Now is time to build new world without inequality and injustice, pope says

ROME (CNS)—As the world slowly recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic, there is a risk it will be struck by an even worse virus—that of selfish indifference, Pope Francis said.

This dangerous virus is “spread by the thought that life is better if it is better for me and that everything will be fine if it is fine for me. It begins there and ends up selecting one person over another, discarding the poor and sacrificing those left behind on the altar of progress,” he said in his homily at a Mass on Divine Mercy Sunday on April 19.

The current pandemic instead must compel people to prepare for a “collective future” that sees the whole human family as one and holds all of the Earth’s gifts in common in order to be shared justly with those in need, he said.

“This is not some ideology; it is Christianity,” and it mirrors the way the early Christian community lived, the pope said at the Mass, celebrated privately at Rome’s Church of the Holy Spirit, which houses a shrine dedicated to Divine Mercy.

The Mass was celebrated on the 20th anniversary of St. John Paul II’s declaration that the Sunday after Easter would be celebrated as Divine Mercy Sunday. The Divine Mercy movement was founded in the early 1900s by Polish nun St. Faustina Kowalska, who said Jesus told her he wanted a feast of Divine Mercy as a refuge and shelter for all souls.

In his homily, Pope Francis noted that St. Faustina said Jesus told her, “I am love and shelter for all souls. I am the loving ministry of Jesus.”

The nurse practitioner at Community Hospital East in Indianapolis, Nurse practitioners Katie Kennedy, left, and Gina Catanese are two of the dedicated health care workers who are taking care of COVID-19 patients at Community Hospital East in Indianapolis. (Submitted photo)

Katie Kennedy quickly realized the devastating impact of COVID-19 after she offered to assess infected patients—so that only one person from her group would get exposed to the deadly virus.

The nurse practitioner at Community Hospital East in Indianapolis saw how some patients declined rapidly—from being fine, to being on a ventilator 12 hours later, to multi-organ failure.”

She was also there for the touching moment when her younger sister, Emily Norton—a nurse in the hospital’s intensive care unit—held the hand of a patient who was dying from the virus.

Then came the moment when the 35-year-old mother of three young children faced her own struggles with the deadly virus after working 12 straight days with about 10 patients. She had a fever, back pain and shortness of breath that was so bad that she soon found herself at home “sitting in the middle of our steps to rest when going up or down them” and while walking to the mailbox.

When she tested positive for the coronavirus on March 30, she wasn’t surprised, but the fears were still there. She became one of the nearly 9,300 health care workers in the United States infected by the disease, according to an April 14 report from the

Health care workers rely on their faith as they serve on the front lines of pandemic

(See DUNNAWAY, page 10)

Amid crisis, doctor finds hope in ‘the loving ministry of Jesus’

By John Shaughnessy

Dr. Heidi Dunnaway has an interesting perspective on the coronavirus crisis from her viewpoint in the southern part of Indiana.

It’s a perspective that comes from being the chief medical officer at Ascension St. Vincent Evansville with oversight responsibilities for the Catholic health care system’s five smaller, rural hospitals in Bedford, Loogootee, Brazil, North Vernon and Salem.

“In some ways, we’ve been blessed in the southern part of the state because we’ve not been hit as hard as in the central and northern parts of the state,” she says. “Being in a more rural area is a benefit. We’ve had a smaller number of cases so far. We are sort of holding our breaths.”

She’s also holding onto her faith in this uncertain time when everything “just changes so rapidly.”

“My faith helps me personally quite a bit as we’ve been facing it,” says Dunnaway, a member of St. John the Baptist Parish in Newburgh, Ind., in the Evansville Diocese. “It was very useful to me going through Lent. This feels a bit like going to the desert. I think of Christ’s 40 days in the desert. There’s the simplicity and being laid bare. And Easter this year had a lot of meaning.

“It’s the symbolism of Easter—the new life, the hope that we’ll get through this. There’s a strength we have to have through this. Personally, I’m not sure I’d be able to do this without my faith. It’s so foundational to all the things we’re being asked to do.”

One of the emphases of Ascension’s approach to health care is “our respect for end of life,” she says—“how we take care of our patients, how we take care of our

See KENNEDY, page 10
POPE
continued from page 1

POPE Francis celebrates Mass on the feast of Divine Mercy at the Church of the Holy Spirit near the Vatican in Rome on April 19. The church houses a sanctuary dedicated to Divine Mercy. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)

to offer them to him “so that he can help us experience his mercy,” the pope said.

Even the disciples, and especially St. Thomas, experienced fear and doubt, failing to believe in the risen Lord right away, the pope said.

Jesus doesn’t scold them with a sermon because “he wants us to see him not as a taskmaster with whom we have to settle accounts, but as our father who always raises us up,” just like any father would when his child falls, the pope said.

“The hand that always puts us back on our feet is mercy: God knows that without mercy we will remain on the ground, that is, in keeping to walk, we need to be put back on our feet,” he said.

Right now, he said, the world is undergoing a “time of trial” and, like St. Thomas, “with our fears and our doubts, [we] experience it to be finally what the Lord, who sees beyond that frailty an irrepressible beauty,” like a crystal that is delicate, but pure and transparent before God who lets his light of mercy “shine in us and through us in the world.”

“Let us be gratefulful mindful of the feast of Divine Mercy, the pope said, comes from St. Thomas, “the disciple who arrived late,” but for whom the Lord waited, not leaving him behind.

“Now while we are looking ahead to a challenging and arduous recovery from the pandemic, there is a danger that we will forget those who are left behind. The risk is that we may then be struck by an even worse virus, that of selfish indifference,” the pope said.

“Let us show mercy to those who are most vulnerable for in this way we will build a new world,” he said.

“The prayers of the faithful at the Mass asked God for consolation, mercy and strength for the Church, government leaders, priests, Christians, health care workers, volunteers and the homeless during the global pandemic.

“May priests always administer the sacrament of reconciliation with a merciful heart and in this period of enforced solitude, may they offer forgiveness and consolation through every means,” one petition prayed.

“May all the baptized not let themselves be intimidated by the inconveniences and sufferings from these weeks, but may they know how to give spiritual comfort and material support generously to all those who are in a precarious situation,” said another petition.

After Mass, before praying the “Regina Coeli,” the pope said Christians must remember the words of mercy and compassion toward everyone, especially those who suffer, are abandoned or in need. “We cannot lose the memory of divine mercy” also inspire the just sharing among nations and their institutions in order to face the current crisis in solidarity,” he said.

