



The Criterion

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May 15, 2020

Fighting hunger

Seymour program serves food, ‘hope and strength’ during pandemic, pages 8-9.



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Plan announced to reopen churches, resume public celebration of sacraments



Worshipers take part in a Mass celebrated on July 20, 2017, for members of Legatus, an organization for Catholic business leaders, at St. Luke the Evangelist Church in Indianapolis. On May 8, Archbishop Charles C. Thompson announced a plan to allow for the phased and safe reopening of churches and the celebration of the Mass and other sacraments across central and southern Indiana. When the celebration of Mass resumes in the archdiocese, seating will be limited in a continued effort to help slow the spread of the coronavirus. (Submitted file photo by Katie Rutter)

By Sean Gallagher

For the first time in almost two months, churches in central and southern Indiana are beginning to open for the faithful for private prayer, devotions and the sacrament of penance.

In the coming days, a phased resumption of the public celebration of the Mass and other sacraments will begin in archdiocesan parishes.

The March 17 closure of churches and suspension of public worship across Indiana was implemented as part of the broader societal effort to slow the spread of the coronavirus.

Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

announced the plan to reopen churches and resume public worship in a May 8 letter and plan sent to pastors and parish coordinators and posted on the archdiocesan website.

Read Archbishop Charles C. Thompson's letter in English and Spanish, page 2.

“While we continue to take great care and utilize the recommended precautions,” he said in the letter, “we will soon begin the gradual process of reopening our churches and resuming the celebration of the sacraments publicly.”

The dates in the archdiocesan plan for the phased reopening churches and

resuming the public celebration of the sacraments can vary locally depending on a parish’s ability to ensure a safe worship environment and specific county-level stay-at-home orders.

Here are the phases of the plan:

- **Phase one—Starting on or after May 13,** churches may reopen for private prayer, devotions and the sacrament of penance.
- **Phase two—Starting on or after May 19,** weekday Masses, weddings and funerals within Mass, postponed memorial Masses for those who have died and the anointing of the sick for those who are seriously ill but may not be in imminent danger of death

may resume. (Presently, graveside services, funerals and weddings outside Mass with 10 people or less have been permitted.)

• **Phase three—Starting on or after the weekend of May 23-24,** Sunday Masses, the Rites of Christian Initiation of Adults and first Communion may resume.

All people 65 or older and those who are sick or who have medical conditions that make them especially vulnerable to the coronavirus should remain at home.

Archbishop Thompson has extended the dispensation for the obligation to participate in Mass on Sundays to all the faithful until Aug. 15.

See MASSES, page 2

‘An act of faith’

Faith, prayers help man in ICU, sick wife at home survive COVID-19

By Natalie Hoefer

John and Megan Dugan were looking forward to March 25, John’s 50th birthday. They and their 13-year-old son Charlie would be on a cruise with several other families to celebrate.

Then the coronavirus hit—not just the country, but the Dugans. Just 24 hours after the day marking his birth, John began a five-day fight for his life on a ventilator in an Indianapolis hospital.

“I felt like I was drowning,” he recalls. “I couldn’t breathe. It was the worst feeling in the world.”

Meanwhile, Megan suffered at home with the coronavirus’ telltale fever, body aches and exhaustion. The days blurred as she slept for as much as 20 hours at a time.

But the Dugans were not alone. Family, friends and even

See COVID, page 14



As his physical therapist offers a “V” for victory, John Dugan, a member of St. Barnabas Parish in Indianapolis, smiles after he finishes his final physical therapy session on May 6 as part of his recovery from COVID-19, including five days on a ventilator.

(Submitted photo by John Dugan)

MASSES

continued from page 1

This extension is motivated, in part by the continued need of social distancing, which will result in limiting the seating capacity of churches. The plan offers parishes a variety of ways to spread out attendance at Masses. Social distancing will also affect the procedure of distributing Communion.

Father Patrick Beidelman, executive director of the archdiocesan Secretariat for Worship and Evangelization, helped develop the plan. Several pastoral leaders, theologians and health care experts, both from within and beyond the archdiocese, were consulted in the development process.

"It will be regularly monitored, enhanced, clarified and added to as we gain more knowledge and experience," Father Beidelman said. "It's a living plan, not set in stone. As we have the experience of our first time opening churches again, beginning to celebrate weekday Masses and then Masses for Sunday, we're going to learn a lot of

things—what's going well and what works. And we'll learn about what doesn't work that we need to change."

Because of the danger that the coronavirus presents for people 65 or older or with complicating medical conditions, distribution of Communion outside of Mass, including to the homebound or those in hospitals or nursing homes remains discontinued until further notice unless it is given as Viaticum to one who is in imminent danger of death.

Parishes are encouraged to continue livestreaming their local celebration of the Mass. Videos of Sunday and weekday Masses celebrated at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis will continue to be posted daily on the archdiocesan website.

Father Beidelman encouraged Catholics across central and southern Indiana to keep in mind the continued sacrifice of those people who stay at home for the protection of themselves and others, to "surround them in their prayer" and "if they're able to receive holy Communion at Mass, perhaps they can consider periodically offering their Communion for someone they know who cannot yet come to Mass and ask God



Public Schedule of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

No public events scheduled at this time.

Father Beidelman is now looking forward to gathering with his parishioners for the celebration of the Eucharist.

"I can only imagine how emotional it will be for people to return to this gift of God," he said. "It will be a great joy for me because the celebration of Mass and the reception of holy Communion, the Eucharist, is as high as it gets for us on this side of the grave. It is the source of our communion with God and one another and it is the summit, the apex, of our lives as Catholics."

(*Archbishop Charles C. Thompson's letter and the archdiocesan plan to reopen churches and resume the public celebration of the Mass and other sacraments can be viewed in both English and Spanish at www.archindy.org.*) †



The Most Reverend Charles C. Thompson
Archdiocese of Indianapolis
1400 N. Meridian Street
Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367
317-236-1403

8 May 2020

Dear Sisters & Brothers in Christ,

These few weeks of staying in place to fight the coronavirus, although a very short time frame in the grand scheme of things, has felt like ages for many. Though it has been difficult on practically everyone, as previously stated, the decision to close churches was made out of an abundance of caution.

While we continue to take great care and utilize the recommended precautions, we will soon begin the gradual process of reopening our churches and resuming the celebration of the Sacraments publicly.

Reopening our churches for private prayer and devotions and for the celebration of the Sacrament of Penance will be a part of our first phase, and this will be possible beginning on Wednesday, May 13. In the following week, beginning on Tuesday, May 19, the offering of weekday Masses and some other smaller celebrations may begin. Finally, we will return to the celebration of Masses for Sunday and the remainder of most of the postponed celebrations of the Sacraments. A decision has not been made regarding the postponed celebrations of the Sacrament of Confirmation. As of now, all confirmation celebrations through May 31st are postponed. More information will be forthcoming.

Please understand that I am allowing, not mandating, that churches reopen on next Wednesday, May 13. In fact, local directives in some places may limit the reopening process of some churches. For those who need more time, that is understandable. For those who prefer to provide the Sacrament of Reconciliation outdoors rather than inside, that is acceptable as well.

Some provisions for resuming public liturgical celebrations of Mass and other Sacraments are provided with this letter. To be very clear: **The dispensation from the obligation to participate at Mass remains in effect until August 15. Those who are 65 years of age and older as well as all vulnerable and sick persons are strongly encouraged to stay at home during this time.** With assurance of my prayers and best wishes, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ Charles C. Thompson

Most Reverend Charles C. Thompson
Archbishop of Indianapolis

Carta del arzobispo Charles C. Thompson acerca de la reapertura de las iglesias

Queridos hermanas y hermanos en Cristo:

Aunque estas semanas de confinamiento voluntario para luchar contra el coronavirus han sido cortas en términos generales de tiempo, muchos las han sentido como eternas. Si bien esto ha resultado difícil para prácticamente todo el mundo, la decisión de cerrar las iglesias surgió por excesiva precaución, como se expresó anteriormente.

Ciertamente seguiremos teniendo mucho cuidado y aplicaremos las precauciones recomendadas, pero pronto comenzaremos el proceso de reapertura gradual de nuestras iglesias y a reanudar la celebración pública de los sacramentos.

Como parte de la primera fase está la reapertura de las iglesias para la oración y la devoción privada, y para celebrar el sacramento de la penitencia, lo cual posiblemente se hará a partir del miércoles 13 de mayo. A la semana siguiente, el martes 19 de mayo, podrán comenzar las misas entre semana y otras celebraciones pequeñas.

Por último, retomaremos la celebración de las misas dominicales y la mayoría de las demás celebraciones de los sacramentos pospuestas. No se ha tomado ninguna decisión con respecto a la celebración del sacramento de la confirmación pospuesta. Por ahora, hasta el 31 de mayo todas las confirmaciones quedan pospuestas. Pronto ofreceremos más información.

Tengan en cuenta que estoy permitiendo que las iglesias abran este miércoles 13 de mayo, pero esto no es una obligación. De hecho, las directrices locales en algunos lugares quizás limiten el proceso de reapertura de algunas iglesias. Es comprensible que algunos requieran más tiempo. Es igualmente aceptable ofrecer el sacramento de la reconciliación al aire libre y no en el interior.

Junto con esta carta se proporcionan algunas disposiciones para retomar las celebraciones litúrgicas de la misa pública y otros sacramentos. Para dejarlo muy en claro: **La dispensa de la obligación de participar en la misa sigue vigente hasta el 15 de agosto. Se exhorta con vehemencia a las personas de 65 años en adelante, así como a las vulnerables y las enfermas, que permanezcan en sus casas durante este período.** Con la certeza de mis oraciones y mis mejores deseos

quedo de ustedes en Cristo,

+ Charles C. Thompson

Reverendísimo Charles C. Thompson
Arzobispo de Indianápolis

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The Criterion

05/15/20

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Divided court re-examines insurance coverage of contraceptives

WASHINGTON (CNS)—The justices of the U.S. Supreme Court seemed divided on May 6 over Trump administration rules that give employers more ability to opt out of providing contraceptive, abortifacient and sterilization coverage in their health plans.

The argument, part of a handful that will take place by teleconference during the coronavirus restrictions, took another look at an issue that has come before the court already, and again, as in previous terms, it highlighted the Little Sisters of the Poor, the order of women religious who care for the elderly poor.

"There are very strong interests on both sides here, which is what makes the case difficult, obviously," Justice Brett Kavanaugh said in the May 6 arguments, which lasted 40 minutes longer than the usual-allotted hour.

He said the interests include religious liberty for the Little Sisters of the Poor and others, and ensuring women's access to health care and preventive services.

"So the question becomes: Who decides how to balance those interests?" he asked.

The Little Sisters of the Poor, who have been down this road before, were represented by Becket, a religious liberty law firm.

To recap their journey: In 2013, religious groups and houses of worship were granted a religious exemption by the Supreme Court from the government's mandate in the Affordable Care Act to include coverage of contraceptives, abortifacients and sterilization in their employee health plans. Three years later, religious nonprofit groups challenged the requirement that they

comply with the mandate, and the court sent the cases back to the lower courts with instructions for the federal government and the challengers to try to work out a solution agreeable to both sides.

Then in 2017, religious groups were given further protection from the mandate through an executive order issued by President Donald J. Trump requiring the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to write a comprehensive exemption to benefit religious ministries, including the Little Sisters of the Poor, from the contraceptive, abortifacient and sterilization mandate.

HHS provided this exemption in 2018, but several states challenged it, including California, Pennsylvania and New Jersey, saying HHS didn't have the power to give this exemption.

Pennsylvania and New Jersey obtained a nationwide injunction against the rules protecting religious objectors from the mandate; that injunction was then upheld by the 3rd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, based in Philadelphia.

This is where the Little Sisters come back because they appealed the circuit court's ruling and asked the Supreme Court to step in.

In one of the two consolidated cases, *Trump v. Pennsylvania*, the administration has argued that the exceptions to the contraceptive, abortifacient and sterilization mandate for religious groups were authorized by the health care law and required by the 1993 Religious Freedom Restoration Act, known as RFRA.

