High school seniors turn to God as pandemic ends their last spring together

By John Shaughnessy

The shock and devastation of losing the final months of his senior year in high school have slowly started to lessen for Luke Leffler.

And during this uncertain time of the coronavirus crisis, he has been praying that this continuing tragedy doesn’t get worse, adding extra prayers for his friends and family, especially his grandparents.

Still there are moments when his sadness returns in response to the understandable decision by Indiana Gov. Eric Holcomb to close schools for the final months of his senior year in Indianapolis Memorial High School in Indianapolis.

He wishes that he could have enjoyed his last baseball season with his teammates, and that Eliza had the same opportunity in softball.

And maybe most of all, he just wishes he had these final weeks to walk into school, down the halls, into the secret room together, in fear and trepidation, disillusioned and demoralized, they had to be thinking and saying to one another, locked in a closed room, the empty tomb, yes, but not places of worship. This isn’t how Easter is supposed to be for Christians. Empty tomb, yes, but not places of worship.

At 17, youth wishes that he could have had the stage together with his twin sister Eliza, could have shared the conversations and traditions of their senior year.

As students at Father Thomas Scecina Memorial High School in Indianapolis, twins Eliza and Luke Leffler have found their prayers and their conversations with God increasing as they and all other high school seniors across the archdiocese deal with the coronavirus ending their hopes for prom, one last sports season and other activities and traditions of their senior year.

The 17-year-old youth wishes that he could have had a conversation or even just a hello with all the friends and teachers he has come to know these final weeks to walk into school, down the halls, into the secret room together, in fear and trepidation, disillusioned and demoralized, they had to be thinking and saying to one another, locked in a closed room, in place, people being diagnosed with a scary virus by the thousands, people dying by the hundreds here in 2020. This isn’t how Easter is supposed to be for Christians. Empty tomb, yes, but not places of worship.

But his Easter prayers on April 12 were mostly in the context of the suffering and death caused by the coronavirus and the economic difficulties the pandemic already has triggered.

The pope’s Easter morning Mass was unique; missing were dozens of cardinals concelebrating and tens of thousands of pilgrims from around the world packing St. Peter’s Square. Instead one cardinal—Cardinal Angelo Comastri, archpriest of St. Peter’s Basilica—and a dozen faithful sat inside, one in each pew, before the Altar of the Chair where the pope celebrated the liturgy.

Also missing were the more than 50,000 tulips, daffodils and flowering shrubs that growers in the Netherlands donate each year to turn into a garden the steps leading up to the basilica.

Yet millions followed on television, by radio and by livestream as the Easter “Alleluia” was repeated and the Gospel account of the disciples finding the empty tomb was proclaimed both in Latin and in Greek.

In a clear sign of continuing prayers to God for the end of the pandemic, the sanctuary around the altar again was dominated by symbols of Romans’ faith in the Risen Lord, transform the world

The same would have been speculated among the Apostles and other disciples on that first Easter morning. Locked in a secret room together, in fear and trepidation, disillusioned and demoralized, they had to be thinking and saying to one another, “It’s not supposed to be this way.” The long-awaited Messiah, the Christ, was not supposed to go out like this—condemned as a criminal, mocked, humiliated, beaten, abandoned, crucified and killed. A showdown with evil, yes, but not defeat.

Perhaps this is yet another opportunity to stop thinking about how it is supposed to be on human terms, to be a bit more focused on the will of God. After all, from glorious moments and traditions of Easter hope, peace, care for the poor
divine intervention: the icon "Salus Populi"
continued from page 1
Pope Francis delivered his Easter message "urbi et orbi" ("to the city and the world") after celebrating Easter Mass in St. Peter’s Basilica at the Vatican on April 12. The Mass was celebrated without the presence of the public due to the coronavirus pandemic. (CNS Photo/Vatican Media)

Pope Francis continued from page 1
the living Church has raised its voice. It was the voice of the apostles, and it is the voice of the Church today,” he prayed.

"This is no magic formula that makes problems vanish,” the pope said. "No, the resurrection of Christ is the beginning of the end for the world’s greatest problem—suffering. Instead, it is the victory of love over the root of evil, a victory that does not bypass suffering and death, but passes through them, opening a path in the abyss, transforming evil into good: this is the unique hallmark of the power of God.”

The risen Jesus, he said, came forth from the grave still bearing the marks of his crucifixion, he said, “Let us turn our gaze to him that he may heal the wounds of an afflicted humanity.”

The pope prayed first of all for those directly affected by the coronavirus, especially the sick, those who have died and those mourning loved ones after not being able to say goodbye.

"May the Lord of life welcome the departed into his kingdom and grant comfort and hope to those still suffering, especially the elderly and those who are alone," he said. "May he never withdraw his consolation and help from those who are especially vulnerable, such as persons who work in nursing homes or live in barracks and prisons.

Pope Francis also prayed for those suffering from solitude because of the pandemic, for those who have lost their jobs, for doctors and nurses treating the sick, and for members of law enforcement, who are helping keep people safe.

"In these weeks, the lives of millions of people have suddenly changed," he said. Some people have found it an opportunity to slow down, reflect and spend time with their families.

But, he said, for many others “this is also a time of worry about an uncertain future, about jobs that are at risk and about other consequences of the current crisis.”

The pope asked political leaders “to work actively for the common good, to provide the means and resources needed to enable every person to have a dignified life and, when circumstances allow, to assist them in resuming their normal daily activities.”

"When the whole world is suffering, he said, people must pay special attention to the poor, the homeless and refugees.

Pope Francis also called for the lifting of international sanctions imposed on certain countries to put pressure on them, but which make the suffering of their people unbearable, and for a forgiveness, or at least reduction, of the foreign debt of the world’s poorest nations.

“May Christ our peace enlighten all who have responsibility in conflicts, that they may have the courage to support that appeal for an immediate global cease-fire in all corners of the world,” he prayed.

“Indifference, self-centeredness, division and forgiveness are not words we want to hear at this time,” he said. Yet, “they seem to prevail when fear and death overwhelm us; that is, when we do not let the Lord Jesus triumph in our hearts and lives.

“Let us call to mind the words of the risen Jesus Himself,” he said, “and Easter is the time to start.”

WASHINGTO (CNS)—For the first time in its history, the Supreme Court announced on April 20 it will conduct 10 oral arguments by teleconference in May. Among the arguments it will hear are cases involving the Little Sisters of the Poor and California Catholic schools.

The court also will hear arguments in a case allowing access to President Donald J. Trump’s financial records.

Specific dates have not been announced for these cases, but the court said the arguments will take place between May 4 and May 11-13.

In announcing the decision to proceed with some of the arguments already postponed due to the stay-at-home guidelines in place with the coronavirus, the court said in a news release that it was “keeping with public health guidance in response to COVID-19 and that “the justices and counsel will all participate remotely.”

“The court anticipates providing a live audio feed of these arguments to news media,” the release said.

The court also will hear arguments in two cases that were initially scheduled for April oral arguments before it was postponed.

The combined cases, Our Lady of Guadalupe School v. Morrisson-Reeves and St. James School v. Biel, center on two California Catholic schools that were sued by the teachers they had fired who claimed they had been victims of job discrimination.

