Because they don’t know, because they aren’t Catholic and they were all Mormon.

“So then the teacher came up and was like, ‘It’s unacceptable. Wipe it off.’ And I told her four times, and she didn’t listen, and she made me wipe it off in front of all the kids.”

William told the president: “I just don’t want anyone to feel like that.”

Trump mentioned school prayer in his Jan. 3 address to evangelicals in Miami where he praised an effort in Tennessee to expand school prayer. Last November, the American Civil Liberties Union filed a lawsuit against a school district saying it sponsored prayer assemblies and the distribution of Bibles.

“I will be taking action to safeguard students’ and teachers’ First Amendment rights to pray in their schools,” Trump told the Florida gathering.

The Supreme Court has taken up the issue of school prayer multiple times. In the 1960s, it said that school-sponsored prayer violates the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment but that students are permitted to pray alone or in groups at school if other students weren’t compelled to participate.

In 1992, the court ruled against a graduation prayer, and eight years later it said prayers said on a public address system at school games also violated the Establishment Clause.

In November, the Trump administration issued a proposed rule change that will help ensure faith-based social service providers will not be excluded from certain federally-funded programs at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

WASHBURN (CNS)—A culture of religious freedom “consists of respect for the dignity of others as they seek to live in accordance with the truth about God,” said the chairman of the U.S. bishops’ Committee for Religious Liberty.

“All people can thrive in such a culture,” said Bishop George V. Murry of Youngstown, Ohio, but he also noted that “the establishment of a culture of religious freedom is always an ongoing task.”

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in Washington issued Bishop Murry’s statement late on Jan. 15, ahead of National Religious Freedom Day on Jan. 16, which celebrates the nation’s long-standing commitment to freedom of conscience and the freedom to profess one’s own faith.

The observance commemorates the day the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom was signed—on Jan. 16, 1786. Each year, by presidential proclamation, Jan. 16 is declared Religious Freedom Day.

“While the free exercise of religion has long been enshrined in our country’s laws, religious minorities have often experienced encroachments on their ability to practice their faith freely,” Bishop Murry said. “Even today, many Jewish, Muslim, Christian and other communities, all in different ways, face challenges to their religious freedom.

“On this Religious Freedom Day, we are grateful that the right of religious liberty is cherished in this country,” the bishop said. “I appreciate concrete actions the administration has undertaken, such as recent steps to protect faith-based social service providers.”

Marriage ANNOUNCEMENTS

Be a part of our Fall Marriage Edition

February 28, 2020, issue of The Criterion

 Couples who are planning to be married between January 30 and July 31, 2020 in a marriage that is recognized as a valid sacramental or valid natural marriage, or couples who were wed between July 31, 2019, and January 30, 2020, in such a recognized marriage and did not have their engagement announcement in The Criterion are invited to submit the information for the upcoming February 28 Spring Marriage Edition.

Announcements can be submitted using the form below, or electronically at www.archindy.org/criterion/localforms/wedding-form.html.

E-mailed photos Photos should be saved in jpg format and be at least 500 kb. Color photos are preferred. We recommend sending a photo where the couple’s faces are close to each other. Please send the photo as an attachment to e克拉b@archindy.org. Subject line: Fall Wedding (Last name). In the e-mail, please include the information in the form located below.

If it is not possible to e-mail a photo, a photo can be mailed with the bottom form. Please, no photocopies of photos. To have the photo returned, please include a return addressed envelope with a postage stamp on it.

Deadline All announcements and photos must be received by 10 a.m. on Friday, February 7, 2020. (No announcements or photos will be accepted after this date.)

Use this form to furnish information

City and state: BLOOMINGTON, The Criterion, 1375 April Spl, 47401 W. Monroe Street, Indianapolis, IN 46222-8287 (deadline with photos: Friday, February 7, 2020, at 10 a.m.

Name of Bride (first, last) and City and State

Name of Groom (first, last) and City and State

Wedding Date and City

Church

Place

Photo Enclosed

No Photos

Married by: 

First Name

Last Name

Signature

To submit the information for the upcoming February 28 Spring Marriage Edition.
He reflected on his experience in Rome in a recent interview with The Criterion.

‘Ask me anything you want’
The trip culminated when the 35 bishops from Illinois, Indiana and Wisconsin met for two-and-a-half hours on Dec. 12 with Pope Francis.

It began an hour late. Archbishop Thompson noted, with the pope immediately apologizing to his brother bishops.

“Even though he was an hour late, he was never rushed,” Archbishop Thompson said. “He never indicated in any way that he needed to be somewhere else than right there.

The way seating was arranged at the meeting indicated how the pope saw the bishops as his brothers.

“He sat in a chair in a semicircle among us, like the rest of us,” Archbishop Thompson recalled. “Other than him wearing a white cassock and we wore black ones with maroon trimmings, he was in the room right there with us.”

The discussion he had with them was frank and open. To further that atmosphere, the bishops were asked to leave their phones in a room outside the one where they met with the pope. Thus, no recordings or videos were made of the meeting.

“At the very beginning, he said, ‘Ask me anything you want. You can even criticize me. Whatever you need to do.’ ”

Archbishop Thompson recalled. “He was very candid, very sincere, very pastoral, very gracious. And the bishops were very candid with him. They asked very sincere questions and didn’t shy away from asking questions that might be challenging.”

While some bishops in the group chose to ask the pope questions, Archbishop Thompson did not.

“I don’t do that,” he said. “I’m one of the more reserved ones.”

The archdiocese was mentioned to the pope, however, when a bishop remarked about it hosting more than 20,000 youths.

“Very powerful,” he said. “As a bishop, as a shepherd, you’re always holding your sheep, your people, in your prayer. At every Mass, I’m holding them in my prayer.”

Renewing his faith on behalf of archdiocesan Catholics at the tombs of two Apostles was significant. So was the fact that these two early leaders of the Church gave their lives in witness to the Gospel, something Archbishop Thompson noted all believers are to do, even if it does not strictly mean they are to die as martyrs.

“There are various forms of martyrdom,” he said. “People have to make all kinds of sacrifices for their faith. Sometimes, it’s the ridicule that you take, your reputation being damaged, the sacrifice of someone’s good name, enduring great humiliations.

“All of us who have been baptized have died with Christ and have risen with Christ. From the moment that we claim Christ, the Scriptures tell us to pick up our cross and deny ourselves. We are to suffer with him if we are to rise with him.”

‘Passion and devotion to the faith’
In addition to meeting with Pope Francis and praying in Rome’s holy sites, Archbishop Thompson and the bishops of Illinois, Indiana and Wisconsin also met with the leaders of various dicasteries at the Vatican, offices that help the pope oversee such aspects of the Church as liturgy, Catholic education and doctrine.

Months before the ad limina visit, each bishop is to submit a detailed report to the Vatican about the life of the Church in the dioceses they lead. This helps the pope and his co-workers prepare for the meeting.

Archbishop Thompson noted a significant change in the meetings this time from what happened in 2012 during his first ad limina visit, then as bishop of Evansville, Ind.

Then, he said, “for the most part, they had a prepared presentation to us about what they had gleaned from [our report]. They might be affirming, challenging, criticizing,”

Then, at the end, you might get to ask a question or two.”

Last month, he said, “there was a lot more dialogue, a greater sense of the principle of subsidiarity,” in which decisions are to be made at the lowest or most local level possible.

“I remember a couple of situations where the bishop would ask where [the dicastery leaders] were on this or that,” Archbishop Thompson recalled. “And he’d say, ‘If you’re asking us, here’s what we would say. But you’re the bishop. It’s your diocese. You wouldn’t have gotten that in 2012. In 2012, it would have been, ’Here’s what we say it is.’ ”

Archbishop Thompson noted that this change may be in response to cardinals in the conclave that elected Pope Francis in 2013 mentioning a greater desire for openness and dialogue in Vatican officials.

Pope Francis and his co-workers still face many of the same challenges in the broader culture that were challenges to their predecessors—something that Archbishop Thompson recalled Pope Francis mentioning in his meeting with him.

“He addressed some things where sometimes the media will represent him in a certain way and his frustration with that,” Archbishop Thompson said. “It was good to hear that perspective from him. He has to deal with the same things that we have to deal with.

’It just reminds you that he understands.’ ”

Archbishop Thompson was amazed at how Pope Francis, who turned 83 just days after he met with him, had energy to meet with so many people on a daily basis.

What’s the source of this energy?
“I don’t think you can keep up what he’s doing without passion and devotion to the faith, to the people of God, to the Church,” Archbishop Thompson said.

The free give-and-take of his and the other bishops’ meeting with the pope, Archbishop Thompson said, was reflective of Pope Francis’ approach to pastoral ministry. Shortly after he was elected pontiff in 2013, Pope Francis now famously said that shepherds should have “the smell of the sheep.”

“Those sheep for the pope include the bishops?” Yes, said Archbishop Thompson.

“Well, we can be the smelliest sheep,” he said with a laugh. †
Jesus said, “Let the children come to me, and do not prevent them; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these” (Mt 19:14)

Recognizing parents as the first teachers of their children, the archdiocesan Office of Catholic Schools is grateful for the opportunity to serve more than 22,000 young people in Catholic schools across central and southern Indiana. It is through this ministry of education and formation that our outstanding pastors, school leaders, teachers and staff members make Christ present in the world each day … and help our students do the same!

In today’s world, success is defined in various ways. Some base success on annual gross income; others on overall material wealth; and still others on job title or ranking within an organization. As Catholics, we know that God will not measure our success on worldly treasures. What ultimately matters is the extent to which we love and serve him by loving and serving others—by making his presence known through all we do and say.

Christ is evident in the holistic, engaging and academically excellent programming that integrates faith, culture and life provided through Catholic school ministry.

Our Catholic schools prepare students through rigorous academics, diverse experiences, prayerful discernment and service opportunities so that they are ready not only for post-secondary learning and healthy career paths, but also for heaven. Our faith is interwoven into all aspects of who we are and what we do in Catholic education.

Christ’s love is seen through service, prayer and the celebration of sacraments. Christ’s hope is witnessed in the impressive ways in which young people use their gifts of art, music, intellect or athleticism. And Christ’s joy is cherished as young people are observed applying what they have learned in an effort to honor and glorify God.

To see this for yourself, please step into a few of our Catholic schools as you enjoy this year’s Catholic Schools Week supplement in The Criterion.