Lawyers for Pennsylvania and

New Jersey said the administration lacked statutory authority to issue such regulations, and said the government did not follow proper administrative procedures.

The second case examines whether the Little Sisters of the Poor had the standing to appeal the 3rd Circuit ruling since a separate court order had already allowed them to refuse to provide contraceptive, abortifacient and sterilization coverage in their employee health plans.

In the May 6 oral arguments, Justices Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Sonia Sotomayor expressed concerns that if the Trump administration rules remained in place, many women would be left without access to contraceptives covered by insurance plans.

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) filed a friend-of-the-court brief siding with the Little Sisters of the Poor, which stressed that the court needs to set the record straight, particularly with its interpretation of RFRA, which says "governments should not substantially burden religious exercise without compelling justification."

The brief said there was a compelling need to review this case not only because the 3rd Circuit Court decision conflicts with other Supreme Court rulings on this topic in the Hobby Lobby and Zubik decisions, but also because its ruling "threatens to reduce one of America's leading civil rights laws to virtual impotence," referring to RFRA.

It emphasized that RFRA essentially hangs in the balance because the appeals



The U.S. Supreme Court in Washington is seen in this 2017 file photo. The court heard oral arguments by teleconference on the Little Sisters of Poor case on May 6, examining exemption challenges to the contraceptive, abortifacient and sterilization mandate of the Affordable Care Act. (CNS photo/Tyler Orsburn)

court "adopted a grudging interpretation of the statute that will, unless reversed, too often deny protection for religious people and institutions."

Weighing in again on the day of the oral arguments, a statement by USCCB committee chairs said: "Religious organizations have a right, recognized by the Constitution, to select people who will perform ministry, and the government has no legitimate authority to second-guess those ministerial decisions."

It also said the government cannot force a religious order to "violate the religious beliefs that animate its mission," and called it "dismaying that after the federal government expanded religious exemptions to the HHS contraceptive mandate, Pennsylvania and other states chose to continue this attack on conscience."

The oral arguments were the combined cases of *Little Sisters of the Poor Saints Peter and Paul Home v. Pennsylvania* and *Trump v. Pennsylvania*. A decision is expected by late June. †

SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral still offering daily online Mass to archdiocesan faithful

While Church leaders throughout central and southern Indiana begin working on plans to reopen parishes for the celebration of Masses, SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis will continue to offer Mass online each day.

Archbishop Charles C. Thompson, Cathedral Parish rector Father Patrick Beidelman and other priests will continue to celebrate the liturgy. It can be viewed on the archdiocesan website at www.archindy.org. †

life coordinator *pro tem* of St. Mary-of-the-Woods Parish in Terre Haute while remaining parish life coordinator at Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish.

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

Official Appointment

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Ms. Barbara Black, parish life coordinator at Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish in Terre Haute, appointed parish

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James 1:17

What a whirlwind! Our "normal" is anything but normal right now. But have you noticed the little blessings that are happening in this time?

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"The joy of the Lord is my strength."
Nehemiah 8:10

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We want you to share how you have been blessed during this time of uncertainty. Use these QR codes to view the video from Dana Stone and to upload your video to share with us.



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OPINION



The Criterion

Archbishop Charles C. Thompson, Publisher
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Editorial



In one of former papal photographer Arturo Mari's famous photos, he shows Pope John Paul II celebrating his final international World Youth Day in Toronto in 2002. (CNS photo/Arturo Mari)

St. Pope John Paul II born 100 years ago

Next Monday, May 18, is the 100th anniversary of the birth of St. Pope John Paul II. The Catholic Church had some exceptional popes during the 20th century, perhaps more than in any other century, but JP II, as he came to be known, is considered by many as the greatest. His pontificate carried over into the 21st century; he died just 15 years ago and Pope Francis canonized him in 2014.

Born Karol Josef Wojtyla in Wadowice, Poland, he led a remarkable life before his election as pope in 1978. An athletic boy who played football (what we know as soccer), he became an actor and a playwright in his late teens. But then came World War II, and he had to go to work in a limestone quarry for the German occupation forces.

He studied for the priesthood in a clandestine underground seminary and was ordained in 1946. He was known as a kind priest, especially to the young with whom he would camp, but also as an intellectual. Named a bishop, he attended the Second Vatican Council where he first caught the attention of the rest of the Church's hierarchy.

It was historic, to say the least, when he was elected pope because he was the first non-Italian pope in 455 years, the first since Adrian VI in 1522-23 and the first ever from Eastern Europe. Then his pontificate extended for more than 26 years, longer than any pope except Blessed Pius IX.

Pope John Paul II quickly became the most-traveled pope in history, journeying to 129 countries. More people saw him in person than saw all of his predecessors combined.

He also canonized and beatified many more people than all of his predecessors combined.

Perhaps historians will remember him particularly for his role in the dramatic events leading to the fall of communism in Eastern Europe, including his home country. His visits to Poland and his support of the Solidarity labor movement there strengthened resistance to communism. This led to nonviolent liberation movements and the collapse of communist regimes, the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the breakup of the Soviet Union.

His literary output—including 13 encyclicals—set another record. He was by far the most prolific writer as a pope. The encyclicals showed his concern for the protection of all human life, for

social justice (three social encyclicals), for ecumenism and interreligious relations, his love for the Blessed Virgin and the relationship of faith and reason. He also wrote several books and others were produced with his cooperation.

He worked tirelessly to promote better relations with the Jews and with other Christians, as well as non-Christian religions. He apologized frequently for errors committed by Church leaders in the past against Jews, Muslims and others.

There can be little doubt that he was admired by more people in the world than any other religious or political leader. Twice he called leaders of all religions together to pray for peace, the only religious leader who could have done so.

Throughout his pontificate, he was extremely popular with youth. This was understandable when he was a strong athletic man, but his attraction to young people continued into his old age and despite his infirmities. Our young people chanted "John Paul II, we love you!" during his visit to Denver for World Youth Day in 1993, and so many others through the years affectionately chanted that refrain.

He tried to put the ideas of collegiality with the bishops into practice by presiding over 15 synods of bishops, usually issuing apostolic exhortations following the gatherings. When the idea of a new catechism was suggested at a synod, he approved the project and then authorized the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* in 1992. He oversaw the revision of the *Code of Canon Law* and promulgated the new code in 1983.

He was sensitive to women's issues while continuing to insist that the Church is unable to ordain women. His continued support for priestly celibacy also put him at odds with some in the Church.

As he aged, he suffered from Parkinson's disease, the effects of an assassination attempt, a broken hip and an appendectomy. Through that, he taught us the value of suffering. He referred to his illnesses as "the mission Jesus entrusted to me."

As we observe the centennial of his birth, we thank God for giving us this great man to lead his Church during our lifetime.

—John F. Fink

Reflection/Sr. Sheila Marie Fitzpatrick, O.S.B.

Global Church to celebrate Laudato Si' Week on May 16-24

On May 24, 2015, Pope Francis released his first encyclical, "Laudato Si'", on Care for Our Common Home.

This year is the fifth anniversary of the release, and the worldwide Church is marking this occasion with virtual events and prayer during the dates of May 16-24, called *Laudato Si'* Week.

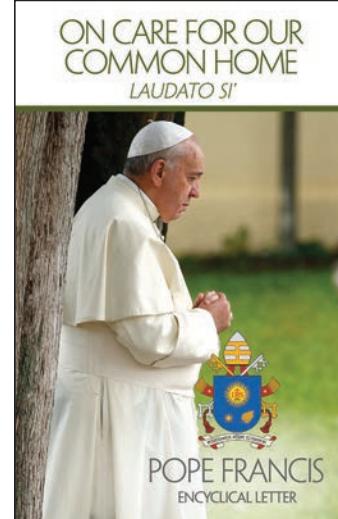
The Global Catholic Climate Movement (GCCM) is the official site for *Laudato Si'* Week (www.laudatosiweek.org), and includes a message from Pope Francis renewing his urgent call for all of us to care for our Earth.

The theme of *Laudato Si'* Week is "everything is connected," taken from the encyclical: "Everything is connected. Concern for the environment thus needs to be joined to a sincere love for our fellow human beings and an unwavering commitment to resolving the problems of society" (#91).

This is visible in our care for all life, from conception to death. It is visible in the care for those most vulnerable, especially during this time of the COVID-19 pandemic. May our prayers and actions reflect Christ's love for our fellow human beings and for all of God's creation.

The GCCM is calling on us to "come together as one people around the world to prayerfully discern the lessons of this moment. While the world experiences a history-defining crisis, we reflect and prepare to build a better world."

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (usccb.org/environment) and its supporting organization, the Catholic Climate Covenant (catholicclimatecovenant.org) are also promoting *Laudato Si'* Week with resources and support to the dioceses across the United States.



May we all reflect during this time on what we can do to build a better world for future generations. May we protect life and preserve that which sustains life. May we care for our common home.

As Pope Francis said, "Let's take care of creation, a gift of our good Creator God. Let's celebrate *Laudato Si'* Week together."

(Benedictine Sister Sheila Marie Fitzpatrick is director of Facilities at the Benedict Inn Retreat & Conference Center in Beech Grove and a member of the archdiocese's Creation Care Commission. For more information, visit ourcommonhome.org.) †

Sight Unseen/Brandon A. Evans

The inscription on the inner wall

In a distant land, there is a fictional monastery and over its church is a stone mantle. Inscribed there are three words its monks read every time they gather to prayer:

"All Things Pass."

It's a phrase they keep in their hearts and use to stoke the fire of their fervor; a lock-solid rule set against a vain world.

For humanity is, in its progress and regress, *human*. The fault at the heart of the world is the fault at the heart of each person, and despite all attempts *every generation forgets* the things it promises it will not.

Original Sin wounds us. It makes to stumble the steady and lends darkness to memory. We repeat, from children to adults, the mistakes of the past because they are *our* mistakes; the fissure that separates us from God cuts down all the way to the deepest part of our souls.

We are a paradox: beings who long for permanence and immortality in a universe of constant change and death—even our good works betrayed by our mistakes.

We tremble before death, and against all our hopes history staggers toward apocalypse.



But it is precisely *there* that we find our hope, for the light that shines at history's end is the light of the One who made Easter out of Good Friday.

The monks of the imaginary abbey live the words they read each day by seeing in them not just a curse, but also a remedy. They live a life of detachment and austerity, dying to the things they want the most and giving their service to God.

Jesus Christ is the very model of this cure. Over and over in the Scriptures, he says it: that we must each take up our cross, give up our possessions, accept the tears that come our way, turn the other cheek. He says it until, in the end and despite his fear, he embraced death willingly.

One day it will be each of us standing before that darkness. It will be us on the hospital bed, unable to move as the priest lays down crosses of oil on our hands.

Our own death will be—to each of us—the death of *everyone* and *everything* we know. All our plans, all our loves, all our hopes and dreams and memories, they will all pass in a single instant. We will cede *all* ownership, even of our own body.

Our lives can be a preparation for such a moment, having placed our trust in Jesus a thousand other times and through a thousand other worries; we can steal from death the terror it yields.

See EVANS, page 15

ARCHBISHOP/ARZOBISPO CHARLES C. THOMPSON



Christ the Cornerstone

We can rejoice this Easter season because Jesus is close to us

"Shout joyfully to God, all the Earth, sing praise to the glory of his name; proclaim his glorious praise. Say to God, 'How tremendous are your deeds!' " (Ps 66:2-3)

The Sixth Sunday of Easter, which we celebrate this weekend, continues the joy-filled themes of this holy season.

As we begin the liturgy, the Entrance Antiphon (Is 48:20) announces: "Proclaim a joyful sound and let it be heard; proclaim to the ends of the Earth: The Lord has freed his people, alleluia."

Scripture readings, prayers and acclamations continue the joy-filled proclamation that Christ our hope is risen. Even in times of tragedy and deep sadness, we insist on the joyful character of this liturgical season. Are we deluding ourselves? Or do we truly have reason to rejoice?