The pope ended his midday address by offering Easter greetings to Orthodox and Eastern Catholics celebrating according to the Julian calendar and thanking those Eastern-rite Catholics who were also celebrating the same day as a gesture of ecumenism and fraternity.

Because of restrictions in place to curb the spread of the coronavirus, the Divine Mercy Mass was celebrated without the presence of the public, with only a small choir and with only two concelebrants: Archbishop Rino Fisichella, president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting New Evangelization, and Msgr. Jozef Burt, the parish’s rector.


NEWS FROM YOU!

Do you have something exciting or news worthy you want to be considered to print in The Criterion?

E-mail us:
criterion@archindy.org

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FEMA issues guidelines to ensure ‘equal protection’ for all COVID-19 patients

WASHINGTON (CNS)—National Right to Life on April 16 praised the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for issuing guidelines to ensure equal protection for all patients with COVID-19 to prevent rationing of care.

“We thank President [Donald J.] Trump and FEMA Administrator Phil Gaynor for efforts to protect the most vulnerable in our society,” said Carol Tobias, president of National Right to Life, adding that the guidelines “will help ensure that regardless of ability or disability, age, origin or chronic health issues, patients are treated equally.”

Titled “Ensuring Civil Rights During the COVID-19 Response,” the FEMA guidelines for its “state, local, tribal and territorial partners” were issued in its Civil Rights Bulletin. They state:

“Make medical treatment decisions, including details of care under crisis standards of care and allocation of ventilators, after an individualized consideration of each person, free from stereotypes and biases, including generalizations and judgments about the individual’s ability of life or relative value to society, based on the individual’s disability, age, race, income level or any protected basis.”

“This individualized consideration should be based on current objective medical evidence and the expressed views of the patients themselves as opposed to unfounded assumptions,” the guidelines said.

“Catholic Bioethics Center have all

Across the country, a critical shortage of resources for treating patients, especially those who have the highly contagious virus as well as a lack of equipment such as ventilators has prompted some U.S. hospitals to consider instituting a blanket DNR, or ‘do not resuscitate’ order, for COVID-19 patients

The Criterion is inviting our readers to share your stories of first holy Communions.

Maybe you have a story to share from making your first holy Communions.

Maybe you have a story to share from your child or grandchild preparing for and/or taking part in this wondrous sacrament.

Maybe you have a story to share as a teacher or catechist who prepares children for the first time to receive Christ into their hearts and their bodies in this special way.

And maybe you have a story or thoughts to share about how the Eucharist still is a meaningful part of your life.

Please send your stories to John Shaughnessy by e-mail at shaughnessy@archindy.org or by mail in care of The Criterion, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202. Please include your parish and a daytime phone number where you can be reached.

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Father William Munshower built community in two parishes for 41 years

By Sean Gallagher

Father William Munshower, a retired priest of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, died on April 14 at the Westminster Village North retirement community in Indianapolis. He was 88.

Because of measures prohibiting large public gatherings due to the coronavirus pandemic, a private memorial service was celebrated at the priests’ circle at Calvary Cemetery in Indianapolis. A memorial Mass for Father Munshower is expected to be celebrated at a later time.

In a 2008 interview with The Criterion on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of his ordination as a priest, Father Munshower described what was at the heart of his priestly life and ministry.

“Being a part of a Christian gathering, having a hand in the gathering and participating in that gathering, whether it be in the Eucharist or a parish picnic,” he said. “A priest comes together with people and inspires them, encourages them and prays with them. I think of myself in those terms.”

Before retiring from active ministry in 2015, Father Munshower spent 41 years taking part in such gatherings and inspiring people in faith in two Indianapolis faith communities: Holy Spirit Parish and St. Thomas Aquinas Parish.

From his childhood through his time in college, Father Beidelman admired his pastor, who was in part an inspiration of his own priestly vocation.

Serving now as the executive director of the archdiocesan secretariat for worship and evangelization, Father Beidelman sees a connection between Father Munshower’s love of relationships with the Church’s worship and proclamation of the Gospel.

“The principal prayers of the Mass are that we might be one with God and one with another. I think Father Bill Munshower did that for thousands of people, probably tens of thousands of people throughout his life in ministry.”

“He saw the importance of people being in communion with one another, working with each other to build the kingdom of God. That community building, I think, served the faith of many people over the years.”

One of those whom it served was Manny Debono, a member of St. Thomas Aquinas Parish who experienced Father Munshower’s ministry there in the 1960s and later in the 1990s and 2000s.

Debono, 83, said there was no difference between the way Father Munshower acted outside of worship and parish ministry and how he interacted with people in ordinary social settings.

“There was a continuity there,” Debono said. “If he was in your home or talking during a meal, it was the same. Bill Munshower that had given you Communion the Sunday before. He was just a good man who loved people and life. He projected that throughout his own personal life.”

That continuity, Father Beidelman said, also extended to meditating on how the Gospel applied to contemporary issues.

“As far back as his time in high school, Father Munshower protested racial inequality in society, including participating in Dr. Martin Luther King’s 1963 March on Washington. “You got the sense that he was always pondering something,” Father Beidelman said. “When you’d meet him, you were often brought into that pondering. He didn’t always get to an answer or a resolution. But he could ponder with the best of them.”

Father Munshower also had a “special love for the lost sheep among us,” Father Beidelman recalled. “That approachability made folks, who would often feel intimidated by priests or the Church or even faith and spirituality in general, to feel really connected to God through him.”

William Glenn Munshower was born on Feb. 23, 1932, in Indianapolis to William and Catherine (Ashcroft) Munshower. He was 88.

After graduating from Cathedral High School in Indianapolis in 1950, he attended St. John’s University in Terre Haute, from 1963-71.

From 1971-73, he was the chaplain of the Newman Center at Indiana State University in Terre Haute.

In 1973, Father Munshower became pastor of Holy Spirit Parish in Indianapolis, where he would continue in ministry until 1994.

During that time, he also served as administrator of St. Agnes Parish in Nashville from 1981-85.

After a sabbatical, Father Munshower returned to St. Thomas Aquinas Parish as pastor, serving there from 1994-2006, at which time he was granted permission to retire.

In retirement, Father Munshower ministered as a part-time sacramental pastor at St. Andrew the Apostle Parish in Indianapolis from 2009-15 and at Cathedral High School.