May God bless you always,
Gina Kuntz Fleming
There may not be a better plan for showing high school students the true beauty of God’s creation than the one that Joseph Hollowell has continued to shape and share for nearly 40 years:

Take a group of youths to one of the most breathtaking places in the world. Let them wake up in the crisp mountain air. Send them hiking and climbing mountains that stretch toward the heavens and stretch their limits. Put them in rafts that rush through white-water rapids—the cold water soaking through their clothes and the thrill soaking into their skin. Gather them around cranking campfires at night to share their experiences from the day and from their lives. Then have them sleep beneath skies where stars shoot across the blackness, where stars shine with their own wonderful gifts and the gifts all others share their experiences from the day and from their lives. Then have them sleep beneath skies where stars shoot across the blackness, where stars shine with their own wonderful gifts and the gifts all others share.

Joseph Hollowell

Now, the 65-year-old Hollowell is preparing to lead the 41st such trip for juniors and seniors in high school. That goal has been at the forefront of his life since he first started climbing mountains in Alaska in 1979. By 1980, Hollowell had expanded the program to the mountains of Colorado, and he’s continued to develop it ever since.

The Summer Field Study program has done more than touch and shape the lives of the youths who have taken the trips and the adult volunteers who have guided them. It has also deeply touched and shaped his life.

“The beauty of the mountains as a graduate student is what inspired me to enter the teaching profession. I marvel at the beautiful things it’s done for so many youths and adults, and I’m grateful to be a part of it. I’ve always had a love for the outdoors and outdoor activities, and this allows me to do something I love in a way that provides others the opportunity to experience the joy I get when I’m out in God’s creation.”

Hollowell also views the experiences as an extension of the Catholic faith he holds dear.

“The beauty of God’s creation moves people. In the Catholic faith, we talk about the three-prong approach to introducing people to the idea of God—the presentation of truth, the presentation of goodness and the presentation of beauty. This particular program starts out by introducing people to the beauty. It’s very difficult for people to be immersed in these unspoiled, alpine environments and not be moved by it. The beauty of these environments stays with people—and they instinctively feel there’s a creator. It just takes your breath away.”

**Archdiocesan high school students experience the adrenaline of raining through white-water rapids—one of the many adventures during the annual Summer Field Study program led by Joseph Hollowell, president of Roncalli High School in Indianapolis, for nearly 40 years.** (Submitted photo)

**Retreat leaves its life-changing mark on teachers and students**

By John Shaughnessy

NEW ALBANY—Elizabeth “Libby” Wright Saldanha was on retreat once when she heard a phrase from God that has continued to impact her life and her role as a teacher—“Take me with you.”

“Ministry as a teacher is a role I fully believe has been entrusted to me by God,” says Saldanha, last year’s recipient of the Saint Theodora Excellence in Education Award, the highest honor for a Catholic educator in the archdiocese. “Though my classroom responsibilities are hugely important to me, I feel my most influential role lies in my calling to be a living witness to our faith each and every day.”

Saldanha lives that approach at Holy Family School in New Albany, where she teaches seventh-grade religion and seventh- and eighth-grade social studies. In 2015, she and her teaching partner Sarah Green noticed that their seventh-grade students didn’t have the usual tight bonds that had connected previous classes. Remembering the retreat that had a major impact on her life, Saldanha suggested that concept to Green, and the two teachers developed a retreat program based on the theme, “Encounters with Christ.”

The retreat, which continues today, includes a service project, bonding activities, the sacrament of reconciliation and a traditional Seder (Passover) meal. It also involves an experience for the students “to look at God face to face”—eucharistic adoration—Saldanha says.

“‘It gives me chills to remember so many of the students’ reactions to their first adoration experience,’” Saldanha recalls about that first group. “The kids looked changed and energized when they came out of there. One student said, ‘That was the first time I felt God was talking to me.’ They formed a relationship they didn’t have before.”

“‘It continues to transform hearts year after year.”'

Saldanha’s heart has also been touched by such moments of grace and faith.

“When former students come back and ask me to sponsor them as they make their confirmation, or when a good friend asks me to be a spiritual mentor as a godmother to her infant son, there is no feeling that’s equivalent. When others are able to see the love and devotion I have for my faith, I know I am serving our God well.”

Teacher and student learn the blessing of lifting up each other

By John Shaughnessy

Like many teachers in Catholic schools, Jillian Hollins remembers a certain student who struggled in one of the first classes she taught. Hollins also remembers how she helped that student, and how that student influenced her as a teacher.

“I knew she had potential, but she couldn’t keep up with the class, finish assignments or even just complete simple tasks,” recalls Hollins, a finalist for last year’s Saint Theodora Excellence in Education Award, the highest honor for a Catholic educator in the archdiocese.

“I talked with her parents and learned that she had been through a lot as a young child. We got her the help that she needed, and she began to improve in her work. It was amazing.

“What I did that year is now what I do all the time in my job as a teacher. I want nothing but success for my students. I will find anyway possible to help them achieve success. If they do happen to fall down, we work together on how we are going to pick each other up.”

Hollins also strives to include the Catholic faith in all her fourth-grade classes at St. Louis School in Batesville.

“In science, we learn that everything we have has a purpose,” she notes. “In math, I teach the advanced vocabulary and words that I’m continually telling the students, ‘You are so lucky. God gave you this great brain. Now, it’s your job to use it to its greatest potential.’

“In English, reading and spelling, I am able to relate Gospel stories to the terms, vocabulary and words that I’m trying to get the students to learn. We read and write about God, his influence in our lives, and how we can use our faith in all situations.”

Hollins also considers herself as a role model for her students, “showing them my Catholic faith by living like Jesus.”

“From the moment they walk into my classroom in the morning, I try to read their emotions and then have a positive effect on their lives. I want them to feel comfortable in our classroom and to come to me with anything. Being a Catholic educator allows me to not only influence how well they perform in the classroom, but how they treat others, and their attitudes about life, friends and school.

“I do this by giving students the same love, respect and encouragement as my own children. This takes a great deal of heart, and I put forth all of mine for my students.”

Garden helps plant the seed of helping others

By John Shaughnessy

Hannah Raiford’s face lights up with joy as she talks about working in her school’s garden that produces fresh vegetables for families in need.

Daniel Kent has a similar expression when he mentions how he and his fellow students contribute money and collect food items to help people in Haiti.

“Realizing that people need our help energizes us to help,” says Daniel, an eighth-grade student at Christ the King School in Indianapolis with Hannah.

Hannah’s and Daniel’s reactions are exactly what Christ the King principal Ed Seib was seeking when he started the Catholic Charity Collaborations program at the school three years ago.

“I wanted to show the students what it’s like to help others, to plant the seed of putting our faith into action,” Seib says. “I used a Pope Francis quote, ‘Let us protect it’s like to help others, to plant the seed of how that student helped that student, and the first classes she taught.

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“I do this by giving students the same love, respect and encouragement as my own children. This takes a great deal of heart, and I put forth all of mine for my students.”

It was a way of living out that quote, not only to each other but to other people in the world.”

In the program’s first year, the school community focused on a different charity each month, including helping homeless families at Holy Family Shelter in Indianapolis and refugees and immigrants through Catholic Charities Indianapolis.

“We asked the directors what they needed. The kids would bring in the items, and we’d have a freewill offering at one of the school Masses,” Seib says.

“The next year, we let the kids come up with different ideas, and we let them run with it. We spent half the year donating money for the Haiti lunch program. Christ the King has a couple sister parishes in Haiti that we share with St. Matthew (the Apostle Parish in Indianapolis.) We raised $1,200 for that.”

The school community also raises vegetables for the food pantry of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul in Indianapolis, by planting a garden. More than 200 pounds of tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, zucchini and strawberries were donated to the pantry last year.

“They write back saying how thankful they are to give fresh produce to people,” says Hannah who has planted seeds, picked weeds and assembled planter boxes in the garden with fellow students. “The little kids and we work in the garden. It’s good to see all of your work pay off and help other people in the community.”

Both Hannah and Daniel appreciate how the program involves all the students in the school because it shows the younger children the importance of helping others at any early age.

“It makes you feel more fortunate, and you’re thankful for what you do have,” Daniel says. “And when you receive the thank-you letters, that makes you happy.”

Students at Christ the King School in Indianapolis work together in the garden to grow produce to help people in need. (Submitted photo)

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“I wanted to show the students what it’s like to help others, to plant the seed of putting our faith into action,” Seib says. “I used a Pope Francis quote, ‘Let us protect

It was a way of living out that quote, not only to each other but to other people in the world.”

In the program’s first year, the school community focused on a different charity each month, including helping homeless families at Holy Family Shelter in Indianapolis and refugees and immigrants through Catholic Charities Indianapolis.

“We asked the directors what they needed. The kids would bring in the items, and we’d have a freewill offering at one of the school Masses,” Seib says.

“The next year, we let the kids come up with different ideas, and we let them run with it. We spent half the year donating money for the Haiti lunch program. Christ the King has a couple sister parishes in Haiti that we share with St. Matthew (the Apostle Parish in Indianapolis.) We raised $1,200 for that.”

The school community also raises vegetables for the food pantry of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul in Indianapolis, by planting a garden. More than 200 pounds of tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, zucchini and strawberries were donated to the pantry last year.

“They write back saying how thankful they are to give fresh produce to people,” says Hannah who has planted seeds, picked weeds and assembled planter boxes in the garden with fellow students. “The little kids and we work in the garden. It’s good to see all of your work pay off and help other people in the community.”

Both Hannah and Daniel appreciate how the program involves all the students in the school because it shows the younger children the importance of helping others at any early age.

“It makes you feel more fortunate, and you’re thankful for what you do have,” Daniel says. “And when you receive the thank-you letters, that makes you happy.”

Students at Christ the King School in Indianapolis work together in the garden to grow produce to help people in need. (Submitted photo)
Principal shares five keys for creating positive school culture

By John Shaughnessy

If you’re around Rob Detzel for a while, you’re likely to get a box of candy, a card or a story from him—like the telling one he shares about a Mr. Foster.

“He was my old principal and boss,” says Detzel, now a principal himself at St. Lawrence School in Lawrenceburg. “I had an offer to go to another school—my alma mater—and when I went in to talk to him about it, he said, ‘You have to do what is best for you.’

“At that point, I decided to leave and take the new job. At the end of the day, he came to my classroom and said, ‘I still want you to do what is best for you, but I don’t want you to leave. You are a great teacher, and it would be a big loss for us if you left. I should have told you that earlier.’ After that, I knew I was staying even though I would make less money. I just wanted to feel valued and know that I was appreciated. I have never forgotten that lesson.”

Detzel shared that story—and the reasons he gives cards and boxes of candy to people—with an audience of educators during the Blue Ribbon Schools National Conference in Orlando, Fla., on Dec. 14.