The great mystery of our Lord's resurrection, his triumph over sin and death, is that while we continue to experience the effects of evil (plagues, natural disasters and catastrophes resulting from human sinfulness), their power over us has been neutralized by the love of God perfectly realized in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross.

By his wounds, we have been healed. By his freely chosen gift-of-self, we have been released from the bondage of sin and the finality of death.

Even when we can't see or understand the reasons for the bad things that happen to us—and especially to those who are most vulnerable and undeserving of the hardships that are imposed on them—we are invited to rejoice in the unconditional love and mercy of our Redeemer, Jesus Christ. He invites us to accompany him on his journey from death to new life. As close as he is to us now, the hope we have received through our participation in the joy of Easter is just a foretaste of much deeper joy to come.

This means that, even in the worst possible circumstances, the risen Lord is with us. He is close to us. He shares in our suffering and our sorrow. He mourns with us. He comforts us and gives us hope.

Above all, we can rejoice because our Lord invites us to share in both his suffering (his passion and death) and his joy (his resurrection and ascension into heaven). Even in our own suffering and death, we are promised the joy of

being united with Christ—both here and now and in a better life to come. As individuals and as a community of faith, we are invited to draw near to Christ, and so encounter his mercy and his hope.

Practically speaking, we Christians are not naïve or foolish about the manifestations of sin and death that confront us in daily life. When someone we love dies, we mourn but we don't lose hope. When we confront the realities of poverty, homelessness or injustice, we don't react passively; we practice the virtues of charity, hospitality and justice. When a massive pandemic strikes our homes, our communities and our world, we don't give up; we make sacrifices and endure hardships to slow the spread and protect the health and well-being of those who are most vulnerable.

We do these things in confidence and hope because we know that the Lord is risen. We endure hardships, provide comfort and support to others, and accept the things that we can't change, because Jesus is close to us and assures us that no matter what happens, all will be well.

As Christians, we look to Mary and the saints to inspire us and be our guides during difficult times. These are the women and men who have gone before us testifying to the power of the Resurrection. They knew great sorrow, and they endured severe pain and suffering (even martyrdom) with confidence in the Lord's closeness to them. They were not afraid. They trusted in the Lord.

The First Reading for this Sunday (Acts 8:5-8, 14-17) tells the story of Philip's witness to the resurrection:

"Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed the Christ to them. With one accord, the crowds paid attention to what was said by Philip when they heard it and saw the signs he was doing. For unclean spirits, crying out in a loud voice, came out of many possessed people, and many paralyzed or crippled people were cured. There was great joy in that city" (Acts 8:5-7).

Great joy comes with the realization that Christ our hope is risen. We can rejoice this Easter season in spite of everything because Jesus is close to us. Let's draw near to him, and to one another, in hope and in joy. Alleluia! †



Cristo, la piedra angular

Podemos alegrarnos en esta temporada de Pascua porque Jesús está cerca de nosotros

"Canten salmos a su glorioso nombre; ¡rindanle gloriosas alabanzas! Díganle a Dios: '¡Cuán imponentes son tus obras!' " (Sal 66:2-3).

El Sexto Domingo de Pascua, que celebramos este fin de semana, continúa con los temas llenos de alegría de esta temporada santa.

Al comienzo de la liturgia, la antífona de entrada (Is 48:20) proclama: "Anuncien esto con gritos de alegría y háganlo saber. Publíquenlo hasta en los confines de la tierra; digan: El Señor ha redimido a su pueblo, aleluya."

Las lecturas de las Escrituras, las oraciones y las aclamaciones continúan la proclamación llena de alegría de que Cristo nuestra esperanza ha resucitado. Incluso en tiempos de tragedia y profunda tristeza, insistimos en el carácter alegre de esta temporada litúrgica. ¿Acaso nos estamos engañando? ¿O en verdad tenemos motivos para alegrarnos?

El gran misterio de la resurrección de nuestro Señor, su triunfo sobre el pecado y la muerte, es que mientras seguimos experimentando los efectos del mal (plagas, desastres naturales y catástrofes producto del pecado humano), su poder sobre nosotros ha sido neutralizado por el amor de Dios perfectamente realizado en el

sacrificio de Jesucristo en la cruz. Mediante sus heridas, hemos sido sanados; por su autoentrega elegida libremente, hemos sido liberados de la esclavitud del pecado y de la finalidad de la muerte.

Incluso cuando no podemos ver o entender las razones de lo malo que nos sucede, y especialmente cuando se trata de los que son más vulnerables y que no merecen las penurias que se les imponen, estamos invitados a regocijarnos en el amor incondicional y la misericordia de nuestro Redentor, Jesucristo, quien nos invita a acompañarlo en su viaje de la muerte a la nueva vida. A pesar de lo cerca que está de nosotros ahora, la esperanza que hemos recibido a través de nuestra participación en la alegría pascual es solo un anticipo de una alegría mucho más profunda que está por venir.

Esto significa que, incluso en las peores circunstancias, el Señor resucitado está con nosotros. Está cerca de nosotros. Comparte nuestro sufrimiento y nuestra pena. Llora con nosotros. Nos consuela y nos da esperanza.

Sobre todo, podemos regocijarnos porque nuestro Señor nos invita a compartir tanto su sufrimiento (su pasión y muerte) como su alegría (su resurrección y ascensión al cielo).

Incluso en nuestro propio sufrimiento y muerte, se nos promete la alegría de estar unidos a Cristo, tanto aquí y ahora, como en una mejor vida por venir. Como individuos y como comunidad de fe, estamos invitados a acercarnos a Cristo, y así encontrar su misericordia y su esperanza.

En la práctica, los cristianos no somos ingenuos o tontos en cuanto a las manifestaciones del pecado y la muerte que se nos presentan en la vida diaria. Cuando muere un ser querido lloramos pero no perdemos la esperanza. Cuando nos enfrentamos a las realidades de la pobreza, la indigencia o la injusticia, no reaccionamos pasivamente; practicamos las virtudes de la caridad, la hospitalidad y la justicia. Cuando una pandemia de enormes proporciones azota nuestros hogares, nuestras comunidades y nuestro mundo, no nos damos por vencidos; hacemos sacrificios y soportamos dificultades para frenar la propagación y proteger la salud y el bienestar de los más vulnerables.

Hacemos esto con confianza y esperanza porque sabemos que el Señor ha resucitado. Soportamos las dificultades, damos consuelo y apoyo a los demás, y aceptamos las cosas que no podemos cambiar, porque Jesús está cerca de nosotros y nos asegura que

pase lo que pase, todo estará bien.

Como cristianos, elevamos la mirada hacia María y los santos para que nos inspiren y sean nuestros guías en los momentos difíciles. Estos son los hombres y mujeres que nos han precedido en el testimonio del poder de la Resurrección. Conocieron una gran pena, y soportaron intensos dolores y sufrimientos (incluso el martirio) con la confianza de que el Señor estaba cerca de ellos. No temían pues confiaban en el Señor.

La primera lectura de este domingo (Hc 8:5-8; 14-17) narra el testimonio de Felipe de la resurrección:

"Felipe bajó a una ciudad de Samaria y les anunciaría al Mesías. Al oír a Felipe y ver las señales milagrosas que realizaba, mucha gente se reunía y todos prestaban atención a su mensaje. De muchos endemoniados los espíritus malignos salían dando alaridos, y un gran número de paralíticos y cojos quedaban sanos. Y aquella ciudad se llenó de alegría" (Hc 8:5-7).

Al darnos cuenta de que Cristo nuestra esperanza ha resucitado, sobreviene una inmensa alegría. Pese a todo, podemos alegrarnos en esta temporada de Pascua porque Jesús está cerca de nosotros. Acerquémonos a él, y a los demás, con esperanza y alegría. ¡Aleluya! †

Pope to nurses, midwives: ‘Thank you for your service to humanity’

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- The coronavirus pandemic has drawn well-deserved attention to nurses and midwives, who are among “the saints next door,” dedicated to helping people in some of the most joyful or painful moments of their lives, Pope Francis said.

“Every day, we witness the testimony of courage and sacrifice of health care workers, and nurses in particular, who, with professionalism, self-sacrifice and a sense of responsibility and love for neighbor, assist people affected by the virus, even to the point of putting their own health at risk,” the pope said in a message marking the May 12 celebration of International Nurses Day and the 200th anniversary of the birth of Florence Nightingale.

“Thank you for your service to humanity,” the pope wrote.

Pope Francis also paid tribute to the nurses who contracted the virus and died, assuring their families that “the Lord knows each of them by name.”

“In many countries,” he said, “the pandemic has also brought to light a number of deficiencies in the provision of health care,” including the need to invest in nurses and give them greater respect and recognition.

Pope Francis used his message to nurses to also “ask leaders of nations throughout the world to invest in health care as the primary common good, by strengthening its systems and employing

greater numbers of nurses, so as to ensure adequate care to everyone with respect for the dignity of each person.”

Nurses and midwives, he said, have a “very special vocation” of being “guardians and preservers of life.”

“You are an image of the church as a ‘field hospital’ that continues to carry out the mission of Jesus Christ, who drew near to and healed people with all kinds of sickness and who stooped down to wash the feet of his disciples,” the pope said.

Nurses and midwives know that they need scientific and technical knowledge to help their patients, but that their vocation means also bringing “human and humanizing” qualities to their patient interactions.

“Taking care of women and men, of children and elderly, in every phase



Belgian nurses pose with trays of cookies and pastries that they received to celebrate International Nurses Day at Erasme Hospital in Brussels on May 12 during the COVID-19 pandemic. (CNS photo/Yves Herman, Reuters)

of their life from birth to death,” he said, “you are tasked with continuous listening aimed at understanding what the needs of that patient are in the phase that he or she is experiencing.”

“Before the uniqueness of each situation, indeed, it is never enough to follow a protocol, but a constant—and tiresome!—effort of discernment and

attention to the individual person is required,” Pope Francis wrote.

“I would like to say a special word to midwives who assist women in their pregnancies and help them give birth to their children,” he wrote. “Your work is among the most noble of professions, for it is directly dedicated to the service of life and of motherhood.” †

At morning Mass, Pope Francis offers prayers for unemployed

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—As countries continue to reel from the economic fallout of the coronavirus pandemic, Pope Francis offered prayers for the men and women who have been unable to work.

“In these days, many people have lost their jobs, were not rehired or work off the books. Let us pray for these brothers and sisters of ours who are suffering from this lack of work,” the pope said on May 11 at the start of his Mass in the Domus Sanctae Marthae.

The pope’s prayer came at a time

when jobless rates have skyrocketed as businesses were forced to close their doors due to lockdown measures. According to a *Washington Post* report on May 11, White House economic adviser Kevin Hassett said the U.S. unemployment rate “is likely to rise to 20 percent” in June.

In his homily at the Mass, the pope reflected on the day’s Gospel reading from St. John, in which Jesus promises his disciples the gift of the Holy Spirit who will “teach you everything and remind you of all that I told you” (Jn 14:26).

Referring to Christ’s use of the Greek word “Paraclete,” which means “advocate,” the pope said the Holy Spirit is the one “who supports us, who accompanies us so we won’t fall, who holds you firmly.”

The Holy Spirit’s two main tasks, he explained, are to “teach” and “remind” Christians about faith.

The Holy Spirit “teaches us. He teaches us the mystery of faith, he teaches us to enter into the mystery, to understand the mystery a bit better,” the pope said. “And the Spirit teaches us to grow in the understanding of faith, to understand it more, to understand what faith tells us.”

Faith, he added, isn’t something that remains static but, like a tree, continues to grow and gives fruit.

“The Holy Spirit prevents doctrine from being mistaken, it prevents it from standing still without growing in us,” he said. “He will teach us the things that

Jesus taught us, he will develop in us an understanding of what Jesus taught us and will make the Lord’s doctrine grow within us until it is mature.”

The Spirit’s second task, he continued, is to remind us of Jesus’ teachings and “is like a memory, it awakens us.”