Surviving are his sister, Anne Delany, and brother, John Munshower.

Memorial contributions may be sent to Saint Meinrad Archabbey, 200 Hill Drive, St. Meinrad, IN 47577, www.saintmeinrad.edu/support-us, or to St. John’s University, P.O. Box 2000, 2850 Abbey Plaza, Collegeville, MN 56234; www.csbsju.edu.

Pope Francis’ prayer intentions for May

• For Deacons—We pray that deacons, faithful in their service to the Word and the poor, may be an invigorating symbol for the entire Church.

See Pope Francis’ monthly intentions at archindy.org/popeintentions.

"For even the son of man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."
Mark 10:45

"Our Hands work through our Hands"

"For even the son of man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."
Mark 10:45

Your parish brings you the light of Christ.
Keep the light shining by giving to your parish online at www.archindy.org/Giving.
Beating visible voices amid the coronavirus pandemic

We’ve heard Pope Francis, Archbishop Charles C. Thompson, and many other Church leaders echo this sentiment, but it bears repeating: The celebration of Easter this year has been like no other in our lifetime.

If we didn’t gather in our churches throughout central and southern Indiana during the Easter Vigil to welcome hundreds of catechumens and candidates into our family of faith, our churches were not filled with weekly Mass attendees and “C and E” Catholics who gather with us on Christmas and Easter to celebrate Jesus Christ’s birth and his resurrection.

The coronavirus has resulted in many changes where our lives of faith are concerned. Since mid-March, we have been unable to gather as community and attend Mass in our churches. Thanks to Archbishop Thompson and our priests throughout the archdiocese, we have been able to watch and pray with Mass online each day.

We also have not been able to receive the Eucharist, which St. John Paul II reminded us during his pontificate is the greatest gift of our Catholic faith.

First Communions and confirmations are on hold for our young people, as is the reception of other sacraments like reconciliation for many of us.

Eucharistic adoration has also been suspended. The challenges mount as we try and fulfill our call to be missionary disciples. Fortunately, those who are close to death have had priests, in very difficult circumstances, make an extra effort to celebrate the sacrament of the anointing of the sick with them.

Listening to homilies online in recent days has reminded us of our call to ongoing conversion. In this context, it could mean exploring new ways to live out our faith. In a recent editorial, we suggested praying the rosary as a family each day.

Despite the challenges, the Easter season reminds us we are called to holiness and forgiveness. Pope Francis told us last week that we are called to be joyful witnesses to Christ’s victory over death—even amid the coronavirus pandemic.

In an editorial published on April 17 by the Spanish magazine, Vida Nueva (New Life), the pope said that those who take part in “the Lord’s passion, the passion of our brothers and sisters, even living our own passion, our ears will hear the newness of the resurrection: we are not alone, the Lord precedes us on our journey by removing the stones that paralyze us.”

“If there’s one thing we’ve been able to learn in all this time, it’s that no one is saved alone,” he wrote.

In his editorial, titled “Un plan para rescatar” (“a plan to rescue”), the pope also acknowledged that an invitation to be joyful “may seem like a provocation or a bad joke in front of the grave consequences we are suffering due to COVID-19.”

But like the women who went to the tomb, the Holy Father wrote, we are surrounded by an atmosphere of sorrow and uncertainty.

In today’s uncertain era, the pope said, the stone in front of the tomb symbolizes the worry and anguish that “battles hope,” especially for the elderly and disabled people, families struggling financially, as well as health care workers and public servants who feel “exhausted and overwhelmed.”

The wealth of that stone, he added, “seems to have the last word.”

Pope Francis wrote that despite their suffering and fear, the women disciples still went out to the tomb and did “not allow themselves to be paralyzed by what was happening.”

While some Apostles fled, the women carried their spices and oils to anoint Jesus’ body, much like the many men and women today who try to “bear the burden of co-responsibility to care for and not risk the lives of others.”

We saw the anointing poured out by doctors, nurses, warehouse workers, cleaners, caretakers, transporters, security forces, volunteers, priests, nuns, grandparent and educators and so many others who were encouraged to give everything they had to bring a little healing, calm and soul to the situation,” the pope wrote.

The good news of Christ’s resurrection, he continued, is what brings hope and joy to all and shows that “our actions—our anointing, our giving, our vigilance and accompanying others in the difficult ways in this time—are not and will not be in vain.”

“God never abandons his people; he is always close to them, especially when sorrow is most present,” the pope wrote.

This is a time, Pope Francis said, “to unite the entire human family” and to conquer the coronavirus through “the antibodies of solidarity.”

We must especially remember our Holy Father’s message as we celebrate the 50th Easter of Australia. And although we mark this season in a different way with social distancing and stay-at-home orders—the message this Easter is the same: Alleluia! Jesus Christ has risen! He has indeed risen!

—Mike Krokos

Reflection/John Shaugnessy
Is this the best compliment someone can give or get?

The comment from the mom provided a hearty laugh—something needed even more these days.

As a friend told the story, the mom had been asked how homeschooling was going for her and her two grade-school children during this time when school buildings are closed for the foreseeable future.

The mom smiled and replied with a twinkle in her eye, “My kids have learned more in the last two months than they did in the entire school year!”

Two students were suspended for fighting, and one teacher was fired for drinking on the job.

The joy continued when another friend shared the news that one of his daughters had become engaged in early April, a moment that led to a celebration with both sets of parents—a celebration with appropriate social distancing.

And then there’s the story of the 5-year-old girl who helped to make a chocolate cake for her grandfather’s birthday. When she saw her grandfather, the small girl ran to give him a hug until her parents told her to stop, saying, “Remember, we need to keep our distance.”

Her smile disappeared until her grandfather told her they would soon celebrate together with a big hug and a big piece of cake.

All these moments remind me of what may be the best compliment I’ve ever heard one friend give another: “She’s an Easter person. She knows that our faith is a faith of life ultimately. We know there’s the resurrection, and it gets us through the crosses of our life. That’s why there’s a joy to her.”

I find myself holding on, even tighter, to moments of joy and holiness this year amid the coronavirus crisis. I also find myself seeking the larger gifts these moments offer.

So in the humor of a mother, there’s joy and the hope for a better day.

In a couple’s engagement, there’s the commitment of a deeper love.

In the desire to share a hug and a birthday cake, there’s the promise of a reunion that will uplift the heart and the soul.

