A couple’s 800-day trip around the world deepens their faith—in God and humanity

By John Shaughnessy

Their 800-day journey around the world led Matt and Nikki Javit to 35 countries, five continents and countless adventures—including snorkeling in shark-infested waters off the Galapagos Islands, learning the sport of cricket on the Indian Islands, trekking through a thunderstorm as they climbed the same dirt hill that St. Thomas did as he fled angry locals in India.

Their 27-month trip of a lifetime into a darkened St. Peter’s Basilica as religious orders, Pope Francis processed to consecrate their lives totally to serving God and their brothers and sisters. Led by candle-bearing men and women from a variety of religious orders, Pope Francis processed into a darkened St. Peter’s Basilica on Feb. 1 for a vigil celebration of Candlemas—the feast of the Presentation of the Lord—and the Vatican celebration of the World Day for Consecrated Life.

A key to perseverance and joy in life is this vision, he said. “You fell in love with Jesus, you saw everything in him, and enraptured by his gaze, you left the rest behind. Religious life is this vision,” he said.

For religious, God’s love is worth more than any earthly good, Pope Francis says at Mass

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—When one is totally in love with the Lord, then poverty, chastity and obedience are not sacrifices, but vehicles of freedom, Pope Francis told consecrated men and women.

Celebrating the World Day for Consecrated Life, Pope Francis urged women and men religious to be people of hope, and he asked all Catholics to pray for the hundreds of thousands of women and men who continue to consecrate their lives totally to serving God and their brothers and sisters.

After reciting the Angelus prayer on the feast day, he asked people in St. Peter’s Square to join him in praying a Hail Mary for “the consecrated men and women who do so much work, so often hidden.”

In his homily at the Mass with religious the evening before, Pope Francis focused on the figures of Simeon and Anna, who were present in the Temple when Mary and Joseph brought the baby Jesus. Simeon and Anna, who dedicated their lives to prayer, recognized Jesus as the Messiah.

Simeon says that he can die in peace because he had seen “the grace that was worth more than life,” the pope said.

Religious men and women and consecrated virgins also “caught sight of the treasure worth more than any worldly good,” Pope Francis said. “And so, you left behind precious things such as possessions, such as making a family for yourselves.”

“You fell in love with Jesus, you saw everything in him, and en rapported by his gaze, you left the rest behind. Religious life is this vision,” he said.

A key to perseverance and joy in religious life is to be always aware of the
Klopf had operated abortion facilities in her hometown of Fort Wayne as well as in South Bend and Gary. It was upon Klopf’s death in September 2019 that investigators found the remains of 2,411 aborted fetuses and thousands of medical records at his Indiana properties—all the result of abortions he had performed at his Indiana facilities before his medical license was suspended in 2015 for various violations.

Brown emphasized that Senate Bill 299 is not a reaction to the Klopf case. Instead, she said it is simply designed to fully implement the 2016 legislation—House Bill 1337—that was immediately challenged by the abortion industry, but finally upheld by the Supreme Court.

“The Klopf case just underlines the need for this type of law,” said Brown, a member of St. Jude Parish in Fort Wayne. “It brings to light how deceptive the abortion industry can be.”

The Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC) stands in strong support of Senate Bill 299 as it did with the legislation four years ago.

“We believe that in keeping with respecting the dignity of the body, particularly the most vulnerable in the form of these aborted fetuses, ensuring a proper burial or cremation is appropriate,” said Angela Espada, executive director of the ICC, the public policy voice of the Catholic Church in Indiana. Church teaching on the matter is clear, added Father C. Ryan McCarthy, a priest and most recently the president for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.

“Every human person is equal in dignity in the sight of God, and, for Catholics, not only are there traditions but actual requirements of canon law” surrounding proper disposal of human remains, said Father McCarthy, pastor of Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Parish in Indianapolis. “We are required to bury human remains, to the best of our ability, intact and in a permanent place.”

Father McCarthy acknowledged that sometimes in the early stages of pregnancy—whether by miscarriage or abortion—fetal remains are lost or cannot be identified. “No one is bound to the impossible,” he said, “but if you have fetal remains, they must be treated with due respect.”

Catholic cemeteries in Indiana stand ready to help in these situations, Father McCarthy added.

In the Klopf case, both the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend and the Diocese of Gary refused to provide burial for the remains found on the doctor’s property and reiterated those offers to the Office of the Indiana Attorney General, which is handling the case.

Several representatives of the Attorney General’s office spoke in support of Senate Bill 299 during the committee hearing.

“It is vital to have very strong laws on the books dealing with the disposition of fetal remains and to document that it has been done so appropriately,” said Parvony Stover, director of government affairs and legislative policy.

The Attorney General’s office is continuing with its investigation and is working to ensure that the fetal remains will be treated with proper dignity and respect, the representatives said.

Senate Bill 299 passed 10-1 at the conclusion of the hearing, with Sen. Jean Breaux (D-Indianapolis) casting the only dissenting vote. The bill is expected to pass the full Senate and will be considered by the House in the coming weeks.

“This is a very straightforward bill that merely implements the rules [in the 2016 law] so that every health care provider, whether an abortion clinic or hospital, understands that they can no longer use their earlier protocols for fetal remains,” Brown said. “Despite what people the pro-life side of this issue say, there needs to be more definition around these matters.”

“My personal opinion is that Senate Bill 299 and other priority legislation of the ICC, visit www.indianacc.org. This website includes access to ICAN (Indianapolis Catholic Action Network, which offers the Church’s position on key issues.

(News from you!)

Sen. Liz Brown

News from you from this editor.

When Dave Eggers first heard the news that the life of an abandoned baby had been saved in Seymour, two emotions immediately overwhelmed him.

Eggers’ first reaction was one of complete joy that a baby had been found and rescued about an hour after the child had been born.

The next most immediate reaction focused on the mother of the child.

“What breaks your heart is what that mother went through,” said Eggers. “A member of St. Ambrose Parish in Seymour and the treasurer of the Knights of Columbus Council 15252 there is a testament of what God she made the right decision.”

On Jan. 23, the baby’s mother placed her infant girl inside a Safe Haven Baby Box that had been installed at Seymour Fire Station 3 on June 14, 2019. An alarm immediately notified firefighters, the baby was retrieved from the box within 60 seconds, and she was transported to a nearby hospital.

“It worked exactly according to plan,” said Eggers. “That’s what the box was built for—to save a baby’s life.”

Severino’s Knights of Columbus had a role in that effort, paying for the installation of the baby box at the fire station and providing for a yearly maintenance fee to operate the box.

Yet Eggers focused his praise on two individuals.

He quickly mentioned 19-year-old Hunter Wart, who raised $10,000 to purchase the box—money Wart collected from mowing lawns and collecting scrap metal.

“You can’t say enough about how his hard work has paid off,” Eggers said. “He doesn’t come from a wealthy family. He raised every penny of the $10,000.”

Eggers’ thoughts also returned to the birth mother.

“You pray for her and hope the best for her as well,” he said. “Because we had the box, she may have planned what did before she gave birth. She gave her baby up so her baby could have a better life.”

In was told by current Mayor Matt Nicholson that the baby was within 30 days of having a permanent home and the adoption being finalized.

“ar a baby’s life is absolutely incredible. It’s exactly what we all hoped for.”

Abandoned newborn saved thanks to Seymour Safe Haven Baby Box

By John Shaugnessy

February 6–9

Annual conference for Association of Graduate Programs in Ministry in Tucson, Ariz.

February 10–11


February 12 – 11 a.m.

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

February 13 – 8:15 a.m.

Judiciaries meeting at Indiana Interchurch Center, Indianapolis

February 13 – 10 a.m.

Leadership Team meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center

February 13 – 5 p.m.

Ministries of Lector and Acolyte Mass at St. Thomas Aquinas Chapel at St. Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology, St. Meinrad

February 15 – 11 a.m.

Confirmation for youths of St. Louis Parish in St. Louis Church, Batesville

February 15 – 2 p.m.

Confirmation for youths of St. Michael Parish, Brookville; St. Nicholas Parish, Ripley County; St. Anthony of Padua Parish, Morris; and St. Peter Parish, Franklin County, at St. Louis Church, Batesville

February 15 – 6 p.m.

St. Louis Parish “Celebration of Love” dinner at Knights of Columbus Hall, Batesville

February 16 – 5:30 p.m.

Mass at St. Paul Catholic Center, Bloomington

February 18 – 11 a.m.

College of Deans meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center (Schedule subject to change.)
WASHINGTON (CNS)—Catholic leaders said a Trump administration plan to limit the issuance of immigrant visas for people from six African and Asian nations “undermines family reunification,” and will make it more difficult to support migrants forced from their homeland.

“We note with particular sadness and have witnessed firsthand the trauma of family separation that occurs with travel bans, which will only increase with this new proclamation,” officials with the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and three Catholic agencies that work widely with migrant families said in a Feb. 2 statement.