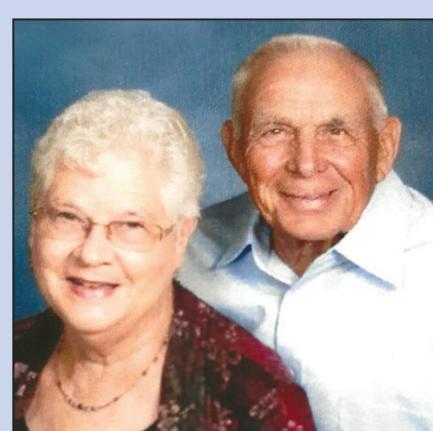
“He keeps us awake, he awakens us to the things of the Lord, he helps us remember our own lives,” including the times when one has chosen to follow or leave the Lord, the pope said.

Pope Francis encouraged Christians to trust in the Holy Spirit who guides all people to discern what is right and wrong and is “God’s gift” to all.

“The Spirit is the gift,” he said. God “will not leave you alone, he will send you the Paraclete who will sustain you and help you to go forward, to remember, to discern and to grow. God’s gift is the Holy Spirit.” †

VIPS

Announcements for couples celebrating 50, 55, 60, 65, 70 or more years of marriage are accepted. Go to bit.ly/2M4MQms or call 317-236-1585.



Lawrence and Marilyn (Knue) Joerger, members of All Saints Parish in Dearborn County, celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary on March 19.

The couple was married in the former St. John Church in Dover on March 19, 1955.

They have eight children: Laura Hartman, Ruth Hendrix, Linda Todd, Rita Wissel, Kelly, Bob, Larry and the late Mary Lou Joerger.

The couple also has 20 grandchildren, 33 great-grandchildren and one great-great-grandchild. †



Kenneth and Eileen (O'Connor) Wilkerson, members of SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi Parish in Greenwood, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on May 22.

The couple was married in Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Indianapolis on May 22, 1970.

They have three children: Cody, Kempis and Jonathon Wilkerson.

The couple also has 13 grandchildren and one great-grandchild. †

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The Face of Mercy

By Daniel Conway

Pope Francis turns to Mary for inspiration, courage, hope

Mother of God and our Mother, pray for us to God, the Father of mercies, that this great suffering may end and that hope and peace may dawn anew. Plead with your divine Son, as you did at Cana, so that the families of the sick and the victims be comforted, and their hearts be opened to confidence and trust.

(Pope Francis)

Pope Francis has frequently said that his favorite image for the Church is her motherhood. "The Church is feminine," Pope Francis says. "She is a mother."

Mary is the model, the inspiration for the Church's motherhood and for all that is holy, compassionate and loving in the Church's life and ministry. When Mary's influence is missing or weak, the pope teaches, the Church no longer acts as a loving mother.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Pope Francis has repeatedly turned to Mary, Health of the Sick, for inspiration, courage and hope. He has implored her to intercede for us, and to help all who suffer from this modern-day plague to find consolation in the healing power of her Son, Jesus. Drawing on one of the Church's most ancient Marian hymns,

"*Sub Tuum Praesidium*" ("Beneath Thy Protection"), the pope prays:

"We seek refuge under your protection, O Holy Mother of God. Do not despise our pleas—we who are put to the test—and deliver us from every danger, O glorious and blessed Virgin. Amen."

In a recent communication to archdiocesan leaders, Indianapolis Archbishop Charles C. Thompson referred to Pope Francis's reliance on Mary for inspiration and help during this pandemic:

"Mary is a great source of strength, encouragement and hope in times of trial, Pope Francis reminds us. Because she is our mother, she cares deeply for us and she wants what is best for us always. Let's ask her to comfort the sick and the dying, and to share her courage with health care providers and all who are risking their own lives to serve the needs of others. Let's turn to Mary when we are frightened or lonely. She will stay close to us and calm our fears. Above all, when we feel confused or lost on life's journey, Mary can show us the way to her Son, Jesus. There's no way we can successfully deal with the effects of the

COVID-19 pandemic all by ourselves. Thank God we can rely on our Blessed Mother Mary, and all the saints, to inspire us and guide us as we navigate the troubled waters of this very strange time."

Recently, Pope Francis has encouraged all individuals and families to pray the rosary daily during the month of May to ask for our Blessed Mother's special protection and care during this pandemic. As the pope says, "Contemplating the face of Christ with the heart of Mary, our Mother will make us even more united as a spiritual family and will help us overcome this time of trial."

Pope Francis has composed two prayers "that you can recite at the end of the rosary, and that I myself will pray in the month of May, in spiritual union with all of you."

These new prayers emphasize the importance of "contemplating the face of Christ with the heart of Mary our Mother," which the Holy Father believes "will make us even more united as a spiritual family and will help us overcome this time of trial." The Holy Father's letter, which includes the full

text of his new prayers, may be found here: <https://bit.ly/3dBbSTp> (case sensitive).

The pope is keenly aware that although we are all looking forward to a return to "normalcy," we know that we will never be quite the same. He prays that Mary, the Mother of the Church, will inspire us all with compassion and courage. The pope has warned us against "the sin of indifference," which he says is a virus worse than COVID-19. He prays that Mary will help us avoid returning to business as usual, but rather that we can move forward in hope and embrace the mission of her Son, Jesus.

In a similar way, Pope Francis prays that St. Joseph the Worker, the foster father of Jesus and the husband of Mary, whose feast we celebrated on May 1, will continue to be the Protector of the Church.

Finally, the Holy Father prays that our experiences in recent months will lead us to a profound renewal of our faith in God, our hope in a better life to come, and our ability to witness to the joy of the Gospel.

(Daniel Conway is a member of The Criterion's editorial committee.) †

"Jesus of Nazareth, by his words, his actions, and his entire person reveals the mercy of God."

—Pope Francis, "*Misericordiae Vultus*" ("The Face of Mercy")



"Jesús de Nazaret con su palabra, con sus gestos y con toda su persona revela la misericordia de Dios."

—Papa Francisco, "*Misericordiae Vultus*" ("El rostro de la misericordia")

El rostro de la misericordia/Daniel Conway

El papa Francisco acude a María como fuente de inspiración, valentía y esperanza

Madre de Dios y Madre nuestra, implora al Padre de misericordia que esta dura prueba termine y que volvamos a encontrar un horizonte de esperanza y de paz. Como en Caná, intercede ante tu Divino Hijo, pidiéndole que consuele a las familias de los enfermos y de las víctimas, y que abra sus corazones a la esperanza.

El papa Francisco ha dicho con frecuencia que su imagen favorita de la Iglesia es su maternidad. "La Iglesia es femenina," dice el Papa. "Es madre."

María es el modelo, la inspiración para la maternidad de la Iglesia y para todo lo que es santo, compasivo y amoroso en la vida y el ministerio de la Iglesia. Cuando la influencia de María falta o es débil, la Iglesia ya no actúa como una madre amorosa, según nos enseña el Papa.

Durante la pandemia de la COVID-19, el papa Francisco ha recurrido repetidamente a María, Salud de los Enfermos, en busca de inspiración, valentía y esperanza. Le ha implorado que interceda por nosotros y que ayude a todos los que sufren de esta plaga moderna a encontrar consuelo en el poder curativo de su Hijo, Jesús. Inspirado en uno de los himnos marianos

más antiguos de la Iglesia, *Sub Tuum Praesidium* ("Bajo tu protección"), el Papa reza:

"Bajo tu amparo nos acogemos, Santa Madre de Dios, no desprecies nuestras súplicas en las necesidades, antes bien libranos de todo peligro, oh Virgen gloriosa y bendita. Amén."

En una reciente comunicación a los líderes arquidiocesanos, el arzobispo de Indianápolis Charles C. Thompson afirmó que María ha sido la fuente de inspiración y ayuda del papa Francisco durante esta pandemia:

"El papa Francisco nos recuerda que María es una gran fuente de fuerza, aliento y esperanza en tiempos de prueba. Porque ella es nuestra madre, se preocupa profundamente por nosotros y siempre desea lo mejor para nosotros. Pidámosle que consuele a los enfermos y a los moribundos, y que comparta su valentía con los proveedores de salud y con todos los que arriesgan sus propias vidas para atender las necesidades de los demás. Recurramos a María cuando estemos asustados o solos. Ella permanecerá cerca de nosotros y calmará nuestros miedos. Sobre todo, cuando nos sentimos confundidos o perdidos en el camino de la vida, María puede mostrarnos el camino

hacia su Hijo, Jesús. No hay manera de que podamos enfrentar con éxito los efectos de la pandemia de COVID-19 por nosotros mismos. Gracias a Dios podemos confiar en nuestra Santa Madre María, y en todos los santos, para que nos inspiren y nos guíen mientras navegamos por las aguas turbulentas de esta época tan extraña."

Recientemente el papa Francisco ha animado a todos los individuos y familias a rezar el rosario diariamente durante el mes de mayo para pedir la protección y el cuidado especial de nuestra Santa Madre durante esta pandemia. Como lo expresa el papa: "Contemplar juntos el rostro de Cristo con el corazón de María, nuestra Madre, nos unirá todavía más como familia espiritual y nos ayudará a superar esta prueba."

El papa Francisco ha compuesto dos oraciones "que pueden recitar al final del Rosario, y que yo mismo diré durante el mes de mayo, unido espiritualmente a ustedes."

Estas nuevas oraciones hacen énfasis en la importancia de "contemplar juntos el rostro de Cristo con el corazón de María Madre nuestra" que el Santo Padre considera que "nos unirá todavía más como familia espiritual y nos ayudará a superar esta prueba." La carta del Santo

padre, que incluye el texto completo de sus nuevas oraciones se encuentra en: <https://bit.ly/3fHuJxM>.

El papa es muy consciente de que aunque todos estamos deseando volver a la "normalidad," sabemos que nunca volveremos a ser los mismos. Le ruega a María, la Madre de la Iglesia, para que inspire a todos compasión y valentía. El Papa nos ha advertido contra "el pecado de la indiferencia," que afirma que es un virus peor que el de la COVID-19. Le pide a María que nos ayude a no retomar la vida de antes, sino que podamos avanzar en la esperanza y acoger la misión de su Hijo, Jesús.

Asimismo, el papa Francisco reza para que San José Obrero, el padre adoptivo de Jesús y el esposo de María, cuya fiesta celebramos el 1 de mayo, continúe siendo el Protector de la Iglesia.

Por último, el Santo Padre pide para que nuestras experiencias de los últimos meses nos lleven a una profunda renovación de nuestra fe en Dios, nuestra esperanza en una vida mejor por venir y nuestra capacidad de dar testimonio de la alegría del Evangelio.

(Daniel Conway es integrante del comité editorial de The Criterion.) †

New Seymour program serves food, 'hope and strength'

(Editor's note: Below is the second article in a series looking at how parishes and organizations with Catholic ties are meeting the increased need for food since the outbreak of the coronavirus and its impact on the economy. The final installment next week will focus on Martin's Cloak ministry in the Tell City Deanery.)

By Natalie Hoefer

Look at a map of Indiana. Trace one finger down two counties from Indianapolis, and trace the other finger up two counties from the Ohio River. Your fingers will meet at Jackson County, the geographical center of the archdiocese.

With the primary source of jobs in the county found in



Michelle Neibert-Levine, left, principal of St. Ambrose School in Seymour, and her family—Peyton, Andrew and Matt Levine, prepare boxed meals on April 23 in the school cafeteria for the "Feeding Seymour" project. The family are members of St. Ambrose Parish. (Submitted photo)

Church wasn't prepared, either, for pandemic, nuncio to U.S. says

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Just like millions of people throughout the world, "the Church was not prepared" for the coronavirus pandemic, said Archbishop Christophe Pierre, the Vatican nuncio to the United States, in a May 6 interview with Catholic News Service (CNS).

"We are also people in an organization" beyond just a religion with adherents, Archbishop Pierre said in the interview, which was conducted via Zoom. "The other day I was with an archbishop who was telling me, 'Today, we have 16,000 people to give to, people who work for the Church,

and we have a huge organization.'"

In response, "we have to innovate. We have to be creative," Archbishop Pierre said.

He warned, though, of another malady that could strike the Church.

