Private school proponents tracking flurry of education bills

By Victoria Arthur

He calls it the “Indiana education tornado,” and it is a key element of an equally fast-moving legislative session approaching its halfway point.

John Elcesser, who represents the state’s more than 400 non-public schools (including Indiana’s 175 Catholic schools), says that constant change and new demands on teachers and administrators have led to a flurry of proposed new legislation that lawmakers are considering. The organization he leads, the Indiana Non-Public Education Association (INPEA), is monitoring dozens of bills that have implications for educators and students statewide, including the more than 7,000 teachers and close to 100,000 students at Indiana’s private schools.

“There are so many moving parts because of all the changes over the last five years,” said Elcesser, executive director of the INPEA. “That’s the frustration you hear from educators around the state. Right now we have ILEARN, a new assessment for schools. Beyond that, what is required for students to graduate is changing. It’s not that some of the change isn’t good, but it’s a lot to manage. And the Indiana Catholic Conference is a key partner in that effort.

As it has since its inception in 1974, the INPEA is working to ensure that the interests of non-public schools are included in the policy discussion, with protecting school choice and religious liberty at the top of the priority list. Once again, the Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC) is a key partner in that effort.

“The Catholic Church is fortunate to have the INPEA assist with much of the heavy lifting when it comes to monitoring, advancing or defeating legislation that affects our schools,” Elcesser said. “We are grateful for their commitment to our shared mission.”

The timing of the event—which included a Mass, march and rally, as well as a prayer vigil the evening before—is significant. It marks the date when, on Jan. 22, 1973, the United States Supreme Court’s Roe v. Wade decision legalized abortion nationwide. There were new voices at this year’s event. First were those of the roughly 300 more people who participated this year than last. And there were voices of new speakers at this year’s rally representing a young generation of pro-life advocates—including one yet to be born.

There were other new voices, too—those of opposition. For the first time since the event’s inception on Jan. 22, 2018, participants were met with protest from pro-choice advocates.

President Trump tells March for Life crowd he welcomes their commitment to all children

WASHINGTON (CNS)—President Donald J. Trump credited attendees at the 47th annual March for Life for their commitment to protect the life of unborn and born children.

“Together we are the voice for the voiceless,” Trump told tens of thousands of people gathered at a noontime rally on Jan. 24 on the National Mall.

“You stand for life each and every day. You provide housing, education, jobs and medical care for the women that you serve,” the president said.

Trump was the first president to speak in person in the 47-year history of the March for Life. He spoke for about 10 minutes at the start of the rally and before attendees began their march to the Supreme Court.

“Today, as president of the United States, I am truly proud to stand with you. We’re here for a very simple reason: to defend the right for every child, born and unborn, to fulfill their God-given potential,” Trump said.

He also credited the young people who made up a large portion of the crowd for their commitment to life, saying they were “the heart of the March for Life.”

Pro-life advocates make their voices heard at Indiana March for Life

By Natalie Hoefer

On Jan. 22, roughly 1,100 voices rang out through the streets of Indianapolis in defense of the unborn. With joy and confidence, they proclaimed their message: “We! Are! The pro-life generation!” “Pro-life is pro-woman!” “We love babies, yes we do! We love babies, and mothers too!”

They were the voices of pro-life advocates participating in the Indiana March for Life, an annual event co-sponsored by the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, the Diocese of Lafayette and Right to Life of Indianapolis.

During the third annual Indiana March for Life on Jan. 22 in Indianapolis, a mass of about 1,100 pro-life advocates marched up Meridian Street toward Monument Circle, far outnumbering a small group of protesters on the monument steps. (Photo by Natalie Hoefer)

There were new voices at this year’s rally representing a young generation of pro-life advocates—including one yet to be born.

But at a Mass preceding the
opposing bills that could have an impact on religious freedom and the delivery of a quality faith-based education to students in our state," said Angela Espada, executive director of the Catholic Church in Indiana. "With the great number of education-related bills introduced in this legislative session, our two organizations will continue to work diligently to protect the rights of Catholic and other non-public schools.

Both groups are currently monitoring 63 education bills in this short, non-budget-year legislative session that Ellceser describes as "fast and furious." He expects that number to drop dramatically in early February at the crossover point in the session, when bills move from one legislative chamber to the other. Among the bills that lawmakers are fast-tracking are those that echo education goals set by Indiana Gov. Eric Holcomb.

"Gov. Holcomb's education agenda has driven the priority given to the education bills in this legislative session, and a number of his priorities are also our priorities," Ellceser said.

This includes ensuring that schools and teachers are not penalized this year for lower scores on last year's I-LEARN standardized test, which replaced ISTEP, the state's previously used test for student growth and achievement. As expected, the transition period resulted in a drop in scores, with only 37 percent of Indiana students passing both the math and English portions of the test in the 2018-19 school year.

House Bill 1001 and a parallel bill, Senate Bill 2, would hold schools harmless of the new exam in the 2018-19 school year. This transition period resulted in a drop in scores, which replaced ISTEP, a standardized test, which replaced ISTEP, among other provisions. "We have been very supportive of both the governor's 'hold harmless' focus and our proposal for a transition-focused regulation," Ellceser added. "That's not even looking at professional development to improve instruction. Nobody takes anything away; they just continue to add more and more. "

Other bills of interest to the INPEA and ICC are Senate Bill 455, which concerns school accreditation, and House Bill 1066, an omnibus bill that includes closing current gaps in school voucher eligibility for siblings and foster children. As they have for decades, the ICC and INPEA organizations will work together to educate the public and legislations on matters that concern students in every type of school.

"We are stronger together," Ellceser said. "To get involved in the advocacy efforts of the INPEA, visit www.inpea.org. The website includes access to podcasts, research data, position papers, a legislative action center and other information concerning non-public schools and their mission. To follow the priority legislation of the ICC, visit www.indianatime.org. This website includes access to I-CAN, the Indiana Catholic Action Network, which tracks the Church's position on key issues. Those who sign up for I-CAN receive alerts on legislation moving forward and ways to contact their elected representatives."

(Victoria Arthur, a member of St. Malachy Parish in Brownstown, is a correspondent for The Criterion.)

News fromYou:

• Listen to the Migrants’ Cries—We pray that the cries of our migrant brothers and sisters, victims of criminal trafficking, may be heard and considered.

(The to see Pope Francis’ monthly intentions, go to www.archindy.org/popeintentions.)

New Season of The Criterion

The Criterion (ISSN 0574-4350) is published weekly except the last week of December and the first week of January. Published weekly except the last week of December and the first week of January.

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February 1st – 1:30 p.m.
Baptism at Our Lady of Mount Carmel
Church, Carmel, Ind. (Diocese of Lafayette)

February 2nd – 10:30 a.m.
Mass at St. Peter and Paul Cathedral, Indianapolis

February 2nd – 2 p.m.
Annual Scout Awards Ceremony, St. Peter and Paul Cathedral

February 3rd – 3:30 p.m.
National Catholics Bioethics Conference, Dallas, Texas

Fifth annual E6 Catholic Men’s Conference to be held on Feb. 22

The fifth annual E6 Catholic Men’s Conference will take place from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Feb. 22 at the East Central High School Performing Arts Center, 1 Trojan Place, in St. Leon.

Organized by members of All Saints Parish in DeRubertin County, the conference will feature presentations by Dr. Scott Hahn, Marianists of the Immaculate Father Donald Calloway and Doug Barry.

The founder and president of the Saint Paul Center for Biblical Theology in Steubenville, Ohio, Hahn has delivered numerous talks nationally and internationally on a wide variety of topics related to Scripture and the Catholic faith. A convert to Catholicism, he is also a best-selling author of several books, including The Lamb’s Supper, Reasons to Believe and Rome Sweet Home.

Father Donald Calloway and Doug Barry are best-selling author of several books, including The Lamb’s Supper, Reasons to Believe and Rome Sweet Home.

Fr. Donald Calloway, M.I.C.

The Passion—a Catholic apologist that focuses on encouraging and strengthening men, women and youths to be better prepared to fight the battles that we all face in the world today—body, mind and soul. He has traveled nationally and internationally, and is best known for his one-man drama of The Passion, which began in 1992 and has been performed live around the world, and aired on EWTN. For many years, he was the co-host of EWTN’s “Life on the Rock” and currently hosts “BATTLE READY,” also aired on EWTN.