Joining in the statement were leading Church voices on migration and immigration: Archbishop Jose H. Gomez of Los Angeles, president of the USCCB; Auxiliary Bishop Mario E. Dorsonville of Washington, chairman of the bishops’ Committee on Migration; Bishop Joseph C. Bambera of Scranton, Pa., chairman of the bishops’ Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs; Bishop Jamie Soto of the bishops’ Committee on Interreligious Affairs; Bishop W. Patrick Boyle of Cleveland, president and CEO of Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. (CLINIC); Dominican Sister Donna Marie, chairman of the board of Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. (CLINIC); Dominican Sister Donna Marie, chairman of the board of Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. (CLINIC); and Sister Donna Marie, chairman of the board of Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. (CLINIC).

The new proclamation removes the diversity visa lottery, which allows 50,000 people from countries with low immigration to the United States each year to apply for green cards in a random drawing. People seeking nonimmigrant visas on a temporary basis for business, tourism, medical treatment and certain types of temporary work are not affected by the new proclamation.

The U.S. Church leaders said the new proclamation serves as a painful reminder of the 2017 ban which threatened our country’s founding principle of religious freedom.

“Since the original ban was put in place three years ago, waivers to allow visas for those with humanitarian need have been frustrated time and again in their efforts to reunite with loved ones,” the statement said.

“We urge the administration to reverse this action and consider the human and strategic costs of these harmful bans,” the statement concluded.

In a separate statement, Bishop Soto, CLINIC’s board chairman, expressed concern about the administration’s expanded restrictions.

“The policy has been devastating to thousands of men, women and children whose only beacon of hope is the safety and prosperity that America can offer,” said Krisch O’Maro Vignarajah, president and CEO of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service. The organization is one of the largest refugee resettlement agencies in the nation.

“Can we look at ourselves in the mirror knowing that we are doing less and less, especially when an unprecedented global refugee crisis calls for swift, bold action from the world’s humanitarian leader?” she added in a Jan. 31 statement. Wolf said the agency’s officials would work with the countries on bolstering their security requirements to help them work to get off the list.

“Their countries for the most part want to be helpful, they want to do the right thing, they have relationships with the U.S., but for a variety of different reasons failed to meet those minimum requirements,” Wolf said...
Be Our Guest/Marc Tuttle

A disturbing change in Planned Parenthood’s approach to expanding abortion services

It was a thrill to see a record number of between 1,000-1,100 pro-life Hoosiers attended the third annual Indiana March for Life in downtown Indianapolis on Jan. 22. Public events like this one are just one of the ways that the pro-life movement came to life in Indianapolis and continues to promote respect for all human life.

Another way is through education and awareness. That’s why, in addition to sharing the good news of this year’s Indiana March for Life, we also want people to be aware of a disturbing change in Planned Parenthood’s approach to expanding abortion services in Indiana.

I’ll start with some news that on first glance seems nothing but positive.

Last July, Planned Parenthood (PP) announced they were shuttering their non-abortion-providing clinic in Seymour and directing all of their patients to Planned Parenthood in Columbus. But this is just the latest of a string of closures of Planned Parenthood clinics in Indiana. In fact, the number of PP clinics in the state has dropped by more than half in the last decade. In 2007, there were 35 PP clinics in Indiana. Now, with the closing of the clinic in Seymour that number is only 15. This, is of course, a good thing.

But this latest closing seems to be part of a trend on the part of Planned Parenthood to double down on performing abortions, abandoning any feigned commitment it might have had to “health care” outside of abortion.

During the same decade that the number of clinics has been contracted, the number of abortion-providing facilities actually increased, as did the number of abortions conducted by Planned Parenthood. Since 2007, abortions have increased 8 percent at Planned Parenthood facilities in Indiana—from 5,160 in 2007 to 5,611 in 2019.

Despite their claims that abortion makes up only 3 percent of the services they provide, an examination of annual reports and media releases reveal the organization’s deep commitment to expanding abortion. From 2007-17, the number of patients performed by PP declined 72 percent, the number of breast exams fell by 65 percent and the number of cancer screenings declined by 68 percent.

In terms of their reproductive services, contraception services dropped by 33 percent, prenatal care dropped 17 percent and adoption referrals dropped 42 percent.

Meanwhile, in the same 10-year timeframe the number of abortions by PP in Indiana increased by 9 percent. It’s clear, Planned Parenthood is committed to providing more abortions—no matter what.

Are we seeing a new “alliance,” PP in Indiana and Kentucky, known as PPINK, will have even more money and power to increase abortions and chip away at Indiana’s pro-life legislation.

Last year, Planned Parenthood’s greatest Northwest affiliate announced that it would take over PPINK. An Associated Press story called this move “a first-of-its-kind” strategy by Planned Parenthood. It’s time for PPINK to face the legal costs of challenging far-reaching limits on abortion rights sought by Republican lawmakers in states like Indiana.

The article quoted Chris Charbonneau, the CEO of the Great Northwest affiliate, saying “The political environments in Indiana and Kentucky have been particularly oppressive.”

The Associated Press has “faced the legal costs of challenging far-reaching limits on abortion rights sought by Republican lawmakers in states like Indiana.”

Letter to the Editor

The Criterion must put its bias against President Trump aside, reader says

“We would be remiss if we did not recognize President Donald J. Trump, who came to the White House in 2017, to attend the national March for Life and address participants in person.” This was mentioned two-thirds of the way into The Criterion’s editor’s piece by Mike Krokos in its Jan. 31 issue. The first time a president addresses the March in 47 years, and The Criterion says, “We would be remiss if we did not recognize….”

President Trump has been the most pro-life president in history, and yet the editors of The Criterion cannot seem to accept the good that he has done. Rather than praising his actions, they write about him as an antiabortion advocate. It would appear that their apparent bias against him has clouded their judgment.

They take every opportunity, it seems, to slam him about immigration (something that is legislated by Congress) and question whether or not he is racist (strange, considering his approval among African-Americans is more than 40 percent). So when he does something that they should celebrate, they don’t understand it, or they attribute it to something else.

In three years, President Trump has radically shaped the federal judiciary by naming more than 100 judges, all of whom are justices of the U.S. Supreme Court who are conservatives. Not only does this positively affect the culture of the federal judiciary, but it allows for the protection of religious liberty.

He has been a clear and consistent spokesman for life. His speech at the March for Life was the strongest pro-life speech given by any president in history, and he has been the only one to have the guts to show up. The speech certainly was a more forceful pro-life argument than most any homily I have heard in Catholic Church or from most Catholic bishops in the last 20 years. That’s sad.

Why is it that President Trump spurns so forcefully for life while Catholic leaders seem to be so timid? What are they afraid of? Why doesn’t The Criterion question these leaders? Why has there been not one national collection in the Church to support the pro-life cause since 1973?

The editorial staff of The Criterion should put its anti-Trump bias aside and objectively give the president the credit he deserves for speaking up and acting definitively while many in the Catholic Church remain silent.

Dr. Stephen O’Neil

Indianapolis

Letters Policy

Letters from readers are welcome and should be typewritten, double spaced, clearly expressed, concise, temperate in tone, courteous in content and short. The editors reserve the right to select and edit the letters based on space limitations, political bias, and content.

Letters must be signed, but, for serious reasons, the author’s name may be withheld. Send letters to “Letters to the Editor,” The Criterion, 1400 N. Meridian Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202-2467. Readers with access to e-mail may send letters to criterion@archindy.org.
We are called to be salt and light for those in need.

"If you remove from your midst oppression, false accusation and malicious speech, if you bestow your bread to the hungry and satisfy the afflicted, then light shall rise for you in the darkness, and the gloom shall become for you like midday" (cf. Is 58:9-10).

The readings for this weekend, the Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time, challenge us to overcome what Pope Francis calls "the sin of indifference." As followers of Jesus Christ, we are called to be salt and light for the world—salt to overcome apathy, light to shine in the darkness.

One of the distinguishing characteristics of Jesus is his compassion. Our Lord cares about us. He is never indifferent to the suffering of others, and frequently, he is moved with pity; his heart aches for the poor, for those who are afflicted with physical and mental diseases, and even for sinners. There is no apathy in Jesus. He cares deeply about everyone, and he doesn’t keep his compassion to himself. He acts—feed the hungry, to cure the sick and to forgive sins.

We might say that Jesus’ compassion is what makes him stand out. He is a shining light on our world’s darkness because he is the only one who can be the salt—an essential preservative in the days before refrigeration as well as a condiment that enhances flavor—because he brings out the best in us in no matter how badly we have been spoiled by selfishness and sin.

This Sunday’s first reading from the prophet Isaiah (Is 58:7-10) admonishes us: "Share your bread with the hungry, shelter the oppressed and the homeless; clothe the naked when you see them, and do not turn your back on your own. Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your wound shall quickly be healed; your vindication shall go before you, and the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer, you shall cry for help, and he will say: Here I am!" (Is 58:7-9) This is the Golden Rule: We must treat others as we wish to be treated.

If we care about others, our own needs will be met. If we selfishly refuse to help our sisters and brothers in need, we become insipid, like salt that has lost its power. As Jesus says in this Sunday’s Gospel reading (Mt 5:13-16), "You are the salt of the earth. But if salt loses its taste, with what can it be seasoned? It is no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot" (Mt 5:13).

