Panelists discuss ‘virus’ of racism, praise protesters demanding justice

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Just as the world is facing the coronavirus pandemic and its deadly impact, racism likewise is a deadly virus that must be cured, Washington Archbishop Wilton D. Gregory said on June 5.

He made the comments during an online dialogue on racism sponsored by Georgetown University’s Initiative on Catholic Social Thought and Public Life. The dialogue was viewed by 7,900 people watching it via livestream.

During the panel discussion on “Racism in our Streets and Structures: A Test of Faith, A Crisis for Our Nation,” Archbishop Gregory was asked why he referred to racism as a virus when he issued a statement about the death of George Floyd—the African-American man who died while in police custody on May 25, when a white Minneapolis officer knelt on his neck for nearly nine minutes.

“It’s an appropriate image at a moment when we’re all thinking about a virus that threatens us,” he said.

Archbishop Gregory said questions experts are asking in confronting the coronavirus equally apply to racism: “How is racism, this silent but deadly virus, passed on to other people? Is it learned at home? Is it transmitted through our structures? Is it part of the air that we breathe, and how do we find a vaccine, how can we protect ourselves, how can we render it ineffective?”

He opened the discussion with a prayer.

He asked God to “bless those who take to our streets to protest injustice,” and also prayed law enforcement officers will have “a commitment to equal justice for all, and respect for the lives and dignity of all those they serve and protect from harm.”

Floyd’s death, the nationwide protests it sparked and urgent calls to address racism were the key topics discussed by the panelists, who also included Marcia Chatelain, an associate professor of public policy at Georgetown University.

Seniors share their greatest life lessons from Catholic high schools

By John Shaughnessy

Their answers are thoughtful and heartfelt—exactly what you would expect from some of the top-performing, graduating seniors in Catholic high schools across the archdiocese.

Their answers also reflect how much these past four years of Catholic education have meant to them, how they have found a family in their high schools that has changed their lives, and how their experiences have helped them grow in their faith and their relationship with God.

Their answers are in response to these two questions:

What is one of the greatest life lessons you have learned in high school?

How has your high school prepared you for life on Earth and in heaven?

Representing the 1,385 seniors who are graduating from Catholic high schools in the archdiocese this spring, these graduates offer a glimpse into what the members of the Class of 2020 have learned in the past four years—and what they will carry with them into their futures.

Archbishop Thompson celebrates Mass with two historically black parishes

By Natalie Hoefer

On June 7, the feast of the Holy Trinity, Archbishop Charles C. Thompson celebrated Mass with two historically black Indianapolis parishes, Holy Angels and St. Rita. The Mass was celebrated in the parking lot of Holy Angels School, with the congregation remaining in their cars and listening via an FM radio transmission of the Mass.

“These are challenging times for us, with what’s going on in our nation and the world, the evil and sin of racism, all the things that tear us apart,” the archbishop said before the liturgy began.

“The feast of the Holy Trinity is about the perfect communio of love, of three
USCCB migration chairman says Senate needs to act on ‘Dreamer,’ TPS bill

WASHINGTON (CNS)—The chairman of the U.S. bishops’ Committee on Migration has urged the U.S. Senate to take action and pass a bill to protect “Dreamers” and as well beneficiaries of the Temporary Protected Status and Deferred Enforced Departure programs.

Washington Auxiliary Bishop Mario E. Dorsonville’s statement, issued on July 4, came on the first anniversary of House passage of the American Dream and Promise Act, H.R. 6, which provides for House passage of the American Dream and Promise Act, H.R. 6, which provides


Rev. Jeffrey D. Lufresne, administrator of St. Philip Neri Parish in Indianapolis, appointed pastor of the parish.

Rev. Very Rev. Anthony P. Hollowell, VF, administrator of St. Paul Parish in Tell City, St. Mark Parish in Perry County, and dean of the Tell City Deanery, appointed pastor of the parishes while remaining dean of the Tell City Deanery.


Rev. Matthew H. Tucci, administrator of Most Sacred Heart of Jesus and St. Augustine parishes, both in Jeffersonville, appointed pastor of the parishes.

Rev. Timothy M. Wyckisalla, administrator of St. Mark the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis and part-time Defender of the Bond, Metropolitan Tribunal, appointed pastor of the parish while continuing as part-time Defender of the Bond, Metropolitan Tribunal.

Rev. Steven Schaftein, pastor of St. Rose of Lima Parish in Franklin, appointed to a second six-year term.

Rev. Paul M. Shikany, pastor of St. Gabriel the Archangel Parish in Indianapolis, appointed to a second six-year term.

Effective August 5, 2020


Rev. Nicholas A. Ajpacaja Tzoc, parochial vicar pro tempore of Holy Spirit Parish in Indianapolis, appointed administrator of St. Gabriel the Archangel Parish in Indianapolis

These appointments are from the office of the Most Rev. Charles C. Thompson, Archbishop of Indianapolis.

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Pope prays for those still hit by COVID-19, urges caution elsewhere

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope Francis prayed for people living in countries where COVID-19 is still causing a huge number of deaths, and he cautioned people in Italy to continue to be careful and follow health precautions.

“Be careful, do not sing ‘Victory!’ yet, do not celebrate victory too soon! It remains necessary to follow the rules in force carefully because they are rules that help us to prevent the virus from gaining ground,” he said on June 7 after reciting the Angelus prayer from the window of the Apostolic Palace.

He greeted the few hundred visitors who had assembled in St. Peter’s Square, maintaining social distancing and many wearing masks.

Seeing people in the square, he said, was a sign that “the acute phase” of the pandemic in Italy was over, which had led to the gradual easing of restrictive measures.

But the pope cautioned everyone to continue to be careful.

“Thanks be to God we are coming out of the worst, stronger, but always with the rules given the authorities give us,” he said.

The Vatican press office had announced the pope’s prayer before that the last Vatican employee who had tested positive for the coronavirus was now testing negative. A total of 12 cases were reported among Vatican employees since late February.

None of the 12 died.

He reminded people, however, that “the virus continues to claim many victims in other countries.”

“I wish to express my closeness to those people and their families, and to all those who care for them. With our prayer, let us be close to them.”

The pandemic is claiming large numbers of victims in the United States and other countries in Central, South and North America, according to the World Health Organization (WHO) on June 6.

Some countries were also seeing “upsticks” in COVID-19 cases as lockdowns eased, which meant people had to continue to follow precautions, Margaret Harris, a WHO spokesperson said from Geneva.

In his Angelus talk, Pope Francis discussed the importance of the day’s feast of the Most Holy Trinity, which celebrates God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

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The pope also reminded that people should remain dedicated in a special way to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

“Ideed, the human and divine heart of Jesus is the wellspring where we can always draw upon God’s mercy, forgiveness and tenderness,” he said.

He urged people to practice eucharistic adoration because they can find that love present in the Eucharist, and “little by little, one’s heart will become more patient, more generous, more merciful, in imitation of the heart of Jesus.”

He also encouraged people to recite, for the month of June, a short prayer his grandmother taught him: “Jesus, let my heart resemble yours in all I do.”

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Prayer vigils, protests, bishops’ homilies echo call for racial justice

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Bishops called for Americans to celebrate the country’s diversity, pray the deep sin of racism can be overcome and invited people to remember that each person is a unique creation of God in Trinity Sunday homilies, messages and homilies.

“Our diversity should never be considered a problem that needs to be solved or something that divides us,” Bishop Gregory L. Parkes of St. Petersburg, Fla., said during a “Holy Hour for Peace, Healing and Change” at the Cathedral of St. Jude the Apostle on June 7.

In Boston, Cardinal Sean P. O’Malley called racism a “social and spiritual cancer” that results from the novel coronavirus pandemic, and the prayer service seemed to be “the next step” to address the concerns people have had as demonstrations emerged across the country.

Women religious from the Ursuline and Sisters of Notre Dame communities who work at the parish and minister to the neighborhood donned black T-shirts adorned with “Nuns for Justice” in white lettering for the vigil to demonstrate support for people who have felt the sin of racism.

Elsewhere, San Diego Bishop Robert W. McElroy said during a Mass with Catholic African Americans at Immaculata Church on June 6 that God’s creation provides the foundation on which to overcome racism and allow God to understand the unity of the human family.

He said that while God provides a “loving plan for human history and solidarity, and Jesus accompanies the faithful through his own suffering and demands to accompany others in their agony, “it is the Spirit who breathes on us as disciples and as a community of faith to renew the face of the Earth.”

