Pope marks anniversary of ‘Laudato Si’ with call to prayer and action

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Commemorating the fifth anniversary of his encyclical on the environment, Pope Francis called on Christians to join in prayer and acts of care for the Earth and for the poor.

After reciting the “Regina Coeli” prayer on May 24, the pope encouraged Catholics to participate in the celebration of the “Special ‘Laudato Si’ Anniversary Year,” a yearlong series of initiatives dedicated to putting the encyclical’s teaching into action.

“I invite all people of goodwill to join, to take care of our common home and of our most fragile brothers and sisters,” he said.

According to the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, the yearlong celebration from May 24, 2020, to May 24, 2021, will emphasize “ecological conversion in action” through a series of events dedicated to environmental care, education and the economy.

The pope also said that “it would be beautiful” for Catholics to recite the prayer dedicated to the anniversary celebration of the encyclical.

The prayer, which is available on the dicastery’s “Laudato Si’ Week” website (laudatosiweek.org), asks God to “be present to those in need in these trying times, especially the poorest and those most at risk of being left behind.

“Help us to show creative solidarity in addressing the consequences of this global pandemic. Make us courageous to embrace the changes that are needed in search of the common good,” the prayer states.

In a statement released by the Vatican press office on May 16, the dicastery also detailed the rollout of a “seven-year journey toward integral ecology” for just days before she would receive her first holy Communion.

Dear Mother,
I love you. To show my love, I will be good and obey you. Next Sunday when Jesus comes into my heart, I shall ask Him to bless the sweetest Mother in the whole world.

Love, kisses,
Nadine

Kaelin recently rediscovered that love letter as she was quarantined at home during the coronavirus crisis.

“During this quarantine time, I chose to look through some boxes I brought home after my mother passed away in 1983,” said Kaelin, a member of St. Michael Parish in Bradford in the New Albany Deanery. “I was surprised to find this letter I wrote to her before my first holy Communion in 1955.

“I couldn’t believe she kept it all those years.”

Keeping that letter shows the depth of the Eucharist shines through in readers’ stories of special first Communions

The power of the Eucharist shines through in readers’ stories of special first Communions

(Advisor’s note: The Criterion invited readers to share their special memories of their first Communion and also to share the importance that the Eucharist has in their lives. We begin their stories in this week’s issue.)

By John Shaughnessy

It’s a handwritten letter touched with the love of a child for her mother.

Nadine Kaelin wrote the note, in her best penmanship, on lined paper for her best penmanship, on lined paper just days before she would receive her first holy Communion.

Dear Mother,
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“I couldn’t believe she kept it all those years.”

Weekend Masses resume in some parishes after two-month hiatus

By Natalie Hoefer, Sean Gallagher, Katie Rutter and John Shaughnessy

More than two months had passed since Catholic churches across central and southern Indiana were closed to help stop the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

May 23-24 marked the first time weekend Masses could be publicly celebrated in the archdiocese.

Those who participated in their first public weekend Mass since the middle of March used words like “terrific,” “special” and “emotional” to describe the experience of once again worshiping in community and receiving the Body of Christ in the Eucharist.

But they did so in churches limited to 20-30 percent capacity per archdiocesan recommendations to better adhere to safety and social distancing guidelines. They wore face masks and sanitized their hands. They sat separated by roped-off pews.

Complaints filed against abortion provider

Planned Parenthood allegations

Complaints filed against abortion provider, page 3.

By Natalie Hoefer, Sean Gallagher, Katie Rutter and John Shaughnessy

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Serving the Church in Central and Southern Indiana Since 1960
Honor Mary with mosaic

Pictured above is a mosaic of the Miraculous Medal created by the students of St. Louis School in Batesville. The school dedicated the past school year to honoring the Blessed Mother, coinciding with the parish’s yearlong focus on Mary. Students added pieces to the mosaic each time they performed an act of kindness, said a prayer or forgave someone. The mosaic was almost finished when the school year ended abruptly due to COVID-19. Students prayed the rosary with their families in order to finish the mosaic. (Sue Zephrin photo)

Wanted: Your nominations for Excellence in Catechesis award

Criterion staff report

Would you like to nominate a parish catechetical leader for an award? The archdiocesan Office of Catechesis has a streamlined nomination process that makes it easy to do. The Excellence in Catechesis honor has been awarded by the Office of Catechesis since 1996. Previous award winners still active in catechetical ministry include Mary Jo Thomas-Day, Deacon John Jacobi, Cynthia Flaten, Barbara Black, Kim Sprague, Julie Haney, Anita Navarra and Marianne Hawkins.

To nominate someone for 2020, take a few minutes to provide brief answers to the questions below:

• How do your nominee’s efforts help parishioners grow as disciples of Jesus? Explain their work and how it has impacted others. Were there any new ways to make a report?

• In what ways does your nominee’s ministry encourage parishioners to bridge the gap that can be present between knowledge of our faith and practicing it in everyday life—making religion a way of life and a virtue that benefits communities?

• Providing meaningful experiences or information for catechists helps bring about excellence—by God’s grace! How does your nominee encourage and motivate those who teach the faith with ongoing affirmation in the form of certification, recognition and commissioning?

• Brief answers—two or three sentences—are sufficient to let us know the reasons you are nominating your parish catechetical leader. If you’d like to provide additional information, feel free to do so.

Please include the name of the nominating pastor or administrator and the best way of contacting you. Each nominee’s pastor, administrator or parish life coordinator will be contacted to confirm nominations.