Our indifference causes us to become uncaring, no longer able to help others in their time of need. Jesus counters our indifference with his compassion, his ability to "suffer with" his brothers and sisters. Where we are paralyzed by apathy, Jesus never turns his back on his own. "You are the light of the world," Jesus tells us. "A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket; it is set on a lamp stand, where it gives light to all in the house. Just so, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father" (Mt 5:14-16).

In our indifference, we hide under cover of darkness. We fail to act as Jesus demands, and we deny the truth about ourselves. Instead of acting with care and compassion, we timidly hold back telling ourselves that someone else will do what we are too afraid to do: care for the least of these sisters and brothers.

In this Sunday’s second reading (1 Cor 2:1-5), St. Paul acknowledges that we cannot do what our Lord commands by our own power. It is the Holy Spirit who makes us bolder than we are by ourselves and who gives us the power we need to act on behalf of others. "I came to you in weakness and fear and much trembling" (1 Cor 2:3). St. Paul teaches us, "and my message and my proclamation were not with persuasive words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of Spirit and power, so that your faith might rest not on the wisdom of men but on the power of God" (1 Cor 2:3-5).

To overcome our indifference and to become salt and light for the world, we must surrender our egos and allow the grace of God to empower and enlighten us. Let’s pray for the "weakness, fear and trembling" that brings us to our knees and allows us to let the Holy Spirit move us to be not too proud, too frightened or indifferent to do: care deeply for our brothers and sisters in need.

Estamos llamados a ser sal y luz para los necesitados

"Si quitas de en medio de ti el yugo, el amenece con el dedo y el hablar inaudito, y a tu ofrecer a ayudar al hambrearto, y sacias el deseo del afligido, entonces surgirá tu luz, en las tinieblas, y tu oscuridad será como el mediodía" (cf. Is 58:9-10).

Las lecturas de este domingo, el quinto del Tiempo ordinario, nos desafían a superar lo que el papa Francisco denomina “el pecado de la indiferencia.”

Como seguidores de Jesucristo estamos llamados a ser la sal y la luz del mundo: sal para superar la apatía y luz para brillar en la oscuridad.

Una de las características que distingue a Jesús es la compasión. Nuestro Señor se preocupa por nosotros. Él jamás es indiferente al dolor de los demás y, a menudo, lo mueve la misericordia; Su corazón sufre por los pobres, por los afectados por enfermedades físicas y mentales, e incluso por los pecadores. Para Jesús no existe la apatía; se preocupa profundamente por todos y no es avaro con la compasión, sino que actúa: al alimentar al hambrearto, al curar al enfermo y al perdonar los pecados.

Tal vez podamos decir que la compasión de Jesús es lo que caracteriza. Es una luz que brilla en la oscuridad de nuestro mundo porque nos cuida y se preocupa enormemente. Es como la sal: un preservante esencial en la época en la que todavía no existía la refrigeración, así como el condimento que realza el sabor, porque él hace que nos incluamos independientemente de cuánto nos hayamos corrompido nuestro egoísmo y el pecado.

La primera lectura de este domingo del profeta Isaías (Is 58:7-10) nos exhorta: “No es para que compartas tu pan con el hambrearto, y reciba en casa a los pobres sin hambre; para que cuando veas al desamparado, y no te escondas de tu semejante; entonces tu luz despejará como la aurora, y tu recuperación brócalo con rapidez. Delante de ti irá tu justicia; y la gloria del Señor será tu retaguardia. Entonces invocaráis, y el Señor responderá; Clamaráis; y él dirá: Aquí estoy” (Is 58:7-9).

Nuestra indiferencia hace que nos convirtamos en personas indolentes, incapaces de ayudar a los demás cuando lo necesiten. Jesús contrarresta nuestra indiferencia con su compasión, su capacidad para “sufrir junto con” nuestros hermanos. Aún en los momentos en los que la apatía nos paraliza, Jesús jamás da la espalda.

“Ustedes son la luz del mundo” nos dice Jesús. “Una ciudad situada sobre un monte no se puede ocultar; ni se enciende una lámpara y se pone debajo de un almidón, sino sobre el candelero, y alumbra a todos los que están en la casa. Así brilla la luz de ustedes delante de los hombres, para que vean tus buenas acciones y glorifiquen a su Padre que está en los cielos.” (Mt 5:14-16).

En nuestra indiferencia nos ocultamos bajo un manto de oscuridad; pero si acudimos como egos, como el hombre que ha perdido su poder, como lo expresa Jesús en la lectura del Evangelio de este domingo (Mt 5:13-16): “Ustedes son la sal de la tierra; pero si la sal se ha vuelto insípida, ¿con qué se hará salada otra vez? Ya para nada sirve, sino para ser echada fuera y pisoteada por los hombres.” (Mt 5:13).

Nuestra indiferencia hace que no nos movamos, que nos veamos como una mayor incomprensibilidad; pero no porque nos neguemos a hacer lo que nos pide el Señor únicamente con la fuerza de nuestro propio egoísmo. El Espíritu Santo nos hace más audaces de lo que somos nosotros mismos y nos da el poder que necesitamos para actuar en nombre de los demás. “Estuve entre ustedes con debilidad y con temor y mucho temblor—nos enseña san Pablo—y mi mensaje y mi predicación no fueron con palabras persuasivas de sabiduría, sino con demostración del Espíritu y de poder, para que la fe de ustedes no se desanime en la sabiduría de los hombres, sino en el poder de Dios” (1 Cor 2:3-5).

Para superar nuestra indiferencia y a convertirnos en sal y luz del mundo, debemos abandonar el ego y permitir que la gracia de Dios nos empodere y nos ilumine. Recemos por la “debilidad, el temor y el temblor” que nos obliga a ponernos de rodillas y a humillarnos, y al Espíritu Santo haga aquello nuestro ego, nuestro miedo o nuestra indiferencia nos impide hacer: cuidar y preocuparnos profundamente por nuestros hermanos necesitados. †
February 11

February 11-18
Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, 5333 E. Washington St., Indianapolis. Festival of Prayer. Tues. 6 p.m. Mass and a talk about Our Lady of Lourdes and anointing of the sick. Wed. 3 p.m. rosary walk. Thurs. 6 p.m. Mass with eucharistic adoration and benediction. Fri. 6 p.m. Mass with SainteMarie’s Day blessing for couples. Sat. 5 p.m. Mass followed by refreshments. Sun. 11:30 a.m. rosary and faith using guided imagery. Mon. 7 p.m. Lectio Divina presentation. Tues. 5:45 p.m. rosary followed by Mass for the feast of St. Bernadette. 7 p.m. sacred music concert. Information: 317-356-7291.

February 13 – 21

February 14-16
St. Rita Parish, 1723 S. Theodore Guérin Catholic Church, 212 Washington St., North Vernon. Adoption: Let’s Talk About It,” sponsored by Jennings County Pro-Life, viewing of the movie I Lived on Parker Ave, panel discussion, opportunity for questions with adoption agencies, lawyers, who have adopted and mothers who have chosen adoption. 6 p.m. dinner, free. Information: 812-346-3614, prciniessprotonline@gmail.com.

February 17

February 14-17
Providence Spirituality and Conference Center,福ey Room, 1 Sisters of Providence, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. St. Mary-of-the-Woods. Used Book Sale sponsored by Linden Leaf Gifts. 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. books not pre-priced, donations accepted. Information: Ryan Soreby, 866-996-2947, tsoreby@spmw.org.

February 19

February 18
St. Mary Parish Center, 212 Washington St., North Vernon. Adoption: Let’s Talk About It,” sponsored by Jennings County Pro-Life, viewing of the movie I Lived on Parker Ave, panel discussion, opportunity for questions with adoption agencies, lawyers, who have adopted and mothers who have chosen adoption. 6 p.m. dinner, free. Information: 812-346-3614, prciniessprotonline@gmail.com.

February 19
Our Lady of Peace Cemetery and Mausoleum, 9001 Havercrook Road, Indianapolis. Mass, 2 p.m. Information: 317-574-8898 or www.catholiccemeteries.cc.

February 22
East Central High School Performing Arts Center, 1 Trojan Road A, St. Leon. E6 Catholic Men’s Conference: “Putting on the Armor of God.” 8 a.m. – 4 p.m., speakers, adoration, confession, Mass, ages 26 and older $40 for pre-registration or $55 for walk-ins, ages 16-25 $25 for pre-registration or $30 for walk-ins, clergy and religious free, includes lunch and materials, free parking. Information and registration: www.efatholicministriesconference.com.

February 23

February 20 – March 26
Archbishop Edward J. Burke Catholic Center, Indianapolis. Divorce and Beyond Support Group, six Thursdays (Feb. 27, March 5, 12, 19, and 26), facilitated by Amy Frederick, 7-9 p.m., scholarships available. Registration: www.archindy.org/archievents/catholicministry/registration के डिग्री परिचय दिवस के लिए हिन्दी में विभिन्न स्थलों की यात्रा के लिए तीसरे सीकर्स पार्किंग, 317-592-4006.

