



The

# Criterion

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## Joyful Witness

Near accident results in God's work of mercy, writes columnist Kim Pohovey, page 12.

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## BRINGING CHRIST TO THE FRONT LINES



Father Adam Ahern celebrates Mass on Feb. 8 for soldiers on a military base in Jordan. There is no regular chaplain serving the region, and the soldiers appreciate when a chaplain visits. (Submitted photo)

### 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.

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

See **SOLDIERS**, page 8

### 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 Sciupac, 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 voters 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

See **ELECTION**, page 9

### 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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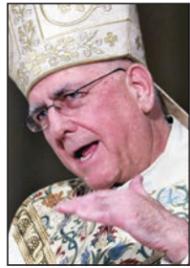


A worker sprays disinfectant to combat the coronavirus in the Basilica of San Domenico Maggiore in Naples, Italy, on March 6. (CNS photo/Fotogramma/PA/ABACAPRESS.COM/No via Reuters)

# USCCB launches 'Walking With Moms in Need' yearlong parish service project

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



Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann

through all nine months of pregnancy across the country.

The new program has its own website, [www.walkingwithmoms.com](http://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 courthouses 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 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 contained what several observers at the time called the strongest expression ever of Church teaching against capital 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: Celebration 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. †



## Public Schedule of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

March 13 – 23, 2020

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>March 13 – 11:30 a.m.</b><br/>St. Patrick's Day Parade, Indianapolis</p> <p><b>March 14 – 2 p.m.</b><br/>Confirmation Mass for youths of St. Anthony of Padua Parish, Clarksville, at St. Anthony of Padua Church</p> <p><b>March 16 – 4:45 p.m.</b><br/>Mass and dinner with Diocesan Catechetical Leaders of Indiana at Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, Indianapolis</p> <p><b>March 17 – 1 p.m.</b><br/>Council of Priests meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis</p> <p><b>March 18 – 8 a.m.</b><br/>Mass for students of St. Monica School, Indianapolis, at St. Monica Church</p> <p><b>March 18 – 10 a.m.</b><br/>Department heads meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center</p> | <p><b>March 18 – 7 p.m.</b><br/>Confirmation for youths of Good Shepherd Parish, Indianapolis, at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, Indianapolis</p> <p><b>March 19 – 10 a.m.</b><br/>Leadership Team meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center</p> <p><b>March 19 – 6:30 p.m.</b><br/>Mass at Edinburgh Correctional Facility, Edinburgh</p> <p><b>March 21 – 9:30 CT</b><br/>Mass to Celebrate 150th Anniversary of Saint Meinrad Archabbey being named an abbey at Archabbey Church of Our Lady of Einsiedeln, St. Meinrad.</p> <p><b>March 21 – 5:30 p.m.</b><br/>Baptisms at St. Augustine Church in Lebanon, Ky.</p> <p><b>March 23 – 8 a.m.</b><br/>Indiana Bishops and Major Superiors meeting at Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House</p> |
|--|--|

(Schedule subject to change.)

## 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 structural 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 as 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." †

## Official Appointment

Effective Immediately

**Rev. Jayaseelan Sengolraj,** Archdiocese of Delhi, India, to parochial vicar of SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi Parish in Greenwood.

(This appointment is from the office of the Most Rev. Charles C. Thompson, Archbishop of Indianapolis.) †

## Correction

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

## 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/popessintentions](http://www.archindy.org/popessintentions).) †



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# Bill lifts barriers to career opportunities for youths in poverty

By Victoria Arthur

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 continuing to

receive 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 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.

"Many companies today have a minimum requirement of one to two years of relevant work experience, even for entry-level jobs," Goodrich said. "Programs like internships and

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

Beyond offering a brighter future for young people in difficult circumstances, Goodrich said the legislation makes good economic sense for Indiana. Gov. Eric Holcomb has launched an initiative known as Next Level Jobs that aims to take the state's workforce to the next level with a focus on in-demand, high-paying positions. Next Level Jobs provides free training for Hoosiers and reimbursements for Indiana employers offering such training in high-demand fields like health care and information technology.

The governor's agenda calls for filling more than 1 million job openings in Indiana by 2025. According to state officials, there are currently 45,000 positions available for highly skilled individuals.

"Indiana's unemployment rate continues to sit below the national average, but we also have more jobs available than workers to fill them," Goodrich said. "This bill reaffirms our continued focus on growing our workforce to help support a solid pipeline of skilled workers to keep Indiana's economic momentum moving forward."

House Bill 1009, which was awaiting the governor's signature at press time, had strong backing from the Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC).

"The ICC supported this bill because



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

—Rep. Chuck Goodrich

it supports the family unit," said Angela Espada, executive director of the ICC, the public policy voice of the Catholic Church in Indiana. "The families affected by this bill receive public assistance, which means they are financially vulnerable. Our faith calls us to assist the poor.

"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.

"We were hearing from practitioners in the [Next Level Jobs] initiative that students were being discouraged 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.

TANF is a federal government program that provides grants to the states for distribution to families in deep poverty. Because of antiquated state guidelines, the \$288 maximum monthly payout for a family of three in deep poverty has not been adjusted for inflation in more than 30 years. Senate Bill 111 would have modernized TANF in Indiana, but the measure did not receive a hearing.

Fraser explained that if House Bill 1009 becomes law, TANF benefits would receive immediate protection, unlike those related to SNAP and for Medicaid, which would require the state to file for a waiver and then await federal approval.

"TANF is unique in that the state has the power right now to decide what is and isn't income," Fraser said. "The state would be able to make this change for TANF families right away under its own authority, so that is exciting to us because it's progress on the TANF portion right away."

"I am very hopeful that the governor will sign this legislation," she added.

To follow priority legislation of the ICC, visit [www.indianacc.org](http://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.) †



**'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

# After leading 'virtual' Angelus, pope blesses crowd in St. Peter's Square

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope Francis did not recite the Sunday *Angelus* from the window of his studio overlooking



Pope Francis

St. Peter's Square on March 8, but he did go to the window to wave and to bless the pilgrims who showed up anyway.

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 asked people throughout Italy to avoid large gatherings, particularly indoors, and to keep a yard's distance between people in public in the hopes of slowing 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 be closed until April 3 to reduce situations where people crowd together.

Pope Francis began his *Angelus* address acknowledging that "it's a bit odd, today's *Angelus* prayer with the pope 'caged' in the library," but he said he could see there were people in the square and he was with all those who were praying with him.

"I am close in prayer to the people who are suffering from the current coronavirus epidemic, and all those who are caring for them," the pope said. "I join my brother

bishops in encouraging the faithful to live this difficult moment with the strength of faith, the certainty of hope and the fervor of charity.

"May this season of Lent help us give everything a Gospel sense, even this moment of trial and suffering," Pope Francis said.

After his Ash Wednesday services on Feb. 26, Pope Francis began cancelling events because of a cold, according to the Vatican press office. While he was not coughing during the *Angelus* on March 8 and while his voice was not as hoarse as it had been, the microphone did pick up the sound of wheezing.

The tradition of the pope reciting the *Angelus* with visitors in St. Peter's Square began with Pope Pius XII in the fall of 1954; he had done a special radio broadcast of the *Angelus* on the feast of the Assumption, Aug. 15, that year and decided it was a practice he wanted to expand.

Since then, the popes have kept the Sunday noon appointment except when they were traveling or, in the case of St. John Paul II, when he was hospitalized. However, even after being shot on May 13, 1981, he recorded a brief message broadcast in St. Peter's Square.

In his main *Angelus* address on March 8, Pope Francis spoke about the day's Gospel account of the transfiguration.

Jesus took Peter, James and John up Mount Tabor with him; "the privilege of being at the transfiguration was reserved to them" and not all 12 Apostles, the pope noted. "But why the choice of these three? Were they holier? No. Peter, at time of trial would deny him. And the two brothers, James and John, would ask to have the first places in his kingdom.

"Jesus does not choose according to our

criteria, but according to his plan of love," the pope said. "Jesus' love has no limit.

"It was a gratuitous choice, without condition, a free initiative, a divine friendship that asked nothing in return," Pope Francis said. "And as he called those to 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. "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 baptism we received makes us witnesses, not because of our own abilities, but by the gift of the Spirit." †

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## Editorial



St. Patrick, patron of Ireland, is depicted in a stained-glass window at St. Christopher Church in Baldwin, N.Y. In most U.S. dioceses, the feast of St. Patrick is celebrated as an optional memorial on the saint's traditional feast day, March 17. (CNS photo/Gregory A. Shemitz)

## 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 bishops. But most of the clergy and laity remained Catholic.

It wasn't until 1829 that Catholics, under the leadership of Daniel O'Connell, won their religious freedom when the Catholic Emancipation Act relieved Catholics of both England and Ireland of most of the civil disabilities to which they had been subject.

It was during the Irish potato famine when the Irish began to emigrate to America. A million people died in Ireland between 1845 and 1849 because of famine. After the famine, they continued to come to America.

The Irish war of independence lasted from 1919 to 1921. It ended with the creation of Northern Ireland in 1922, which remained part of Great Britain, and mostly Protestant.

Relations between Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland deteriorated and resulted in what was known as "the Troubles." These lasted for 33 years, ending in 1998, and led to more than 3,500 deaths.