The title of the conference is taken from the sixth chapter of St. Paul’s Letter to the Ephesians, which calls on the faithful to “put on the armor of God” (Eph 6:11) in their spiritual battle against the devil. In addition to the speakers, the conference will include the celebration of the Mass, the opportunity to participate in the sacrament of penance, adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and Benedictine Mass. Father Gregory Meyer, pastor of All Saints Parish, is scheduled to be the principal celebrant of the conference Mass.

Last year’s conference drew participants from across Indiana, Ohio and Kentucky.

Advance registration by Feb. 21 is $40 for adults and $25 for students. Cost at the door on the day of the conference is $55 for adults and $30 for students. Clergy and religious may attend free of charge.

Lunch will be provided for all conference participants. For more information or to register online, visit www.ecatholicmensconference.com. Sponsorship and limited vendor opportunities are also available. Please visit the web site for more details.

Pope Francis’ prayer intention for February

• The Catholic Church is fortunate to have the INPEA as a partner with much of the heavy lifting when it comes to monitoring, advising or opposing bills that could have an impact on religious freedom and the delivery of a quality faith-based education to students in our state. 

—Angela Espada, executive director of the Indiana Catholic Conference

To see Pope Francis’ monthly intentions, go to www.archindy.org/popeintentions.

Public Schedule of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

February 1 – 12, 2020

February 6-9

Graduate Association of Programs in Ministry Annual Conference, Tuscon, Ariz.

February 10-11

Episcopal Ordination and Installation of The Most Reverend Robert J. McClory, G.Gry, Ind.

February 12 – 11 a.m.

Advisory Board meeting for Office of Ecumenism and Interreligious Affairs at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis

(Schedule subject to change.)
Initiative will have local Catholics praying around the clock for vocations

By Sean Gallagher

Promoting priestly and religious vocations is a key aspect of the life of the Church in central and southern Indiana. That’s one of the reasons why last fall Archbishop Charles C. Thompson appointed Father Michael Keucher as archdiocesan vocations director and five priests across the archdiocese to assist him as associate vocations directors.

But Father Keucher knows that even this added support is not enough. Where, then, did he turn for support? The 14 perpetual adoration chapels across central and southern Indiana, which he describes as ‘powerhouses for vocations.’

Starting on Feb. 2, with the support of the pastors of those parishes, there will be at least two people praying a rosary for vocations 24 hours per day, seven days per week in archdiocesan perpetual adoration chapels.

“Think about all the miracles that have come to this world by way of the rosary and because people have spent time in front of Jesus,” says Father Keucher, who is also pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Shelbyville and sacramental minister of St. Vincent De Paul Parish in Shelby County. “You put all of that together and I just think that the Lord has something good in mind here.”

With 14 perpetual adoration chapels in the archdiocese, two will be assigned to a day of the week and every person who takes an hour in those chapels on those days will pray a rosary for vocations during their time before the Blessed Sacrament.

“Our chapels have a contemplative nature about them—and they should,” says Father Keucher. “But maybe this rosary campaign in our chapels will help us to realize that our chapels also have an apostolic nature.”

He also hopes that the prayer for vocations initiative will spread.

“As we keep going, I think we need to have more holy hours for vocations across the archdiocese, even in places that don’t have perpetual adoration chapels,” Father Keucher says.

To help with this, the archdiocesan vocations office has developed a pamphlet that will help people meditate on the mysteries of the rosary in light of vocations.

Father Francis Joseph Kalapurackal, pastor of St. Thomas More Parish in Mooresville, which has a perpetual adoration chapel, is confident in the power of this initiative.

“It’s an absolutely wonderful move,” he says. “When people kneel in the presence of the Lord, that’s when vocations arise.”

He shares Father Keucher’s desire to see more holy hours for vocations in archdiocesan parishes. But Father Kalapurackal wants the initiative extended even further.

“The domestic Church, the family, should begin praying for vocations,” he says. “This effort of having people in every chapel praying … will invite more people to storm heaven for such an important cause for us at this time for the Church. Priests are so much in need.”

Marilyn Ross, a member of Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish in Greenwood, is encouraged by the new prayer initiative. She and a small group of Catholics have gathered weekly for several years at her parish’s perpetual adoration chapel for a holy hour for vocations.

She’s glad that many more people across central and southern Indiana will join her and her group in this spiritual effort.

“This is a positive way for us to do something to help our struggling Church right now, especially in the U.S.,” Ross says. “It’s easy for people to stand around, criticize and feel helpless. But this is a very positive step that we can take to help our Church move forward in the mission that Christ has given her. We’re all part of that mission.”

(For more information about vocations to the priesthood and religious life in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, visit www.HearGodsCall.com.)

Adoration chapel vocations prayer assignments by day of the week

Sundays
St. Joseph Parish in Shelbyville and St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Bedford.

Mondays
St. Thomas More Parish in Mooresville and Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish in Greenwood.

Tuesdays
All Saints Parish in Dearborn County (St. John the Baptist Campus in Dover) and St. Barnabas Parish in Indianapolis.

Wednesdays
St. Louis Parish in Batesville and St. Luke the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis.

Thursdays
St. Michael the Archangel Parish in Indianapolis and St. Mary Parish in Greensburg.

Fridays
St. Mary Parish in North Vernon and St. Nicholas Parish in Ripley County.

Saturdays
St. Patrick Parish in Terre Haute and St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) Parish in Indianapolis.

(See a list of adoration chapels, including addresses, by logging on to www.archindy.org/adoration)
Marches offer a reminder that our faith implores us to stand for the unborn

Make Womb for Love! Love Life: Choose Life: For Life, For Freedom, For Generation. As A Formed Fetus, I Oppose Abortion. Pray to End Abortion. A Sea of signs shared these poignant and heartfelt messages last week.

The signs reflected the goals, the dedication and the determination of the roughly 1,100 people who took part in the Indiana March for Life in Indianapolis on Jan. 22 and the thousands of thousands who participated in the national March for Life in Washington on Jan. 24.

Both groups wanted to make no doubt where they stood when it came to the unborn: the faith they live teaches them to respect and care for all human life—from conception to natural death.

Indianapolis Archbishop Charles C. Thompson announced the availability of a homily during a Mass celebrated at St. John the Evangelist Church in Indianapolis before the Indiana March for Life.

"While there is a specific focus on defending and supporting the lives of the unborn, we march for the dignity of the human person, the sacredness of life from the moment of conception to natural death," he said. "We cannot be authentic advocates of life if we do not have the courage to take responsibility for the dignity of those with whom we live, work, encounter and even disagree with in this life. Each and every human being is created in the image of God."

We are again encouraged and hopeful as we see more and more people taking part in the marches for life, and we pray that God continues to move hearts each day where the abortion debate is concerned. We need to remind others that people of all ages attend the rallies. Youth, teenagers, college students, parents, grandparents—all are committed to standing up for life. So are people from all ethnic backgrounds: black, white, Hispanic, Asian. They understand the tragedy of abortion affects all races, cultures and nations. They, too, want to see this Holocaust end.

Many in the secular news media again attempted to make abortion a political issue. But as Catholics and people of various faith traditions who took part in the rallies, we understand that it is a life-and-death issue. We see more and more frequently how some in society—including various politicians—try to put boundaries on our faith, to keep it only in houses of worship and out of the public square.

And yet some of those same politicians tell us they know what’s best for us: think of the Affordable Care Act, where businesses could be forced to provide abortifacients, contraception and sterilization to employees. Thankfully, the law was overturned by the Supreme Court, and we hope and pray all faith-based businesses and others who oppose this law come out victorious when all is said and done.

We should also remind lawmakers that, according to a new poll released in advance of the annual March for Life, seven in 10 American adults support “significant” restrictions on abortion.

Conducted by the Marist Poll at Marist College under the sponsorship of the Knights of Columbus, the survey of 1,237 adults on Jan. 7-12 showed that the respondents would welcome limits on abortion so that it can be performed only during the first three months of pregnancy.

Notably, 47 percent of “pro-choice” respondents favored restrictions while 98 percent of “pro-life” respondents felt the same way.

With advances in technology, we believe more and more people are embracing the fact that life truly begins at conception. And through catechetical and evangelization efforts, more people understand that every child is made in the image and likeness of God.

We would be remiss if we did not recognize President Donald J. Trump, who has been one of the leading voices to attend the national March for Life and address participants in person.

“Today, as president of the United States, I am truly proud to stand with you. We’re here for a very simple reason: to defend the right for every child, born and unborn, to fulfill their God-given potential,” Trump said.

The president also credited the young people who made up a large portion of the crowd for their commitment to life.

“It’s your generation that is making this a pro-life nation,” the president said, adding, “You are powered by prayer and motivated by pure, unselfish love.”

