As the Church becomes more diverse, Catholic vote becomes harder to define

WASHINGTON (CNS)—In the last presidential election, some political pundits referred to the “Catholic vote,” one that predicted Donald J. Trump’s rise to the presidency, and one that aligned in 2016 with the voting constituency that landed him the White House: overwhelmingly white and politically conservative voters.

But what the vote also revealed was a demographic shift taking place among Catholic voters, one that depends more on the ethnic background of the person casting the vote than on a religious affiliation.

“When we don’t talk about the white Catholic vote vs. the Hispanic Catholic vote, we’re really missing a lot,” said Elizabeth Podrebarac Scupic, senior researcher at the Pew Research Center and one of the panelists of “Faith and the Faithful in the 2020 Presidential Primaries” roundtable hosted on March 4 by the Initiative on Catholic Social Thought and Public Life at Georgetown University.

“We know the entire U.S. is becoming far more politically polarized than ever before, and religious groups are not immune to that,” she said.

Though 52 percent of Catholic voters cast ballots for Trump in the 2016 presidential election, the majority of Latino Catholics—which at 38 percent of the Catholic population in the U.S. is the second largest ethnic group in the Church—overwhelmingly voted for Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton.

And in the recent Democratic primaries, Latinos carried progressive Bernie Sanders to victory on Super Tuesday in the delegate-rich state of California.

“I think that the really important Catholic vote in this primary election was the Hispanic Catholics,” said Jesuit Father Thomas Reese, who also spoke on the panel that examined the way religious values and beliefs are shaping the race for the White House in 2020.

The way a voter views and practices his or her faith, which in many ways is painted with the brush of their socioeconomic background, becomes more diverse, Catholic Social Thought and Public Life at Georgetown University.

Throughout the 2020 Presidential Primaries” roundtable hosted on March 4 by the Initiative on Catholic Social Thought and Public Life at Georgetown University.

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At its back wall.

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Standing behind the altar in the base’s chapel, Father Ahern looked up at its back wall.

“You could see in the wall where an artillery round had actually gone through the wall [in the past] and landed just outside the chapel,” he recalled in a recent phone interview with The Criterion.

As a chaplain in the Indiana Army National Guard, Father Ahern has been deployed to Camp Arifjan in Kuwait as part of Task Force Spartan since last May. From there, he has traveled across the Middle East to minister to U.S. soldiers throughout the region.

Serving in tense combat situations is nothing new for the priest. Years earlier, before he became an archdiocesan seminarian, he had been an Army sergeant in a special forces unit assigned to a base in Afghanistan. After later serving in communications in the White House, Father Ahern discerned a call to the priesthood and was

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Despite danger, archdiocesan priest ministers to U.S. soldiers serving in the Middle East

By Sean Gallagher

Father Adam Ahern was just starting to celebrate Mass at a remote U.S. Army base in Afghanistan, calling on God’s mercy when alarms went off.

Artillery shells or rocket fire were coming toward the base. Everyone at the Mass went to the ground for cover.

It was soon learned that the rounds landed outside the base. The soldiers attending the Mass then had to report to where they were serving at the base. When they returned, the Mass resumed.

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See Solders page 8

Public Masses suspended in Italy; Vatican closes St. Peter’s Square and the Basilica to tourists

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—The suspension of public Masses in Italy is a painful yet necessary measure to protect people’s health, the country’s bishops said.

And in cooperation with Italian emergency measures, the Vatican has closed St. Peter’s Square and Basilica to tourists starting on March 10 through April 3.

The new measure, announced on March 10, was the latest move by the Vatican to help stop the spread of the coronavirus by reducing access to places that attract large groups of people. On March 8, the Vatican closed the Vatican Museums, the necropolis and other museums connected with the Vatican.

In coordination with measures introduced by Italian authorities, the Vatican said in a communique, “starting today, St. Peter’s Square and Basilica will be

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A worker sprays disinfectant to combat the coronavirus in the Basilica of San Domenico Maggiore in Naples, Italy, on March 6. (CNS photo/Fotogramma/ABACAPRESS.COM via Reuters)
WASHINGTON (CNS)—U.S. Catholic bishops are being asked to invite the parishes in their dioceses to join a nationwide effort called “Walking With Moms in Need: A Year of Service” from March 25 of this year through March 25, 2021.

Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann of Kansas City, Kan., chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) Committee on Pro-Life Activities, announced the new initiative on the National Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children on Jan. 22, the anniversary of the Supreme Court’s 1973 Roe v. Wade decision legalizing abortion through all nine months of pregnancy across the country.

The new program has its own website, www.walkingwithmoms.com, with "resources, outreach tools and models to assist parishes in this effort." Resources will continue to be added to the site, according to the USCCB’s Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities.

“As the Church and growing numbers of pro-life Americans continue to advocate for women and children in courtrooms and legislatures,” Archbishop Naumann said, “the Church’s pastoral response is focused on the needs of women facing pregnancies in challenging circumstances.”

This pastoral response to pregnant women and mothers in need “has long been the case” for the Church, he said, but added that the Year of Service will “intensify” this response.

The launch date of the program marks the 25th anniversary of St. John Paul II’s encyclical “Evangelium Vitae” (“The Gospel of Life”). The encyclical, the 11th of his pontificate, forthrightly condemns abortion and euthanasia, the major attacks on human life at its beginning and end. It also contains what several observers at the time called the strongest expression ever of Church teaching against infant punishment.

It says the cases of justifiable use of it today are “very rare, if not practically nonexistent.”

Through the Year of Service, parishes are asked to complete a simple inventory of the resources currently available in their local area, assess the results and identify gaps, and plan and implement a parish response based on their findings.

In “recognizing that women in need can be most effectively reached at the local level,” Archbishop Naumann explained, the Year of Service “invites parishes to assess, communicate, and expand resources to expectant mothers within their own communities.”

The Year of Service is divided into five phases of parish action:

- Phase 1: Announce the Year of Service and begin building a core team (March 2020).
- Phase 2: Launch parish inventory process (May 2020).
- Phase 3: Share inventory results and begin assessment and planning (September 2020).
- Phase 4: Announcement and Commitment to Parish Response (January 2021).
- Phase 5: Coordination and Implementation of Parish Plans (March 2021).

There are suggested steps for implementing each phase along with sample announcements, sample intercessions, homily helps and a prayer activity.

For example in Phase 1, the steps include appointing a parish leader; beginning to assemble a parish core team; establishing a parish support network; and announcing the “Evangelium Vitae” anniversary and Year of Service; praying for pregnant mothers in need as a parish community; and beginning to plan the parish’s first core team meeting.

“We pray that ‘Walking with Moms in Need: A Year of Service’ will help us reach every pregnant mother in need; that she may know she can turn to her local Catholic community for help and authentic friendship,” Archbishop Naumann added when he announced the nationwide effort in January.

**Correspondence**

In the Feb. 21 issue of The Criterion, an editorial of Franciscan Sister Alice Retzer was published that did not list all of her surviving siblings. Her brother, John Retzer of Sunman, was not included.

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**Pope: ‘Synodality’ is theme for 2022 synod**

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope Francis has decided the next world Synod of Bishops at the Vatican, which will take place in October 2022, will have the theme: “For a synodal Church: Communion, participation and mission.”

The Vatican announced the choice of “synodality” as the theme in a brief communique on March 7.

“Synodality,” which literally means “walking together,” has become a key topic of Pope Francis’ pontificate, but one which has raised questions and even confusion.

The basic idea in the pope’s teaching is that the grace of baptism makes a person part of the body of the Church and, therefore, responsible for its life and mission. In a hierarchical Church, that shared responsibility calls for regular, serious and structured forums for listening to all members of the Church. At the same time, as the pope has said, it does not mean putting decisions to a vote if a synod were a parliament.

In 2018, the International Theological Commission which advises the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, published a document on the topic “Synodality In the Life and Mission of the Church.”

Synodality, which has been present in Christianity since its very beginning, the document said, is not simply about involving people in decision making, but involving all the baptized in discerning God’s will and listening to the Holy Spirit.

Regarding questions that continue to be raised about the similarities and differences between synodality and a democratic form of Church governance, the commission wrote: “A synodal Church is a Church of participation and co-responsibility. In exercising synodality, she is called to give expression to the participation of all, according to each one’s calling, with the authority conferred by Christ on the College of Bishops headed by the pope. Participation is based on the fact that all the faithful are qualified and called to serve each other through the gifts they have all received from the Holy Spirit.”

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**Public Schedule of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson**

March 13 – 7 p.m. Confirmation for youths of Good Shepherd Parish, Indianapolis, at Sts. Peter and Paul Cathedral, Indianapolis

March 19 – 10 a.m. Leadership Team meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center

March 19 – 6:30 p.m. Mass at Edmondson Correctional Facility, Edinburgh

March 21 – 9:30 CT Mass to Celebrate 150th Anniversary of Saint Meinrad Archabbey being named an abbey at Archabbey Church of Our Lady of Einsiedeln, St. Meinrad.

March 21 – 5:30 p.m. Baptisms at St. Augustine Church in Lebanon, Ky.

March 23 – 8 a.m. Indiana Bishops and Major Superiors meeting at Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House.

(Schedule subject to change.)

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**Pope Francis’ prayer intentions for March**

• Catholics in China—We pray that the Church in China may persevere in its faithfulness to the Gospel and grow in unity.

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

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**Correction**

In the Feb. 21 issue of The Criterion, an editorial of Franciscan Sister Alice Retzer was published that did not list all of her surviving siblings. Her brother, John Retzer of Sunman, was not included.†
Bill lifts barriers to career opportunities for youths in poverty

For a young person in a poor family, an internship or other work-based learning opportunity can offer the first step to a better life. But for many impoverished youths in Indiana, that path is never taken—because the wages they earn from those jobs can prevent their families from receiving the government assistance they desperately need.

A bill that unanimously passed both the Indiana House and Senate would help break down those barriers. House Bill 1009, authored by state Rep. Chuck Goodrich (R-Noblesville), would exempt a student’s income earned through a paid internship, apprenticeship or other work-based opportunity from their family’s eligibility for the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), more commonly known as food stamps. Goodrich said that students too often turn down promising opportunities because their earnings could put their families over the household income threshold for receiving help through these programs.

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"The families affected by this bill receive public assistance, which means they are financially vulnerable. Our faith calls us to assist the poor."

—Angela Espada, executive director of the Indiana Catholic Conference

"Programs like internships and apprenticeships are essential educational and networking opportunities that every student should be able to participate in without worrying about it will affect their family's financial situation."

—Rep. Chuck Goodrich

After leading ‘virtual’ Angelus, pope blesses crowd in St. Peter’s Square

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope Francis didn’t take his Angelus prayer run from the window of his studio looking St. Peter’s Square on March 8. He did go to the window to wave and to bless the people as he had showed up anywhere.

