A faith-filled response to the coronavirus

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I’m sure you agree with me that this is a time unlike any other. A worldwide health crisis has forced us to do things—and not do things—that before now were unheard of. Just a month ago, most of us would never have imagined that no public celebrations of Mass would be allowed, that schools would be closed, or that all sports activities and entertainment programs would be canceled.

This is a Lent unlike any other in our Church’s 2,000-year history. It’s a true desert experience where prayer, fasting and the sharing of all God’s gifts take on a new, and very powerful, meaning for us all.

The worldwide outbreak of the coronavirus has reminded us that we are utterly dependent on the grace of God for everything that is important to us. It has also shown us that we truly are sisters and brothers, one family under God, who need to work together to survive—and flourish—as individuals, families and communities.

As difficult as it is not to celebrate Mass in our churches, we all remain spiritually united. For centuries when the faithful have been unable to attend Mass and receive the Eucharist, they have been encouraged to make an act of Spiritual Communion.

Lent is a time of preparation for the joy of Easter. We don’t know how long Lent will last this year. The emergency measures imposed on us to prevent, or at least slow, the spread of this deadly virus may well extend into the Easter season. But faith assures us that our God is with us and that once this long Lent is over, we will once again know the joy of Christ’s resurrection.

Let’s make this Lenten penance productive. Let’s use this time to grow in prayer, fasting and the sharing of all God's gifts take on a new, and very powerful, meaning for us all.

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As COVID-19 affects so many people in so many ways, the Church stands poised to make a vast difference. “People will be turning to the Church to help them at a time of need,” said archdiocesan director of stewardship and development Jolinda Moore. “People are going to need the light of Christ now more than ever.”

Across central and southern Indiana, Catholics and non-Catholics alike are already turning to parishes for food both physical and spiritual. A decrease in parish income would result in a direct impact at a time when there is a critical need more than ever, says Moore.

At the same time, the coronavirus has created a financial conundrum for parishes and parishioners alike to meet this time of need. Without people in the pews and with some parishioners’ own decrease in income, how can parishes gather the needed funds to serve and to spread the Gospel message in so great a time of need?

And how can parishioners support their parishes when public Masses are canceled, and with the many possibly decreasing or disappearing altogether as government mandates and economic hardships affect both churches and businesses?

Three priests in the archdiocese say the answer—and the power—lie in the hands of Catholics themselves, even those whose income is diminished.

The key, they say, is in focusing on the Christian values of generosity, stewardship, and a concept called subsidiarity.

“Ultimately, it’s about loving your neighbor”

That’s why Father Joseph Feltz, pastor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in New Albany. “Stewardship is to ‘receive God’s gifts gratefully, cultivate them responsibly, share them lovingly in justice with others, and return them with interest to the Lord,’” according to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops’ website.

“We as Catholics are called to practice—and so develop a habit—in sharing the time, talent and treasure God has entrusted us with,” says Father Feltz. “Continuing to share our gifts—and mainly at this point the gift of treasure—continues the virtue of stewardship. …

“Ultimately, it’s about loving your neighbor when one supports their parish. When people are supporting their church, they’re helping the parish help the community.”

“We need this subsidiarity of support”

Since parishes are composed of Catholics in a local area, “They’re the ones that know what the local community is struggling with and what its needs are,” says Father Feltz. So it follows that—if properly supported by parishioners—parishes are best suited to meet the needs of the local community. It’s a concept called subsidiarity, a principle that the Church promotes.

“Basically, subsidiarity means that the larger level does not do for the smaller community what the smaller community can do on its own level,” says Father Nicholas Dant, pastor of St. Matthew the Apostle Parish in Indianapolis. “We need this subsidiarity of support more than ever at this unprecedented time.”

A problem be notes, however, is that there is an “inclusion for folks to give to the weekly collection while one is only present for Mass.”

“But parishes do not have large reserves from which to draw. Without regular collection income coming in weekly, funds will be quickly depleted.”

Such a lack of funds could not only prevent parishioners from helping their neighbors through parish-sponsored charity. The impact could affect other ministries and programs, parish schools and even a parish’s ability to maintain its staff.

“It all depends on how we people of faith are willing to sacrifice what we are ourselves financially secure—continuing the work of the Church” in spreading the Gospel message and serving those in need, says Father Dant.

“I have much faith in our faithful”

Parishes are not blind to financial trials faced by their parishioners in these trying times.

“Many are expected to be impacted financially due to the changing economy,” says Moore. “It’s understandable that, those in such a situation will need to look at their ability to give financially.

She notes that in times of crisis, people “often react with an all-or-none attitude. … I would encourage individuals to give what they can as opposed to ceasing to give altogether.”

Instead of eliminating parish donations, she says, “Perhaps a short-term decrease in giving might be necessary. It might be decreasing the level of support by 10 percent to 20 percent.”

“For others, this might be a time when they can reflect on their giving and actually contribute more to offset the hardships of others.

It is not a one-size-fits-all situation, but a dialogue … with Christ.

Despite his observation of the tendency for some Catholics to donate to the parish only when they’re in the pew worshipping at Mass, Father Dant is still hopeful.

“Personally, I have much faith in our faithful,” he says. “I believe many of them do see the importance of their Catholic faith for their lives.”

“Throughout my ministry, I have witnessed time and time again the lengths many people will go for their parish, their faith family. I believe they know of their deep need for God, their need for the sacraments to continue to exist, to continue the living Christ, and their need to be sustained by God’s word on a weekly basis.”

Whether the needs are financial, physical or spiritual, “They’re the ones that know what the local community is struggling with and what its needs are,” Moore says. “It’s understandable that those in such a situation will need to look at their ability to give financially.”

“Those with resources, no matter how small they feel they may be, can share these gifts to help others receive in their time of need.”

(To continue donating, go to your parish’s website for how to donate online, or go to www.archindy.org and click on the “Parish Giving” button, then click on your parish’s name to be directed to your parish’s online giving page. If you wish to give online but your parish is not listed, or if you do not have access to online giving through your parish’s website, e-mail the archdiocesan Office of Stewardship and Development at osd@archindy.org with your parish, name, parish name and city, e-mail address and telephone number. We will be in touch within 24-48 hours to assist you with an online giving solution. Those who prefer to mail donations regularly to their parish may do so, understanding that checks might not be processed immediately as parish offices remain closed due to the coronavirus outbreak.)

Like all of you, we are in uncharted territory because of the coronavirus pandemic.