Archbishop Thompson encouraged Massgoers to seek to allow the power of the Holy Spirit to guide their efforts and the light of Christ to shine through their witnesses.

“Your guarding of grace provided by this celebration of word and sacrament is meant to lead us in service to others— including the unborn, those struggling with unplanned pregnancies, expectant mothers, health professionals, legislators and women who suffer from the procurement of abortion,” he said. “No one is beyond the scope of divine mercy nor the spirit of gratitude that is to periorm our witness to life in faith, hope and charity.”

When it comes to life, may our prayers and actions continue to change hearts.

—Mike Krokos

Reflection/Sean Gallagher

Kobe Bryant showed determination to be great in basketball and family life

I’ve been a basketball fan since I was in grade school. Maybe it just comes with being a Hoosier.

So, I was saddened on Jan. 26 when the news began to spread that Kobe Bryant, an all-time National Basketball Association (NBA) superstar, had died at age 41 in a helicopter accident near Los Angeles.

I had admired Bryant’s tremendous athletic skills and dogged determination to give his all in every game throughout his 20-plus year career, even though I can’t say I was one of his fans. After all, he was a key member of the Los Angeles Lakers team that defeated my beloved Indiana Pacers in the NBA Finals in 2000.

Those from across the sports world and beyond who paid tribute to Bryant after his death focused on how he was one of the greatest basketball players of all time and an unparalleled ambassador for the game. His dedication to his wife and family and were also mentioned.

But I remembered in the back of my mind that he had made some serious mistakes earlier in life. In 2003, he was arrested for sexual assault. While he denied the crime and the charges were eventually dropped, he did admit to being unfaithful to his wife, Vanessa.

Perhaps those mistakes contributed to Bryant’s death simply didn’t want to say anything ill of the dead.

A Jan. 26 Catholic News Agency article (quoting a 2015 interview with Bryant published by GQ), however, explained how his lifelong Catholic faith helped him overcome his mistakes and renew his marriage and family life, even after Vanessa filed for divorce in 2011.

When that happened, Bryant realized that he needed to apply the determination he used to be the best in basketball to his vocation as a husband and father. “How could I do that in my professional life if I wasn’t like that in my personal life, when it affects my kids? It wouldn’t make any sense.”

Vivica was denied her divorce petition in 2013, and the couple went on to have two more daughters in addition to the two daughters they had been blessed with.

Bryant was being a dedicated father on and off the court, going to his 13-year-old daughter Gianna to a basketball game for her team that he coached and seven other people also died in the helicopter crash.

Learning about how much Bryant loved his daughter and sought to pass on the game he loved to her made their passing all the more poignant for me. Just the day before, I helped coach my 12-year-old son Victor’s Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) basketball team from Lumen Christi Catholic Church in Indianapolis.

Being a CYO coach has helped me be a better father for Victor and to have a real relationship with each of his classmates. It’s also given me a greater knowledge and appreciation for the game over the three seasons I have been coaching.

Now, I can look at highlights from Bryant’s career with more awe at his accomplishments from the court.

My Catholic faith, however, leads me to value the determination he showed off the court, driven by God’s grace and mercy, to make up for his mistakes.

Kobe Bryant wasn’t a perfect husband and father. He definitely made mistakes earlier in life. None of us Catholic husbands and fathers are. Like Bryant, though, we too, can rise to the challenge of being the best husbands and fathers he calls us to be.

May our heavenly Father give Bryant and her friends rest, peace and joy on their journey in heaven and may his surviving family through his legacy of applying his God-given determination both on and off the court and, most importantly, his home.

(Sean Gallagher is a reporter for The Criterion.)

Be Our Guest/Peggy Gris

The birthday offer an opportunity to become pro-life, prayer warrior

Last week, we focused on the national March for Life in Washington. I have been there myself many times, and it is truly a remarkable experience.

As a continuation of the grace of God which is received at this wonderful pro-life event in our nation’s capital, I am writing to invite everyone to join us at an open monthly pro-life Mass, adoration of Jesus and an active prayer vigil.

On the third Saturday of every month, the Helpers of God’s Precious Infants gather at St. Michael the Archangel Church, which is located 3354 W. 30th St. in Indianapolis. The prayer vigil begins with Holy Mass at 8:30 a.m. with Father John Kamwendo presiding.

This is in full support of God’s amazing grace, which I have heard and even experienced because someone was inspired by the Holy Spirit to be present there while prayers about abortion were being performed and/or said what was asked in the Mass.

Please come each third Saturday of the month to pray for someone. Bring as many people as you can. We always have room for more. You may be the prayer warrior God calls to save the life of a little one. Or you can pray simply for the love they have for each other in this very stressful situation. God loves everyone. Come and pray and share this love.

(Peggy Gris is a member of St. Michael the Archangel in Indianapolis.)
“A qué compararos el reino de Dios? ¿Con qué parábola lo representaremos? Es como el grano de mostaza, que, cuando siembra, es la más pequeña de todas las semillas de la tierra; pero una vez sembrado, crece más que todas las otras plantas y echa la tierra; pero una vez sembrado, crece más pequeña de todas las semillas de Dios? ¿Con qué parábola lo explicaba todo a sus discípulos” (Mk 4:33-34).

Most of Jesus’ parables are familiar to us today. After being repeated year in and year out for 2,000 years, they remain vivid in our imaginations. The parables of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10:35-37) and the Prodigal Son (Lk 15:11-32) are excellent examples. Who could forget these vivid illustrations of God’s love and mercy?

Jesus enseñaba por medio de parábolas. En vez de basarse en conceptos abstractos, nuestro Señor narraba historias para ilustrar con palabras el significado que quería transmitir.

Como lo explica Marcos: “Con estas y otras muchas parábolas le anunciaba Jesús el mensaje, en la medida en que podían comprenderlo. Y sin parábolas no les decía nada. Luego, a solas, se lo explicaba todo a sus discípulos” (Mc 4:33-34).

Hoy en día estamos familiarizados con la mayoría de las parábolas de Jesús, ya que a fuerza de repetirlas año tras año durante 2,000 años se mantienen vividas en nuestra imaginación. Las parábolas del Buen Samaritano (Lk 10:35-37) y del Hijo pródigo (Lc 15:11-32) son excelentes ejemplos. ¿Quién podría olvidar estas imágenes vivas del amor y la misericordia de Dios? ¿Quién no sería capaz de comprender lo que nuestro Señor nos dice sobre cómo debemos vivir si deseamos ser felices, tanto en esta vida como en el mundo que está por venir?

Y sin embargo, muy a menudo olvidamos las lecciones que Jesús nos enseña. A veces estamos tan familiarizados con las parábolas que la impacto ya no es tan poderoso como debería. En otros casos, permitimos que las distracciones del ajetreo de la vida nos impidan reconocer la verdad de las parábolas de Jesús para nosotros. Y en ocasiones, permitimos que nuestro egoísmo y el pecado interfiere y nos negamos a aceptar las verdades sencillas que nos presenta el Evangelio.

Sabemos que la parábola del Buen Samaritano, por ejemplo, ilustra que debemos cuidar a los menos a los otros, lo que incluye a los extranjeros e incluso a los enemigos. Pero, ¿cuándo a menudo nos comportamos como los demás personajes de la historia, el sacerdote y el levita, quienes se niegan a ayudar a uno de los suyos? Se supone que estas eran “buenos” personas cuya indiferencia les impidió ser verdaderamente buenos.

La parábola tiene una moraleja importante: si bien podríamos identificarnos con el hijo menor de la parábola del Hijo pródigo, cuán a menudo nos comportamos como el hermano mayor, resentido por la misericordia de Dios hacia los demás? En vez de estar agradecidos por lo que tenemos, muy a menudo nos concentramos en lo que nos falta y esto provoca celos y odios. Como consecuencia de ello, somos incapaces de ver las bendiciones en nuestras vidas y nos quejamos cuando, en verdad, deberíamos dar gracias.

El hecho de que seamos capaces de ver tan fácilmente la verdad de estos principios morales demuestra el poder de estas parábolas. Jesús nos muestra vivamente lo que quiere que entendamos: nos transmite el mensaje mediante imágenes y ejemplos que podemos entender y apreciar fácilmente, aunque no siempre vivamos como deberíamos.