This moment in our nation’s long crucifixion of the African-American community must not merely be an interlude. It must be a moment of transformation. When the Spirit of God descends upon the poorest Pentecost, they were timid, lost and fearful. But with the Spirit in their midst, they transformed the whole of the world,” Bishop McElroy said.

Bishop Robert P. Deeley of Portland, Maine, said the Holy Father urged us more about the recent tragic death of George Floyd, the massive outpouring of anger and grief that has followed, and the healing and change.

He explained how he was on a walk when he came upon a group of black children playing, and on the sidewalk nearby, they had created a colorful image of what the term “black lives matter” means to them.

“I thought to myself why, ever, would these beautiful children ever think that their lives do not matter? Yet, when we talk to black people, they share with us that the do not believe our society values them,” he said.

“Systematic racism begins in the attitudes of the individuals in a society. And, therefore, overcoming racism will begin with each person reflecting and acting personally, to change their view. Society will change when we change,” Bishop Deeley added.

Washingtion D.C. Parish in Cleveland were joined by neighborhood residents as they gathered in front of their parish church on a busy inner-city street after Sunday Mass to pray for peace and understanding and an end to racism and police violence toward African Americans.

The events occurred as tens of thousands of Americans joined peaceful demonstrations, rallies and vigils throughout the country and around the world, saw the videotape of George Floyd’s death that was recorded by an onlooker during the arrest.

“George Floyd, the massive outpouring of anger and justice must be incorporated in our schools, our teaching and our preaching,” Cardinal O’Malley said.

“We must uphold commitments to equal dignity and human rights in institutions in our society, in politics, in law, economy, education.”

“Catholic teaching on social justice measures the way a society acts fairly or not. Our work will not be done until African-American men, women and children are treated with equal respect in our life of the United States,” he said.

Ursuline Sister Jean Raymond, pastor of Holy Name of Jesus Parish in Cleveland, said the post-Mass gathering to share with people of faith realized they wanted to undertake “some visible response” to events of the previous two weeks.

The parish, she told Catholic News Service (CNS), has supported black-owned businesses throughout the lockdowns that resulted from the novel coronavirus pandemic, and the prayer service seemed to be “the next step” to address the concerns people have had as demonstrations emerged across the country.

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More than 300 people participate in a Holy Hour at the Cathedral of St Jude the Apostle in St. Petersburg, Fla., on June 8. Demonstrations continue after a white police officer in Minnesota was caught on a bystander’s video on May 25 pressing his knee into the neck of George Floyd, an African American, who was later pronounced dead at a hospital. (CNS photo/courtesy Diocese of St. Petersburg)
Feast of Corpus Christi

This Sunday’s observance of the feast of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ (Corpus Christi) will seem different this year. For some of us, such as those 65 or older or those who aren’t healthy, it might mean that they will not attend Mass. Others might not be able to go to their parishes because the parishes must limit attendance at Mass.

Most of those who do attend Mass, though, will probably have a better appreciation for what we have in the Eucharist this year than they had last year. If “absence makes the heart grow fonder,” that has a strong significance for Catholics and the Eucharist this year.

This was clear in what Father Michael Keucher told Sean Gallagher in an interview that he recorded last winter. Keucher, a retired priest and past director of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis Office for Divine Worship, said the first Sunday after the beginning of the stay-at-home order, that was “the most beautiful Sunday Mass I have ever experienced in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. It was the first time in my life that I was completely aware of the presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist.”

Keucher told Gallagher that “you can feel Jesus’ presence in your heart, and it’s beautiful. You can see the devotion in some of the faces. You can see all of the Eucharistic adoration going on.”

It was also clear in the words of a woman who had attended Mass the day before Keucher spoke. Keucher told Gallagher that she said, “We got to live in a time when we have truly suffered from their inability to receive the Eucharist at Mass. Try telling that to Koehne and the people you’re missing out on, so now that we have Corpus Christi and the Eucharist 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.”

It wasn’t long ago that surveys of Catholics revealed that large numbers of them did not believe that the Eucharist is truly the Body and Blood of Christ. Try telling that to Keohne and the people Father Keucher knew.

All over the archdiocese or (or all over the world, for that matter), Catholics have truly suffered from their inability to receive the Eucharist at Mass. Parishioners were encouraged to make that act of spiritual Communion that Keohne mentioned, and the archdiocese continues streaming online daily Mass from SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis.

During the stay-at-home order, that Mass usually attracted several hundred views, which is more people than is usually attend Mass at the cathedral. So, people obviously missed being able to attend Mass and receive the Eucharist.

The feast we will celebrate on Sunday, however we will be able to do so, emphasizes our belief that, when bread and wine are consecrated by a validly ordained Catholic priest, they really and truly become the body and blood of Jesus Christ while continuing to look and taste like bread and wine.

Our belief in this dogma is so strong that the Catechism of the Catholic Church says, “The Eucharist is the sum and summary of our faith” (#1327) and, “The Eucharist is the source and summit of our faith” (#1324).

Not surprisingly because of his devotion to the Eucharist, the feast is closely connected to St. Thomas Aquinas. He proposed it to Pope Urban IV, who established the feast in 1264. St. Thomas composed his hymn “Pange Lingua” for Vestors of Corpus Christi. This hymn is also used on Holy Thursday in the celebration of Mass during the procession of the Blessed Sacrament to the altar of repose. The last two verses of that hymn, the Tauroem Ergos are sung at Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

The feast is celebrated on the Thursday after Trinity Sunday in about 25 countries where it is a holy day of obligation and a public holiday. Otherwise, as in the United States, it is celebrated on the Sunday after Trinity Sunday so that, during an ordinary year, more people can celebrate it.

Corpus Christi processions continue to be celebrated in many countries and in parishes across central and southern Indiana. In medieval times, especially in England, the feast was a time for mystery plays. However, these were suppressed in 1548 when the Church of England denied the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. During the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, many Catholics were martyred because they refused to renounce their belief in the real presence.

A piece of Catholic trivia: The feast of Corpus Christi is one of five occasions in the year when a diocesan bishop may not be away from his diocese unless for a grave and urgent reason. Canon 395, §3, found in the Code of Canon Law, states: “He [the diocesan bishop] is not to be absent from the diocese on Christmas, during Holy Week, and on Easter, Pentecost, and the Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ, except for a grave and urgent cause.”

—John F. Fink

Reflection/John Shaughnessy

One word and one choice define all of us

As our car spun out of control, it quickly struck me that this could be the way life suddenly ends for my wife, two of our children and me.

We were traveling on a busy interstate highway late on a winter’s night years ago when our car hit a stretch of black ice. After several 360-degree rotations in the darkness, I kept expecting another car or semi-trailer to come along—but kept praying it wouldn’t happen. Finally, we slid off the road and slammed into a snow bank. Still, we were safe.

Oblivious to the danger we had just escaped, one of our then-small sons shouted with joy from the back seat: “That was so cool, Dad! Can we do that again?”

Yet even that joyful innocence couldn’t shake the vulnerable feeling I had. Righting our car, I drove to the next exit and found the nearest motel for the night.

I’ve been thinking about moments of vulnerability more these days ever since the word “vulnerable” has become so prevalent during the coronavirus crisis. It’s been heavily used to describe people 65 and older, and those with health issues that make them more susceptible to the life-threatening impact of the disease.

Still, here’s the reality: In regard to life in general, if you are searching for one word that connects people of all ages and all backgrounds, “vulnerable” would be one of the defining choices.

That reality has become especially clear as the world has seemingly spun out of the control recently.

Beyond the people who have been labeled as “vulnerable” during the coronavirus crisis, that feeling extends to the millions of people of all ages who have been furloughed or lost their jobs.

That feeling is also there in the people who have been deemed “essential”—the health care workers, the grocery store employees, the delivery people and others—who worry about their increased exposure to the disease and who fear bringing it home to their families.

And it’s leaving its mark on students in grade schools, high schools and colleges. They not only saw their spring rituals and activities taken away, they’re also more uncertain now—like most of us—about what the future holds for them.

In fact, one-third of Americans are showing signs of clinical anxiety or depression due to the pandemic, according to a recent report from the U.S. Census Bureau.

The reality of feeling vulnerable also applies to every part of the race-related concerns and problems that have erupted again recently.

People of black and brown skin feel vulnerable because of the prejudices, injustices and senseless deaths that have continued as part of their reality in this country.

People in law enforcement—a dangerous and stressful line of duty—have a higher risk of suicide than any other profession.

People who live in areas torched by riots and violence fear for their safety.

Being vulnerable is so much a part of our humanity that Christ suffered in agony in the Garden of Gethsemane and the Apostles hid in a room following Jesus’ death.