The Vatican had announced the day before that the Angelus prayer and the pope’s weekly general audience on March 11 would be livestreamed from the papal library “to avoid the risk of spreading the COVID-19 [coronavirus],” especially given the crowding that occurs at the security checkpoints on entering the square. The Italian government and Vatican City State health services have restricted people from entering throughout Italy to avoid large gatherings, particularly indoors, and to keep a yard’s distance between people to prevent the spread of the virus.

Following the lead of the Italian government, the Vatican also announced on March 8 that the Vatican Museums, the necropolis under St. Peter’s Basilica and the papal villa at Castel Gandolfo would close until April 3 to reduce situations where people crowd together.

 espada was among those who testified in favor of the legislation before a House committee, along with Jessica Fraser, program director for the Indiana Institute for Working Families.

"We were hearing from practitioners in the [Next Level Jobs] initiative that students were being disconnected from participating because of these financial concerns," said Fraser, a member of St. Thomas Aquinas Parish in Indianapolis. "The state is allocating money toward work-based learning programs, but students are afraid that their families are going to get punished from an economic standpoint if they pursue these opportunities."

In the final days of this year’s short legislative session, Fraser said she was encouraged by the strong support for House Bill 1009 in both chambers of the Indiana General Assembly. As a public policy expert on TANF, she considered the forward movement on the bill a bright spot after the roadblocks encountered in the legislature on TANF itself.

"I am very hopeful that the governor will sign this legislation," she added. "To follow priority legislation of the ICC, visit www.indianacc.org. This website includes access to I-CAN, the Indiana Catholic Action Network, which offers 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 Brownsburg, is a correspondent for The Criterion.)

"We feel inadequate, but we cannot withdraw with the excuse of our incompetence."

People often are tempted to say that they are too busy to pray or to help out in the parish or to assist a neighbor in need, the pope said. "But we must not forget that the bishop is called upon to make us witnesses, not because of our own abilities, but by the gift of the Spirit."

"It was a gratuitous choice, without condition, a free initiative, a divine foundation that asked nothing in return," Pope Francis said. "And as he called those three disciples, today he still calls some to be close to him in order to give witness."

"Being witnesses of Jesus is a gift that we have not deserved," the pope continued.

"Supporting this bill is also important because it allows young people to be exposed to internships and programs that can help them break the cycle of poverty without hurting their families’ eligibility for assistance," Espada was among those who testified in favor of the legislation before a House committee, along with Jessica Fraser, program director for the Indiana Institute for Working Families.

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Reflection/Amelia Goffinet
Take time to be ‘in the moment’ throughout this Lenten season

What have you given up for Lent? As we’ve been taught, Lent is 40 days of repentance, fasting and preparation for Easter. The 40 days of Lent remind us of the 40 days Jesus spent in the wilderness. All the while, Satan was throwing temptation after temptation at him.

What does your temptation look like? Every year, the Lenten season, just as everyone varies in how to observe Lent.

Back in the summer, I became hyper-aware of “living in the moment.” I tend to think the Holy Spirit had a lot to do with putting the thought into my head.

My mother, who had been suffering with a long illness, was nearing the end of her life. With every visit, I found myself looking into her eyes—truly looking into her eyes, not just looking at her or around her.

Those were the beautiful eyes of the person who watched me grow from an infant to a toddler to a teenager and finally to an adult with children of my own.

I looked at her hands, the hands that were now the hands of a 93-year-old woman, knuckles gnarled from arthritis and thin skinned from age. Those hands were the first to hold me when I was born, the hands that corrected me when I needed it, and the hands that showed me love with her hugs.

I listened to her words, words that now were nonsensical, but she still had the cadence or flow in her voice that I grew up hearing, sharing Irish unity and the referendum on Unity which is the means to secure this.

There’s also the fact that Catholicism has grown in Northern Ireland. An article in the British magazine The Economist reported, “The pressure for unification is about more than Brexit. Northern Ireland’s census in 2021 is likely to confirm that Catholics outnumber Protestants for the first time.”

But Catholicism in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland doesn’t play the same role today that it did in the past. After Ireland won its independence, the Catholic Church played a significant role, especially during the political leadership of Eamon de Valera. For example, divorce and remarriage was not permitted, and neither was abortion.

That didn’t last. When Ireland was partitioned in 1922, 92.6 percent of the south’s population was Catholic. That began to change by the 1960s. In the Republic of Ireland, according to the 2016 census, 78 percent of the population still identifies as Catholic. That’s still better than every other country in Europe (except the Vatican and Poland), but surveys show that the Irish are not practicing their religion very well. Fewer than one in five Catholics attend Mass on any given weekend, and it is even less often among young people.

A poll by the Irish Times found that, not only do the majority of Irish Catholics not attend Mass weekly, but almost 62 percent reject key parts of Catholicism, such as transubstantiation.

In 2015, the Irish voted to approve same-sex marriage in a referendum, and in 2018, they voted to legalize abortion, both of which had previously been forbidden. That prompted Una Mullally, a journalist who writes for The Guardian, to say that “the nation of Ireland as a conservative, dogmatically Catholic country has been shattered.”

Thus, it appears that Ireland needs a new St. Patrick.

—John F. Fink

Reflection/Tom Yost
March Madness and Lent live much in common

March Madness is upon us. Even if you’re not a sports fan, you know what I am talking about.

The NCAA college men’s basketball tournament begins on March 15, and we all take notice. It is a time of excitement. March Madness is also a time of fasting and prayer for many American Catholics. The season of Lent has begun.

Selection Sunday reminds me of Ash Wednesday. They both “kick off” a major event/season. Sixty-eight teams are selected for the tournament. All the baptized and those preparing for baptism are “selected” for Lent. College teams and their fan base await the announcements from the selection committee. The prophet Joel announces to the people on Ash Wednesday to “Blow the trumpet… call a fast… gather the elders… notify the congregation… assemble the elders… gather the children” (Joel 2:15-16) because “the time is about to begin.” We then move into tournament time when the teams do battle. The players and coaches need to prepare themselves mentally, physically, emotionally and, I would dare say, spiritually. They discuss and pray with their teams in order to arrive at the Final Four and ultimately the championship game.

Interestingly enough, the NCAA basketball season goes through six rounds or six games—rounds one and two, the Sweet 16, Elite Eight, Final Four, and the championship game.

Lent is our tournament time. We

Does Ireland need a new St. Patrick?

Ireland seems to need a new St. Patrick. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 33 million Americans self-identify as Irish Americans, descended from people who immigrated from the Emerald Isle. And on St. Patrick’s Day, next Tuesday, March 17, that number swells as many other Americans become Irish for a day.

St. Patrick converted Ireland to Catholicism in the fifth century. We don’t know the precise dates, but Patrick’s autobiographical Confessio tells us that he was a Roman-British youth who was kidnapped and taken to Ireland when he was 16. He managed to escape about six years later and made it back home. After being ordained a priest, he returned to Ireland as a missionary, became a bishop, and converted the people from a form of Celtic polytheism. There are many legends about the things he accomplished and miracles he performed.

Thereafter, most of the people of Ireland remained Catholic, often despite persecution and hardship. During the English Reformation under Queen Elizabeth I, the Church in England and Ireland broke away from the papacy, including all but two of the Irish dioceses, the feast day celebrated as an optional memorial on the saint’s feast day.

Greg A. Otolski, Editor
Archbishop Charles C. Thompson, Publisher
Mike Krooks, Editor
Page 4 The Criterion Friday, March 13, 2020
Let’s acknowledge Jesus as the living water we are thirsting for

“Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again; but whoever drinks the water I shall give will never thirst; but the water that I shall give will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life” (Jn 4:13-14).

The Gospel reading for the Third Sunday of Lent (cf. Jn 4:4-12) tells us of Jesus’ encounter with a Samaritan woman at Jacob’s well. This story is remarkable for many reasons. It calls attention to both the humanity and the divinity of Jesus, and it clearly shows that his ministry breaks down the barriers that separate us from one another. As Pope Francis might say, in this Gospel reading, Jesus tears down several walls and replaces them with bridges.

According to St. John: “A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, ‘Give me a drink.’ Her disciples had gone into the town to buy food. The Samaritan woman said to him, ‘How can you, a Jew, ask me, a Samaritan woman, for a drink?’—For Jews use nothing in common with Samaritans” (Jn 4:7-9).

Two barriers are identified immediately: 1) The cultural barrier between women and men, and 2) The religious barrier between Samaritans and Jews. The woman asks: “That would speak to her at all, but what he goes on to say truly astonishes her. As the woman can plainly see, Jesus is tired and thirsty. He asks her for a drink of water—a purely human request—but he also speaks to her about a very different kind of thirst. “If you knew the gift of God and who is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him and he would have given you living water” (Jn 4:10).

What is this “living water,” and why does Jesus raise this issue with her? At first, the woman is totally confused. She addresses him on the practical level, not the spiritual one. “Sir, you do not even have a bucket and the cistern is deep; where then can you get this living water?” (Jn 4:11). Jesus’ reply seems incomprehensible: “Everyone who drinks this water will never thirst; but whoever drinks the water I shall give will never thirst; the water I shall give will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life” (Jn 4:10).

This is the third barrier that must be overcome—the one that blocks our ability to see beyond the here and now to the deeper meaning of our lives. Yes, we are human, and we have basic needs that must be met: hunger, thirst, the need for shelter, physical healing and more. But we are also spiritual beings whose needs transcend our everyday requirements. We need love, forgiveness and hope for the future. We need to believe that our lives have purpose, and that the journey we are on from the moment of our conception to the day we die will bring us to our heavenly home. This is the thirst that Jesus speaks about—the one that he alone can satisfy.

Only when Jesus points out the woman’s true marital status does she realize that he is speaking of something other than physical thirst. “You are right in saying, ‘I do not have a husband,’ Jesus says. “For you have had five husbands and the one you have now is not your husband” (Jn 4:17). Jesus isn’t scolding her or looking down on her. He is speaking the truth with love.

The woman replies, “Sir, I can see that you are a prophet” (Jn 4:19). Realizing that she has had an encounter with “the one called the Christ,” the Samaritan woman leaves her practical concerns (the water jar) behind and goes off to tell others about Jesus. Jesus built three bridges that day: 1) he affirmed the equality of women and men, 2) He treated a foreigner (one whom devout Jews considered an apostate) with dignity and respect, and 3) he made it clear that there is more to life than satisfying our earthly needs.

The Church provides us with this season of Lent to remind us that, as Jesus said to his disciples, “My food is to do the will of my Father and to finish his work” (Jn 4:34). There are times when we have to speak unpopular truths as Jesus did, but we do this out of love, not out of hatred or with evil intentions. Let’s pray for the grace to follow our Lord’s example. Let’s acknowledge Jesus as the living water we are thirsting for.