But despite the challenges of not gathering for Mass on a weekday basis because of the closing of the Catholic Center in Indianapolis, our weekday Masses are still being compiled and will be available online each week.

We encourage readers to visit our website at www.CriterionOnline.com for the most up-to-date coverage, including taking advantage of daily and Sunday Mass being celebrated online by Archbishop Thompson and others.

Also, because of this unique situation, we are offering the entire issue of The Criterion online each week.

Our daily lives are being interrupted like never before. We encourage everyone to make the most of the resources the archdiocese is offering at this time, and to continue to live out our faith and serve as beacons of light in this time of uncertainty.

Mike Krokos, editor
Father Richard Eldred was pastor of parishes in Lawrence County

By Sean Gallagher

Father Richard Eldred, pastor of St. Mary Parish in Mitchell and St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Bedford, died on March 18 at St. Vincent Dunn Hospital in Bedford. He was 70.

Because of measures prohibiting large public gatherings due to the coronavirus outbreak, a private committal service was celebrated at Calvary Cemetery in Terre Haute.

A memorial Mass for Father Eldred is expected to be celebrated at a later time.

In a 2015 interview with The Criterion, Father Eldred spoke about his love for priestly life and ministry, which he embraced when he was nearly 50 years old after working for more than 20 years in his family’s moving and storage business in Terre Haute.

“You have your challenges just like anyone does in life, but I really enjoy being a priest,” Father Eldred said.

“The peace and joy and prayer are off the charts. You have this wonderful knowledge of the presence of the Lord in your life.”

During the 15 years of his ministry to the Catholic community in Lawrence County, Father Eldred sought to share that presence with many people in need through an array of charitable ministries he helped to found and support.

They include Becky’s Place, now an agency of archdiocesan Catholic Charities Bloomington that offers shelter for homeless women and children; a local chapter of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul and a thrift store; and the Men’s Warming Center of Bedford.

Eldred’s dedication to serving the community was evident in his ministry visits to the area’s adoration chapels in the archdiocese: at St. Thomas More Parish in Mooresville and at St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Bedford.

“All of those things started with prayer,” Father Eldred said in a 2017 interview with The Criterion of the connection between his ministry of charity and his prayer life. “We have Catholics and non-Catholics that have found peace by being here in our adoration chapels.

Father Eldred also had a great love of the priesthood and did what he could to pass it on to others. Father Rick Nagel, pastor of St. John the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis, knows this personally.

At one point during his priestly formation, Father Nagel was considering leaving the seminary, but first wanted to go on a retreat at Medjugorje, a Bosnian town where the Blessed Virgin Mary is said to have appeared many times since the early 1980s. The problem was, he needed a priest to serve as a spiritual director during the retreat and couldn’t find one.

When he spoke with Father Eldred about it, the priest offered without hesitation to be his spiritual director.

Father Nagel had a profound experience during the retreat that he said “affirmed that I was supposed to stay in and continue my journey to the priesthood.

“I wouldn’t be a priest today if it weren’t for him,” Father Nagel said.

During the retreat, Father Nagel saw a man approach Father Eldred on a sidewalk asking him to hear his confession. Without hesitation, Father Eldred agreed to do so.

“Soon, a long line of people formed and he was hearing confessions four hours later.

“He was just so open to the Spirit all the time,” Father Nagel said.

That openness to the Spirit was also reflected in an attraction to the goodness in the people around him.

“He was forever an affirmer of people,” Father Nagel said. “He was always affirming people in ministry. He encouraged young men to think about their vocation. He was constantly thinking about others and where they were at in their lives. That was one of his primary gifts.”

Richard William Eldred was born on Aug. 24, 1949, to the late John and Mary Eldred in the Bloomington Deanery from the time of the completion.

As good as he was at organizing large-scale ministries involving many people from the broader community, Deacon Reising said that what drove Father Eldred in this work was always his love for Christ and other people.

“Let’s be with us now as we place all our trust in Him. Thank you. May God bless you and keep you safe during this challenging time. May Christ be with us now as we place all our trust in Him. Thank you.”

Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

R e s p o n s e

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Fr. Richard Eldred

The words of Los Angeles Archbishop Jose H. Gomez, president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, in his prayer to Our Lady of Guadalupe:

Pray for us, loving Mother And gain for our nation and world, And for all our families and loved ones, The protection of your holy angels, That we may be spared the worst of the illness.

May God bless you and keep you safe during this challenging time. May Christ be with us now as we place all our trust in Him. Thank you.

Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

We give to the United Catholic Appeal because... it helps so many different people in a variety of ways.

www.archindy.org/UCA

The Criterion Friday, March 27, 2020 Page 3
Reflection/Natalie Hoefer
Can we talk now? Using this time of seclusion to grow closer to God

I know several people who gave up Facebook for Lent. I am not one of them. In fact, I’m glad I didn’t make that sacrifice, because reading through the posts of late is like viewing a snapshot of society’s primal nature in this ominous but historic time.

One that made me chuckle read: “Day three of quarantine. Lenten Lent wearing in right eye.”

But my favorite post in the last few weeks is a simple message “from God”: “No movies. No concerts. No sporting events. No restaurants. No social gatherings. Limited workload. I’ve cleared your schedule—can we talk now? God.”

This short message summarizes my own thoughts on this time of seclusion and solo time—and offers a shorter and catchier than anything I could write! I recall the sense of urgency that underpinned the Catholic Church’s March 17 announcement that the building would close the next day. Perhaps it was the chorus of some of you: rushing to get work done, scrambling to grab everything needed to work from home for several weeks, saying hurried goodbyes to co-workers as if we were all on the sinking Titanic going off in search of a lifeline—“So long, take care. Hope to see you on the other side.”

When I got home that evening, I went to my work/prayer space closed the door, took a deep breath and settled into the silence to process what had transpired. Schools and offices closing for the time being. Gatherings restricted in size. The heartbreaking news of public Masses, adoration and most sacraments being suspended until further notice to stop the spread of the coronavirus.

The announcements had come one after another like waves coming over a storm. (Later I saw another Facebook message “from God” that wisely advised, “Focus on me, not the storm.”)

I actually didn’t take too long for me to see God in the chaos. He shone like a lighthouse because the terrible news was a clear message for all: “Come to me. Draw closer to me. Find lasting shelter in me.”

The more I reflected, the more I realized I could see so much potential for a groundswell of lasting faith to emerge through this time of trial and standstill God has allowed.