Yet there is often a choice when we reach a place of vulnerability. It’s a choice of self-interest or a greater good.

Christ and the Apostles chose the greater good, and their choice changed the world. During the pandemic and the recent race-related conflicts, many people have also made choices seeking a greater good.

For some, it’s the simple effort of wearing a mask. For others, it’s caring for someone touched by a disease. For some, it’s a protestor reaching out to hug a patient, or a police officer kneeling or locking arms in unity with a protester. For others, it’s being unrelenting in making sure all the facts of a confrontation come to light.

On the morning after our car spun out of control, the feeling of being vulnerable stayed with my wife and me. Still, we continued on our journey home, buoyed by the light of a new day, and intent on focused on the road ahead and where we hoped to end up together.

We all fall under the definition of “vulnerable” in some way, but we all can choose to define our lives differently.

In a world seemingly spinning out of control, some of us can choose to define the greater good, and others can choose to become a bond we hold onto, a bond that strengthens us.

(Shaughnessy is the assistant editor of The Criterion and the author of Then Something Wonderful Happened: Unlikely encounters and unexpected crises in search of a friendship with God.)
Eucharist is living bread for the life of the world

“Yo soy el pan vivo que descendió del cielo; si alguno come de este pan, vivirá para siempre; y el pan que yo también daré por la vida del mundo es mi carne” (Jn 6:51).

Ahora más que nunca, durante este tiempo de recuperación del virus de la COVID-19, necesitamos el pan vivo que Jesús nos promete. La festividad que celebramos este fin de semana como la Soledadidad del Santísimo Cuerpo y la Sangre de Cristo (Corpus Christi) es la fuente de curación para todas las formas de enfermedades físicas, emocionales, mentales y espirituales. Es un alimento para los cuerpos debilitados por la enfermedad, y es un estímulo para los corazones ansiosos y temerosos.

Después de muchas semanas en las que a la mayoría de los católicos se le negó el acceso a la presencia real de Jesús en la Eucaristía, esta celebración de la Soledadidad del Santísimo Cuerpo y la Sangre de Cristo es más que nunca necesaria para la vida del mundo. Y así, debemos recibir este gran sacramento, siempre que podamos, con reverencia y con profunda alegría. Como cantamos en la secuencia de Corpus Christi:

“Claros y fuertes resuenan tus cánticos, no faltarán ni la alegría ni la más dulce gracia, desde tu corazón que estallen las alabanzas.”

En la primera lectura del domingo, tomada del Deuteronomio, (Dt 8:2-3, 14b-16a), Mosaes le dice al pueblo de Israel (y a nosotros): “[No] olvides al Señor tu Dios, quien te sacó de Egipto, la tierra donde viviste como esclavo. El Señor te guio a través del vasto y horrible desierto, esa tierra reseca y sedienta, llena de serpientes venenosas y escorpiones; te dio el agua que hizo brotar de la más dura roca; en el desierto te alimentó con manna, comida que jamás conoceron sus antepasados” (Dt 8:14-16).

Nos recuerda que pueden aparecer dificultades terribles pero a lo largo de todas nuestras dificultades el Señor está con nosotros, dándonos lo que necesitamos para sobrevivir y crecer como su pueblo elegido. Ciertamente nuestro Salvador constató esto en su cuerpo y sangre vivificantes. Ciertamente sigue siendo la fuente principal de nuestra recuperación de la enfermedad, la catástrofe económica y el miedo paralizante. Uno de los mantras que escuchamos repetidamente durante los meses de encierro fue “Estamos juntos en esto.” Para los que somos discípulos de Jesucristo, esto es mucho más que un eslogan reconfortante. Es una declaración sobre nuestra identidad como miembros del único Cuerpo de Cristo. Tal como nos lo recuerda san Pablo en la segunda lectura de Corpus Christi:

“Hermanos: Esa copa de bendición por la cual damos gracias, ¿no significa que entramos en comunión con la sangre de Cristo? Ese pan que partimos, ¿no significa que entramos en comunión con el cuerpo de Cristo? Hay un solo pan del cual todos participamos; por eso, aunque somos muchos, formamos un solo cuerpo” (1 Cor 10:16-17).

Participamos en el cuerpo y la sangre de Cristo por medio de una comunión que es tanto física como espiritual. Cuando recibimos a Cristo en la Eucaristía, entramos en una misteriosa unión con él y con todos nuestros hermanos que están unidos a él en el “pan vivo para la vida del mundo.”

Incluso en la época de Jesús, este era un concepto espiritual. Esperaba que los judíos discutieran entre ellos, diciendo: “¿Cómo puede este darse a comer su carne?”—Ciertamente les aseguró—“que, si no comen el carne del Hijo del hombre ni beben su sangre, no tienen realmente vida. El que come mi carne y bebe mi sangre, tiene vida eterna, y yo lo resucitaré en el día final.”

En nuestra arquidiócesis, la dispensa de la obligación de participar en la misa sigue vigente hasta el 15 de agosto. Se exhorta a la comunidad a las personas de 65 años en adelante, así como a las vulnerables y las enfermas, que permanezcan en sus casas durante este período. Aun así, creemos que nuestra mejor oportunidad de lograr una recuperación total de los efectos de la actual pandemia es a través de la comunión con Jesucristo. Idealmente, esto ocurre a través de una recepción física de la sagrada Eucaristía. Pero incluso cuando eso es imposible, el ejercicio espiritual que hacemos puede unirnos exitosamente con Cristo y los miembros de su cuerpo.

Recemos para que nuestra celebración del Corpus Christi este año sea un tiempo de gracia, lleno de alegría. •
Thompson laughed. Of the Trinity was to preach on—and often heard how challenging the dogma delivered the homily. Minister for both faith communities, sanctity of life in the communion we share as the body of Christ.” Father Andrew Syberg, sacramental minister for both faith communities, delivered the homily. “Going back to my seminary days, I often heard how challenging the dogma of the Trinity was to preach on—and now I have to do it in front of my boss,” he said with a grin as Archbishop Thompson laughed. In his homily, Father Syberg noted that Catholics “must allow the actions of the Trinity—Father, Son, and Spirit—to transform us, to transform our actions.” “The authentic disciple has to allow for the possibility that things that may seem to be impossible may not be so impossible after all,” he said, a fact especially relevant in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and recent racial unrest. “If we don’t allow ourselves to be pushed past what we think we can endure, we will never find forgiveness for the unforgivable, or love for the unlovable. Faith in what is beyond our ability to comprehend will elude us. Hope in situations that appear to be hopeless will evade us.” But embracing “the tension that comes from bending a bit” results in a better understanding of the truth, Father Syberg continued. “Our perception of what is actually possible will change. And as we expose the lies of the devil—who by the way wants nothing more than to destroy humanity’s relationship with God and with one another—we must continue to pursue the truth that is the Trinity.” “As we do, we will come to a greater understanding of how life-giving the truth actually is, … [and] we will arrive at a place where the truth is all we will ever want.” Holy Angels parishioner Gretchen Horne said she appreciated “the link between the happenings in the world today to the theme of Holy Trinity Sunday. Even in times of unrest and pain—and just in life in general—it’s important to remember that we’re part of a community.” The Mass with the archbishop was “the first time I’ve had Communion in three months,” said Gretchen’s husband Reggie Horne. “It was great to have that experience back, to be back worshipping with others. And then having our archbishop celebrate with us made it more special.” He said having Archbishop Thompson celebrate Mass with the two parishes was “appreciated at this time of racial unrest. Your faith remains strong, and we know God is with us, but to have the archbishop come together with the black community at this time was a blessing.” Yet through such trying times, including the pandemic, “We have to say thanks to God,” said Kerry Connell of St. Rita Parish. And coming together to celebrate the Mass—even if in cars—is “a great way to say thank you to the Lord for all he’s done for us.” Before offering the final blessing, Archbishop Thompson shared a story from his early days as a priest. He recalled the school of the parish he was serving wanting to form a girls’ basketball team but having only six girls in the whole school, one of whom had never played the sport. The other girls convinced her to join, telling her all she had to do was sit on the bench. “The first game, a teammate fouled out, and the girl had to go onto the court. The ball was thrown to her, and three players from the other team came after her,” he said. “As they ran toward her, she put the ball under her left arm and then made the sign of the cross. The three girls just stopped and looked over at their coach. They didn’t know what to do.” The incident, Archbishop Thompson said, illustrates the power of the Holy Trinity. “We live in a lot of social unrest, we live in this pandemic, we live in a world of violence, chaos and injustice sometimes,” he said. “Let us remember not to be fearful. Let us try to be like that little girl, to trust in the Holy Trinity.” “The sign of the cross is a powerful, powerful weapon against the evils of our day. Let us never lose sight of the power of the Trinity at work in our midst.”