Nominations are due by June 30 and can be faxed to 317-592-4032. They can also be mailed to Ken Ogorek, c/o Archdiocese of Indianapolis, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202, or replies can be e-mailed to: kogorek@archindy.org.
Complaints filed about abortion centers open during ban

By Natalie Hofer

Complaints against abortion centers in Bloomington and Indianapolis have been filed with the state Attorney General’s Office in regard to those facilities remaining open and performing steady business during the time that Gov. Eric Holcomb ordered the temporary closing of elective and non-emergency surgeries, including abortions, during the coronavirus crisis.

The complaints were filed by sidewalk counselors who serve outside of the Planned Parenthood (PP) abortion centers in those cities. One complaint per facility was filed for each day they were open for business in defiance of the state order. The ban, effective from April 1-21, states that “hospitals, ambulatory surgical centers, dental facilities, plastic surgery centers, dermatology offices and abortion clinics are directed to cancel or postpone elective and non-urgent surgical or invasive procedures.”

The goal was to insure the availability of critical resources—including surgical gowns, gloves and face masks—‘by “combating the spread of, and treating those affected by, this dangerous [COVID-19] virus,”’ states the complaint.

“But the governor gave a huge loophole,” says Jodi Smith, state director for the Susan B. Anthony List and a lobbyist for Indiana Right to Life. “The caveats are found in the order’s definition of elective and non-essential surgeries. It describes them as any procedure ‘which can be delayed without undue risk to the current or future health of the patient as determined by the patient’s treating physician . . . or health care provider.’”

“Legally, if a doctor deemed it was an emergency or couldn’t wait, the doctor still had the right to do the surgery,” Smith explains.

“Guess what? These abortion centers never, ever thought to do that. We are very surprised,” says Monica Siefer, a sidewalk counselor who served outside the Bloomington PP abortion center where the alleged infractions took place. Niebrugge filed the complaints with the Indiana Attorney General’s Office.

Abortion facilities that maintained steady business during the ban “were in defiance in spirit if not in writing with the governor intended,” says Siefer. “Having that doctor here at this facility is alarming, and having them perform those procedures is a citizen of Tippecanoe County. ‘The goal was to establish over time the different ways that complications from surgical abortions, and those taking pills can end up in the ER [emergency room] if they have problems. It’s another drain on resources,’” she said.

Sidewalk counselors outside of Planned Parenthood abortion facility on Feb. 20, 2019. (File photo by Natalie Hofer)

Facilities not adhering to social distancing and other guidelines was also a source of concern.

“We know they let people in the door without masks, and we only saw one facility taking temperatures,” says Smith, a member of Bread of Life Ministries in Avon. “They really felt they were above the law.”

Dye and Siefer agree that it’s unlikely the complaints will result in any action against the facilities. But their goal in filing the complaints goes beyond seeing immediate results.

Dye notes a “big concern with the their using up PPE [personal protection equipment] at a time when it was very valuable.”

There’s the possibilities of “everything goes at the speed of molasses with these things,” Smith said. “So legally, if a doctor deemed it was an emergency or couldn’t wait, the doctor still had the right to do the surgery,” Smith explains.

Complaints of unlicensed abortions filed against Lafayette Planned Parenthood

By Natalie Hofer

On May 19, a press conference was held outside of the Planned Parenthood abortion facility in Lafayette, Ind., by members of Bread of Life Ministries and Abolish PP Indiana, which “bears false witness to the laws of the state.”

“The<center> criteria that complaints were filed against that facility for reporting two unlicensed surgical abortions in March that were done in March that were marked as surgical abortions,” said Tippecanoe County Right to Life board member Kevin Niebrugge during the press conference. Niebrugge filed the complaints as a citizen of Tippecanoe County. “The reason that’s surprising is this facility is not licensed to perform surgical abortions. They can only perform chemical abortions.”

The two reports were signed by Dr. Deborah Nucatola, the abortion provider filmed in a 2015 undercover video eating salad while discussing her personal and professional life. She is the director of Planned Parenthood facility on Feb. 20, 2019. (File photo by Natalie Hofer)

The unlicensed procedures were performed at the Fayetteville, KY Planned Parenthood center in March that was licensed to offer chemical abortions. They were performed by the clinics’ medical director, Dr. Deborah Nucatola, the clinic is named after, in an undercover video released by the Center for Medical Progress. Niebrugge said he filed the complaints with the Attorney General’s Office.

“Having that doctor here at this facility is alarming, and having them perform illegal abortions here is alarming; and knowing she is traveling and working in our state is alarming,” Niebrugge said.

Sidewalk counselors at the PP abortion centers in Bloomington and Indianapolis have also reported seeing Nucatola in those facilities.

“Since she took over as PP IN’s medical director, we’ve been watching, and I mean watching,” said Susan B. Anthony List state director Jodi Smith in an interview with The Criterion. “Our goal [in filing the complaints] is to attract attention to the fact that this notorious person is in our town and state, and that we’ll be watching every single solitary thing she does.”

Right to Life of Indianapolis director Marc Tuttle served as moderator for the press conference. He noted any legal action against the facility awaits a police investigation.

“We’ll have to wait to see what happens after that,” he said. “Our hope is that it will be referred to the attorney general to look into license revocation” for both Nucatola and the Lafayette PP abortion center.

“Guess what? These abortion centers never, ever thought to do that. We are very surprised.”