They were all part of his presentation on “Positive School Culture”—a presentation that stems from his 26 years as an educator in Catholic schools. That includes 2018 when he was the principal of St. Cecelia Catholic School in Independence, Ky., when it earned principal of the school. That includes 2018 when he was the first week of a school year, Detzel sees boxes of truffles when he meets with the police chief, the fire chief, the mayor, the mail carrier, business owners and local principals and superintendents in the community. “You need to support these people at some time,” he says. “It is just a little way to say thank you for what you do for us. People appreciate the gesture and feel valued.”

He also meets individually with everyone on his staff, asking them about their families, what is great about the school, and what can be done better. He also makes sure he has a selection of cards to share with people in the school community, whether it’s offering congratulations, sympathy or gratitude.

The idea for the cards “came from a professor of mine at Xavier University who said to always have different cards on hand because as the leader of your school, sentiments should come from you, and cards are a fantastic way to express them,” Detzel says.

“When people feel valued, they are more likely to work harder and work better.”

‘Find the right people that fit your culture’

Detzel says that hiring good people is “the most important thing” a leader can do.

“A culture of greatness requires that you find the right people that fit your culture. Then you develop and coach them by mentoring and training. Then empower them and let them do what they do best.”

To find the right people requires spending more time getting to know the people interviewing, he says. “We meet someone for 30 minutes and call their references and hire them,” he says about the usual process. “We need to spend more time on the hiring process. Call more than their references. Google them. Check their social media accounts.”

‘Get out of the ivory tower’

At the start of a school day, Detzel greets the students. He also makes time to visit every classroom every day. And if a child has been sick, he welcomes the student back when he or she returns.

For Detzel, it’s all part of being visible and being positive. He also instructs teachers to share positive phone calls and e-mails with parents. “Parents fear phone calls and e-mails because they are usually made because their children are either sick, hurt or in trouble,” he says. “Teachers should make at least two positive calls and e-mails a week.”

In response to this approach, Detzel has seen parents “reciprocating with calls of their own,” creating better communication and a more positive connection with teachers.

‘Being positive doesn’t just make you better, it makes everyone around you better. I can’t guarantee you that you will succeed by being positive, but I will guarantee you that you will not succeed by being negative.’

Praise, promote and smile

Detzel shares another story about the importance of promoting the great parts of a school. It’s a story from his previous school where 21 clubs and activities were offered to students, but the parents’ ratings of those experiences for their children were “only in the 60s” out of a possible 100.

“The teachers were furious because they all volunteered for a club,” Detzel says. “I told them that this is why we do the surveys. Our problem was not that we didn’t offer enough clubs and activities, but that we didn’t promote them enough. That year, we posted club pictures every day on social media. We featured them in our parent newsletters. We sent out updates on mass e-mails. That year we only had 19 clubs and activities, but our parent survey rating for clubs and activities was in the 90’s.

“The lesson was that you can do great things, but unless you promote them, your stakeholders will not be aware of the wonderful things you are doing for your students.”

It’s one more step toward creating a positive school culture, he says. “Praise everyone and give them room to grow. Creating a culture where people are afraid to fail leads to failure. We learn from our mistakes and become better.”

‘Make it cool to do the right thing’

Detzel says the fifth principle for creating a positive school culture is built on this foundation: “Have the fortitude to start change. Make it cool and people will follow.”

To emphasize that point, he shares a story about Bill Eubank, the maintenance person at his previous school.

“We had problems with the rooms being really messy, and Bill couldn’t get to each room every day,” Detzel notes. “He asked me if he could start a clean room contest for each week and announce the winners on the PA on Friday, with the yearly winners getting a prize the last week of school. I said yes, and he organized the whole thing.

“The kids get really into it. When I announced the different grade level winners each week, you could hear the roar of cheers all the way in the office. The school was never that clean before, and it freed Bill up to do the things we needed him to get done. You have to hire good people and let them do their jobs and they will do amazing things.”

Detzel believes that sharing the Catholic faith with students, staff, parents and the community is at the heart of establishing a positive culture.

“Being a Catholic is all about having faith, being positive and helping others. Those are three things that will lead to a positive culture. A positive school culture goes hand in hand with our Catholic faith.”

By John Shaughnessy

 detzel@spxchatharineschoolindianapolis.org

At the start of a school day, Detzel greets the students. He also makes time to visit every classroom every day. And if a child has been sick, he welcomes the student back when he or she returns. For Detzel, it’s all part of being visible and being positive. He also instructs teachers to share positive phone calls and e-mails with parents. “Parents fear phone calls and e-mails because they are usually made because their children are either sick, hurt or in trouble,” he says. “Teachers should make at least two positive calls and e-mails a week.” In response to this approach, Detzel has seen parents “reciprocating with calls of their own,” creating better communication and a more positive connection with teachers. ‘Being positive doesn’t just make you better, it makes everyone around you better. I can’t guarantee you that you will succeed by being positive, but I will guarantee you that you will not succeed by being negative.’ Praise, promote and smile Detzel shares another story about the importance of promoting the great parts of a school. It’s a story from his previous school where 21 clubs and activities were offered to students, but the parents’ ratings of those experiences for their children were “only in the 60s” out of a possible 100. “The teachers were furious because they all volunteered for a club,” Detzel says. “I told them that this is why we do the surveys. Our problem was not that we didn’t offer enough clubs and activities, but that we didn’t promote them enough. That year, we posted club pictures every day on social media. We featured them in our parent newsletters. We sent out updates on mass e-mails. That year we only had 19 clubs and activities, but our parent survey rating for clubs and activities was in the 90’s. ‘The lesson was that you can do great things, but unless you promote them, your stakeholders will not be aware of the wonderful things you are doing for your students.” It’s one more step toward creating a positive school culture, he says. “Praise everyone and give them room to grow. Creating a culture where people are afraid to fail leads to failure. We learn from our mistakes and become better.” ‘Make it cool to do the right thing’ Detzel says the fifth principle for creating a positive school culture is built on this foundation: “Have the fortitude to start change. Make it cool and people will follow.” To emphasize that point, he shares a story about Bill Eubank, the maintenance person at his previous school. “We had problems with the rooms being really messy, and Bill couldn’t get to each room every day,” Detzel notes. “He asked me if he could start a clean room contest for each week and announce the winners on the PA on Friday, with the yearly winners getting a prize the last week of school. I said yes, and he organized the whole thing. “The kids get really into it. When I announced the different grade level winners each week, you could hear the roar of cheers all the way in the office. The school was never that clean before, and it freed Bill up to do the things we needed him to get done. You have to hire good people and let them do their jobs and they will do amazing things.” Detzel believes that sharing the Catholic faith with students, staff, parents and the community is at the heart of establishing a positive culture. “Being a Catholic is all about having faith, being positive and helping others. Those are three things that will lead to a positive culture. A positive school culture goes hand in hand with our Catholic faith.”

Principal Rob Detzel is completely focused as he participates in a fun typing competition with fourth-grade students at St. Lawrence School in Lawrenceburg. (Submitted photo)
Students participating in service projects is a staple of Catholic education. From the youngest students in grade schools to high school seniors, students in Catholic schools reach out to those in need because they’re being formed to follow the example of Christ.

Many of these service projects are created and guided by school staff members. But a successful program at Cardinal Ritter Jr./Sr. High School in Indianapolis has had students in charge for two years of all aspects of its efforts to provide food for students in need in Catholic schools in the Indianapolis West Deanery during breaks in the academic year.

The “Backpack Blessings” program has been funded by a grant from the archdiocesan St. Francis Xavier Home Mission Fund.

Cardinal Ritter seniors Chloe Olejnik and Gabriella Hicks, both members of St. Susanna Parish in Plainfield, have overseen it from its inception.

“We both are very active in our home parish, and when we were given the opportunity to potentially give back to kids that we used to play against in CYO [Catholic Youth Organization] sports, or go to school with, there was nothing we’d rather do,” said Chloe. “Service is a very important aspect in both of our lives, and the ability to provide services to fellow Catholic school kids is truly amazing.”

The pair and other students involved in campus ministry at Cardinal Ritter keep in contact with principals of schools in the West Deanery, plan the food items that fill backpacks, schedule food drives at the high school, purchase any additional needed food items and distribute the backpacks to the schools.

“It is 100 percent them taking the responsibility,” said Cardinal Ritter president Jo Hoy. “I don’t have to do anything. They run things by me for logistics and legalities. But everything else is handled by them—every bit of it. It’s been beautiful.”

Liz Ramos, principal of St. Michael-St. Gabriel Archangels School in the West Deanery, said that usually 25 of her students benefit from the program each time the backpacks are distributed.

“What’s great about it is that you have students helping other students,” Ramos said. “It’s not just adults realizing that this is the right thing to do. Students are recognizing a need and are trying to make sure that these [other] students and their families are benefiting from what they’re able to do.”

Overall, 150 backpacks are sent to six schools in the deanery before each break. Although they have helped lead the program from the start, Chloe and Gabriella are determined to continue in the hard work it involves.

“At the end of the day, there is so much need everywhere,” Chloe said. “Having the ability to provide backpacks full of food to children who have inadequate food sources is a blessing to us.”

She also appreciates that the program embodies the Catholic faith at the heart of the life of her high school.

“Cardinal Ritter is more than a school, we are a family,” Chloe said. “Everyone here looks out for each other and makes an effort to help those in need. Service is not only something we are encouraged to do, but it is expected. This project allows for us to provide service to our feeder schools, and help our own future Raiders.”

Since Chloe and Gabriella are both seniors at Cardinal Ritter, their leadership of Backpack Blessings will conclude at the end of this academic year. But they hope the program will continue in the years to come.

“We both hope that after we graduate this year, the program will continue as well as grow into something even bigger,” said Gabriella.

Gabriella Hicks, left, and Chloe Olejnik, both seniors at Cardinal Ritter Jr./Sr. High School in Indianapolis, hold bags that they and fellow students filled with food for students in need in Catholic schools in the Indianapolis West Deanery. The student-driven “Backpack Blessings” program is in its second year and provides food for 150 students in the West Deanery during three breaks in the academic year. (Submitted photo)
The tradition of academic excellence in the archdiocese continued this school year when two Indianapolis Catholic schools received national recognition as Blue Ribbon Schools of Excellence from the U.S. Department of Education.

When the communities of Immaculate Heart of Mary School and St. Thomas Aquinas School were recognized in September, 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 68 Catholic schools in the archdiocese. Only 362 schools in the country received the distinction this year, 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,” Fleming 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 leaders, parents and students that such a prestigious honor can be achieved.”

Immaculate Heart of Mary principal Ronda Swartz said, “What I am 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. All Catholic schools are blessed with this understanding and the opportunity to weave faith into all that we do.”

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

For Fleming, the continuing national recognition of archdiocesan schools 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 honor and glorify God in all they do.”