Today, though, there's a possibility that unification between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland

could take place in the near future. That could be one of the results of Brexit, the vote in Britain to exit the European Union, but also the fact that the Sinn Fein party in Ireland got the largest share of first-place votes in the recent election. That party's core objective, its manifesto says, "is to achieve 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. Today 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 fiction 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/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 after temptation at him.



What does your temptation look like? Everyone is different, 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—words with me that told me how to live life, words that taught me to pray.

My temptation was to use the visit to read the newspaper or to text with a friend or sibling. But, after the whisper from the Holy Spirit to "live in the moment," I found with each visit I wanted to etch every moment with her into my memory.

Mom passed away in December. One of the things she taught me early in life was, "Live your life so you won't have regret." Such wise words from a very wise woman.

You may be asking yourself, "What does all of this have to do with Lent?"

I'm finding myself noticing the world around me only to see so many others missing the moment. Their heads are always down looking into their phone. Singer-songwriter James Taylor recently said, "Distraction is a modern curse."

I believe he may be on to something.

Along with giving something up for Lent, consider adding something to your Lenten promise. How about allowing yourself to "live in the moment?" Try putting your phone (the modern curse) down for a while each day, looking into the eyes of the person with whom you are talking.

Enjoy nature. Watch the clouds as they pass by, noticing how they break apart to form shapes. Notice the smell of a storm moving through, and the change in the temperature right before it hits. Listen to the birds singing and the sounds of the wind rustling through the trees.

When I was very young, after dinner, my mom and I would sit on the front porch swing. We would talk and sing songs together. But, once in a while, she would say, "Shh. I hear silence coming." I would stop talking, and we'd sit silently, just listening.

When I became an adult, I figured out she just needed some quiet time and that was a good way to get me to stop talking. But, it also blessed me with cherished memories.

Now, when I hear the horn from a far-off train, frogs croaking or crickets chirping, it takes me back to that porch swing with my mom. Such a treasured memory.

A wise fictional character, Ferris Bueller, famously said, "Life moves pretty fast. If you don't stop and look around once in a while, you could miss it."

There are many things you can do for a Lenten promise. Be kind. Limit your screen time. Throw away or gift 40 things in order to de-clutter your life. Pray for something different each of the 40 days.

Janice Hughes says, "Rich is the person who has a praying friend."

Take a moment each day for self-examination of your life. Are you the person who has a praying friend, or are you the person to enrich the life of others by being the friend who prays?

And, finally, are you living your life with no regret?

"Shh. I hear the silence coming." Stop talking and listen. See what goodness comes when you are open to being "in the moment."

Let us make our Lenten journey together "in the moment."

(Amelia Goffinet is a health officer, a permanent substitute teacher at Our Lady of Providence High School in Clarksville and a member of St. Augustine Parish in Jeffersonville.) †

## Reflection/Tom Yost

### March Madness and Lent have much in common

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

The NCAA college men's basketball tournament begins on March 15 with what is known as "Selection Sunday." This is the day when teams and fans around the country find out if they have been selected to play in the tournament. As strange as this might seem, I believe March Madness and the season of Lent have a lot in common.



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 an assembly ... gather the people ... notify the congregation ... assemble the elders ... gather the children" (Jl 2:15-16) because something big is about to begin.

We then move into tournament time when the teams do battle. The players and coaching staff prepare themselves mentally, physically, emotionally and, I would dare say, even spiritually. They discipline and focus themselves to reach the Final Four and ultimately the championship game. Interestingly enough, the teams that make it to the final game go 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

See REFLECTION, page 16



# Christ the Cornerstone

## 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; the water 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 4:5-42) tells the story 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.’ His 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 is surprised that Jesus 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 be thirsty again; 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 4:13-14). Still focused on the practical, the woman replies, “Sir, give me this water, so that I may not be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water” (Jn 4:15).

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 much greater 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, to build bridges not walls.

Let's pray for the grace to follow our Lord's example. Let's acknowledge Jesus as the living water we are thirsting for. †



# Cristo, la piedra angular

## 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).*

La lectura del Evangelio del tercer domingo de Cuaresma del año (Jn 4:5-42) narra la historia del encuentro de Jesús con una samaritana en el pozo de Jacobo.

El relato es extraordinario por varios motivos: destaca la humanidad y la divinidad de Jesús, y muestra claramente que su ministerio derriba las barreras que nos separan. Tal como lo expresaría el papa Francisco, en esta lectura del Evangelio Jesús rompe varios muros y los sustituye por puentes.

Según san Juan:

“Una mujer de Samaria vino a sacar agua, y Jesús le dijo: ‘Dame de beber.’ Pues Sus discípulos habían ido a la ciudad a comprar alimentos. Entonces la mujer samaritana le dijo: ‘¿Cómo es que Tú, siendo judío, me pides de beber a mí, que soy samaritana?’ [Porque los judíos no tienen tratos con los samaritanos]” (Jn 4:7-9).

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 hable pero lo que le dice a continuación en verdad la asombra.

La mujer ve claramente que Jesús está cansado y sediento. Le pide que le dé de beber, una petición meramente humana, pero también le habla sobre un tipo de sed distinta. “Si conocieras el don de Dios y quién es el que te dice: ‘Dame de beber,’ tú misma se lo hubieras pedido, y él te habría dado agua viva” (Jn 4:10).

¿Qué significa el “agua viva” y por qué Jesús se lo menciona? Al principio, la mujer se muestra totalmente confundida; lo enfoca desde una perspectiva práctica, no espiritual. “Señor, no tienes con qué sacarla, y el pozo es hondo; ¿de dónde, pues, tienes esa agua viva?” (Jn 4:11) La respuesta de Jesús parece incomprensible: “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). Todavía

concentrada en el aspecto práctico, la mujer le responde: “Señor, dame de esa agua para que no tenga más sed y no necesite venir hasta aquí a sacarla” (Jn 4:15).

Esta es la tercera barrera que debemos superar: la que obstruye nuestra capacidad para ver más allá del aquí y ahora para llegar al significado más profundo de nuestras vidas. Sí, somos humanos y tenemos necesidades básicas que atender: hambre, sed, necesidad de techo, sanación física y más. Pero también somos seres espirituales cuyas necesidades trascienden los requisitos mundanos. Necesitamos amor, perdón y esperanza para el futuro. Necesitamos creer que nuestras vidas tienen un propósito y que el camino que emprendemos desde el momento de nuestra concepción hasta el día en que morimos nos llevará a nuestro hogar celestial. Esta es la sed de la que habla Jesús, la que solo él puede calmar.

Solo cuando Jesús le señala a la mujer su verdadero estado civil se da cuenta ella de que le habla de algo más grande que la sed física. “Tienes razón al decir que no tienes marido,” le dice Jesús. “Porque has tenido cinco

y el que ahora tienes no es tu marido” (Jn 4:17). Jesús no la regaña ni la desprecia; le dice la verdad con amor.

La mujer le dice entonces: “Señor, veo que eres un profeta” (Jn 4:19). Al darse cuenta de que se ha encontrado con “el que es llamado Cristo,” la samaritana abandona sus preocupaciones prácticas (el cántaro) y se fue a contarles a los demás sobre Jesús.

Ese 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 temporada de la Cuaresma para recordarnos que, tal como les 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 debemos decir verdades desagradables, como hizo Jesús, pero lo hacemos por amor, para construir puentes, no muros.

Oremos por la gracia para seguir el ejemplo de nuestro Señor. Reconozcamos a Jesús como el agua viva que anhelamos. †

# Events Calendar

For a list of events for the next four weeks as reported to The Criterion, log on to [www.archindy.org/events](http://www.archindy.org/events).

## March 16

Holy Spirit Church, 7243 E. 10th St., Indianapolis. **Lenten Series: "On Care for Our Common Home" ("Laudato Si'")—Impact of Energy Production/Transportation on Our Environment**, third of four topics (March 30), 7 p.m. each evening, free. Information: 317-353-9404.

Seton Catholic Elementary School, 700 N. A St., Richmond. **Pop Into Primary School**, 8:30-10 a.m., for families with children ages 3-5, stories, games, snacks, information on Seton Catholic early learning opportunities, RSVP for event or to schedule another time to visit: 765-962-5010, [www.setonschools.org](http://www.setonschools.org).

St. Mark the Evangelist Parish Cenacle House, 6118 Smock St., Indianapolis. **Caregiver Support Group**, sponsored by Catholic Charities, 5: 30-7 p.m. Information: Monica Woodsworth, 317-261-3378, [mwoodsworth@archindy.org](mailto:mwoodsworth@archindy.org).

## March 19

St. Joseph Church, 1401

S. Mickley Ave., Indianapolis. **Third Thursday Adoration**, interceding for women experiencing crisis pregnancy, 11 a.m.-7 p.m., with Mass at 5:45 p.m.

Our Lady of Peace Cemetery and Mausoleum, 9001 Haverstick Road, Indianapolis. **Mass**, 2 p.m. Information: 317-574-8898 or [www.catholiccemeteries.cc](http://www.catholiccemeteries.cc).

## March 20

St. Joan of Arc Church, 4217 Central Ave., Indianapolis. **Lenten Devotions**, adoration noon-6 p.m., rosary 6 p.m., Mass 6:30 p.m., Stations of the Cross with Benediction 7 p.m. Information: 317-283-5508, [mrivelli@stjoa.org](mailto:mrivelli@stjoa.org).