The court anticipates providing a live audio feed of these arguments to news media. "...beginning to bitter end, and beyond. Jesus remained keenly focused on the will of the Father in all things. In giving us the perfect prayer, the Our Father, He instructed us to do the same.

What may the Lord be desiring or doing for us in this given moment? This is not to say that the Church did not respond to this pandemic on humanity. However, we might consider how the Lord may use this seemingly tragic and painful event to bring about further transformation in our world, in our lives, our minds and hearts—he who has said, ‘And it came to pass that the cross. Just how is it supposed to be? The Apostles were forced to ponder this very question in a very short period of time. As a result, their sadness and misery were transformed into incredulous joy and great rejoicing. Having been informed by Mary Magdalene about the empty tomb early on that first Easter morning, Peter and the beloved disciple ran to check everything out for themselves. Upon entering, still not yet able to understand what had taken place, we are told that the beloved disciple “saw and believed” (John 20).

The Apostles later encountered the Risen Lord Jesus Christ on that first Easter Sunday are recorded in our first reading from the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 10:34, 37, 43). Peter, having moved from despair to hope to assurance, boldly proclaims that Jesus Christ had been risen from the dead, commissioning him and the other disciples to give personal witness and preach the Good News to all people—the same commissioning down to our own day. In his letter to the Colossians (Col 3:1-4), reminding us that we have been raised with Christ, Paul exhorts us to seek what is above, what is of God, rather than setting for merely what Earth has to offer.

Despite the sadness and hardship of not being able to gather as Church, the Body of Christ, the fact remains that Easter is holy, the Day of Resurrection. Regardless of what we might think that it is supposed to be, we have cause to rejoice in the Risen Lord Jesus Christ, who has conquered sin and death for our salvation.

Our faith continues to seek understanding the will of the Father, the mission of the Son and the guidance of the Spirit.

At some point, the Risen Lord will enable us to emerge from locked doors of confinement and gather again in His name. In the meantime, we continue to embrace Him, to pray for one another, to proclaim the Good News by the witness of our lives, and to persevere in faith and hope, even in assurance. This day above all, let our hearts and minds be raised with Him to what is above and beyond anything of this world. This in a sense is what the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad. Let us go forth this day in assurance. The Lord is Risen; our Salvation is at hand. Alleluia!"
Young adults face defining choice during crisis, faith leader says

By John Shaughnessy

Amid all the unknowns surrounding the coronavirus pandemic, Madison Cipoletti is certain about the defining choice that people have to make — and that moment in time.

“We have two choices,” says Cipoletti, the director of young adult and college campus ministry for the archdiocese. “We can endure and let it pass by without being changed, or we can go against the grain and let this time be a turning point in our faith lives.”

She then made reference to Pope Francis’ address to the world on March 27, when the pope described this period of the coronavirus pandemic as “a time to choose what matters and what is good at sharing how her family is prayerfully and spiritually living the quarantine time,” Cipoletti says. “She is sure to give you a lot of great ideas.”

Cipoletti especially recommends that young adults who want to deepen their faith join “virtual Emmanuel groups” that are being offered through the archdiocese’s young adult and college campus ministry.

“I was previously a part of a weekly small group of women,” she says. “We have continued meeting virtually, and I look forward to it so much each week, and especially now with social distancing. It’s incredible to get to journey through this crisis with other women of faith, and process, struggle and pray through it all together.”

For anyone, male or female, interested in joining a young adult virtual group, contact Rebecca Koward, event and volunteer coordinator of the archdiocese’s young adult and college campus ministry, at kowerr@archindy.org.

Youths are encouraged to connect with their faith community

By John Shaughnessy

As the director of youth ministry for the archdiocese, Paul Sifuentes believes that this time of quarantine is a valuable opportunity for teenagers to deepen their faith and strengthen the connections they already have with people who share their faith.

“If times like this, I would encourage everyone to connect with their faith community,” Sifuentes says. “We all have what the early Church called a ‘community of believers.’ Right now, it is important to connect with the community. Maybe that’s a teacher at school, an uncle, a youth minister, your pastor, a friend from youth group or from school. Whoever it is, reach out and check in.

“We are meant to live the faith with the Body of Christ. Reach out, and I am confident that will bring you great joy.”

Cipoletti suggests two youth night opportunities, starting with Online Catholic Youth Night: ProjectYM Live, which broadcasts at 8 p.m. Eastern time, at projectym.com.

“It features an online icebreaker and amazing speakers each week. It tops off with the opportunity to praise with some great praise-and-worship musicians. Watch on your phone, and maybe even watch at the same time as a friend and text about it during the program.”

The other “Sunday youth night” opportunity is LFTN.Catholic, which broadcasts at 5 p.m. Eastern time on YouTube. Sifuentes notes, “It is a great way to hear a message directed to teens and find community in the chat room. Maybe you even watch it at the same time as your friends and then check in afterward. It runs about 30 minutes.”

Instagram

In forming this list of people to follow on Instagram, Sifuentes says these sites “have been putting out great messages during this time of quarantine.”

• @archindyym: “Our office’s account has been sharing the inspiring content that is being put out there right now. Definitely the first follow for a youth or someone who serves youth in the archdiocese.”

• @mycofficial: “This account is sharing messages of hope and Gospel reflections from many of the speakers atNCYC [National Catholic Youth Conference]”

• @corazoneprenuc: “Father Augustino Torres was one of the speakers at NCYC. He has been sharing great insights.”

• @joemelendrez: “A Catholic performer with great music and a great message. He has been doing live ‘praise parties’ and sharing great insights on his stories.”

For those who are blessed with economic security, if you have not already been doing so, please consider providing financial support to your parish in this critical time of need.

The Church stands as a beacon of hope in many communities, hope that does not so much radiate in the brick and mortar of a building as through the ministries and services provided by your parish.
Sight Unseen/Brandon A. Evans

On the path of the golden keys

My grandfather once said something that changed my life. He wasn’t even speaking to me, and I didn’t appreciate its real importance until years later. At that moment I didn’t know what I didn’t know was there.

It was back in the early ’90s. My brother and I spent a week with my grandparents. We were still working. My sister-in-law had to work. I told her I wasn’t going to do that job. I didn’t know it had been placed in my heart.

In looking up to him, I also knew that I could never reach the stone he set, and always considered myself made of lesser stuff than him.

For except one night, when he said something so simple and so plain and so natural that it became as though an inheritance passed on to me: a word from the man I admired most besides my own father, a word to forever call me to remember my place.

We each have such stories, such moments: things that change us. Maybe it would be worth of some beauty if it was a sharp word of correction, or a dream, or even the grand, sweeping note of a piece of music that makes our eyes suddenly see beyond their dull horizon.

Nevertheless, such moments set us on a path. They are touchstones that define us, ultimately. And so I would venture that there are in each of our lives things that can be best described as golden keys.

These golden keys are more than just insights, they are experiences with God—things our hearts sense are beyond coincidence. They are a unique way that God shows us his presence: not in history, nor in the wonder of creation, nor in a book or a teaching or an argument, but written on the tapestry of our own life.