All these characteristics help define an Easter person. So do the qualities of selflessness and faithfulness. In his recent message to the world, Pope Francis focused on the people who have embraced selflessness and faithfulness during this pandemic. His list started with health care workers, supermarket employees, cleaners, caregivers, transportation personnel, police officers, voluntary priests, religious men and women, “and very many others who have understood that no one reaches salvation by themselves alone.”

He also included fathers, mothers, grandparents, teachers, people of “prayer and quiet service,” and people who exercise patience and offer hope.

The pope’s list is a reminder that during this time, during all times, we are all essential—and even more so in God’s eyes. Through the inseparable connection of his death and resurrection, Christ shows his desire to walk through this life with us while inviting us to share an eternal life with him.

During my own walks with my wife during this time, I have become more keenly aware this year of the splendors of spring, soaking in the sunshine, the sudden burst of tulips and daffodils, and the beauty of the dogswood, redbud, magnolia and fruit trees in our neighborhood.

I also appreciate the signs of encouragement some of us have planted in their yards. Don’t give up. ONE DAY AT A TIME, WE’RE ALL IN THIS ALONGER.

Most of all during our walks, I’ve savored the timeless scenes of life shared together—a father playing catch with his children, a mother hovering behind her wobbling, beginning-to-walk, 1-year-old daughter as she takes her first steps and holding onto the back of a bike that his child is learning to ride.

We see joy, promise, love and hope.

Just as nature’s blossoms fill our hope after a long, dark winter, so is it the time of our lives to live with hope—even through the darkest of times.

It is the gift our Savior gave us with resurrection. It is the gift that an Easter person is called to share with a longing world.

(John Shaugnessy is the assistant editor of The Criterion and the author of Then Some Hair, a collection of humorous reflections on a friendship with God.)

Letter to the Editor

Archbishop Thompson demonstrates good judgment by suspending Masses, reader says

This is just to take a moment to show support for Archbishop Charles C. Thompson’s decision to suspend live Masses and go online liturgies until the COVID-19 crisis abates, “or until such a decision [to close churches] shows no faith.”

In my area, a couple of churches even made the news by repeatedly ignoring state stay-at-home orders and holding services anyway. Their pastors were quoted as saying, “You can arrest us and put us in jail, but we’re not cancelling services.” Some
La vida cristiana es un camino y desde el momento de nuestro bautismo, todos emprendemos un recorrido hacia una mejor vida. Esta nueva vida comienza aquí en la Tierra y creemos firmemente que culmina en el cielo donde habitan Dios, todos los ángeles y los santos. Lo que distingue nuestro camino cristiano es el hecho de que recibimos muchas oportunidades para encontrar a nuestro Señor Jesucristo a lo largo de nuestro recorrido. Al igual que los dos discípulos en el camino a Emaús (Lc 24:13-35), a menudo no nos percatamos de la presencia de Jesús entre nosotros; por lo general no lo reconocemos porque estamos demasiado concentrados en nosotros mismos. Pero si se lo permitimos, Jesús atraviesa nuestra indiferencia y nuestros corazones endurecidos para demostrarnos que nos acompaña a cada paso del camino.

Según leemos en el Evangelio del próximo domingo, el tercer domingo de Pascua, los discípulos que se encontraron con Jesús a la salida de Jerusalén estaban desconsolados y habían abandonado toda esperanza. Se habían enterado de que el sepulcro en el que habían colocado a Jesús estaba vacío, pero no sabían que el Señor había resucitado de entre los muertos. Jesús les reprendió diciéndoles: “Oh insensatos y t hasher de corazón para creer todo lo que los profetas han dicho! ¿No era necesario que el Cristo padeciera todas estas cosas y entrara en Su gloria?” (Lc 24:25-26). Si hubieran reconocido a Jesús, su encuentro con Jesús produjo un cambio profundo en el comportamiento de los dos discípulos de camino a Emaús. En vez de huir de Jerusalén de miedo, se reunieron a los once apóstoles y a los discípulos de Jerusalem descansados y sin esperanza, ahora sus corazones ardían. Tal como lo expresara san Lucas: "Levantándose en esa misma hora, regresaron a Jerusalén, y hallaron reunidos a los once apóstoles y a los que estaban con ellos, que decían: ‘Es verdad que el Señor ha resucitado y se ha aparecido a Simón.’ Y ellos contaban sus experiencias en el camino, y cómo lo habían reconocido al partir el pan” (Lc 24:30-31).

La vida cristiana es un viaje que nos obliga a retornar constantemente a los lugares donde encontramos a Jesús por última vez y donde encontramos a Jesús por última vez. Los discípulos que encontraron a Jesús en Emaús, en el momento de nuestro bautismo, en los sacramentos; o 3) en el servicio selfless de “uno de los más pequeños” de los hermanos de Jesucristo. Si regresamos frecuentemente a estos lugares de encuentro, conscientes de que las gracias que recibimos en nuestro bautismo y confirmación nos han unido en la comunión espiritual de la eucaristía, es probable que reconozcamos a Jesús y nos percatemos de que es un compañero cercano y la meta de nuestro camino. Si le permitimos acercarse a nosotros, Jesús atravesará nuestra indiferencia y nuestros corazones endurecidos y en el proceso, nos desafiará, nos consolará y nos guiará por los caminos difíciles de la vida. Que nuestros corazones ardan con el anhelo de encontrar a Jesús en las Escrituras y al partir el pan. †
Catholic app adds features to help people cope in pandemic

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope Francis postponed World Meeting of Families, World Youth Day because of the current health situation and its consequences on the movement and gatherings of young people and families, the World Meeting of Families in Rome will be pushed back until June 2022 and World Youth Day in Lisbon, Portugal, will be pushed back until August 2023, the Vatican announced.

Cardinal Kevin Farrell, prefect of the dicastery, told Catholic News Service on April 20 that now is the time his office would be signing contracts with hotels and airlines if the World Meeting of Families were still to be held in 2021, "but no one knows what will happen." 

It seemed prudent to push the meeting back a year.

The dicastery also would not hold two large gatherings during the same summer, so it seemed prudent to push the meeting back until August 2023, the Vatican announced.

The day began, as usual, with Mass in the Mater Ecclesiae Monastery, and “Thank God, all of us in the Mater Ecclesiae Monastery are well,” Archbishop Georg Ganswein said.