Marc Tuttle, left, director of Indianapolis Right to Life, introduces Tippecanoe County Right to Life board member Kevin Niebrugge, right, at a press conference held by the northern Indiana pro-life organization in front of the Planned Parenthood abortion facility in Lafayette, Ind., on May 19. (submitted photo by Jodi Smith)
Reflection/Jenna Ford

The difference love can make

As I headed to pour out my frustrations in front of the Blessed Sacrament, I felt as if I had reached the pinnacle of my struggle. While the world’s loss is nothing compared to that of the world’s, it seemed that my life was getting turned upside down. I had accomplished the perfect career, I had everything planned out for the perfect semester. I was going to go on a pilgrimage to Italy with two close friends and had been praying for months for the chance to meet Pope Francis; I was going to plan a prom for a local charity for adults with disabilities; I was going to host events for our graduating seniors; I was going to volunteer with a nonprofit this summer; I was going to build my relationship with God and blossom where he had planted me. Like many of my peers, I was looking to use this semester as a time to give back and self-growth. But now, I was going home. My university, Indiana State University, in Terre Haute, had announced that they were closing due to the coronavirus pandemic, and that students were expected to be on campus by the end of the week. I was crushed. It left me sitting in the Adrian chapel asking God: what about all my plans?

Coming home has been difficult. I want to be out changing the world. I want to be helping those in need, spreading the love of Jesus, and impacting lives for the better. Instead, I am home. I have taken refuge in working once a week at my local food pantry, but all of my other plans, hopes and dreams appear to have taken a pause. It is hard to change the world from the comfort of your own couch. At least it appears that way at first glance. I find solace in the words of St. Teresa of Calcutta, a saint who has greatly inspired my faith. She once stated, “If you can do something for a man and love your family.” I feel many young people are being called to these words. Many of us had grand plans. We had plans to embrace where God had placed us, and plans to keep working to change the world. But in an unexpected twist, many of us are home wondering what’s next or how we can help. In these big ideas of wanting to bring change to the world or helping others, our roots can easily be forgotten.

As I grew up, my Lutheran mother quietly joined the family at Sunday Mass in the town’s magnificent Catholic church. My father, a Lutheran, fully embraced the beautiful sung Tridentine Latin High Mass in its reverence and liturgical beauty, that she actually joined the choir—as a Lutheran! She eventually converted to Catholicism about the time I entered high school, and clearly became the best Catholic in our family. She remains a very special blessing to me.

As Christians, we know eternal life awaits us after death

The last episode of the television show “Zoey’s Extraordinary Playlist” dealt with the death of Zoey’s father, David. The nurse assisting her father said this when asked by Zoey: “Is this when we talk about death?”

The nurse said, “Death is hideous and ugly and grotesque and wild, wildly unfair, or death is the ultimate victory of spirituality and transcendental, and sometimes a very necessary and very freeing escape from the physicality that we are no longer habitable.”

We Christians have the solace of knowing that Jesus has gone before us to prepare a place for us. We are on a journey, going from a twinkle in our father’s eye to our mother’s womb, to our first day of school, to meeting our spouses for the first time, to bringing our loved ones, and finally to our own deaths.

Each step along the way is fraught with fear that the next step will bring.

But we who have faith know that because we believe and have tried to live a life in accordance with that belief, we have been saved by the blood of Jesus, and death is not the end but merely a transition. So we know there is an alternative—we have nothing to fear from death, we are going to a better life with God.
The publication date for this column is on Friday, May 29, the Feast of Pope St. Paul VI. Born in Italy in 1920, and named Giovanni Battista (John Baptist) Montini, this contemporary saint was elected pope in 1963 and took the name “Paul” after the great missionary disciple who brought Christ to the Gentiles. Pope Paul is best known for three things: 1) His work implementing the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, 2) his defense of human life in the encyclical “Humana Vitae,” and 3) his commitment to the evangelizing mission of the Church.

This year, the Feast of Pope St. Paul VI comes just two days before the Solemnity of Pentecost, which we celebrate this Sunday, Pentecost, which is always observed 50 days after Easter, is the culmination of our observance of the joyous mystery of our redemption. By sending the Holy Spirit, the risen Lord shares with the disciples (and with us) the new life that he gained with us) the new life that he gained with the joyous mystery of our redemption. This is always observed 50 days after Easter, the Solemnity of Pentecost, which we celebrate this Sunday. Pentecost, which the Solemnity of Pentecost, which we celebrate this Sunday. Pentecost, which is always observed 50 days after Easter, is the culmination of our observance of the joyous mystery of our redemption.

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In the second reading for the Solemnity of Pentecost (1 Cor 12:3b-7, 12-13), St. Paul tells us that “No one can say, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ except by the Holy Spirit” (1 Cor 12:3). He goes on to say that “There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit; there are different forms of service but the same Lord; there are different workings but the same God who produces all of them in everyone” (1 Cor 12:4-6).

In other words, the in-dwelling of the Holy Spirit takes different forms in each of us, but what we all have in common is the fire of God’s love which burns, either brightly or dimly, in our hearts. As missionary disciples who have witnessed the Lord’s resurrection and experienced the joy of Easter, it is our responsibility to call on the Holy Spirit, asking for renewed courage and enthusiasm in our efforts to proclaim the Gospel through our words and our actions.

Pope St. Paul VI was a strong advocate for the missionary zeal that octaves as a gift of the Holy Spirit. In “Evangelii Nuntiandi,” he poses “three burning questions” (#4) which he says must be kept in mind as we go about the proclamation of the Gospel today:

• In our day, what has happened to that hidden energy of the Good News, which is able to have a powerful effect on man’s conscience?
• To what extent and in what way is that evangelical force capable of really transforming the people of this century?
• What methods should be followed in order that the power of the Gospel may have its effect?