Nuestro Señor entiende que somos lentos para captar los significados y todavía más a la hora de poner en práctica estas enseñanzas en nuestras vidas cotidianas. Ese es uno de los motivos por los cuales nos ofrece la parábola del grano de mostaza “la más pequeña de todas las semillas de la tierra” (Mc 4:31). El reino de Dios, el lugar donde la voluntad de Dios se expresa a plenitud y toda la creación existe en perfecta armonía con Él, crece lentamente a partir de la más pequeña de todas las semillas. Evitamos el crecimiento de nuestros corazones y de nuestros matices de amor. Nuestra Iglesia asume muy en serio esta responsabilidad de explicar el significado de las enseñanzas de Cristo. Es por ello que dedicamos tanto de nuestra valiosa tiempo y recursos a la formación de fe. Deseamos que las parábolas de Jesús sean relevantes hoy en día y en cualquier época porque creemos que nos enseñan a vivir a plenitud y con alegría en libertad.

Pero, ¿cómo se hace para que las parábolas de Jesús sean arraiguen en nuestros corazones y no sean “grano de mostaza sin raíces”? El Evangelio que he escrito es una reflexión sobre la parábola del grano de mostaza, pero también está concebido como una invitación a reflexionar sobre los aspectos de nuestras vidas que a veces nos atraen y que a veces nos pueden llevar a experiencias inesperadas de cruce de amor y gratitud. Es un regalo para reflexionar sobre nuestras vidas y recordar que la vida es un regalo y una oportunidad para vivircelo a plenitud, cumpliéndolo desde el corazón. Ése es el propósito de esta obra. ¡May God give you joy, peace, and love on your journey to live your life fully in harmony with Him! Amen.

Christ, the cornerstone
Retreats and Programs

February 14-16
Archbishop House Retreat and Renewal Center, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. Together in Christ, for married couples, Benedictine Father Noel Mueller presiding, $425 double. Information: 812-357-6585 or mailer@stmeinrad.edu.

February 16

Women’s Care Center, 4901 W. 86th St., Indianapolis. First Friday Mass, 5 p.m., Father Robert Hasker presiding, optional tour of center to follow. Information: 317-428-6080 or women@carecenter.org.

Our Lady of the Greenwood Church, 335 S. Meridian St., Greenwood. First Friday celebration of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, 5:45 p.m., exposition of the Blessed Sacrament following Mass until 9 p.m., sacrament of reconciliation available. Information: 317-888-2861 or info@greenwood.org.

February 8
St. Michael Parish, 11400 Farmers Lane, Greenwood. Spaghetti Dinner Fundraiser: spaghetti with meat sauce, salad, bread, drink and dessert, $10 adults, $5 ages 4-11, ages 3 and younger free. Information: patrocinio@archindy.org or 812-734-5590.

St. Rose of Lima Church, 114 Laclest Dr., Frankfort. Screening of The Story of Eva, documenting the Holocaust survivor Eva Kor, with discussion facilitated by Jessica Chapman from WFYI Indianapolis. Presentation 9:30 a.m., noon and free to the public. Information: Eileen Page, opague@stroselinet.net, 317-378-3929, www.theseriouseva.com.

St. Rita Parish, 1733 E. 16th St., Indianapolis. “Draw Me Close to You” Prayer Breakfast, Father Jude Nance, N PROVIDENCE. All married couples, 2 p.m. Mass with Msgr. William Stumpf, vicar general, reception with light refreshments, music, dance lessons and dancing to music. Information: 317-367-7854, srtritacatholic@yahoo.com or 812-367-1411.


February 11
Church of the Immaculate Conception, 1 Sisters of Providence, South Bend. “Act justly, Love tenderly, Walk Humbly” Monthly Taizé Prayer Service, 7.8 p.m., silent and spoken prayers, simple music, silence. Information: 312-535-2952, prayer@province.org.

February 13-May 21

February 14-16
St. Rita Parish, 1733 E. 16th St., Indianapolis. Black History Month Youth Revival. Fri. 7 p.m. “Recipe for Revival,” Sat. 7 p.m. “Revival or Regret?,” Sun. 11 a.m. “No Revival about a Black Christian Woman’s Prayer,” receptions to follow.

VIPS
Announcements for couples celebrating 50, 55, 60, 65, 70 or more years of marriage are accepted. Go to bit.ly/2V4yq4m or call 317-236-1755.

Adult adoption presentation and panel discussion scheduled in Jennings County on Feb. 16

“Adoption: Let’s Talk About It” is the theme of a presentation scheduled at St. Francis de Sales Church in Indianapolis on Feb. 16. The presentation will take place at 6:30 p.m., located in the Social Hall. The evening will feature a screening of I Lived on Parker Ave., a short film about a woman’s difficult choice, a young couple’s joy at starting a family, and a young man’s adult search for his roots.

Don and Mary Evelyn (Crays) White, members of St. Pius X Parish in Indianapolis, celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary on Dec. 31. The couple was married at the former St. Francis de Sales Church in Indianapolis on Dec. 31, 1949. They have eight children: Elaine Ford, Ann Hamilton, Karen Kurth, Karen Ayne, Dana, Judy, Mark and the late David White. The couple also has 12 grandchildren.

Hubert and Pauline (Brockman) Spinks, members of St. Pius X Parish in Indianapolis, celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary on Feb. 10. The couple was married at the former Holy Trinity Church in New Albany on Feb. 10, 1948. They have seven children: Donna Taylor, Don Doug, Mike, Pat, Terry and the late Steve Spitznagel. The couple also has 12 grandchildren and 22 great grandchildren.

Annual used book sale at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods set for Feb. 14-17

A used book sale will be held at Linden Leaf Books at Providence Spirituality & Conference Center, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, in Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. on Feb. 14-17.

Book categories include hardbacks, paperbacks, spirituality, biology, health, children’s books, gardening, health and craft.

On Feb. 16, local author Joni Wolf will be available from 1:30-4 p.m. to sign and sell autograph copies of her book, The Immunal Quilt. Items are not pricéd. Rather, donations will be accepted. All proceeds will be donated to the sale for the Sisters of Providence’s missions and ministries. To learn more, call 812-535-2948 or e-mail lindenleaf@spsmw.org.

On Feb. 14, 2019, the 50th anniversary of the wedding of first husband, Joni Wolf, and second husband, Doug, will be celebrated. Joni Wolf, who has Down syndrome, is the author of The Immunal Quilt, a memoir about the family she and Doug share.

For more information, contact Emily Mastroncola at emastroncola@archindy.org.

Catholic Office of Youth Ministry, Young Adult Ministry, and Catechesis, the presentation is for youth ministers, directors of religious education, and college campus ministers. The cost to attend is $30 per person, with the fee accessed directly to pay for the workshop and assessment. Lunch is included. Registration is required online at bit.ly/2Ks0gbv. For more information, contact Emily Mastroncola at emastroncola@archindy.org.

‘Christus Vivit’ presentation scheduled for Feb. 24 at St. Bartholomew Parish

Paul Zarzembowski, assistant director for laity, marriage, family life and youth for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops will present “Christus Vivit: Implications of ‘Christus Vivit’ for Ministry Today and Beyond’ from Pope Francis’s apostolic exhortation at St. Bartholomew Parish, 1306 29th St., in Columbus, on Feb. 24. Check-in with refreshments begins at 1:30 p.m., with doors opening at 2:15 p.m. Mass will be offered. Sponsored by the archdiocesan offices of Youth Ministry, Young Adult Ministry, and Catechesis, the presentation is for youth ministers, directors of religious education, and college campus ministers. The cost to attend is $30 per person, with the fee accessed directly to pay for the workshop and assessment. Lunch is included. Registration is required online at bit.ly/2Ks0gbv. For more information, contact Emily Mastroncola at emastroncola@archindy.org.
God's word brings light to life's dark corners, pope says

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—God’s saving word doesn’t seek pristine and safe places to reside, but instead goes in search of the darkest corners of people’s lives that it can brighten, Pope Francis said.

By taking his ministry to the “periphery” of Galilee, Jesus proves that “God wants to visit the very places we think he will never go,” the pope said in his homily on Jan. 26 during Mass in St. Peter’s Basilica.

Jesus “is not afraid to explore the terrain of our hearts and to enter the roughest and most difficult corners of our lives. He knows that his mercy alone can heal us, his presence alone can transform us and his word alone can renew us,” he said.

The Mass marked the first Sunday of the Word of God, an annual celebration Pope Francis has set for the third Sunday in Ordinary Time.

In his Sept. 30, 2019, declaration of the day, the pope said it would be devoted “to the celebration, study and dissemination of the word of God,” which will help the Church “experience anew how the risen Lord opens up for us the treasury of his word and enables us to proclaim its unfathomable riches before the world.”