St. Rita Parish, 1733 Dr. Andrew J. Brown Ave., Indianapolis. **Fish Fry**, 11 a.m.-6 p.m., dinners \$11.50-\$14 includes two sides, dessert, soda; sandwiches or entrées \$10-\$12.25; à la carte items available for purchase, pre-order for pick-up 317-536-1047, 317-632-9349, ext. 111. Information: [stritasecretary71@yahoo.com](mailto:stritasecretary71@yahoo.com)

St. Anthony of Padua Parish, 316 N. Sherwood, Clarksville. **Fish Fry**, 5-7:30 p.m., baked fish, fried fish, oysters, shrimp, adults \$9-11, children \$3-\$7. Information: 812-282-2290. Holy Angels School, 2822 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. St., Indianapolis. **Fish Fry**, 3-7 p.m., dinners, sandwiches, desserts, adults \$9-13, children \$8. Information: [holyangelsbulletin@hotmail.com](mailto:holyangelsbulletin@hotmail.com), 317-926-3324.

Calvary Mausoleum Chapel, 435 W. Troy Ave., Indianapolis. **Monthly Mass**, 2 p.m. Information: 317-784-4439 or [www.catholiccemeteries.cc](http://www.catholiccemeteries.cc).

## March 20-21

Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. **Encounter School of Healing**, presented by Encounter Ministries, Joe Philip and Sean Breeden speaking, Fri. 6:30-9:30 p.m.; Sat. 9 a.m.-10:30 p.m., Vigil Mass 5 p.m., healing service 7:30 p.m. (open to public, across from Catholic Center at SS. Peter and

Paul Cathedral); Sat. lunch provided, \$69 per person or \$35 for priests and religious. Information and registration: [encounterministries.us](http://encounterministries.us).

## March 20-22

Basile Theater, Athenaeum, 401 E. Michigan St., Indianapolis. **The Sound of Music**, performed by Agape Performing Arts Company of Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish in Greenwood, Fri. 7:30 p.m., Sat. 2:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m., Sun. 3:30 p.m., ticket range \$5-\$15. Tickets: [thelittleboxoffice.com/agape](http://thelittleboxoffice.com/agape). Information: 317-983-1965, [inquiries@agapeshows.org](mailto:inquiries@agapeshows.org).

## March 21

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

Indiana Convention Center, Sagamore Ballroom, 100 S. Capital Ave., Indianapolis. **Indiana Catholic Women's Conference**, sponsored by Marian Center of Indianapolis, Franciscan Father Pio Francesco Mandato, Gina

Bauer, Annie Karto and Msgr. Joseph Schaedel speaking, 8 a.m. registration, 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. conference, includes lunch, vendors, Mass, reconciliation, adoration, Benediction, \$55 per person or \$50 per person for groups of 10 or more, students \$25 and religious \$15. For more information, to register online or to print a downloadable registration form, go to [bit.ly/ICWC2020](http://bit.ly/ICWC2020) (case sensitive).

## March 22

Monastery Immaculate Conception, 802 E. 19th St., Ferdinand (Evansville Diocese), **Sundaes with the Sisters**, sponsored by the Sisters of St. Benedict, receive input on discernment, visit and meet with the sisters, 1-3 p.m. Information: [vocations@thedome.org](mailto:vocations@thedome.org), 812-367-1411.

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Leave the Light On**, reconciliation available 9 a.m.-7 p.m., no appointment necessary. Information: Jennifer Burger, 317-545-

7681, [jburger@archindy.org](mailto:jburger@archindy.org), [www.archindy.org/fatima](http://www.archindy.org/fatima).

## March 23

St. Thomas More Parish Gymnasium, 1200 N. Indiana Ave., Mooresville. **Vocations Awareness Event**, sponsored by St. Thomas More Parish and St. Thomas More Knights of Columbus Council #7431, 6:30 p.m. dinner, followed by introduction of seminarians from Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary and presentation, free. Reservations requested by March 20. Reservations and information: 317-834-3371, [knights@stm-church.org](mailto:knights@stm-church.org).

## March 25

St. Simon the Apostle Church, 8155 Oaklandon Road, Indianapolis. **Lenten Taizé Prayer Service**, 7 p.m. Information: 317-826-6000.

The Well Community Center, Brownsburg Older Adult Alliance, 554 Pitt Road, Brownsburg. **Caregiver Support Group**, sponsored by Catholic Charities, noon-1:30 p.m. Information: Monica Woodsworth, 317-261-3378, [mwoodsworth@archindy.org](mailto:mwoodsworth@archindy.org).

## Retreats reflecting on Holy Week available throughout archdiocese

Several Catholic retreat centers throughout central and southern Indiana will offer directed and/or silent retreats of varying length reflecting during Holy Week, which is on April 5-11 this year.

Following is a list of Holy Week-related retreat opportunities reported to *The Criterion*.

**Archabbey Guest House and Retreat Center, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad.** For more information or to register for this retreat, call 812-357-6585 or e-mail [mzoeller@saintmeinrad.edu](mailto:mzoeller@saintmeinrad.edu).

• April 8-12: "The Easter Triduum: Three Days, One Easter." Live the Paschal Mystery through the liturgy with the monastic community of Saint Meinrad Archabbey. Benedictine 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 [benedictinn@benedictinn.org](mailto:benedictinn@benedictinn.org) or go to [www.benedictinn.org/programs](http://www.benedictinn.org/programs).

• April 9-12: "Triduum 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 agape feast. The retreat is from 4:30 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 of Retreat." Spend the day in silent reflection with a private room and access to the common areas and grounds. The day is from 9 a.m.-4 p.m., 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.oldenburgfranciscancenter.org](http://www.oldenburgfranciscancenter.org).

• April 9-12: "Holy Week Retreat." Spend time in silence and reflection during these four holy days, and experience liturgical celebrations with the Sisters of the Third Order Regular of St. Francis in their chapel. 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, 5353 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](mailto:jburger@archindy.org), or go to [www.archindy.org/fatima](http://www.archindy.org/fatima).

• 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 Sunday. Saturday will be a day of silence. The cost is \$200 per person for a private room and shared bathroom, or \$400 per married couple for a private room and private bathroom. The cost includes five meals and snacks.

• April 6-9: "Holy Week Days of Silence." Register for one or multiple days set aside for silence and personal reflection. Each non-directed retreat day is from 8 a.m.-4 p.m. and costs \$35, which includes breakfast, lunch, a room to use throughout the day, and access to common areas and grounds. Depending on availability, overnight stays are available for an additional \$28, with a \$9 dinner when available. Spiritual direction is also available for an additional suggested donation. To schedule to meet with a spiritual director during your stay, contact Georgene Beiriger at 317-545-7681, ext. 105, or [gbeiriger@archindy.org](mailto:gbeiriger@archindy.org).

## Register by March 20 for Camp Rancho Framasa Women's Only Weekend retreat on March 27-29

A "Women's Only Weekend (WOW)" retreat for women ages 21 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 also 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 \$200 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, go to [www.campranchoframasa.org/womens-only](http://www.campranchoframasa.org/womens-only), call 888-988-2839 or e-mail [info@campranchoframasa.org](mailto:info@campranchoframasa.org).

## Retreats for youths and young adults on March 28 look at 'Engaging and Empowering the Next Generation'

The archdiocesan Black Catholic Ministry and St. Christopher Parish in Indianapolis are teaming up 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, 5301 W. 16th St., in Indianapolis, on March 28.

The version for youths in middle school through high school will take place from 10 a.m.-2:15 p.m. The retreat will begin with prayer and will include discussion, the opportunity for confession at noon, and Mass at 1 p.m. followed by lunch. Parents and guardians are welcome to attend.

The version for young adults ages

18-35 will take place from noon-4:30 p.m. It will begin with confession at noon, Mass at 1 p.m., lunch, prayer and discussion.

Both retreats, which will be facilitated by Society of Divine Vocations Father Emeka Okwuosa, are free, although freewill offerings will be accepted.

Registration is required by March 26. To register or for more information, contact archdiocesan Black Catholic Ministry coordinator Pearllette Springer at 317-236-1474 or [pspringer@archindy.org](mailto:pspringer@archindy.org), or St. Christopher pastoral associate of faith formation Providence Sister Mary Ann DeFazio at 317-241-6314, ext. 119, or [mdefazio@stchrisindy.org](mailto:mdefazio@stchrisindy.org).

Events and retreats can be submitted to The Criterion by logging on to [www.archindy.org/events/submission](http://www.archindy.org/events/submission), or by mailing us at 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202, ATTN: Cindy Clark, or by fax at 317-236-1593.

# 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 sprang 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, and said the Tennessee State Council is 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.