In this encyclical, Pope Paul teaches that “To reveal Jesus Christ and his Gospel to those who do not know them has ever, since the morning of Pentecost, the fundamental program which the Church has taken on as received from her Founder.” Without the gift of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, the Church would not be able to carry out her mission. “The whole of the New Testament, and in a special way the Acts of the Apostles, bears witness to a privileged and in a sense exemplary moment of this missionary effort which will subsequently leave its mark on the whole history of the Church” (#51). Today, as we struggle to overcome the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, we need the gift of the Holy Spirit more than ever.

Let’s pray that the Holy Spirit will fill our hearts with a new spirit of evangelization; that our hearts will be ignited by the fire of God’s love; and that we will be united as never before in unleashing the “hidden energy” of the Good News of Jesus Christ. †
Pope Francis will pray at a replica of the Lourdes Grotto in the Vatican Gardens in this 2013 file photo. Pope Francis will pray there on May 30, the eve of Pentecost, leading the major shrines around the world in praying the rosary to implore Mary’s intercession and protection amid the coronavirus pandemic. (CNS photo/L' Osservatore Romano)

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope Francis will lead the major shrines around the world in praying the rosary to implore Mary’s intercession and protection amid the coronavirus pandemic.

The pope will pray at the replica of the Lourdes Grotto in the Vatican Gardens on May 30, the eve of Pentecost, and will also be joined by several “men and women representing various categories of people particularly affected by the virus,” the Vatican said on May 26. The service will be at 5:30 p.m. in Rome (11:30 a.m. EDT).

“At the feet of Mary, the Holy Father will place the many troubles and sorrows of humanity, further worsened by the spread of COVID-19,” said a statement released by the Pontifical Council for Promoting New Evangelization.

According to the statement, the prayer, which coincides with the end of the Marian month of May, “is another sign of closeness and consolation for those who, in different ways, have been struck by the coronavirus, in the certainty that the Heavenly Mother will not disregard the requests for protection.”

Among those who will accompany the pope in praying the rosary will be a doctor and a nurse, a recovered patient as well as a person who lost a family member to COVID-19. Also taking part in the rosary will be a hospital chaplain, a pharmacist, a journalist, a Civil Defense volunteer and his family and a family that welcomed a new baby, “a sign of hope and the victory of life over death,” the pontifical council said.

Shrines around the world will connect to the event and take part in the prayer, including the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. †

Pope to lead world shrines in rosary prayer for pandemic May 30

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Joseph and Margaret (Brumnett) Schaad, members of St. Susanna Parish in Plainfield, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on Jan. 21.

The couple was married in St. John the Evangelist Church in Indianapolis on Jan. 21, 1950.

They have two children: Tina Keers and Terry Silliman.
The couple also has four grandchildren and three great-grandchildren †

Fred and Doris (Giesler) Chandler, members of St. Thomas Aquinas Parish in Indianapolis, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on May 23.

The couple was married in St. Thomas Aquinas Church in Indianapolis on May 23, 1970.

They embrace as their own children the 670 students they feed by helping coordinate a daily school lunch program in Belle-Rivière, Haiti. †

Timothy and Melinda (Simon) Wissel, members of St. Mary Parish in Greensburg, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on April 25.

The couple was married in St. Maurice Church in Napoleon on April 25, 1970.

They have three children: Amanda Capper, Joy Wissel-Draegert and Christina Wright.
The couple also has two grandchildren. †
Holy Spirit helps believers speak language of forgiveness and peace

By Mike Nelson

“Peace be with you,” Jesus says in the Gospel reading for Pentecost Sunday (Jn 20:19). Peace—as in harmony, or even as in a lack of noise—is not exactly plentiful these days. Certainly not in an election year, when cacophony seems to be the (dis)order of the day.

In fact, the barrage of political rhetoric presents an ironic contrast to the first Scripture reading from Pentecost Sunday, from the Acts of the Apostles.

Galileans, filled with the Holy Spirit, were speaking in multiple languages (or tongues), yet each were understood by “devout Jews from every nation,” no matter which nation they were from: Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappadocia, Phrygia, Pamphylia, even Rome (Acts 2:5).

But in today’s United States, we have thousands upon thousands of people (not all of them politicians) failing to understand, or wanting to understand, anyone else, even though most speak English. We might as well be speaking Greek, Aramaic or Latin to one another, for all the good our conversation does.

What is peaceful or harmonious about that? It’s enough to make us cry out the words of the feast’s responsorial psalm: “Lord, send out your Spirit, and renew the face of the Earth” (Ps 104:30).

Which is, of course, exactly what the Lord does in sending the tongues “as of fire” to descend on the Galileans (Acts 2:3). On that first Pentecost day alone, 3,000 followed St. Peter’s plea to “repent and be baptized,” a joyous development in the life of the early Church (Acts 2:38).

And that directs us to what Jesus may have been doing with those locked doors, and offered them peace—“whom you retain are retained” (Jn 20:22-23).

Forgiveness may be the hardest action that we who call ourselves disciples of Jesus are called to perform, again and again. When we look at our world, our country, even our Church, we don’t see much peace, in part because we don’t see much forgiveness.

We do see anger and frustration and obstinance. We see a lack of respect for anyone suggesting a belief or idea different from our own. We see jealousies and hurts, grudges and retribution. We see pain, suffering and anything but peace.

 Forgiveness is not possible without forgiving others who have trespassed against us.” (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

People pray during a worldwide Jubilee gathering marking the 50th anniversary of the Catholic charismatic renewal at the Circus Maximus in Rome on June 2, 2017. Believers are called to remember forgiveness each time they pray the Our Father: “Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive others who have trespassed against us.” (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

One can only imagine their amazement at the tongues as of fire, which parted and came to rest on each one of them” (Acts 2:1-3). (CNS photo/Gregory A. Shemitz)

Initially, after Jesus’ crucifixion, it is clear that his disciples were experiencing anything but peace. They were hiding behind locked doors, troubled by what they had seen and, no doubt, by what they had done, fleeing in terror when Jesus was arrested, tried, sentenced and crucified.