"That is how he interpreted the May 1 reconstitution of the United States and Canada by their respective nations' bishops to Mary," Archbishop Pierre noted that bishops in Latin American countries have reconsecrated dioceses—and in some cases the entire nation—to Our Lady of Guadalupe, patroness of the Americas.

"It's an act of offering, knowing that God is there, taking charge of all of us. Our faith is not an idea. It's not just an ideology. There is nothing magical. It's a relationship with a person," he said.

"In our private devotions, we have constantly these practices of consecration to the Sacred Heart. You know there is a kind of

sacraments, and so forth." But "we suffer what they suffer. The spiritual dimension of the meaning, maybe, of God's presence in the world is being rediscovered."

That is how he interpreted the May 1 reconstitution of the United States and Canada by their respective nations' bishops to Mary, Archbishop Pierre noted that bishops in Latin American countries have reconsecrated dioceses—and in some cases the entire nation—to Our Lady of Guadalupe, patroness of the Americas.

"It's an act of offering, knowing that God is there, taking charge of all of us. Our faith is not an idea. It's not just an ideology. There is nothing magical. It's a relationship with a person," he said.

"In our private devotions, we have constantly these practices of consecration to the Sacred Heart. You know there is a kind of

culture ... when the new home is going up, you invite a priest just to bless your home, you put up an image of the Sacred Heart. These kinds of things," which he said help make people "aware that God is present."

Concern for those most at risk during the pandemic weighed on Archbishop Pierre's mind. "The Church has to find ways and means. Actually, to be honest with you, since I've been in this country, I have seen how many works are done by organizations. They don't make noise about it, but Catholic Charities, CRS [Catholic Relief Services], and many others, there are many. Not just the big ones, [but] dioceses and so forth," he said.

"Another bishop was telling me a few days ago he was discovering how many were poor—and so we have to do something," Archbishop Pierre added. "I would give a lot

of attention to the migrants. The migrants are those now in a very difficult situation because of the precarity of their situation. Many of them are contracting the coronavirus, and they are not being paid attention to."

He added: "The other day we had a kind of meeting through Zoom with a lot of actors in the Church. Catholic Charities, people in charge of education, we were about 20 people sharing our experience. And I was amazed to see how people are acting, not just to foresee what will happen after that, but to be present. A bishop was telling me how many people are in need because they are poor. They are trying to organize a solidarity outreach to the poor."

This has filtered to the parish level as well, he said, having heard reports of "so many priests now, calling their parishioners all the time," and of "voluntarily, priests going to the hospital. ... We have to innovate, not to repeat the same things as before."

"In his conversations with U.S. bishops,

Archbishop Pierre told CNS. "Where are you, bishop? 'At home.' But you know, on the other hand, I also feel they have this on their shoulders—the huge responsibility of animating a Church" that has been paralyzed in a shutdown mode for close to two months.

"They are worried about the condition of the dioceses, they are worried about what will happen financially. And I think it's important for the people also to share the responsibility of the bishops and their priests also. Because we know the resources of this side in defense of the people. It's also a good way to help the people feel more responsible for the future of their own Church."

It has even touched Pope Francis. "For Francis, has had to readjust his practical life. He is like all bishops here," he said, restricted to staying inside.

"I know that Pope Francis is very anxious to exercise his mission and to

do it as before, especially for me," he said, adding that a current problem is a number of new bishops who have "not yet been ordained or installed. So we wait and see for the moment. We will have to take decisions. Many things have been postponed."

One event Archbishop Pierre had to miss was the May 6 installation of new Atlanta Archbishop Gregory J. Hartmayer. He did see, though, the new archbishop's homily from a vespers service the night before the ordination in which Archbishop Hartmayer asked his listeners what lessons they will take from "these weeks of physical separation. We do not know how much we have until we lose it."

"What if, thanks be to God, we are only separated from the Eucharist and one other to be jarred into a different situation, a manifestation of the great and fragile gift to what we have been entrusted?" Archbishop Pierre asked aloud in a lament of continued U.S. Church infighting, saying, "A house divided against itself will crumble." †

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Church leaders oppose Israeli plans to annex unilaterally West Bank land

JERUSALEM (CNS)—Moving forward with an Israeli plan to unilaterally annex West Bank land could mean the end to the already languishing Palestinian-Israeli peace talks, said the heads of the Holy Land Churches.

"An array of plans for Israel to unilaterally annex West Bank land, backed mainly by right-wing factions, raises serious and catastrophic questions about the feasibility of any peaceful agreement to end the decades-long conflict, one that continues to cost many innocent lives as part of a vicious cycle of human tragedy and injustice," the Church leaders said in their statement.

Among those who signed the May 7 statement were Archbishop Pierbattista Pizzaballa, apostolic administrator of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, and Franciscan Father Francesco Patton, custos of the Holy Land.

Also in early May, Israeli Defense Minister Naftali Bennett initially approved a construction project that has been under discussion for 20 years and would see 7,000 new housing units built in the West Bank Israeli settlement of Efrat, expanding the settlement toward its border with Bethlehem.

A new government coalition agreement between Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and opposition leader Benny Gantz allows Netanyahu to present his long-discussed annexation proposal to the government as soon as July 1.

U.S. President Donald J. Trump has expressed support for the annexation plan, which would bring 30 percent of the West Bank under Israeli permanent control, contingent upon the offering of limited statehood to the Palestinians in the remaining territory—something the Palestinians have rejected.

The patriarchs and heads of the Holy Land churches said they viewed such



New housing units being built in the Israeli settlement Efrat are seen on the hillside overlooking a Palestinian village near Bethlehem, West Bank on May 10. The settlement would be included in the proposed annexation plan by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. (CNS photo/Debbie Hill)

unilateral annexation plans "with the utmost concern." They called upon Israel "to refrain from such unilateral moves, which would bring about the loss of any remaining hope for the success of the peace process."

The Church leaders called on the United States, the Russian Federation, the European Union and the United Nations to respond to the plans with a time-defined and phased peace initiative of their own based on international law and U.N. resolutions to "to guarantee a comprehensive, just and long-lasting peace in this part of the world that is considered holy by the three Abrahamic faiths."

They also urged the Palestine Liberation Organization, which they called "the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people," to resolve

all internal and factional conflicts so it could present a united front "dedicated to achieving peace and the building of a viable state that is founded upon pluralism and democratic values."

Regarding settlement expansion, Palestinian and Israeli opponents of the plan say it will prevent any potential expansion of Bethlehem, already being blocked on two sides by other building projects in Efrat and in Har Homa. Israel considers Har Homa a neighborhood of Jerusalem, but Palestinians call it a settlement built on land belonging to Palestinians from the city of Beit Sahour.

The nongovernmental organization Israeli Peace Now indicated it intends to file a court petition against the Efrat building plan.

"This is a cynical move by a caretaker defense minister at the end of his mandate, while the nation is still reeling from the corona crisis, to advance a dangerous plan aimed at entrenching permanent Israeli domination in the southern West Bank and harming the prospect of a two-state solution," Israeli Peace Now said in a statement.

The Latin Patriarchate has spoken against settlement expansion and land appropriation, including in November 2018, when several acres of its own land in the northern Jordan Valley were taken by Israeli military authorities. In 2017 the patriarchate spoke against a quickly passed law that allowed the Israeli government to seize private Palestinian lands where unauthorized Israeli settlements had been built. †

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St. John Paul II led the Church into third millennium

By David Gibson

Do I remember St. John Paul II? Yes, I remember him well.

I write of him as the centennial of his birth on May 18, 1920, approaches. It would be impossible to list all my lasting memories of him in one article. So that is not my goal.

The more than 26-year papacy that commenced with St. John Paul's election on Oct. 16, 1978, meant he would become one compelling point of focus during more than two-thirds of my own long career as an editor in the Catholic press.

Do you have special memories of the Polish pope? If only we could speak together about them!

Is an image worth a thousand words? If so, I suspect that images of St. John Paul kneeling to kiss the Earth as he arrived in each new nation he visited as pope have created a memory shared by many. The gesture was intended to make respect for the peoples of the world visible.

I cannot proceed without recalling the assassination attempt on St. John Paul's life on May 13, 1981. A young Turkish man named Mehmet Ali Agca shot and wounded him critically in St. Peter's Square.

Many around the world apprehensively awaited progress reports during his three-week stay in Rome's Gemelli Hospital. The tragic shooting shook people to the core.

Indeed, however, his recovery progressed. Some 24 more years as pope lay ahead.

If his shooting proved unforgettable, think back also to what followed.

St. John Paul forgave Agca from the beginning. Then, in 1983 he visited Agca in Rome's Rebibbia Prison. It was a visit of kindness, illustrating a basic tenet of Christianity: Forgiveness is powerful.

Later, the Vatican would ask Italy's government to pardon Agca, which it did in the jubilee year 2000.

Another of my key memories of this pope involves his Gospel-driven vision for the future and his related singular dedication to planning. At least insofar as the year 2000 was concerned, he didn't leave things to chance.

Few, I imagine, felt ready when he was



St. John Paul II kneels at the Holy Door before shutting the large bronze door to close the Holy Year in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican on Jan. 6, 2001. When elected pope on Oct. 16, 1978, the first Polish pontiff saw as a primary part of his mission leading the Church into the third millennium. (CNS photo/Maurizio Brambatti, Reuters)

elected in 1978 to begin planning for a new millennium's arrival more than two decades in the future.

But in 1979 he insisted in his first encyclical, "Redemptor Hominis" ("The Redeemer of Man"), that the year 2000 "will be the year of a great jubilee." He added, "We are already approaching that date" (#1).

Later, in his 1994 apostolic letter "Tertio Millennio Adveniente" ("The Coming of the Third Millennium") on the advent of the third millennium, he set forth a detailed, three-year plan of preparations for the coming of the year 2000.

"Everyone is asked to do as much as possible to ensure that the great challenge of the year 2000 is not overlooked," he wrote (#55). When the year 2000 concluded, he acknowledged in the Jan. 6, 2001, apostolic letter "Novo Millennio Ineunte" ("At the Beginning of the New Millennium"), that "from the beginning of my pontificate, my thoughts had been on this holy year 2000" (#2).

Allow me to share one more memory of St. John Paul. It relates to his friendship with St. Teresa of Calcutta, commonly known as Mother Teresa. Some six years after her 1997 death, he declared her "blessed."

The pope's remarks during her Oct. 19, 2003, beatification seemed to highlight what he found so inspiring about this friend, whose dedication to the poor was recognized worldwide. He called her "an icon of the good Samaritan."

She "went everywhere" serving "Christ in the poorest of the poor," he noted. "Not even conflict and war could stand in her way."

St. Teresa of Calcutta, canonized in 2016, "wanted to be a sign of 'God's love, God's presence and God's compassion,' and so remind all of the value and dignity of each of God's children," the pope observed.

For me, the word "dignity" leaps off

the page of his beatification text. I felt as his pontificate unfolded that dignity, human dignity, became an important theme for him.

Not that he introduced human dignity to the Church's lexicon, for the call to respect others, even enemies, is basic for Christians. Moreover, the Second Vatican Council, in which he participated as a young Polish bishop, put the term "human dignity" to good use in its 1965 "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World" ("Gaudium et Spes").

"Everyone must consider his every neighbor without exception as another self, taking into account first of all his life and the means necessary to living it with dignity," said the pastoral constitution (#27).

It dawned on me gradually during his pontificate that he was contributing to making human dignity an essential element in the Catholic conversation not only about other Catholics, but about the human family.

In his December 1988 apostolic exhortation "Christifideles Laici" ("On the Lay Members of Christ's Faithful"), he said:

"To rediscover and make others rediscover the inviolable dignity of every human person makes up an essential task [and], in a certain sense, the central and unifying task of the service which the Church, and the lay faithful in her, are called to render to the human family" (#37).