The golden keys are only possible because the locks that the golden keys turn have been forged by a hundred different events that only we knew, like living tissue, the sinews have twisted together until our souls, silently preparing for their fulfillment, have come to an absence that only a certain moment can fill.

For me, that absence can be described as timidity. I expressed this as timidity, an easy-going, nature-obedience to just authority, but it is more often expressed in very quick, twin directions: docility and unwillingness to lead, and worst of all, cowardice.

It was timidity I showed that night in front of my grandma. One of his friends from the plant was over, and I was trying to convince him that, according to Albert Einstein, time slowed down the faster an object moved.

Even though I knew I was right, I immediately backed down. I learned for bringing up something so academic and eternal, and thought for sure I’d embarrassed my grandfather.

But as I hung my head, and looked away, something clicked inside. My grandfather, sitting in the recliner that welcomed him after each day’s labor, turned his head quickly.

“He’s the smartest kid I know, and if he says it’s true, then it is.”

Those words stayed with me, even when I forgot them.

As my life went on, they proved that there was created, by the very weakness I had, Jesus in the flesh.

Next, we’re certainly being challenged to trust in God’s promises—His mercy, His love, His strength, simply by the presence of His Spirit, who lives inside each of us.

For we are being led to believe: Not that we’re much better, not even that we can trust God at all, but that he trusting us.

As my life went on, they proved that there was a Jesus in the flesh.

Next fall, teachers are going to have a hard worker, a good cook, stem when he had to be, unbelievably skilled with tools, jovial, and, most of all, kind.

In looking up to him, I also knew that I could never reach the stone he set, and always considered myself made of lesser stuff than him.

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Compassionate Jesus is the face of God's mercy

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who in his great mercy gave us a new birth to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you who by the power of God are safeguarded through faith, to a salvation that is ready to be revealed in the final time” (1 Pt 1:3-5).

¡Happy Easter! After a long Lent, the sun is once again shining, and we are blessed with Easter joy!

The Second Sunday of Easter is also known as Divine Mercy Sunday. This is most appropriate because Easter celebrates the greatest act of divine mercy in human history. Our generous and merciful God has redeemed us by an extraordinary act of humility and self-sacrifice. By his wounds, we are healed. By his extreme suffering and his cruel death, all our sins are forgiven. By his glorious resurrection, we have been rescued and set free.

In the second reading for Divine Mercy Sunday (1 Pt 1:3-9), St. Peter tells us that Jesus’ resurrection from the dead has given us “a new birth to a living hope.” (1 Pt 1:3). Not only that, St. Peter tells us that we will receive “an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you who by the power of God are safeguarded through faith, to a salvation that is ready to be revealed in the final time” (1 Pt 1:4-5).

No wonder we shout for joy and sing “Alleluia” during this season of rejoicing. No wonder we celebrate Divine Mercy Sunday with such heartfelt gratitude and joy! The Gospel reading for this Sunday (Jn 20:19-31) tells us that Jesus not only forgave our sins, but he granted the power of forgiveness to his disciples and asked that they continue to share it with all who seek God’s mercy. “Mercy toward a human life in a state of need is the true face of love,” Pope Francis has said, explaining that it is by loving another that one becomes a true disciple of Jesus and that the face of the Father is the Face of Mercy, the Face of the Father,” the pope tells us. When we forgive someone who has offended us, we become the face of mercy in that situation. When we show genuine compassion to someone in need, we share with them the love that comes from our merciful Father in heaven.

Sunday’s Gospel tells the familiar story of the “doubting Thomas.” According to St. John, “Thomas, called Didymus, one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples said to him, ‘We have seen the Lord.’ But he said to them, ‘Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger into the nail marks and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.’” (Jn 20:24-25).

Many of us can understand Thomas’ position. We are practical people and, as the saying goes, “seeing is believing.” But faith in Jesus requires much more than trusting the evidence of our senses. It demands that we encounter the risen Lord as he appears to us in new and different ways—in the sacraments (especially the Eucharist), in the Scriptures, in communion with and service to others (especially “the least of these,” our brothers and sisters).

Jesus, who is the face of mercy, has compassion on his unbelieving disciple. He shows Thomas his wounds saying: “Put your hand here and see my hands, and bring your hand and put it into my side, and do not believe, but believe” (Jn 20:27). As with Thomas and the other disciples, Jesus goes out of his way to be present to us, to greet us warmly with “Peace be with you,” and to invite us to believe in him even if we have not seen him with our own eyes.

God’s mercy always gives us a second chance to encounter Jesus and to believe in him. No matter how skeptical or doubtful we may be; no matter how far we have strayed from the experience of God’s communion with Christ in and through his Church; and no matter how seriously we have sinned, Jesus always reaches out to us with open arms. He embraces us and invites us to experience his friendship and his forgiveness.

We’re right to celebrate Divine Mercy Sunday during the Easter season. Let’s make a second chance for Jesus Easter by encountering Jesus in the holy Eucharist, in his sacred word and in our love for one another.

Happy Easter!

ARCHBISHOP / ARZOBISPO CHARLES C. THOMPSON

Bendito sea el Dios y Padre de nuestro Señor Jesucristo, quien según Su gran misericordia, nos ha hecho nacer de nuevo a una esperanza viva, mediante la resurrección de Jesucristo de entre los muertos, para obtener una herencia incorruptible, inmaculada, y que no se marchitará” (1 Pt 1:3). Y no solo eso; san Pedro nos dice que recibiremos “una herencia incorruptible, inmaculada, y que no se marchitará” (1 Pt 1:4). Así es la inmensa misericordia de Dios: no solo perdona nuestros pecados sino que nos concede una recompensa “reservada en los cielos para ustedes” (1 Pt 1:5). Y no solo eso, san Pedro nos dice que recibiremos una “herencia inmortal, incorruptible, y que no se marchitará” (1 Pt 1:5). Así es la inmensa misericordia de Dios: no sólo perdona nuestros pecados sino que nos concede una recompensa “reservada en los cielos para ustedes” (1 Pt 1:5). Y no sólo eso, san Pedro nos dice que recibiremos “una herencia incorruptible, inmaculada, y que no se marchitará” (1 Pt 1:4).

El segundo domingo de Pascua, después de una larga Cuaresma, ¡el sol brillará nuevas veces y nos bendecirá con la alegría de la Pascua! El segundo domingo de Pascua se conoce también como el domingo de la Divina Misericordia, lo cual resulta especialmente adecuado porque la Pascua celebra el mayor acto de misericordia divina de la historia de la humanidad. Nuestro Dios generoso y misericordioso nos ha redimido mediante un acto extraordinario de humildad y sacrificio. A pesar de todos nuestros pecados han sido perdonados. A través de esta gloriosa resurrección hemos sido rescatados y liberados.