### Shared mission shapes Catholic schools in the archdiocese

**Our Vision**

Ours will be an archdiocese where every Catholic school community flourishes by having the professional and spiritual leadership it needs to advance the mission of the Church and where every professional is supported, every family is engaged, and every child, regardless of race, culture, socio-economic condition, or learning need, is nurtured in mind, body and spirit.

**Our Mission**

With open doors, open arms and open hearts, the Office of Catholic Schools supports the formation of young people through holistic, engaging and academically excellent programming that integrates faith, culture and life as modeled by our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

**Our Shared Values**

- **Open Doors:**
  - We believe that Catholic schools serve as a vital ministry of the greater Church.
  - We believe that Catholic schools should be accessible and affordable.
  - We believe that the viability and vitality of Catholic schools are the responsibility of all the faithful.
  - We believe in shared leadership with pastors, school leaders and commissions/boards under the direction of the archbishop and guidance of Church teachings.

- **Open Arms:**
  - We believe in fostering positive relationships that exemplify the love of God.
  - We believe that Catholic school communities are enriched by the unique image and likeness of God that is present in each individual.
  - We believe that formation best occurs within faith-filled cultures of learning that are inclusive.
  - We believe that parents are the primary educators of each young person and that it is the responsibility of Catholic schools to support the domestic Church.

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St. Thomas Aquinas Student Emmerson Bloede, left, Lauryn Kitzman and Genevieve Maminta celebrate with ice cream treats after their Indianapolis North Deanery school received national recognition as a Blue Ribbon School of Excellence from the U.S. Department of Education. [Submitted photo]
**Archbishop encourages seniors to turn to God amid struggles**

By John Shaughnessy

BROWNSBURG—For Ryan Flick and Eliza Leffler, the message that Archbishop Charles C. Thompson shared with them and their peers during the annual Archdiocesan High School Senior Mass hit close to home.

“I liked the archbishop’s homily about humility and hope—and how he connected it to the next chapter of our lives, whether it’s college or whatever vocation we’re called to,” said Ryan, an 18-year-old senior at Roncalli High School and a member of St. Jude Parish, both in Indianapolis.

Eliza also appreciated the archbishop’s understanding of the hardships that high school seniors have faced in the past four years.

“He knows how tough it is—the struggles of being a senior and trying to figure out next year,” said the 17-year-old senior at Father Thomas Scechina Memorial High School and a member of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, both in Indianapolis.

At the beginning of the Mass on Dec. 2 at St. Malachy Church in Brownsburg, Archbishop Thompson greeted the seniors from across the archdiocese with these words, “What a wonderful time to be together in your senior year. There’s joy and excitement and anticipation, but also knowing there’s almost a starting over in just a few months as well—all for the glory of God.”

The archbishop continued his focus on the connection between God and the seniors in his homily.

“Jesus came to make people be aware that God desires to be in an intimate relationship with each and every one of us. God desires to bring us that peace, that joy, that sense of healing to our very spirits, to our very lives.

“He gives us the strength and grace we need to persevere in the struggles and challenges and hardships of our lives. He calls us to be people of hope, to expect the unexpected, the unimaginable—to be ready and prepared for the many blessings and the ways God continues to grace us, even in the hardships and difficulties of life.

“You as seniors, you didn’t get to this point without hardships, without challenges—whether in your individual lives, whether in your homes, whether in your classes, whatever it may be, but you got here. You have other hardships and challenges ahead, but you also have a great hope, a belief in your future.”

The archbishop encouraged the seniors to include God in their future, to keep him close.

“May that future not be without God’s grace, not without being Christ-centered wherever you journey, wherever you go, whatever you do. That you allow that intimacy of God’s grace to permeate your beings, to continue to guide and lead you and lift you up as people of hope, as people of joy.

“We celebrate today the nearness of God to us—how God is near and dear to us each and every moment of our lives, each and every fabric of our relationships. We are indeed not worthy, but the healing grace of God continues in our lives.”

**Teacher becomes student to deepen her own bond with Christ**

By John Shaughnessy

For Kristin Campbell, her approach as a teacher always led to one main goal. At St. Mary School in North Vernon, Campbell constantly strived “to guide my classroom in a way that cultivates every student’s relationship with Christ.”

That approach led her to become a finalist for last year’s Saint Theodora Excellence in Education Award, the highest honor for a teacher in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.

At St. Mary School in North Vernon, Campbell had already set an example of studying at some point if this is where I am called to,” said Ryan, an 18-year-old senior at Roncalli High School and a member of St. Jude Parish, both in Indianapolis.

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• Distinguished by excellence
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• Sustained by Gospel witness
• Shaped by communion and community
• Accessible to all students
• Established by the expressed authority of the bishop

("Defining Characteristics of Catholic Schools"; National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools)

Class of 2019
College Selections by State

Where in the country did our 2019 Catholic high school students go to college after graduation? The map above shows the states where they’re currently studying.

Alumni of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th># Reported</th>
<th>% of Total Staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seminary</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>24.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational/Trade School</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workforce</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>24.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of alumni who are certified/licensed staff members in our schools: 534
Non-certified/licensed staff members who are alumni: 202
Number of those reported above who are alumni of the school where they are currently employed: 283
Number of schools with students and/or staff participating in a mission trip this school year: 15
Number of schools with students participating in a study abroad program this school year: 4
“Teacher passes love for service and Haiti on to students”

By Natalie Hoefer

Even as a child, Chris Schwartz believed she had “a servant’s heart.” Now, as the 6th-8th grade religion teacher for St. Bartholomew School in Columbus, Schwartz is passing on to her students this value of serving. The students have embraced it—as well as her passion for those who live in the poverty-stricken country of Haiti. It’s a love that developed through Schwartz’s involvement with St. Bartholomew Parish’s twinning relationship with St. Anne Parish in Limonade, Haiti.

“They live in one of the poorest areas in the western hemisphere,” she notes. “Yet they’re so full of joy and love. We all feel that void sometimes, and they know how to fill it with God.”

‘Education is the power out of poverty’

Schwartz, a nearly-lifelong member of St. Bartholomew Parish and a graduate of its school, became involved with the parish’s Friends of Haiti (FOH) mission in the 2000s, when she served as the faith community’s assistant—and then later interim—youth minister.

“Every year [the youths] take a Haiti mission,” she explains. “I had the blessing of taking a youth group to Haiti for the first time in 2010.”

Since then, she has returned to the country nine additional times. And each first time in 2010.”

While on mission, she’s served in a layer, health care assistant and teacher, to many roles—construction worker, gravel-missionary heart in this [class]room.”

Her students. I really focus on the religion students’ pictures, answer their questions. I always tell the kids that we need to use our gifts and talents to help others,” she says. “Well, Mrs. Schwartz, why don’t we use your gift and raise funds. You take portraits and we’ll create Christmas cards.”

She and the students created different backdrops. Then with the students helping as “elves,” Schwartz offered 15-minute time slots for parishioners to take their family Christmas photo for a donation. “All the money goes to the Haiti students, and extra money goes to other Haiti programs,” she explains. “It’s been very successful.”

“All the money goes to the Haiti students, and extra money goes to other Haiti programs,” she explains. “It’s been very successful.”

“One of the most valuable lessons is learned: the importance of creating relationships.”

“Building up that relationship to really understand and immerse yourself is key,” Schwartz says. “We learned that two children, it’s now their business to feed the chickens and raise money for their family. These kids are providing for their family. I get so emotional thinking about it,” she says, pausing to hold back tears.

And her students don’t just help the children of Haiti when natural disasters strike. Each of Schwartz’s 6th-8th grade classes helps pay the tuition for a child of Limonade to attend school.

“I always tell the kids that we need to use our gifts and talents to help others,” she says. “Well, they turned that around and applied it to me!”

“I had told them that I do photography on the side. So they said, ‘Well, Mrs. Schwartz, why don’t we use your gift and raise funds. You take portraits and we’ll create Christmas cards.’”

“Of course, being well-fed and having a source of income are important to overcoming poverty as well. A flood in Limonade in late 2016 threatened both of those components, sweeping away gardens and livestock like cows, goats and chickens. So Schwartz and other FOH members came up with the “Christmas Chicken Challenge.”

“The idea was to have people donate $10 to buy a chicken,” she explains. “Goal was to buy enough so each child at the school [in Limonade] could bring a chicken home to their family.

“The kids [at St. Bartholomew] took initiative and wanted to help. They got into it, knowing they were not just raising money, but money for a purpose.”

“Through their efforts, enough money was raised to provide not one but two chickens per child—plus one for each teacher and staff member at the school.

“These are our brothers and sisters”

“When it comes to helping the Haitians of St. Anne Parish and Limonade, there is so much more involved than raising money or serving on a mission trip. "We talk a lot about giving of our time, how that’s a big gift you can give—that, and love,” says Schwartz. “And I tell them, ‘You can do that right here in school. There are kids right here in front of us who need help and love.’ We sometimes overthink it because they’re just part of our world.”

There are faith lessons and life lessons through serving others that Schwartz hopes her students learn.

“The life lesson is to always try to seek God’s will no matter what,” she explains. “And to learn that they do have something to give. Love is powerful when you allow yourself to be part of it.”

As for the faith lesson, Schwartz says she wants her students to know the importance of reading and memorizing Scripture. But she also wants them to learn that “it’s powerful to live it out,” she says. “I think we always think someone else is taking care of something. But God gives us opportunities to do something. So often we pray for God to help, and he’s looking down saying, ‘I did—I sent you!’”

And in helping, says Schwartz, one of the most valuable lessons is learned: the importance of creating relationships.

“Building up that relationship to really understand and immerse yourself is key,” she explains. “We’re in solidarity, we walk together. “These are our brothers and sisters.”

By Natalie Hoefer

Chris Schwartz, a member of St. Bartholomew Parish in Columbus and middle school religion teacher at the parish’s school, poses with Louvenyz Bouchette in 2016 during a mission trip to Limonade, Haiti. (Submitted photo)
By Sean Gallagher

BROOKVILLE—As Amy Kersey walked amid many holy places in France during a pilgrimage in France last fall, she found that her heart sometimes reached across oceans to the people she loved.

The second-grade teacher at St. Michael School in Brookville often felt that her students, fellow school staff members and family were right there with her as she prayed for them.

The formation in faith that she received at St. Michael when she was a student prepared her for this chance-of-a-lifetime pilgrimage that has already had a positive effect on her work as a teacher.

The Sept. 29-Oct. 10 pilgrimage was led by Father Sean Danda, a former pastor of St. Michael, and was sponsored by St. Malachy Parish in Brownsburg, which the priest now leads.