Relegated to our homes, we have more time to grow in relationship with God, and so many means to do so. Settle into a cozy chair and have a true heart-to-heart conversation with God. Pray the rosary, the Divine Mercy chaplet or any other structured prayer. Read Scripture. Participate in the daily live-streamed or recorded Mass online—some parishes are even live-streaming the Lord’s Prayer.

Now is a good time to learn the merits of sacrificial giving. Maybe it’s by cutting back on snacks, eating at home all day, offering up the sacrifice for those who have the coronavirus, for the safety of health care workers or for an end to the pandemic. We can—and should—make the sacrifice of cutting back to give to our parishes every week to help the Church assist others, even if the donation amount is

Reflection/John Shaughnessy
Finding the touch of God and humanity amid the coronavirus crisis

The surprising discovery was the highlight of my day—even far better than if I had walked into a grocery store and found everything on my list. The moment came during my first day of working from home, when I just randomly decided to check Facebook at lunchtime and found the smiling image of Father Rick Nagel behind the altar of St. John the Evangelist Church in Indianapolis. I clicked on the “play” button, heard my friend—the pastor of St. John—share that he was offering daily Mass on video during a time when all public Masses in the archdiocese have been suspended indefinitely. He also shared that he was smiling because he was imagining all the smiling faces of the usual people who attended the daily 12:10 p.m. Mass at his church.

For the next 26-plus minutes, I couldn’t stop smiling either as I watched the Mass with Father Rick, even sharing a virtual sign of peace with him. It didn’t even matter that throughout the service we noticed some technical malfunction that Father Rick appeared on my Facebook screen sideways. In a week when God has gone sideways with the fear, the uncertainty and the tragedy of the coronavirus, it just mattered that a friend and God were there with me.

The surprises of that day didn’t end there. Early that morning, I had been in a grocery store, avoiding close contact with people as much as I could, when I found myself blocked by the cart of a young woman who suddenly stopped to talk to a clerk who was using a stool to re-stock canned goods on a top shelf.

She asked how he was doing, and how people were reacting during these days of a work-from-home reality. He told her he had been yelled at many times. For the next few minutes, she engaged him in conversation and thanked him for everything he was doing. Her kindness and their shared humanity were the best things I took home from the store.

The joys continued throughout the day. A real estate agent sent an e-mail message saying he was driving around that day and if I needed him to pick up anything for me, he would be happy to do it.

There was also a text from a young friend in Texas whose first child was born in early March. Worried about the world his daughter had just entered, he had texted me a day earlier, noting, “I feel so hard to be staying right now with the distractions of this virus.

Entrusting the world to the care of Our Lady

The next morning, refreshed by a night of good sleep for him, his wife and their daughter, he sent a text expressing that he was happy that one thing he was sure of—the one enduring gift he could give his daughter—was his faith in God.

The one thing he was sure of—the one enduring gift he could give his daughter—was his faith in God.
“Cuando María vino a donde estaba Jesús, cuando lo vio, se arrojó a sus pies, diciendo: “Señor, si hubieras estado aquí, mi hermano no habría muerto”” (Jn 11:32).

El Evangelio del quinto domingo de la Cuaresma (Jn 11:1-45), revela la humanidad de Jesús en todo su esplendor. Su amigo ha muerto y lo desearon cuatro días antes de que Jesús llegara a Betania donde vivía Lázaro con sus hermanas, Marta y María (la mujer que unió al Señor con aceite perfumado y secó sus manos y los pies atados con vendas). Las hermanas estaban desoladas por el dolor y les imploraron a Jesús que hiciera el milagro de resucitar a Lázaro. Jesús les asegura que Lázaro resucitará, pero Marta está impacientada. “Yo sé que estás resucitarás en la resurrección, en el día final” (Jn 11:24). Jesús les dice: “Papa, te doy gracias porque me has oído. Yo sabía que siempre me eches, pero lo dije por causa de la multitud que me rodea, para que crean que Tú me has enviado” (Jn 11:42). Dios, o sea, el que viene al mundo” (Jn 11:25-26).

Por lo que desea Jesús, por encima de todo, es que todos aquellos que le conocen, el padre amoroso y misericordioso es la fuente de toda la vida, la sanación y la esperanza. Y tal como le dice a Marta: “¿No te dije que si crees, verás la gloria de Dios?” (Jn 11:40). Todo el poder, toda la bondad y toda la alegría provienen del Padre a través del Hijo y por la gracia del Espíritu Santo. Jesús obra el milagro de resucitar a Lázaro de entre los muertos como un acto de profundo amor y amistad hacia dos hermanas y su querido hermano, pero también es un signo poderoso para aquellos que, según nos lo relata san Juan, intentaban lapidar-lo. De la forma más concreta posible, Jesús envió un mensaje a sus enemigos (y a todos nosotros) de que toda la vida es sagrada, y amor es más fuerte que la muerte. ¿Y al decir esto, gritó con voz fuerte: “Lázaro, sal fuera!” (Jn 11:44). El difunto salió con las manos y los pies atados con vendas funerarias y el rostro envuelto en un sudario. Así que Jesús les dijo: “Desátenlo, y déjenlo ir” (Jn 11:44). Entonces muchos de los que habían acudido a María y habían visto lo que él hizo comenzaron a creer en él; pero, por supuesto, muchos otros se negaron a creer. A continuación la lectura más allá del Evangelio del domingo, nos enternecen de que los fariseos utilizarán este milagro como otra evidencia de que Jesús es su enemigo. “¿Qué hacemos?” —preguntan—“porque este hombre hace muchas señales. Si lo dejamos seguir así, todos van a creer en Él, y los romanos vendrán y nos quitarán nuestro lugar y nuestra nación” (Jn 11:47-48). El amor y el poder sanador de Dios es rechazado porque los líderes religiosos de la época de Jesús carecían del valor necesario para creer en él. “ Así que, desde ese día—nos dice san Juan—planearon entre sí matar a Jesús” (Jn 11:53). A medida que avanzamos en nuestro camino curesmal, recordemos para que el “placer por el curar” es el milagro de resucitar a Lázaro de entre los muertos es un signo de que todos estamos destinados a unirnos con Jesús, la resurrección y la vida. 

¿Creemos que Jesús es la resurrección y la vida?
Pope announces extraordinary ‘urbi et orbi’ Blessing on March 27

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—In response to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, Pope Francis said he will give an extraordinary blessing “urbi et orbi” (“to the city and the world”) at 6 p.m. Rome time (1 p.m. EDT) on March 27.