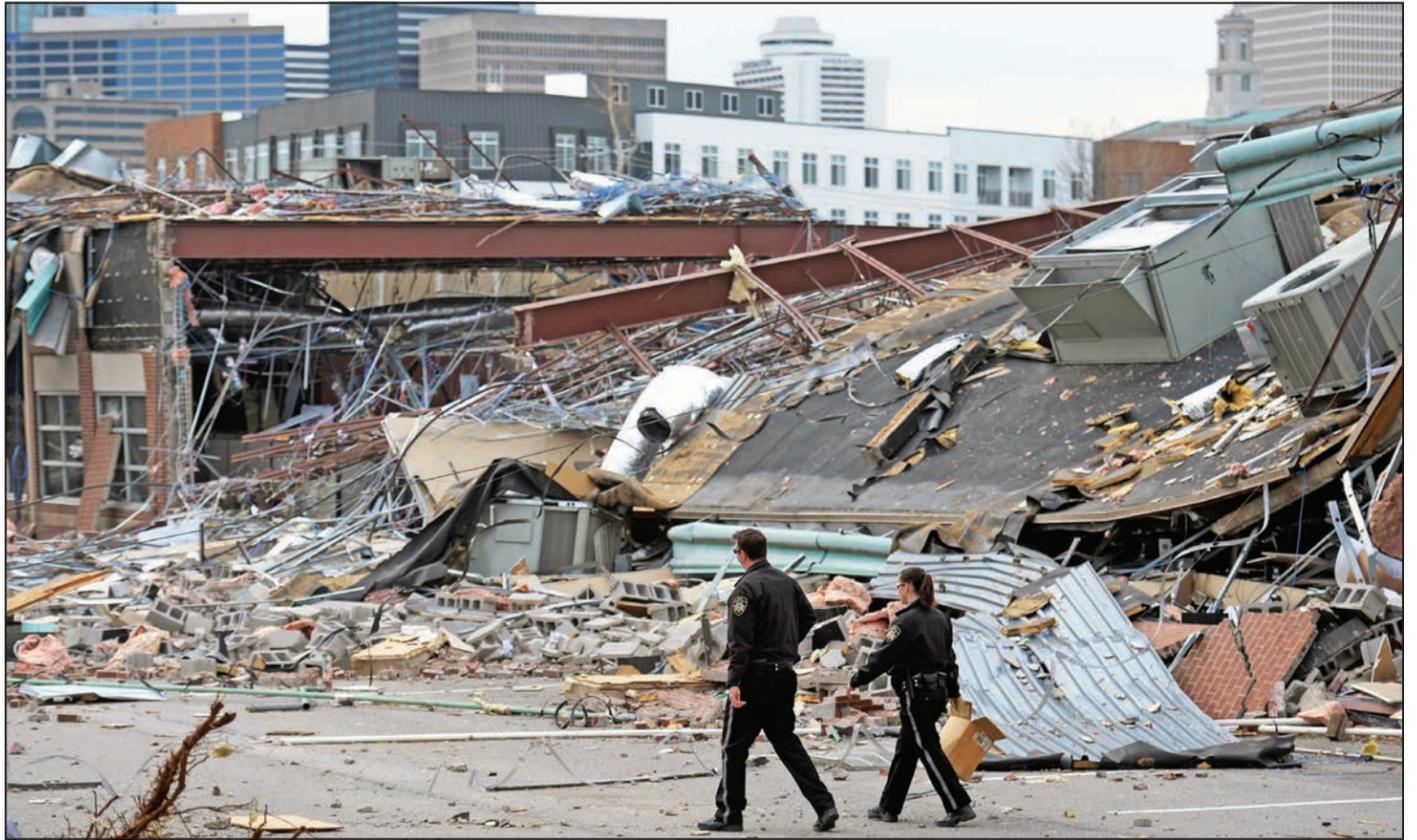
The Catholic Schools Office is



Volunteer Jonathan Abarquez 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 Walker IV, The Tennessean, USA TODAY NETWORK via Reuters)



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 roared up to 165 miles per hour. (CNS photo/Mark Zaleski, for The Tennessean)

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, those 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,



Bishop J. Mark Spalding of Nashville, Tenn., center back, listens on March 4 as Father S. Bede 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)

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.

As 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 \$24,000 to help parishes and people affected by the tornado.

Donors are encouraged to give online through [www.dioceseofnashville.com](http://www.dioceseofnashville.com) or [www.cctenn.org/donate.cfm](http://www.cctenn.org/donate.cfm).

The grant money, and additional donations, could be used to beef 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. †

# 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.

"We spent the next hour talking," Father Ahern said. "He told me what 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.

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.'"

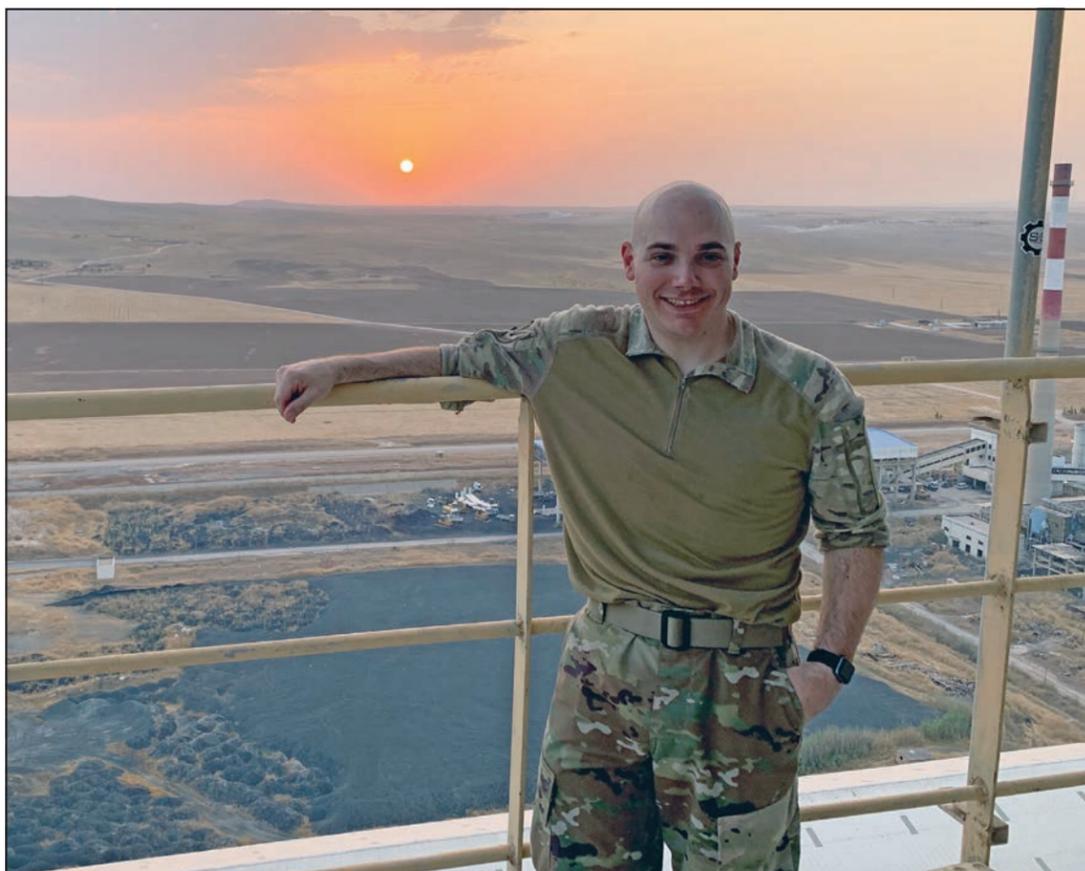
"The excitement has nothing to do with Adam Ahern. It has everything to do with Jesus Christ. Being a part of that is so humbling. In a very real way, it's bringing Christ to those who don't have access to him otherwise."

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 to these locations that



A sunset serves as a spectacular backdrop for Father Adam Ahern overseas on Aug. 13, 2019. He and a Protestant chaplain climbed a 30-story tower while talking and praying. (Submitted photos)

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 what is 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



Father Adam Ahern prays the rosary on Aug. 22, 2019, on a Blackhawk helicopter over northeast Syria.

other archdiocesan priests who served as military chaplains.

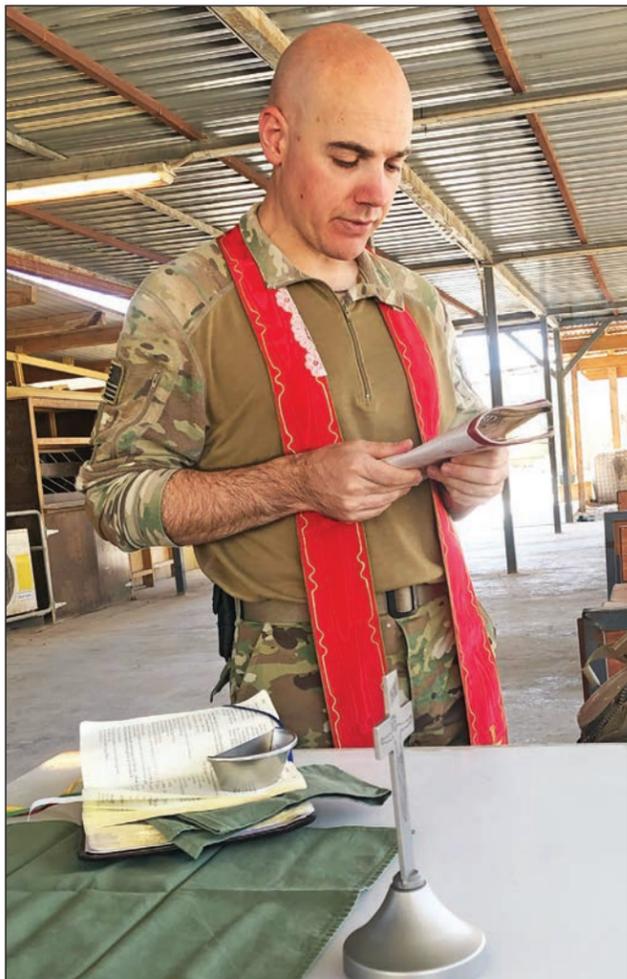
"It's incredibly meaningful," Father Ahern said. "It's a tangible reminder of the heritage and the meaning that I'm trying to be a part of, not only as a priest, but as a priest of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis serving in the Army. The legacy that these men before me have blazed and the meaning that 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 then be 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, send an e-mail with contact information and a brief description of the items to [jredmond@milarch.org](mailto:jredmond@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](http://www.milarch.org/ways-to-support).) †



Father Adam Ahern prepares to celebrate Mass on Sept. 16, 2019, outside a dining facility in Afghanistan because there is no chapel on the base. It was the first Mass celebrated in three months at this location. Father Ahern wears a stole 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.