Reconozcamos a Jesús como el agua viva que anhelamos

“El que beba de esta agua tendrá nuevamente sed, pero el que beba del agua que yo le daré, nunca más volverá a tener sed. El agua que yo le daré se convertirá en él en manantial que brotará hasta la Vida eterna” (Jn 4:13-14).

De inmediato podemos identificar dos barreras: 1) la barrera cultural entre hombres y mujeres, y 2) la barrera religiosa entre samaritanos y judíos. La mujer se sorprende de que Jesús le hablare pero lo que le dice a ella la asombra. “Tú, mujer, está en el pozo cuando yo llamo a la criada de casa y tú me pides de beber a mí, que soy samaritana” (Porque los judíos no tienen tratos con los samaritanos)” (Jn 4:7-9).

Un día Jesús construyó tres puentes: 1) afirmó la igualdad de hombres y mujeres, 2) trató a una extranjera (a quienes los judíos devotos consideraban apóstatas) con dignidad y respeto, y 3) dejó claro que la vida es más que la simple satisfacción de nuestras necesidades terrenales. La Iglesia nos proporciona la oportunidad de la Cuaresma para recordarnos que, tal como le dijo Jesús a los discípulos “Mi comida es hacer la voluntad del que me envió y llevar a cabo Su obra” (Jn 4:34). Hay ocasiones en las que tenemos que tomar decisiones difíciles y decirle a las gentes desagradables, como hizo Jesús, pero lo hacemos con amor, para romper muros, no para edificarlos.

Oremos por la gracia para seguir el ejemplo de nuestro Señor. Reconozcamos a Jesús como el agua viva que anhelamos.
March 16
Holy Spirit Church, 7243 E. 10th St., Indianapolis.
Lenten Series: “On Care for Our Common Home” (“Lenten Series: Impact of Energy Production”)—Transportation on Our Environment, third of four topics (March 30), 7 p.m. each Monday, in Room 304.
317-337-3368, ext. 262. Information: stritasecretary71@yahoo.com.

March 17
St. John of Arc Church, 4217 W. 10th St., Indianapolis.
Catholic Devotions, adoration noon-7 p.m., rosary 6 p.m., Mass 6:30 p.m., Stations of the Cross with Benediction 7 p.m. Information: 317-283-5508, meville@apas.org.

March 19
St. Joseph Church, 1401 S. Mckinley Ave., Indianapolis.
S. Mickey Ave., Indianapolis.
Third Thursday Adoration, informal prayer and conversation for those experiencing pregnancy crisis, 11 a.m.-7 p.m., with Mass at 5:45 p.m. Our Lady of Peace Cemetery and Massachusetts, 9000 Haverstick Road, Indianapolis. Mass, 2 p.m. Information: 317-878-0709 or catholiccemeteries.org.

March 20
21st Ave., Indianapolis.
St. Rita Parish, 1733 S. Mckinley Ave., Indianapolis.
Fish Fry, 11 a.m.-6 p.m., dinners $11.50 service, $12.50 entree—includes two sides and a house salad or soup, sandwiches or entrees $10.12; a carte menu available for pickup or drive-through on pick-up 317-356-1047, 317-632-9349, ext. 105. Information: stchrisindy.org/171. St. Peter and Paul Cathedral; Sat. lunch provided, $15 per person or $25 for family of five and宗教 meeting; call 317-922-2890. Information and registration: encounterministries.org.

March 21
Basile Theater, 403 E. Michigan St., Indianapolis.
The Sound of Music, performed by Agape Performing Arts Company of Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish in Greenwood. Tickets $30, Sat. 3 p.m.; Sun. 3:30 p.m. Information: 317-983-1956, inquiries@agapeshows.org.

March 22
SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, 1347 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. Healing Service, conducted by Joe Philip of Encounter Ministries—7:30 p.m., free.

Indiania Convention Center, Sagamore Ballroom, 100 S. Capital Ave., Indianapolis.
Archbishop Edward Cardinale’s “Women’s Only Weekend Retreat” (WOW)—one for youths and one for young adults—in the Damascus Room below St. Christopher Church, 5355 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. Costs $20 for youths and $55 per person for groups of 10 or more and older will be offered at Camp Rancho Framasa, 2230 Clay Lick Road in Nashville, on March 27-29. The weekend begins with check-in from 7-7:45 p.m. on Friday and ends at 2 p.m. on Sunday. WOW is a women’s retreat filled with faith, relaxation and recreation. The weekend includes workshops, spiritual direction and typical camp activities, such as canoeing, archery, crafts and more. Activities will be led by camp staff throughout the weekend. Participants can move from activity to activity at their leisure, designing their own schedules to be as busy or as slow as desired. There are opportunities for both social and alone time. Half-hour massages are available for an additional $15. The cost for the weekend—including activities, spiritual direction, lodging in shared, heated cabins and meals in the dining hall—is $20 per person, or $350 for two people who sign up under one registration. There is also a $150 option, which includes activities and meals, for those lodging offsite and a Saturday-only option for $100. Scholarships are also available.

March 23
St. Thomas More Parish, Brownsburg.

March 24
St. Simon the Apostle Church, 8155 Oakland Road, Indianapolis. Lenten Tai Chi Prayer Service. Information: 317-826-6000.

March 25
The Well Community Center, 152 IUPUI Blvd, Alliance, 554 Pit Rd., Brown'sburg. Caregiver Symposium and Retreat, presented by Catholic Charities, noon-1:30 p.m. Information: Monica Woodson, 317-454-2077, mwwoodson@archindy.org.

Retreats reflecting on Holy Week and throughout the Lenten season
Several Catholic retreat centers throughout central Indiana will offer directed and/or silent retreats of varying length reflecting during Holy Week, which begins March 20.
Following is a list of Holy Week-related retreat opportunities reported to The Criterion.

Archabpy Guest House and Retreat Center, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. For more information or to register for this retreat, call 812.375-6858 or e-mail meisel@ saintmeinrad.edu.

April 8-12: “The Easter Triduum: Three Days, Great Days”—Spent in the Paschal Mystery through the liturgy with the monastic community of Saint Meinrad Archabpy. Retreat Co-Director Father Jeremy King will offer daily presentations, and time will be set aside for personal prayer and quiet reflection. The cost is $465 for a single room, or $735 for a double room.

Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. For more information or to register for either of these retreat opportunities, call 317-788-7581, e-mail retreats@ benedictin.org or go to www.benedictin.org/programs.

April 12: “Easter Retreat 2020” Experience Holy Week with the Sisters of St. Benedict of Our Lady of Grace Monastery. Retreatants will participate in several beautiful and meaningful services, including an all-night feast. The retreat is free, but a donation of $33 per person is requested.

April 10: “Good Friday Personal Day Retreat” Spend an entire day in silent reflection with a private room and access to the common areas and grounds. The time is free from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., with lunch, and costs $40, which includes lunch.

Oldenburg Franciscan Center, 22143 Main St., Oldenburg. For more information or to register for this retreat, call 812-933-6437 or go to www.oldenburgfranciscan.org or by e-mail to oldenburg@ archindy.org.

April 9-12: “Holy Week Retreat.” Spend time in silence and reflection during these four days, and experience liturgical celebrations with the Sisters of the Third Order Regular of St. Francis of Assisi. Daily spiritual direction with Providence Sister Olga Wittekind is also available at no extra charge. The cost is $350, which includes accommodations and meals.

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5355 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. For more information or to register for one or more of these retreats, contact Jennifer Burger at 317-545-7681 or jburger@archindy.org, or go to www.archindy.org/retns.

April 3-5: “Walking with Christ: Journeying through Holy Week as a Fragile Disciple,” facilitated by Father Stephen Banet. The retreat will include presentations, reconciliation, adoration, Mass and a seder meal. It begins at 7 p.m. on Friday and concludes after lunch on Saturday. Sunday will be a day of silence. The cost is $200 per person for singles, and $240 per married couple, shared bathroom or $400 per married couple for a private room and private bath. Includes meals and snacks.

April 6-9: “Holy Week Days of Silence”—Registration for one or multiple days set aside for silence and personal reflection. Each non- resident registration is $335, which includes lodging and meals.

April 10: “Good Friday Personal Day Retreat” Spend an entire day in silent reflection with a private room and access to the common areas and grounds. The time is free from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Holy Thursday through 1 p.m. on Easter Sunday. The cost is $335 per person, which includes lodging, and meals.

April 10: “Good Friday Personal Day Retreat” Spend an entire day in silent reflection with a private room and access to the common areas and grounds. The time is free from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Holy Thursday through 1 p.m. on Easter Sunday. The cost is $335 per person, which includes lodging, and meals.

A retreat center is scheduled to offer two sessions of a retreat called “Engaging and Empowering the Next Generation”—one for youths and one for young adults—in the Damascus Room below St. Christopher Church, 5355 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. Costs $20 for youths and $55 per person for groups of 10 or more and older will be offered at Camp Rancho Framasa, 2230 Clay Lick Road in Nashville, on March 27-29. The weekend begins with check-in from 7-7:45 p.m. on Friday and ends at 2 p.m. on Sunday. WOW is a women’s retreat filled with faith, relaxation and recreation. The weekend includes workshops, spiritual direction and typical camp activities, such as canoeing, archery, crafts and more. Activities will be led by camp staff throughout the weekend. Participants can move from activity to activity at their leisure, designing their own schedules to be as busy or as slow as desired. There are opportunities for both social and alone time. Half-hour massages are available for an additional $15. The cost for the weekend—including activities, spiritual direction, lodging in shared, heated cabins and meals in the dining hall—is $20 per person, or $350 for two people who sign up under one registration. There is also a $150 option, which includes activities and meals, for those lodging offsite and a Saturday-only option for $100. Scholarships are also available.

Registration is required by March 20. To register or for more information, call St. Joseph Retreat Center, 5355 E. 56th St., Indianapolis, 317-933-6437, or go to www.campranchoframa.org/womens-only or call 888-988-2839 or e-mail info@ campranchoframa.org.

March 26
St. Joseph Retreat Center, 5100 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis.
Catholic community begins long recovery from devastating tornadoes

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (CNS)—The Diocese of Nashville and the Catholic community are responding to the needs, both immediate and long-term, of those affected by deadly tornadoes that ripped across Middle Tennessee in the early hours of March 3, leaving at least 24 people dead.

Bishop J. Mark Spalding has visited the affected pastors and churches in Nashville, and offered prayers of support for all those suffering from the trauma of the disaster.

He has received messages of support from Archbishop Jose H. Gomez of Los Angeles, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), and Archbishop Christophe Pierre, apostolic nuncio to the United States. “As the personal representative of the Holy Father in this country, I assure you of his prayers in this difficult situation,” the letter said.