Archbishop Charles C. Thompson raises the chalice during a Mass for members of Holy Angels and St. Rita parishes, both in Indianapolis, on June 7. The Mass was celebrated in the parking lot of Holy Angels School as worshippers remained in their cars to observe social distance guidelines.

**Marriage**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Be a part of our Fall Marriage Edition**

**July 10, 2020, issue of The Criterion**

Couples who are planning to be married between July 10 and Dec. 31, 2020, or couples who were wed between Jan. 1 and July 9, 2020, in such a recognized marriage are invited to submit the information for the upcoming July 10 Fall Marriage Edition. Announcements can be submitted using the form below, or electronically at archindy.org/engagements.

**E-mailed photos**

Photos should be saved in jpg format and be at least 500 kb. Color photos are preferred. We recommend sending a photo where the couple’s faces are close to each other. Please send the photo as an attachment in an e-mail to alexw@archindy.org. Subject line: Fall Marriage Announcement (Last name). In the e-mail, please include the information in the form located below.

If it is not possible to e-mail a photo, a photo can be mailed with the bottom form. Please no photocopy photos. To have the photo returned, please include a return addressed envelope with a postage stamp on it.

**Deadline**

All announcements and photos must be received by 10 a.m. on Friday, June 26, 2020. (No announcements or photos will be accepted after this date.)

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**Use this form to furnish information**

**Name of Bride (first, middle, last)**

**Name of Groom (first, middle, last)**

**Address of Bride**

**Address of Groom**

**City**

**City**

**State**

**State**

**Zip Code**

**Zip Code**

**Phone Number**

**Phone Number**

**E-mail Address**

**E-mail Address**

**Father of Bride**

**Father of Groom**

**Mother of Bride**

**Mother of Groom**

**Name of Bride’s Father**

**Name of Mother’s Father**

**Name of Bride’s Mother**

**Name of Mother’s Mother**

**Religious Preference**

**Religious Preference**

**Church**

**Church**

**Date of Wedding**

**Date of Wedding**

**Wedding Date**

**Wedding Date**

**Location**

**Location**

**State and City**

**State and City**

**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.

**Rock and Mimi (Uebelhoer) Alberts**, members of St. Pius X Parish in Indianapolis, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on June 6. The couple was married in St. Joan of Arc Church in Indianapolis on June 6, 1970. They have two children: Lori Justin and Karen Routt.

The couple also has six grandchildren.

**Edward and Marilyn (McGovern) Epping**, members of St. Mary Parish in Mitchell, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on June 13. The couple was married at St. Thomas Aquinas Church in Kenosha, Wis., on June 13, 1970. They have three children: Kristen Johnson, Melissa and Brian Epping. The couple also has eight grandchildren.

Rachel’s Vineyard retreat offered July 31-Aug. 2 for those grieving after abortion

A Rachel’s Vineyard post-abortion healing retreat will take place in the greater Indianapolis area on July 31-Aug. 2. The location will be disclosed upon registration. The retreat is for women and men who have known regret, sorrow, guilt or shame after abortion. Supported by the sacraments, the goal of the retreat is to help provide insight, comfort and healing. The weekend combines Scripture meditations, spiritual exercises and discussions in a guided process that leads to the heart of God’s love and compassion.

The cost is $175, although scholarships are available. No one will be turned away due to financial difficulties.

For information about Rachel’s Vineyard Retreats, go to www.rachelsvineyard.org. Inquiries, registration and participation are strictly confidential.

To speak with someone about Rachel’s Vineyard retreats or to register for the upcoming retreat, contact the Project Rachel Team’s confidential line at 317-452-0054 or e-mail projectrachel@archindy.org.
New program offers hope, healing to survivors of suicide loss

By Natalie Hofler

After losing her husband to suicide in November of 2017, Lisa Thibault attended a two-day retreat last October year. According to her statement, she shared her feelings during the retreat with one of the presenters, Providence Sister Connie Kramer.

“I found [the retreat] to be holy and helpful, but I shared privately with Sister Connie that I needed more specific information for those grieving the loss of a loved one to suicide,” Thibault said. “She was very, very, very, very lovely [at the widows’ retreat].”

Sister Connie works as a team member at the Fatima Retreat House and is a member of St. Monica Parish in Indianapolis. “Suicide loss is a different kind of grief,” she said. “It’s an isolating grief, especially in my experience. So being around other survivors is very important to move things forward, to learn how to survive.”

Thibault noted Thibault’s comments to heart. Connections were made, and meetings were set up this year to develop a program for those grieving the loss of a loved one to suicide. The result is a program called “You Are Not Alone: Hope and Healing for Survivors of Suicide Loss,” being offered at Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House in Indianapolis.

The program offers three components: a series of three two-hour sessions; a two-day retreat at Our Lady of Fatima; and suicide prevention training through an American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) program called “safeTALK.” (See more information on each of these programs.)

This article addresses the series and the retreat both of which cover the emotional, healing and spiritual journey of suicide loss survivors.

“Sharing with other survivors who have my same belief in God as a higher power—that’s he’s gentle, forgiving, not judgmental, someone who chooses to forgive those in pain—is important,” says Thibult.

“People lose so much hope!” she noted. “She was not alone in her desire for a faith-based outreach specifically for those grieving the loss due to suicide. She had lost one to suicide.

For several years, Christine Turo-Shields, a psychotherapist, licensed clinical social worker and licensed addiction counselor, has mentioned the need many times to Fatima’s associate director of spiritual care, Cheryl McSweeney.

“Christine feels strongly that we need to do more to get ahead of the call for ministry to survivors of suicide loss, says McSweeney, who serves with her and Thibault on the You Are Not Alone team.

That need is connected to the increase in suicides, says Turo-Shields, who has lost two extended family members to suicide. The member of St. Barnabas Parish in Indianapolis is co-owner of Kenosis Counseling, both in Greenwood, serves on the AFSP board, and serves as a You Are Not Alone presenter.

According to the latest figures from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the news is suicide was up more than 30 percent between 2001-2017. “Suicide rates are still the leading cause of death for 15-34 year-olds,” she added. “And the rate of suicide following another suicide attempt is high because people lose so much hope.”

“Many people are walking around with gaping wounds because they have lost by suicide. There’s such complexity around it—stigma and the emotions of loss, guilt, blame and shame.”

“Not a normal death”

Fr. James Farrell, a You Are Not Alone team member and presenter for Fatima’s new program.

He firmly believes that a sense of loss comes from healing. Individuals are forever scarred by the pain of loss and to help people understand what the Catholic Church believes about suicide.

In the You Are Not Alone program for those grieving the loss of a loved one to suicide, people will come together to grieve, share experiences and learn how God helps them on their journey of survival after a suicide tragedy.

The new “You Are Not Alone: Hope and Healing for Survivors of Suicide Loss” program offered by Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 533 E. 56th St., in Indianapolis, is composed of two separate components for survivors of suicide loss: a series of three two-hour sessions and a two-day retreat, both addressing the emotional, healing and spiritual journey of those who have lost a loved one to suicide.

A third component of the program will address suicide prevention training through an American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) program called “safeTALK,” offered by the American Foundation of Suicide Prevention (AFSP). This portion of the You Are Not Alone offerings is on hold as the AFSP restructures the safeTALK program post-COVID-19.

The three-part series is offered at no cost. Intended to be offered in-person, the series was offered this year online via Zoom due to stay-at-home orders to help stop the spread of the coronavirus.

“People need to be addressing the emotional journey and the other addressing the spiritual journey—to take place May in the third session, which addresses the healing journey, will take place free 4-6 p.m. on June 14. It will be presented by suicide loss survivor Lisa Thibault and Providence Sister Connie Kramer, a you are not alone team member and presenter for the You Are Not Alone program. Fr. James Farrell’s work in grief ministry has helped him understand the driving force behind suicide. He says suicide is seen as a “solution,” he says. “The spirit and the mind break, and hope is lost. The craving to get out of that space leads to life being completed by suicide.”

Suicide is not “committed,” he says, a term which implies a conscious decision by someone “in their right mind.” In his research, he also helped Father Farrell recognize the benefits of grief support groups. He notes that while still working through grief is a personal process, research shows those who participate in such ministry can “move the internal and external pain. Fr. Jim was involved in grief ministry for more than 40 years, and began offering grief-related retreats about seven years ago.

“I firmly believe that grief is meant to be processed with significant losses in our lives, and can become a lifelong friend which helps me,” he said. “Sister Connie. ‘I also know that grief can be transforming and profound. Such as that which occurs following the death of a loved one, suicide can profoundly transform a person.”