# 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” (Is 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 to 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, he said. Instead, “do not be afraid to come and talk, have courage even in your misery” and shame, the pope said.

Another way people try to hide is by putting on appearances of not being a sinner and by proudly showing off their adherence to God’s laws or their acts of charity, he said.

“Vanity never heals. Rather it is poison, bringing disease to the heart, that hardness of heart that tells you, ‘No, don’t turn to



Pope Francis celebrates Mass in the chapel of his residence, the Domus Sanctae Marthae, at the Vatican on March 10. For the second day this week, the pope celebrated Mass without a small group of the faithful in order to avoid the risk of spreading the coronavirus. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)

the Lord, don’t go. Stay,’ believing oneself as self-sufficient.

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

## 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 a public 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 mediated 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 drastic measures, especially in interpersonal contact.”

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

The decision to close St. Peter’s followed a major measure implemented by the Italian government on March 9, discouraging people nationwide from all unessential travel and from leaving their homes unless it was for work, getting food, medicines or seeing a doctor.

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 or places open to the public—both indoor and outdoor—are 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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experience as well as ethnicity, seems to have a lot to do with how the person approaches the ballot box.

For political operative Donna Brazile, a former interim national chair of the Democratic National Committee, her beliefs have largely been shaped by her experience as a black Catholic from Louisiana. The third of nine children, she said she benefited as a child from government programs such as Head Start that helped not just with education but nutrition and health care—programs that have suffered amid political bickering, which has left a generation of children behind, she said.

“We don’t talk about them. They are the victims of this conversation and this battle that we’re having,” she said. “We never talk about maternal health. We never talk about the children who get born, who

get nothing, who get no health care, no ability to survive. We’re snatching away the only food they get every day from a government that can afford to feed them.”

Yet others voted for Republicans and in particular for Trump because they felt that they and their religious institutions were under attack by Democrats who did little to reach out to them, said panelist Timothy Carney, an editor at the *Washington Examiner* and author of *Alienated America: Why Some Places Thrive While Others Collapse*.

“The white evangelical looks around and says, ‘I’m a religious minority now.’ That’s the main thing that’s going on now,” Carney said, explaining that people who never would have defended the behavior of Trump in the past felt that “he’s what’s between me and the state that’s going to come after our institutions,” and decided to support him.

They wanted a president to defend their beliefs 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, ‘He’s the guy who gives us these results.’”

Panelist Eugene Scott, a political reporter for *The Washington Post*, pointed out that there had been a lack of outreach to religious voters, particularly conservative Christians, by the Clinton campaign in the last election, and any potential 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 with values,” and includes voters of other religions as well as of no religious beliefs.

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 conservative Christians out there who backed Trump in the last election, but “would be open to voting for them if that person [the candidate] was aware of them and was reaching out,” Scott said.

But some panelists called out the Democrats, saying that when it comes to the abortion issue, the party has not been welcoming to pro-life Democrats, and has gotten tangled up in responses for fear of how other Democratic constituencies might respond, as well as how others would react when you mention the word “Catholic.”

“I think anyone who mentions ‘Catholic’ is going to tick off some of the main constituencies in the main party,” said Father Reese.

And yet, the Pew center’s Podrebarac Scrupac said more than half of voters in a survey said that it was “very important or somewhat important” to have a president share their religious beliefs. In

the Democratic camp, Biden is perceived as someone who is “very or somewhat religious,” while the rest of the Democrats weren’t perceived similarly.

But Father Reese pointed out that while Latino Catholics may have said they favored someone religious, they voted for Sanders, who, even though he has referred to how Judaism shaped his view, is not perceived to be religious.

“Don’t believe what voters tell you,” he said.

“The biggest story related to faith and politics in the context of identity that 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 said he feared that elections, of late, are run more on fear than love. Carney said religious voters in the last election and this election are looking for something to belong to, something that perhaps in the past was satiated by belonging to a church.

“The quintessential Trump [voter] in the early primaries was the white evangelical who does not 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 they 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 heeding the lessons of her Catholic grandmother who would open the Bible and read to her grandchildren her favorite Scripture from Galatians: “Do not grow weary in doing good for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up” (Gal 6:9).

“That woman had so much faith, giving us that hope every day. Feeding that hope every day is what we should do in our lives to remove fear and doubt and hate because that is not of God. That is the devil we have to rebuke,” she said. †



People enter Nativity 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/Dave Hrbacek, *The Catholic Spirit*)

# Walking with ‘suffering Christ’ means standing with victims, says priest

CHICAGO (CNS)—Jesuit Father Hans Zollner, one of the world’s leading experts on safeguarding minors, said the Church is suffering “institutional trauma” from clerical sexual abuse, trauma that it must learn to integrate into its theology and understanding of salvation if it is to overcome it.

He visited the Archdiocese of Chicago on March 1-3 to speak with seminarians, clergy and members of religious congregations on “The Present Status of Safeguarding in the Church,” which also was the topic of his March 2 DePaul University talk.

Father Zollner, a German, is a licensed psychologist and psychotherapist with a doctorate in theology, the president of the Center for Child Protection at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, a member of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors and a consultant to the Vatican’s Congregation for Clergy.

He was one of four leaders appointed by Pope Francis to organize the February 2019 summit on abuse for the presidents of episcopal conferences.

In his presentation, Father Zollner compared the Church to an individual suffering from trauma who tries to wall it off, keeping it separate from everyday life. That can work well for a time, he said, but eventually the wall develops cracks, the trauma bleeds through and the person suffers flashbacks, reliving rather than simply remembering the traumatic event.

“My theory is that is happening in the Catholic Church now,” the priest said. “What has been hidden is coming out now, but that brings out the whole history.”

“When people read news of an abuse that happened 50 years ago, they read it like it happened yesterday and nothing has changed. ... The awareness of the trauma that had been lingering 30, 40, 50 years has undermined the self-perception of the Church.”

Father Zollner said 2018 was a watershed for the global abuse crisis, starting with Pope Francis’ defense of

accused Chilean priest Fernando Karadima and Bishop Juan Barros in January of that year, saying he had seen no proof that the accusations against Karadima were true.

Less than two weeks later, after a public outcry, the pope sent Archbishop Charles J. Scicluna of Malta, adjunct secretary of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and the Vatican’s chief abuse investigator, to Chile, where he spoke to some 70 victims. In May 2018, Pope Francis called the 34 bishops of Chile to Rome, where they all offered their resignations.

“A whole bishops’ conference offering their resignations—this is something that has never happened in Church history,” Father Zollner said.

“The pope didn’t address it as a matter of dealing with this priest, or with the archbishop and former archbishop of Santiago,” he said. “All of them knew something about the abuse that was going on. For the first time, this pope addressed this as an institutional, a structural, a systemic issue.”

As of now, Father Zollner said, eight Chilean bishops have been removed from office and two have been dismissed from the clerical state, as has Karadima.

That summer, the Church in the U.S. was rocked by accusations that then-Cardinal Theodore E. McCarrick, retired archbishop of Washington, had abused several children and seminarians in past years; he was laicized in February 2019. Also in the summer of 2018 was the release of the Pennsylvania grand jury report.

In Australia, meanwhile, Cardinal George Pell was convicted on five counts related to the sexual abuse of two boys decades earlier, a charge he continues to deny. His final appeal is set to be heard sometime this March.

The February 2019 summit on Church response to the abuse crisis held by Pope Francis and the heads of all of the bishops’ conferences—which included talks by abuse survivors—has resulted

in actions. Those include new laws regarding the safeguarding of minors and other vulnerable people in the Vatican City State and the issuance of the papal mandate “*Vos estis lux mundi*” (“You are the Light of the World”) for the universal Church.

The papal mandate revised and clarified norms and procedures for holding bishops and religious superiors accountable in protecting minors as well as in protecting members of religious orders and seminarians from abuse.

It requires all priests and religious to report suspected abuse or cover-ups and encourages any layperson to report through a now-mandated reporting “system” or office that must be set up in each diocese by June of this year. It also insists leaders be held accountable for committing abuse themselves or covering up or failing to address abuse accusations.

In December, the pope waived the requirement of secrecy for anyone who has reported abuse by a member of the clergy or testified in a canonical trial having to do with clerical sexual abuse.

On Feb. 28, the Vatican announced the creation of a task force to advise bishops’ conferences and congregations of religious on creating or updating their own guidelines for responding to abuse.

The task force will be under the authority of Archbishop Edgar Peña Parra, the third-ranking official in the Vatican Secretariat of State, and will be supervised by the four members of the organizing committee of last year’s summit on the protection of minors: Chicago Cardinal Blase J. Cupich; Father Zollner; Archbishop Scicluna; and Cardinal Oswald Gracias of Bombay.