The formal blessing will be given only immediately after a new pope’s election and on Ascension and Easter—carries with it a plenary indulgence for all who follow by television, internet or radio, are sorry for their sins, recite a few prescribed prayers and promise to go to confession and to receive the Eucharist as soon as possible. After reciting the Angelus prayer on March 22 from the library of the Apostolic Palace, Pope Francis announced his plans for the special blessing, which, he said, would be given in an empty St. Peter’s Square because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The blessing would be intended to “encourage the world to prevent further spread of the virus. With the public joining him only by television, internet or radio, we will listen to the word of God, raise our prayer and penance for the remission of sins, and ask our Lord through his most holy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, to give us all the necessary graces to accept the suffering caused by the coronavirus and so that all may be freed from the spread of this virus."

“Let’s stay united. Let us make those who are alone and abandoned feel joyful. As doctors, nurses, other health care workers and volunteers, let us be united in our commitment to protect the vulnerable and care for those who are sick,” Pope Francis said. "Let’s use this time to become closer to God. By sharing your ideas and stories, from the humorous to the poignant, maybe you’ll inspire someone else to do the same or, at the least, create another welcomed human connection for all of us."

For send your stories and ideas to reporter Natalie Hoefer at nhoefer@archindy.org or leave her a message on her work phone at 317-236-1447. This agency is also working closely with United Way and the Council on Aging to ensure that all clients are getting the food they need, as well as hygiene items. The agency is also working with schools to ensure that all children are being fed as needed.

It is also continuing to assist with utilities, rent and prescriptions as needed.

For more information, call 812-547-0905.

How are you coping with COVID-19?

During this time of uncertainty and church closings because of the coronavirus, The Criterion is inviting our readers to share their ideas and stories about how individuals and families are coping and even thriving; how you are still trying to create a sense of community among your friends, neighbors and fellow parishioners in this period of social distancing; and how you are using this time to become closer to God.

By sharing your ideas and stories, from the humorous to the poignant, maybe you’ll inspire someone else to do the same or, at the least, create another welcomed human connection for all of us.

For more information, call 812-547-0905. 
Faith

Forgiving and offering forgiveness has ‘healing power’ for the soul

By Daniel S. Mulhall

When I was 17 years old, I bumped into a bush and lodged a thorn in a muscle near an elbow. I pulled the thorn out, cleaned the wound with alcohol and bandaged it, thinking that the wound would heal and everything would be OK. But it wasn’t. The wound would not heal completely. Over time new skin covered the wound, but it would still occasionally hurt.

Ten years after the original incident, I bumped my elbow, the wound split open and a little piece of thorn popped out, encased in pus. Finally, the hurting stopped and the wound healed properly because the source of the pain—the barbed end of the thorn—was finally removed.

This story says a lot about the healing power of forgiveness. True healing can only occur when the wound is cleaned completely. The wound, caused when someone hurts us, can only be healed by letting go of the “tip of the thorn,” the grudge that we continue to bear even after the offender says, “I’m sorry,” and we say, “I forgive you.”

As long as we continue to carry around in our hearts any animosity or ill feelings toward the person who has hurt us, our wound cannot heal. We can say that we forgave, we can say that we are OK, but if we continue to bear any animosity toward the person, we are not OK, we have not forgiven.

At my mother’s funeral, her children were surprised to learn that she had been engaged to marry someone other than my father. When asked, Mom’s sister confirmed the story and told us more of the tale. Ending the story, my aunt said, “Your mother never forgave him either.

The tale. Ending the story, my aunt said, “Your mother never forgave him either.

The story of forgiveness and offering forgiveness has ‘healing power’ for the soul. By Daniel S. Mulhall

Almsgiving, rooted in Scripture, tradition, should be practiced year-round

By Paul Senz

Lent is a time of sacrifice. We strive to unite ourselves with the suffering of Jesus, walking with him in the desert, agonizing with him in the garden, dying with him on the cross. There are three traditional “pillars” of Lent that help us follow in Christ’s footsteps: prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Of the three, almsgiving probably gets the least attention, but it is one way that we can make sacrifices during Lent while supporting the needy, the work of the Church or another worthy cause.

Almsgiving can be money, or sometimes food, that is given to the poor.

To live out almsgiving in the spirit of Lent, sacrifice and following the clear teaching of Jesus, we should give not only from our surplus, from what we can spare; but rather, we should give even the coat off our back.

Jesus praised the poor widow who gave of her meager means; she did not hang onto the money, but she gave what little she had (Mk 12:41-44). St. John Chrysostom wrote that our almsgiving “shines with a brighter luster” when given from our poverty.

In the Book of Tobit, we are reminded, “Prayer with fasting is good. Almsgiving with righteousness is better than wealth with wickedness. It is better to give alms than to store up gold; for almsgiving saves from death, and purges all sin. Those who give alms will enjoy a full life” (Tb 12:8-9).

Giving alms, sharing what we have with those in need, is not just a good idea, something with spiritual benefit—it is our vocation, our moral obligation. St. John Chrysostom wrote, “It is for this that God has permitted you to possess much... that you should distribute it to the needy.”

Almsgiving does not expect repayment; it is an act of mercy and of justice, in the purest sense of “caritas” (“charity”). Jesus explained this to his disciples when he said, “When you hold a lunch or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or your wealthy neighbors, in case they may invite you back and you have repayment. Rather, when you hold a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind; blessed indeed will you be because of their inability to repay you” (Lk 14:12-13).

Jesus later taught that we are called to give to the needy, to be merciful, and that whatever we do or do not do to even the least among us, we do to him (Mt 25:31-46).

St. Basil the Great applied this teaching when he wrote, “The bread you do not use is the bread of the hungry. The garment hanging in your wardrobe is the garment of the person who is naked. The shoes you do not wear are the shoes of the one who is barefoot. The money you keep locked away is the money of the poor. The acts of charity you do not perform are the injustices you commit.”

Everything we have is from God. We are everything we have and are a gift of God to the needy, for we are without his grace. Almsgiving is simply passing along the gifts we have been given to those who are in need.

Do not let this be relegated only to Lent. Inspired by these passages from Scripture, the words of the saints and the calling from our Lord, almsgiving should be done the whole year. Let Lent be the springboard and give of yourself always.

(Paul Senz works for Ignatius Press and is a freelance writer who lives with his wife and four children in Oregon.)
Restorative justice can transform victims and perpetrators

In my January Corrections Corner column, I spoke of the overcrowding of jails and prisons, and how it is that people were being incarcerated, including the drug addicted and mentally ill, and the need for reform. I thought it would be a good follow-up to want to introduce you to the concept of restorative justice, which is at the forefront of the ever-changing world of criminal justice.