The pilgrimage’s itinerary included visits to Lourdes, where the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to St. Bernadette; the beautiful gothic cathedral in Chartres; and the shrines of Sourbirous in 1858; the beautiful gothic Virgin Mary appeared to St. Bernadette visits to Lourdes, where the Blessed St. Malachy Parish in Brownsburg, which the priest now leads. 

Headstones in the form of crosses are seen in the Normandy American Cemetery and Memorial in Colleville-sur-Mer, France. Amy Kersey, a second-grade teacher at St. Michael School in Brookville, visited the cemetery as part of a pilgrimage to France last fall. (Photo by Christian Hartmann, Reuters)

The pilgrimage’s itinerary included visits to Lourdes, where the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to St. Bernadette; the beautiful gothic cathedral in Chartres; and the shrines of St. John Vianney, St. Thérèse of Lisieux, and St. Catherine Labouré.

Kersey and the other pilgrims also viewed the places where these and other saints grew up and lived as adults.

“We saw how they grew up in their family life,” she said. “You get goose bumps. It was nice to see that these were normal people, but then they were called.”

That helped her appreciate her own call to Catholic education.

“I didn’t start out in education. I wanted to go into physical therapy,” Kersey said. “But I honestly feel that I have been called here, to a Catholic school. Just like they were called, I feel like I’ve been called.”

She’s also been called to be a wife and mother. That primary vocation in her life took center stage when she and the other pilgrims visited the Normandy beaches where Allied soldiers invaded France on June 6, 1944, D-Day, and the nearby cemetery where the thousands of American soldiers who died in the attack are buried.

This part of the pilgrimage was moving for Kersey because, at the time, her husband was deployed to Afghanistan as an employee of the U.S. Defense Department. He returned home to Brookville shortly after she came back from the pilgrimage.

“It made me think of all those people that gave their lives for us,” said Kersey through tears. “Growing up, I didn’t think about those things. But now I know how it feels as a wife and a mother. I prayed for those people who died for us, and for all the families who are currently going through what I was going through.”

For Kersey, the D-Day sites moved her as much as the shrines of saints.

“Jesus gave his life for us,” she said. “And these men and women gave their lives with no thought. They just did it for others and for our freedom.”

For Kersey, the community at St. Michael School and her work there to pass on the faith to its students cannot be separated from her life with her family.

“Some people have a job and they go home,” she said. “For me, it’s continuous. Me spreading God’s word, sharing it with my students all day is continuous with me having that with my family. I don’t have to put it aside when I go to work. I continue to do it all day long.”

And the students she serves feel close to her.

St. Michael’s third-grade students, who had Kersey as a teacher last year, made cards for her before she left on the pilgrimage.

“I was kind of nervous because she was going to be gone for so long,” said third-grader Virginia Sacksteder. “It was kind of exciting. She went to France. That’s a really cool place.”

St. Michael is also like family for Kersey because it’s been a part of her family for generations.

Her mother, Janet Deutsch, was a student there in the 1950s. She and her three siblings attended school there. And her two sons also went to St. Michael.

Now she’s its second-grade teacher, helping to prepare her students for first reconciliation and first Communion. Her mom helps her, volunteering two days a week as a teacher’s aide in her classroom.

“Think she’s a very good religion teacher,” Deutsch said. “She instills in them that you need to go to Mass every Sunday. She’s determined. I just feel blessed that she’s doing it.”

In her classroom, Kersey noticed that the pilgrimage has had a lasting effect on her, helping her remain calm and trustful in God amid the many daily duties of a Catholic school teacher.

“The littlest things just don’t bother me anymore,” she said. “Now, I just know that it will all work out.”

By Sean Gallagher

Amy Kersey helps second-grader Jackson Boggs on Jan. 9 at St. Michael School in Brookville. Kersey is the school’s second-grade teacher. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)
St. Gabriel alumnus project with school class opens 'new doors' to Japan

By Natalie Hoefer

CONNERSVILLE—In a school in the town of Okuizumo, Japan, sixth-grade students have developed a recent curiosity about how to raise corn and pumpkins. And they were amazed to learn that there are more than just large cities in America.

Meanwhile, at St. Gabriel School in Connersville, sixth-grade students sampled Japanese mochi rice, seaweed and candy. They marveled at such things as a real sumo wrestling belt and a certificate written in Japanese script.

The educational experience developed through a video exchange between sixth-graders of both schools. The project was the brainchild of two teachers in Japan—one being 25-year-old St. Gabriel alumnus Cameron Tipton.

Since the summer of 2017, Tipton has taught English as a second language (ESL) at six schools in the Okuizumo area through the Japanese Exchange and Teaching Program, JET for short.

The project between the two classes began when he was approached by a fellow ESL teacher in Okuizumo.

“The lesson we were working on over there was teaching sixth-grade Japanese students how to introduce their hometown [in English],” says Tipton. “He asked if we could take a video of the sixth-graders here [in Okuizumo] introducing their town in English, and send it to the sixth-graders at St. Gabriel! Where Tipton’s mother teaches second grade.

“I got the idea of, well, if we send one to [St. Gabriel], what if they send one back, introducing Connersville to the Japanese students?”

“A fun experience”

Susie approached Mary Harcourt, who teaches social studies and science for fourth through sixth grades at St. Gabriel. Harcourt says she “jumped on the chance. We had already studied world super powers, so the timing was great. The kids did all the work.”

In the video, students displayed pictures of items they discussed, like crucifixes, another brought in a corn stalk, and one student talked about her family’s pumpkin farm.

“We really enjoyed it,” says Lyla Davidson of making the video.

Her classmate, Paola Amora, adds it was “a fun experience exchanging and learning about their town and their culture.”

Connersville youths were surprised by some things they learned from the Okuizumo students’ video.

For instance, says Dylan Edwards, “They all had the same color of skin and hair, but we have people with different skin color, and people with different colored hair.”

The students were fascinated by their counterparts’ mention of the popularity of sumo wrestling in Japan. They even had the opportunity to see videos of Tipton participate in—and even win rounds of—a sumo wrestling tournament in Okuizumo.

As for the Japanese students, Tipton says they “were surprised when they heard kids their own age speaking native English and had trouble understanding them—they’d only heard us [ESL teachers] speaking very slow, simple English.”

The St. Gabriel students were not overly fond of the sweet mochi rice. Nor did they care for the seaweed Tipton brought back and gave them to sample when he visited them on Jan. 10 while home for a few weeks.

But they liked the Japanese hard candy, and they were interested in his sumo belt and a certificate written in Japanese script.

“Overall, they enjoyed hearing about Japan and learning some new things,” Tipton says of his time with the students. “At the end, Harcourt asked if anyone would be interested in visiting Japan, and almost everyone raised their hand.”

‘Accomplished my goal and more’

Tipton says his hope for the video exchange and his visit to the St. Gabriel sixth-graders was to “introduce them to the world beyond Connersville,” a world he discovered by teaching English in Japan. He started during the summer of 2017 after graduating from Indiana University with a major in history and a minor in Japanese.

He plans to teach in the JET program through one more school year. “I really enjoy living there,” says the Connersville native. “The kids are great, the teaching is great.”

He hopes to do another project with Harcourt, perhaps another video exchange.

As for the current video exchange, Tipton says, “It got my students interested in Indiana, a state they’d never heard of. The [St. Gabriel] kids here have seen my videos, seen sumo, learned about a little town in Japan they never heard of. It opened new doors for the St. Gabriel students and for my students in Japan. “I think it accomplished my goal and more.”

(Top to see the video the St. Gabriel sixth-grade students sent to the youths in Japan and to see other videos about St. Gabriel alumnus Cameron Tipton’s life in Japan, go to www.youtube.com/user/iZaBeCameron/videos.)
1. How do I apply for an Indiana school Voucher?

To apply for funding, visit www.doe.in.gov/choice.

2. To apply for funding, visit www.i4qed.org/sgo.

How can we AFFORD CATHOLIC SCHOOL?

Understanding Tax Credit Scholarships and Indiana School Vouchers

I meet these eligibility requirements:

• Indiana resident

My child is enrolled at a Catholic school.

I meet these eligibility requirements:

• Apply before September 1, 2020

My child attended public school the previous year (two semesters) OR received a Tax Credit Scholarship or Voucher the previous school year.

I’m moving my child in grades K-12 to a Catholic school from a public school.

I meet these eligibility requirements:

• Indian resident

AND one of the following:

My family is at or below 200% of the Federal Free and Reduced Lunch Income Level (see chart).

My family is at or below 150% of the Federal Free and Reduced Lunch Income Level (see chart).

My family is at or below 100% of the Federal Free and Reduced Lunch Income Level and my child qualifies for an IEP.

K-12 SCHOOL VOUCHERS

What is an Indiana School Voucher?

A Voucher is a state-funded scholarship that helps cover the cost of tuition at a private school. Qualifying students in grades K-12 can receive up to 90% of the local per-student state funding amount.

Who qualifies for a Voucher?

• A student whose family meets the income eligibility guidelines for Federal Free and Reduced Lunch Program (see chart), AND

• A student in grades K-12 who is coming to a Catholic school after attending at least one year (two semesters) in an Indiana public school, AND/OR

• A sibling received a Tax Credit Scholarship or Voucher, AND/OR

• A sibling living in an “F” school area, AND/OR

• A current Catholic school student in grades K-12 who has received a Tax Credit Scholarship in a prior year, AND/OR

• A student who qualified for an Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Why should I apply now?

If your family qualifies for assistance, but you do not apply when your child first enters school, you may lose the opportunity for a Voucher or Tax Credit Scholarship for the next 12-13 years. Current Catholic school students CAN receive a Tax Credit Scholarship, making them eligible for a Voucher the following year.

How do I apply for an Indiana school Voucher?

1. To see how much tuition assistance you are eligible for, first register at your Catholic school of choice.

2. To apply for funding, visit www.doe.in.gov/choice.

Pre-K vouchers are available in all counties throughout Indiana. For more information, log onto www.in.gov/fssa/carefinder/4932.htm.
Cathedral transforms a diverse group of students spiritually, intellectually, socially, emotionally, and physically to have the competence to see and the courage to act.
Catholic Education of the Body, Heart and Spirit

Catholic Youth Organization
Archdiocese of Indianapolis
Protect ourselves,” the pope said. “To understand others, we more effectively sow peace instead.”

he said, “we must commit ourselves also to whatever is easy for oneself and see, in many parts of the world, an increase of suffering humanity.”

Today’s consumer culture is also gluttonous with words, he said, churning out so many “useless” words, wasting so much time on “arguing, accusing, shouting insults with no concern for what we say.

“Silence, on the other hand, helps to keep memory alive. If we lose our memory, we destroy our future,” he said.

The commemoration of “the unpeachable cruelty that humanity learned of 75 years ago,” he said, “should serve as a summons to peace, to silence and remember.