“From my own experience, I know how the journey forward is much easier when not traveled alone.”

“A sense of hope comes from healing”

Cheryl McSweeney

The You Are Not Alone three-part series and retreat offer an opportunity for suicide loss survivor to not travel their journey alone.

“Suicide support group is very important to offer the knowledge to people, to remove stigma, and to help people understand what the Catholic Church believes about suicide,” Thibault said.

The July retreat, to be held on July 11-12, will involve talks on the emotional, spiritual and healing journeys of suicide loss survivors; a grief panel; and a discussion on the future of hope and healing at the beginning of the day. In the You Are Not Alone program for those grieving the loss of a loved one to suicide, people will come together to grieve, share experiences and learn how God helps them on their journey of survival after a suicide tragedy.

“The change in the Church’s response to suicide has been very different,” he says.

The new “You Are Not Alone: Hope and Healing for Survivors of Suicide Loss” program offered by Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 533 E. 56th St., in Indianapolis, is composed of two separate components for survivors of suicide loss: a series of three two-hour sessions and a two-day retreat, both addressing the emotional, healing and spiritual journey of those who have lost a loved one to suicide.

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The three-part series is offered at no cost. Intended to be offered in-person, the series was offered this year online via Zoom due to stay-at-home orders to help stop the spread of the coronavirus.

“This is the first of the three two-hour sessions or for the July 11-12 retreat, go to www.archindy.org/fatima or contact Jennifer Burger at 317-543-7681 or Burner@archindy.org.”

The retreat offers three opportunities to come together and grieve, share experiences and learn how God helps them on their journey of survival after a suicide tragedy. The cost is $25 for survivors and $50 for married couples. It includes the program, meals, snacks and a keepsake. The program is available in-person at the retreat or to be held online for six months following the retreat.
SCHOOLS continued from page 1

What is one of the greatest life lessons you have learned in high school?

Nate Pawlak, Father Michael Shawe Memorial High School in Madison: “One of the greatest life lessons I have learned during my time in high school is that some people come into your life for only a short time. This means you have to appreciate every moment with them before your paths separate.”

Elizabeth Mullen, Oldenburg Academy of the Immaculate Conception in Oldenburg: “The great lesson I’ve learned is that the community you build around yourself matters. Your school, family and friends will greatly change how you see yourself and the world. Choose them wisely, invest in them, and appreciate them while you last.”

Maria Popson, Our Lady of Providence High School in Clarksville: “Always put God first. Try to follow his will for you in every decision you make. Look at each opportunity as a heavenly gift and always work hard to share your God-given talents.”

Annie Leppert, Cathedral High School in Indianapolis: “One of the greatest life lessons I have learned during my time at Cathedral is to always stay true to who you are. I have met so many different people at Cathedral, and while it is tempting to try and make yourself seem like someone else to become closer to them, it does not help in the long run.

“My best friends in the world are the ones who take me as I am, and do not want to be like anyone else. The Cathedral family lifts each other up and celebrates what makes each student unique and perfect in God’s eyes.”

Margaret Corns, Bishop Chatard High School in Indianapolis: “One of the greatest life lessons high school has taught me is to lean into any challenge or encounter. Challenges present a unique way for you to learn more about yourself and what you are capable of. Without the challenges I have faced so far in life, I would not know the extent of my capabilities. Challenges help us become the people we are meant to be.”

Suzanne Becker, Seton Catholic High School in Richmond: “One of the greatest life lessons I have learned during high school is the importance of capturing memorable moments. Ten years from now, I will be able to look back on these moments and remember all of the good times I had, and see how I was shaped into the person that I have become.

“You don’t realize just how much you will cherish your high school experience forever until you’ve almost stepped out of the good old days.”

How has your high school prepared you for life on Earth and in heaven?

Michael Mark, Cardinal Ritter High School in Indianapolis: “My high school has prepared me for life in heaven and on Earth by surrounding me with peers who I can share and grow in my faith with, and teachers who act as role models as to what it means to live out a life centered around God.”

Lydvine Adhounioso, Providence Rey High School in Indianapolis: “Attending Providence for the last four years has made me a more prayerful and faithful person. I incorporate prayer daily, in and outside of school. I have fallen in love with theology. Because of these classes, I decided to continue receiving the sacraments and got confirmed last year.”

Archbishop Thompson records message to 2020 high school graduates

By John Shaugnessy

As the superintendent of Catholic schools in the archdiocese, Gina Fleming knows the disappointment that this year’s high school seniors have felt as the coronavirus crisis has cancelled many of the traditions and activities they hoped to experience. Still, in her tribute to the 1,385 members of the archdiocese’s class of 2020, Fleming focused on all the successes they have achieved in the past four years, especially the successes that brought “honor and glory to our Savior and our Lord.”

Every act of service, choral performance, athletic event, theater production, piece of art and academic achievement reflects not only the gifts with which you have been blessed, but also the love and mercy of our God above,” Fleming said. “The superintendent also saluted the seniors for the way they “persevered and demonstrated tenacity and faith” while dealing with “the loss of a typical senior year” with all its festivities and celebrations.

“Thank you, Class of 2020, for caring for others and sharing God’s gifts readily, for seeking solutions in a world full of uncertainty, and for remaining centered on Christ as our light and salvation,” she said. “These are the very life lessons you have learned throughout your Catholic school experience. May you know of our prayers for you as you begin this next chapter of your life.”

On behalf of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson, Fleming also praised “the thousands of teachers, staff members, school leaders, priests, and religious who have formed and educated these young adults.”

“And last but certainly not least, we extend to the parents and guardians of the Class of 2020 a heartfelt thanks for partnering with us in your young person’s holistic growth. “Thank you for entrusting this beloved child of God to us, and for allowing the Archdiocese of Indianapolis to bear witness to the unique gift your child is to this world. May God bless you and your family always.”

On May 23, the date originally scheduled for graduation at Roncalli High School in Indianapolis, the school’s faculty and staff gave each of the graduating seniors a Senior Box as they drove up to the school. The box was filled with many items, including a personal letter from a teacher or staff member, a letter written to the class from the faculty, their academic and athletic awards, a package of school cookies, their graduation cap, tassel, and all cords and medals they had earned. (Submitted photo)

1,385 graduates leave their mark on Catholic high schools

There are 1,385 graduates in the Class of 2020 in Catholic high schools acrosse the archdiocese. Here is the graduating class from each of the 12 schools:

Father Thomas Seccina Memorial High School in Indianapolis—84 seniors.
Lumen Christi Catholic High School in Indianapolis—one senior.
Oldenburg Academy of the Immaculate Conception in Oldenburg—56 seniors.
Our Lady of Providence High School in Clarksville—84 seniors.
Providence Cristo Rey High School in Indianapolis—56 seniors.
Roncalli High School in Indianapolis—270 seniors.
Seton Catholic High School in Richmond—17 seniors.†

Superintendent salutes the Class of 2020 and praises the people who have shaped their lives

By Gina Fleming

On behalf of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson, Fleming also praised “the thousands of teachers, staff members, school leaders, priests, and religious who have formed and educated these young adults.”

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Archbishop Charles C. Thompson has recorded a special message to the 1,385 members of the Class of 2020 who graduated this spring from Catholic high schools in central and southern Indiana, as well as Catholic graduates from other schools.

“May you have 20/20 vision to recognize the grace and presence of God in your lives as you go forward,” he tells the graduates. “Class of 2020, go with God.”