En la segunda lectura del domingo de la Divina Misericordia (1 Pt 1:3-9), san Pedro nos dice que la resurrección de Jesús de entre los muertos nos ha hecho nacer de nuevo a una esperanza viva (1 Pt 1:3). Y no sólo eso; san Pedro nos dice que recibiremos “una herencia incorruptible, inmaculada, y que no se marchitará” (1 Pt 1:4). Así es la inmensa misericordia de Dios: no sólo perdona nuestros pecados sino que nos concede una recompensa “reservada en los cielos para ustedes” (1 Pt 1:5). Y no sólo eso, san Pedro nos dice que recibiremos “una herencia incorruptible, inmaculada, y que no se marchitará” (1 Pt 1:4).

“Si podéis creer, muchacha, que vuestra fe me ha hechizado,” dice al prójimo (especialmente a los “más pequeños de nuestros hermanos”). Jesús compasivo es el rostro de la misericordia de Dios.
Pandemic leads to missing the Eucharist, treasured family memories and a shout-out to technology

Compiled by Natalie Hoefer

We asked readers of The Criterion to share how they are staying connected to their faith and faith communities with the coronavirus pandemic that has impacted all corners of the globe, including in central and southern Indiana.

Here are some of their responses.

‘Jesus is always with me’

In these uncertain times with the COVID-19 pandemic, we are fortunate to have the technology to be able to attend Mass online. As I am attending these Masses, I realize how much I miss receiving Communion. I have always had a soft spot for Jesus. When I was a little girl, attending Mass with my parents at my home parish in Richmond, I would cry because Jesus was at the front of church and I could not go up to be with Jesus. As an adult, there were times when I would not be allowed to receive Communion, and I would cry at Mass because I could not be with Jesus. I enjoyed my 15 years as an extraordinary minister of holy Communion, helping distribute Communion during Masses in Richmond and Knightstown.

And as I am attending Mass online, I get a little weepy and feel the tears well up in my eyes, as I am not able to receive Communion. The absence of physical Communion, not being able to receive the body and blood of Christ, makes me realize the personal relationship with Jesus that I have. Jesus is always with me, whether as a crucifix on my wall, the soft spot in my personal relationship with Jesus that I blood of Christ, makes me realize the not being able to receive Communion, and I would cry at Mass because I could not be with Jesus. I enjoyed my 15 years as an extraordinary minister of holy Communion, helping distribute Communion during Masses in Richmond and Knightstown.

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Mary Catherine Kinnevey  
St. Anne Parish, New Castle

Memory of a past quarantine-like time

My son teaches at Noblesville High School [in Noblesville, Ind., in the Lafayette Diocese]. He sometimes tells the kids stories from when he was growing up. He calls them “Mr. Smith stories.”

While the students are learning from home, he gives them assignments, and the kids report back to him. One boy reported back to him, and then asked him to tell a “Mr. Smith story.”

My son told me he said to the student, “I went through a time like you, when the schools were closed. It was a big snowstorm we now call the Blizzard of 78.” He told me he told the boy what he remembered most about being out of school for so long. My husband and I decided to re-do the kitchen cabinets, since we were stuck inside. We took the cabinets down, took off the varnish, sanded them down, re-varnished them and put them back up. That’s what he remembered about that time.

I have a daughter who has been using this time to go through and sort old photos and movies. I hope other people write in. I would like to read other people’s stories.

Marcella Smith  
Holy Spirit Parish, Indianapolis

‘Technology has been a blessing’

I’m a member of St. Monica Parish in Indianapolis, and I have to say—I’ve been so impressed with my parish’s efforts to keep the faith community connected during this unprecedented time. Like many parishes, St. Monica’s devoted priests and staff members have made possible the blessing of the Mass seven days a week via livestream.

They have also livestreamed the rosary each day from a different area of the parish campus, giving parishioners a glimpse of familiar and much-missed sights within the church and around the grounds.

“Zoom” has become the technology buzzword of the time. Accordingly, the parish has offered young adult meet-ups via Zoom.

But my favorite form of creative connection St. Monica has offered are livestreamed how-to sessions via the parish’s Facebook page (www.facebook.com/saintmonicaindy under “Videos”).

Trying to watch your money? Watch St. Monica School principal Eric Schommer as he demonstrates how to change the oil on a car. Or take notes as parish pastor Father John McCaslan explains how to make pizza with items typically found in every kitchen. And cook along with St. Monica Parish secretary extraordinareare Julia Gonzalez as she teaches how to make fish tacos and tortillas.

And to keep viewers focused on faith, each video includes Scripture readings, information about a saint and prayer petitions.

I’ve heard it mentioned in numerous talk-radio broadcasts and news analysis shows: We will emerge from this crisis with far more knowledge, capability and creativity on the digital front. Such technology has certainly been a blessing in keeping Catholics connected during this challenging time.

Natalie Hoefer  
St. Monica Parish, Indianapolis

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 maybe 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 also 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. Send your stories and ideas to reporter Natalie Hoefer at nhoefer@archindy.org. Or leave her a message on her work phone at 317-236-1486 or 800-382-9836, ext. 1486, and she’ll return your call as soon as possible.

Several parishes to livestream Divine Mercy Sunday services on April 19

Livestreamed Divine Mercy Sunday prayer services on April 19 reported to The Criterion as of April 13 are as follows:

All Saints Parish, Dearborn County, 3 p.m.  
• bit.ly/2wxsKFl (YouTube)
• twitter.com/AllParish (Twitter)
• TV: Local Channel 905

Holy Family Parish, New Albany, 3 p.m.  
• www.facebook.com/HolyFamilyCatholic
Prince of Peace Parish, Madison, 3 p.m.  
• bit.ly/1Ou9r4K (Facebook)

St. Ann Parish, Indianapolis, 2:15 p.m.  
• www.facebook.com/stannindy
• www.st-ann-rcindy.org

St. Joseph Parish, Shelbyville, 3 p.m. (bilingual)  
• www.facebook.com/stjoesshelby

St. Paul Parish, Tell City, and St. Mark Parish, Perry County, 10 a.m. CDT/ 11 a.m. EDT  
• bit.ly/2UBaL4J (YouTube)

St. Francis and Clare of Assisi Parish, Greenwood, 10 a.m.  
• zoom.us/G712954744
• Phone: 312-626-6799, enter meeting ID 712954744

VIPS Offers companions for couples celebrating 50, 55, 60, 65, 70 or more years of marriage are accepted. Go to bit.ly/2MM4qOm or call 317-236-1585.

Frank and Marlene (Kreiner) Deutsch, members of St. Michael Parish, in Brooklynville, will celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary on April 23. The couple was married in St. Peter and Paul Catholic Church in Reading, Ohio, on April 23, 1960. They have five children: Lynn Brown, Paula Sizemore, Andy, Chris and Steve Deutsch. The couple also has 13 grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

Dennis and Connie (Obermeyer) Harmeyer, members of St. Louis Parish, in Batesville, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on April 18. The couple was married in St. Louis Church on April 18, 1970. They have two children, Angela Hartman and Scott Harmeyer. They will celebrate with a Mass and reception at a later date.
Renaissance artist Raphael created timeless masterpieces for the Church

By Shemaiah Gonzalez

This year marks the 500th anniversary of artist Raphael’s death. This painter would glean the best qualities of his contemporaries, Leonardo and Michelangelo, to create a style all his own. His elegance carried him to work in aristocratic courts, churches and for two popes. His depictions of Christ grasped both his divinity and humanity, and has captured our imagination. And he accomplished all this before his death at age 37.