Before the Mass ended, the pope handed copies of the Bible to people representing various professions and states of life, including cardinals, religious leaders, refugees, children and men and women with disabilities.

In his homily, the pope reflected on the Sunday Gospel reading in which Jesus preaches in Galilee, calling on the people to repent and inviting Sts. Peter and Andrew to follow him.

Jesus’ call for people to “repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand,” is a reminder that “God is not far from us” and that he “has torn down walls and shortened distances,” the pope said.

“We ourselves did not deserve this: he came down to meet us. Now this nearness of God to his people in all the ways he has done things since the beginning, even in the Old Testament,” he said. “And this nearness became flesh in Jesus.”

God, he continued, did not take on “our human nature” out of duty but out of love because “one embraces what one loves.”

While Christ also chooses to enter the darkest recesses of one’s heart, the pope said that many times, “we are the ones who close the door, preferring to keep our confusion, our dark side and our duplicity hidden. We keep it locked up within, approaching the Lord with some formal prayers, wary lest his truth stir our hearts. And this is concealed hypocrisy.

Nevertheless, he added, Jesus enters the hearts of men and women in the same way he passed through the “varied and complex region” of Galilee in order to heal and call people to follow him.

“To follow Jesus, mere goods works are not enough; we have to listen daily to his call!” Pope Francis said. “He, who alone knows us and who loves us fully, leads us to put out into the deep sea of life. Just as he did with the disciples who heard him.”

After celebrating Mass, the pope greeted pilgrims in St. Peter’s Square for his Sunday Angelus address.

Volunteers from UNITALSI, an Italian Catholic pilgrimage association that brings the sick and volunteers together for prayer and pilgrimages to Lourdes and other Marian shrines, handed free Bibles to the pilgrims.

“The pope thanked the volunteers, as well as local dioceses and communities who proposed initiatives to promote ‘the centrality of Holy Scripture in the life of the Church.’”

The Sunday of the Word of God, Pope Francis said, was instituted “to better celebrate and receive always the gift of the word that God has made and daily gives to his people.”

Remembering Holocaust is ‘a duty,’ Pope Francis says

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope Francis said remembering the millions of men, women and children who perished in the Holocaust is a call for the world today to reflect and commit to not repeating the atrocities of the past.

Speaking to pilgrims in St. Peter’s Square on Jan. 26, the pope said that “in the face of this immense tragedy, this atrocity, indifference is inadmissible, and remembering is a duty.

“We are all called to have a moment of prayer and reflection, each one saying in his or her own heart, ‘Never again, never again!’” the pope said.

International Holocaust Remembrance Day is observed around the world Jan. 27, which marks the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp in Oswiecim, Poland.

Operated from 1940 to 1945, Auschwitz was the Nazi’s largest camp and consisted of two camps, Auschwitz I, where many were imprisoned and murdered; the Birkenau extermination camp—also known as Auschwitz II—and Auschwitz III (Auschwitz-Monowitz), an area of auxiliary camps that included several factories.

In 1942, Auschwitz became the site of the mass extermination of more than 1 million Jews, 23,000 Roma, 15,000 Soviet prisoners of war and thousands of Polish citizens of different nationalities.

The Nazi’s systematic persecution and genocide led to the deaths of 6 million Jews in Europe.

During his visit to Poland in 2016, the pope visited the Auschwitz death camp, where he prayed in silence and met with survivors of the Holocaust.

The pope has also denounced anti-Semitism and violence against Jewish people, including in November when reports surfaced of an escalation in anti-Semitic violence and vandalism across Europe.

During his weekly general audience on Nov. 13, the pope said that the world has “seen so many brutalities done against the Jewish people, and we were convinced that this was over.

“But today the habit of persecuting Jews is beginning to be reborn,” he said. “Brothers and sisters: this is neither human nor Christian; the Jews are our brothers and sisters and must not be persecuted! Understood?”

Two organizations representing the bishops of Europe also issued a joint statement to mark the anniversary of the liberation of the death camp.

The Council of European Bishops’ Conferences and the Commission of the Bishops’ Conferences of the European Union said “Auschwitz has become a symbol of all German concentration camps, and even of all such extermination sites.

“Here, the Nazis took the power to decide who is human and who is not. Here, euthanasia met with eugenics,” they said. “Auschwitz-Birkenau is a result of the system based on the ideology of national socialism, which meant trampling the dignity of man who is made in the image of God. Another totalitarianism, namely communism, acted quite similarly, also reaching a death toll of millions.”

The bishops said they wished “to appeal to the modern world for reconciliation and peace, for respect for the image of God. Another totalitarianism, namely communism, acted quite similarly, also reaching a death toll of millions.”

The bishops said they wished “to appeal to the modern world for reconciliation and peace, for respect

Our Lady of Lourdes Parish to host sixth annual Festival of Prayer

The eight days of meditation, prayer, music and fellowship in Indiana in 2015 by the late Father Noah Casey, then Our Lady of Lourdes Parish pastor, honors Our Lady of Lourdes and St. Bernadette.

At 6 p.m., Feb. 11, a Mass in celebration of the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes will be celebrated along with a celebration of the sacrament of the anointing of the sick.

A rosary walk will take place in the parish church at 3:15 p.m. on Feb. 12. Feb. 13 will feature Mass celebrated at 6 p.m., followed by a period of eucharistic adoration and Benediction. Recitation of the rosary will take place before the liturgy at 5:30 p.m.

On Feb. 14, Mass will be celebrated at 8:15 a.m. and at 6 p.m. The rosary led by school children will be prayed following the morning Mass, and a blessing for married couples will take place after the evening liturgy.

Fellowship and refreshments will be offered in the parish’s Bernadette Hall following a Mass celebrated at 6 p.m. on Feb. 15.

After the 10 a.m. Mass on Feb. 16, a catered lunch will be offered in Bernadette Hall, along with a period of prayer featuring guided imagery led by Rev. Hansbury, Our Lady of Lourdes’ former director of religious education.

Feb. 17 will feature a presentation by Andrea Aikman on the ancient prayer practice of lectio divina at 7 p.m. in Bernadette Hall.

The festival will conclude on Feb. 18 in the parish church with the prayer of the rosary at 5:30 p.m., celebration of Mass at 6 p.m. and a sacred music concert at 7 p.m.

For more information on the annual Festival of Prayer, call 317-356-7291, send an e-mail to parishsecretary@olilinfty.org, or visit www.olilinfty.org.

A boy wears a prisoner’s uniform after the liberation of the Nazi death camp Auschwitz-Birkenau in 1945 in Oswiecim, Poland. Historians estimate that the Nazis sent at least 1.3 million people to Auschwitz between 1940-45, and it is believed that came 1.1 million of those perished there. Auschwitz was liberated by the Soviet Army on Jan. 27, 1945.

(CNS photo/Hotam Kobani, Archives via Reuters)

for each nation’s right to exist and to freedom, to independence, to maintain its own culture.”

Citation report staff

Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, 5333 E. 65th Street, Indianapolis, will host its sixth annual Festival of Prayer on Feb. 11-18.

The festival will conclude on Feb. 18 in the parish church with the prayer of the rosary at 5:30 p.m., celebration of Mass at 6 p.m. and a sacred music concert at 7 p.m.

For more information on the annual Festival of Prayer, call 317-356-7291, send an e-mail to parishsecretary@olilinfty.org, or visit www.olilinfty.org.
MARCH

March, the voice of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson reminded the participants to avoid “hardness of heart” and to “stay centered on Christ.”

“Go forth with the joy of the Gospel” Archbishop Thompson served as principal celebrant of the Mass at St. John the Evangelist Church in Indianapolis;

Concluding with him were Lafayette Bishop Timothy L. Doherty and numerous priests of the two dioceses.

In his homily, Archbishop Thompson noted the importance of beginning the march and rally with the orthodox liturgy.

“The outpouring of grace provided by this celebration of word and sacrament is meant to lead us to service to others,” he said. “Including the unborn, those struggling with unplanned pregnancies, expectant mothers, birth professionals, legislators and those who suffer from the procurement of abortion. No one is beyond the scope of divine mercy.”

Archbishop Thompson explained how both readings for the Mass revealed that divine grace prevails over the forces of ignorance, injustice, hypocrisy and evil.

God knows what transpires in the hearts and minds of human beings. So, we must go forth today not with hardness of hearts and minds of human beings. So, we must go forth today with the joy of the Gospel. We must go forth today not with hardness of hearts and minds of human beings. So, we must go forth today with the joy of the Gospel.