Diocesan parishes and schools sprung into action after the storm. Holy Rosary Parish in Donelson served as the site of a Red Cross emergency shelter on March 3, and a number of churches and schools were collecting supplies such as bottled water and baby formula for tornado victims.

The Knights of Columbus has been marshaling its members to donate money, materials and manpower to relief efforts. “In the coming days, we will offer the strength of unity of nearly 12,000 Knights across the state as we go to work to bring relief to this disaster,” State Deputy Michael McCusker wrote in a letter to local Knights.

He called charity “the first and foremost principle” of the fraternal order, working in conjunction with the Nashville Diocese to coordinate a statewide K of C charitable effort.

The Catholic Pastoral Center in Nashville hosted a Red Cross blood drive on March 9.

The Catholic Schools Office is preparing to relocate students to finish the school year.

The Catholic Pastoral Center in Nashville hosted a Red Cross blood drive on March 9. (CNS photo/Rick Musacchio, Tennessee Register)

Volunteer Jonathan Abaregua hands a plate of food to Brenda Bryant of Nashville, Tenn., on March 4 at the McGruder Family Resource Center, which is managed by Catholic Charities of Tennessee. Nicknamed “The Volunteer State,” Tennessee lived up to its name as numerous volunteer efforts sprang up across the state immediately after the storm. The Diocese of Nashville is raising funds for those affected, and their chancery office hosted a Red Cross Blood Drive on March 9. (CNS photo/Theresa Laurence, Tennessee Register)

Exploring how it might help Donelson Christian Academy, which was destroyed by the tornado and will be looking to relocate students to finish the school year.

Catholic Charities of Tennessee also is on the front lines of responding to the needs of tornado victims. “We have a balance between the work that doesn’t stop and the emergency work,” Judy Orr, the agency’s executive director, told the Tennessee Register, Nashville’s diocesan newspaper.

For example, Wendy Overlock, who oversees the Loaves and Fishes community meal program at Holy Name Parish in East Nashville, managed a regularly scheduled March 4 meal service while also serving as the Catholic Charities emergency assistance coordinator, fielding calls from those in need, who want to help, and communications with state emergency management officials.

“It’s a lot,” she said. “But we have a lot of helpers.”

The morning of March 4, Overlock and her team of volunteers made peanut butter and jelly sandwiches to hand out to their guests in the hard-hit East Nashville neighborhood where Holy Name is located since the building had no power.

“We went back to how we started,” she said, which was the simple act of handing out sandwiches to the homeless 30 years ago.

Meanwhile, at the McGruder Family Resource Center in North Nashville, which is managed by Catholic Charities, volunteers from Gideon’s Army and Metro Nashville Public Schools, among others, showed up in droves to meet the immediate needs of people in the neighborhood.

Observing people who had lost homes or power load up supplies by the garbage bag and wagon load, McGruder director Alisha Haddock noted. “This is what happens when tragedy strikes, we come together.”

Even though the power was out at McGruder, volunteers worked in the kitchen normally used for the Catholic Charities Culinary Training Academy to heat up prepared food to serve anyone in need.

“The community knows they can count on us here,” Haddock said.

“Catholic Charities’ North Nashville response moves forward. Haddock said her staff will “go out in the community and put hands on the situation. There’s a lot of seniors who are unseen, and we want them to know they are being seen and helped.”

Catholic Charities is just beginning to map out a longer-term plan to help those suffering after the storm. With key staff members affected by the tornado themselves, and a long-planned major fundraising event scheduled for March 4, Orr was just beginning to formulate the organization’s relief plans on March 5.

“A thoughtful, organized approach will provide the most relief,” she said.

“The work of Catholic Charities is really rebuilding of lives after the emergency,” Orr said. “We anticipate a lot of people in need of counseling after the trauma of this event, the loss of life and homes. This could be a setback from which some people cannot recover.”

Catholic Charities of Tennessee has already received a $10,000 grant from Catholic Charities USA, which will be used to meet the immediate needs of those affected, most likely in the form of gift cards for groceries and supplies.

“Our staff members have the protocols in place to assess the needs and connect people with the resources they need,” Orr said.

Catholic Charities has received more than $9,000 in additional donations from those in Tennessee and surrounding states. The Diocese of Nashville has so far received monetary donations of more than $25,000 to help parishes and people affected by the tornado.

Donors are encouraged to give online through www.dioceseofnashville.com or www.catholiccharitiesusa.org.

The grant money, and additional donations, could be used to help up the Catholic Charities counseling staff, which Orr anticipates will be greatly needed. “People will have needs beyond ‘I have a hole in my roof’ to ‘I have a hole in my heart,’” she said.

It’s likely that many people in Putnam County, which suffered the greatest loss of life from the tornadoes, will have holes in their hearts for some time to come. At least 19 deaths have been reported by officials in Putnam County, about 80 miles east of Nashville along Interstate 40.

Security officers walk behind the tornado-damaged Department of Human Services building in Nashville, Tenn., on March 5. Dozens of people are dead after a powerful and fast-moving storm cut across Middle Tennessee in the early hours of March 3, dropping tornadoes that raced up to 165 miles per hour.

Bishop J. Mark Spalding of Nashville, Tenn., center back, listens on March 4 as Father S. Bade Price, pastor at the Church of the Assumption, talks about the damage to the building caused by a tornado that hit Nashville’s historic Germantown neighborhood and crossed the state, killing at least 24 people. The Diocese of Nashville is raising funds for those affected, and the chancery office will host a Red Cross Blood Drive on March 9. (CNS photo/Rick Musacchio, Tennessee Register)

Volunteer Jonathan Abaregua hands a plate of food to Brenda Bryant of Nashville, Tenn., on March 4 at the McGruder Family Resource Center, which is managed by Catholic Charities of Tennessee. Nicknamed “The Volunteer State,” Tennessee lived up to its name as numerous volunteer efforts sprang up across the state immediately after the storm. The Diocese of Nashville is raising funds for those affected, and their chancery office hosted a Red Cross Blood Drive on March 9. (CNS photo/Theresa Laurence, Tennessee Register)

Ann Hooven stands outside her destroyed home after a tornado touched down in Nashville, Tenn., on March 3. At least 24 people have died across central Tennessee as a result of severe storms and at least one tornado that hit Nashville and the region early on March 3, officials said. (CNS photo/George Wales P The Tennessean, USA TODAY NETWORK via Reuters)
SOLDIERS

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ordained in 2015. He believes that much of his life up to now has been preparing him to serve as a priest to U.S. soldiers in the Middle East.

“I feel like this is where God has called me to be at this time, in this place,” he said. “It’s an incredible sense of fulfillment of his call for me.”

Ministering to ‘your average Joe’

Father Ahern’s service in the Army gives him a special perspective on the experiences of the men and women to whom he is ministering in the Middle East. He says he feels drawn to reach out to “your average Joe,” the kind of soldier he had been.

One of them came up to him after a Mass he had celebrated, telling him that he needed to speak to a chaplain.

“I went and spent the time with him,” Father Ahern said. “He told me what he was going on, and what he was struggling with. I not only listened, but also offered words of encouragement and advice. He wasn’t a Catholic soldier, but he needed to talk to a chaplain.

“Because I know what it’s like to struggle with your leadership from time to time, because I was a soldier myself, I was able to relate with him and speak with him, not as an officer to an enlisted soldier, but as a chaplain to a soldier or even a soldier to a soldier.”

Father Ahern holds the rank of captain in the Indiana National Guard, which he joined as a chaplain after his ordination in 2015. Colonel Mark Brozak of the Kentucky Army National Guard serves with Father Ahern at Camp Arifjan. He appreciates the priest’s previous experience in the military.

“He understands the issues soldiers face, their concerns, and knows their spiritual needs,” Brozak said. “I have come to see Father Ahern as a very important part of our team here.”

Because Father Ahern has previously served in combat duty in the Army, he is entitled to wear what is known as a “combat patch” on his right sleeve. This, Brozak said, “adds further credibility to his abilities to understand and minister to soldiers. It’s a visible reminder of his service, which soldiers understand and respect.”

Brozak described the important role that military chaplains play during deployment, saying they help “maintain a soldier’s morale as well as their moral and ethical decision-making.”

Father Ahern, he noted, carries out this duty effectively for service personnel across the Middle East.

“It’s hard to quantify the impact this had on individuals,” Brozak said, “but these missions were a priority set by our commanding general, who routinely received updates and reports on the travels and actions of the chaplains.”

Brozak, who is Catholic, has personally appreciated the ministry of Father Ahern.

“The time he spent with just myself was invaluable in my religious formation which was something I wanted to work on while deployed,” he said. “Chaplains play a very important role in the health of individuals and organizations and their contributions cannot be underestimated.”

“It boosts their morale”

Father Ahern has to make the most of his face-to-face encounters with soldiers, though, because in many instances it’s the only one he’ll have with them.

During his time at Camp Arifjan, Father Ahern has often traveled to minister to U.S. soldiers across the Middle East. Many of those who are Catholic go several months between seeing a priest or worshipping at Mass because, at present, there are only six priests in the U.S. Army in the region.

“When you show up at a place, you have a number of [soldiers] who are just excited to see a priest,” Father Ahern said. “They ask you, ‘Father, when are you going to have Mass? OK, I’ll be there.’”

The excitement has nothing to do with Adam Ahern. It has everything to do with Jesus Christ. Being a part of that is so humbling. In a very real way, it’s bringing Christ to those who don’t have access to him otherwise.

Father Ahern’s time at forward operating bases (FOB) across the Middle East is packed with ministry because he is usually, at the most, only there for a day or two.

“There’s a reason why I’ve gone to every FOB that I’ve been to,” he said. “There was a soldier that God sent me there to speak to, whether that was in the homily, in celebrating the Eucharist, in confession or in a conversation we had afterward. All too often, I’ll never know. But every time it’s been an incredible blessing.”

Father Ahern is often assisted in his ministry by Indiana National Guard staff sergeant Misty Marroquin, who helps coordinate ministry teams across the Middle East. In her work, she knows that there are many more Protestants serving as chaplains than Catholic priests.

“You can see that it means a lot more when we travel to provide Catholic services,” said Marroquin. “You can see how much it means to them to have him there for a short amount of time when we get there to give those locations that haven’t had a priest for a number of months.

“It boosts their morale and helps them stay positive. For the short amount of time that we’re there, you can see the difference that it makes to help them get through what they’ve got to do.”

At the same time, the brief amount of time he gets to spend with soldiers can be difficult for Father Ahern.

“My heart breaks often,” he said. “You can see how hungry they are oftentimes for the Eucharist, for Christ, for the sacraments. You can see the joy when they do get the sacraments. But then it’s like, ‘I won’t be here tomorrow’.