Early years
Raffaello Sanzio (or Santi), and known simply as Raphael, was born in 1483 in Urbino, Italy. In his family, art was a passion as his father was a court painter to the Duke of Urbino. Urbino was a cultured and vibrant town where the duke praised lovely manners above all else.
Learning to be a gentleman was part of the education Raphael received at a young age working alongside his father in his art workshop. These manners proved helpful in his future career.
Young Raphael showed talent and was given an apprenticeship to Umbria master Pietro Perugino at the young age of 8. Orphaned by age 11, Raphael continued his studies with Perugino while he co-managed his father’s workshop with his stepmother. By age 17, Raphael finished his education and was considered a “master.” He was in high demand from the start of his career, taking commissions in churches and courts in central Italy.

Florence
In 1504, Raphael went to study in Florence with a letter of recommendation from the Duke of Urbino’s mother, ensuring that he would meet all the right people. Leonardo da Vinci was working in Florence during this time.
As Raphael studied Leonardo’s work, his own painting style began to blossom. Raphael’s painting “Madonna del Granduca” shows this development and Leonardo’s influence. Raphael absorbed the beauty the artist’s dramatic poses and groupings of his figures and learned from them, using these techniques in his “School of Athens.” Michelangelo had been working in Rome at the same time and grew to despise the younger, up-and-coming Raphael. After seeing Michelangelo’s Sistine Chapel, Raphael gleaned the older artist’s dynamic poses and groupings of his figures and learned from them, using these techniques in his “School of Athens.” Michelangelo’s scorn for the young artist was widely known, as was his cantankerous temper. Raphael got the last laugh, painting him as the acrid philosopher, Heracleitus, putting at the foot of the steps in “The School of Athens.” He even added the brown boots Michelangelo reportedly slept in, so there would be no missing him.

Legacy
Sir Joshua Reynolds, and 18th-century English artist, said of Raphael: “The excellency of this extraordinary man lay in the propriety, beauty and majesty of his characters, his judicious contrivance of his composition, correctness of drawing, purity of taste and the skilful accommodation of other men’s conceptions to his own purpose.”
Raphael changed the art world with his supple poses and transformed the way we view the Blessed Virgin Mary with his tender and loving portrayals. Raphael absorbed the beauty the Renaissance had to offer, and let us see it through his eyes.

Shemaiah Gonzalez is a freelance writer. Her website is www.shemaiahongalez.com.
All we are being called to is a different kind of silence

I am here, sitting at home, during a pandemic. It’s Holy Week. I’m supposed to be at Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House in Indianapolis, hosting a day of silence, about Mass and embracing silence with others that feel called to it.

Instead, we’ve all been called to another kind of silence.

Many people are being called to the silence of their homes. Most are called to the silence of their hands, suddenly still and without work. Many are feeling the silence of anxiety and sadness. So many feel like they are not living without the “busy” of life. I can see that I was secret with you since we are all here in this space together: Slow down and embrace silence, it is sacred and should be cherished.

I’ve been walking each morning since this all started, and I’ve noticed so many things that I’ve never noticed before because I was always rushing through my daily life. There are many “I see” moments in my house: the yellow pansy can hold about 100 shades of yellow in one petal; an approaching rainstorm still smells amazing; simply watching water move is incredibly relaxing; and watching a bee pollinate a flower is a truly amazing sight.

As I noted last year, these practices are often the truest expressions of freedom and tolerance. In addition, generous support of the poor marks this period. It is believed that the rewards of generosity to the poor (giving, giving charity) are increased during the month of Ramadan.

The Muslim month of Ramadan will commence on April 24 and extend to May 23. This period, known as the Holy Month of Ramadan, lasts 30 days. During this holy month, Muslims are not permitted to fast on this day. The festival extends for three days. On these days, Muslims share in Eid prayers, charity, social gatherings, fasting and organizing community iftars. Perhaps one of your Muslim friends will invite you to a festive meal! 

You see, it is a major festival among Buddhists. It recalls the birth, enlightenment and death of Gautama Buddha (also known as Siddhartha), the founder of Buddhism. Tradition says that all three events happened on the same day of the calendar throughout his life. The festival is observed usually on a Sunday during the first full moon of May. Buddhists live all over the world. Regionally, there are Buddhist temples, centers and monasteries in Indianapolis, Bloomington, Louisville, Cincinnati and Dayton. But the majority live in southeast Asia.

As one can imagine, how this variety of cultures observe Vesak varies. Yet, there are commonalities. Typically, Buddhists gather together to commemorate the break down of Vesak. While there, they meditate on all the religious precepts of Buddhism, emboldening their lives, seeking wisely, honoring life and showing generosity to their fellow citizens.

Over the three days of Vesak, offerings of food, flowers and flags are placed. These gifts show that life is fleeting. In many places, the people hang and give away flags of Buddhism. This day, the festival extends for three days. On these days, Muslims share in Eid prayers, charity, social gatherings, fasting and organizing community iftars. Perhaps one of your Muslim friends will invite you to a festive meal!

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Guest Column
Fr. Richard Malloy, S.J.

“Spiritual Communion” connects us, God’s love is present

“Sacraments are those signs that achieve what is meant by “spiritual Communion.”

Let’s start at the beginning. God loves us constantly and precisely creates and sustains us. God wants us to be with us on the journey of life, wants to save us from sin and all evil. God wants us to have peace and joy where we will be with him and our loved ones for all eternity. A spiritual Communion begins in the fourth century: “For the Son of God became man upon the heels of the new moon of February.” It connects us with the reality of God’s active love in our lives. That divine love forms in us an intimacy and that divine love is present in and through our loving relationships with others. We open ourselves to awareness of God’s transformative love when we pray. There is a tangible concreteness and community reality to this connection. God is Lord and Savior, brother and companion, present in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit who dwell in a house of bread and wine.

And the reality of that presence is known even when we cannot be physically present at Mass, and maybe must witness and pray along with the Mass while viewing television. We can prayerfully enter into this communion. Fast means we want to enter into our minds and hearts and achieve in our lives the reality of love and grace that God has for us. We witness to the fact when we can receive the reality physically. We also know that Christ is really present and there is the sacramental reality (sacramentality: liturgy - in the word proclaimed; 2) in the people gathered; 3) in the consecrated bread and wine; and 4) in the presence of the presider. So Mass via TV or Internet leaves us with three of the four!

I just think. A spouse away on a trip loves across time and space. Parents who have died and gone before us are loved and love us across time and space. From the depths of our reality that God’s love is really loved.

At Mass, we are deeply connected with all our loved ones, and with all with whom we are in community. In this, we are loved by—perhaps a technician or a cameraman in or behind him to the streets of Rome. Empty, rain-glistened pavement stretched behind him as he walked. On my return that night, I noticed the darkness even in the air, he said. “We notice it in people’s gestures, their glances give them away. I thought of my forgive ties to the grocery store, where the usual Midwestern friendliness has been replaced by serious demeanor, which makes it hard to decide how best to negotiate among each other so we don’t come too close.”