The concept can mean different things to different people and institutions, but basically it is an acknowledgment that harm is caused by criminal behavior. It is best accomplished through cooperative processes that allow all willing stakeholders to participate. Though other approaches are available when that is impossible. This can lead to transformation of people, relationships and communities.

It is possible that some of those normally at the root of the crimes that are perpetrated, offenders are often able to take responsibility for their actions. If they are able to hear from their victims, either in a controlled setting or through other indirect means, they may become more fully aware of the real people they have harmed and how they have harmed them.

When an offender, reconciled, can help programs facilitate face-to-face meetings and from these meetings, both the offender and the victims learn to articulate each other’s situations. The result is that many times forgiveness and redemption occur. It is a simple next step for such a conversion of heart to reduce the propensity for further harm to others.

It requires an act of forgiveness. Some are perpetrators. And as St. Joseph of Medaille Sister Helen Prejean says often, “People are more than the wrong thing they have ever done in their lives.”

Howard Zehr, an American criminologist, is the pioneer of the modern concept of restorative justice. He espouses that:

• The end of harm and justice requires repairing that harm.

• The best way to determine how to do that is to have the perpetrator and the victim actively involved in the process of justice.

• The result is fundamental changes in people, relationships and community.

All crimes are not appropriate for this process, especially where there are victims of violent crimes. Most property- related crimes including burglary and theft can also include monetary restitution where victims are made financially whole through the payment of money or in-kind services, and community restitution where offenders volunteer for social service activities. The community can “make things right” in a global sense.

Wouldn’t we all be better off if victims participated in the process and were somehow made whole and offenders were allowed to redeem themselves? As Prison Fellowship International states, “We believe all people have value, deserve mercy, and are loved equally by God—even the most outcast.”

To that I say, Amen.

(Deacon Marc Kellams is the Coordinator of Corrections Ministry for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis and a former criminal court judge. Contact him via telegraph, “improved means to an improved end.”

Effie Caldarola writes for Catholic News Service.)

In God’s plan, all members of a family are channels of grace to each other, helping each other to grow in holiness, both in their ordinary daily interactions and in more significant ways. By showing gratitude for the small ways that people witness each other’s situations. The result is that many times forgiveness and redemption occur. It is a simple next step for such a conversion of heart to reduce the propensity for further harm to others.

Take the time to read the ‘good news’ first in your daily life

“We are in great haste to construct a magnetic telegraph to Texas, but Maine and Texas, it may be, have yet to tunnel under the Atlantic and bring the Old World some weeks nearer to the New; but perchance the first news that will leak through into the broad, flapping American ear will be that the Princess Adelaide has the whooping cough.”

When he wrote the preceding quotation in 1851, Henry David Thoreau was feeling rather skeptical about the advent of high-speed communications and Catholic media

Brett Robinson is director of Communications and Catholic media studies at the University of Notre Dame McGrath Institute for Church Life."

Perspectives

For the Journey/Effie Caldarola

As you cope with COVID-19 pandemic, turn your mind to God

So we try to adapt Lent to this new reality. I pray to understand how I am being called to respond. I can feel OK about this hunkering down, until that moment of panic when I wonder just how long I will be asked to stay home. The best advice I saw was on Twitter: Use this time to flex your contemplative muscles. Old timers are doing it to contemplation, perhaps, yet we need discipline and strength to turn our minds. Get out these resources.

Contact friends daily. Laugh and cultivate that sense of humor. Touch base with someone who lives alone. We care about our news and social media. Keep a journal of these days for posterity. Take long walks. Make your sacrifice of not going out into bad habits under stress.

And pray for those who are suffering from this disease worldwide, across all borders. Pray for the first responders and medical personnel who are putting their lives on the line in this battle.

Like all our lives, this too will pass. So let’s make this a Lent for the history books.

(Elfie Caldarola writes for Catholic News Service)

Faith and Family/Sean Gallagher

Live more as a domestic Church on COVID-19 outbreak

The Church has taught from its earliest days that each family among the faithful is a domestic Church. It is in the family that people of all ages, but especially parents and grandparents, are brought to faith in Jesus Christ, have their faith shaped and nurtured with him and grow in relationship with him. It is in the family that parents form the faith of children through their example, their words and actions. 

In God’s plan, all members of a family are channels of grace to each other, helping each other to grow in holiness, both in their ordinary daily interactions and in more significant ways. By showing gratitude for the small ways that people witness each other’s situations. The result is that many times forgiveness and redemption occur. It is a simple next step for such a conversion of heart to reduce the propensity for further harm to others.

Getting that strength is important now because we’re probably spending more time than ever in house and home. Grace working in our lives can help us in such situations to gradually smooth off the sharp edges of an experience that can rub up against those with whom we live.

As challenging and sometimes as frightening as living in this outbreak can be, with the ever-present help of God’s grace and the protection of the Church, we can somehow make this a time when the faith of the whole family or families can actually be strengthened.

Leaning heavily upon the love of Christ from whom nothing is hidden, may the Holy Spirit, who knows no social distancing, draw all families closer together in the communion of the saints so that our hearts may overflow with joy on that happy day when we can all join together again in the communion of the saints as if we had cared for each other, helping each other to grow in holiness, both in their ordinary daily interactions and in more significant ways. By showing gratitude for the small ways that people witness each other’s situations. The result is that many times forgiveness and redemption occur. It is a simple next step for such a conversion of heart to reduce the propensity for further harm to others.

Fellowship International states, “We believe all people have value, deserve mercy, and are loved equally by God—even the most outcast.”

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(Deacon Marc Kellams is the Coordinator of Corrections Ministry for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis and a former criminal court judge. Contact him at mkellams@archindy.org or call 317-592-4012.)

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Like all our lives, this too will pass. So let’s make this a Lent for the history books.

(Elfie Caldarola writes for Catholic News Service)
The Book of Ezekiel provides the first reading for Mass this weekend. Even a quick reading of the history of ancient Israel shows that there were few periods of prosperity and calm. Indeed, only the reigns of David and Solomon might properly be considered as truly good times. Some periods, however, were more trying than others.

Certainly, the generations spent in exile in Babylon were miserable. Confined in Babylon in wretchedness, and a minority surrounded by paganism and surely unwelcome, the Jewish exiles yearned for the day when they would be able to return to their homeland.