The archbishop also said the retired pope received a special present, a pre-publication copy of a book by Elie Wiesel called “Ein Leben” (Benedict XVI: A Life), an almost 1,200-page biography written by Peter Seewald, who collaborated with the retired pope on several best-selling books.

The volume will be released in German on April 30. "Seewald intended to give it to the pope emeritus in person," the archbishop said, "but, unfortunately, the pandemic made that impossible.”

The retired pope was born on April 16, 1927, in the Bavarian town of Marktl am Inn and was ordained to the priesthood in 1951. Before his election as pope in 2005, succeeding St. John Paul II, he served for 24 years as prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

Pope Benedict stunned the world in 2013 when he announced that he would step down, becoming the first pope in almost 600 years to resign.
Use critical thinking, Gospel values when evaluating digital media

By Sr. Nancy Usselmann, F.S.P.

As a media literacy educator, I watch a lot of movies and streaming shows to be able to reflect on theology and the popular culture.

Many times when I meet parents, teachers and ministers they share that their biggest concern is to help youth live mindfully in today’s digital media environment.

How can we integrate a reflective, spiritual life with all the media we consume and create?

I believe this requires us to be critical engageurs of the culture. It’s a learned practice that takes discipline, something our culture sorely lacks.

Everything moves so quickly that we do not take stock of how we are living and why. The deep existential questions that philosophers of old reflected on have fallen by the wayside and been replaced with fast-paced communication that necessitates lack of deep reflection.

So, what is a Catholic to do? Practice media literacy that integrates faith—that is, media mindfulness.

That sounds simple, but it takes effort. What is media literacy anyway?

According to the Center for Media Literacy, based in Malibu, Calif., it is the ability to “access, analyze, evaluate, create and participate” in the media we encounter. That is, we stop and reflect on all that we see, hear and feel when we engage with media messages.

It is important to know how media are created so we know the techniques involved to grab our attention. However, that is only one part of being media literate.

The crucial part is asking questions: Why is this media being sent? What values, ideologies or points of view are being communicated?

For Catholics, the faith perspective means that we bring Gospel values and the example of Jesus into conversation with those messages. This is media mindfulness.

It follows a four-step methodology of theological reflection (listen, reflect, dialogue, act) helping us to go deeper as we ask critical questions of the media experience.

We ask: What is really going on? What am I seeing, hearing and feeling?

We ask first: What is going on? What is going on? Who pains? Who gains?

The third step connects our Christian values: What difference does it make? What Christian values does this media experience support, ignore or oppose?

Finally, we examine: What difference can I make? What response seems appropriate in light of my Christian beliefs? What do I take away from this media experience? Does it challenge me? Does it open me up to different points of view? If so, what action will I take as a result?

Take the movie, Just Mercy, as an example. Even though movies are about making money, they are also powerful storytellers that give us a glimpse into a world we may not know about otherwise.

Following the first step of the media mindfulness process, we ask: What is going on?

The film, directed by Destin Daniel Cretton, presents a narrative based on the true story of Harvard graduate attorney Bryan Stevenson (played by Michael B. Jordan) who moves to Alabama to give legal representation to death-row inmates, many of whom were often wrongfully convicted. He helps Walter McMillian (played by Jamie Foxx) to clear his conviction and save him from execution.

We ask: What is really going on? The film addresses serious issues with regard to racism and how we judge other people who are different from ourselves. It can lead to a discussion on our legal system that convicts people with less-than-substantial evidence.

The third step is essential: What difference does it make? How would Jesus treat others? This step helps us examine what our faith values really mean in our everyday lives. What does it mean to love our neighbor? Do we really understand this Gospel maxim?

Last, we ask: What difference can I make? My takeaway could be that I will examine my prejudices and seek to respect every person I encounter. I could also look into volunteering with organizations that lobby to end the death penalty.

With each step of the media mindfulness method, we begin to reflect more deeply and profoundly on our media entertainment. This can be done for streaming shows as well as social media posts.

All media require of us to be critical thinkers and examine well our relationship to the messages they communicate, as well as what we ourselves create. To live our faith in our daily actions means to grow in discernment skills, living each day reflectively and purposefully.

We are called, as Catholics, to live our faith in the here and now, in the concrete and tangible experiences of our lives, and that includes our digital media experience. When we do, we may be surprised by the grace of God that is reflected back to us from the art of popular culture to challenge us to be holy and engaged digital citizens.

(Paulist Sister Nancy Usselmann is director of the Pauline Center for Media Studies in Los Angeles. She is a media literacy education specialist, theologian, international speaker, writer, film reviewer and blogger for bemediamindful.org and Catholicmom.com. She is the author of A Sacred Look: Becoming Cultural Mystics, a book on the theology of popular culture.)
Ministering to the incarcerated is a gift, not a burden. There have been several offenders. There have been several instances of offenders. There have been several in his life and repeatedly thanked me explained how important the sessions had been in his life and repeatedly thanked me for the pleasure of hearing from former offenders. There have been several offenders. There have been several in his life and repeatedly thanked me for the pleasure of hearing from former offenders.

The purpose of ministry is not to solve the problems of drug and alcohol addictions that are often the root cause of incarceration. The purpose is not to end poverty or the cycle of domestic violence. The purpose of this ministry is to bring the Good News of Jesus Christ to people who have forgiven this joyous news and to others who have really never heard it, help the offenders to see the instant that it is only through Jesus Christ that they can ever hope to be truly free of the bonds that they dragged down and caused them to run afoul of the laws of society. Is ministering to the incarcerated worth my time and effort? Absolutely! Through the ministry to the incarcerated, are we really doing any good? How successful? Although the successes are not as frequent as I would wish, they occur often enough to remind me that I plant the seeds, while it is God who takes care of the harvest. Ultimately it is always nice to have more input about the work and efforts put forth by the volunteers of the Catholic ministry to the incarcerated.

(Deacon Steven Gretencord ministers at Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish in Terre Haute and is a member of the archdiocese's Corrections Advisory Committee.)

Are you the one to come? That plaintive question fills our hearts this Easter. It was asked in the Gospel of Matthew 11:3, when the imprisoned John the Baptist sends two of his disciples to Jesus. Are you the Messiah? Are you the one for whom we’ve been waiting? Are you the voice of God warning us on a blustery, chilly Easter morning, participating in my parish’s Mass online, I felt such a sense of unity with my faith community, such a sense that I could affirmatively, yes, you are the one who is to come. But I also felt a fear that we would not hear it or not come with it. We are a fragile and sinful little community of friends. I find the Scripture readings that discuss Jesus’ resurrection and its aftermath to be an antidote to despair. There can be serious risk to a person who really believes in this idea: a belief that weapons and military might are the gods that will save us.