Pope Francis stood in the middle of the church facing the Sea of Galilee, the “part of the boat that sinks first.” Jesus, courageous, offered hope.

“ar one reaches salvation by themselves,” Pope Francis reminded us. “We must also speak of ‘a connection to the Earth.’ We were not shaken awake by wars or injustice across the world, but by the cry of the poor of our ailing planet.”

We lived, the pope reminded us, “thinking we would stay healthy, but that this is a world that is sick.”

Many nights, when I have trouble sleeping, I join many others who pray that Jesus will help us do better at choosing what really matters. We are all being called to a different kind of silence.
Divine Mercy Sunday

My Journey to God

You Never Left Me

By Greg Hublar

When I chose to ignore your calling, and direction for my life
You Never Left Me

When I purposefully chose the world, and all its empty promises
You Never Left Me

When I felt as though you had abandoned me, and that you couldn’t be trusted
You Never Left Me

When I wrongly blamed you for all the struggles, and the trials throughout my life
You Never Left Me

When through my thoughts and actions, I placed myself over others
You Never Left Me

When I allowed my mind to wander through sinful pleasures
You Never Left Me

When I didn’t believe you would provide for me or my family
You Never Left Me

When I failed to trust you with my finances, and the blessings you had given me
You Never Left Me

When I looked for meaning and fulfillment in life, outside of you
You Never Left Me

As I look back over the days I have lived, I can now clearly see
You Never Left Me

Going forward with each remaining day, Jesus help me to always remember
You Never Left Me, and You Never Will!

(Q Greg Hublar is a member of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in New Albany.)

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, April 19, 2020

- 1 Peter 1:3-9
- John 20:19-31

As almost always in the Easter season, the Acts of the Apostles furnishes the Eucharist with its first reading.

Acts claims to be, and scholars assume it indeed to be, the work of the Evangelist who wrote St. Luke’s Gospel. This book, therefore, may properly be regarded as a continuation of the story presented in Luke’s Gospel, which closes with the ascension of Jesus. Acts then begins at this point.

As it progresses, Acts traces for some years the development of the infant Church, describing the plight and behavior of its first members. It provides a fascinating insight into the formation of the Church’s structure, as well as a powerful lesson in the basic beliefs of the early Christians.

Acts also gives great examples of unfeigned faith and of human ignorance and treachery.

In this weekend’s reading, the teachings of the Apostles and love for the Lord and adherence to him were central to the lives of the first Christians. They met for the “breaking of the bread,” an ancient term of the first Christians. They met for the adherence to him were central to the lives of the Apostles and love for the Lord and treachery.

Jesus lives! The encounter with the doubting, demanding Thomas affirms this fact.

Resurrection from the dead is stunning, but Jesus further acts as God by conferring the very power of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles, thereby giving them the authority to forgive sins. He sends them to the four corners of the world to bring redemption to all humanity.

Passing through locked doors as if they were thin air, Jesus greeted the Apostles with “Peace be with you” (Jn 20:21, 26), Jesus makes clear that peace only is in God.

Reflection

This weekend, the Church calls its people to have faith and to rejoice. Resurrection and redemption in Jesus refer not to memories of times long past, but living realities for us to experience here and now.

It is time for us to find consolation and strength in Jesus, the crucified and risen, living still.

We observe Divine Mercy Sunday on this Second Sunday of Easter. Divine Mercy is with us in and through Jesus, the Risen, the Son of God. It gives us hope, purpose and strength.

While sin and human limitation present obstacles, often considerable, in our progress toward God the Lord left us the Apostles and their successors in the Church. The Lord lives! He lives today, where we are, for us, and for each of us individually. †

Question Corner

Fr. Kenneth Doyle

The sacrament of the anointing of the sick cannot be delegated to a medical worker

Q I am a recent convert to the Catholic Church. I am also a registered nurse and have held many patients as they passed on to eternity. I am concerned over the issue of priests being “barred” from hospitals during the current coronavirus epidemic, I have heard many Catholics bemoan the fact that, as a result, the sick and dying are being denied the sacrament of the sick. So, my question is: Can this sacrament be done by intention? It seems to me that we could somehow comfort people—who are denied the sacrament through the inaccessibility of priests—that Jesus can heal simply through his grace and the person’s faith. (Florida)

A Your perspective is right on target: Jesus can forgive and heal based on a person’s intention. In fact, in late March 2020, the chair of the U.S. bishops’ Committee on Divine Worship made that same point. Archbishop Leonard P. Blair of Hartford, Conn., explained that what the Vatican had said the previous week about the sacrament of penance can be applied analogously to the anointing of the sick. The Vatican’s Apostolic Penitentiary had said: “Where the individual faithful find themselves in the painful impossibility of receiving sacramental absolution, it should be remembered that perfect contrition, coming from the love of God, beloved above all things, expressed by a sincere request for forgiveness [that which the penitent is at present able to express] and accompanied by ‘votum confessionis,’ that is, by the firm resolution to have recourse, as soon as possible, to sacramental confession, obtains forgiveness of sins, even mortal ones.”

Interestingly, Archbishop Blair issued his statement to clarify and correct a “solution” that had been proposed earlier that same week by another New England bishop. In an e-mail to priests of his diocese, Bishop Mitchell T. Rozanski of Springfield, Mass., had said, “I am allowing the assigned Catholic hospital chaplains, standing outside a patient’s room or away from their bedside, to dab a cotton swab with holy oil and then allow a nurse to enter the patient’s room and administer the oil.”

Speaking to the U.S. bishops, after conferring with the Vatican, Archbishop Blair said, “With regard to the anointing of the sick, it is not possible for the anointing with oil to be delegated to someone else, such as a nurse or doctor.” Bishop Rozanski immediately rescinded the permission he had granted earlier.

This brings us back to the questioner’s valuable insight: In a circumstance where a physical anointing is impossible, God knows a person’s soul and can provide spiritual comfort and strength.

Q I am 80 years old, a “cradle Catholic,” a product of Catholic elementary and secondary schools and a Catholic university. I have a question that I think others of my generation might ask: When did bowing become acceptable, versus genuflecting, before a tabernacle with a lighted sanctuary lamp? (Kansas)

A The act of genuflecting—bending the right knee to the ground—is a sign of adoration and is meant to honor the Blessed Sacrament. Therefore, upon arriving in church, if there is a tabernacle containing the consecrated hosts, one should genuflect toward it. (This assumes that one is able physically to do so.)

If, instead, the Eucharist is reserved in a side chapel, it would be proper simply to bow toward the altar. The “General Instruction of the Roman Missal” notes that, when the tabernacle is present in the sanctuary, the priest genuflects when he arrives at the altar and departs from it, and three times during the Liturgy of the Eucharist. “Otherwise,” says the general instruction, “all who pass before the most Blessed Sacrament genuflect, unless they are moving in procession.” (§274).

Ministers carrying the processional cross, candles or the Book of the Gospels bow their heads instead of genuflecting.