Jesuit Father Hans Zollner, right, a leading Vatican official dealing with clergy sexual abuse in the church, speaks about “The Present Status of Safeguarding in the Church” at St. Gall Church in Chicago on March 2. (CNS photo/Karen Callaway, *Chicago Catholic*)

“For all this to happen in a year, for the Vatican, that’s lightning speed,” Father Zollner said after his talk.

At the same time, the Church as an institution has many challenges, he said.

The Church includes both perpetrators and victims, people who want to bring the problem to light so it can be cleaned up and people who want to cover it up. Until now, little in the way of expertise and experience developed in one part of the world was being used to help leaders in other areas.

Father Zollner, a theologian, decried the lack of the theological thought about the abuse crisis and what it means for the Church and for the Church’s understanding of salvation.

“Tell me where theology, 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. †

## Lenten penance services are scheduled at archdiocesan parishes

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 24, 7 p.m. at Holy Family, Oldenburg
- March 26, 7 p.m. for St. Catherine of Siena, Decatur County, at St. John the Evangelist Campus, Enochsburg
- March 29, 1:30 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 31, 7 p.m. at St. Agnes, Nashville
- March 31, 6 p.m. at St. John the Apostle, Bloomington
- April 1, 6:30 p.m. at St. Jude the Apostle, Spencer
- April 2, 7 p.m. at St. Martin of Tours, Martinsville
- April 8, 6-9 p.m. for St. Charles Borromeo, Bloomington, and St. Paul Catholic Center, Bloomington, at St. Paul Catholic Center

### Connersville Deanery

- March 19, 6:30 p.m. at St. Mary, Rushville
- March 23, 6 p.m. at St. Elizabeth of Hungary, Cambridge City
- March 29, 6 p.m. for St. Elizabeth Ann Seton at Holy Family Campus, Richmond

### Indianapolis East Deanery

- March 19, 7 p.m. for St. Thérèse of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) and Our Lady of Lourdes, at St. Thérèse of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower)
- March 24, 6:30-7:30 p.m. at St. Mary
- March 26, 7 p.m. at St. Thomas the Apostle, Fortville
- March 27, 6-8 p.m. at 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. for 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 16, 7 p.m. at St. Mary, Navilleton
- March 18, 7 p.m., at St. Michael, Bradford
- March 19, 7 p.m. at St. Mary, New Albany
- March 25, 7 p.m. at St. Mary-of-the-Knobs, Floyd County
- March 26, 8 a.m.-8 p.m. (confession only, no service) at Our Lady of Perpetual Help, New Albany
- 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 confession times are part of New Albany Deanery’s “*The Light is on for You*”

- Wednesdays in Lent: St. Michael, Charlestown, 5:45-7:30 p.m. with adoration; and St. Mary, New Albany, 6:30 p.m.
- Thursdays in Lent: St. Francis Xavier, Henryville, 5:45-7:30 p.m. with adoration

### Seymour Deanery

- March 17, 7 p.m. at St. Rose of Lima, Franklin
- March 18, 6:30 p.m. at St. Patrick, Salem
- March 19, 6 p.m. at American Martyrs, Scottsburg
- March 26, 7 p.m. for Holy Trinity, Edinburgh, and

- St. Bartholomew, Columbus, at St. Bartholomew
- April 1, 6:30 p.m. for St. Ann and St. Joseph, Jennings County; St. Mary, North Vernon; and 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 St. Joseph University, Terre Haute
- April 1, 7 p.m. at Sacred Heart, Clinton
- April 6, 7 p.m. at St. Paul the Apostle, Greencastle
- April 8, 11 a.m. at St. Joseph, Rockville
- April 8, 7 p.m. at Annunciation, Brazil

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

Saturdays in Lent:

- St. Margaret Mary, Terre Haute, 3-3:45 p.m.
- Sacred Heart, Clinton, 3:30-4 p.m.
- St. Joseph University, Terre Haute, 3:30-4:30 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.

Thursdays in Lent: St. Joseph University, Terre Haute, 7-8 p.m.

### Tell City Deanery

- Sundays during Lent: 3-4 p.m. at St. Paul, Tell City

(An updated version of this list, along with other Lenten resources, can be found at [www.archindy.org/lent/](http://www.archindy.org/lent/).) †

# Faith *Alive!*

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## 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 organizations that we care about, including the Church, can always use additional funding to help carry out their missions.

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



Volunteers serve breakfast to people in need at a shelter in Mount Clemens, Mich. 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. (CNS photo/Jim West)

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 embalming 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.

(Follow Stephanie Clary on Twitter @scherp01.) †



Volunteers work at the Earthworks Urban Farm in Detroit. The farm grows fresh produce for the Capuchin Soup Kitchen. This Lent, be generous with your time. Offer to clean, organize or do yardwork. (CNS photo/Jim West)

Joyful Witness/Kimberly Pohovey

## Near accident results in God's work of mercy

Lent always makes me give pause to our need to practice the corporal works of mercy. Years ago, I almost hit a man while driving my car on a curvy stretch of road. I could barely think through my trembling. To my great shame, my first thought was fleeing the scene as quickly as possible. But God always offers us a choice.



That morning, I was driving my kids to school, which was located around the corner from that narrow, curvy road. A man walked toward the direction of my car, along the side 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 close to the roadside and was startled enough to fling his cup of coffee which splattered across my windshield. It happened in a split-second.

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 what choice words he had for me.

Thoughts began to race through my mind. I needed to get my boys to school before they were late. I could just drive on—no one would know. I should turn around and apologize. I knew what was the right thing to do. We always *know*.

I quickly dropped off my kids and returned. I found that the gentleman had not progressed much farther 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.

After a few very uncomfortable minutes of staring, he finally responded, "I can't believe you came back." I assumed he was still angry. I expressed 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 rest. I told him I would offer 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 this. He hugged me. I finally realized 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 on his way to catch a bus to an eye doctor appointment. He would need to make a bus transfer and wasn't sure he had enough bus fare to make his way. While 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 careened into his life.

God definitely works in mysterious ways. Had I not sought his forgiveness, he would not have had the bus fare he needed to see a doctor who hopefully helped him.

We parted ways teary-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 archdiocesan 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 brought a smile to many a motorist: "Choose Your Rut Carefully.



... You'll Be In It For The Next 150 Miles."

Author Henri Nouwen, in his book *In the Name of Jesus*, admits to being in one for more than 20 years. Judging from the externals, he had it made: the University of Notre Dame, Yale

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 began to churn internally. 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 Jesus?' After twenty-five years of the priesthood, I found myself praying poorly, living somewhat isolated from other people, and very much preoccupied with burning issues. ... Something inside was telling me that my success was putting my own soul in danger. ... I woke up one day with the realization that I was living in a very dark place and

that the term 'burnout' was a convenient psychological translation for a spiritual death."

Nouwen asked the Lord to show him where he wanted him to go and he would follow, "but please be clear and unambiguous about it!" Well, God was. The Lord made it clear to him that he should leave his prestigious role as a distinguished professor at an Ivy League university and join the L'Arche communities for mentally challenged people.

In Nouwen's own words: "God said, 'Go and live among the poor in spirit, and they will heal you.'" So he did.

The lessons awaiting Nouwen were numerous: some painful, a few humiliating, but all of them necessary. Slowly, almost imperceptibly, he experienced a change deep within his being. The master teacher learned to be the humble servant. The self-confident, proud individualist became a compassionate, caring friend.

Most of us have no idea how deeply entrenched we are in the rut of routine. Externally, everything looks fine. Our activities often revolve around the Church, family and friends. We have work at home and in our jobs, children to pick up, parents to keep healthy, and meetings to attend. Who can criticize us for being attentive to these relationships?

Unfortunately, this rut of both religious and daily activities can numb our souls until we find ourselves in need of spiritual refreshment—a fresh touch from God, who works to create his masterpiece within us. Frequently, we feel this during the waning weeks of winter.

It is then that we need to slow down, pull out of that rut and take a different path. Sometimes this means just getting away from it all—literally—to a place where there are no demands of our time, where we can find spiritual renewal. Or maybe it is a good time to assess what we are doing in service to others. It could be the right time to "go and live among the poor in spirit." It could be the right time to reach out to those whom we know little about—the poor, the refugee or immigrant, the mentally or developmentally disabled.

During this season of Lent, slow down, be quiet, watch nature, and think about life. Then when we celebrate the risen Lord, go out and serve, be a witness, a disciple for Christ. Get out of your rut. It'll make a difference for the rest of your life.

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

The Human Side/Fr. Eugene Hemrick

## 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.



"When they arrived at Bethsaida, they brought a blind man to Christ and begged him to touch him. He took the man by the hand and led him outside the village" (Mk 8:22-23). The passage is reminiscent of the

passage of Isaiah, "I am the Lord, your God, who grasp your right hand; It is I who say to you, Do not fear, I will help you" (Is 41:13).

When praying during Lent, let us start our prayer, "Oh God take my hand and lead us. May we put ourselves into your hands wholeheartedly. Often prayer can

be about our agenda, please let it be an opening of ourselves to your will."

There is a saying, "The more we are disinterested in our self, the stronger we are." By letting God take center in our prayer life and pursuing his agenda, we allow his providence to fortify us.

Leading the blind outside the village gives us another principle of prayer: dispelling outside distractions to be "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 our needs and to breathe in God more fully.

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

Some have interpreted this double healing as a lesson for his Apostles who were slow in understanding Christ's mission and needed repeated reminders. 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, prayer is sweet and at other times it is difficult to practice. Lent's 40 days encourage us to be patient and persistent in our endeavors to draw closer to God.