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TRUMP continued from page 1

“It’s your generation that is making this a pro-life nation,” the president said, adding, “You are powered by prayer and motivated by pure unselfish love.”

Trump’s speech before the largely supportive crowd was punctuated by applause and cheers. Calls of “Four more, guys” welcomed him to the podium.

The pro-life movement has been buoyed by Trump’s appointment of two conservative justices to the Supreme Court. Its goal has been a reversal of the court’s 1973 decision in Roe v. Wade that legalized abortion.

Vice President Mike Pence and his wife, Karen, addressed the rally in a video recorded in Rome prior to Trump’s arrival at the rally. Pence met with Pope Francis earlier in the day.

He said in the video that he thanked the pope “for all that he and Catholic Americans have done to defend the sanctity of human life in the history of this movement.”

Karen Pence thanked attendees for their witness and compassion for the unborn. “Thank you for standing for life,” she said. “We cannot be more proud to be on this journey with you.”

The vice president called Trump the “most pro-life president in American history,” and a “champion for the movement.”

“So keep standing strong and stand with that love and compassion that has always defined the movement for life,” Pence said.

Not all participants in the rally agreed with the single-issue stance of Trump and Pence. A group of Franciscan friars held signs calling for the protection of the environment and peace.

Rally-goers also heard from members of Congress and several other speakers, including women who survived attempted abortions, over the course of an hour following the president’s appearance.

Rep. Steve Scalise, R-La., urged the audience to support the Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act that has been introduced in Congress. The bill would ensure that any child born alive after an abortion received medical care. It would also institute penalties for doctors who allow such infants to die or who intentionally kill a newborn.

He said he is working to bring the bill to a vote in the House of Representatives by filing a discharge petition, meaning it would bypass committee action and go directly to the full House. He said 204 House members have signed the petition—all 197 Republicans and seven Democrats—and that he is working to gain 14 more.

Democrat to gain a majority that would force a vote on the bill. He encouraged those at the rally to contact their member of Congress to express support for the petition and the bill.

At times the gathering turned to politics as speakers called on rally-goers to vote for pro-life candidates in the upcoming presidential election. They also complimented Trump for his appointment of 187 federal conservative judges who are more likely to support restrictions on abortion.

“We are at a pivotal moment for the pro-life movement and this great nation,” said Marjorie Dannenfelser, president of Susan B. Anthony List, a pro-life education organization, in crediting legislative efforts nationwide to limit abortion.

She encouraged the crowd to “go for the win” and “put the will of the people into law” in an effort to overturn Roe v. Wade in the Supreme Court in the November election. “It’s the most consequential for the cause of the unborn,” she said.

In brief remarks, Rep. Chris Smith, R-New Jersey, noted how there have been incremental steps to end abortion throughout the nation.

“We’re making progress,” Smith said. “But we are encouraged. With the help of ultrasound imaging, we will tirelessly struggle to ensure that unborn children are no longer invisible, trivialized, mocked, dehumanized and killed.”

Smith, who co-chairs the Congressional Pro-Life Caucus, credited the crowd for their activism that has resulted in “countless” women and babies who have been spared “the violence of abortion and today live, love and thrive.”

Teen speaker, youthful crowd seen as signs march resonates with the young

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Catalina Galinanes, this year’s student speaker at the March for Life rally on the National Mall, has been to almost as many marches as Jeanne Mancini, president of the March for Life Education and Defense Fund.

The Jan. 24 march was Galinanes’ seventh, Mancini’s eighth.

“It’s so inspiring and so powerful to go with family and friends,” said the junior at the all-girls Oakcrest School in Vienna, Va.

She is president of the school’s Respect Life Club. Forty students from the school were chosen to carry the parade-front banner for the entire duration of the march down Constitution Avenue to the Supreme Court.

“It’s in keeping with this year’s theme, “Pro-Life Is Pro-Woman,” linking the pro-life cause to the women’s suffrage leaders who brought about the 19th Amendment, enabling women to vote for the first time.

“And so I thought it was appropriate that we have young women at the front of the march,” said Mancini in an interview with Catholic News Service ahead of the event.

Another 200 students from Colorado Christian University in the Denver suburb of Lakewood were chosen to carry pennants.

Putting the focus on young participants has been Mancini’s goal for some time.

“The way I see it, the March for Life is organically young grassroots. Like, we don’t really try really hard to bring young people to the March for Life. They are attracted to the issue now.”

That is partly the result of the organization’s aggressive use of social media. “Knowing that social media is a language that reaches young people, there’s a pretty massive difference from eight years ago. I think we’re the most followed pro-life group on Instagram,” Mancini explained.

“When we do the surveys after the march to see who the favorite speakers were, by and large it’s always the young speaker, someone like Catalina, or people who were excited to hear from, because they’re speaking for their generation.”

Young people “know that social justice begins in the womb, and they have such hopes that their generation will make abortion unthinkable.”

The long-established image of the marchers is of school groups in matching toga-wearing caps, and parish groups, arriving by bus. But to anyone who has ever talked to marchers, a more nuanced picture emerges. Many are there as individuals or as couples who have come on their own.

Mancini has some personal experience with that as well.

“It’s almost like a call,” she agreed. “Someone in my family came for the first time last year. I think he felt a certain call to come. It really changed his heart.”

“He’s going to be back this year. … He’s got all his work to rearrange and he has to come from way out West. The experience is really transformative. Something about standing up in a public way.”

“Just witnessing everyone standing up for pro-life” has an impact, Catalina added. †
Gift of counsel brings guidance of Holy Spirit into decision making

By Father Herbert Weber

I must have been in the third or fourth grade when I first heard about the gifts of the Holy Spirit. In our rural parish, the bishop came every three years and children in third, fourth and fifth grade received the sacrament of confirmation.

So, I was about 9 when I heard words like counsel and fortitude for the first time. Other gifts like wisdom and knowledge at least had names that I recognized. But I confess that counsel was new to my vocabulary. I suspect that for many, it is still a strange word that begs for better comprehension.

Part of the maturing process is for people to see the consequences of their actions. Healthy judgments require maturity, just as making such judgments helps bring about mature Christian living.

Counsel, as a gift of God, takes that sense of judgment to a new level. It adds insight and conviction that humans cannot attain on their own. The old adage that grace builds on nature aptly reflects the relationship of this gift of the Holy Spirit as it builds on human development.

The most common examples of counsel come from confirmation students. Whether at school or among peers, these young people see behavior that they already know is not good. There may be bullying going on. They themselves may be pressured to deal with such adversity.

As young people talk about these issues, it is often as if they are fighting against overwhelming forces. Hopefully, they have enough self-esteem to stand up against overwhelming forces. Equally, the adults in their lives may have coached them how to deal with such adversity.

Nonetheless, the divine gift of counsel can go beyond what they can do on their own. This means that they have to really believe that the Holy Spirit is an active part of their lives and not just some image of God discussed in confirmation preparation.

Counsel continues to be important throughout a person’s life, often helping deal with challenges in both work and family life.

A young woman whom I knew in university campus ministry told me how excited she was to land her first real job after college. It was in her degree area and promised all that she was looking for in her new career.

Six months later, however, she stopped in to tell me how disillusioned she was with the job. As much as she tried to do the right thing, she finally decided that the position was requiring her to behave in unethical and likely illegal ways.

After prayer and consultation, she decided that she had to quit the job to find some peace of mind. Her comment to me was that she was unwilling to give up her integrity.

Not all jobs have to end that way, but there are many times when the gift of counsel can help determine that some action must be taken. As an aside, the subsequent gift of fortitude or courage has to be called upon as well to help follow through with that right decision-making.

Family members at all levels need to call on the Holy Spirit to activate the gift of counsel. Parents, unfortunately, do not always have the clarity of vision that they desire.

Whether looking into care for aging parents or trying to help guide their children through treacherous challenges, right judgment is necessary. Personal research and open conversations have to be matched with trust in the Holy Spirit as an active part of their lives.

Perhaps that is precisely where it gets difficult. On the one hand, people are asked to use all the skills at their disposal while, on the other hand, they are called upon to rely on the Holy Spirit.

All the gifts of the Spirit (1 Cor 12:1-2) are the divine counterpoint to human efforts. There has to be teamwork between humans and God. Relying on human efforts alone is insufficient; nor does it work when humans simply look to God and fail to do their own work.

Moreover, the various gifts of the Holy Spirit work together. As already noted, counsel needs the support of fortitude, and both need the insight of wisdom and knowledge. Ultimately, these gifts work together and express the ongoing presence of the Holy Spirit in one’s life.