Ezekiel built upon this theme of hope and expectation. As did all the prophets, he saw a release from Babylon bondage—not as an incident or a coincidence. He regarded it as a result of God’s mercy and of fidelity to God. So, in this reading, the Lord speaks through Ezekiel, promising to breathe new life into the defeated, dejected people. Ezekiel sees a parallel between the resurrection of Jesus and the restoration of earthly life to Lazarus. In each account, mourning women are essential parts of the story. Stones seal the tombs. The bodies are dressed and clothed, customary in Jewish burials of the time, covered the faces. Finally, in each story, faith and human limitation have important roles.

Reflection

Next week on Palm Sunday, the Church will invite us to learn and to worship in the most intense liturgical days of the year. Calling us to Christ and with ancient drama and the most compelling symbolism, it will proclaim Jesus as the Son of God and the risen Lord.

This weekend, the Church prepares us for the experience of Holy Week, giving us the beautiful and wonderful story of the raising of Lazarus. Foreseeing the Lord’s own resurrection, today’s message is clear: If we are united with Jesus, as Lazarus and his sisters were united, then in God’s power we will have everlasting life.

Eternal life will occur only if we seek Jesus, with the faith uncompromisingly shown by Martha. It is the faith that believes that Jesus alone gives us life.

The other readings reinforce this theme. For everyone, life can be hard. Death awaits all. Ezekiel assures us that God will give us true life, a life of holiness, a life that never ends and a life of peace and joy.

St. Paul reminds us that this life abides only in Jesus. As Lent progresses toward its culmination, the Church calls us to Jesus, the Lord of life.

Sunday, March 29, 2020

• Ezekiel 37:12-14
• Romans 8:8-11
• John 11:1-45

My Journey to God

Surrender

By Steven Koch

To Nazareth an angel came
A teenage bride he called by name
Hail Mary, do not fear my voice.

God’s Son you’ll bear, if that’s your choice.

“How can this be? I’ve known no man”
Just trust in Him, God has a plan

“You’re not a virgin, I’ll be your husband”
I’ll bear His child; I’ll raise His Son

She surrenders

The mother taught her son to trust
With faith the Father who is just.

When life’s uncertainties come nigh
Give steadfastness to God on high

He learned his lessons well that day
When at Gethsemane, he knelt to pray

“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”
I’ll die for them as you have shown

He surrenders

(Steven Koch is a member of St. Malachi Parish in Pueblo, Colo. Photo: A depiction of the Annunciation is seen above the altar at St. Mary Church in New Albany, Ohio. The feast of the Annunciation occurs each year on March 25.) (Photo by Natalie Hoefle)

Daily Readings

Monday, March 30
Daniel 13:1-9, 15-17, 19-30, 33-62
or Daniel 13:41-62
Psalm 23:1-6
John 6:1-11

Tuesday, March 31
Numbers 21:4-9
Psalm 90:2-3, 16-21
John 8:20-31

Wednesday, April 1
Daniel 3:14-20, 91-92, 95
(Responsorial) Daniel 3:52, 56
John 8:31-42

Thursday, April 2
St. Francis of Paola, hermit
Genesis 17:3-9
Psalm 105:4-9
John 8:31-59

Friday, April 3
Jeremiah 20:10-13
Psalm 16:2-7
John 10:31-42

Saturday, April 4
St. Isidore, bishop & doctor of the Church
Ezekiel 57:21-28
(Responsory) Jeremiah 31:10-13
John 11:45-56

Sunday, April 5
Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord
Matthew 21:1-11 (procession)
Isaiah 30:4-7
Psalm 22:8-9, 17-18, 19-20, 23-24
Philippians 2:6-11
Matthew 26:14-27:66
or Matthew 27:11-54

Question Corner

Fr. Kenneth Doyle

The Church allows for organ donation under certain conditions

What is the Catholic Church’s position on donating body parts for medical science? (Pennsylvania)

A Let’s divide the answer into two parts: post-mortem transplants and those from living donors. Gifts to a living recipient or to scientific research from a donor who has clearly died is the easier part.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church says: "Organ donation after death is a noble and meritorious act and is to be encouraged as an expression of generous community" (#2296). The Church does teach that the remains, after organ donation or medical research, should be treated with reverence and should be entombed or buried. As gifts to living donors—bone marrow, say, or a lung or kidney—this is morally permissible so long as it is not life-threatening to the donor and does not deprive the donor of an essential bodily function, and provided that the anticipated benefit to the recipient is proportionate to the harm done to the donor.

In his 1995 encyclical “The Gospel of Life,” St. John Paul II called organ donation an example of “everyday heroism” (#86). And in 2014, Pope Francis told the Transplantation Committee for the Council of Europe that organ donation “is a testimony of love for our neighbor.”

(Questions may be sent to Father Kenneth Doyle at askfatherdoyle@gmail.com and 20 Columbia Circle Dr., Albany, New York 12203.)

COVID-19

By Linda Abner

I see the devil dancing with glee:
The churches have closed!
The choirs are silent.
Gathering steam in the fear of Unknown,
Eagerly watering seeds that are sown
Of false conviction that we are alone.

Alone in this strange, never-known-before world,
I see the devil dancing with glee:
Where panic, mistrust and anxiety spread
Among people who watch every newscast with dread
Forgetting Who holds every day that’s ahead.

Though all through the ages the Evil One’s tried
To sever mankind from our infinite Source
Through clamorous discord and murderous lies,
To sever mankind from our infinite Source

And the Evil One sure is leaping for joy
Knowing his weapons abound ever more
Where panic, mistrust and anxiety spread

Fr. Kenneth Doyle is a member of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Indianapolis. A monstrose fished from Loch Raven Reservoir in Maryland is the centerpiece of an adoration chapel at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Baltimore.) (CNS photos/Olivia Obineme, Catholic Review)
Roncalli students prepare 60,000 meals for people in need in one day

By Sean Gallagher

Lent is a time when Catholics as individuals give up disciplines such as prayer, fasting and almsgiving in a special way. 

Sometimes, these practices are done in part to help other people. 

What difference might be made if lots of Catholics got together during Lent to combine their efforts? 

That’s what happened recently at Roncalli High School in Indianapolis. 

On March 11, its more than 1,000 students prepared 60,000 meals for people in need in countries around the world. 

It was an initiative organized by the Boca Raton, Fla.-based Catholic Cross Outreach. 

In shifts throughout the school day, students came to a gym at Roncalli to fill bags with 390 grams of rice, beans, dehydrated vegetables, soy and vitamin packets. 