One can only imagine their amazement when Jesus appeared to them, despite the locked doors, and offered them peace—and a pointed suggestion on what kind of peace he meant.

“Receive the Holy Spirit,” Jesus said, breathing on them. “Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained” (Jn 20-22-23).

“Enormous amounts of energy are wasted when we hold back our love, hold onto hate and harbor acrimonious feelings,” says Drew. “The only remedy is letting go, and being willing to forgive.”

Pope Francis spoke to that point during an April 2019 general audience in Rome, asserting that forgiveness fills a gap left by justice, or the lack thereof.

“In life not everything is resolved with justice,” he said. “Especially where one must put a stop to evil, someone must love beyond what is due, in order to reconstitute a relationship of peace.”

Martin Luther King Jr., no stranger to conflict or the cause of peace, offered this succinct advice: “Forgiveness is not an occasional act; it is a permanent attitude.”

We are called to remember this each time we pray the Our Father: “Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who have trespassed against us.”

Those are not words to mumble perfunctorily so that they leave our heads the second they leave our mouths. They belong permanently etched in our hearts and minds.

“God can be appeased only by prayers that make peace,” says the Catechism of the Catholic Church (#2845). “To God, the better offering is peace, brotherly concord and a people made one in the unity of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.”

Seven weeks ago, we celebrated Easter, the resurrection of the Lord. But let us remember something else: Jesus’ commandments didn’t stay in the tomb any more than he did. His call to forgive, to reconcile, to love our neighbors and our enemies remains very much alive and very much a part of who we need to be as his disciples.

It would seem that God sent the Holy Spirit to remind us of that very reality—no matter what language we speak.

(Catholic journalist Mike Nelson writes from Southern California.)
For the Journey/Effie Caradola

Consider the common good during COVID-19 pandemic

We are confronted by jarring images these days. Who would have imagined in February that today we would see millions of Americans wearing face masks on routine trips to the grocery store? Who could have envisioned the sight of peaceful protesters being intimidated by government agents in a state capital? The news is saturated with stories of how we have navigated our daily routines, and it’s a good moment to reflect on “the common good” and what a powerful message those images can send about our commitment to it.

Government for the common good is a bedrock part of the teaching with roots going back centuries. The common good is the reason that the political authority exists, according to Catholic social teaching. Here are some benefits of our commitment to the common good: free public libraries, public schools that serve all equally, fire departments that arrive to your home for free, public parks, public, safe drinking water, access to voting rights. The list goes on and on.

We don’t always agree on what best serves the common good. You may oppose a school bond if you think the project is frivolous, or the budget does not fit your budget. But if that bond issue passes, are you free to decline to pay the increase in your property tax? Nope, because the state constitution decided what is for the common good.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church, quoting the Second Vatican Council’s Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, defines the common good as “the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or individuals, to reach their fulfillment more fully.” Some social conditions, like that bond issue, are decided by a vote of the people. Public authorities are bound to respect the fundamental and inalienable rights of the human person (#1907). That’s why we Catholics endeavor to protect the lives of the unborn and work for just treatment of people at our borders. It’s a bit deceiving when the majority of people who have lost employment during this crisis are lower-paid workers, and when people of color contract COVID-19 out of proportion to their numbers in our population.

While the common good defends our individual rights, it constantly reminds us that we’re in this together. Images carry great weight. Intimidation by bringing weapons to a building is wrong and sends a message about our nation: that we’re lawless, prone to violence, and have no regard for the common good and no concern for the common good. It’s the opposite of legitimate protest. We need to speak as a church in a statement. It says you care about the elderly, those most threatened and the grocery clerk who only wants to work to support his family.

We wear our face mask. Wear it even if your employer or governor or mayor or neighborhood grocery hasn’t required it. Wear the mask because you want to send a message to those who won’t, who think they’re above the law or don’t care about the common good.

Catholicism is not our private Sunday morning religion. It’s our public way of life. In the encyclical “Caritas in Veritate,” Pope Benedict XVI said, “The more we strive to secure a common good corresponding to the real needs of our neighbors, the more effectively we love them.” (Effie Caradola writes forthefarnews.org)

Faith and Family/Sean Gallagher

Let the Holy Spirit nurture joy in our hearts for the Eucharist

Philip was overjoyed when he ran to me. A bright smile shone on his face. He was so happy that his last paycheck arrived and forth he couldn’t stop jumping for joy. My 10-year-old son wanted to share with me his excitement that fulfilled a great desire of his heart: to return again in our parish’s church.

On May 18, we received a call from our parish in which we were offered the chance to take part in Mass the next morning. It was to be the first day on which weekday Masses could be celebrated according to the plan for the resumption of public celebrations of the sacraments in central and southern Indiana.

But no more than 25 people could come to the Mass. That was because our parish is in Maroun County, which has a stay-at-home order due to the COVID-19 pandemic that restricts the size of religious gatherings.

In our parish, we set up a fair system to offer as many of its members as possible the opportunity to come to Mass. Members are randomly selected, with the chance to attend a particular Mass. Once they give their answer—accepting or declining the offer—their names were put at the bottom of the call list.

Our family happened to be called for the first public Sunday Mass in the parish in more than two months.