(Father Herbert Weber is founding pastor of St. John XXIII Parish in Perrysburg, Ohio. His weekly podcast can be found at 23church.)

Josh and Cara Bash and their five adopted daughters, all members of St. Joan of Arc Parish in Indianapolis, pray before a meal in their home on July 10, 2017. Family members at all levels need to call on the Spirit to activate the gift of counsel.
Opening doors to love beyond roses and store advertisements

As Valentine’s Day approaches, so does more awareness of the need to express love to others. Can we express it to the diverse people in our lives. From an awesome agape-centered Valentine’s Day celebration, we’ve seen that love doesn’t have to be physical or visible. We express it to the diverse people in our lives. From an awesome agape-centered Valentine’s Day celebration, we’ve seen that love doesn’t have to be physical or visible. We express it to the diverse people in our lives.
The Sunday Readings
Sunday, February 2, 2020

- Malachi 3:1-4
- Hebrews 2:14-18

Under ordinary circumstances, the liturgy for this weekend would be that of the Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time. This weekend, however, the Church celebrates the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord.

Any interruption in the usual course of the liturgical season is a lesson in itself. The Church tells believers that the feast contains such an important message and commemorates such a person or event because it conveys a message or reality helpful to us as we aspire to holiness. This occurs with the Church’s emphasis on the feast of the Presentation of the Lord this weekend.

By presenting their newborn child in the temple, Jewish parents in effect consecrated the child to God. It was more than just a tradition or charming gesture. It placed the infant fully within the stream of life and identity among the chosen people. The child shared in God’s gift to the people of Israel, beginning with their knowing God and the promise of salvation. Presentation in the temple also placed the child in the mission of God’s chosen people, to adore God above everything and to obey him in all things. In this spirit, Mary and Joseph presented Jesus in the temple.

The first reading is from the Book of Malachi. Through this prophesy, God promises the chosen people that they will receive a messenger, divinely sent and presented Jesus in the temple.

Identity of the Lord Jesus. This reading is more eloquent in its testimony to the Hebrews. No work in the New Testament reconcile God and the people. Everything and to obey him in all things.

How wondrous the willow, the wind about its crown
Bare trees, cold-pressed in the winter hour
With fresh presence of the fallen leaves,
The morning dew drops me new

Reflection
The liturgy of the word for this feast of the Presentation of the Lord is practical for anyone believing in Jesus and seeking salvation. Simeon and Anna recognized Jesus and saw a role hardly suggested simply by the presence of an infant. The Gospel reading is clear. They are devout. They are wise. Understanding God’s will and accepting limitations in understanding it come only to the good and the sincere. Finally, Simeon’s warning to Mary is telling. In a world of sin and hardship, no Christian can expect a life without demands and dilemma. Mary was no exception. Nevertheless, she was faithful.

TheMETHOD OF ENFORCING
A number of Catholic churches have established programs on the Alpha movement in Christianity. I have found conflicting guidance as to the legitimacy or orthodoxy of this movement. Can you advise me as to whether it is approved for Catholic membership?

Return
Alpha is a program of Christian evangelization first developed some 30 years ago at an Anglican charismatic parish in London. It consists of about a dozen interactive sessions in which participants discuss basic questions of faith, such as “Who is Jesus?” and “Why and how do I pray?” The goal is to bring participants into a closer personal relationship with Christ.

Alpha is compatible with Catholic teaching, although it does not deal specifically with issues like the sacraments. There is available a version called “Alpha for Catholics,” which supplements the basic program with teachings specific to Catholicism. Since its inception, Alpha has been used in thousands of Catholic parishes in more than 70 countries. Detroit Archbishop Allen H. Vigneron, recently elected vice president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, notes that “many parishes in Detroit have found Alpha a great tool for helping men and women hear the initial proclamation of the Gospel.”

Cardinal Christoph Schoenborn of Vienna has said, “Alpha is for meeting Jesus … For me, the Christian life has something to do with simplicity, friendship, closeness and joy. That’s what I feel about Alpha, and I think that’s a string that it works and that it’s given from the Lord.”

My Journey to God
Morning Glory
By Tierney Vrdolyak

The morning dew drops me new
With fresh presence of the fallen leaves,
Bare trees, cold-pressed in the winter hour
I awaken to.

Oh, taste and see; awake and read
How wondrous the willow, the wind about its crown
Whispering back and forth, from bough to bough
Unceasing sound.

Belting time is now
When in undisturbed solitude
I simply breathe, offering up whatever may encompass.

Some call this idleness.
But I, whose I am not
See, if yet initially, true thought:
Contemplation, new worlds awaken
Within the eye I am.

No need for latest news as the dew drops, or iceershounds,
For in one breath tidings ever ancient, ever new break the bought
Make willows wither?
Morning’s tale is awe enough for me.

(Tierney Vrdolyak is a theology teacher at Nativity Catholic School in Indianapolis through the University of Notre Dame’s EOHO program. Photo: Snow-covered berries are seen on a tree outside the headquarters of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in Washington on Feb. 20, 2019.) (CNS photo/Dan Falls)

Daily Readings

Monday, February 3
- Mt 7:21-29
- Psalm 32:1-7

Tuesday, February 4
- 2 Samuel 19:13-40, 30, 16:5-13
- Psalm 2:7-12

Wednesday, February 5
- Psalm 86:1-6

Thursday, February 6
- Psalm 32:1-2, 5-7
- Mark 6:1-6

Friday, February 7
- Strach 47:2-11

Question Corner
A number of Catholic parishes here in my archdiocese have hosted programs on the Alpha movement in Christianity. I have found conflicting guidance as to the legitimacy or orthodoxy of this movement. Can you advise me as to whether it is approved for Catholic membership?

A book on lives of the saints which I am reading lists a St. Olympias in the fourth and fifth centuries and says that she was a deaconess of the Church, “an office which existed at that time.” When did the Church stop ordaining women as deacons and why? (Virginia)

Clearly there were women in the early Church who were called “deaconesses.” St. Paul in his Letter to the Romans (Bom 16:1) refers to a certain Phoebe, whom he calls (in some but not all translations) “a deaconess of the Church at Cenchreae.” It is also clear that the perennial teaching and practice of the Church has been that deaconesses were not sacramentally ordained and thereby not included in the sacrament of holy orders. And the saint you mention—Olympias—was, according to the Catholic Encyclopedia on www.newadvent.org, “consecrated [as] deaconesses” by the bishop of Constantinople in the fourth century. She had been widowed at an early age and chose to remain unmarried, dedicating her considerable fortune to helping the poor.

In the early centuries, deaconesses seem to have played a role in the baptism of women.

Christian women were baptized naked, many of them as adult converts. Since the clergy were male, modesty demanded that deaconesses take women converts into the water. Catholic scholars have divided opinions as to whether these ancient deaconesses were actually ordained to a degree of holy orders or were simply blessed for service, like lectors or acolytes today.

In 2016, Pope Francis, with the encouragement of the International Union of Superiors General, created a study commission to examine the matter of women serving as deacons. Since then, members of that commission have arrived at varying points of view.

(Questions may be sent to Father Kenneth Doyle at ukfdoyle@gmail.com and 90 Lynden Circle Dr, Albany, New York 12203.)

The Criterion invites readers to submit original prose or poetry relating to faith or experiences of prayer for possible publication in the “My Journey to God” column. Please include name, address, parish and telephone number and send to “My Journey to God,” The Criterion, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367 or e-mail to nhoefer@archindy.org.
This story means even more today as we grapple with the social and psychological effects of new technologies. Economists point to the way wealth has shifted to places like Silicon Valley in the digital era. Historians recount the heady days of the Internet when computer programmers were experimenting with the tools that would allow us to download the world’s information from our sofas.

But what of our interior lives? How are we being changed? Or more important, in what ways do we need to change to cooperate with God’s unfolding plan?
Bryant relied on Catholic faith to see him through tough personal times

CALABASAS, Calif. (CNS)—As the world mourned the loss of basketball great Kobe Bryant, his 13-year-old daughter Gianna and seven others killed in a tragic helicopter crash on Jan. 26, many recalled how Bryant gave much credit to his Catholic faith for seeing him through the bad times and strengthening his marriage and family.

A shooting guard, Bryant was drafted into the NBA at age 17 and played his entire 20-season career with the Los Angeles Lakers. He entered the NBA directly from high school and won five NBA championships. He retired at the end of the 2015-16 season.