They look past the Jesus of Scripture who presented such a different idea of righteous, who continually decreed greed and power and who spent his time with sinners, outcasts, the marginalized, those struggling along the borders of society. During our liturgy, we hear the prophet Isaiah’s words, “Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.” They fill me with such a desire to be one of his own. In the readings following the resurrection accounts, the disciples would not come as the conquering hero. No bells and whistles, no fireworks, no displays of triumph. Instead, he comes quietly, not appearing to the many but to the few—to those who were in his own world.

I must, to hasten, to the faultless but sinners. He came to Peter, the doubter, and to Thomas the doubter. He came to his fragile and sinful little community of friends. I remind myself of this when I feel down on myself. He did not appear to them because they loved him so well, he came to them because he loved them so well.

So, we see moments of great intimacy. We see Jesus cooking a breakfast for his friends near water’s edge. We hear Mary of Magdala recognizing him in the garden when he calls her by name. He offers his body, his wondrousness, to Thomas so that he might see for himself and testify to his disciples. This, we learn, is who Jesus is. God tells us he loves. That is all God is and everything God is.

(Elfie Caldarola writes for Catholic News Service.)

Perspectives  Faith and Family/Sean Gallagher

Fight against spiritual and moral maladies lives on against COVID-19

It’s been amazing how much people have learned about the coronavirus since the pandemic spread their way. People are taking precautions against symptoms, incubation period, morbidity rate, how the virus spreads from one person to other and how we can slow the spread.

Just a few months ago, relatively few people had heard of COVID-19. Now we’ve all taken a crash course in it and are taking bold action upon that knowledge.

We’ve given the virus this attention for several reasons, including social distancing measures that are so commonplace now weren’t taken, our hospitals would be overwhelmed and the number of deaths due to the virus would skyrocket.

But consider for a moment: if we are willing to learn and take seriously what is offered on this highly contagious and dangerous physical disease, imagine what great good could happen if we were to similarly cooperate with God’s grace to battle the spiritual and moral maladies that run rampant among us.

The outward symptoms of these illnesses are seen in a hyper materialistic or sexualized view of morality, human relations and daily life. Sufferers try, unsuccessfully, to treat the dissatisfaction they feel with ungodly, self-indulgent views through addictive behavior and sometimes, sadly, by suicide.

We need to come to an inward orientation of life in which sufferers focus more on themselves than on others, or in which they seek fulfillment in this world through self-assertion rather than seeking it ultimately in heaven through self-sacrifice. As they have been around long enough that we’ve all been exposed to it and show its symptoms to our friends.

This spiritual virus is fought primarily in marriage and the family. And that we haven’t taken seriously. It is a weapon to battle these spiritual and moral illnesses like we have with the coronavirus is suggested in the fact that our marriages and families over the past generation have been overrun, broken down and redefined.

Unfortunately, there is no vaccine for these maladies, for as long as we humans have free will, we can always choose to let the virulent virus take us.

There is, however, what might be called a powerful antiviral treatment that can do wonders to heal our souls, our families and our society. It’s God’s grace, which surrounds us every day but too easily goes unheeded.

The most effective way to deliver grace so that it directly attacks these illnesses is in the most direct and obvious form of the sacrament of penance. It is there that the grace of God’s mercy can do us the most good in our material and spiritual moral pandemic, but there is always hope.

Pray daily for your own family and others. Commit to pray with the special prayer for God’s grace to reverse the effects of these illnesses in your family. And take one grace-inspired action a time to make it so.

As your family starts to recover from these maladies, it will show other families that it is possible, hopefully inspire them to do the same, and spread spiritual and moral healing through our society.

Amid the Fray/Greg Reardon

Abstaining from Eucharist is eighth corporal work of mercy

There are strange gifts wrapped in this terrible pandemic. During a trying Lent of lockdowns and quarantines that started in early Easter, almost all of us have found ourselves living apart from the sacraments. Our eucharistic fast has lasted for weeks. This has been disconcerting for many as it is not necessarily a bad thing.

I have gone to my parish several times since public Mass was allowed. Sitting in the darkened nave illuminated only by the light passing through the stained glass windows, I have knelt in prayer. I have seen an eighth corporal and seven spiritual works of mercy. I feel an invisible communion of souls bonded by our shared desire for the end of the Mass.

In this unprecedented time of restraint, it is as if there is an eighth corporal work of mercy. We cannot visit the sick or the imprisoned, but we are being asked to give up something as dear as reception of the Eucharist for a little while for the sake of our fellows. The confounding truth of the COVID-19 virus is that someone who is infected has no sympathy neither for a little while before the fever comes, or perhaps never any discernible sign of illness. Yet that person is carrying a virus. Which means that any of us could be the unwitting cause of another’s death. If I am infected but asymptomatic, I may feel fine to spend time with you. You then become, at least at first, asymptomatic, and you go visit your parents. Or your friend with hypertension. Or your spouse battling lupus. And suddenly my decision to spend time with you has endangered the lives of others.

John Milton’s great line in his Samson Agonistes, “They can pray ‘Alas! stand and wait,’” takes on special meaning now. For this is a moment we serve in our isolation. We are up against powerful adversaries. We have others. We stay in place to save lives. Such a sacrifice conforms to Catholic morality and Catholic social principles. We are willing to sacrifice this good for a little while out of respect for the lives of others.

Some of us are the very ones who Cauphas moment, viewing individuals as expendable for the sake of the economy, calculating the likely risk to the elderly or the infirm so that, to paraphrase the Gospel, the whole nation’s economy may perish. It is a profoundly unjust and anti-life calculus.

It is pure sacrilege for the sake of others is a small imitation of our Savior’s sacrifice for us. This will soon pass, but there are lessons here. For the most vulnerable among us, we abstain. For the sake of the weak, we fast. How we respond will be our measure.

These successes are not as frequent as we would wish, they occur often enough to remind me that I plant the seeds, while it is God who takes care of the harvest. Ultimately it is always nice to have more input about the work and efforts put forth by the volunteers of the Catholic ministry to the incarcerated.