February 23
SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, 1347 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. Rite of Election.

February 26
E6 Catholic Men’s Conference: “Putting on the Armor of God.” 8 a.m. – 4 p.m., speakers, adoration, confession, Mass, ages 26 and older $40 for pre-registration or $55 for walk-ins, ages 16-25 $25 for pre-registration or $30 for walk-ins, clergy and religious free, includes lunch and materials, free parking. Information and registration: www.efatholicministriesconference.com.

February 24
Mount Saint Francis Center for Spirituality, Copertino Room, 101 St. Francis Road, Mount St. Francis. Mondays at the Mount Scripture Study, 10:30 a.m. and 7 p.m., registration required, free will offering. Information: www.mountscripturessanctuary.org. 812-923-8017.

February 26
Benedict Inn Retreat Center Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Breck Grove. From the Desert to the Wellsprings of Life with Jesus, Benedictine Sister Susan Marie Landrith. Friday, 10 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., $50 includes lunch. Registration: www.benedictinn.org/retreat- programs. Information: Benedictine@sisterbonin.org, 317-748-7581.

“Promise: Sacramental Marriage in Service to the Village,” is the theme of a one-day retreat of Black Catholic couples at the Emmanuel Center of St. Monica Parish, 6131 N. Michigan Road, in Indianapolis. Doors open at 8 a.m. and the program begins at 9 a.m. The retreat ends at 5 p.m. Mass with a renewal of marriage commitment. Sponsored by the archdiocesan Black Catholic Ministry, the retreat will be facilitated by Andrew and Terry Lyke, founders of the Arusi Network, Inc. that educates African-Americans on the skills and benefits of marriage. The registration fee is $25 per couple. For more information or to register, call 317-236-1483.

February 24
St. Bartholomew Church, 1306 27th St., Columbus: “Christus Vivit”: Implications of Pope Francis’ ‘Living Hope,’ by Paul Jarzembowski, author and USCCB assistant director for vocations, fatherhood, family life and youth presenting, co-sponsored by several archdiocesan offices for youth ministers, directors of religious education and campus ministers. Information: 317-592-4006.

February 28
St. Matthew School Gymnasium, 4100 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. Fish Fry, “all-you-can-eat” breaded fish dinners. $8 per person; breaded pork, chicken, cheese pizza, clam chowder, fettuccine Alfredo, macaroni and cheese available ala carte, 5-7:30 p.m. Information: 317-257-4297, spsministry@spmw.org.
Indian Catholic Women’s Conference for March 21 in Indy

BUFFALO priest needs liver transplant; will a donor show up in time?

Father Pio Francesco Mandato, F.M.H.J., pastor of St. Luke the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis, and his parents came to the United States from Pietrelcina, Italy, the same town as St. Pio, also known as Padre Pio, the famous 20th-century stigmatist priest. Father Pio knew the saint and received his first holy Communion from him. Father Pio is a member of the Franciscan Missionary Hermits of St. Joseph and is in Cincinnati, Pennsylvania. During the conference, Father Pio will offer individual blessings with a glow of St. Pio.

Bauer has been a teacher and speaker for St. Paul Seminary in Minnesota, National Institute of Catholic Schools, and the John Bosco Conference for catechetical and religious educators in Steubenville, Ohio. He has traveled the country serving as a retreat master and trainer for both youth and adult groups alike. He is an expert on the topic of the dignity of the human person and living holiness in today’s culture.

Catholic singer-songwriter and inspirational speaker Annie Karto hopes to see the Flame of Father Pio burn through the power of God’s great gift of music. Given a penance 27 years ago to spread the message of Divine Mercy, Karto combines her songs with her testimony of the healing mercy of God. Msgr. Schaedel has ministered in central and southern Indiana for 38 years. During that time, he has served as a teacher, associate pastor, moderator of the curia, vicar for religious, vicar general, and director of various diocesan offices, including vocations, pro-life, mission, and the Society for the Propagation of the Faith. He is known for his humor and for his deep devotion to Christ and the Church.

Margaret Sanger when the organization’s three-fold mission, as laid out by Planned Parenthood so it can fulfill its original mission of promoting the rights of parents over and undermining the moral authority of marriage; eugenically using birth control as an instrument of social change, not health care.

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Father John Mack, a priest of the Diocese of Buffalo, N.Y., needs a liver transplant from a living donor.

Living donors have been judged to be better donors than cadavers. The recipient receives a portion of the healthy donor’s liver (more than half of it), and typically the organ will grow back to normal size in both the recipient and the donor within several weeks. Relatives make the best donors of all.

But Father Mack, being celibate, has no children. He also is an only child.

Research indicates the best donors are between the ages of 18 and 60. And all of the priest’s cousins are older than he—and he is in his 60s.

Nobody knows, but Father Mack, who has been living with liver disease for the past five years and whose manifestations really knocked him for a loop 18 months ago—could be one of the 20 percent to 25 percent of people waiting for a transplant who die before getting one.

BUFFALO priest needs liver transplant; will a donor show up in time?

Father Mack, in a Jan. 22 telephone interview with Catholic News Service (CNS) from Christ’s Kingdom Community near Buffalo in East Aurora, N.Y., where he teaches, said his prayer life changed when he faced his health worsened in mid-2018.

“Every time I would have an upper endoscopy and have conversations, I would say an Our Father and kind of get myself calmed down,” he said. “But in the midst of all of this, I said a prayer that seems for me that makes it OK is, ‘This is God’s will. This is God’s will. This is going to happen.’"

Despite all of this seemingly bad news, “the miracles keep happening,” he said. Even though Father Mack has nonalcoholic cirrhosis of the liver—second largest disease of people going in for transplants. I was never a drinker,” he said. “I was beginning to look like a Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade balloon,” Father Mack added.

Then his weight went from 240 to 165 in a hurry; he’s now at 190 pounds. "People looked at me that Christmas, and they were frightened," he said.

Then his first symptoms surfaced, "I learned to live with the chronic illness, and I was pretty much back to normal in terms of working," he recalled. "I had to teach at the seminary, and help out at a nearby parish on weekends. "I used to be able to pack in 12-, 16-hour days. I can’t do that anymore.”

"I would be around 220, 225 [pounds], but when I started gaining over the summer [of 2018] I didn’t realize that."

"It goes so drastic at one point that there were a couple of months I couldn’t [celebrate] Mass in public at all. I couldn’t be trusted. I ran out of steam,” said Father Mack.

“I stepped away from the classroom, I stepped away from the parish. I missed that. In the seminary, I barely walk down the hall. Just to walk to the chapel was nearly impossible. It was after Thanksgiving in 2018 that I could walk down the chapel and vest and come to Mass [for the first time in months]."

A priest since 1985, his pastoral ministry has included several tours as a military chaplain, with deployments to Colombia, Guantanamo Bay in Cuba, Pakistan and Qatar. He’s also a book author and a fourth-degree Knight of Columbus.

Without discussing the particulars of Father Mack’s case, Dr. Mark Levstik, medical director of transplant hepatology for the UR Medicine Transplant program at the University of Rochester Medical Center in New York, said: “The organ shortage is one of the biggest struggles we face. That’s because liver transplantation has become so successful. More than 90 percent of people will survive liver transplantation and do well.”

At the University of Rochester, he added, their success rate has risen to 95 percent.

“The fortunate thing is this is such a good procedure. The difficulty is finding very qualified surgical, medical, multidisciplinary teams that can do it,” Levstik said.

(To learn more about Father Mack, visit his website, www.liverformack.com)†
COUPLE 
continued from page 1
so many small stories like that. We knew God was guiding us.”

That’s just one of the many memorable snapshots that will stay with the couple—memories they have stored with the same care that they packed everything they needed for their 27-month journey into one backpack each.

‘A way of being thankful for all you have’

As they prepared for their trip from February 2017 to May of 2019, Matt and Nikki each stuffed their backpacks with their laptops, a bathing suit, three sets of clothes, a week’s worth of underwear and three pairs of shoes. Matt’s shoes took a considerable amount of space since the former basketball player at the University of North Carolina-Greensboro wears a size 15. Still, he made sure to pack one other item that he considered essential for the trip.

“As a good Catholic, I downloaded the readings in English on my Kindle app before we left,” Matt says as he and Nikki sit at a table in their Indianapolis home. “I knew we would go to all these different churches and they sometimes wouldn’t speak our language. We went to hundreds of churches and attended Mass many, many times. Even though they weren’t speaking our language, you’d still get a great vibe in the scenario from just being around the people.”

That vibe especially came alive when they spent Holy Week in 2017 in Ayacucho, Peru. People from across that country and around the world pack the city which marks the sacred week with fairs, dancing in the streets, elaborate religious processions and re-enactments, and the women of the city wearing black on Good Friday. A Mass in the cathedral on Easter Sunday morning ends with more than 200 men carrying a huge representation of Christ’s resurrection into the streets.

“It was just fantastic,” Matt says. “We’re extremely blessed people,” Matt says. “Going to Mass was a way of being thankful for all you have and asking for guidance in the week ahead. It was also a huge part of the travel experience. Going to churches is a way to experience the locals and get something authentic.”