“It’s hard and difficult. But it is what it has to be. So, I make my peace with it. I pray for them often and encourage other people to pray for them as much as I can.”

‘Please pray for our troops’

Although the settings in which he has ministered in the Middle East are very different from central and southern Indiana, much of what Father Ahern does in ministry is similar to what happens in archdiocesan parishes.

He celebrates the sacraments, prays the rosary with other Catholics, leads Bible studies and offers pastoral counseling.

“They’re away from family in ways that are often very stressful and tense situations,” Father Ahern said. “So, I’m intentional about trying to bring to them as typical a parish experience as I can. It’s very intentional in being that way. I try to provide for them what they’d get back home as much as I can.”

Like many priests in central and southern Indiana, Father Ahern also connects with those he serves in ordinary social situations: running 5K races, stopping by offices for a chat, gathering groups for a Catholic movie night or smoking a cigar at the Camp Arifjan Cigar Club.

“His presence and participation are certainly noticed by soldiers within the task force, and lends a certain amount of credibility to his role here as a chaplain as he is out there with the troops in all manner of activities,” Brozak said.

Father Ahern has also brought a bit of the archdiocese with him in his service in the Middle East.

When he became a chaplain in the Indiana Army National Guard, he requested a chaplain kit from the archdiocesan archives and received one that belonged to Msgr. Charles Ross, an archdiocesan priest who served as a chaplain in World War II and the Korean War and died in 2000.

While deployed, Father Ahern now celebrates Mass with a stole that had belonged to Msgr. Ross. He appreciates how it connects him to Msgr. Ross and other archdiocesan priests who served as military chaplains.

“It’s incredibly meaningful,” Father Ahern said. “It’s a tangible reminder of the heritage and the meaning that I’m trying to be a part of, not only as a priest, but as a priest of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis serving in the Army. The legacy that these men before me have blazed and the meaning that goes with it in bringing Christ to these incredible environments, … they’re truly incredible American heroes.”

Father Ahern’s deployment to the Middle East will likely come to an end before Easter, and he will return to the archdiocese.

But even though he’ll be then far away from the soldiers that he’s ministered to, they’ll still be close to him in prayer. And he asks that Catholics in central and southern Indiana to keep them in prayer, too.

“Please pray for our troops, because [they] need it,” Father Ahern said.

(In addition to praying, readers can support efforts to minister to Catholic soldiers through the donation of items such as rosaries and scapulars. To make a donation online, visit www.milarch.org. A military chaplain will then contact the donor. Instructions for making financial donations for the Archdiocese for the Military Services online or by check can be found at www.milarch.org/ways-to-support.)
Pope urges priests to tend to sick, health care workers during epidemic

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope Francis prayed that priests would find the courage to visit those who are sick and offer accompaniment to health care professionals and volunteers working during the coronavirus epidemic.

During a live broadcast of his daily morning Mass, Pope Francis again prayed for the many people who have fallen ill because of the virus and for health care workers.

“Let us also pray to the Lord for our priests, so that they have the courage to go out and go to those who are sick, bringing the strength of the word of God and the Eucharist and to accompany health care workers and volunteers in the work they are doing,” he said, on March 10 at the start of the Mass at the Domus Sanctae Marthae.

The Italian government issued a late-night measure on March 9 extending “red zone” restrictions already in place in the north to all of Italy, urging people to stay at home and avoid all unessential travel as part of already implemented plans to prevent the further spread of the virus.

The move came as Italy became the nation with the second-highest number of deaths related to the coronavirus and the second-highest number of confirmed cases in the world with 9,172 known infections, according to the World Health Organization on March 10. As of March 9, the virus had claimed the lives of 463 people in Italy, the Italian health ministry said.

The normally private daily Masses were being broadcast live on Vatican News and the Vatican YouTube channel to help people still be united in prayer with the pope, the Vatican said.

In his homily, the pope reflected on the first reading in which God tells the prophet Isaiah that even though people’s sins are like “scarlet” (Is 1:18), the Lord will make them “white as snow” (1:18) if people are willing and obey his command to set things right.

The pope invited people to use the time of Lent to speak God honestly about their sins because he is able “to change everything.”

Like Adam and Eve, people often try to hide from God when they realize they have sinned, the pope said. “Instead, ‘do not be afraid to come and talk, have courage even in your misery’ and show me,” the pope said.

Another way people try to hide is by putting on appearances of holiness and being a sinner and proudly showing off their adherence to God’s laws or their acts of charity.

“Vanity never heals. Rather it is poison, bringing disease to the heart, that hardness of heart that tells you, ‘No, don’t turn the lord, don’t go.’ Stay; believing oneself as self-sufficient.”

“Believe in the Lord. He knows, who we are. We know too, but vanity always calls us to cover ourselves” and hide, the pope said.

Churches and places of worship in Italy are allowed to stay open, but they must guarantee people stay three feet apart and avoid congregating.

St. Peter’s Square is Vatican territory, according to the Lateran Pacts agreement signed in 1929 between the Italian government and the Vatican. But since the Vatican is surrounded by Italian territory, the agreement allowed Italian police to provide security and law enforcement in the square and the entrance of the Vatican Museums.

A member of the Italian police told Catholic News Service that all forms of assembly in public spaces were open to the public—including outdoor concerts and religious events—were forbidden all across Italy. Even though the square is under the jurisdiction of Vatican City State, it is subject to Italian laws, the police officer said.

ELECTION

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People enter Nativty of Our Lord Church in St. Paul, Minn., on March 3. The church served as a polling place for the Super Tuesday presidential primary. (CNS photo/Dawn Hibbard, The Catholic Spirit)

experience as well as ethnicity, seems to have a lot to do with how the person believes against abortion, and Trump, along with Vice President Mike Pence, were ready to do that, Carney said, even if there were character issues.

“People who certainly are ashamed of a president who appeared in Playboy, poses with a Playboy cover behind him, brags about sexually assaulting women...they just say, ‘I’m a Republican and I’m going to give us these results.’”

Panelist Eugene Scott, a political reporter for The Washington Post, pointed out that there had been significant support among religious voters, particularly conservative Christians, by the Clinton campaign in the last election, and added that Democratic candidates should pay attention to those lessons from the past.

“Most recently, Brazile said, the ‘Protestant black community put the Catholic in the driver’s seat. That’s where we are.’ But she admitted that “while my faith has driven me and my politics...my party often doesn’t lead with faith, but what it does do is raise integrity and values,” and religious voters are important to other religions as well as to religious believers.

Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden and Sen. Elizabeth Warren, who dropped out of the presidential race on March 5, agreed that there were a few candidates who stood out among the candidates who backed Trump in the last election, but would not be open to voting for them if that person was the candidate, and would vote for other candidates who were religious as well as to religious believers.

“Don’t believe what voters tells you,” he said. “The biggest story related to faith and policy that the Democratic Party has come about in this election is people reflecting on what their faith means to them, and what values shape their politics and their view of policy,” said Scott.

Father Reese, too, supported the idea that those who are religious do not necessarily need to go to church, he said. “You can say that’s because they’re fake Christians. No. It’s because they’re disconnected. The people, what they’re seeking with Sanders, what they’re seeking with Trump, is what would be getting if they were going to church. I, for one, argue they’d be better off going to church.”

For those like Brazile, being a religious voter means hedging the losses of her Catholic grandmother who would open the Bible and read to her grandchildren in the living room. “Scruton from Conservative.com don’t grow any worse in doing good for the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not lose heart,” she said.

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ITALY

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closed to guided tours and tourists.”

Italian police were located as usual at the perimeter around the square that separates Vatican City State and Italian territory, as well as under the colonnade. But they were not allowing people to enter the square unless they could document it was for work reasons or other exceptions currently allowed by Italian law.

A small number of tourists could be seen taking selfies outside the square, and a group of tourists was looking for information about the Wednesday general audience. The March 11 audience was not an official event, but featured Pope Francis offering his catechesis broadcast online on Vatican media outlets.

In reference to the public Masses, the Italian bishops’ conference said in a statement on March 8, “This is a very restrictive step, the acceptance of which causes suffering and difficulty for pastors, priests and the faithful.”

After the Italian government issued a decree barring the celebration of all “civil and religious ceremonies, including funerals,” the bishops announced the suspension of public Masses until April 3.

“The acceptance of the decree is only motivated by the desire to do one’s part, even in this situation, to contribute to the protection of public health,” the bishops said.

As of March 9, the health and safety precautions published by the Vatican—which is an independent city-state within Rome—did not include a ban on public celebrations of the Mass, but they did insist that everything possible be done to ensure that people stay one meter apart.

Cardinal Angelo De Donatis, papal vicar of the Diocese of Rome, said that while all public Masses are suspended, churches “will remain open, as usual, for personal prayer.”

The Diocese of Rome, he said, “will assume an attitude of full responsibility toward the community in the knowledge that protection from infection requires even more rigorous measures, especially in interpersonal contact.”

“May this time of Lent help us to live this period of test evangelically,” Cardinal De Donatis said.

The decision to close St. Peter’s square and the entrance of the Vatican city was made in order to “defend the health and safety of all those who work in the Vatican and in the Italian territory,” the Vatican said.

The move came as Italy became the global epicenter of the outbreak, with the country toughening its restrictions in an attempt to slow the spread of the virus.

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People enter Nativty of Our Lord Church in St. Paul, Minn., on March 3. The church served as a polling place for the Super Tuesday presidential primary. (CNS photo/Dawn Hibbard, The Catholic Spirit)
Walking with ‘suffering Christ’ means standing with victims, says priest

The present status of safeguarding in the Church

By Jesuit Father Hans Zollner, right, a leading Vatican official dealing with the abuse crisis and what it means for the Church and for the Church’s understanding of salvation. "Tell me where theyology, in the face of the abuse, has changed," he said. "Where do we ask, ‘What does God want us to do now?’ Where are the theologians addressing this?"

The Church, he said, is good at standing with the vulnerable: the hungry, the poor, the immigrants and refugees. But it must also stand with those who have been victimized within the Church. "If we don’t, we are not walking with the suffering Christ," he said.

Parishes throughout the archdiocese have scheduled communal penance services for Lent. Below is a list of services reported to The Criterion.