(Greg Reardon, editor and chief-in-chief of Catholic News Service, can be reached at greardon@catholicnews.com.)
The The Sunday Readings Sunday, April 26, 2020

- 1 Peter 1:17-21


In this reading, St. Peter again preaches to the crowds in Jerusalem. Catholics are quite familiar with the events leading up to these words, but Americans are very accustomed to impassioned preaching. They hear it in their own churches. They hear it on the radio, television and online.

Preaching, by definition, is not simply lecturing or speaking aloud. At its best, it is speaking in the name of God.

Those who preached, by ancient Jewish standards, were privileged people in this sense. None chose to be a preacher. Rather, a preacher was selected by God. This selection is speaking in the name of God.

As colonial Americans, we are accustomed to impassioned preaching. In the Easter season, the Church calls us to hear it on the radio, television and online.

It’s Easter, He is risen, Allelu, Allelu, Allelu!

A Poem for Easter

By Monsignor Lawrence Moran

Q was surprised to read in the Catholic press an article criticizing Pope Francis’ agreement to allow the Communist government to nominate candidates for bishops in China. So, my question is this: Are those under the pope’s authority allowed to question publicly such an arrangement made by the Holy Father? (Ohio)

A The answer to your question is “Yes,” but first some important background.

The provisional agreement that you reference was made in September 2018 between the Holy See and the Chinese government. This agreement helps to give the Church “a greater freedom” so that it can dedicate itself to “the mission of announcing the Gospel.”

The Church’s decision to enter the agreement was a providential and pastoral one with which anyone is free to disagree. In fact, one of the strongest critics when the agreement was being considered was Cardinal Joseph Zen, the retired archbishop of Hong Kong.

I have a question that is personal. I haven’t been to church in a while, and I don’t usually pray, although recently I have begun to. Will God accept me still, if I start going to church at this point in my life? I want to get close to him, and I hope that it’s not too late. (California)

A It is never too late. God’s love for us is deep and everlasting. The Second Letter of St. Peter tells us that the Lord is “patient with you, not wishing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance” (2 Pt 3:9).

Think of the criminal on the cross who turned to Christ only hours before his death and was promised that he would be with Jesus in paradise that very day. And think, too, of St. Augustine, who lived a dissolute life as a young man, fathering a child out of wedlock and who, for years, followed various philosophers only to become disillusioned with their teachings.

When he was in his 30s, Augustine was inspired to pick up a Bible and “chanced” upon these words from St. Paul’s Letter to the Romans: “Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the desires of the flesh” (Rom 13:14). Soon after, he was baptized by St. Ambrose and became one of our greatest saints.

Later, reflecting on his experience, Augustine made this keen observation: “You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you.” Thank you for your question, and I will pray for you on your journey back to prayer and Catholic practice.

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

My Journey to God

A Poem for Easter

When purple Lenten days are through and eggs are colored rainbow hue and lily trumpets blow anew, it’s Easter, He is risen, Allelu!

When fiery pillar, Christ, our light and lily trumpets blow anew, and eggs are colored rainbow hue When purple Lenten days are through and eggs are colored rainbow hue and lily trumpets blow anew, and eggs are colored rainbow hue, it’s Easter, He is risen, Allelu! And lily trumpets blow anew, and eggs are colored rainbow hue it’s Easter, He is risen, Allelu!

When alleluias ringing through bud-green trees to skies of blue now tell the old “Good News” anew, it’s Easter, He is risen, Allelu! When alleluias ringing through bud-green trees to skies of blue now tell the old “Good News” anew, it’s Easter, He is risen, Allelu! And lily trumpets blow anew, and eggs are colored rainbow hue it’s Easter, He is risen, Allelu!

It’s Easter, He is risen, Allelu!

(From the late Msgr. Lawrence Moran was a priest of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis who passed away on May 4, 2019. His poem was submitted by Katie Rahman of St. Patrick Parish in Terre Haute. A statue of the risen Christ and His Sacred Heart embracing the world stands among the trees in the cemetery for the Sisters of Providence at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, in St. Mary-of-the-Woods.) Submitted photo by Katie Rahman

Question Corner/Fr. Kenneth Doyle

Diplomatic agreements of the Holy See are prudential decisions open to criticism
Nurse sees God’s healing touch ‘in this time of the unknown’

By John Shaughnessy

Catie Walden doesn’t consider herself a “hero”—a word often used to describe health care workers on the front lines of the coronavirus pandemic. But she does embrace two other titles: nurse and mom.

As the mother of five children, ages 7 to 1, Walden always strives to keep them safe, healthy and happy. She has the same goal for the children she cares for as a charge nurse in the pediatric emergency department at Ascension St. Vincent’s downtown Indianapolis. Yet her motherly instincts have reached a heightened level of concern and care as the coronavirus continues to have an impact on Indiana.

Fortunately, her unit has seen “just a handful” of children affected by the virus in mostly less life-threatening ways, with difficulty of breathing being a common factor. Still, the unit is just separated from the adult emergency area by a set of double doors.

“I was scared because I saw how healthy people can become so sick,” says Kennedy, a member of St. Pius X Parish in Indianapolis with her husband Sean and their children. “I was really concerned about spreading it to Sean, the kids, and my parents and Sean’s mother who has babysat the kids.”

Kennedy drew strength and support from a friend who had babysat the kids, “I was more concerned about spreading it to people. It renews your faith in people and in God.”

She believes God has been there for her, too—and not just during the pandemic, but going forward. Everyone is absolutely doing the best they can, but I worry about emotional exhaustion and compassion fatigue.

At the same time, she draws hope, encouragement and strength from two realities she has witnessed during this time. For her, it starts with Ascension’s mission, a mission “rooted in the loving ministry of Jesus as healer.” It “sets the tone for everything we do for our patients,” Dunnaway says. “From that, everything else naturally flows. Whether we’re in a pandemic situation or not, our framework is already there for these tough issues. It helps us as we go forward.”

The second reality that bolsters her is the response of the health care workers to the crisis. “One of the things I’ve definitely seen is a real sense of caring and love for each other that has been just much more evident. It’s not just caring for patients. We’re all caring for one another more. People are showing such incredible kindness and compassion for each other—stepping into roles they’re not used to because they see a need for it. “People show you what they’re made of in these situations. They’ve been tremendous.”

Catie Walden

Catie Walden wears her protective equipment as she cares for children as a charge nurse in the pediatric emergency department at Ascension St. Vincent Hospital in Indianapolis. (Submitted photo)

DUNNWAY, continued from page 1

families and be respectful of our patient’s wishes.”