Following the sun and a dream

In planning the trip, Matt and Nikki focused on “traveling with the sun.” So their direction always led them toward warm weather and as many beaches as possible as they started in South America, spent two summers in Europe, lived 2 1/2 months in India, and experienced three months in South Africa, six weeks in Japan and six months in Southeast Asia before finishing their trip with a tour of Australia, Fiji and New Zealand.

As they followed the sun, they also followed one of Nikki’s lifelong dreams—to visit the shrine of Our Lady of Fatima in Portugal. As a small child growing up in Chicago, she became mesmerized watching the 1952 movie, The Miracle of Our Lady of Fatima.

“It was on TV, and I became so fascinated with these three shepherd children who saw the vision of Mary,” Nikki says with a glowing smile. “I thought that would happen to me. I would run in the back field of our house and kneel down and shout to the heavens—to make Mary talk to me. For me, it was always a place I wanted to go.”

“We held the whole tour, and it was everything I hoped it would be,” she says. “The cathedral was phenomenal. We lit candles for everyone in our families. There were pilgrims from all over the world there. People were on their bare knees crawling toward the shrine. It was all really moving to me.”

They shared that same reaction when they followed in the footsteps of St. Thomas in India.

“It kind of shook my soul”

The shrine of St. Thomas in Malaya, in India, commemorates the evangelization efforts of one of Christ’s original Apostles.

“As the story goes, after Jesus’ death, a lot of the disciples went west while St. Thomas went east to India,” Matt notes. During his second trip there, according to the local church, some people threatened the life of St. Thomas so he fled up a hill. There, while he was praying, the Blessed Mother appeared to him, assuring him he would be successful in his efforts to lead people in the area to Christ.

“At the top of the hill where St. Thomas fled, there is a huge golden cross erected in the middle of nowhere,” Nikki says.

Matt adds, “Here’s what’s awesome. As you go up the hill, you see these massive crosses that have been left there by people who have carried them up this dirt hill.”

“As Nikki and I were making the trek up there—it’s not easy—it started to rain near the top. We looked at each other. ‘Do we want to do this?’ We kept going. When we got to the top, there was the oldest shrine there. It’s kind of shook my soul. I felt like God was applauding our efforts.”

The next day, the couple stopped at a nearby Catholic orphanage where they brought toiletries, school supplies, basketballs, soccer balls and cricket equipment for the boys who called the place home.

“As the priest came out, he was talking to me,” Matt says. “I said, ‘Father, do you mind if I throw some of the sporting equipment out there so they can see it?’ There are 55 teenage boys at the orphanage. They came flying out the doors. They played for hours until the rains came.

“I had the chance to interact with them, teach them some lessons and just hang out with them. Not a single child had shoes. Nikki and I were reflecting on that later. The kids never felt they were without. They were so happy.”

“It could make me cry”

While the journey took them deeper into the traditions of the Catholic faith around the world, it also gave them a deeper appreciation for the way other people live—and die—for their faith. “We had the chance to visit the Auschwitz concentration camp,” Matt says, referring to the site in Poland where more than 1 million Jewish people were killed by the Nazis during World War II. “It will move you in a way to understand the evil that’s out there. It’s sad, but I think it’s something we should understand. We had the chance to understand other faiths around the world as well. The Buddhist people were the kindest and the warmest as we went through Asia. We were in the countryside of Vietnam looking at this beautiful Buddhist temple during the Chinese New Year and the head monk came out and invited us to dinner. He wanted to tell us more about him and understand more about us and tell us about his faith.”

They had similar experiences with people who practice the Shinto religion in Japan and Hinduism in India. In fact, they took part in three weddings in India through connections they had made with natives of that country in the United States.

“For me, it’s just the reiteration that humans are great people,” Matt says. “We got to experience 27 months of kindness around the world. People are so welcoming and kind no matter what religion and faith you are.”

Nikki adds, “People with so little have given us so much. It was to the point where it could make me cry. We met people who had just food and the clothes on their backs, and they were breaking their best for our best. All they want to do is show you their kindness. They just want to spend time with you and create bonds and friendships with you.”

“The blessings that come our way”

In looking back on their journey, Matt and Nikki say it reflects their personal approach to life of emphasizing “experiences over things.”

They saved extensively before they made the trip and tried to cut expenses along the way, including house-sitting for two cats in exchange for housing in Switzerland, and house-sitting for a dog in exchange for housing in Singapore.

The journey also made their marriage of 14 years a better and closer one, they say. And they have no regrets that they gave up some prime earning years to take the journey—with Matt being a sales executive at the time and Nikki being a pharmacist.

“We worked hard and in each other and in God—to know there was something out there that was pulling us. We knew the challenge of the journey would give us a unique opportunity to learn new skills and develop ourselves in a different way.”

They have continued that approach since returning to Indianapolis. Matt recently attended a Vietnamese Mass at St. Joseph Parish in Indianapolis, bringing his Kindle app with the readings in English with him.

The smiles he shared with the members of the Vietnamese congregation that Sunday reminded him of the life-changing experiences he and Nikki had on the journey—and the life-changing connections that can be made at home.

“We saw the beauty of the people around the world, but we also understood how lucky we are to live in this country and the blessings that come our way,” Matt says. “You’d be surprised what you can learn from people and the profound impact they can have on you as well.”

Matt and Nikki Javit serve the grandeur of Machu Picchu in Peru, one of their top “bucket list” destinations as they traveled across the globe. (Submitted photo)

Matt and Nikki Javit wear traditional Indian clothing as they participate in the wedding of a friend during their time in India—an experience that reflected their desire to learn more about other cultures and faiths during their 27-month journey around the world. (Submitted photo)
An elderly woman participates in the 47th annual March for Life in Washington on Jan. 24. Pope Francis told Catholic seniors and pastoral workers from around the world on Jan. 31 that old age “is not a disease, it’s a privilege,” and Catholic dioceses and parishes miss a huge and growing resource if they ignore their senior members. (CNS photo/Tyler Orsburn)
Vocations panel is among Catholic Schools Week activities

By Sean Gallagher

Catholic Schools Week is a time each year to celebrate the gifts of the Catholic schools in forming young people in body, mind and spirit with the ultimate goal of each of them becoming saints.

An integral part of the growth in holiness for Catholic school students is for them to begin discovering their God-given vocations.

About 100 students in Catholic schools across central and southern Indiana gathered on Jan. 29 to learn about vocations to the priesthood and religious life during a panel discussion on the topic at the Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center in Indianapolis.

The event took place after a Catholic Schools Week Mass celebrated in SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis.

It was co-sponsored by the archdiocesan Office of Catholic Schools and Office of Priestly and Religious Vocations.

Fathers and religious vocations director, led the panel discussion.

“We want to celebrate Catholic Schools Week because of its role in the holistic education of students in our schools,” Father Keucher is assisted in his service as vocations director by five priests serving as associate vocation directors in parishes across central and southern Indiana.

“We want to encourage young people to consider the call to priesthood and/or religious life,” Archbishop Thompson said afterward. “The vocation panel following the Catholic Schools Week Mass is but one innovation toward that goal. The young people seemed to be very attentive, respectful and engaged.

It is one way of planting seeds, leaving the growth and fruit of such endeavors to the grace of the Holy Spirit.”

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“Our mother Mary, to give you that grace to listen to the ways of prayer to help their young listeners be open to the name of Jesus Christ.”

“A graded school of a religious sister, but that thought of that possible vocation took a back seat as she grew older.

Sister Nicolette recalled how she had thought in grade school about becoming a religious sister, but that thought of that possible vocation took a back seat as she grew older.

Sister Loretto suggested the rosary.

Among other prayers, Sister Loretto suggested the rosary.

“I'm still giving it a try, and I love it. I'm very happy to be a Benedictine sister.”

At the end of the event, each of the panelists suggested ways for prayer to help their young listeners be open to God’s vocation for them.

Among other prayers, Sister Loretto suggested the rosary.

“If you can’t say a whole rosary, say a little bit of it to our mother Mary, to give you that grace to listen to the Holy Spirit,” she said.

Dufresne suggested eucharistic adoration because he had heard God’s call to the priesthood while praying before the Blessed Sacrament.

“I really recommend eucharistic adoration—any time that you can spend with Jesus, whether he’s in a tabernacle or exposed on an altar in a monstrance,” he said.

“That’s what led me to my vocation.”

Sister Nicolette spoke of an ancient form of prayer called “lectio divina” (“sacred reading”) in which passages from the Scriptures are read slowly and prayerfully.

“When we focus on the Scriptures, the word of God, we’ll have a greater idea of what God is calling us to do,” she said.

“It’s a two-way street with God. Make sure you have a relationship with God that is two way, not just speaking to God when you need something or there’s a test you forgot to study for.”

Cooper Thomas, a student at St. Joseph School in Shelbyville, enjoyed the panel discussion.

“It was inspiring, really,” he said. “They gave a piece of what they learned as they were growing up, wanting to become a priest or nun. If I ever wanted to be a priest, I could ask my pastor or the archbishop what to do.”