The two-minute recording can be heard at catholicindy.org, the website of Catholic Radio Indy 89.1 FM and 90.9 FM.†
By Katie Rutter

Catholic News Service

JASPER, Ind. (CNS)—Even as sanctuaries across the country closed their doors to stop the spread of the coronavirus, a sacred space in Jasper remained accessible. Encircled by shrines depicting the mysteries of the rosary with a 12-foot-tall manmade cave as the centerpieces, the town’s outdoor Geode Grotto became a refuge even from the fear of airborne viruses. “I just hope everybody can still come here and can come on their own time and can still be safe,” Andrea Bradford told Catholic News Service (CNS) on May 27. Bradford works part time in a nursing home and has to diligently protect her health for the sake of the residents. “It’s outdoors, so it’s beautiful and it just helps with the senses and helps us to remain calm in this time of trouble,” added Tim Bell, the president of Friends of the Grotto, a nonprofit that cares for the grounds. The flowerbeds and shrines of the Geode Grotto grace more than half an acre of land and offer many places to sit, meditate and pray. Much of its beauty comes from the unusual rocks that form the structures: hollow stones called geodes that are plentiful in southern Indiana. Unassembling the geode, geodes contain quartz crystals that glitter in shades of white, yellow, pink and purple. “I live close by so I’ll walk over whenever I want to and I’ll say a rosary,” I’ll say a Divine Mercy chaplet and just sit here for a few minutes,” said Dee Ann Bell, Tim’s wife, who also is a member of the nonprofit. Peace and solace are at the very core of the grotto’s origins. The shrine was constructed in the 1950s by a priest coming to terms with the anger and grief he experienced from his childhood survival of an earthquake in his native Italy. Both his parents were killed in the disaster. “For a long time, he had this anger toward rock, and whenever he would see a rock, he would kick it,” explained Bradford. “So when he was priest, he said, ‘Everything is God’s creation, and I know the rocks are God’s creation too.’” Father Philip constructed the grotto out of the very objects of his anger and fear. After about a decade of work, he completed a large cave that re-creates the Lourdes Marian apparition site in France with statues of Mary and the visionary, St. Bernadette Soubirous; seven smaller shrines to saints; flower-lined walls that depict the mysteries of the rosary; two fountains; and dozens of flowerpots that weigh as much as 2,500 pounds each. “To me, it’s a beautiful reminder of what we should do with our anger, to turn it into something beautiful,” summarized Bradford. Even before the pandemic, a dozen or more Catholics would gather at the grotto on the 13th day of every month to pray the rosary together. That tradition continued every month except April, when restrictions were tightened. In May, attendees stayed 6 feet apart and most wore masks. “[The pandemic] has always been mentioned, that we hope people are staying healthy, we hope that people are not living in fear, that they rely on their strength from Christ and turn toward him,” explained Dee Ann Bell. Members of the nonprofit are continually on the grounds, which requires restoration after constant exposure to the elements. During the pandemic, they have cemented geodes back onto structures, resurfaced metal decorations, replaced plexiglass windows in the Marian shrine and tended the flowerbeds. On May 30, the day that Pope Francis led worshippers at the world’s Marian shrines in praying for an end to the pandemic, a Jasper resident stopped by and cited the pope’s actions as his motivation. He had only been to the grotto once before, and Andrea Bradford shared its history. “We have people that walk through all the time just because it’s a pretty place, and not necessarily the same people you’re going to meet at church,” said Nathan Bradford, Andrea Bradford’s husband, “and you have a chance to talk to them about Jesus.” The group’s next project is to excavate a tactile rosary imprinted in one wall that has been swallowed by the landscape. As restoration continues, these caretakers hope that the shrine will continue to be a place of peace and refuge, whatever may come. “I never really know how much a place like this would inspire people to faith in Jesus,” said Nathan Bradford, “but that’s always kind of the hope.” (Kate Rutter is a freelance writer and member of St. Charles Borromeo Parish in Bloomington. To watch a related video, go to cny.org/EsS1F0ub4c.)

SUICIDE

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away from God, because that’s where you place the blame,” says Turo-Shields. She says survivors ask God, “How could you let this happen? Why didn’t you do something? How can I believe in a God that would allow this to happen?” “It’s a place to unpack all of that, a place to realize it’s OK to have those thoughts and doubts and disillusionment,” she says. “What’s really important is for survivors to recognize that how their loved one died does not overshadow how he or she lived. When you’re dealing with suicide and tragic death, often the journey is how to make meaning or sense out of what seems senseless, how to comprehend that which is incomprehensible.” Hearing back to her experience of loneliness during the widow’s retreat, Thibault also notes the sense of community the You Are Not Alone program offers. “It’s so important for survivors to form some sense of community so they don’t feel isolated in their own grief,” she says. “Hearing from other survivors is crucial, to see that you can move forward and that this experience doesn’t have to define you.” “I could relate to all of it” McWeeny says the hope is for the You Are Not Alone program to be offered “at least annually. We’ll see how this year goes then go from there.” According to comments from those who attended the first two parts of the three-series—moved from an in-person to an online format due to stay-at-home orders to stop the spread of the coronavirus—the You Are Not Alone program succeeds in its goals. “I’m so grateful that this series is available!” wrote one attendee in their post-session survey. “Thank you! I could relate to all of it!” Another noted that Turo-Shields “laid a firm foundation of solid material, and the panel shared their experience, strength and hope in diverse ways so as to reach all participants in some way.” A third participant expressed their gratitude for the program on behalf of their family. “Our family has found so much comfort from it,” the person wrote. “Thank you for talking about something that so many others will not talk about.” The comments were rewarding to Thibault. “Suicide loss survivors are part of the faith community, and they need healing and support, and to know that God is with us throughout our journey of grief,” she says. “And there is reward for the You Are Not Alone team members as well. I feel like this is my ministry, my calling,” says Proctor. “I feel like this is how I can honor my son. I can’t bring him back, but I certainly can honor him and keep others hopefully from having the same thing happen to them.” “Even just saving one person would be worth it.”

The Geode Grotto in Jasper, Ind., is seen on May 30. The outdoor shrine was built as a place of peace and consolation and has continued in that role during the coronavirus pandemic as one of the few places Catholics can safely gather for prayer. (CNS photo/Katie Rutter)

A mocked Andrea Bradford of Jasper, Ind., tends flowerbeds at the town’s Geode Grotto on May 30 amid the coronavirus pandemic. Bradford says the outdoor shrine has provided her with a place to pray and share her faith while churches were closed to stem the spread of COVID-19.

The Geode Grotto offers visitors beauty, peace, place to pray

A statue of Mary graces the Geode Grotto in Jasper, Ind., on May 30. The grotto was constructed out of crystal-filled rocks called geodes by a priest coming to terms with the anger and grief he experienced from his childhood survival of an earthquake in his native Italy that claimed the lives of his parents.
Thoughts of family and friends fill first Communion memories

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

By John Shaughnessy

There are times from our pasts that we can still see and feel clearly, no matter how many years have passed. And the people who were at the center of these moments continue to live in our hearts and our minds.

For Mary Ellen Cestaro, one of the most poignant times in her life occurred when she was in the second grade at St. Mary-of-the-Knobs School in Floyd County. “My mother had just passed away from cancer on March 19th, and nine days later I turned 8 years old,” Cestaro recalls. “It was a very sad time of my life.”

It would also become a defining time of friendship and love for her, a time when she would also start to heal and have hope. “As my class began to prepare for our first Communion in May, I began to feel happy and excited,” Cestaro says. “My friends Linda Smith and Rose Messmer, along with many others in our class, helped me to feel friendship and love. We practiced the beautiful song, ‘Oh Lord, I Am Not Worthy,’ to sing on the day we would receive our Lord for the first time.”

She also remembers the white dress her godmother made her for that special day, the veil with lace that she wore, and the gifts of a prayer book and a rosary. Yet, most of all, she remembers how she felt when she received Communion for the first time. “I felt Jesus come to me in a special way that totally filled my being with his love. We practiced the beautiful song, ‘Oh Lord, I Am Not Worthy,’ to sing on the day we would receive our Lord for the first time.”

“I still feel a great overwhelming love when receiving Communion,” says Cestaro, now a member of Holy Family Parish in New Albany. “Jesus comes to me and feeds me with his love and spirit. It is a constant in my life that gives me strength during all circumstances.”

“During times of illness, or now with the pandemic, I have been watching Mass on the air each day and saying the rosary. I can still receive a spiritual Communion by praying that Jesus will come into my heart and renew me, and this keeps me close to our Lord.”

When mischief gave way to a minor miracle

Diane Smith has a wealth of wonderful memories from her more than 25 years of preparing children for their first Communion. One of her best memories involves a large class she worked about the most. “We had 18 children that year,” recalls Smith, a catechist for the second-grade students of St. Benedict Parish in Terre Haute. “In that class, I had several boys who were known for mischief during class—being under the desk or hanging upside down from their chair.

“So I was a little worried about what was going to happen at the first Communion Mass as we gathered all of the children around the altar during the offering. We tried as hard as we could to keep the boys from standing next to each other but, of course, that did not happen. To my surprise and relief, they stood with hands folded and were attentive and reverent.”

While every class she has prepared has been different, one quality connects the students through the years. “What never changes is the children’s joy and anticipation of ‘making’ first Communion,” Smith says. “As we prepare throughout the school year, it is fun to watch as the children grow in their understanding and desire to receive Jesus into their hearts.”

She especially looks forward to the retreats for the children and their families—times during which they make banners that will mark each child’s pew on the day they receive the sacrament. “We also make the handprints that will be a part of the altar cloth, and we bake and eat bread together with family and classmates in preparation of receiving the bread that is Jesus. We laugh and come together more fully as we eagerly anticipate the Mass that will be our special Mass.”