(David Gibson served on Catholic News Service's editorial staff for 37 years.) †



St. John Paul II sits with his would-be assassin, Mehmet Ali Agca, in Rome's Rebibbia Prison in 1983. The pope suffered serious intestinal wounds after the gunman fired shots at him in St. Peter's Square on May 13, 1981. Forgiving Agca was a dramatic personal expression of the central emphasis of the valuing of the dignity of all people that was at the heart of Pope John Paul's ministry as bishop of Rome. (CNS photo/Arturo Mari, L'Osservatore Romano)

Alcance de adoración y evangelización/Oscar Castellanos

Entrar en terreno sagrado mediante el arte de la escucha y el acompañamiento

¿Qué pudieran tener en común las siguientes historias?

Marcos es un joven de 26 años que ha terminado la universidad y al ver la



realidad de la iglesia comienza a luchar con el pensamiento y la posibilidad de entrar a un seminario y entregar su vida como sacerdote. Al contemplar esa posibilidad le pregunta a Dios cuáles son las

señales que debe seguir.

Por otra parte tenemos a Martha, madre de cuatro niños cursando la primaria. Ella se ha sentido frustrada y molesta, ya que durante estos últimos meses ha estado en casa ayudándolos con sus trabajos escolares a través de la tecnología, la cual no maneja muy bien. Ella, quien participaba activamente en su comunidad en diferentes voluntariados, ahora se concentra del todo en ayudar desde su hogar. Martha siente y constata que su fe ha decaído, pues no ha sido alimentada por los sacramentos y ministerios de los cuales usualmente participaba. Al contemplar su realidad, pregunta en su interior: ¿Dios, cuáles son las señales que debo seguir?

Finalmente tenemos a Daniel, un inmigrante quien a sus 50 años ha sido despedido de su único trabajo, sin poder proveer para su familia. Aunque no se considera una persona fiel a su fe, nunca ha dejado de encomendarse a Dios, sobre todo en momentos de necesidad. Daniel no tenía plan B, nunca se imaginó perder su trabajo a estas alturas de la vida y se rehusa a renegar de Dios, al contrario, de una manera honesta y directa pregunta en oración: ¿Dios,

cuáles son las señales que debo seguir?

Todas estas historias, aunque diferentes, en su contexto comparten la experiencia de encontrarse confundidos, faltos de esperanza y deseosos de preguntar y buscar. Es un sentimiento de cierta soledad, no necesariamente de abandono de Dios, sino una soledad que invita a conversar de una manera más profunda con Dios. Experimentan sin darse cuenta, una necesidad de ser acompañados por alguien que los escuche y guie hacia un lugar distinto del que están. La pregunta que se hacen es con quién y qué tipo de acompañamiento. Bastaría con llamar a su mejor amigo o confidente y expresar sus problemas. Bastaría con arrodillarse y desahogar lo que hay en su interior a un Dios que lo escucha todo. En nuestra tradición cristiana, diríamos que la dirección espiritual es una opción muy viable para este tipo de acompañamiento.

Hasta hace pocas décadas, la dirección espiritual se consideraba primordialmente una oportunidad para los religiosos o personas que estaban dentro del seminario o el sacerdocio, y no para los laicos. Aún más interesante, la dirección espiritual no era otorgada por laicos, mucho menos por mujeres. Todavía recuerdo con tristeza hace un par de años, el momento en que una dirigida me llamó y me dijo: "Tenemos que cancelar nuestras sesiones porque mi pareja está convencida que esto no es de Dios ya que la dirección espiritual solo puede darse por sacerdotes." La dirigida, proveniente de una cultura donde predomina el clericalismo, me confirmó cuanta falta hace educar sobre este ministerio.

La dirección espiritual no debe confundirse con ayuda psiquiátrica o consejería, mucho menos debe igualarse a

una sesión de "coaching" o autoayuda. La dirección espiritual se centra en la relación con Dios, su presente y las voluntades. No se busca en la dirección espiritual terapia, aunque en ocasiones el director espiritual tenga conocimiento en las ciencias del comportamiento. No se busca, la solución de problemas o conflictos, aunque el director tenga una recomendación para el dirigido. Los problemas pueden terminar, pero la relación con Dios siempre continúa, es por eso que la dirección espiritual no termina cuando se ha solucionado un problema.

La dirección espiritual, aunque es una práctica muy antigua poco sabíamos de ella. Ahora claramente la vemos como un ministerio oficial dentro de la pastoral de la Iglesia, donde su primordial enfoque es encontrar la voluntad de Dios y llevarla a cabo.

La forma más sencilla de ver este ministerio, es la de un cristiano (capacitado en ciertas áreas) acompañando a otro en el arte de escuchar; dicha experiencia se asemeja al encuentro de Moisés y la sarza ardiente, donde Dios le pide quitarse las sandalias porque está en terreno sagrado. A lo largo de los años como director y dirigido puedo decir que al escuchar y palpar la vida interior y la experiencia de fe de otros, estoy en "terreno sagrado."

Es así como Marcos, Martha y Daniel en sus diferentes contextos, pudieran beneficiarse de este ministerio, un espacio para el encuentro con un hermano(a) que camina con ellos, y sobre todo, con el verdadero director espiritual: El Espíritu Santo.

(Oscar Castellanos es el director de la Oficina de Ministerios Interculturales de la Arquidiócesis.) †

Worship and Evangelization Outreach/Oscar Castellanos

Entering sacred ground through the art of listening and accompaniment

What do the following stories have in common?

Marcus is a 26-year-old man who just finished college, and he is still not sure what he wants to do next. After four years, he comes back home and begins to wrestle with the thought of entering seminary and offer up his life as a priest. By contemplating such a possibility, he asks God and himself



what are the signs he should follow.

In another example, we have Martha, a mother of four children who are still in elementary school. She has been frustrated and upset during the past few weeks, since she has been at home helping them with their school work through technology, which she does not handle very well.

Martha, who has actively participated in her parish community in different groups and ministries, now concentrates entirely on helping from home. Martha's faith has waned with these challenges. Her faith has not been nurtured by the sacraments and ministries in which she usually participates. As she contemplates her reality, she asks herself and God what are the signs she must follow.

We also have Daniel, an immigrant, who at the age of 50 has lost his job. Now unable to provide for his family, he questions God. Although he does not consider himself a person of deep faith, he has never ceased to entrust his life to God, especially in times of need.

Daniel had no Plan B. He never imagined losing his job at this point in life, but he refuses to deny God. On the contrary, in a prayerful moment, he asks

God: what are the signs I must follow?

All these stories, although different, share the same experience of being confused, hopeless and eager to ask questions.

It is a feeling of loneliness—not necessarily abandonment from God—but rather a solitude that invites them to go deeper in their relationship with God.

They inadvertently experience a need to be accompanied by someone. The question is by whom, and what type of accompaniment is appropriate.

Would it be enough to call a best friend and express their thoughts, or simply kneel and vent before God, who listens to everything? In our Christian tradition, we would say that spiritual direction is a very viable option for the type of accompaniment they each seek.

Until a few decades ago, spiritual direction was primarily for priests, religious, or men in the seminary in formation for the priesthood, and not so much for the laity. Even more interesting, spiritual direction was not offered to lay men, much less by women.

I still remember with sadness the time a woman directee called me and said: "We have to cancel our sessions because my husband is convinced that this is not from God, since spiritual direction can only be given by priests."

This experience taught me that there are still certain cultures where clericalism predominates, and it also confirmed that we still need to educate our communities about this ministry.

Spiritual direction should not be confused with psychological help, or with counseling, nor should it be equated to some type of coaching.

Spiritual direction focuses on a relationship with God, a person's

present and eventually the discernment of his or her will. Therefore, therapy is not a part of spiritual direction, although sometimes the spiritual director might have knowledge in behavioral sciences.

No one should come to spiritual direction to solve problems or conflicts, although at times the director might recommend and suggest something concerning the issues that the directee expresses. The main difference is that the relationship with God always continues; that is why spiritual direction does not end when a problem has been solved.

Although it is an old practice in our Catholic tradition, we still know little about spiritual direction, especially in certain cultures and ethnic groups.

Spiritual direction is an authentic ministry within the pastoral care of the Church, where its primary focus is to help individuals find the will of God and carry it out in their daily lives.

The simplest way to view this ministry is that of a Christian (trained in certain areas) accompanying another in the art of listening, an experience similar to the encounter of Moses and the burning bush, where God asks him to remove his sandals because he was stepping on sacred ground.

Over the years as a director, I can say that while listening to the religious experience of others, I am on sacred ground.

This is how Marcus, Martha and Daniel could benefit from this ministry, a space designed for the encounter, with a brother and/or sister who walks side by side. It is an encounter with the sole and foremost spiritual director, whom is the Holy Spirit.

(Oscar Castellanos is director of the archdiocesan Office of Intercultural Ministry.) †

For the Journey/Effie Caldarola

Don't bottle up emotions

Have you had a good cry lately?

I have. I saw a Twitter post about a cheerful old fellow in an English care facility who slept with his late wife's photo every night. So, a thoughtful staff member had a photo company create a pillow for him, one side of which displayed his spouse's picture.

When she presented it, he gasped and laughed in surprise, but then quickly clasped the pillow to himself and dissolved in tears.

Cue the Kleenex. I started to cry and a floodgate opened. I sobbed for 15 minutes.

Was that a touching post? Of course. Was my lengthy crying jag exclusively related to the old man clutching his wife's photo and weeping? Of course not.

These are emotional times. I cry easily in the best of times, but the pandemic has me unusually teary. Exhausted nurses without adequate personal protection equipment, long lines of cars at food pantries, the stories of those dying alone. And the unsettling feeling, as I view the federal government's response, that we are careening through uncharted waters in a rudderless ship.

So much sorrow and suffering and courage. A future so uncertain.

Then, my own worries, mixed up with gratitude and love, with the tender realization of things I had taken for granted. A visit to my son in Alaska that won't happen soon. A pregnant daughter I may not see for a long time. Another daughter, unemployed.

The happy laughter at online family meetings that doesn't extinguish the deep longing I have to hug my kids. The craziness of drive-by, curbside visits from more than 6 feet away with a brother who lives only 10 minutes from me.

Brian Stelter is an anchor with CNN. Recently, he missed a deadline for a daily newsletter he produces, and he was courageously upfront about why. That night, he said, he "crawled in bed and cried" over his feelings and fears about the pandemic.

"I hit a wall. Gutted by the death toll. Disturbed by the government's shortcomings. Dismayed by political rhetoric that bears no resemblance to reality," Stelter wrote. "Worried about friends who are losing their jobs; kids who are missing school; and senior citizens who are living in fear."

"I crawled in bed and cried for our pre-pandemic lives. Tears had been waiting a month to escape."

"Now," he said, "is not a time for faux-invincibility."

It's good to hear that from a guy, that gender that often suppresses tears, and from a successful professional. Not just permission to cry, but perhaps an assignment: Once in a while, let those tears flow. It's cathartic. It's a positive release.

A caveat, of course: if you find yourself frequently overwhelmed with grief and emotion, that's a warning signal. If you are experiencing real depression, call a hotline, a friend, your parish or archdiocese for suggestions.

But often our tears are positive reactions to the kindness of strangers, the courage of others and love that endures, like that of the old English gent who clutched his wife's picture.

St. Ignatius of Loyola approved of tears, the kind that overcome us in the presence of God when we recognize our dependence on the Lord.

So those tears that well up when you watch the evening news, or when you see people on balconies in Italy singing together, or New Yorkers cheering for their health providers at 7 p.m. each evening? Those tears are an acknowledgment of our shared humanity at a time we humans worldwide need to unite. It's OK. Once in a while, have a good cry.

(Effie Caldarola writes for Catholic News Service.) †

Sixth Sunday of Easter/Msgr. Owen F. Campion

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, May 17, 2020

- Acts of the Apostles 8:5-8, 14-17
- 1 Peter 3:15-18
- John 14:15-21

The Acts of the Apostles once again this Easter season furnishes the first reading for Mass this weekend. In the readings of the weekends earlier in this season, the identity of the Apostles has clearly been given.

The Apostles had exercised the authority of Jesus in naming a new member of their group, Matthias, who succeeded Judas. St. Peter healed the sick and spoke on behalf of the Apostles as Jesus had spoken.