Biannual grants awarded to parishes, schools and archdiocesan agencies

Criterion staff report

The Archdiocesan Combined Grants awarded for the first half of the 2019-20 fiscal year total more than $320,300.

The grants, awarded twice a year, are made available through the St. Francis Xavier Home Mission Endowment Fund, the Growth and Expansion Endowment Fund and the James P. Scott Endowment Fund. These grants were made possible through the generous support of archdiocesan parishioners, who set up the endowments.

The grant process is jointly administered by the archdiocesan Finance Office and the Office of Stewardship and Development.

Grant applications are due to the archdiocese for the two grant allocation periods each year by April 30 for Fall/Winter and Oct. 31 for Fall/Winter.

The Fall/Winter grants awarded for fiscal year 2019-2020 are as follows:

• Holy Angels Parish, Indianapolis; Growth and Expansion Fund; $10,000 for matching gift for building capital campaign.

• Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ Parish, Indianapolis; James P. Scott Fund; $10,000 for school lighting project.

• Lady of the Rosary Parish, Indianapolis; Home Mission Fund; $12,500 for exterior church door repairs.

• St. Joan of Arc Parish, Indianapolis; Home Mission Fund; $8,000 for nutrition program.

• St. Michael-St. Gabriel School, Indianapolis; Home Mission Fund; $7,500 for safety and security upgrades.

• St. Roch Parish, Indianapolis; James P. Scott Fund; $4,132 for security projects for the school.

• St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception Parish, Aurora; Home Mission Fund; $2,500 for new phone system.

• St. Vincent de Paul Parish; Home Mission Fund; $5,972 to replace HVAC in school kitchen.

• St. Michael Parish, Brookville; James P. Scott Fund; $10,000 to replace windows in office building.

• St. Joseph Parish, Corydon; Growth and Expansion Fund; $40,000 for school safety projects.

• St. Michael Parish, Greenfield; James P. Scott Fund; $11,000 for new phone system.

• St. Mary Parish, Lapel; James P. Scott Fund; $25,000 for stained-glass window repair.

• St. Lawrence Parish, Bloomington; Growth and Expansion Fund; $10,000 for STEAM Center for school.

• Prince of Peace Catholic School, Madison; James P. Scott Fund; $18,700 for roof and gutter replacement.

• Immaculate Conception Parish, Millersville; Home Mission Fund; $5,000 for roof/steeples repairs.

• St. Mary Parish, North Vernon; Home Mission Fund; $25,000 for parish center roof project.

• St. Susanna Parish, Plainfield; Growth and Expansion Fund; $15,362 for two classroom sets of Chromebooks.

• St. Patrick Parish, Salem; Home Mission Fund; $30,000 for sanctuary roof project.

• Cardinal Crunch—Terr Hauss, James P. Scott Fund; $11,200 for door replacement for Ryes Youth Center.

• Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, Indianapolis; James P. Scott Fund; $11,000 for replacing roofs on homes.

• St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities, New Albany; James P. Scott; $19,630 for HAVC replacement.

• Cardinal Ritter Jr./Sr. High School, Home Mission Fund; $11,180 for security upgrades.

• Father Thomas Secinnia Memorial High School; Growth and Expansion Fund; $11,500 for replacement of cafeteria serving line.

(For information on how to apply for the grants, go to www.archindy.org/finance/grant.html, or contact Stacy Harris in the Finance Office at stacyharris@archindy.org, or by phone at 317-236-1533 or 800-382-9836, ext. 1548.)
Fortitude strengthens believers to persevere in faith until death

By Maureen Pratt

When wondering how we will get through a crisis, when we are faced with decisions that challenge our beliefs, when heaven seems far away, the Holy Spirit provides profound support, a light for our dark path, through the gift of fortitude.

One of the most all-encompassing of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, fortitude supports us in living out the other six gifts (wisdom, understanding, knowledge, counsel, piety and fear of the Lord) and making our way faithfully through our earthly life to blessed eternity with God.

The gift of fortitude is sometimes confused with the moral virtue by the same name, but it is distinct in origin and scope. The gift of fortitude is bestowed on us by God through the Holy Spirit at our baptism and strengthened in confirmation. By contrast, the moral virtue of fortitude is “acquired by human effort,” says the Catechism of the Catholic Church, and we practice it through our decisions and actions (#1804).

The gift of fortitude equips us with a never-depleted reservoir of God-given perseverance to live out our faith to the last breath, carrying us to heaven. The human, moral virtue of fortitude is developed each time we decide to do the right thing, approach a life challenge with perseverance to live out our faith to the last breath, carrying us to heaven.

In Scripture, the greatest example of fortitude—gift and virtue—is seen in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Whether facing physical deprivation and temptation (Mt 4:1-11), strong and powerful criticism (Mk 12:1-8) or betrayal and death on the cross (Mk 14), Jesus resisted temptation, endured criticism and forged ahead to the cross despite terrible pain. He was sustained by the gift of fortitude, God-given endurance to see the journey through to its glorious end.

Each decision we make to do good builds within us the virtue of fortitude, which is supported by the gift of fortitude, and enables us to live the other gifts of the Holy Spirit. Here, too, Jesus sets the example. The gifts of knowledge and fear of God (humility) shine in an early incident in Jesus’ life. As a child of 12 years old, he left his family to speak with and listen to scholars of the Mosaic law in the Temple (Lk 2:41-52). But rather than start his ministry at that age, he returned home with Mary and Joseph when they came to find him. There, he “advanced in wisdom and age and favor before God and man” (Lk 2:52).

The gifts of knowledge and wisdom are practiced through a consistent commitment to grow in faith, and they are focused on faith through the gift of fortitude.

While carrying out his ministry, Jesus went off by himself to pray (Lk 4:42, 5:15-16), an act of piety and understanding of what he needed to do for the longevity of his ministry that must have been difficult as demand for his teaching and miracles increased.

The gift of fortitude, present in Jesus, is also available to us. When we feel that our activities are pulling us from our spiritual center, we too can find the understanding and strength we need to go off, reflect and refresh so that we are able to continue our heavenly journey.

Jesus’ unswerving call to “love one another” and his love for outcasts show how the gift of fortitude keeps the spiritual and ministerial gaze in the right—the good—place no matter the distractions posed by society or those close to us (Jn 13:34).

Through acts of Christ-like kindness and compassion, we benefit from the gift of fortitude to show society how to live by the other gifts of the Holy Spirit. For example, a religious sister leads prayer for displaced Iraqi Christians who fled Islamic State militants in Mosul in 2014 at a school acting as a refugee camp in Irbil, Iraq. The gift of fortitude, given by God at baptism and strengthened in confirmation, helps believers persevere in faith in difficult circumstances until death.

A religious sister leads prayer for displaced Iraqi Christians who fled Islamic State militants in Mosul in 2014 at a school acting as a refugee camp in Irbil, Iraq. The gift of fortitude, given by God at baptism and strengthened in confirmation, helps believers persevere in faith in difficult circumstances until death. (CNS photo/Shadiq Jabban, Reuters)

A fourth-century image of St. Paul the Apostle is seen on the walls of the Santa Thesia catacomb beneath Rome. Writing to the Corinthians about an ongoing affliction, the Apostle Paul writes: “Three times, I begged the Lord about this, that it might leave me, but he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness’” (2 Cor 12:8-9). (CNS photo/Pontifical Commission for Sacred Archaeology, Reuters)

The crucified Christ is depicted in a mosaic at El Santuario de Chimayo in Chimayo, N.M. Christ’s enduring of his passion and death are the ultimate example for believers of the divine gift of fortitude to endure in faith through trials. (CNS photo/Shawn V. Micallef)


(Maureen Pratt’s website is www.maureenpratt.com)
Setting goals of medical care and who speaks for you

(This week, we begin a new quarterly column titled “A Journey of Dignity.” It is a collaboration of the Office of Life
Health and Dignity,Ascension St. Vincent’s and Franciscan Health.)

The Catholic Church affirms that we are created in “imago Dei,” the likeness and likeness of God. Consequently, we are
are called to honor the intrinsic and redemptive stewardship over the great gift that is our very life.

But just what does “prudent stewardship” actually mean? What does it look like?

One clear aspect is care of life itself—
our body and its health. But here things
tend to get fuzzy. Due to the significant
developments of medical science over the
past century, modern medicine can cause many to wonder: Do I have to do everything possible to prolong my life?
What does the Church actually teach?
We might summarize one of the principles of the Church teaching on care for one’s life this way: avoid the opposite extremes of being neglectful and overzealous. In other words, we should not neglect care for ourselves, but we are not
obligated to extend our life at all costs. The real
thing for us is the health of our body.

However, if these goods are well-
ordered, they should be integrated. Care
for the body should be given in the same
context as the other needs of the spiritual
life. Integration and proper ordering of the
physical and spiritual in a well-integrated
ultimate goal that we should strive for as
prudent stewards of our lives.

Consequently, our goals are incredibly
significant.