**Batesville Deanery**
- March 20, 9 a.m.-9 p.m. (confession only, no service) at St. Joseph, Shelbyville
- March 20, 9 a.m.-9 p.m. at Holy Family, Oldenburg
- March 26, 7 p.m. at St. Catherine of Sienna, Decatur County, at St. John the Evangelist Campus, Bloomington
- March 29, 13:30 p.m. at St. Maurice, Napoleon
- March 31, 6:30 p.m. at St. Michael, Brookville
- April 1, 7 p.m. at St. Louis, Batesville
- April 2, 6:30 p.m. at St. Peter, Franklin County
- April 3, 9 a.m.-9 p.m. (confession only, no service), for All Saints, Dearborn County, at St. Martin Campus, Yorkville

**Bloomington Deanery**
- March 11, 7 p.m. at St. Agnes, Nashville
- March 31, 6 p.m. at St. John the Apostle, Bloomington
- April 6, 6:30 p.m. at St. Jude the Apostle, Bloomington
- April 2, 7 p.m. at St. Martin of Tours, Martinsville
- April 8, 6-9 p.m. for St. Charles Borromeo, Bloomington, and St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Center, Bloomington, at St. Paul Catholic Center, Bloomington

**Connersville Deanery**
- March 19, 6:30 p.m. at St. Mary, Connersville
- March 23, 6:30 p.m. at St. Elizabeth of Hungary, Middletown
- March 24, 6:30 p.m. at St. Patrick, Connersville

**Indianapolis East Deanery**
- March 19, 7 p.m. for St. Therese of the Infant Jesus, Lawrenceburg
- March 26, 9 a.m.-9 p.m. at St. Joseph, Eminence
- March 27, 6-8 p.m. for St. Michael, Greenfield
- March 28, 9-11 a.m. at St. Michael, Greenfield

**Indianapolis South Deanery**
- March 19, 7 p.m. for Holy Name of Jesus, Beech Grove, and Good Shepherd, at Holy Name of Jesus
- March 25, 7 p.m. at Our Lady of the Greenwood, Greenwood
- March 30, 7 p.m. for St. Ann and St. Thomas More, Mooresville (Indianapolis West Deanery), at St. Thomas More
- April 4, 9 a.m. at SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi, Greenwood

**Indianapolis West Deanery**
- March 18, 7 p.m. at St. Susanna, Plainfield, and St. Joseph, at St. Susanna
- March 30, 7 p.m. for St. Thomas More, Mooresville, and St. Ann (Indianapolis South Deanery) at St. Thomas More
- April 3, 7 p.m. for St. Michael the Archangel, St. Gabriel the Archangel and St. Monica, at St. Michael the Archangel
- Wednesdays in Lent, 6-7 p.m. at Mary Queen of Peace, Danville

**New Albany Deanery**
- March 18, 7 p.m. at St. Mary, New Albany
- March 18, 7 p.m. at St. Michael, Franklin
- March 19, 7 p.m. at St. Mary, New Albany
- March 22, 7 p.m. at St. Mary-of-the-Knobs, Floyd County
- March 26, 8 a.m.-8 p.m. (confession only, no service), for all parishes
- April 1, 7 p.m. at St. Anthony of Padua, Clarksville
- April 5, 1 p.m. at St. John the Baptist, Starlight

The following additional confection times are part of New Albany Deanery’s “The Light is on for You”

**St. Bartholomew, Columbus, at St. Bartholomew
- April 1, 6-7 p.m. for St. Ann and St. Joseph, Jennings County, at St. Mary, North Vernon, and at St. Ambrose, Seymour, at St. Ambrose

**Terre Haute Deanery**
- March 24, 2 p.m. at St. Margaret Mary, Terre Haute
- March 31, 7 p.m. at Indiana University, Terre Haute
- April 1, 7 p.m. at Sacred Heart, Clinton
- April 6, 7 p.m. at St. Paul the Apostle, Greenfield
- April 8, 11 a.m. at St. Patrick, Terre Haute
- April 8, 7 p.m. at Annunciation, Brazil

Additionally, the following confection times are offered in the Terre Haute Deanery

Saturday in Lent:
- St. Margaret Mary, Terre Haute, 3-3:45 p.m.
- Sacred Heart, Clinton, 3-3:45 p.m.
- St. Joseph University, Terre Haute, 3-3:45 p.m.
- Sacred Heart of Jesus, Terre Haute, 4 p.m.
- St. Benedict, Terre Haute, 4 p.m.
- St. Paul, Greencastle, 4-4:45 p.m.
- St. Patrick, Terre Haute, 7:15-7:45 p.m.
- First Saturday of the month (March 7, April 4), 9-11 a.m. at Annunciation, Brazil

Sundays in Lent:
- St. Patrick, Terre Haute, 8-8:30 a.m.
- Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Brazil, 8-8:45 a.m.
- Noon at St. Paul the Apostle, Greencastle
- First Sunday of the month (March 1, April 5) 8:30 a.m. at St. Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods

Tuesdays in Lent:
- St. Joseph, Rockville, 4:30 p.m.
- St. Benedict, Terre Haute, 7-8 p.m.

Thursdays in Lent:
- St. Joseph University, Terre Haute, 7-8 p.m.
Giving alms during Lent can happen in many ways

By Stephanie Clary

A traditional way to approach the Lenten practice of almsgiving is to give from the excess that you create by fasting. For example, according to Catholic Relief Services, you save approximately $3 per person, per meal, when you abstain from serving meat. By that estimate, eating meat-free on every Friday during Lent could save a single person more than $60 and a family of four more than $250 (and that’s not including the additional fasting on Ash Wednesday).

By choosing to abstain from eating meat on more days than the obligatory Fridays, one could save an even more significant amount of funds throughout Lent to then give to the organization or organizations of one’s choosing. This approach of giving from the excess of what you give up connects the Lenten pillars of fasting, almsgiving and prayer to reinforce the interconnected dynamic of how we all exist, survive and flourish as the body of Christ and creation of God.

It’s also a convenient way to be able to financially give a little more than usual without drastically affecting your budget. But what if you are unable to fast for health or safety reasons, or what if you already live a frugal lifestyle without funds to spare? Does this mean that you are unable to participate fully in the three Lenten pillars because you are unable to donate money somewhere this Lent? Of course not.

Almsgiving does not have to take the form of financial alms. There are many ways to be generous toward others that do not require excess in your bank account (or a bank account at all, for that matter).

It’s easy to focus on the financial aspect of almsgiving because the Church, your organization and others who are strapped for cash this Lent, consider giving alms—or generously supporting nonprofits to see if there are any volunteer services, offer to clean, organize or do yardwork for any subject who do it regularly: influencers. Shares on social media platforms can be so effective that we have a name for the sort of promotion that comes with likes, comments and shares on social media platforms can be so effective that we have a name for people who do it regularly: influencers. Your influence just might help somebody else encounter the cause that you care about, and you’ll have helped the organization without costing them, or you, a penny.

But the examples we have of the body of Christ and how each part contributes to the whole do not rely upon every member always making financial contributions. They rely on the many parts exercising their own individually unique gifts and talents for the benefit of the whole (see 1 Cor 12).

Scripture tells us of Martha and Mary being generous with their hospitality when Jesus visits their home (Lk 10:38-42). Peter, Thomas, Nathanael and the sons of Zebedee were generous with their talent of fishing when they shared their breakfast catch with Jesus and the others on the shore (Jn 21:10-13).

The women were generous with their time when they approached Jesus’ tomb with enshrinking spices and oils after his crucifixion (Lk 23:55-24:1). Early followers of Christ were generous with their belongings, sharing with anyone who was in need (Acts 2:44-45).

And Paul was generous with his praise as he wrote to various early Christian communities and spoke of others who were living for Christ. Like the companions of Jesus and other early followers of Christ, Christians today also find themselves in various contexts with different gifts to offer. If you’re strapped for cash this Lent, consider giving alms—or generously supporting others—with one of these alternative methods to monetary donations.

• Be generous with your time. Check in with your parish or other local nonprofits to see if there are any volunteer opportunities coming up in which you could participate. If there aren’t structured volunteer services, offer to clean, organize, do yardwork or anything else that they might need some extra help with during the spring.

• Be generous with your talents. What are you good at? What do you enjoy doing? See if your parish or another organization that you would like to support could use any (free) help in those areas.

• Be generous with your belongings. In the consumerist culture of Western society today, it’s easier than ever to live among an overabundance of things. Clean out your closet, toy chest, bookshelf or whatever space in your home seems a little cluttered and donate the items that you no longer need to a parish thrift store, homeless shelter, day care or other nonprofit in need.

• Be generous with your hospitality. Invite friends, family or colleagues over for a home-cooked meal. Or prepare a meal and deliver it to the door of someone who could use the support right now, such as parents with young children, those who are sick, healing or otherwise mobility-limited, new neighbors or those preparing for a move, or anyone who happens to be in a particularly busy season of life right now.

• Be generous with your praise. Personal recommendations go a long way in the digital age. The sort of promotion that comes with likes, comments and shares on social media platforms can be so effective that we have a name for people who do it regularly: influencers.

If you are unable to make monetary donations to the Church or organizations that you would like to support this Lent, consider providing a boost online by liking or commenting on posts, sharing a website link or leaving a review.

Your influence just might help somebody else encounter the cause that you care about, and you’ll have helped the organization without costing them, or you, a penny.
Joyful Witness/Kimberly Pohovey

Near accident results in God’s work of mercy

Lent always lets me give pause to our need to practice the corporal works of mercy. Years ago, I talked about the traffic jam and car accident, while driving my car on a curve of a small road that was located around the corner from that narrow, curvy road. A man walked toward the direction of my car as I was making the turn and out of the road, carrying his morning cup of coffee.

As I approached him, some commotion caught my attention inside the car. Honestly, I cannot remember the catalyst anymore, and I reached down to retrieve something from the floor. As I did, I swerved slightly to the right side of the road. The man was walking extremely closely to me and was startled enough to fling his cup of coffee which splattered across my windshields. It appeared to be in a car.

As I passed him, I looked in my rear-view mirror and saw him raise his arms in anger. While I could not hear him, I could only guess he was likely angry, given that he had just swerved. Thoughts began to race through my mind. I needed to get to my boys to school before they were late and could just drive on—no one would know. I should turn around and apologize. I knew what was the right thing to do, but deep down I always knew I quickly dropped off my kids and returned. I found that the gentleman had already progressed several blocks down the road. I pulled over into a nearby lot and raced to catch up to him. He turned around and stared at me in disbelief. I took him in, noting his disheveled appearance.

I believe there were a few very uncomfortable minutes of staring, he finally responded, “I can’t believe you came back.” I assumed he had caught my sorrow, asked for his forgiveness and offered to buy him another drink. To which he again replied, “I can’t believe you came back.” I rambled an excuse about being distracted while driving and repeated my sorrow. His face softened.

I handed him a $20 bill to buy himself a replacement cup of coffee and told him to keep the change. I was astonished to see him more if I had it on me. I was still unsure of his reaction when he began to cry. He said that no one had ever treated him like he had. He hugged me tightly and said he was grateful. Can you imagine? He was grateful! We introduced ourselves to one another. He explained to me that he was nearly homeless and going blind. He was only able to see what was in front of him and catch his doctor appointment. He would need to make a bus transfer and wasn’t sure he had enough fare to get him farther down the road walking along that road, he was praying to God to help him find a way to make it to his appointment. That’s when I literally caredened into his life.