Once cured, the blind man now had the ability to look deeply into the eyes of Christ and to cherish his newfound faith in him. May this also be our Lenten blessing.

(Father Eugene Hemrick writes for Catholic News Service.) †

Twenty Something/

Christina Capecchi

## 'Joyful momentum' when two or more are gathered

There comes a moment when something clicks. At a book club or a Bible study. In a carpool circle or a coffee shop. A connection is made, and a gathering turns into a group, taking on a life of its own.



Elizabeth Tomlin has experienced it many times and, as a nomadic Army wife, she's 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 her teenage son broke his arm while her husband was deployed, and a new friend arrived at the hospital with a stroller and blankets, whisking away her 1-year-old.

And there was the time last summer, after yet another move, that housing plans were delayed and her family had to stay in a hotel for 50 days. Elizabeth and another newly relocated mom met at a laundromat once a week. Doing 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 could not bubble wrap her heart every time the family packed up 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 Military Council of Catholic Women. She served as a de facto consultant to Catholics trying to start or grow women's groups.

The Washington-based 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 hand. Stories poured out. Practical tips interspersed with spiritual insights. Reflection questions, prayers and accounts of female saints. Soon 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 explores how to cultivate spiritual friendships, practice hospitality, embrace your strengths, serve the community, resolve conflict and mentor new leaders.

Women need relationships—more so than ever, perhaps, in an Instagram age.

"Our faith is incarnational," said Elizabeth, now 39. "We are supposed to walk alongside our sisters in Christ. Face-to-face connections cannot be replicated by social media, and if we try to substitute emoji hearts for actually having a heartfelt conversation, we will fall into the trap of becoming digitally addicted yet interpersonally detached."

As she settles into her two-story brick colonial on an Air Force base near Tacoma, Elizabeth has an opportunity to live out the lessons she wrote.

"Something I learn and re-learn is that when you accept hospitality, you are also helping the person serving you because you are affirming that person's service," she said. "God put us into community to lift each other up."

There is plenty of laughter along the way.

Third Sunday of Lent/Msgr. Owen F. Campion

# 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. Another name is the Pentateuch, this term coming from the Greek word for five.

As the title implies, the Book of Exodus is concerned with the experiences of the Hebrews as they fled Egypt and moved toward the land that God had promised them. It was a difficult trip. Even today, a journey across the Sinai Peninsula can evoke concern and worry. Not surprisingly, the Hebrews wondered if they had swapped the witch for the devil as they wandered across Sinai. In frustration, bewilderment and misery, they grumbled about Moses, their leader.

Water was and is a precious commodity in this arid environment. The people feared that thirst would result in death. Moses, enlightened by God, told them to look for water in an improbable place, the side of a rock. He struck the rock and water flowed.

St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans supplies the second reading. As is typical of Paul's writing, this passage celebrates Jesus as the only source of life and of communion with God. It also proclaims salvation in Christ as the gift coming from his willing self-sacrifice on Calvary.

For its last reading this weekend, the Church presents a passage from St. John's Gospel. It is the story of the Lord's meeting with a Samaritan woman beside a well in Samaria. It is heavy with lessons for us.

First, the site was Samaria. For the Jews of the Lord's time, Samaria represented many bad things. The woman was a Samaritan.

Samaritans were of Hebrew heritage, but they had acquiesced when foreigners invaded the land, compromising with paganism, and even inter-marrying 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; 43:3-4  
Luke 4:24-30

Tuesday, March 17  
St. Patrick, bishop  
Daniel 3:25, 34-43  
Psalm 25:4-5ab, 6-7bc, 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

Friday, March 20  
Hosea 14:2-10  
Psalm 81:6c-11b, 14, 17  
Mark 12:28-34

Saturday, March 21  
Hosea 6:1-6  
Psalm 51:3-4, 18-21b  
Luke 18:9-14

Sunday, March 22  
Fourth Sunday of Lent  
1 Samuel 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13a  
Psalm 23:1-6  
Ephesians 5:8-14  
John 9:1-41  
or John 9:1, 6-9, 13-17, 34-38

Question Corner/Fr. Kenneth Doyle

## Differences in Gospels aren't necessarily contradictions

**Q**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)

**A**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.

**Q**If a pastor praises President Donald J. Trump by name during the course

of a homily, isn't that the same thing as campaigning for him? (Nebraska)

**A**I believe—particularly in the midst of an active and heated political campaign—that a preacher needs to be careful about seeming to praise or criticize particular candidates. Priests are encouraged at all times to share the principles of Catholic social teaching and to encourage parishioners to participate in the political process.

But in a website article titled "Do's and Don'ts Guidelines During Election Season," the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) is clear on activities that must be avoided. To parishes, other Church organizations and their representatives these guidelines say: "Do not endorse or oppose candidates, political parties, or groups of candidates, or take any action that reasonably could be construed as endorsement or opposition."

In my mind, what the pastor in your question has done is a clear violation of that "reasonably could be construed" provision.

In a further specification of this caution, the Washington State Catholic Conference lists under what the Catholic Church and Catholic organizations cannot do: "endorse or oppose candidates or political parties, or actively engage in political campaigns for or against any candidate or party through homily, newsletter, flyer, poster, bulletin, e-mail, phone, parish website links, social media, or by providing a parish mailing list."

In a document that the USCCB revises periodically called "Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship," among the subject areas that should be of concern for Catholics in weighing their voting preferences are such things as: human life, promoting peace, religious freedom, the preferential option for the poor, migration, combatting unjust discrimination and care for our common home. That document is available at [www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org).

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

## My Journey to God

### Consecration

By Gina Langferman

(Gina Langferman is a member of St. Barnabas Parish in Indianapolis. Background: A priest incenses a monstrance as part of an evening of adoration during which approximately 17,000 college students, religious, campus ministers and others knelt in worship on Jan. 5, 2019, during the SEEK conference in the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis.) (Criterion file photo)

Christ removes the veil  
That covers the temple  
Each time His body and blood  
Are lifted up at Mass.

Heaven and earth are joined.  
We are one with the  
Communion of Saints.

Just as the curtain in the temple  
Was torn in two  
As Christ gave up his life for us on the cross,  
There is now no division between  
God and man,  
Heaven and Earth.

Thank you, Lord Jesus,  
For saving us and giving us  
Hope of life eternal.  
Thank you for your sacrifice  
And for giving us every spiritual gift  
That we need to make it through this life  
And someday live  
In the fullness of your life in heaven.

# Rest in peace

Please submit in writing to our office by 10 a.m. Thursday before the week of publication; be sure to state date of death. Obituaries of archdiocesan priests serving our archdiocese are listed elsewhere in *The Criterion*. Order priests and religious sisters and brothers are included here, unless they are natives of the archdiocese or have other connections to it; those are separate obituaries on this page.

**ALLSPA, Rita K.**, 83, St. Lawrence, Indianapolis, Feb. 21. Mother of Christine Jackson, Kathleen, Carl, Daniel, David and Steven Allspaw. Grandmother of 10.

**ANTSY, William T.**, 90, St. Pius X, Indianapolis, Feb. 26. Husband of Jane Antsy. Father of Jane Grosvenor, Elizabeth Sullivan, John and William Antsy. Brother of John and Robert Antsy. Grandfather of 13. Great-grandfather of six.

**BANET, Joan M. (Seng)**, 80, St. Mary-of-the-Knobs, Floyd County, Feb. 27. Mother of Maribeth Bradley, Brian, Dennis, Douglas, Gerald and Gregory Banet. Grandmother of seven. Great-grandmother of five.

**CLARK, Margaret**, 87, St. Barnabas, Indianapolis, Feb. 27. Mother of Mary Barnhart, Robbie Cahill, Susie Dennis, Jackie Hudman, Karen Kidwell and Tracy Smith. Grandmother of 17. Great-grandmother of 31.

**ENNEKING, Frances K.**, 96, Holy Family, Oldenburg, Feb. 25. Mother of Kay Schumacher, Diane and Keith Dierckman. Grandmother of 12. Great-grandmother of 13. Great-great grandmother of two.

**GRAZIANO, Salvatore**, 83, Christ the King, Indianapolis, Feb. 21. Husband of Dolores Graziano. Father of Gary and John Graziano. Grandfather of three. Great-grandfather of one.

**MARSHALL, Robert E.** 85, St. Barnabas, Indianapolis, Feb. 28. Husband of Sharon Marshall. Father of David, Don and Ron Marshall. Brother of Carolyn Baumer and Betty Boon. Grandfather of 10. Great-grandfather of nine.

**MILLER, Caryl J.**, 92, St. Louis, Batesville, Feb. 26. Mother of Abigail, Rebecca, Susan, Kevin and Timothy Miller. Grandmother of four. Great-grandmother of one.

**ROMANI, Linda M.**, 63, St. Lawrence, Lawrenceburg,



## Detroit church named basilica

Snow falls outside St. Anne Church in Detroit. Pope Francis recently named the historic church a minor basilica. It is the eighth parish church for the oldest Catholic faith community in Detroit. St. Anne Parish was started by two French missionaries in 1701 two days after the city itself was founded. (CNS photo/James Silvestri, Detroit Catholic)

Feb. 27. Mother of Christopher and Jason Huber. Daughter of Angelo Romani. Sister of Jayne Linneman, Jenny McLaughlin, Judy Van Driessche, Gail Virgin, Tom and Mike Finke and Jeff Romani.