Consider an example: I am 35 with a
wife and three young children. My goal
would be to work hard for my family and
health. To see our children attend Catholic
elementary, high school and college so they
can be well educated and obtain meaningful work. I want to see them get married or engaged, to whichever path God calls them.

But let’s say I am diagnosed with a significant disease, like stage 4 pancreatic cancer, which is exceedingly aggressive. My goals would change as my life expectancy and with each clinical change. The importance of working would diminish. I would only want medical interventions that would bring comfort and relieve the symptoms.

I would want to focus on meaningful time
to live, in the company of my loved ones, and occupation would be reconciling myself with God in preparation for a good and great heaven.

Let’s say it’s something less drastic,
like congestive heart failure. This is still a
severe condition, life-limiting in that with a
good medical plan and healthy living, it may be reasonable to think that I will still achieve my life goals. Of
course, things change as the disease progresses. At such times, I would need to consider whether
they could still be achieved or whether I need to change them. I would
need to consider whether I thought the medical interventions that physicians
were offering would be worth it. Are
they reasonably beneficial to me? Or are
eyes excessively burdensome and disproportionate to the good they could
achieve?

In both scenarios, we might summarize
my goal: I want to maximize the quality
of life.

For the Journey

Elliot Bedford

The Church’s season of Ordinary Time

How ordinary is “Ordinary Time”?

As it turns out, not very, if you think of it as ordinary ho-hum and routine. Instead, engaging the writer during Advent, it’s the time when we begin our journey to the crowded stable to the empty tomb!” That’s an extraordinary hike.

Did you ever wonder why we call this season, the one that lasts longest in the Church and doesn’t include Lent, Advent, Christmas or Easter, “ordinary”?

It has nothing to do with a lack of bells and whistles, or a boring sameness. Instead, the term stems from the Latin “ordo,” the root of our English words order, orderly, or ordination. From here the Church numbers each Sunday in Ordinary Time is numbered. So, the explanation is fairly
hyphenated. And the readings from Ordinary Time invite us to deeply experience the life of Christ.

Yes, when we proclaim Jesus disfigured and unloved, a mercy
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The Sunday Readings

Sunday, February 9, 2020

- Isaiah 58:7-10
- 1 Corinthians 2:1-5
- Matthew 5:13-16

The Book of Isaiah's third section is the source of this weekend's first reading. Scholars believe that this section was written perhaps in Jerusalem for the Hebrew remnant that had returned from Babylon.

This assumption puts the third section of Isaiah at a date after the epic Babylonian captivity, 597-59 B.C., give or take, which ended when the Persian ruler Cyrus overtook Babylon. He allowed the Jews to return to their homeland after an absence of four generations. Probably few had ever seen their homeland.

Nevertheless, release from Babylon brought utter exhilaration to the exiles. The opportunity, at last, was the sweet. When the exiles reached their ancestral home, they found deprivation and want, conditions worse than those that they had experienced in Babylon.

In this section of the Book of Isaiah, the prophet refutes God's goodness, but he also called upon the people to provide for those in need. Then they would experience the reward of returning home and the fullness of God's promise to give them life and peace.

St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians provides the second reading. Paul addressed this epistle to Christians living in Corinth, then one of the major cities of the Roman Empire. Rich, decadent and sophisticated, Corinth was a center of culture and vice at the time.

Nearby was Athens, the very symbol of wisdom and logic. Paul had preached in Athens with little success.

In his epistles, he forever answered skeptics who asked if the Christian Gospel had any meaning. After all, the Gospel ran counter to every conventional pattern of thought of the time. Finally, and most importantly, to so many, the founder of Christianity, Jesus of Nazareth, had been executed as a common criminal and traitor to the Roman Empire.

In response, Paul insisted that he relied not on some more dependable than human reasoning, namely the Holy Spirit. He spoke not with words of "human wisdom" (1 Cor 2:5).

St. Matthew's Gospel furnishes the last reading, a collection of two brief statements by Jesus given in clear imagery for the audience.

First, Jesus told the disciples that they were the "salt of the Earth" (Mt 5:13). Next, the Lord admonished followers to be "the light of the world" (Mt 5:14).

Salt and light are hardly unknown in conversation today, but in ancient times, they had a symbolism greater than that pertaining now.

At the time of Jesus, salt was precious. Roman soldiers were paid in salt. ("He is not worth his salt.") The word "salary" derives from this practice. Salt could be traded. Dust or sand usually mixed with salt. The less dust and sand, the better the salt.

Today, people are accustomed to bright light at night. Then, artificial light was weak. Since night was threatening, light had a very special value. It enabled security and freedom.

Jesus urged disciples to uplift earthly society by being "salt" and "light."

Reflection

Gently but deliberately, the Church is guiding us onward from its introduction of Jesus of Nazareth as son of the human Mary, and Son of God. And Redeemer of the sinful human race, as given at Christmas, Epiphany and the Feast of the Lord's Baptism. It is challenging us to respond to Jesus.

These readings are clear. Discipleship is no mere lip service. It is the actual and intentional imitation of Christ in our daily lives.

Matthew insists that believers have a strength upon which to draw as they illuminate the world, a strength issuing from the grace of their faith. As disciples, they do not stumble through darkness. They are pure salt, not contaminated by the dross of sin.

It is not automatic. Christians must allow the light of Christ to guide them. They must rid themselves of impurities with the help of God's mercy. This is difficult. They must fortify their Christian resolution. Such is discipleship.

Question Corner/

Fr. Kenneth Doyle

Beatification cause of French priest on hold because of anti-Semitic writings

Q: I know that for some years the Vatican has been studying the cause for sainthood of the French priest Father Leon Dehon. Will Vatican and Pope Francis canonize him in spite of that priest's anti-Semitic writings? (Oregon)

A: Father Dehon, a teenager seated near me who was chewing gum during the Mass. I was not overly alarmed because I have seen other people chew as they chew at Mass. But I was appalled when I watched that young man parade forward to receive holy Communion while still chewing his gum. Should the priest have refused to give him Communion? (Oregon)

A: Pope Benedict XVI was elected, he suspended the beatification process and set up a commission to conduct further studies of Father Dehon's writings. Concern had been expressed—particularly by the archbishop of Paris at the time, Cardinal Jean-Marie Lustiger—about the priest’s anti-Semitic rhetoric. (In his 1898 Social Catechism, Father Dehon wrote that Jewish people “willingly favor all the enemies of the Church.”)

Soon after Pope Benedict ordered the hold, Father Dehon’s own religious order’s publication Il Regno acknowledged in an editorial that Father Dehon’s writings had at times reflected the “widespread prejudices of the Catholic Church of the 19th century” regarding Jewish people.

In 2015, in off-the-cuff remarks while meeting in Rome with priests of Father Dehon’s congregation, Pope Francis made reference to “the almost-blessed Dehon.” Since that time, we have seen no further information on Father Dehon’s cause for sainthood—which makes me think the matter is still on hold.

Speaking to an Italian journal in 2015, Father Jose Carlos Brion, a Spanish priest who had helped oversee Father Dehon’s cause, said: “Of course I would like to see Leon Dehon beatified, but not at the cost of our friendship with the Jewish people.”

A: At a recent Mass I attended, I noticed a teenager seated near me who was chewing gum during the Mass. I was not overly alarmed because I have seen other people chew as they chew at Mass. But I was appalled when I watched that young man parade forward to receive holy Communion while still chewing his gum. Should the priest have refused to give him Communion? (Oregon)

A: Canon law (#914.9) tells Catholics that they are to abstain from all food and drink (with the exception of water or medicine) for at least one hour before receiving holy Communion. The reason, of course, is to remind us how special the Eucharist is, nourishing us for life eternal. Nowhere, however, does canon law define precisely what constitutes food and what does not.

Some, I suppose, might argue that since sugar-free gum has no nutritional value, it does not qualify. But I would tend to differ; in my mind, gum of any kind crosses the line for preparation to receive holy Communion and should be avoided.

As to your question, though, I would not, as a priest, refuse to give the young man holy Communion. Why not instead seek him out after Mass and chat with him as to the appropriateness of chewing gum before receiving Communion? And if the problem is as common as you indicate, perhaps a formal reminder in the parish bulletin might help.

(What questions may be sent to Father Kenneth Doyle at askfatherdoyle@gmail.com and 30 Columbus 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 experiences of possible publication in the “My Journey to God” column.

Seasonal reflections also are appreciated. Please include name, address, parish and telephone number with submissions.

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The Criterion Friday, February 7, 2020

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Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

My Journey to God

Forgive Me

By Ron Lewis

Forgive me, Lord, if I have walked so fast along the way
That I could not observe the needs
Of folks I passed each day.
And gave I failed to see
God, slow my pace a bit today
That I may kender be,
That in my haste I may not fail
Another's needs to see.
And let me walk the whole day through
For signs of loneliness,
That I may drop a word, a smile,
And leave some happiness.