God definitely works in mysterious ways. I know I will not forget this man. He would not have had the bus fare he needed to see a doctor who hopefully helped him.

We parted ways tear-eyed. I was touched by his mercy. He felt I was the answer to his prayer. Both of our thirsts were quenched.

(Kimberly Pohovey is a member of St. Jude Parish in Indianapolis. She is the director of major and planned gifts for the Indiana Office of Stewardship and Development.)

Our Works of Charity/ David J. Bethuram

Get out of your rut, find a new path in life

There is a sign along an Alaskan highway that has caught the attention of many a motorist: “Practice Your Carefully. You’ll Be It For The Night.”

Author Henri Nouwen, in his book In Search of the Lotus, admits to being in one for more than 20 years. He was sent to the externals, he had it made: the University of Notre Dame and Harvard were on his resume. And his field of study was equally impressive: theology mixed with courses in pastoral psychology and Christian spirituality.

Nothing wrong with that, but the rut got so deep he could not hear the call of God.

Listen to his honest admission:

“I entered into my fifties and was able to realize the unlikelihood of doubling my years, I came face to face with the simple question, ‘Did becoming older bring me closer to the Lord?’ After 25 years of the priesthood, I found myself praying poorly, living somewhat isolated from other people, and very much preoccupied with giving up writing books….”

As he settles into his two-story 18th-century house in the spring of 1972, Nouwen reflects on the past 25 years and the new path he is about to take: “I woke up one day with the realization that I was living in a very dark place and

The Human Side/ Fr Eugene Hendrick

Be patient and persistent, draw closer to God during Lent

Looking for an inspiring Lenten practice? Read Mark’s Gospel in which Christ heals the blind man.

I like when I arrived at Bethesda, they brought a blind man and begged him to touch him. He took the man’s hand, and led him outside the village” (Mk 8:22- 23).

It is reminiscent of the passage of Isaiah, “I am the Lord, your God, who granteth thee waters wherein to drink, and will show thee way, to tread, and will lead thee in paths that thou knowest not” (Is 41:13).

When praying during Lent, let us start our prayer, “Oft God take my hand and lead me. May we put ourselves into your hands whereby we may understand and be about our agenda, please let it be an opening of ourselves to your will.”

There is a saying, “The more we are distracted from prayer, the stronger are our needs.” By letting God take center in our prayer life and pursuing his agenda, we allow his providence to take root in our soul. Leading the blind outside the village gives us another principle of prayer—disengaging ourselves from all there” with God in silence. Only he who can be silent can speak meaningfully. Prayer is conversation with God in which we not only exhale, but also inhale. Silence and its tranquility allow us to exhale, to listen and breathe in God’s presence.

Mark’s Gospel is unique in that Christ first puts speak on the blind man’s eyes allowing him to see, but not fully. Then Christ lays his hands on him and cures his blindness every time.

Some have interpreted this double healing as a lesson for his Apostles who were slow in understanding Christ’s mission and needed to be strengthened. It also contains the principle that prayer takes time in growing our relationship with Christ.

To be touched by God’s love, prayerful patience and courage are necessary. At times we would like to “all there” with God in silence. Only he who can be silent can speak meaningfully. Prayer is conversation with God in which we not only exhale, but also inhale. Silence and its tranquility allow us to exhale, to listen and breathe in God’s presence.

Mark’s Gospel is unique in that Christ first puts speak on the blind man’s eyes allowing him to see, but not fully. Then Christ lays his hands on him and cures his blindness every time.

(Father Eugene Hendrick writes for Joyful Witness/Perspectives.)

Twenty Something/Christina Capuchetti

‘Joyful momentum’ works when need is gathered

There comes a moment when something clicks. At a book club or a Bible study. In a Catholic store and freezer food shop. A connection is made, and a turning point is taken on a life of its own.

Elizabeth Tomlin has experienced it many times and, as a non-Catholic, no one is to come to rely on it.

There was the time she had just moved to Texas, and she showed up at a parish get-together with a casserole. The other young moms embraced her. Fresh flowers, name tags and free child care eased her entry. Their warm smiles sealed the deal.

There was the time a son got into college. And it came, a different time, a time when college tuition was paid in a lump at a year’s end. The laundry together became a highlight of the summer.

With each new beginning came more insights into the vital role of women’s ministry. No, she couldn’t bear it. She threw in her heart every family the packet had and moved out. But she could share it with others, experiencing the power of vulnerability and shared faith.

Elizabeth became a founding member of the L’Arche Dallas/Lake Dallas Women. She served as a de facto consultant to Catholics trying to start or grow women’s groups.

The Washington-bred mom with curly red hair, an adventurous spirit and a buoyant faith came to realize she had something to say. She began rising at 5 a.m. to write in the dining room, coffee at her feet. She wrote tips interspersed with spiritual insights. Reflection questions, prayers and anecdotes, suggested that women might write a book.

She had written a book, which was just published by Ave Maria Press. The title—Joyful Momentum— alludes to the biblical friendship that offered the perfect starting point: the visitation between Mary and her pregnant cousin, Elizabeth. An exchange that was equal parts joy and mystery.

The title also conveys the practical nature of the book: keys to growing the kind of ministry that develops momentum. It explains how to cultivate spiritual friendships, develop hospitality, embrace your strengths, serve the community, respect differences and mentor newcomers.

Women need relationships—more so than ever, perhaps, in an Instagram age. Elizabeth’s book is an invitation to develop.”

Elizabeth, now 39, “We are supposed to walk alongside our sisters in Christ. Face-to-face conversations are essential. So are tip-offs and one-on-one, person-to-person conversations can help open the trap of becoming digitally addicted yet interpersonal detached.”

As the persistent and two-story brick colonial on an Air Force base near Tacoma, Elizabeth has an opportunity to live out the Jesus who shows up in the trap of becoming digitally addicted yet interpersonal detached.

Some I learn and re-learn is that when you accept hospitality, you also help the person you are with, you are affirming that person’s value,” she said. “God put us into community to lift each other up.”

There is plenty of laughter along the way.

See CAPECCHI page 14
The Sunday Readings

Sunday, March 15, 2020

- Exodus 17:3-7
- Romans 5:1-2, 5-8
- John 4:5-42

The source of the first biblical reading for this Lenten weekend’s Mass is the Book of Exodus, one of those five books of the Bible regarded as the basis of God’s revelation to the chosen people. They saw in these books the initial theological concepts and practical regulations about human behavior, as given by God to Moses. Together, these books constitute the Torah, still the cornerstone of Judaism.

The Samaritans were of Hebrew heritage, but they had acquired when foreigners invaded the land, compromising with paganism, and even inter-marriage with pagan foreigners. Inter-marriage added insult to injury, because by such unions Samaritans diluted the Hebrew heritage.

Faithful Jews scorned Samaritans and looked upon them with contempt. Also, at the time of Jesus, no adult, unmarried man ever engaged a strange woman in conversation, let alone a Samaritan.

Jesus obviously set all these considerations aside. He bore the mercy of God, and this mercy was meant for everyone—no exceptions.

Furthermore, by outreach to this Samaritan woman, the Lord asserts that every person possesses dignity, indeed a right to eternal life.

More than Moses of old, Jesus promises a gift of life-giving, satisfying water available from no well or spring beside a rock.

Finally, the Lord predicts that a new order is coming. It will be neither centralized in Jerusalem, nor on the mountaintops where the Samaritans customarily worshipped.

Reflection

Very much a part of Lent are the Church’s preparations to receive new members during the Easter Vigil. Central to the vigil is the triumphant celebration of the Eucharist. The Lord lives! Water also is a prominent symbol. With water ritually blessed at the vigil, the Church will baptize new members.

For those Catholics already members of the Church and not being baptized at the Easter Vigil but participants nevertheless, water also will symbolize life. The previously baptized will renew their baptismal promises aloud. The priest will sprinkle them with blessed water to recall their baptisms.

While this water will symbolize new life, in these readings, the Church tells us that God alone, in Jesus, is the source of life eternal, as baptism indicates. Lent is our time to decide whether to receive this life or not. ♦

Daily Readings

Monday, March 16
2 Kings 5:1-15b
Psalm 42:2-3, 43-34
Luke 4:24-30

Tuesday, March 17
St. Patrick, bishop
Daniel 3:25, 34-37
Psalm 25:4-5, 6-7b, 8-9
Matthew 18:21-35

Wednesday, March 18
St. Cyril of Jerusalem, bishop and doctor of the Church
Deuteronomy 4:1, 5-9
Psalm 147:12-13, 15-16, 19-20
Matthew 5:17-19

Thursday, March 19
St. Joseph, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary
2 Samuel 7:4-5a, 12-14a, 16
Psalm 89:2-5, 27, 29
Romans 4:13, 16-18, 22
Matthew 1:16, 18-21, 24a or Luke 2:41-51a

Differences in Gospels aren’t necessarily contradictions

In the Gospel for the feast of the Epiphany, Matthew indicates that the Magi visited with King Herod in Jerusalem at the time of Jesus’ birth, and that apparently soon after their visit, the Holy Family fled to Egypt to avoid the wrath of Herod and stayed there until Herod had died. But on Feb. 2, we heard Luke’s account of the Christ Child’s presentation in the Temple in Jerusalem just a few weeks after his birth, and Luke indicates that the Holy Family returned then to Nazareth in Galilee. How are we to reconcile these different accounts? (Ohio)

Some Scripture scholars have pointed out what you see as a conflict between the infancy narratives of Matthew and Luke.

Other biblical authorities, however, have no problem with reconciling the two narratives. The key, they explain, is to understand that the four Gospel authors wrote for different audiences, and thus each of them did not feel compelled to detail every aspect of the life of Jesus.

Luke, for example, says nothing about the flight into Egypt while Matthew doesn’t mention the Temple observance of the presentation.

In addition, the Gospel writers sometimes used the word “then” to introduce a particular passage as though the events happened in quick succession, while that may not have been true.

Luke does not say that the Holy Family returned to Nazareth “immediately” after the presentation in the Temple; he simply indicates that Mary and Joseph settled afterward in Nazareth, without specifying how much time had elapsed.

So, it is quite possible that Luke’s narrative allows for a period of time for a flight into Egypt to escape the wrath of Herod, followed by an eventual return to Nazareth.

Question Corner/Fr. Kenneth Doyle

Does the Church ordain married men as priests? (Texas)

A man’s ordination as a priest does not necessarily preclude him from marriage. After ordination, however, a priest’s personal life can be demanding, and many priests choose to remain single.