The coronavirus crisis has changed the traditions for this year’s group. Classes have been taught online. Banners and bread have been made at home.

Smith admits the changes made her “a little sad,” but she is uplifted by the news that the group will receive their first Communion on June 14. “The kids are excited, and so am I. I remembered what I tell the children that first Communion really means. It is about knowing that when we receive the Eucharist, we receive the greatest gift we could ever receive—Jesus. I know they will receive Jesus into their hearts because they have waited, and they are ready.”

Waiting with anticipation

The memories surrounding his first Communion remain crystal clear for Kevin Wagner. As the 10th of 11 children in his family, he still savorsthe “very special study time” that he had with his mom as she helped him prepare for receiving the sacrament. “I received much attention,” says Wagner, a member of St. Thomas the Apostle Parish in Fortville. “She and I together learned all the prayers that were required.” He also can’t forget how his oldest brother’s car accident had an impact on when he could receive the Eucharist for the first time.

Those memories take Wagner back to 1965, toward the end of the Second Vatican Council. “Our parish was very open to all the changes that came out of that historic meeting,” says Wagner, about his childhood parish in Michigan. “One of the changes that they made for my class was that instead of the children learning all of the required prayers in our school, we were to study at home with our parents to prepare for the sacrament.

“We then would have our first holy Communion with our family, and then later the entire class would have the traditional ‘First Solemn Communion.’”

Being the first student in his second-grade class to learn all the prayers, Wagner was excited to become the first of his classmates to receive the sacrament. Then came his brother’s car accident. His jaw was wired shut in order to heal. Wagner recalls, “I anxiously waited and prayed for him to get better. I think it was six to eight weeks later when I was able to have my first holy Communion with my six older brothers and my four sisters and my mom and dad.

“Having to wait those additional weeks made the sacrament even more meaningful and special to me.”

(More stories will be shared in next week’s issue.)

Mary Ellen Cestaro, a member of Holy Family Parish in New Albany, holds up her first Communion banner. (Submitted photo)

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Mary Ellen Cestaro, a member of Holy Family Parish in New Albany, holds up her first Communion banner. (Submitted photo)
COVID-19 pandemic presents emotional and spiritual challenges

By Maureen Pratt

Among the most difficult challenges in navigating the coronavirus pandemic have been uncertainty and change over which we seem to have little control. From a novel and confounding virus to sudden shifts or loss in work, and from relative independence to staying at home with all the family, many are still trying to get accustomed to the new normal, even as the world is gradually reopening to a newer new normal!

Uncertainty and change can have significant effects on our emotional and spiritual lives. They can trigger a host of emotions, including anxiety, frustration, loss and fear. They can disrupt the cadence of our spiritual practice, too, as our usual means of worship and fellowship are out of reach.

There are steps, however, that we can take to foster stronger, resilient emotional and spiritual health. One of these is to understand the nature of our emotions, for example, fear, and how to handle potential problems.

James Coupe, clinical director at St. John Vianney Center in Downingtown, Pa., and a clinical psychologist in private practice said, “The purpose of fear is to keep us safe. We would naturally expect to experience fear in a pandemic. To understand our fear, try to have ways to think about our situation that is appropriate for the situation.”

“Get as much information from credible sources about how the virus works, the way we might be more or less at risk for getting infected. Listen to a trusted source. You’ll feel more empowered.”

Sadness and loss are understandable, too. But, said Coupe, “keep an eye on the intensity. See that it is in line with reality, that it’s not lasting all day or influencing our ability to get our work done or interact with our family.”

Physical and mental space can help family members manage emotional flares.

Warmer weather offers opportunities to exercise, which has a mental health benefit. (CNS photo/Chaz Muth)

“Looking for ways to get outside is a blessing,” said Coupe. “Weather offers opportunities to exercise, which has a mental health benefit.”

Warmer weather offers opportunities to exercise, which has a mental health benefit. (CNS photo/Chaz Muth)

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“A woman prays at a church in Bilbao, Spain, on May 11 as parts of Spain relax restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic. When emotions get elevated, experts recommend picking up a prayer book to get your mind off of the feelings, and then work through your problems later.” (CNS photo/Vincent West, Reuters)

“A woman prays at a church in Bilbao, Spain, on May 11 as parts of Spain relax restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic. When emotions get elevated, experts recommend picking up a prayer book to get your mind off of the feelings, and then work through your problems later.” (CNS photo/Vincent West, Reuters)

“When our emotions get too elevated, we need to remove ourselves from the heightened emotions. Pick up a prayer book, something to get your mind off the emotion of the moment. Then, of course, talk and work through your problems.”

“Talking is important with children and teens, too, as is allowing them to ask questions. And parents don’t have to have all the answers.”

Pediatric specialist Dr. Pat Fosarelli, author of How to Talk to Children and Teens about COVID-19, said, “Parents have a lot of difficulty saying, ‘I don’t know,’ when they feel they should know. This is a novel virus; nobody knows. It’s OK.”

“For a young child, comfort them,” said Fosarelli. “Other kids, they’ll ask the questions. ‘If God is loving, and God is omnipotent, why doesn’t God just fix this? Make it go away?’ ”

Children feel fear, too, and have questions stemming from it.

Fosarelli, also associate dean of instruction at St. Mary’s Seminary and University in Baltimore, said, “There had been some clergy from other traditions that have said this is God’s way of warning the world. That’s really scary for kids. I don’t pretend to know God’s mind. But we know that God loves us and cares for us.”

The sense of God’s love can be disrupted as our lives undergo ongoing upheaval and face continued uncertainties with the world opening. So, too, can the regular rhythm of the spiritual practices we used to enjoy. Keeping connections, however, can help.

Becky Van Ness, director of the Collegeville Institute for the Study of Religion and Spirituality at St. John’s School of Theology and Seminary in Collegeville, Minn., said, “In Christian spirituality, we are already not yet of the kingdom. We’re adapting, we’re connecting. We actually can be more connected with family members than we have before. God is all about relation.”

The requirement to stay-at-home can also foster a sense of spirituality of place. “There is a Benedictine charism of stability of place,” said Van Ness. “Even though community in place is online, something is happening that gives a rootedness, connections with other people. When we go forth, we will have a new appreciation for place. And I hope that we’ll keep gratitude alive.”

For those having difficulty with the emotional toll occurring from the pandemic, Coupe said, “There’s no need to wait to get help. Residential facilities are open, and if someone is developing a substance problem, they have access to a rehab facility.

For some, this time of self-isolation and social distancing might have led to discernment.

Coupe said, “[During the pandemic] our perspectives have shifted, perhaps permanently, perhaps temporarily. This can help people find a vocational call. Take some time to discern what the next move is. Don’t do it compulsively, and not from emotion. From intellect, talking to friends, taking it to prayer. It’s healthy to move toward something that gives you more purpose.”

(Maureen Pratt’s website is www.mauureenpratt.com)

Two men and two children, all wearing masks, ride bicycles on a wet Sunday, April 26 on a trail near Bladensburg, Md., getting exercise outside while the state of Maryland has shelter-in-place restrictions amid the coronavirus pandemic. Warmer weather offers opportunities to exercise, which has a mental health benefit. (CNS photo/Courtesy MPR)

Two men and two children, all wearing masks, ride bicycles on a wet Sunday, April 26 on a trail near Bladensburg, Md., getting exercise outside while the state of Maryland has shelter-in-place restrictions amid the coronavirus pandemic. Warmer weather offers opportunities to exercise, which has a mental health benefit. (CNS photo/Courtesy MPR)

Two men and two children, all wearing masks, ride bicycles on a wet Sunday, April 26 on a trail near Bladensburg, Md., getting exercise outside while the state of Maryland has shelter-in-place restrictions amid the coronavirus pandemic. Warmer weather offers opportunities to exercise, which has a mental health benefit. (CNS photo/Courtesy MPR)
I’ll never forget the look on my mother’s face as she entered my hospital room and saw me laughing likewas if I had a friend of mine. It was a look of such unease. I died at the age of 20, introduced her to my good friend Steven. They met at the hospital I was at; I was in the hospital recovering from an infection. Steven and I had become good friends while working together on the Buffalo News newspaper staff. He was generous, smart, kind and had a terrific laugh. Oh, and Steven was black.

When Steven left my hospital room, my mom inquired about our relationship. I let her know we were just good friends, but the mom inquired about our relationship. I let her know we were just good friends, but the mother’s face as she entered my hospital room. The nurse asked if it was okay if she called me by my first name. The nurse said, “I’ll never forget the look on my mother’s face as she entered my hospital room and saw me laughing.”