(Ron Lewis is a member of St. Anthony of Padua Parish in Chatsworth and a Businessman oblate of Saint Meinrad Archabbey. Photo: A homeless woman sits with her belongings outside the Vatican on March 26, 2015.) (CNS photo/Massimo Villani, Reuters)
New Knights’ initiation ceremony is open to the public

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (CNS)—After 140 years, the Knights of Columbus is pulling down a veil of secrecy that has surrounded its initiation ceremonies in an effort to better showcase the order’s core principles and its drive to help Catholic men become disciples.

Since its founding in 1882, the initiation ceremonies for the first three degrees of Knights membership—focused on the principles of charity, unity and fraternity—have been secret and open to members only. The fourth degree, dedicated to the discipleship ... charity, unity and fraternity, is the final step in the journey toward Knighthood and is considered a path of discipleship for the order members.

Carl Anderson has served as the President of the Knights of Columbus since 2016. He has been a member of the Order since 1977 and is a member of the Knights of Columbus in St. Mark the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis, Indiana. Anderson is also a member of the Knights of Columbus State Council in Indiana.

The new degree ceremony is open to all Knights members and their families and friends. The ceremony is designed to showcase the order’s core principles of charity, unity and fraternity in a way that is inclusive and welcoming to all.

Today, the order has more than 15.5 million members worldwide who are involved in charitable and service work. Although membership as a whole is growing, not all areas are showing increases, said Anderson.

"I think the Catholic Church is growing in many places, but the membership is growing in different ways,” Anderson said. “In some areas, the membership is decreasing, and in other areas, it is increasing. The key is to find ways to engage people in the faith, especially young people, and to make them feel connected to the Church.”

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The ceremony is open to all Knights members and their families and friends. The ceremony is designed to showcase the order’s core principles of charity, unity, and fraternity in a way that is inclusive and welcoming to all.
Students encouraged to ‘learn, serve, lead, succeed’ during Catholic Schools Week Mass

By John Shaughnessy

Tapping into the Catholic Schools Week theme of “Learn, Serve, Lead, Succeed,” Archbishop Charles C. Thompson made those four goals the heart of his homily during the Catholic Schools Week Mass at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis on Jan. 29.

The archbishop told the congregation of students, teachers and school leaders from across the archdiocese, “Catholic schools provide that environment, provide that special place to listen, to hear about the Good News—to hear about what God wants from us. It provides us a place and an opportunity to grow and develop that good soil of the spirit of our lives. It enables us to be rooted in the Good News of Jesus, and also to be rooted in Church teaching, how to live that out.”

Focusing on the students, the archbishop said, “We need you to be able to grow, to bear good fruit and more importantly to be good citizens, to be good witnesses, to be good disciples of Jesus Christ. Because we are called to transform the world, to proclaim the kingdom of God to people—not to let the world’s kingdom reign. That’s why we need to learn, serve, lead and succeed. To make a difference.”

The archbishop also stressed how Catholic schools are different from other places of learning. “Our schools are not merely private schools. We exist to learn, to serve, to lead and to succeed in the name of Jesus Christ. Because we are called to keep pointing to the world that there is something greater than this moment. It’s everlasting life. Not just that you will be successful in this world, but you will know life eternal in the kingdom of heaven.”

Above, Archbishop Charles C. Thompson poses with Ben Emma Welp, students at Holy Family School in New Albany, after a Jan. 29 Catholic Schools Week Mass in SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis.

Right, Archbishop Charles C. Thompson smiles while preaching a homily during a Jan. 29 Catholic Schools Week Mass in SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis, which was attended by hundreds of Catholic school students from across the archdiocese.

Catholic High School President

Providence Cristo Rey High School, a Roman Catholic, coeducational secondary school located at 75 N. Bellview Place in Indianapolis, Indiana, is currently accepting applications for the position of president. Providence Cristo Rey High School is sponsored by the Sisters of Providence of Saint-Mary-of-the-Woods and is a member of the Cristo Rey Network, a national association of high schools providing a rigorous college-preparatory education to urban young people with economic need. The ideal candidate is a visionary leader who can effectively articulate the school’s mission to its various constituencies. Preference will be given to candidates with a mission orientation that incorporates Catholic education values and Cristo Rey ideals with a strategic vision for the development of all aspects of the school and students. A competitive salary and benefits package are offered.

Job description is available at www.cristoreyindy.org.

 Candidates should submit a résumé, cover letter, and list of at least three references to the President Search Committee at the following email address: presidentsearch@cristoreyindy.org.

Application deadline is March 1, 2020.

PRINCIPAL
Sacred Heart Academy, Louisville, Kentucky

Sacred Heart Academy, an all-girls Catholic high school in Louisville, Kentucky seeks a Principal beginning July 1, 2020. The Principal will promote the Catholic educational development of the school’s staff and students, with emphasis on the Academy’s core values. The Principal is responsible for personnel management, including recruiting and supporting highly qualified faculty and staff. This position ensures the ongoing development of rigorous academic standards, works collaboratively with the administrative team and is an integral part of the planning, managing and monitoring of the annual budget.

Sacred Heart Academy offers a comprehensive benefits package to employees working at least 30 hours per week, which includes a 50% tuition discount at all four campus schools. Sacred Heart Schools is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Doctorate in education or related field preferred. Current state certification in education specializing in administration. Experience as a teacher. Experience as a Catholic school Principal. Supportive member of a Catholic parish.

Interested candidates should send a letter of interest and resume to shemployment@shalou.org.
Palestinians say Trump peace plan does not bode well for the future

ABOUD, West Bank (CNS)—The pews at the Our Lady of Seven Sorrows Church were full on Feb. 2, as children led a procession for the feast of the Presentation of the Lord and received candles from Father Firas Aridah.

Watching their children, parents of the parish said the announcement of U.S. President Donald J. Trump’s “deal of the century” peace plan did not bode well for their future.

“We’d like to have a better future for our children, but I am afraid of the future,” said Boutrous Fawadleh, 50, an English teacher at the Latin Patriarchate school in Aboud and the father of three boys, ages 14, 11 and 4. “What kind of life will it be for them?”

Mostly, parents told Catholic News Service (CNS), they were concerned about how the plan would further whittle away their freedom of movement on a day-to-day basis and increase Israeli control over their lives.

Already blocked by an Israeli checkpoint at the entrance to the village, they said they worried that with the tacit permission for land annexation by what they said was a one-sided proposal, more checkpoints and more settlements would be built around Aboud, making daily life even more of a struggle.

“Before we had hopes, now we have no hopes,” Fawadleh said. “Even before this plan, people were suffering; with these measures there will be more checkpoints, more Israeli military presence, more settlements.”

Among other aspects of the plan announced on Jan. 28, Trump proposed the recognition of Israeli sovereignty over West Bank settlements, creating Israeli enclave communities in the heart of the West Bank while promising the possibility of a future independent Palestinian state under certain conditions.

This, Fawadleh joked grimly, would create a Palestinian state map impossible for schoolchildren to draw.

The village of Aboud, surrounded by the three Israeli settlements and closed in by the Israeli separation barrier, would be included in one of these enclaves.

Located between Ramallah and Jerusalem, Aboud—population 2,000—has had thousands of square meters of land already confiscated by Israel.

“Where is the dignity in this plan? There is no dignity, no human rights; [it] is just thinking of the Jewish people and the state of Israel and negating the rights of a whole other people on the other hand,” said Father Aridah, adding that he was concerned that more young Palestinians would want to leave as their lives became more difficult.

Annexation of land in the West Bank and Jordan Valley will increase tensions and demonstrations, which could become violent, Fawadleh said.

Israel says the checkpoints and military patrols in the area are necessary for security reasons to protect settlers, who have been targets of drive-by shootings and other attacks by Palestinians.

Louy Fawadleh, 40, is a psychologist and a member of the same large extended family as Boutrous Fawadleh. The younger Fawadleh said that, every day, he and his wife travel some 30 miles to their jobs in Ramallah, and he often has to travel to other West Bank cities for his work. Often it takes more than double the time it should to get home because of the checkpoints, he said.

Just a few days earlier, he said, they were nearing a checkpoint and heard Israeli soldiers exploding something at the side of the road. They did not know what it was, and his wife became frightened and began to tremble and cry, he said.

“Imagine feeling this way just going home from work. It is a feeling you can’t explain,” he said.

The father of three boys, ages 12, 9 and 6, Louy Fawadleh said he was already beginning to worry about the basic issue of what he would do when his sons had to cross checkpoints to get to the Christian high school in Ramallah.

“Teenage boys are especially inspected at the checkpoints, so they are more in danger,” he said, shortly after the end of Zeit University on time.

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“My son’s practice is from 7 to 9 p.m. in Ramallah, and that means we drive back to Aboud at night. Sometimes, I am afraid to drive that dark road at night,” she said. “I just need a good future for my children.”

Thaira Naseem, 37, a science teacher, said she was not interested in politics. She simply wants to be able to take her 13-year-old son to his soccer practices in Ramallah and to his matches in other cities without being fearful of the Israeli checkpoints—which can be put up without notice—and to be able to make it to her own graduate classes at nearby Bir Zeit University on time.

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Boutrous Fawadleh and his wife, Samar, pose for a photo with their sons after Mass on Feb. 2, in Aboud, West Bank. (CNS photo/Debbie Hill)