“We need to do this, so we don’t become indifferent,” he said. And he asked that Christians and Jews continue to use their shared spiritual patrimony to serve all people and to create ways of drawing closer together.

“We do not do this—we who believe in him who from on high remembered us and showed compassion for our weaknesses—then who will?”

Federal judge blocks Trump's order on state refugee resettlement

WASHINGTON (CNS)—A federal judge in Maryland issued a preliminary injunction on Jan. 15 against the Trump administration from enforcing an executive order that would allow state and local government officials to reject resettling refugees in their jurisdictions.

The judge ruled in favor of the plaintiffs, three faith-based resettlement agencies—HIAS, a Jewish organization; Church World Service; and Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service—who said their work would be directly impacted and harmed by the order.

In his 31-page decision, U.S. District Judge Peter Messitte said the executive order could be seen as unlawful because it grants states and localities veto power that “flies in the face of clear congressional intent.

The judge also called for refugee resettlement to “go forward as it developed for the almost 40 years” prior to President Donald Trump’s executive order, announced last September.

Ashley Feasley, director of policy for Migration and Refugee Services of the Catholic Legal Services, called the ruling “a welcome step in our ongoing ministry to provide housing and other services for refugees, including the USCCB’s Migration and Refugee Services, which in partnership with its affiliates, resettles about 30 percent of the refugees that arrive in the U.S. each year.

In a Jan. 17 statement, Auxiliary Bishop Mario E. Dorsonville of Washington, who is chairman of the USCCB’s migration committee, called the ruling “a welcome step in our ongoing ministry to provide refugees, who are fleeing religious persecution, war and other dangers, with safe haven here in the United States.”

He also noted the injunction “helps to maintain a uniform national policy of welcome to refugees and serves to maintain reunification of refugee families as a primary factor for initial resettlement.”

Krish O’Mara Vignarajah, president and CEO of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS), called the ruling a “win for the rule of law and for all refugees and the communities that welcome them.”

“Without the federal government’s intervention, we were likely to lose, the country—are on our side.”

She said LIRS and its colleagues have been working on the local, state and national level to “successfully reestablish refugee resettlement for decades, and we plan to continue doing just that.”

Trump’s executive order issued last fall said state and local officials in any jurisdiction had vetoes over refugee resettlement after June 2020, if they made their decision on this public by Jan. 21.

To date, governors in 42 states, including Indiana, have said they will accept more refugees. Governors from five remaining states that accept refugees—Alabama, Georgia, Florida, Mississippi and South Carolina—had not yet responded to the deadline.

Texas was the first state to reject the resettlement of new refugees, announced by Texas Gov. Greg Abbott in a Jan. 10 letter to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. In statements and Twitter posts, the state’s Catholic bishops urged him to reconsider.

In a Jan. 10 statement, the Texas Catholic Conference, the public policy arm of the state’s bishops, said the move to “turn away refugees from the great state of Texas” was “deeply discouraging and disheartening.”

“A Texan could tell you that the government,” but said his decision in this case was “simply misguided” because it “denies people who are fleeing persecution, including religious persecution, from being able to bring their gifts and talents to our state and contribute to the general common good of all Texans.”

Online Lay Ministry Formation

The Archdiocese of Indianapolis has partnered with the University of Notre Dame and Catholic Distance University (CDU) to offer not-for-credit online theology classes:

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• Complete 12 courses online with ND STEP program
• CDU offers classes on Catechism of the Catholic Church
• 20% discount for all employees, volunteers, and parishioners

For more information, please log on to www.archindy.org/layministry

See your ad here next week!

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  317-236-1454
carls@archindy.org
Faith and practice what you teach."

ordination when ritually handing them a Book of the bishops tell diaconate candidates during the rite of what we know and acting on it. Or, as practice their faith—in some cases, more even atheists can be just as knowledgeable about what the Catholic Church teaches. doesn't take an active Catholic to know assess. Many of us have heard that it good from evil." (CNS photo/Crosiers)

Knowledge can be a tricky gift to discern your teaching and distinguish good from evil." (CNS photo/Gregory A. Shemitz)

The key, of course, is taking to heart what we know and acting on it. Or, as bishops tell diaconate candidates during the rite of ordination when ritually handing them a Book of the Gospels: "Believe what you read, teach what you believe and practice what you teach."

That, in the context of our Catholic faith, should give us a clue as to what knowledge actually means. Knowledge simply for knowledge’s sake, St. James suggested rather pointedly, means nothing without action inspired by that knowledge: "What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works?" (Jas 2:14).

As an adult, I attended confirmation preparation classes at another parish before the implementation of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. It was designed to teach us facts about the faith I would profess at the Easter Vigil. We even took a midterm to test our knowledge.

Fortunately, I was already of the mind to become Catholic, not because of its teaching but because I was seeking a community of faith that sought to know and follow Jesus Christ. The words I once heard during a parish retreat, "We are the body of Christ, we are a community of believers," and the ministries that serve Church and community in Jesus’ name are why I became and remain a Catholic.

This was long before I knew anything about St. Bonaventure or any of the saints, or anything about the Catechism of the Catholic Church or very much about Scripture. But I learned very quickly about the person of Jesus, and how he was more interested in how people lived their lives than in how much they knew.

The Pharisees knew all too well how Jesus felt about learned people. When he healed the man born blind, the Pharisees were outraged that Jesus had performed his healing work on the Sabbath, in violation of the law of Moses. And believing that blindness was a result of sin, they were outraged further when Jesus suggested that blindness was more than a physical affliction.

"If you were blind," Jesus told the Pharisees, "you would have no sin; but now you are saying, 'We see,' so your sin remains" (Jn 9:41).

The blind man, now healed, understood as a relationship between knowledge and the other gifts of the Holy Spirit. (CNS photo/Gregory A. Shemitz)

The Holy Spirit's gift of knowledge should help form not only the mind, but also the heart and will of a person. (CNS photo/Gregory A. Shemitz)

Volunteer Argentina Infante assists a man at a food pantry at Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of New York's community center in the South Bronx. The Holy Spirit’s gift of knowledge should help form not only the mind, but also the heart and will of a person. (CNS photo/Gregory A. Shemitz)

FaithAlive!

Gift of knowledge should move people to take good actions

By Mike Nelson

What is knowledge? More specifically, what is knowledge in relation to our Catholic faith?

Several years ago, I came upon St. Bonaventure’s “Prayer for the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit.” A 13th-century cardinal and follower of St. Francis of Assisi, St. Bonaventure is also a patron saint of our parish, Mission San Buenaventura in Ventura, Calif. My wife directs music and liturgy and I play piano.

Reading this prayer inspired me to set St. Bonaventure’s prayer to music, in which I combined two gifts to make part of a verse: “Grant us courage, grant us knowledge, so we may know and protect what is good.”

The actual words of St. Bonaventure’s prayer suggest I was hopefully on the right track: “May he impart to us the gift of knowledge, which will enable us to discern your teaching and distinguish good from evil.”

Knowledge can be a tricky gift to assess. Many of us have heard that it doesn’t take an active Catholic to know what the Catholic Church teaches. Inactive Catholics, non-Catholics and even atheists can be just as knowledgeable about what the Catholic Church teaches. (CNS photo/Crosiers)

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The Holy Spirit's gift of knowledge should help form not only the mind, but also the heart and will of a person. (CNS photo/Gregory A. Shemitz)

Don't take an active Catholic to know what the Catholic Church teaches. (CNS photo/Crosiers)

The Holy Spirit, traditionally depicted as a dove, is pictured in a stained-glass window at St. John Vianney Church in Lithia Springs, Ga. There is a relationship between knowledge and the other gifts of the Holy Spirit. (CNS photo/Michael Alexander, Georgia Bulletin)

The gift of knowledge, St. Thomas said, corresponds to the virtue of hope, which better helps us to understand the meaning of God. “God ‘desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth’; that is, of Christ Jesus,” declares the catechism (#74). “Christ must be proclaimed to all nations and individuals, so that this revelation may reach to the ends of the Earth.”

It is important, too, to realize that, as St. Bonaventure (inspired by Isaiah, St. Paul and others) proclaimed, there is a relationship between knowledge and the other gifts of the Holy Spirit.

“If you receive my words and treasure them, you would have no sin, but now you are saying, ‘We see,’ so your sin remains” (Jn 9:41).

The blind man, now healed, understood as a relationship between knowledge and the other gifts of the Holy Spirit. (CNS photo/Gregory A. Shemitz)

For if knowledge impacts only the mind and not the heart and will, what is its purpose? As St. Paul told the people of Ephesus, “May the eyes of your hearts be enlightened, that you may know what is the hope that belongs to his call” (Eph 1:18).

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St. Thomas Aquinas—a doctor of the Church like his contemporary, St. Bonaventure—suggested in his Summa Theologica that all gifts of the Holy Spirit are connected to the cardinal virtues rooted in ancient Greece and later proclaimed by Church leaders in the Middle Ages.

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St. Bonaventure is depicted in a stained-glass window at the Basilica of Our Lady Immaculate in Guelph, Ontario. In his “Prayer for the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit,” Bonaventure asks the Holy Spirit to ‘‘ impart to us the gift of knowledge, which will enable us to discern your teaching and distinguish good from evil.’’ (CNS photo/Crosiers)

The Holy Spirit, traditionally depicted as a dove, is pictured in a stained-glass window at St. John Vianney Church in Lithia Springs, Ga. There is a relationship between knowledge and the other gifts of the Holy Spirit. (CNS photo/Michael Alexander, Georgia Bulletin)

St. Thomas Aquinas—a doctor of the Church like his contemporary, St. Bonaventure—suggested in his Summa Theologica that all gifts of the Holy Spirit are connected to the cardinal virtues rooted in ancient Greece and later proclaimed by Church leaders in the Middle Ages.

The gift of knowledge, St. Thomas said, corresponds to the virtue of hope, which better helps us to understand the meaning of God. “God ‘desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth’; that is, of Christ Jesus,” declares the catechism (#74). “Christ must be proclaimed to all nations and individuals, so that this revelation may reach to the ends of the Earth.”

It is important, too, to realize that, as St. Bonaventure (inspired by Isaiah, St. Paul and others) proclaimed, there is a relationship between knowledge and the other gifts of the Holy Spirit.

“If you receive my words and treasure them, you would have no sin, but now you are saying, ‘We see,’ so your sin remains” (Jn 9:41).

The blind man, now healed, understood as a relationship between knowledge and the other gifts of the Holy Spirit. (CNS photo/Gregory A. Shemitz)

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Perspectives

Worship and Evangelization Outreach/Sean Hussey

Goal of evangelization includes living as intentional disciples

Are you a follower of Jesus, or just a fan? Growing up, did you admire Jesus, but was I don’t know. In college, I met fellow students who worship and share their lives with Jesus, and they witnessed to me what it means to live as a disciple. Through that community, I was led to a personal relationship with Jesus, and I made the decision to follow him.