In a recent interview, he talked about death quickly prompted tributes on social media. On Twitter, Archbishop Joseph H. Gomez of Los Angeles said “he was sad to hear the news” and offered prayers for him and his family. In Rome for his region’s “ad limina” visit with Pope Francis, Archbishoph Gomez told Catholic News Service Jan. 27 that Bryant “was a very good Catholic, a trusted and compassionate Catholic” and recalled meeting the Lakers star “and it’s something you can’t control, and it’s in his hands now.”

One of the darkest periods in his personal life happened in 2003—when he was accused of raping a young woman while he was staying at a mountain resort hotel in Colorado. He was in the state for knee surgery and was staying near Vail in Eagle Colro. He was arrested on a rape charge. He denied he had raped her, but admitted that the two had consensual sex. The charges were eventually dropped. In 2008 Bryant settled with his accuser and in 2005 Bryant settled with out of court for an undisclosed sum.

In a GQ interview in 2015, he said he relied on his Catholic faith to get him through—and talking to a priest was “the turning point.”

“For me, the one thing that really helped me during that process—I’m Catholic, I grew up Catholic, my kids are Catholic—was talking to a priest. It was actually kind of funny: He looks at me and says, ‘Did you do it?’ And I say, ‘Of course not.’ Then he asks, ‘Do you have a good lawyer?’ And I’m like, ‘Uh, yeah, he’s phenomenal.’

So then he just said, ‘Let it go. Move on. God’s not going to give you anything you can’t handle, and it’s in his hands now. This is something you can’t control. So let it go.’ And that was a significant turning point.”

Law enforcement officials identified the other passengers on the helicopter, who also perished: the pilot, Ara Zobayan; John Altobelli, head basketball coach at Orange Coast College in Costa Mesa, Calif., his wife, Keri, and their daughter Alyssa; Christina Mauser, a basketball coach at Harbor Day School in Newport Beach, Calif., where Gianna Kobe attended school; Sarah Chester and her daughter Payton, who was of middle school age. USA Today reported the group was traveling in Bryant’s private helicopter to the Mamba Sports Academy in Thousand Oaks, Calif., for a girls basketball team’s championship game. Bryant was expected to coach, and Gianna was expected to play. The crash occurred around 10:3 a.m. PST; law enforcement officials said there were foggy conditions in the hills overlooking Calabasas, which is in Los Angeles County.

Among tributes to Bryant flooding the Internet was a remembrance by Instagram user Cristina Ballestero, who described seeing Bryant at a weekday Mass at Holy Rosary Church in Orange Calif.

She recalled looking up to see the basketball star sitting in her pew, but she managed to “stay focused on Jesus, not this insanely talented basketball player my whole family has looked up to and watched our whole lives.”

“As we went up to Communion, he waited for me to go,” she recalled, adding that he complemented her on having a “beautiful voice” in singing the Mass hymns.

“His most inspiring trait was his decision to turn to his faith in God and receive God’s mercy and to be a better man after a regretful decision,” Ballestero wrote, referring to the GQ article. “I am heartbroken at the news of his death alongside his daughter Gianna. My prayers go out to his family, friends and loved ones.”

She also noted all the good works Kobe and his wife have done through their foundation and several other charities they are involved in and donate money to.

A tweet from Tommy Tighe @bryantstennis said Bryant was a “great man” and Bryant and his family at Our Lady Queen of Angels Church during Mass “and it’s something I’ve never forgotten.”

“May the crucified Christ and His sorrowful mother be with Kobe’s wife, daughters, and family,” Tighe tweeted.

Bryant, who also perished: the pilot, Ara Zobayan; John Altobelli, head basketball coach at Orange Coast College in Costa Mesa, Calif., his wife, Keri, and their daughter Alyssa; Christina Mauser, a basketball coach at Harbor Day School in Newport Beach, Calif., where Gianna Kobe attended school; Sarah Chester and her daughter Payton, who was of middle school age. USA Today reported the group was traveling in Bryant’s private helicopter to the Mamba Sports Academy in Thousand Oaks, Calif., for a girls basketball team’s championship game. Bryant was expected to coach, and Gianna was expected to play. The crash occurred around 10:3 a.m. PST; law enforcement officials said there were foggy conditions in the hills overlooking Calabasas, which is in Los Angeles County.

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Human Resources Data Administrator

The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Indianapolis is seeking a full-time Human Resources Data Administrator to perform a wide variety of functional and analytical assignments that support the Human Resources Office. This position will primarily focus on managing or monitoring several workflows within the HRIS or payroll system, the position will also administer key processes or programs outside primarily focus on managing or monitoring several workflows within the HRIS or payroll system, the position will also administer key processes or programs outside

Employment

Caralee 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 must also complete a full Criminal History Clearance.

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

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Responsibilities include preparing reports to various end-users, administering a process to ensure collection of missed insurance premiums, reviewing employee data changes in the HRIS, reviewing hours worked by employees for eligibility and Affordable Care Act (ACA) compliance, reviewing pending new hire/ rehire records, assisting with the implementation of online timekeeping, preparing check requests, overseeing automatic enrollment and automatic savings deferral increases in the retirement savings plan, ensuring accurate completion of I-9 employment eligibility forms, and performing other duties as necessary.

A bachelor’s degree in business administration, informatics, or a related field and previous experience in human resources and/or benefits administration is preferred. Proficiency with website design or administration is a plus. The ability to exercise discretion and maintain confidentiality is essential. Proficiency with databases, payroll systems, Microsoft Office applications, including an advanced knowledge of Excel is required.

Please e-mail cover letter, resume, and list of references to:

Andrea Wunnenberg
Operations Manager, Human Resources
Archdiocese of Indianapolis
1400 N. Meridian St.
Indianapolis, IN 46202
E-mail: awunnenberg@archindy.org
Equal Opportunity Employer

Executive Assistant for Communications

The Archdiocese of Indianapolis is seeking a full-time Executive Assistant for Communications to perform editorial functions and coordinate communications and public relations activities, including preparing the Wedding and Parish Festival/Vacation supplements, gathering information regarding Advent and Lenten penance services, publishing a list of new Catholics after Easter, creating the groupings of special Masses, including Easter Sunday, and the Feast of our Lady of Guadalupe, and maintaining information on retreats, events, and obituaries. Other duties include overseeing display and classified advertisements for the Archdiocese, development and administration of Archdiocese’s Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram accounts, public relations, and the ability to travel throughout the diocese’s 12 counties. The successful candidate must also complete a full Criminal History Clearance.

To apply, please e-mail a cover letter, resume, and list of references, in confidence, to:

Ed Isakson
Director, Human Resources
Archdiocese of Indianapolis
1400 N. Meridian St.
Indianapolis, IN 46202
E-mail: eisakson@archindy.org
Equal Opportunity Employer

![Bryant Bryant](image)
In 1998, Saint John’s Abbey and University commissioned Donald Jackson, official scribe and calligrapher to Queen Elizabeth II, to create The Saint John's Bible. It was the first completely handwritten and illuminated Bible in more than 500 years. Jackson and an international team of calligraphers and artists constructed the Bible using calfskin vellum, ancient inks, gold leaf, palladium, and platinum. The text was written with quill pens formed from goose, turkey, and swan feathers. The completed work includes seven volumes totaling 1,150 pages and 160 major illuminations and each volume stands two feet tall by three feet wide. The Heritage Edition of this masterpiece was developed to give institutions the opportunity to witness and experience its magnificence.

For more information, contact SaintJohnsBible@marian.edu.

Special thanks to Ed and Peggy Bonach for sponsoring Marian University's year with The Saint John's Bible.

**Events with The Saint John's Bible**

**February 5 | 6-8 p.m.**
Interfaith Panel Discussion
Art of the Sacred Texts: Reflections on the Sublime
in Diverse Holy Writings
Michael A. Evans Center for Health Sciences, Lecture Hall 1

**February 19 | 7-9 p.m.**
Jamie Higgs, Ph.D.
The Saint John's Bible and the Power of the Page
Mother Theresa Hackelmeier Memorial Library, Auditorium

**March 13 | 7-9 p.m.**
Suzanne Moore
Tradition and Transformation
Marian Hall, Marian University Theatre

When The Saint John’s Bible is not on display for events, it can be viewed in the Mother Theresa Hackelmeier Memorial Library on the campus of Marian University.

Docent-lead viewings will be available on:

- Tuesday, February 4 5-7 p.m.
- Saturday, February 8 Noon-2 p.m.
- Tuesday, March 10 5-7 p.m.
- Saturday, March 14 Noon-2 p.m.
- Tuesday, April 7 5-7 p.m.
- Saturday, April 18 Noon-2 p.m.

For more information, contact SaintJohnsBible@marian.edu.

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