It was not just simply that the Apostles had been with Jesus as specially selected students and followers. The Lord commissioned them to discharge divine authority itself. Thus, they continued the mission of Jesus the Redeemer.

In this reading, clarifying this identity continues. While Acts already has clearly established that Peter was the head of the Apostles, the character of apostleship also belonged to the others.

For this reading, the central figures are Philip and John. They performed miracles, as Jesus had done. They were part of the community of Apostles, then centered in Jerusalem, gathered around and beside Peter.

The Apostles in Jerusalem sent Philip and John to Samaria. Just as Jesus had led the Samaritan woman, among other foreigners, to embrace the Gospel, the Apostles looked to the eternal life of all people. The love of God stops at no borders. It embraces all humanity. Later, the Apostles went much farther afield, bearing with them the mercy and power of Christ.

They began the brilliant history of evangelization in the Church, still a critical goal for Catholics.

The second reading is from the First Epistle of St. Peter. This reading is a strong, joyful and enthusiastic proclamation of Jesus as Lord, calling believers to listen to and follow him. The

Lord should be in their hearts and minds.

St. John's Gospel furnishes the last reading. Not a resurrection narrative, it nonetheless serves the Church's purpose as it teaches us this weekend. After celebrating the resurrection for these weeks since Easter, the Church is summoning us to look at our lives.

This reading is our blueprint for life. Our task as disciples is to love others as Jesus loved all. It is crystal clear. Our salvation is in God's love, given to us in the Lord.

Indeed, the very act of providing us with a blueprint for living is a vitally important gift given in love to us by God.

Reflection

The next major liturgical event for us will be the celebration of the Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord. Soon after this feast, we will celebrate the Solemnity of Pentecost. Within sight now is the close of the Easter season.

Already, for weeks, the Church has informed us of the resurrection of Jesus, gloriously occurring after the dreadful events of Good Friday. It has shared with us its joy, echoing the joy of the first Christians. It has reported again and again of the risen Lord's appearances and admonitions.

Gently, gradually but emphatically, the Church has begun the process of leading us in our day to ask what the resurrection truly means for each of us individually. Is it an anniversary or, for each of us, a personal experience?

The Church will reassure us. Our communion with Jesus was not lost with his ascension when he returned to the Father. Communion remains clearly in the Church, standing with the Apostles and their successors. This link with Peter and the other Apostles also is God's gift to us.

Through the Church, we hear again the words of Christ. In the Church's sacraments, Christ's eternal strength and life continue to flow to us.

These readings call us to peace, hope and goodness. They teach us about life and how to live. †



My Journey to God

Enough

By Michael Barrett

I passed a beggar, gave him money from my pocket.
Did I give enough?
My co-worker yelled at me today, I absorbed her anger.
Was my response enough?
I hugged my crying child tightly, unable to say a word.
Did I love him enough?
I did not pray today.
Why can I never do enough?

*Oh, my child.
The beggar ate today from your generosity.
Your co-worker calmed her soul after you gave her
space to vent.
Your child was being teased and felt unloved until you
cared.
You did pray today. I was the beggar, the co-worker, your
son.
My beloved child, YOU are enough.*

Daily Readings

Monday, May 18

St. John I, pope and martyr
Acts 16:11-15
Psalm 149:1b-6a, 9b
John 15:26-16:4a

Psalm 98:1-4
John 16:16-20

Tuesday, May 19

Acts 16:22-34
Psalm 138:1-3, 7c-8
John 16:5-11

Friday, May 22
St. Rita of Cascia, religious
Acts 18:9-18
Psalm 47:2-7
John 16:20-23

Wednesday, May 20

St. Bernardine of Siena, priest
Acts 17:15, 22-18:1
Psalm 148:1-2, 11-14
John 16:12-15

Saturday, May 23
Acts 18:23-28
Psalm 47:2-3, 8-10
John 16:23b-28

Thursday, May 21

St. Christopher Magallanes, priest, and companions, martyrs
Acts 18:1-8

Sunday, May 24
The Ascension of the Lord
Acts 1:1-11
Psalm 47:2-3, 6-9
Ephesians 1:17-23
Matthew 28:16-20

Question Corner/Fr. Kenneth Doyle

Sacramental absolution of sins, based in Scripture, has developed over time

Q When I was a Protestant, I never went to confession, and no such practice existed in any of the churches to which I belonged over the years. Now, as a Catholic, I've been told that confession is based on a passage in the Letter of St. James that says, "Confess your sins to one another" (Jas 5:16).

But that verse to me seems more like a general instruction to admit it when we've done a person some wrong and ask each other's forgiveness than it does a mandate to have a confessional in every church. Can you explain? (Indiana)

A I have always learned that the Church's authority to forgive sins was based primarily on a different scriptural text from the one you cite. This passage comes from the Gospel of St. John: on the night of the resurrection, when the risen Jesus appeared to the Apostles who were huddled in fear, he said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit.

Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained" (Jn 20:22-23).

The exact form in which that forgiveness is dispensed has varied considerably over the years, as detailed in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (#1447). In the early centuries, reconciliation for particularly grave sins consisted of a one-time-only public profession of guilt and a course of manifest penance, sometimes for a number of years, before readmission into the eucharistic community of the Church.

During the seventh century, Irish missionaries brought to the European continent the practice of the private confession of sins to a priest, opening the way to the regular use

of the sacrament for both mortal and venial sins—and this has continued as the basic structure of the sacrament up to the present day.

Q Due to COVID-19 and restrictions to prevent its spread, public Masses are currently suspended in our diocese. If I "attend" a livestreamed Mass on television during this time, have I fulfilled my Sunday obligation? By not participating at all, I feel as if I am falling away—and it is becoming much too easy to enjoy this "time off." (Virginia)

A No, you have not fulfilled your Sunday obligation by watching Mass on television or through social media. But at the present time, all dioceses in the U.S. have dispensed with the obligation to attend Mass on Sunday and all holy days of obligation in order to help slow the spread of the coronavirus.

Whenever circumstances make it impossible or unwise to go to church—illness, caring for a sick child, a non-negotiable work assignment, etc.—your Sunday obligation is simply lifted. But what you should still do is to try to make Sunday special.

The bishop of the Diocese of Spokane, Wash., for example, wrote that during the pandemic, "Those members of the faithful who do not attend Sunday Mass should devote some time to prayer on the Lord's Day, either alone or as a family."

Many parishes and dioceses have offered suggestions as to how that might be done—watching a televised Mass, prayerfully meditating on the Sunday Mass readings, praying the Our Father and offering prayer intentions aloud as a family.

During a weekday televised Mass from his residence in March, Pope Francis suggested that viewers who find themselves unable to receive the Eucharist during the coronavirus make a "spiritual Communion," and he offered the following text:

"My Jesus, I believe that you are present in the most holy sacrament of the altar. I love you above all things, and I desire to receive you into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive you sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace you as if you were already there and unite myself wholly to you. Never permit me to be separated from you."

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

(Michael Barrett is a member of St. Philip Neri Parish in Indianapolis. Photo: A pedestrian gives money to a homeless man sitting outside St. Francis of Assisi Church in New York City on Feb. 19. (CNS photo/Gregory A. Shemitz)

COVID

continued from page 1

strangers stormed heaven with prayers. So did the members of their parish, St. Barnabas in Indianapolis. What follows is a testament to faith.

"It's not a story about me" or Megan, John insists, but "a story of how God held [our] hands."

I prayed for someone to save me'

March 16 was a normal day for John. He'd been in Logansport, Ind., conducting business for JCD Realty Group LLC, the property management and real estate group he established in 2001.

By the time he returned home, he wasn't feeling well. He took his temperature. The thermometer read between 100-101 degrees.

But the next day he felt fine and returned to Logansport.

"I came home and played some basketball with Charlie," he says. "I finally just had to stop. I felt horrible."

For the next seven days, John's temperature ranged between 101-103 degrees. His body ached and he was tired, but there was no coughing, no trouble breathing.

The situation changed on March 24.

"Within an hour, his breathing changed rapidly," says Megan. "It all progressed really quickly. That was terrifying."

At 9 p.m., she drove him to the hospital, where he was placed under observation.

Six hours later, John was admitted to the hospital and placed in the intensive care unit. It was March 25, his 50th birthday. Instead of celebrating with his family and friends on a cruise, he was isolated in a hospital, his coughing and shortness of breath worsening.

Late the next day, John was placed on a ventilator.

"I didn't think it was a big deal," he says. "I thought I'd be on it that night and maybe the next day so I could sleep. I didn't realize it was life support."

So began a five-day struggle that John recalls as one long sensation of drowning and fighting to breathe.

"It was like I could look up and see where the air was, but couldn't reach it," he says. "I felt like I was going to die. I thought, 'How am I still breathing? I know I'm not supposed to be able to breathe underwater—I don't have gills.'

"I didn't understand I was on a ventilator that was breathing for me, so I kept trying to breathe myself, trying to cough up whatever was in my lungs.

"I'd think, 'I can't do this anymore,' and drift off. But then I'd wake up and still be alive. I just prayed for someone to walk in the door and save me."

'It was in the hands of God'

Even though he felt like he was dying, says John, he never feared death.

"I felt God's presence the whole time," he recalls. "I felt scared of the pain, but not of dying, not of what would happen to me. I felt miserable, but peaceful. I knew it wasn't in my hands. It was in the hands of God."

After the ventilator was removed on March 31, John learned how close he'd come to dying.

"I didn't understand it until a nurse practitioner said, 'I just want to say congratulations. I've been a nurse practitioner a long time, and I never talked to anyone who came off a ventilator,'" he recalls. "I asked her what she meant, and she said, 'People just don't get off those things.'

"That's when it really hit. I didn't realize I was on it for five days."

Later during a phone conference, Megan told John about the outpouring of prayer on his behalf.

The kids in Charlie's sixth-grade class at St. Barnabas School—most of whom John knew through coaching or helping coach the school's basketball, football, volleyball and wrestling teams and assisting with Vacation Bible

School for several years—prayed a rosary for him.

The list of those praying continued—the St. Barnabas Men's Club, the couple's fellow parish marriage sponsor couples, their priest friends, classmates he graduated with from Roncalli High School in Indianapolis in 1988.

He even learned that their parish priest, Father Daniel Mahan, had tried to visit him in the hospital to give him a blessing, "but they wouldn't let him in," says John.

"When Megan told me everyone who was praying for me, I was dumbfounded," he says. "I found out people I hardly knew were praying for me. Then it was person after person after person. I thought, 'No wonder I made it through!'"

'It was so touching'

During the conference call, John also learned how sick his wife had been.

"The entire time he was in the hospital, I was home with a fever and body aches," says Megan, special services manager for the technology company CDW.

She recalls wanting "to be strong for Charlie," who stayed in the upstairs portion of the family's home while Megan stayed downstairs.

"In my head, I thought I was showing him I was OK, checking in on him a lot and saying, 'You doing OK, buddy?'" she says. "But looking back, he tells me, 'Mom, you slept a lot. One time you slept 20 hours.'"

Then came the night Megan's breathing became shallow. She knew if she went to the hospital, Charlie would have to stay with relatives, which could expose them to the coronavirus.

But Megan was even more concerned for Charlie.

"At 13, he doesn't like to show emotion," she says. "But I knew he was really upset. I couldn't do that to Charlie, leave him with no parents. Because John was in the hospital, I had to power through it."

So Megan, a convert to Catholicism, prayed.