That approach is still in the forefront, but the deadly contagiousness of the coronavirus has added a dramatic challenge as infected patients aren’t allowed visitors and there can’t always be face-to-face conversations with patients’ families. Technology helps, Dunnaway says, but the challenge continues and takes its toll, including on health care workers.

“I think we all go into medicine—health care—to help people. And it’s very hard when people are put in positions where they feel they can’t do everything they normally do for patients and families. It’s a unique situation we haven’t faced before.”

Those dealing with some of our sickest patients are going “to have to find ways to deal with it—not just during the pandemic, but going forward. Everyone is absolutely doing the best they can, but I worry about emotional exhaustion and compassion fatigue.”

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KENNEDY

continued from page 1

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. At least 27

Katie and Sean

Kennedy of St. Pius X Parish in Indianapolis pose for a family photo with their children Aiden, Alannah, center, and Kayleigh. (Submitted photo)
In addition to making masks, he’s now started working as a frontline medical worker during the pandemic as an emergency room technician at Community Hospital East in Indianapolis. Donlan accepted the job shortly before the pandemic began making significant changes in daily life in the U.S. The threat of the virus, though, has not given him second thoughts about his new line of work.

“It didn’t change my mind about it at all,” Donlan said. “I thought that, more than ever, this was a time that I could serve a little bit.”

He reflected that his experience of three decades as a firefighter helped form him to accept danger in serving others. “I was blessed by my job in the fire department,” Donlan said. “I wanted to do everything I could in my power to maybe be the last line of hope.”

He looks on his efforts to make and give away masks modestly, calling it his “little mission.”

“It’s nothing special,” he said. “It’s just one more thing for many people.”

The masks that Donlan and those who volunteer with him make are composed of heavy-duty shop paper towels, coffee filters, pipe cleaners, staples and rubber bands. They cost about 10 cents to make filters, pipe cleaners, staples and rubber bands. They cost about 10 cents to make and can be assembled in seconds.

The paper towels he uses, he said, have been tested and shown to be three times more effective than ordinary cotton cloth in filtering particles. Donlan also noted that the masks he makes are reusable and can be gently washed in water and air dried.

“If this would even be so lucky as to prevent one infection, it would all have been worth it,” he said. “Not one life. Just one infection.”

His modest selflessness in trying to help others during the pandemic was formed by his faith and his family. He’s the third generation of his family that has served as a firefighter.

“God’s been so good to me,” Donlan said. “So, any time that I can give back, I love the opportunity.”

While he spoke about his efforts from a work station in his garage, a fellow Holy Spirit parishioner, Mike O’Connor, came to pick up some masks that he was planning on giving to volunteers at food distribution points in Indianapolis for students now going without meals from schools.

Donlan accepted the job shortly before the pandemic began making significant changes in daily life in the U.S. The threat of the virus, though, has not given him second thoughts about his new line of work.

“We're constantly sanitizing the exterior of our gloves,” Donlan said. “I sanitize the workstations three or four times throughout the day. We do our best to make the mask not be part of the problem.”

Anyone who comes to volunteer also has their temperature checked. Just as Donlan takes a modest view of his efforts in making the masks, he also finds satisfaction in his work in small ways. “If this would even be so lucky as to prevent one infection, it would all have been worth it,” he said. “Not one life. Just one infection.”

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recalls. "But I kept turning to God every work or be active as he had been before. Started going to Holy Trinity that Larry
go to Holy Trinity where I was raised." Church inspired Larry.
a small church in Fairfield where the community. So the sisters attended the girls wanted to be part of a faith
granddaughters. Mass at the time they adopted their 'I wanted to be closer to God'
sacraments of initiation. "It's a memory of watching his daughters receive the
 adopted the girls in 2011. 'I wanted to be closer to God'

I wanted to be closer to God! The Higdons were not going to Mass at the time they adopted their grandchildren.
But for some reason, says Larry, the girls wanted to be part of a faith community. So the sisters attended services and joined a youth group at a small church in Fairfield where the family lives.

Before long, the girls' desire to go to church inspired Larry. "I told Amy, 'We all need to go to church together,'" he recalls. "I wanted to go to Holy Trinity where I was raised." The girls liked the parish and the parishioners. Gracie describes the congregation as "small, and the people are very nice."

It was around the time the family started going to Holy Trinity that Larry became ill and was no longer able to work or be active as he had been before. "My dad was getting sick and school
his feast day is on my birthday," and enjoyed researching meaningful patron saints.

But Sophia struggled to find a saint who "interested" her. "We had cards with saints," she recalls of her RCIC classes. "I read through over a dozen. I couldn't find one I was interested in."

"Then I came to St. Monica. She lived a rough life. But everything she went through, she never gave up on God and turned to him and kept her faith, and that's how she got through life. She was always happy because she always had God with her. She inspired me," she says.

'God in my heart'
Looking back, Sophia says the
day she was welcomed into the full communion of the Church "was awesome." As the family drove to a restaurant for a celebratory meal after the Mass, "I was sobbing so much that Dad had to pull the car over and tell me it was OK because God was with me."

I feel that—I was just overwhelmed

for Larry, having his daughters

have God and Jesus in my life more now than before." And the girls give back to their faith community as well, says Larry.

"Anytime the parish needs help, the girls will do it—shovel snow, clean, you name it," he says. "They're very involved for their ages."

Even the closing of churches to help stop the spread of the coronavirus so soon after receiving their sacraments has not lessened the girls' faith. They watch Mass with their parents on Sunday mornings. On Sunday evenings, they pray the rosary as a family while on FaceTime with a relative.

Still, says Sophia, "I've tried because I love my church and getting to see everybody there. I love to help people. It's just not the same, not going to church anymore."

Despite the church's temporary closure, she has still found a way to help her fellow parishioners. Deacon Russell Woodard, Holy Trinity's parish life coordinator, dropped off at the Higdon house the parish's palms that would have been used during the Palm Sunday Mass. "I'm making crosses out of them to hand out to everyone when we can go back to church," says Sophia. "I've already made 400 so far."

Even though she can't worship at Mass in person for the time being, "It's nice being Catholic," says Sophia. "I feel more loved than I did before. I feel like I have God and Jesus in my life more now than before."

For Larry, having his daughters choose to become Catholic "meant the world to me. It was one of happiest days of my life to watch all four of them get baptized. It's a memory I'll cherish all my life."