Catholic Cross Outreach will distribute those bags to local ministries helping people in need in several countries, including Guatemala, Haiti and Nicaragua. 

“Service is a huge part of what we do,” said Roncalli senior Ryan Flick, a member of St. Jude Parish in Indianapolis. 

“We are all required to complete service hours. But if you talk to a lot of students, so many of them go above and beyond the required service we have to do. This is an example of us making an impact on the world.” 

Jeff Traylor, Roncalli’s campus minister, was in the gym all day as the students assembled thousands of meals. 

“It’s been amazing to watch,” he said. 

Our kids are such hard workers and are dedicated to what they’re doing. We’ve had more students coming than I expected.” 

To speed them up, he got them to “be so good at what they do and are excited to be a part of it.” 

In addition to putting in a day’s work to prepare 60,000 meals, Roncalli’s students are seeking to raise $17,000 during Lent to pay for the meals and their distribution. 

To help prepare them for this Lenten effort, a priest who does ministry through Cross Catholic Outreach spoke to Roncalli’s students on Ash Wednesday. 

“He told our students that they were going to be the hands and feet of Christ,” Traylor recalled. 

Then the priest saw banners hanging from the gym’s ceiling highlighting Roncalli’s athletic excellence. 

“He said, ‘I’ll give you one piece of advice. You get the opportunity to use their influence where they’re at in life to be champions for the poor.’” 

For Erika Kvak, Catholic Cross Outreach’s development officer who was at Roncalli on March 11, the impact of the effort to prepare 60,000 meals reaches beyond the high school’s 1,050 students. 

“It’s something that they will talk about with friends, family and in the community,” Kvak said. “They’ll spread the word about what can be done to serve the poor. That’s our reason for being here today. We want to give as many people as possible to help serve.” 

So far this year, Catholic Cross Outreach has worked with parishes, Catholic schools and organizations like the Knights of Columbus across the country to assemble 500,000 meals. 

Last year, the ministry provided more than $300 million in aid from donors in the U.S. that was distributed to people in need in 28 countries through hunger relief, housing and water programs. 

So much of that assistance comes about because of the efforts of individual Christians, families, groups and communities in our dioceses. 

With equal clarity and determination, we must identify the steps we are called to take in order to serve life in all its truth,” the pope said in his 1995 encyclical. 

With these words, the pope “invites each of us to ask ourselves how we are assisting women in need who are pregnant or have young children,” said Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann of Kansas City, Kan., chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ (USCCB) Committee on Pro-Life Activities. 

He challenged us to open our hearts even wider, and to improve our responses where needed, especially at the local level—in short, to truly accompany each pregnant or parenting woman in need,” the archbishop said. 

On March 23 statement, issued to mark the 25th anniversary of “The Gospel of Life.” 

The anniversary was on March 25, which also is the Feast of the Annunciation. 

The encyclical, the 1st of St. John Paul II’s pontificate, forthrightly condemned 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 the death penalty are “very rare, if not practically nonexistent.” 

March 25 also was the start of a yearlong nationwide effort the USCCB has launched to celebrate the anniversary of the encyclical “by assessing and expanding our efforts to mothers in need.” Archbishop Naumann said. 

The initiative is called “Walking With Moms in Need: A Year of Service,” and the country’s Catholic bishops are being asked to invite the parishes in their dioceses to participate in it. 

The new program has its own website, www.walkingwithmoms.com. 

With “resources, outreach tools and networking opportunities tailored to the efforts of parishes and communities in our dioceses,” resources will continue to be added to the site, according to the USCCB’s Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities. 

The program, which will end on March 25, 2021, was “enthusiastically embraced” by the bishops at their general assembly last November, the archbishop said. “I am excited to see dioceses and parishes across the country making plans to join in the Year of Service in their own unique ways. It is capturing the imagination of our people.” 

“Pope Francis reminds us, our parishes are called to be ‘islands of mercy in the midst of a sea of indifference,’” he said. 

Archbishop Naumann also addressed the current coronavirus pandemic gripping the United States and leading to the suspension of public Catholic Masses and restrictions on church gatherings and programs. 

He urged dioceses and parishes to adjust their schedules for the Year of Service “according to what is pastorally and practically appropriate for everyone’s safety.” 

In the meantime, we can still pray … that this Year of Service will help us increase our outreach, so that every pregnant and parenting mother in need may know she can turn to her local Catholic community for help and authentic friendship,” Archbisp Naumann said. 

He first announced the initiative on the National Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children on Jan. 22, the anniversary of the Supreme Court’s 1973 Roe v. Wade decision legalizing abortion through all nine months of pregnancy across the country. 

“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,” Archbisp Naumann said. 

In “recognizing that women in need can be most effectively reached at the local level,” he 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: Announcing the Year of Service and begin building a core team (March 2020). 

Phase 2: Launching parish inventory process (May 2020). 

Phase 3: Sharing inventory results and beginning assessment and planning (September 2020). 

Phase 4: Announcing and committing to parish response (January 2021). 

Phase 5: Celebration and implementation of parish plans (March 2021). 

There are suggested steps for implementing each phase listed on the website, 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 core parish team; establishing a parish support network; praying for pregnant mothers in need as a parish community; and beginning to plan the parish’s first core team meeting.
reflects the same approach that she has had for St. Bartholomew School since she became its principal in 2013.

Since then, the school’s enrollment has grown from 341 students to 403. And the number of Hispanic students has increased from 11 percent of the school’s population to 38 percent.

Still, for Heckman, the most important growth has been in the school’s ever-increasing commitment to have students learn and live the Catholic faith.

Creating ‘Catholic memories’

“We’ve definitely focused on the Catholic part of the Catholic school part, making sure our students understand what it means to be Catholic and to have ‘Catholic memories’ of what we did—having a May crowning ceremony, going to the Stations of the Cross during Lent, focusing on service projects throughout the year,” she said.

“We want them to grow in mind, body and spirit. We want them to grow in their faith and their relationships with people.”

At the same time, St. Bartholomew has been consistently recognized as an “Indiana 4-Star School” by the state’s Department of Education.

All these avenues of growth, faith and success have led Heckman to be honored with a 2020 “Lead, Learn, Proclaim Award” from the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA), for her dedication and commitment to excellence in Catholic education. She was chosen from more than 150,000 Catholic teachers and administration across the state.

While Heckman appreciates the honor, she also said, “That’s not my award. For a principal to win an award reflects on the entire school community. I share it with everyone here.”

Members of the school community were just as quick to praise her.