**SAUNDERS, Peggy Jo (Boston)**, 78, Sacred Heart of Jesus, Indianapolis, Feb. 27. Wife of Roy Saunders. Mother of Roseann Buergelein and Frank Saunders. Grandmother of several.

**SIEFERT, Elmer J.**, 91, Holy Family, Oldenburg, March 3. Father of Melissa Barnett, Marcia Bischoff, Monica Mores, Mary Wallpe, Mark, Melvin and Mike Siefert. Grandfather of 14. Great-grandfather of 15.

**STEDMAN, Peter E.**, 88, Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Indianapolis, March 2. Husband of Eleanor Stedman. Father of James and Paul Stedman. Brother of Barbara Gastmeyer, Grandfather of three. †

# 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 programs in Italy this semester, or are closely monitoring the situation and prepared to cut programs short if necessary.

Schools ending their Italian international study programs this semester include Villanova University just outside Philadelphia, the University of Notre Dame in Notre Dame, Ind., Gonzaga University in Spokane, Wash., The Catholic University of America in Washington, Fairfield University in Connecticut, Loyola University Chicago, the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minn., and Boston College.

As of March 4, more than 2,700 people in Italy have contracted the virus, known as COVID-19, while at least 107 people have died since the outbreak began in northern Italy, the Italian health ministry said. It has the highest number of coronavirus cases in Europe. COVID-19 is the name of this most recent coronavirus.

Seton Hall University in South Orange, N.J., canceled its spring break study abroad program to Italy, and several colleges have posted warnings about individual travel during the break on their websites.

In announcing the cancellation of these programs, many of the Catholic colleges and universities acknowledged students' disappointment. Some, but

not all, said they would offer some type of financial reimbursement.

In writing about the semester's discontinuation at the 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."

He pointed out this was not "an ideal situation for our students, parents, faculty or staff" and said the university 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.

Notre Dame 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 Bernardi 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

continued from page 12

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

Laughter helps an absurdity 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 said. "We laugh when our spirits are light. I think of laughter as an involuntary expression of gratitude. When our spirits are light, it's easy to see God's goodness."

(Christina Capecchi is a freelance writer from Inver Grove Heights, Minn.) †

### Online Lay Ministry Formation

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

- Earn certificate in Lay Ministry
- Complete 12 courses online with ND STEP program
- CDU offers classes on Catechism of the Catholic Church
- 20% discount for all employees, volunteers, and parishioners

For more information, please log on to [www.archindy.org/layministry](http://www.archindy.org/layministry)



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Sunday, May 17th | 4-6 pm  
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- **The Healing Journey Forward with Suicide Loss**  
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### REPORT SEXUAL MISCONDUCT NOW

If you are a victim of sexual misconduct by a person ministering on behalf of the Church, or if you know of anyone who has been a victim of such misconduct, please contact the archdiocesan victim assistance coordinator. There are two ways to make a report:

- 1 Ethics Point**  
Confidential, Online Reporting  
[www.archdioceseofindianapolis.ethicspoint.com](http://www.archdioceseofindianapolis.ethicspoint.com) or 888-393-6810
- 2** Carla Hill, Archdiocese of Indianapolis, Victim Assistance Coordinator  
P.O. Box 1410, Indianapolis, IN 46206-1410  
**317-236-1548 or 800-382-9836, ext. 1548**  
[carlahill@archindy.org](mailto:carlahill@archindy.org)

# Classified Directory

Classifieds Continued, page 16

## Employment

### 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](mailto:eisakson@archindy.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.

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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 an integral part 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. Doctorate in education or related field preferred. Current state certification in education specializing in administration. Experience as a teacher. Experience as a Catholic school principal. Supportive member of a Catholic parish.

Interested candidates should send a letter of interest and resume to [shsemployment@shslou.org](mailto:shsemployment@shslou.org).

## Employment

### ADMINISTRATIVE & RESEARCH ASSISTANT (FULL TIME)

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](http://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](mailto:hr@saintmeinrad.edu) or fax: 812/357-8262, or mail to:

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

### 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 judgement, 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](mailto:kevin.sweeney@setoncarmel.org)

### 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 list of references, in confidence, to:

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## Confirmation in Lawrenceburg

This photo depicts a confirmation liturgy at St. Lawrence Church in Lawrenceburg. There is no date included with the photo, but a second photo in the archives from the same day indicates that the pastor was Father Herman Kasper, who led the parish from 1949-1962. Archbishop Paul C. Schulte is seen processing into church to administer the sacrament.

(Would you like to comment on or share information about this photo? Contact archdiocesan archivist Julie Motyka at 800-382-9836, ext. 1538; 317-236-1538; or by e-mail at [jmotyka@archindy.org](mailto:jmotyka@archindy.org).)

## Alabama executes inmate after Supreme Court denies last-minute stay

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Nathaniel Woods, a 43-year-old inmate in Alabama, was executed by lethal injection on March 5 after the U.S. Supreme Court, which initially granted a temporary stay, denied the inmate's petition to put his execution on hold.

Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey also denied Wood's request for clemency.

Woods was convicted, along with Kerry Spencer, in the 2004 killings of three police officers in Alabama. The prosecution argued that Woods was an accomplice, and Spencer has repeatedly claimed to be the only shooter.

A groundswell of support built up for Woods prior to his execution. Supporters included Martin Luther King III, who

argued that Woods had received an unfair trial and should not be executed.

U.S. Sen. Doug Jones, D-Alabama, sent a letter to Ivey, saying that because of the discrepancies in the case, "a delay is warranted."

"This is not a decision that I take lightly, but I firmly believe in the rule of law and that justice must be served," Ivey said in a statement after the execution.

The execution took place at William C. Holman Correctional Facility in Atmore, Ala.

Catholic Mobilizing Network tweeted that even though Nathaniel Woods "never pulled the trigger" that ended the police officers' lives, "tonight we mourn their senseless loss." †

journey to Easter.

The "Final Four" of the tournament is a celebrated accomplishment. It is the gate way to the championship game. I equate the "Final Four" to our celebration of Holy Week and the triduum, or the three days—Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday which is the gateway

## 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."

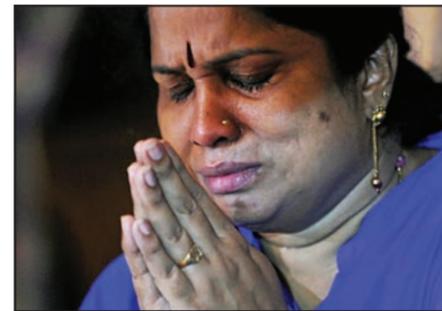
"Two years ago, the genocidal campaign waged by ISIS against Christians and other minorities in Iraq and Syria had only just begun to decline," Marlin said, "but memories of that atrocity have faded since then."

"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 "very engaged" on the issue of Christian persecution, up by 16 percent from a year ago; 20 percent said their parish is "not engaged"; and 22 percent were "unsure" about their parish's level of engagement on the issue.

• As for their local bishop speaking



A family member of victims cries while praying during the reopening ceremony of St. Anthony's Shrine in Colombo, Sri Lanka, on June 12, 2019, months after it was closed because of an Easter bombing. (CNS photo/Dinuka Liyanawatte, Reuters)

out on Christian persecution, 27 percent said the bishop was "very engaged" on the issue, up 12 percent compared to a year ago; 24 percent were "unsure" about their bishop's level of involvement; and 12 percent said their bishop was "not engaged" at all.

• Asked about Pope Francis' focus on the issue, 47 percent of Catholics in the U.S. said he was "very engaged" on the issue, down by 8 percent from a year ago; 16 percent were "unsure" about the pope's involvement on the issue; just 8 percent said the pope was "not engaged."

Respondents also were asked to rank by importance policies by the U.S. government and other Western countries to help persecuted Christians. "Putting diplomatic pressure on offending countries" was ranked as most important by Catholics in the U.S., followed by economic sanctions and emergency asylum for victims of persecution. Next came financial support of persecuted Christian communities, while military intervention and "the military training and arming" were said to be less important.

Asked what actions Catholics in the U.S. can personally take to help persecuted Christians, 68 percent said prayer was "very important," 59 percent said raising awareness of the plight of the Christians at the parish level was important; 53 percent and 52 percent, respectively, said donating to agencies that help persecuted Christians and contacting members of Congress were important.

Marlin said the survey showed that Catholics in the U.S. believe the Church in America "can do much more when it comes to calling attention to the gravity of Christian persecution." Given the percentage of Catholics who said they were "unsure" about their parish's or bishop's engagement on the issue, or said they were "not engaged," education at the parish and diocesan levels "remains of crucial importance," he added.

He called on the Church in the U.S. to do more "to inform and galvanize the faithful" on this issue. †

## REFLECTION

continued from page 4

have six rounds or six weeks of preparing ourselves to turn away from sin and turn toward God. It takes discipline and focus (prayer, fasting and almsgiving) as we

to the Easter Vigil and Easter Sunday. It signals the end of the tournament/Lent as we anticipate the championship game/Easter Sunday.

At the end of it all, March Madness only celebrates one basketball champion. One victorious team. Many teams and their fans come away disappointed.

Easter proclaims to the baptized and newly baptized our "champion" is our Savior Jesus Christ, and every one of us shares in his victory over sin and death. Amen.

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

## Classified Directory, cont'd

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