Also, in the Catholic Church, a priest is not considered married in the same way as a lay person. A priest’s vow of poverty, chastity, and obedience does not preclude him from marriage, but it does mean that he must be committed to his vocation as a priest above his personal desires.

On the other hand, some people believe that married men are more likely to understand the needs of married families, and that they may be better able to relate to their parishioners. However, these are personal opinions, and there is no one-size-fits-all solution to the question of whether to ordain married men as priests.
Coronavirus prompts colleges to halt international programs

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Amid concerns over the current outbreak of the coronavirus, several Catholic colleges and universities in the U.S. have canceled their international study programs. At least five such programs for Italian students were among those canceled last week.

In writing about the semester’s discontinuation at Loyola University Chicago’s John Felice Rome Center, the program’s director, Michael Andrews, said: “Please remember that it is our civic responsibility to do everything we can to prevent any additional spread of the virus, keeping in mind the most vulnerable among us.” Andrew stated that the program was committed to providing a positive alternative learning experience for its students.

Like other college leaders in this position around the country, he said the main goal at this time is to get students home safely and to be sure they stayed at home for the 14-day period directed by the Centers for Disease Control.

Villanova University announced on its website that “given the rapid increase in the number of confirmed cases in northern Italy, we have made the decision to bring home our students who are abroad in Italy. The university is in close contact with other study abroad programs in which Villanova students are participating and will determine appropriate responses to additional disruptions caused by the coronavirus.”

Gonzaga University announced it has suspended all academic courses in Florence, Italy, effective on March 6, and said students should make “immediate plans to travel back to their home residence.” Similarly, Fairfield University is closing its Florence University of the Arts study abroad program, and requiring the 142 students enrolled in the program to leave Italy and return to the main campus by March 15 where they will have the option of online and hybrid classes to remain on track to graduate.

Boston College officials said initially they were taking a wait-and-see approach regarding the school’s college program in Parma, Italy, but “after much thought and consideration,” they decided to close the program for the spring semester.

None of the college officials said they, too, had to “make the difficult but necessary decision to end all programming” in Italy for the rest of the semester. The school has 106 students studying in the Italian study program, 27 in the architecture program, one in law and 78 in other disciplines, who will be flown back to the United States as soon as possible.

The university previously announced a ban on school-sponsored travel to China and South Korea and is now extending that prohibition to Italy. It also said on its website that it continues to recommend against personal travel to China, South Korea, Italy, Iran and Japan. Boston College also placed a prohibition on university-sponsored travel to China and South Korea.

Students from the University of St. Thomas’ Catholic Studies program in St. Paul, Minn., and its seminary program at St. John Vianney, were also asked to return home by March 6 with the closing of the school’s Bernardus campus in Rome this semester.

Students will be able to complete their classes from St. Paul, the university said.

“We simply cannot predict how COVID-19 will continue to spread throughout Italy, and we believe it is in the best interests of our students to leave Rome before the ability to do so is restricted,” university officials said.

CAPECCHI

Elizabeth likes to quote St. Ignatius Loyola, who said: “Laugh and grow strong.”

Laughter helps an把istry look more like an amusement, an adventure. It softens as it strengthens.

Just as surely as it bonds women finding humor in a shared experience, it also directs them to God, Elizabeth says.

“Laugh and grow strong.”

(Christmas CAPECCHI is a freelance writer from Inver Grove Heights, Minn.)
**Director/Coordinator of Religious Education**

St. Margaret Mary and St. Patrick parishes of Terre Haute, Indiana, are seeking a full-time director/coordinator of religious education to implement and oversee parish faith formation programs at all levels beginning June 1, 2020.

Applicant should have a love for the Catholic faith, knowledge of and commitment to the Archdiocesan Faith Formation Guidelines and Faith-Formation Curriculum and the ability to work together with catechists, youth ministers, RCIA team, school personnel and pastoral staff. Experience in parish formation programs preferred. Masters in Theology or related field preferred.

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

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

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

**Equal Opportunity Employer**

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**PRINCIPAL**

Sacred Heart Academy, Louisville, Kentucky

Sacred Heart Academy, an all-girls Catholic high school in Louisville, Kentucky seeks a mission-driven, visionary, collaborative, student-focused and community-centered Principal beginning July 1, 2020. The Principal will promote the Catholic educational development of the school’s staff and students, with emphasis on the Ursuline core values. The ideal candidate will serve as a community leader, fostering a climate of well-being and engagement of students, faculty and staff within the Academy and serve as a role model, reflecting the school’s Catholic and Ursuline identity while embodying the creative and forward-thinking direction of the school.

The Principal holds primary responsibility for providing personal and visible leadership for the faculty, staff, students and families on the mission of the school and will be involved with the development and implementation of a strategic long-term plan that is consistent with both that mission and the vision of Sacred Heart Schools. 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 a vital member of the planning, managing and monitoring of the annual budget.

Sacred Heart Schools 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.

Interested candidates should send a letter of interest and resume to shsemployment@shslou.org.

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**Coordinator of Stewardship and Membership**

St. Elizabeth Seton Catholic Church, Carmel IN, is seeking a Coordinator of Stewardship and Membership who reports to the Director of Finance. The Coordinator provides leadership, strategic direction and coordination for all parish stewardship, fundraising efforts, and initiatives, including Diocesan appeals, offertory enhancement campaigns, and Parish Database Management. Coordinator develops and implements a stewardship program that increases parishioner’s awareness of stewardship, challenges them to integrate stewardship into their daily lives, to engage parishioners into active, full and mindful participation in the parish and, encourages generous sharing of financial resources.

**Core Responsibilities:**
- Must be a practicing Catholic in good standing.
- Strong strategic, leadership, and organizational skills. Cultivates best practices for engaging parishioners through gifts of time, talent, and treasure.
- Ability to build positive and enduring relationships with clergy, parish staff, lay leaders and ministers, as well as diocesan staff and leadership.
- Partners with parish Stewardship Council to cultivate a warm and hospitable culture of stewardship in the parish that is guided by the parish mission.
- Strong written communication skills, including the ability to write in a clear, concise, persuasive, and grammatically correct manner.
- Ability to respond well to shifting priorities and changing work situations; ability to work effectively in ambiguous situations; ability to develop new skills to remain effective; ability to adapt to changes; ability to adapt strategies in response to new information or changes to a situation.

**Education and Qualifications Preferred:**
- Bachelor’s Degree from an accredited college or university required.
- Demonstrates good judgment, decision-making and problem resolution skills independently.
- Ability to work well under pressure, be flexible and collaborate with others.
- Can effectively work under timelines and deadlines.

Please send cover letter, resume, and salary history, in confidence, to:

Kevin Sweeney, Director of Finance
St. Elizabeth Seton Catholic Church, Carmel IN
kevin.sweeney@setoncarmel.org

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**Part-Time Typist**

The Tribunal is seeking a part-time typist. Responsibilities include typing testimony from witnesses and/or the primary parties of a case.

Qualifications include strong typing skills, experience using personal computers, ability to maintain a high level of confidentiality and well-developed interpersonal and organizational skills. A high school diploma or its equivalent is required. This position would be 18 hours per week.

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

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

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

**Equal Opportunity Employer**

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**Administrative & Research Assistant**

Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology is seeking an individual to work full time assisting the Director of the Young Adult Initiative in carrying out all activities and functions of a grant-funded program that aims to help parishes engage young Catholics ages 23-29. Full job description can be found at www.saintmeinrad.org/jobs.

An Associate’s degree or equivalent work experience is required. Office technology and computer literacy are essential. Internet research, website design, and social media engagement experience preferred. Desktop publishing experience beneficial.

We offer a competitive wage and benefit package. Please email your cover letter and resume to hr@saintmeinrad.edu or fax: 812/357-8262, or mail to:

Saint Meinrad Archabbey
Human Resources Dept.
200 Hill Drive
St. Meinrad, IN 47577

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**Part-Time Auditor**

The Tribunal is seeking a part-time auditor. Responsibilities include obtaining testimony from witnesses and/or the primary parties of a case via telephone or in-person interview.

Qualifications include strong typing skills, experience using personal computers, ability to maintain a high level of confidentiality and well-developed interpersonal and organizational skills. A high school graduate or its equivalent and some college is required. This position is 5 hours per week and is ideal for a candidate who would like a more flexible position. Occasional evening work is required. The ideal candidate would be Spanish speaking.

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

To apply, please e-mail a cover letter, resume, and salary history, in confidence, to:

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

**Equal Opportunity Employer**
Poll: Fewer Catholics see Christian persecution as an urgent issue

NEW YORK (CNS)—More than half of Catholics in the U.S. are “very concerned” about global Christian persecution, but this group accounts for 52 percent of Catholics today, compared to 58 percent in winter 2019, according to a new poll.

It also showed the number of Catholics in the U.S. who think Christian persecution is “very severe” declined compared to a year ago, dropping from 46 percent to 41 percent.

Results of the third annual nationwide poll examining the views of U.S. Catholics on the global persecution of Christians were released on March 4. The poll was conducted by McLaughlin & Associates for Aid to the Church in Need-USA, an international papal agency that supports suffering and persecuted Christians in more than 140 countries. Respondents also ranked global Christian persecution as a less urgent issue than human trafficking, poverty, climate change and the global refugee crisis.

Catholics who described themselves as being “very devout” were most concerned about Christian persecution, but the poll showed that even this group has ranked human trafficking as the issue of greatest concern for three consecutive years.

“While 52 percent of American Catholics show strong concern about the persecution of Christians, it is nevertheless disheartening to see the drop in their number compared to a year ago,” George Marlin, chairman of Aid to the Church in Need-USA, said in a statement.

“It’s telling,” he said, “that U.S. Catholics consider human trafficking, poverty, climate change and the refugee crisis—as important as these issues are—to be more important than the persecution of Christians.

“Two years ago, the genocidal campaign waged by ISIS against Christians and other minorities in Iraq and Syria had only just begun to decline,” Marlin said, “but memories of that atrocity have faded since then.

“This may well help explain the apparently lesser concern” about Christian persecution by Catholics in the U.S., he said.

In listing the countries where they believe Christian persecution is most severe, U.S. Catholics identified Iran as the worst offending nation, followed in order by North Korea, Iraq, Syria, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia as the next five worst-offending countries. Other findings of the poll showed:

• More than one-fifth of Catholics in the U.S. said their parish is “not engaged”; and 22 percent of their parish’s level of engagement on the issue.

• As for their local bishop speaking to the Easter Vigil and Easter Sunday. It signals the end of the Church's Lenten fast as we anticipate the championship game Chenes.

Easter Sunday.

At the end of it all, March Madness truly begins. One victorious team. Many teams and families. Amen.

Jesus Christ, and every one of us shares in his victory over sin and death. Amen.

New Albany
(Tom Yost is a pastoral associate at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in New Albany. †)