Hearing that we had the chance to worship at that Mass was wonderful for me to hear. But seeing my son Philip so overjoyed at the opportunity may have made my heart full of joy even more.

My wife Cindy and I have tried through the years, with the help of God’s grace, to nurture a love for our faith in our five sons. So, it was a joy to see that love shine forth so enthusiastically in Philip.

“Now I can’t say that he embraces the faith so well in all aspects of his life.”

While the common good defends our life, the common good is our public way of life. It’s our public way of life. It’s our public way of life. It’s our public way of life.

Coronavirus reminds us of human costs of solitary confinement

No one foresaw the coronavirus outbreak. And now that it is here, the temptation during COVID-19 is to embrace distractions—anything to fill time and space—and to ignore the power of reflection that our spiritual contemplation can provide us.

By mid-March, weekly alcohol prescriptions rose 34 percent in the United States. A little enrichment due to disease has given me a bit of interior insight and understanding, prompting me to plumb the depths of my soul, to listen to it attentively and to learn from it.

Silence generates interior insight and understanding, prompting us to plumb the depths of our soul, to listen to it attentively and to learn from it.

In the 19th century, the Eastern State Penitentiary in Philadelphia incarcerated prisoners from bad society and allowed them to think on their crimes. It didn’t work out that way. Charles Dickens visited Eastern State in 1842 and wrote about it in his travelogue: “I hold this slow and daily tempering by the mysteries of the brain, to be irreparably worse than any torture of the body.”

Half a century later, a Supreme Court made a similar observation about a prisoner who had sentenced to death. Solitary confinement made his punishment even worse, the court held. It caused some prisoners to go “violently insane;” others died by suicide.

It’s sad to think that in our time we have doubled down on the practice, rather than abandon it. There are more than 60,000 people held in solitary confinement in the United States. They include some really bad and dangerous people, like Theodore Kaczynski and Joaquin “El Chapo” Guzman.

But I must say that some prisoners who are cooped up, I’m sure we are overdoing it.

We prisoners of the pandemic are far less isolated than inmates in a supermax facility. We have phones, computers, TV’s and spouses. But that doesn’t change the fact that isolation is very bad for human health.

This confinement due to disease has given me a bit more appreciation for the human costs of solitary confinement. In taking away this lesson, I hope I’m not alone.

John Garvey is president of The Catholic University of America in Washington. Catholic University’s website is www.cua.edu.

In the human side/effie hennrich

Positive side of solitude can be a friend during challenging times

Most people do not like to be alone. Why? Solitude comes from the Latin, “solaus,” meaning, alone, companionless, solitary, isolation. Loneliness has an undesirable connotation of being companionless, rejected, forsaken and forlorn. Some who can embrace solitude, others find it intolerable. Examining in relation to silence and recollection it can be a cherished gift during the pandemic. Silence means being still, quiet or at rest, implying composure and peace. There is the saying that a person who is silent can speak meaningfully. Silence generates interior insight and understanding, prompting us to plumb the depths of our soul, to listen to it attentively and to get through life as best as possible.

I think normally most humans yearn for companionship to which we do not even listen. It is simply there to fill the vacuum. With God, we need to nourish these inner musical to take its place.”

Solitude that is caused by COVID-19 is an opportunity for achieving the inner strength of music which Anne Morrow Lindberg spoke. It is not an enemy but a friend helping us in through a difficult moment. (Father Eugene Hemrick writes forthefarnews.org)
The Sunday Readings
Sunday, May 31, 2020

- 1 Corinthians 12:3b-7, 12-13
- John 20:19-23

This weekend, the Church celebrates the Sollemity of Pentecost, one of the most important feasts of the Church’s liturgical year. It is richly biblical in its background and profoundly educational both in its own message as well as in its place in the chronology of events commemorated these past weeks: Good Friday, Easter, and the Sollemity of the Ascension of the Lord being the most important.

When Christians chiefly were of Jewish origin, they naturally observed Jewish holy days only very early in Church history, this makeup of the faithful began to change. Missionaries such as St. Paul took the Gospel far and wide, winning converts from paganism. Then, as a result of a rebellion against the Romans in Palestine in 70, the Jews themselves almost were annihilated. Nevertheless, the Christian character heavily draws upon the Jewish context of the New Testament, which is Jewish origin, they naturally observed the Jewish holy days, which are the most important.

The Apostles have a share in divine power, which is God in the Scriptures. The Holy Spirit comes as God, the third person of the Blessed Trinity. The Spirit, promised and sent by Christ. When Christians chiefly were of Jewish origin, they naturally observed the Jewish holy days, which are the most important.

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Strengthened by the Holy Spirit, the Church concludes its brilliant story of God’s love. The Church is not a happenstance of accident of birth or ethnicity makes one person more important than another. The key is humility and a full and genuine acceptance of Christ. The Church is not a happenstance of accident of birth or ethnicity makes one person more important than another. The key is humility and a full and genuine acceptance of Christ.

The prayer “Hail, Holy Queen” has three phrases in it that trouble many. They are: “...we do cry, poor banished children of Eve...” (they were banished from God). And this, “...unto the Lamb”. Here is what is the history of this prayer, and was the author troubled? (Virginia)

The origin of the prayer “Hail, Holy Queen” (its original Latin title is “Salve Regina”) is uncertain, but many historians ascribe it to an 11th-century German monk and scholar, Hermann of Reichenau—and your question and the history of this prayer. The prayer makes life on Earth appear to be a punishment, and may be true. The origin of the prayer “Hail, Holy Queen” (its original Latin title is “Salve Regina”) is uncertain, but many historians ascribe it to an 11th-century German monk and scholar, Hermann of Reichenau—and your question and the history of this prayer. The prayer makes life on Earth appear to be a punishment, and may be true.