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

Daily Readings

Monday, April 20

 Acts 4:23-31
 Psalm 2:1-9
 John 3:1-8

Tuesday, April 21

 St. Anselm, bishop and doctor of the Church
 Acts 4:32-40
 Psalm 93:1-2, 5
 John 3:7b-15

Wednesday, April 22

 Acts 5:17-26
 Psalm 34:2-9
 John 3:16-21

Thursday, April 23

 St. George, martyr
 St. Adalbert, bishop and martyr
 Acts 5:27-33
 Psalm 142:9, 17-20
 John 3:31-36

Friday, April 24

 St. Fidelis of Sigmaringen, priest and martyr
 Acts 6:4-7
 Psalm 27:1, 4, 13-14
 John 6:1-15

Saturday, April 25

 St. Mark, Evangelist
 1 Peter 5:13-14
 Psalm 89:2-3, 6-7, 16-17
 Mark 16:13-20

Sunday, April 26

 Third Sunday of Easter
 Acts 2:14, 22-33
 Psalm 16:1-2, 5, 7-11
 1 Peter 1:17-21
Tears filled the eyes of Father Jonathan Meyer as he talked to the high school students.

The pastor of All Saints Parish in Dearborn County knows the disappointment and even the pain that two senior classes—two classes he has come to know—would be experiencing since the April 2 announcement by Indiana Gov. Eric Holcomb that school buildings throughout the state would be closed through the end of the 2019-20 academic year.

“I talked to the high school students. I talked to the St. Leon and cross country coach at East Central High School in St. Leon, Father Meyer has come to know the students. I feel the pain there, and he knows the loss they are experiencing by not being able to participate in spring sports, theater productions and other activities—including just being able to see their friends and classmates. So Father Meyer set up a video talk with them to share his thoughts and advice about dealing with the disappointment and making the most of the reality they face.

While his talk is directed toward the Trojans of East Central, it’s a message that also means for high school students across the archdiocese and the state. Here are some edited versions of the main points of his talk.

Cling to what you know, who are you

“First and foremost, be not afraid,” Father Meyer counseled. “This is a powerful time to connect with what you know and experience the uncertainty. You know you have gifts and talents and abilities. You know that there are teachers and coaches that are mourning right now over your loss. Cling to what you know. Cling to who you are. No one can take that away from you.”

Be creative

“God didn’t give you talents and abilities to bury them in darkness, in depression, in doubt, in fear. God gave you those talents and abilities so you can use them to shine. You need to like him. You need to be creative. Allow your imagination to say, ‘How can I use these gifts? How can I use these talents?’”

Be a game changer

“Be aware... of such misconduct, please contact the archdiocesan victim assistance team, 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 team, online Lay Ministry Formation"
Priests, laity saddened by absence of chrism Mass, look forward to coming together again as community

By Sean Gallagher

The chrism Mass of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis is a hallmark liturgy each year for the church in central and southern Indiana.

Gathered with the archbishop in SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis are priests, deacons, and representatives from parishes, Catholic schools, and Church buildings.

The archbishop blesses oils used in several sacraments, in the anointing of alters and in the Ordination of priests.

Representatives from parishes across the archdiocese receive those oils and take them back home to their communities.

This liturgy has ordinarily been celebrated on Tuesday of Holy Week in the archdiocese. But because of the coronavirus pandemic, it has been postponed indefinitely.

Cardinalowiak, a member of All Saints Parish in Dearborn County, has participated in the chrism Mass.

“Not being part of it was just huge,” said Vogele.

Vogele of missing the chrism Mass during Holy Week this year is a sentiment all of the parishes of the archdiocese could relate to, and that the priests who give us the Eucharist and to bless those oils that we use for baptism, anointings and Confirmations.

It’s very poignant and [shows] who we are as a faithful Church.

In a letter sent to priests serving in the archdiocese on April 7, the day on which the chrism Mass was to have been celebrated, Archbishop Charles C. Thompson said that it was “especially painful” that they were unable to gather for spiritual sustenance.

“Though physically separated from our people and one another, we remain united in and through our great high priest, Jesus Christ,” Archbishop Thompson said.

“We are particularly united with one another through him by means of our daily celebration of Mass and the Liturgy of the Hours. Eucharistic adoration, the rosary and other devotions further enhance that unity we share with one another and those we serve. In this time of ‘social distancing’ and ‘stay at home,’ we need to hold one another in prayer more than ever.

Father Vincent Gilmore, associate pastor of Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish in Greenwood, was looking forward to the archdiocese coming together in prayer.

Since he was ordained a priest last June, this would have been the first time he would have renewed his ordination promises with other priests in the archdiocese.

“There’s a certain sweetness in the sacrifice I’ve come to,” said Father Gilmore of the postponement of the liturgy.

“It’s like Mother Teresa said, ‘Give us the grace of love, Lord, to give what you take and take what you give with a big smile.’ ”

While he can’t participate in the chrism Mass, Father Gilmore has shown his continued commitment to priestly life and ministry as he reaches out to the members of his parish.

He, Father Todd Goodson, Our Lady of the Greenwood’s pastor, and the parish staff have been making phone calls to the more than 2,400 households of the Indianapolis South Deanery faith community. “just to check in to see how they’re doing, what they’re struggling with, if they have any prayer requests or need any assistance from us.”

“A couple of them broke down and cried as they picked up the phone—and it wasn’t just because they had to speak with me,” Father Gilmore said with a laugh. “Just the gesture of a phone call like that made a big difference to us.”

He said the purpose of the calls were “just to check in to see how they’re doing, what they’re struggling with, if they have any prayer requests or need any assistance from us.”

“Most importantly, we’re just letting them know that we care,” Father Gilmore said.

Vogele has seen how the members of All Saints Parish in Dearborn County care for their faith as they have shared photos of how they’ve decorated places in their homes where they gather to pray with livedestreamed liturgies from one of the four campuses of the Batesville Deeney faith community.

“They’ve created altars, places with candles and statues,” said Vogele, who is a liturgical musician and cantor in the parish.

“This is an opportunity. We know what our churches look like. We can build a domestic church in our homes. Creating sacred spaces give people a great experience [of faith]. I don’t think God has abandoned us. He has opened up an opportunity to create this at home.”

Vogele, 67, has been involved in liturgical music since she was 8. So her Catholic faith means a lot to her, especially at this time when she can’t gather for worship with her brothers and sisters in Christ.

“This is who I am,” she said. “This is my life. It truly is. Not being part of Van Der Berg’t is a loss. Van Der Berg’t similarly missed coming to the cathedral for the chrism Mass. A volunteer sacristan for the St. Andrew campus of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, Father Van Der Berg’t has received the blessed oils for the Connersville Deanery faith community.

“It’s an honor to be able to receive the oils for our parish,” she said. “I find it beautiful and uplifting celebration of our faith.”

So, when Tuesday of Holy Week came around this year, it felt like “a big void” to Van Der Berg’t.

Christ told her, “The pale ray stands for the Water which makes souls righteous. The red ray stands for the Blood which is the life of souls…” (Diary, 299).

“Paint an image according to the pattern you see, with the signature: Jesus, I trust in You. … I promise that the soul that will venerate this image will not perish” (Diary, 47, 48).