“Under Mrs. Heckman’s leadership, our teachers, assistants, staff and volunteers are striving to do more than just touch a body of religious truths,” noted Claudia Jackson, a parent and past president of the school’s parent-teacher organization. “She understands that what is important is to cultivate faith in the hearts of our students.”

Citing how the school has students from Asia, Europe and several Spanish-speaking countries, Father Clem Davis said he’s impressed by the welcome Heckman extends to families of different cultures.

“When I come into the building, I see learning going on, but it feels more like family than just a schoolhouse,” noted the senior associate pastor of St. Bartholomew Parish. “Seeing Helen interact with the students at their distinct levels of development, I am sure that she has set the tone.”

“You can help the world grow”

“To help create that sense of welcome at the school, Heckman has hired numerous bilingual staff members. She has also stressed professional development for teachers in the area of cultural awareness. And because of her leadership, St. Bartholomew was one of the first five schools chosen for the archdiocese’s Latino Outreach Initiative through the Office of Catholic Schools.

“It’s not just about welcoming people, whatever their cultural or ethnic background may be,” said Heckman, a mother of three grown sons. “It’s to better serve them, to be more supportive of their families.”

Heckman does that and more, said Diana Graman, a faculty member at the school. “She has implemented an after-school, homework help program for those students who do not have assistance at home. She partnered with our PTO to help build an outdoor learning lab so that all types of learners may be reached. This lab has allowed different students to shine as well as connect to the beauty of nature.”

Fourth-grader Mahala Ross shared a common student attitude toward the outdoor learning lab: “It’s fun being outside, and you can help the world grow—and have fun with your friends.”

Heckman savored joy as she watched the members of the school’s horticulture club create their Resurrection Gardens.

“To me, the whole idea is to enjoy all the gifts God has given us in nature—and to take care of the environment to make it beneficial for the future,” she said. “It goes along with our Catholic social teaching about care for creation.”

Her emphasis on faith extends to her own growth as a person.

“The roots of her Catholic faith include my childhood as a student at Little Flower School in Indianapolis. She’s also the 1981 graduate of Father Thomas Scuena Memorial High School in Indianapolis. And she and her husband of 32 years, Chuck, were married in St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) Church in Indianapolis. Every important moment in my life has been in a Catholic school or church,” she said.

And still she keeps trying to grow in her faith.

“As a principal, I’ve tried to focus more on my Catholic faith, and be an example for my staff—reading Scripture daily, prayering together with staff and parish staff, and getting more involved with service projects. In faculty meetings, we’ve concentrated on learning about the Mass and Catholic social teaching. “It’s just trying to make sure the school community knows we are a Catholic school—and that it’s important to us.” "

Director/Coordinator of Religious Education

St. Margaret Mary and St. Patrick Churches of Terre Haute, Indiana are seeking a fulltime 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 legally 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: isaksone@archindy.org

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PLAN
continued from page 1

“They were a fantastic team. You never know if a group is going to gel, but this team worked so well together. The Holy Spirit was really with us.”

Their first task was to read “The Joy of the Gospel,” Pope Francis’ 2013 apostolic exhortation. The document was chosen for its “articulation of his teaching on the proclamation of the Gospel in our current age,” says Msgr. William F. Stumpf, archdiocesan vicar general, who was also involved in the project. “We believed the archdiocesan pastoral plan needed to be rooted in the prominent and significant

pastoral plan’s focus on the family, through which she sees the plan being brought to life in the archdiocese.

“I see the family as the ‘front lines’ of the spiritual battle,” she says. “I am excited that the role of parents and families are called out clearly in the pastoral plan … through specific goals around devotional and family life that, if embraced and through cooperation with God’s grace, could radically change our faithful, one believer at a time.”

Her fellow team member, Patrick Byrne of St. Mary-of-the-Knobs Parish in Floyd County, also notes that the plan “is for all ages.”

“It focuses on helping to develop a deeper personal encounter with Jesus Christ, being better stewards of our resources, supporting and engaging families and communities, spreading the joy of the Gospel to all, and addressing the ways to ensure the spiritual and physical well-being of our clergy.”

Existing with ‘eye of faith and hope in salvation’

The archdiocesan pastoral plan has been passed on to those responsible for developing action steps to implement the plan’s goals. Lentz says they will consider strategies, timelines, costs and ownership to take the plan from paper to reality.

“My hope is that we’ll be able to promulgate the plan in summer or early fall,” she says.

When the plan is released, it will be posted on the archdiocese’s website and published in The Criterion.

In the meantime, Archbishop Thompson offers a reminder of the overarching purpose of the Church that should drive every action by Catholics and archdiocesan entities in central and southern Indiana:

“Our ministries and services, while providing care and outreach to the spiritual and corporal needs of individuals as well as communities—families, parishes, schools, marginalized groups, etc.—ultimately exist with the eye of faith and hope in salvation of souls,” he says. “Together, through a common rootedness in word, sacrament and service, we carry on the mission of Jesus Christ as entrusted to the Church.

“We need to be intentional about proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ, drawing ever closer to him and providing a credible witness that leads others to a personal encounter with our Savior.”

Archdiocesan Pastoral Plan goals:

- Prayer and Worship: To foster a personal encounter with Jesus Christ through a rich and vibrant liturgical, sacramental and devotional, and personal prayer life.
- Stewardship: To cultivate a culture of stewardship responding to our baptismal call through the giving of one’s time, talent and treasure in the service of God and others.
- Family and Community: To support and engage families and communities in the archdiocese.
- Evangelization and Catechesis: To live with an attitude of missionary discipleship of all people, reaching out to the peripheries of our archdiocese, parishes and communities.
- Priestly Life and Leadership: To ensure the spiritual and physical well-being of the clergy by spiritual vitality, organizational efficacy and sound stewardship principles and practices.

Members of the Archdiocesan Pastoral Planning Committee:

- Julie Albertson
- Loraine Brown
- J. Patrick Byrne
- Oscar Castellanos
- Christine Eppert
- Matt Foley
- Father Rick Ginther
- Steven Goebel
- Kara Gresh
- Amy Higgins
- Deacon Stephen Hodges
- Erin Jeffries
- Deacon Marc Kellams
- Franciscan Sister Joanita Koors
- Father Doug Marcotte
- Bernie Paradise
- Leticia Pasillas
- Richard Pohlman
- Pearlette Springer
- Lynne Weisenbach

Coordinating Team:

- Archbishop Charles C. Thompson
- Annette “Mickey” Lentz
- Msgr. William F. Stumpf
- David Bethuram
- Greg Otołski