The Pope noted, “We just don’t know.” In March, a large sign in Dallas asked: “Is the coronavirus a judgment from God?” My answer would be “No,” and I would call both Jesus and Pope Francis as my witnesses. Remember in the Gospel of St. John (1:12), when Jesus was asked about the man born blind, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” Christ’s response was: “Neither he nor his parents sinned; it is so that the works of God might be made visible through him!” (John 9:3). In a meditation that he offered recently, Pope Francis said of the coronavirus that this is not a time of God’s judgment but of our judgment, “a time to choose what matters and what passes away, a time to separate that is necessary from what is not.” He went on to say, “We need to reflect on how we have lived up to now, and what we need to change to be more generous and compassionate.”

The pontiff lauded health care workers and all those who are praying for victims of the coronavirus; in the midst of this crisis, the pope noted, God is calling all people, and there is no obligation to pray with wording you might find troublesome. There’s an obvious problem with theology here. Was COVID-19 self-existent? Or did God create it? (Oregon)

The opus major of this reading. It is one of the Church’s best-known Marian prayers and is commonly recited or chanted in monastic communities at the close of day; it is also frequently used by Catholics as the concluding prayer when praying the rosary. (Often, too, the “Salve Regina” is sung at the end of a priest’s funeral by his fellow clerics.)

The “Hail, Holy Queen” strikes me as a prayer of love and devotion coming from the heart of an author who may have suffered greatly and lost his life. Different prayers, of course, speak to the life experiences and preferences of different people, and there is no obligation to pray with wording you might find troublesome. (Some historians note that in 1492, on his voyage to the New World, Christopher Columbus would gather his crew on the deck each evening and sing the “Salve Regina,” signifying their confidence in Our Lady’s protection.)

In a recent letter to our archdiocesan paper, someone wrote that “in regard to COVID-19, there is no evidence that God is angry or doing anything to either with its development or with its dispersal.” There’s an obvious problem with theology here. Was COVID-19 self-existent? Or did God create it? (Oregon)

The origin of the coronavirus is disputed; among the theories are that it originated in bats and was subsequently passed on to snakes. There is no obligation to pray with wording you might find troublesome. There’s an obvious problem with theology here. Was COVID-19 self-existent? Or did God create it? (Oregon)

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Father Michael Keucher serves as the parish’s sacramental director at St. Joseph Church in Shelbyville, where he helps to plan and celebrate Mass three times a week. He has extended the dispensation for the obligation to participate in Mass to all the faithful until Aug. 15. All people 65 or older and those who are sick or who have medical conditions are asked to remain at home. Below is a glimpse of what the path back to normalcy looks like for the Church in central and southern Indiana, told through the reactions, thoughts and insights of priests and lay Catholics as parishes cautiously begin to call the faithful back to worship at their churches.

**‘Like a wonderful present’**

Before restrictions were put in place to stop the spread of the coronavirus, Rhonda Meriwether attended Mass at St. Joseph’s three times a week. To receive Christ in the Eucharist once again was “like a wonderful present,” she said. It was special in more ways than one—May 23 happened to be her birthday.

As the Mass was getting ready to begin, Meriwether held up a plastic bag filled with Communion wafers. It was the first Mass she had attended since COVID-19 restrictions were in place. She was an essential worker and had not been able to attend Mass before.

“People just really have missed being able to receive our Lord. So, it was a great joy today to be able to give our Lord to them.”

**‘It opened my eyes’**

Lisa Helms experienced one of the feelings Father Keucher described when she attended her first public weekend Mass in 10 weeks at her home parish of St. Martin of Tours in Martinsville.

“I’ve been watching Mass online,” she said. “But to be back here with my fellow parishioners was a good feeling. It was kind of emotional.”

Yet there were those unable to receive the Eucharist as well, a fact that saddened parish administrator Father Jegan Peter. “I wish more people were able to participate” in the Mass, he said. The temporary indoor capacity limits the number of worshippers in the church to 150. Parishioners register for Mass online in advance to stay within the limit.

Mostly, Father Peter said, “I’m really sorry for parishioners 65 and older who aren’t able to be here. This is tough for them, not to be present at Mass. It’s very upsetting for them.”

He also worries about protecting his parishioners from the coronavirus as they return to stand in the church. “Celebrating Mass with people was excellent,” he said. “But I’m so concerned about keeping people safe.”

The parish followed archdiocesan guidelines to ensure that safety. Every other pew in the church was roped to maintain social distance, masks and hand sanitizer were available in the narthex, and an usher sanitized each person’s hands as they left their pew for Communion.

When Indianapolis Mayor Joseph Hogsett limited the number of people from 225 to 150 starting on May 15, some parishes—including St. Thomas Aquinas and Christ the King—chose to wait until at least June 7-7 to celebrate public weekend Masses.

Father Todd Riebe, who ministers at both parishes, didn’t think the 25-person limit was reasonable. “We recognize that no human being can 100 percent take away all chances of infection, but we can be as responsible as possible while upholding the dignity of the sacraments.”

**The Church is coming back to life**

And yet, hope prevails. “We’re actually experiencing a sort of Easter right now, because it’s like the Church is coming back to life in this archdiocese,” said Father Stanley Pondel, pastor of St. Louis Parish in Batesville, after celebrating Mass in the church on March 23.

“The things the Church is meant to do—to worship God, to celebrate the Eucharist, to provide reconciliation and other sacraments—those things are coming back. So in a certain way we’re experiencing Easter. We’re experiencing it late, but we’re experiencing it.”