Now that’s not a free ticket to sin without sorrow and still slide safely through the pearly gates. Sin damages and can even kill our relationship with God. But when we do sin, God desires us to seek his mercy with a repentant heart, no matter how grave the sin.

Calling upon his mercy is the “A” of the “ABCs” of the message Christ asked St. Faustina to spread. “S” for “Trusting and confident in God’s mercy; be merciful to others; and completely trust in Jesus.

The feast, the image and the message of Divine Mercy are for all times. But what better time than during this pandemic to come to trust in God’s infinite mercy and in the goodness of his plans for us. And what better time to start than this Divine Mercy Sunday.

Cathole students missing foundational knowledge, we won’t be able to move forward in our faith journey until we learn this lesson of trust in God.

The same is true of the world—as Christ told St. Faustina. “Mankind will not have peace until it turns [to God] with trust…” (Diary, 300).

(Natéli Hoefner is a reporter for The Criterion.)

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TO ADVERTISE IN THE Criterion

EVAES continued from page 6

with each step I took along the way.

For those rusted gears of timidity which lurk in me-opt to turn my life around. They turned suddenly and all together, urged on by that golden key from my great father which is the love in the midst of adversity, delivered by a voice issuing from his Sacred Heart.

“The two rays denote blood and water,” Van Der Berg’t has received the blessed oils for the Connersville Deanery faith community.

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(Natéli Hoefner is a reporter for The Criterion.)
Spirit of Hope Award winners help give hope and change lives

By Natalie Hatler

Each spring, St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities in New Albany honors two people with the Spirit of Hope Award, the agency’s highest recognition. This year’s winners are Joan Cahill and Paula Robinson. Typically around this time of year, the honorees would receive their awards at the organization’s largest fundraiser, its annual “Giving Hope—Changing Lives” gala.

Like so many events, the gala has been postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic.

While Cahill and Robinson will receive their awards when the event is rescheduled, The Criterion recently had an appropriate time to celebrate those honored for something so needed in today’s challenging times: a spirit of hope.

Paula Robinson: ‘A perfect model of giving’

Robinson, 73, recalls a time when she and her late husband lived just down the street from what was then called St. John’s Maternity Home.

When asked if she could volunteer one day, then that she would come one day to receive the honor, “I would have,” she said with no hesitation.

She recalls visiting with the agency’s then-development director, who told her about the move of the maternity home with Catholic Charities.

“It’s a story that goes on and on,” she said.

Robinson began volunteering in 2008—-and made a difference herself. Among her offers for the organization, Robinson served on its advisory council from 2010-13. During that time, from 2011-13, she chaired the committee for the gala that had first sparked her desire to contribute to the agency.

The member of St. Mary Parish in Navilleton offered “great leadership while serving on the advisory council,” says agency director Mark Casper. She was a leading advocate for St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities in offering an affordable housing program.

“She demonstrated great vision in a period where decisions had to be made,” said Cardinal Joseph E. Kurtz, O.F.M. Cap., then Pope Francis’s representative to the United States.

“Whatever was needed when we moved into the new office in the 1960s and 1970s, Paula was instrumental in this happening,” Casper describes Robinson as “a perfect model of giving her time, talent and treasure, and all with the utmost humility and a what-can-I-do-to-help attitude.”

Casper says the organization “is the best thing we can do is go deeper and pray.”

“It is stronger than any virus and it dates our every action,” she said. “The best thing we can do is continue our unceasing prayer, and let others know we are praying for them.”

The Spirit of Hope Award was “heartbreaking,” she adds.

But in response to the directives of social distancing and gatherings having to be avoided, the community has closed its doors to guests for the time being. Cahill, who with her husband Joe is a member of St. Mary’s-of-the-Knobs Parish in Floyd County, Indiana, said “as we got too attached” to the young pregnant women she helped in the maternity home. “I never went back, I was talking tirelessly to offer services that filled gaps that other funding and government assistance did not.”

Caspérior who at first claimed to be “39 and holding” but later admitted to being 83—sends her job “was a dream come true.”

“It was fantastic to know you were doing good and helping those young ladies, and helping change their lives around. It was just a great feeling, very rewarding.”

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Casper enthusiastically agrees. “St. Elizabeth’s was her story.” She says “For her it was a passion, never just a job.” 

She said “Loved those girls!”

“Joan set the tone when there was no St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities in New Albany,” she said. “She had the vision, and she left the culture behind and passion that makes St. Elizabeth’s special to this day.”

“For Cahill, it comes down to hope.”

“When they come here, those young women have hope.”

“Better, here, they pick up the pieces and get on with their life.”

“It was great to see her get her life turned around and have a good future,” she said. “It was wonderful to see them make something out of their lives.”

The press release notes that Cahill “served all clients with passion and professionalism, setting a standard of excellence that agency staff endeavor to uphold each day.”

Joan Cahill

Cahill was the first to receive one of this year’s Spirit of Hope Awards. “I just couldn’t believe it,” she says. “I thought, ‘All I was doing was my job, and I couldn’t have done it without my wonderful staff.”

But Cahill’s job was no small task.

She began working in 1989 as the newly established St. Elizabeth Maternity Home’s first social services director, a role she held until retiring in 2005.

“She demonstrated great vision in a period where decisions had to be made,” she said.

“I painted rooms and trim and fences—whatever was needed when we moved into the new office in the 1960s and 1970s, she said. “I think I’ve retired from painting if I can get away with it,” she adds with a laugh.

Receiving the Spirit of Hope Award is “an honor,” says Robinson. “I’m thankful I’m in a position where I can give back to the community.”

“She never went home without talking about what we do,” Cahill adds. “She was my hero.”

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Religious communities in archdiocese refocus on prayer during pandemic

By Sean Gallagher

Like all other residents who are living under Gov. Eric Holcomb’s March 24 stay-at-home order, religious across central and southern Indiana have had their lives significantly affected by the coronavirus pandemic.

They’re taking special measures to protect the health of their order members, who are especially vulnerable to the virus. This includes isolating those who live in shared health care facilities from the rest of their communities, keeping the number of lay people working on their campuses to a minimum and closing their campuses to all visitors.

These communities also operate centers that offer retreats and other programs. All of these offerings have been cancelled until further notice.

These sisters, brothers and priests also keep to the spiritualities of their order and look to the spirituality of their order and wish to gather for their Funerals. “We’re accepting of the why,” she said, “and realize how important it is in keeping the community together.”

In response to the pandemic, the Sisters of Providence’s leadership team has invited the community to return to a prayer practice that dates back to St. Francis of Assisi’s time. These are the “prayer stations” and the community has hosted its own “stations of the Cross”.

It is their “prayer of reunion,” which the sisters and the lay Providence associates have been asked to pray aloud, wherever they are, at 3 p.m. daily.

“We unite with all our sisters and all who are connected to the Sisters of Providence wherever they may be to praise you, our living Father, present to us in your Word, Jesus.”

The online service, linked to the Facebook pages of the other religious orders, invites everyone to “pray with and for those who pray for and with you.”

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