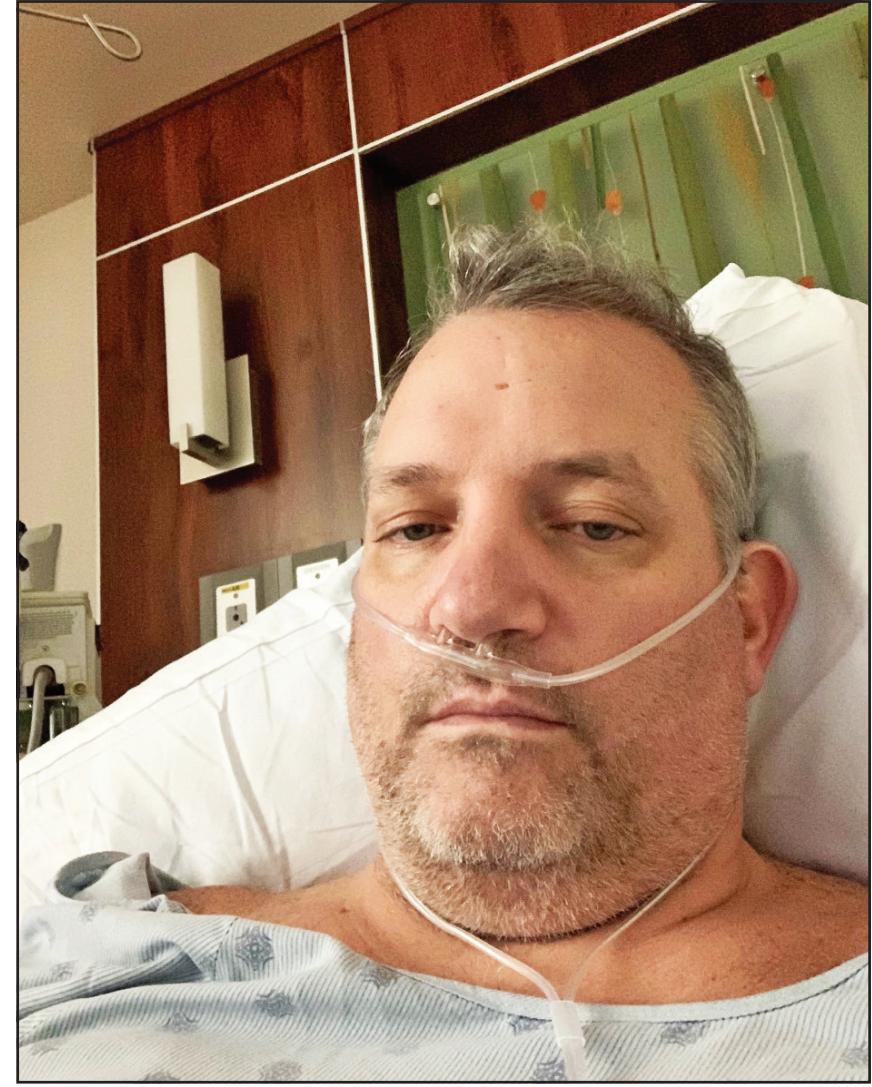
"One minute I was getting on my knees and praying for God to save my husband's life, to save me, to help the doctors. The next I'd be angry, yelling at God, 'I can't take this! Why are you doing this?'"

But just like John, Megan was not alone. She says the "outpouring of love and faith from friends, neighbors and strangers was amazing." Members of the St. Barnabas MOMS group and sponsor couples reached out, preparing meals and asking how they could help.

"I was overwhelmed," she says. "It was so touching."

'We're stronger for it'

John was released from the hospital on April 2. Recovered now, the couple is thankful that they survived



Oxygen helps John Dugan, a member of St. Barnabas Parish in Indianapolis, breathe on March 25. The next day, he was placed on a ventilator for five days due to chronic symptoms from COVID-19. (Submitted photo by John Dugan)

and that Charlie remained healthy.

They are thankful for the support they received from family, friends, acquaintances and strangers.

And they are thankful for the gift of faith—both theirs and of all those who prayed for them.

"There's no way something like this can't affect your faith," says John. "When I was thinking every breath was my last, every breath was an act of faith."

He says the couple now looks back—and forward—and sees "God's presence, how he works his grace through others, through what they say, what they do. You see life through the eyes of faith."

Megan adds that she and John are "so humbled by the outpouring of support and prayers from everyone, and now we ask ourselves how we can help others."

For instance, she says, "John hates needles. I thought he'd never want to donate blood to help work for a cure or a vaccination [for COVID-19]." But when he was contacted about donating his blood for that purpose, "He didn't hesitate," she notes.

It was a "traumatic, terrifying three weeks," Megan admits. But through God's grace, the gift of faith and the prayers and support of so many others, she says, "we're on the other side of the trial, and we're stronger for it." †



Megan, Charlie and John Dugan, members of St. Barnabas Parish in Indianapolis, pose for a family photo in the fall of 2019. (Submitted photo)

Online Lay Ministry Formation

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

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Bishops say Our Lady of America apparitions were not supernatural

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Ind., and five other bishops have concluded that alleged apparitions of Our Lady of America—said to have taken place more than six decades ago—were not of supernatural origin.

While private devotion inspired by reports of the apparitions could continue without harm to the faith, Bishop Rhoades said, it would not be appropriate for any sort of public devotion.

"I must come to the conclusion that the visions and revelations themselves cannot be said to be of supernatural origin in the sense of objective occurrences," Bishop Rhoades said in a final document known as a singular decree, adding that he "cannot approve or support public devotion or cult."

The investigation concerned numerous apparitions reported by Sister Mary Ephrem Neuzil, a Sister of the Most Precious Blood of Jesus of Dayton, Ohio, between 1956 and 1959. At the time, it was reported that Mary had appeared to Sister Mary Ephrem and had identified herself as Our Lady of America.

Sister Mary Ephrem died in 2000. Both before and after the reported apparitions, she said she had other communications or locutions from Mary that took place in several dioceses.

Concurring with the conclusion reached by Bishop Rhoades were five other bishops from the dioceses where Sister Mary Ephrem had stayed during this period: Archbishops Dennis M. Schnurr of Cincinnati, and Allen H. Vigneron of Detroit along with Bishops Thomas J. Olmsted of Phoenix, Timothy L. Doherty of Lafayette, Ind., and Daniel E. Thomas of Toledo, Ohio.

EVANS

continued from page 4

For it is just as our last breath leaves that we will see the deeper truth that lies beyond the words on that monastery's mantle. We will come to realize the power of Christ's promise to make all things new, and to give good things to those who relinquish them.

We will see that every word we have spoken, every bond forged, every lesson learned, every glimmer we have ever had in our eye, every love, every friend and family member and home and city and memory did not, after all, pass into nothingness.

They passed into another's ownership, to the One who breathes new life into them and will hold them for us forever.

C.S. Lewis grasped the same truth: "Nothing that you have not given away will ever be really yours. Nothing in you that has not died will ever be raised from the dead. Look for yourself, and

In an interview with Catholic News Service (CNS), Bishop Rhoades said he had agreed to a request by the other five bishops to form a commission of six theologians and canonists to investigate the apparitions. He was chosen as the lead bishop of the commission because the alleged apparitions began in Rome City, Ind., which is in his diocese.

He described the commission as "a very balanced group that was open to the possibility that the apparitions were authentic."

But after what he said was a year of study of the vast documentation of the case, all members of the commission concluded that the apparitions were not supernatural in origin.

In an explanatory document called "Statement Regarding the Devotion to Our Lady of America" and signed by all six bishops, they said that Sister Mary Ephrem appeared to have been "honest, morally upright, psychologically balanced, devoted to religious life and without guile." They also said there were spiritual fruits that came from the devotion, although none warranted certification as miraculous.

The bishops said there was not any doctrinal error in the revelations, though the report added that a claim regarding St. Joseph as a "co-redemeer" with Christ "must be seen as an error."

Regarding the experiences of Sister Mary Ephrem, the bishops said their study concluded that they should be described as "subjective inner religious experiences rather than objective external visions and revelations."

While saying such experiences were "authentically graced moments," the document added that they were "subjective ones in which her own imagination and intellect were constitutively engaged," not "objective visions and revelations of the type seen at Guadalupe, Fatima and Lourdes."

you will find in the long run only hatred, loneliness, despair, rage, ruin, and decay. But look for Christ and you will find Him, and with Him everything else thrown in."

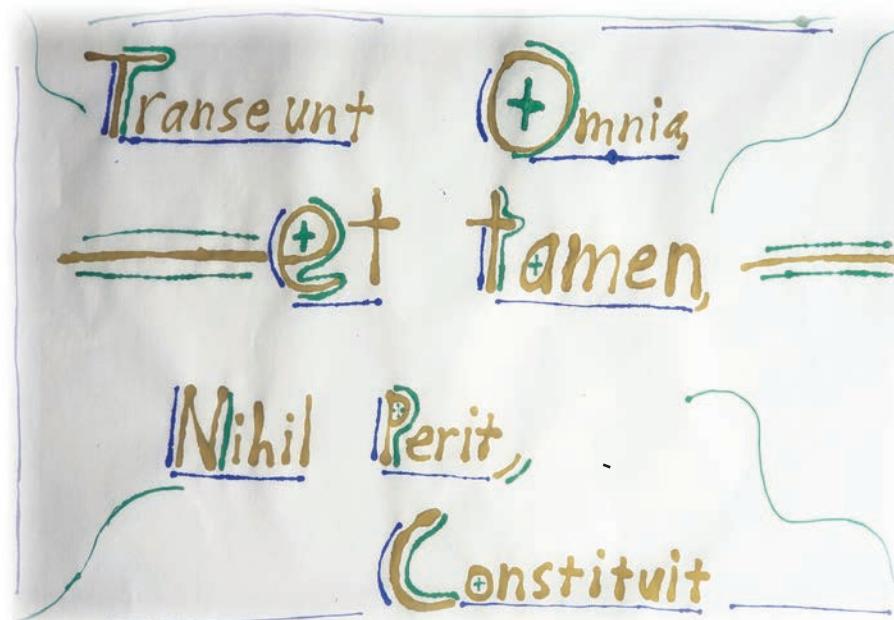
Friendship with Christ means friendship with the One who has the power to give us the life eternal we crave.

And so, there is a second inscription at the monastery. It is hidden away in a secret garden at the very center, accessed only by those monks who have long practiced giving up the world and vowed themselves to a holy life.

The words are cut more deeply than those on the exterior; they are larger and more permanent; in them is the real meaning of the first inscription, its apex and fulfilment:

"Nothing is Lost."

(*Sight Unseen* is an occasional column that explores God and the world. Brandon A. Evans is the online editor and graphic designer of The Criterion and a member of St. Susanna Parish in Plainfield.) †



The Latin phrase above, written on rice paper with fountain ink, reads "Transeunt Omnia, et tamen, Nihil Perit, Constituit," which can be roughly translated to: "All Things Pass, and yet, Nothing is Lost."

The report also noted that Sister Mary Ephrem's spiritual director was a priest who later became archbishop of Cincinnati, Archbishop Paul F. Leibold. He had supported Sister Mary Ephrem in various ways over many years. "However, in a letter written two years before his death," the document noted that the archbishop said "he was unable to make a judgment on the supernatural nature of the visions or apparitions."

While he said he attested to the sister's holiness, he wrote: "I have never taken any action to promote her devotion publicly."

The bishops concluded that since many of the prayers and religious articles such as medals have been given approval by "competent ecclesiastical authority," the use of such materials could continue "as a matter of private devotion."

In explaining the origins of the commission, Bishop Rhoades said that after receiving requests from bishops for some sort of assessment regarding the

purported apparitions, then-president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, asked the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith if this was the appropriate competence of the conference.

The doctrinal congregation said it was more appropriately the responsibility of the local bishop where the apparitions and locutions were said to have occurred. This case was unusual in that several dioceses were involved, and all the bishops were asked to review and approve the final report.

Sister Mary Ephrem, baptized Mildred, was born in 1916 and became a member of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Most Precious Blood of Jesus in 1933. In 1938, she said she started to experience mystical events, the report said.

Bishop Rhoades expressed appreciation for leaders of the devotion who provided the commission with literally thousands of pages of correspondence and other materials for review. "They are faith-filled, wonderful people," he said. †

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Employment

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Note: This position is fully funded by a grant from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB).

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The Catholic Charities – CARE Program is a pilot program of the USCCB – Office of Migration and Refugee Services. The Archdiocese of Indianapolis is one of three dioceses participating in the USCCB program.

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BISHOP CHATARD HIGH SCHOOL
THE NORTH DEANERY HIGH SCHOOL OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF INDIANAPOLIS

May God Bless
& Protect
the Class of

2020