St. Louis parishioner Gary Kuntz felt it. “It was terrific, just the feeling to hold the body of Jesus in your own hands physically,” he said after the Mass. “I was really glad for it.”

He was among the more than 30 parishioners at the Mass, well below the church’s percentage capacity of 225. Ushers will count the number of people as they arrive for Mass to ensure that number is not exceeded.

Kim Koehne, who also attended the Mass, said it was “awesome to be back—I’m really excited to just be in church.”

She first returned to the church the week prior for the sacrament of reconciliation “for the first time in months, and that alone was absolutely incredible,” she said.

“So now to be back and to actually receive Jesus truly and not just an act of spiritual communion is incredible. You don’t realize what you didn’t have or what you’re missing out on, so now that we have it, I don’t want to take it for granted.”

First confession, then adoration, then Mass

At the same time, many parishes across the archdiocese have taken a slower approach to re-opening their churches to the public for weekend Masses. When Indianapolis Mayor Joseph Hogsett limited the number of people from 225 to 150 starting on May 15, some parishes—including St. Thomas Aquinas and Christ the King—chose to wait until at least June 7-7 to celebrate public weekend Masses.

Father Todd Riebe, who ministers at both parishes, didn’t think the 25-person limit was reasonable. “We would use—a lottery system, the sign-up genius, the first-come-first-serve basis, or by invitation only?” No one of those seems quite right to me.

For this reason, he said in the letter, the parish “will stand in solidarity with one another and wait until the weekend of June 6-7 to celebrate the first public Masses at St. Thomas. This is a decision that several parishes in the North Deanery have made. While St. Malachy Parish in Brownsburg will wait to have its first weekend Masses on May 30-31, parishioners have been embracing the re-opening of their parish since May 16. On that day, 33 people received the sacrament of reconciliation from their pastor Father Sean Danda during two hours of drive-up confessions.

First, outdoor confessions, then indoor adoration. Next, weekend Masses;” Father Danda noted in an interview with The Criterion. “Each phase is dependent on the other and has been evaluated and revised accordingly. “We recognize that no human being can 100 percent take away all chances of infection, but we can be as responsible as possible while upholding the dignity of the sacrament.”

(Katie Rutter is a member of St. Charles Borromeo Parish in Bloomington. To read the architect’s letter along with the archdiocesan plan for the resumption of the public celebration of the sacraments, log on to www.archindy.org.)
of a mother’s love. In another special way, love is at the heart of how Kaelin’s faith has deepened through the years.

“I remember my first holy communion. Although at that time I probably really didn’t realize the true meaning, I knew it was something special. As years went by, I truly came to know the meaning of the Eucharist. I have grown to know Christ is most important in my life.”

The intersection of human love and divine love also shines through in these stories that people have shared about the path their Eucharist in their lives, then and now.

'It’s time to come home'

While Marilyn Pitzulo remembers her first Communion in 1971 “with great fondness,” there’s another experience with the Eucharist that stays with her even now.

“More impactful was my second first Communion in the fall of 2019,” she says. “After my divorce, my children and I left the Catholic Church for a 30-year ecumenical journey through several Protestant denominations. Those were formative years as I grew to find comfort in the word of God and a deep prayer life. However, even working in full-time ministry, I couldn’t shake the knowledge that something was missing.”

That feeling started to grow for Pitzulo when her daughter, Amanda, had a desire to return to her own faith while she was a student at Saint Mary’s College in Notre Dame, Ind.

“When my daughter called me from Saint Mary’s and said she felt called to be confirmed, I was delighted,” Pitzulo says. “Attending Mass with her during her confirmation was a source of comfort and peace to our own heart. In this building was the presence, the real presence of God. I wept to my knees. In this building was the knowledge that something was missing.”

“Every event we could. I knew we were strong feelings during the Mass about that moment on, Mass was bittersweet as I began to anticipate Christmas at the tabernacle. This was what I was needed to pray. I never forgot that.”

Linden has also never forgotten the special gift she received at her first Communion on May 6, 1956.

“My father did make it to my first Communion, looking like I’m 55, but he was there. In fact, he made it to my 65th birthday party,” says Linden, who is now 71.

“I love of the Eucharist. I believe it’s a gift be a they shared together for years, leading to one more touching moment. My father was deeply spiritual—a daily Communicant throughout most of his life. One of the greatest privileges of my life was bringing him Communion shortly before he died [in 2013 at the age of 88.] We had come full circle.”

All of those memories came flooding back to Linden this year as two of her grandchildren were scheduled to receive their first Communion. That same day, he made it to my 65th birthday party,” says Linden, who is now 71.

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When Linden shared her love and fear with one of her grandchildren, her grandmother comforted her.

“Faith Linden had just received the Eucharist for the first time in 1956. Her father did make it to her first Communion on May 6, 1956.

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Dan Ryan

Dan Ryan notes. “The first church she came to was a source of comfort in her life. She married her second husband in that church, a marriage that led to the birth of Ryan. She made sure her four children were baptized and confirmed there. She even taught Sunday school there for more than 40 years, years in which she often shared one of her deepest beliefs. She believed with all her heart—and she taught her children to believe—that the most important thing we could do as Christians was to celebrate the sacrament of holy Communion.”

“—as a Catholic turned Lutheran son who became a Catholic and also letting my mother know, ‘I get it.’

“I can’t make it to Mass regularly, but I’m saying the same prayer, the same words, and I’m feeling the same thing.”

“I feel I’m not only taking Communion to advertise in this week’s issue. (More stories will be shared in next week’s issue.)

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