Pope Benedict XVI once said, “Being Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction.”

The goal of evangelization is to introduce people to the person of Jesus Christ, and to invite them to follow him as an intentional disciple. Evangelization is not an imposition, but an invitation to eternal life.

As the archdiocese’s new coordinator of evangelization, it is my goal to serve alongside you in this great call to evangelize. Please allow me to introduce myself, to share with you some of the exciting things we are working on.

My name is Sean Hussey. I am the youngest of five children, I have 10 beautiful nieces and nephews, and my wife, Paige, and I are expecting our first child in February. I am deeply grateful to be joining the team here at the archdiocese.

I hope to support and serve our priests, parishes, and diocesan offices, and anyone interested in evangelization to build up cultures of evangelization and discipleship at all levels through ongoing discipleship formation, practical training and resources.

Our most recently released resource is called “10 Things to Do.” Does the word “disciple” come from the Latin word for student. Therefore, we must ask: How do we have a relationship with Jesus in ordinary life? In other words, what does a disciple do? This new resource we have available in English and Spanish will be a helpful tool for you to be more intentional in your own walk with Jesus toward eternity, and as we seek an unselfish kindness (Acts 2:45).

Through such spiritually based wisdom, those present are encouraged to embody unselfish kindness toward the stranger.

The immediate change this brings about for Roman Catholics is liturgical: the name has changed.

The far-reaching change sought by Pope Francis: a designated annual celebration that honors and proclaims the Word of God. We recognize that word as an essential expression of divine communication central to our life as Catholic Christians. The word of God. God speaking to humanity. God speaking to believers. God reaching out to God’s will for humanity. In Christ.

For ecclesial relations, this is our essential starting point. Whenever Christians gather, our first commonality is our baptism. That baptism is rooted in God’s gift of grace through Jesus Christ. It should not surprise us, then, that the immediate response to this commonality works when we pray with and through God’s word.

Last Sunday, Jan. 19, was an example: the contemplative Weekly Lenten prayer services on Christian Unity. At a local prayer service, the entire focus was based on Acts 27:18-28:10, specifically the passage we now call “unselfish kindness” (Acts 28:2).

Through such scripturally based wisdom, those present are encouraged to embody unselfish kindness toward the stranger.

When the Irvington Association of Ministers Lenten prayer services take place each Wednesday evening in Indianapolis during Lent, it is the word of God that gather us to hear and reflect upon. From this, we lift the needs of the communities from which we come, and the larger community in which we live. We note our “lessness” in Lent and in need, even as we are not fully one.

Each year at the National Workshop on Christian Unity, we open the four days with a joint prayer service. The word of God—Jesus’ teaching—gathers us together in Jesus’ own words: “that all may be one” (Jn 17:21).

Each day we have Scripture study. A skilled presenter leads us in reflection on designated passages.

In 2015, study was led by Amy-Jill Levine. A university professor of New Testament and Jewish Studies at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tenn., Levine is Jewish. She brought to select passages of the New Testament the ancient knowledge, cultural and linguistic understandings of the ancient Jewish community. Talmud, Torah and Christian Testament meet! The word of God is truly an interreligious link. We share God’s word with Judaism in the ancient texts of the Old Testament.

We share the Psalms, that great collection of sung poetry. They fire our religious imagination and give us a text we can pray together.

It is true that we differ in how we understand the truths found within the word (e.g., our “Christ” approach to some passages vs. their mosaic covenant approach). But Christians and Jews honor, cherish and love the word for its revealing God as Creator, as a source of redemption and a sanctifier of the realities of our lives.

The Third Sunday in Ordinary Time is now the “Sunday of the Word of God.” It is true that, each year, the central word of God—for Catholics, Christians and Jews. (Father Rick Ginther is director of the archdiocesan Office of Ecumenism and Interreligious Affairs. He is also the pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Indianapolis.)

The Human Side/Fr. Eugene Hemrick

Tuning out today’s nonstop news and the missing art of dialogue

Why are some people tuning out today’s news? Could one reason be that basic principles of discernment are being lost in what they are experiencing?

St. Paul the Apostle, in his Epistle to the Church of Ephesians, outlines the very principles of which we speak. We speak of a discernment that demands comprehensiveness. Under “this first commandment which is the greatest of all,” Pope Paul VI, all “should examine closely the kind of speech we use. Is it easy to understand? Can it be grasped by ordinary people? Is it the current idiom?”

This second principle, is defined as “confidence not only in the power of one’s own words, but also in the goodness of both the words and the discourse.”

Hence dialogue promotes intimacy and friendship on both sides. The third principle is pedagogic prudence: “The person who speaks is always at pains to learn the sensitivities of his audience. The second reason demands it, he adapts himself and the manner of his presentation to the susceptibilities and the degree of intelligence of his hearers.”

Finally, the principle of meekness is not prodded, proud, bitter, offensive, a command or assertion, but the opposite: “If he uses extreme methods, is patient under contradiction and inclines toward generosity.”

Are people tuning out the news because much of what it reports goes against promoting confidence and friendship, affronts human dignity and virtue? Could it also be that our news is nonstop? Our digestive system rebels when we overeat, and so does our mind when it is overwhelmed. You don’t so much hear people saying “I can’t get enough news,” rather, “enough is enough.”

Something is missing in today’s news that is touching our nerve of disconnection. Could it be that it lacks the virtue of disinterestedness?

Another resource we are putting finishing touches on is an evangelization methodology. It will provide a model for implementing and sustaining a process of spiritual multiplication by God’s grace that transcends small groups and one-on-one discipleship efforts. We hope that this guidebook will be an ongoing support for anyone continuing the work of evangelization, the essential mission of the Church.

Are some people who is interested in evangelization, I would encourage you to ask your pastor or parish life coordinator who your parish’s point of contact is for the archdiocesan Office of Evangelization. You can offer to help that person, or if none has yet been identified, take on that role—offer to be that person and contact me in the Office of Evangelization. We can provide you with the support and resources you need.

May God give us the grace to live as intentional disciples of his Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ.

(Sebastian Hussey is the evangelization and discipleship coordinator within the archdiocesan Secretariat for Worship and Evangelization. He can be reached at shussey@archindy.org.)

For the Journey/Effie Caldero

Have an eco-conscious new year

At a New Year’s Eve party, someone asked everyone about their 2020 resolutions. Talk about defeating a celebrity’s 2020 goal! I was not going to make resolutions, and others came up with weak responses like “Drink more water.”

This was an opportunity to make a resolution that I started drinking more water. Finally, it is a resolution that I can succeed!

Seriously, though, I don’t make resolutions for my New Year’s Resolutions. But I do find it helpful during January to review important areas of my life. This year, I was inspired by Internet exchanges about what people are doing or plan to do for the environment.

On the other hand, I often forget to take my campus hugs to the grocery store in plastic. So, to do things differently, I’ve put a little sign on my car radio—“Bags? Perhaps by doing this, I will save a few trees from being cut down.”

A change I made this past year: after reading about the demolition of Canadian boreal forest for one of the toilet paper industry, I’ve started buying only 100 percent recycled toilet paper. At www.greenpapertowel.org, you can discover which brands get an A and which an F for sustainability.

In 2019, I joined my parish’s Creation Care team, which cooperates with a composting company to collect all food waste and paper from parish dinners for composting soil. By recycling and composting, we aim to bring parish events to make in the world at large more environmentally friendly.

Knowing that meat production accounts for about 4 percent of greenhouse gas according to www.csl profess.org, I’ve decided to become a dedicated secondhand shopper. In my town, we have an upscale boutique that sells secondhand clothing to support a residence for homeless pregnant women. I can support a good cause while cutting back on new clothing, a major source of pollution.

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Edward Hemrick is a freelance writer who lives in Indianapolis. He has a way to go in being environmentally sustainable. But we will incorporate a lot of news from our gardens—vegetables, coneflowers, milkweed—that will help encourage birds and the right kind of insects. I’ve become a dedicated secondhand shopper. In my town, we have an upscale boutique that sells secondhand clothing to support a residence for homeless pregnant women. I can support a good cause while cutting back on new clothing, a major source of pollution.

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Effie Caldero writes for Catholic News Service.
The Criterion, Friday, January 24, 2020  Page 13A

Third Sunday of Ordinary Time/Msgr. Owen F Campton

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, January 26, 2020

• Isaiah 8:23-9-3
• 1 Corinthians 1:10-13, 17
• Matthew 4:12-23

The Book of Isaiah supplies the first reading for Mass this weekend. It offers us a powerful lesson.

When this part of Isaiah was written, God’s people were skimming on thin ice. They still had their independence, at least after a fashion. Hebrew kings still reigned in the kingdoms of Judah and Israel. The religious, social and political structures all still gave lip service to the ancient religion and to the holy covenant between God and the chosen people. Everything, however, was at risk because devotion to the covenant and obedience to God’s law were at low ebb. Isaiah loudly warned that disaster was just around the corner. But, he said, the people could rescue themselves by returning to religious faithfulness and obeying God, as previous people had taught. They had this potential, this ability, within themselves.

They did not sin because they were helpless in the face of temptation. Rather, they were weak because they ignored God. If they were determined, they could be strong and virtuous.

For its second reading, the Church has selected a section from St. Paul’s First Epistle to the Corinthians. Paul obviously loved the Christian Corinthians. He yearned to see them saintly as the case in this reading, refer to these Apostles so specifically by giving their names. The Gospel leaves no doubt whatsoever about their identity since it was vital in the early Church that the teachings of the genuine Apostles be known and be kept intact.

Reflection

These readings remind us of how, at the same time, humans can be so blind and so powerful. In its first reading, Isaiah criticized the people for their religious listlessness. But he also presumed that, if they wished, they could reverse their wayward paths and return to God.

The same message is also essentially in the second reading from St. Paul’s First Epistle to the Corinthians. Paul boldly denounced the Corinthians’ sins and quarrels and called them to conversion, insisting that they could withstand temptation.

We are sinners. But although sin restrains us, we can break away from turning to God and by allowing his grace to empower us. The impulse to sin, while real, can be so match with God and the heart determined to be with God.

The teachings of the Apostles guide us to our own empowerment and union with the Lord. †

The Gates of Hell in Our Midst

By Natalie Hoefner

Against the massive bluff— the “rock”—of ancient Caesarea Philippi, stood a temple to the god Pan. “The gates of hell,” Christ called it, for children were sacrificed there.*

Today four “temples” stand in our midst—here in central and southern Indiana where we proclaim the Gospel of Christ—where children again are slain, as an act declared by the people so long as the little ones are wholly—or partially—on the right (or wrong) side of the womb.

*(Natalie Hoefner is a member of St. Monica Parish and is a writer for The Criterion.)

My Journey to God

Question Corner

Fr. Kenneth Doyle

The Christmas liturgical season ends with the Baptism of the Lord.

At my previous parish, we said that the end of the Christmas season was the feast of the Epiphany. My current parish, though, says that the Christmas season concludes a week later on the feast of the Baptism of the Lord. Which one is right?

A lot of people do put away their Nativity scenes and other Christmas decorations following the Epiphany, leading to a common assumption that the Christmas season closes with that feast. But liturgically, your current parish is correct.

The Christmas 2019 website of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops says this: “The liturgical season of Christmas begins with the vigil Masses on Christmas Eve and concludes on the feast of the Baptism of the Lord.”

The second part of your question, though, is a bit more difficult: What does Christ’s baptism have to do with Christmas? Here, it’s helpful to consider what Pope Benedict XVI said in a homily on the feast of the Baptism of the Lord in 2013.

He explained that both the nativity of Jesus and his baptism show the Savior’s solidarity with us, the humble immersion in our world and into our hearts, and reflect on the gift of salvation that is born with him. "Including the fact that he was born to die for us.”

The baptism of Jesus marks a sharp line of demarcation: Previous to that, he was viewed simply as a carpenter from Nazareth. But with his baptism, his public life begins as he proclaims with his words and actions the arrival of the kingdom of God; with the baptism in the Jordan River have to do with Christmas? (Indiana)

A Actually, your pastor is following what is the prescribed procedure. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in its liturgy guide says: “After the priest has concluded his own Communion, he distributes Communion to the extraordinary ministers of holy Communion.”

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

Readers may submit prose or poetry for faith column

The Criterion invites readers to submit original prose or poetry relating to faith or experience of prayer for possible publication in the “My Journey to God” column.

Seasonal reflections also are appreciated. “Poems should be no longer than 25 lines (including lines between stanzas if applicable) of either 4 or 5 characters (including spaces) and allow room for a staff-selected photo, 64 characters (including spaces) and allow for a staff-selected photo, 64 characters (including spaces) and allow for a staff-selected photo, 64 characters (including spaces) and allow for a staff-selected photo, 64 characters (including spaces) and allow for a staff-selected photo, 64 characters (including spaces) and allow for a staff-selected photo.” Please include name, address, parish and telephone number with your submission.

Send material for consideration to “My Journey to God,” The Criterion, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367 or e-mail to thefem@archindy.org.
Archiepiscopal ordinations:

Order priests and religious sisters and brothers are listed by date of death. Obituaries of publication; be sure to state to our office by 10 a.m.

**BARDON, Marilyn.** 77, St. Michael the Archangel, Indianapolis. Daughter of Mrs. Victor (the late) Bardon. Sister of Sister Mary Frances Bardon, S.C.


**ERNE, William H.** 94, St. Louis, Batesville, Ind. Jan. 1, Brother of Bob and Joan Erne. Uncle and great-uncle of several.

**EVERGERS, Red, 87, St. Lawrence, Indianapolis. Dec. 22, Father of Lausha Dotson and Cynthia Owsings. Great-grandfather of five. Great-grandfather of 10.**

**GALLAGHER, Mary Alice.** 90, St. Lawrence, Indianapolis. Dec. 19, Mother of Susan Barker, Julie Mayle, Christine Schmidt, Nancy Valentine and Martin Gallagher. Grandmother of 15. Great-grandmother of 25.


**ISADA, Victor, 82, St. Mark the Evangelist, Indianapolis, Dec. 29, Husband of Elizabeth Isada. Brother of Victoria Stefanik, Paolo and Raymond Isada. Brother of Dolores and Rafael Isada. Jr. Grandfather of one.**


**LAEHEY, John, 75, Holy Spirit, Indianapolis, Dec. 11, Husband of Patricia Lahey. Father of Mary Ann Dewar, Teresa Whits, David and Robert Lahey. Grandfather and great-grandfather of several.**


**MCKENNA, Daniel J.** 55, Holy Name of Jesus, Breoch Grove, Dec. 30, Brother of Marie Wagner. Debra, Susan, John and Mike McKenna Jr. Uncle of several.

**MCKEON, Thomas J.** 71, St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower), Indianapolis, Dec. 22, Brother of Daniel McKean. Great-grandfather of eight. Great-grandfather of four.


**REYES-GOMEZ, Ramon, 72, Holy Spirit, Indianapolis, Jan. 3, Husband of Graciela Rodriguez de Reyes. Father of Elizabeth, Georgia, Brian and Ramon Reyes.**

**ROGERS, Rina.** 60, St. Lawrence, Indianapolis, Nov. 7, Sister of Richard and Victor Rogers. Aunt of several.


**THERDALL, Alek S.** 68, St. Matthew the Apostle, Indianapolis, Dec. 31, Husband of Kate Therdall. Father of Megan, Craig and Ryan Therdall. Great-grandfather of three.

**TREXOLLA, Mindy M.** 88, Christ the King, Indianapolis, Dec. 28, Wife of James Trentell. Mother of Timothy Trexell. Great-grandmother of one.


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**VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Supporting and supported by their bishops, 25 young adults from Minnesota and North Dakota made a pilgrimage to Rome to seek information about the faith.**

The delegation of women and men, single and married, and their bishops—the first to travel with the bishops of Region VIII (which also includes South Dakota), who are required by Church law to make the ad limina visits to pray at the tombs of Sts. Peter and Paul and to meet with the pope and top Vatican officials.

Many dioceses offer pilgrimages to coincide with their bishops’ ad limina visits. But the Region VIII trip was different. Young adults were invited last May to apply to make the trip by providing a letter of recommendation from someone who knew them, usually a pastor. The Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis, the Diocese of Dubuque, Iowa, and the Diocese of Rapid City, S.D., collaborated to form the pilgrimage.

They want to know where God is calling them to serve. They are seeking information about the faith. As opposed to that “virtual reality,” Randazzo said, “Rome has lots of stuff” with art and architecture and the actual places where Sts. Peter and Paul and a host of other saints lived, died and were buried.

The youthful pilgrims, the archbishop said, told the archdiocese last Easter, “I want everything we do to be an effort to evangelization,” which is how much of their time is spent online, including when they were on the cruise ship in the Mediterranean Sea, he said.

As they came to Mass at St. Peter’s Basilica, they were struck by the reminders of the Church last Easter.

—**VINCENTE RANDAZZO**

Archbishop Bernard A. Hebda of Saint Paul and Minneapolis called the young adults to talk with a group of young adults after consecrating Mass with U.S. bishops at the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls in Rome on Jan. 15. Young adults from the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis, the Diocese of New Ulm, Minn., and the Diocese of Bismarck, N.D., accompanied U.S. bishops from North Dakota, Minnesota and South Dakota on their “ad limina” visits to Rome. (**CNS photo/Karen Callaway, Chicago Catholic**)
This includes all of Indiana’s neighboring states, with Kentucky passing reasonable accommodation legislation last year. “We can do better in Indiana in a pro-life state,” said Sen. Mike Bohacek (R-Michiana Shores), one of the co-authors of Senate Bill 362. “This is pro-life, and it’s also proportional. We want to be pro-business, but we also want to protect working moms and their unborn children, and [with this bill] it’s fairly easy to do.”

—Sen. Mike Bohacek

Holcomb has made increasing Indiana’s high infant mortality rate a cornerstone of his agenda, challenging the state to become the best in the Midwest by 2024. While progress has been made in recent years, Indiana currently ranks 7th in the United States for infant mortality and 16th in the country for maternal mortality, according to Erin Macey, senior policy analyst for the Indiana Institute for Working Families in Indianapolis. She emphasized that a leading cause of infant mortality is prematurity birth, which can be the result of unsafe working conditions. “There is a relationship between pre-term birth and physically demanding work—things that involve prolonged standing and lifting, for instance, and mandatory overtime,” said Macey, who frequently testifies before legislative committees about issues affecting Hoosier families.

While attempts to pass similar laws fell short in past legislative sessions, Macey said she is encouraged by what she believes is a broad base of support. “There is a strong coalition around this issue, with everyone from business groups to the March of Dimes wanting to make sure that we have safeguards and modifications in place for pregnant women so they don’t deliver early or lose their pregnancies,” she said. “I definitely see momentum for these bills.”

The Senate bill will move first, with a hearing scheduled for Jan. 27 in the Senate Committee on Family and Children’s Services. “We will be working really hard to ensure that Indiana soon becomes the 26th state to have a law like this in place,” Macey said.

To follow Senate Bill 342, House Bill 1294 and other priority legislation of the ICC, visit www.iccnj.org. This website includes access to ISCAN, the Indiana Catholic Action Network, which offers the Chamber’s position papers as well as membership issues affecting Hoosier families.

Victoria Arzuza, a member of St. Malachy Parish in Broad Ripple, is a correspondent for The Criterion.

The Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Evansville, Indiana

The Roman Catholic Diocese of Evansville, Indiana, seeks a Director of Catholic Charities. The director reports to the Diocesan Chief Operating Officer. Duties include, but are not limited to developing and implementing annual goals and objectives in cooperation with the bishop of Evansville and the chief operating officer; collaborating with governmental and charitable agencies consistent with Catholic Social Teaching, the Code of Ethics of Catholic Charities USA, and the policies and guidelines of the diocese; and maintaining quality control and work with Catholic Charities’ Board of Advisors and staff to develop and monitor annual goals, objectives, and outcomes.

The successful candidate must be a practicing Catholic in good standing and committed to the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church. Minimum qualifications include a Bachelor Degree (Master’s Degree preferred) in a business, social service or education field; five years’ experience in management and administration; good communications and public relations skills; a valid driver’s license; and the ability to travel throughout the diocese’s 12 counties. The successful candidate also must complete a full Criminal History Clearance.

To apply, and/or to view a full job description, please visit http://www.evendo.org/employment-opportunities.html

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Employment

Director Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Evansville, Indiana

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Train the young in the way they should go; even when old, they will not swerve from it.

Proverbs 22:6

Every parent wants the best for their child. And for many of us, that means giving them the benefit of a Catholic education. For some, however, this is not possible because of the expense.

What if you could help make a Catholic education a reality for children in need? Would you?

It is as easy as setting up an endowment through the Catholic Community Foundation! Your endowment would be a priceless, perpetual gift for future generations. Others can contribute to your endowment as well, allowing it to grow faster and provide even more hope to those in need.

For more information, contact the Catholic Community Foundation at 317-236-1482 or ccf@archindy.org. You can make a difference!