I grew up in a family of Mexican-American descent. My parents were from Mexico, and my grandparents had come to the United States to work in the fields. I grew up speaking Spanish at home and learning about the culture and traditions of my heritage. My parents instilled in me the importance of family, tradition, and the value of hard work.

Unfortunately, the world is still black and white, but there’s a whole lot of grey and nuance. That the world is no one way of looking at the world, events or people. It takes empathy and understanding to blend the reality of things.

As I grappled with that incident over the years, I have to admit that I have tried to look at things with different lenses. At first, I was horrified that my friend might have picked up on my mother’s unease. Never having to deal with prejudices personally, I thought to think of different times when Steven may have dealt with similar situations, or far worse, later in life. I will attempt to understand my mother’s response from her perspective. She was a product of her upbringing, times and experiences. She grew up in a suburb of Cincinnati that was all white. And in her era, mixed couples were not prevalent. I am certainly not vitriolic, simply stating that she thought what she did based on her environment and what she was taught. I think she feared what she did not know or understand.

Fast forward to my mid-20s. I was held up at gunpoint by two young men. The police thought it might have been some sort of gang initiation. Thankfully, I wasn’t physically harmed, but I did experience psychological scars. And for the first time in my life, I grappled with whether I was white and privileged. This was the among white people, as young students, but instead of being social and pursuing activities that bring enjoyment to help combat stress. The coronavirus may affect people in different ways:

In Pursuit of Justice

Faith teaches us to choose solidarity, protect our neighbor

One of my favorite parts of being Mexican is the notion or tradition of family. Our family extends far beyond our immediate family members. In my world, family includes our neighbors and the lifelong friends of our parents. I try to include our godparents and our church friends. Family includes our neighbors and the neighbors and the help care for seniors.

As an immigrant, I thoroughly understand the fear that comes from an uncertain future. In fact, I can identify with this emotion currently in my wait for the Supreme Court decision for the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. Immigrants waiting for a nonexistent immigration line, DACA recipients, temporary protective status holders and others know what it’s like for an executive order to change your world with the stroke of a pen.

Wasting is hard. Wasting is especially hard when it’s dependent on something that we have control over, like a Supreme Court decision or a devastating virus. Wasting is hard when it means our future jobs are on hold or canceled. Wasting is hard when the outcome is uncertain no matter how “good” you are now. If I learned anything from my wait it’s that wasting time is important. It’s not a crybaby, she said.

Giardino said.”

The great surprise came when it was time for her discharge. A nurse wheeled her up to the door as she stood up and walked out. She held a rainbow-colored sign that said “I’m 99 and I crush my own manicures. This is high, elicitng thunderous applause.

A large group of medical professionals had gathered, holding balloons and rainbow signs—“a parade of life,” Giardino’s daughter Camille Stordeur said.

A local reporter covered the story, and soon People magazine published an article. The next day, footage of Giardino’s grand exit aired on “The Today Show.”

“That’s remarkable,” Hoda Kotb said that “That’s remarkable.”

The news anchor sensed what Giardino was feeling. “She’s not your average great grandma.

The 4-foot, 9-inch first-generation Italian was hailed by samba and her Catholic faith. She doesn’t drink water, doesn’t take naps, doesn’t take any medication other than a sleeping pill to help her shut down at the end of a day. I really can’t sit down and do nothing.” Giardino said. “I feel like I’m wasting my time and other people’s time. I like to be active.”

She and others know that prayer stimulates her mind at every opportunity and serves the other residents at her assisted living community. Giardino moved in two years ago, she learned how to crochet and promptly made blankets for everyone there. When she gets her papers on a newspaper, she reads it from front to back. She’s currently making her way through the Bible.

Giardino loves being a lector at Mass. Her family presumes her to conduct the choristers during Palm Sunday service where she read all parts of the lengthy Gospel.

She has four children, making sure to provide a Catholic education, and worked in administration at the Long Island police department headquarters. She’s known for her homemade mannequins—“light as a feather.” Camille said. “I feel like I’m wasting my time and other people’s time. I like to be active.”

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This weekend, the Church celebrates the Solemnity of The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, or as perhaps it is better known by its Latin translation, Corpus Christi. Feasts in the Church have a dual purpose. They call Catholics to celebrate the Eucharist in reverence to the great event or event recalled by the feast. They are also opportunities for the Church to instruct its members in a point of belief considered particularly important, as drawn from the experience of Jesus, the saint commemorated or from a doctrine held by the Church.

In this weekend’s feast, the Church invites us literally to join in the Eucharist, as we participate in the Mass and receive Communion, and the Church instructs us about the Eucharist.

As its first reading, the Church presents a reading from the Book of Deuteronomy. One of the five books of the Torah, and heavy with references to the Eucharist. Deuteronomy recalls the passage of the Hebrews from Egyptian slavery to the promised land.

Moses, the central figure, speaks in this reading, reminding the people that they owed their survival, their very lives, to God. When they were lost in the barren desert, with no hope for finding food, God gave them manna to eat. God guided them through the wilderness.

For its second reading, the Church gives us a selection from St. Paul’s First Epistle to the Corinthians. The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke record the last Supper in detail. This reading from First Corinthians also refers to the Eucharist.

These parallel accounts among these biblical sources tell us that the Lord provided the Eucharist, but that the Eucharist had its roots in Jewish practices. They tell us that the Lord instituted the Eucharist in the last Supper, and that this Eucharist was for the first Christians. St. John’s Gospels furnishes the last reading. It is among the most profound and loveliest passages in all the Scriptures. In this reading, Jesus declares, “I am the living bread come down from heaven. If anyone eats this bread, he shall live forever; the bread I shall give is my flesh, for the life of the world” (Jn 6:51).

The Lord spoke these words, almost certainly, in Aramaic. They were recorded in the Gospel in Greek. The English version is a further translation. Despite the years, and despite the translations, Jesus quite clearly spoke of the Eucharist as Catholics understand it today. He never called it a symbol or a mere reminder of the Last Supper. He was blunt and direct. He expressly said, “I am the living bread come down from heaven.”

Catholics see the Eucharist as the flesh and blood of the risen Lord. The link between the Eucharist and the Lord's sacrificial gift of self on Calvary also is clear from the text. The Eucharist is the flesh of Jesus given “for the life of the world” (Jn 6:51).

Reflection

Instead of counting wallpaper roses during the recent quarantine, I organized my books, finding among them a volume acquired years ago in Belgium, a biography of St. Bernadette. The English translation, The Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, is a Catholic's implied permission/dispensation, but there’s a technical difference in the sort of permission/dispensation to which you want the priest or the rabbi to agree. It is whether you want the priest or the rabbi to agree, to put you in touch with a priest they think might be willing to accommodate you, or to think you should do it. It can certainly happen, and this is what I think might be more likely.

First, you should telephone the Catholic diocese in the area of Florida where you would like to be married. (The Florida dioceses are: Miami, St. Augustine, St. Petersburg, Orlando, Pensacola-Tallahassee, Palm Beach, and Venice.) When you call, ask for the marriage tribunal office, explain your situation and seek their advice. Ask them to put you in touch with a priest they think might be willing to accommodate you.

Then speak with that priest and, if he’s willing to be accommodated, ask him for a letter to the local rabbi who might participate. Then call that rabbi and seek his or her assistance.

At some point, you and your fiancé will need to fill out some paperwork with the Church seeking the required permissions, as well as obtain a civil marriage license.

One question you’ll have to decide is whether you want the rabbi to be the one to receive your vows during the ceremony, it can work either way, whether that is a technical difference in the sort of permission/dispensation you need to obtain. You have a year to work things out, so you can certainly come together, but it would be best to start soon. Meanwhile, I will pray for the two of you and for God’s blessings on your marriage.

(Questions may be sent to Fether Kenneth Doyle at askfatherdoyle@gmail.com and 30 Columbus Circle, New York, New York 10019.)

The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, Corpus Christi/
Msgr. Owen F. Campion

The Sunday Readings
Sunday, June 14, 2020

• Deuteronomy 8:2-3, 14b-16a
• 1 Corinthians 10:16-17
• John 6:51-58

Monday, June 15
1 Kings 21:1-36
Psalm 5:2-6, 8-9
Matthew 5:38-42

Tuesday, June 16
1 Kings 21:17-29
Psalm 5:3-6b, 11, 16
Matthew 5:43-48

Wednesday, June 17
2 Kings 2:1-25
Psalm 31:20-21, 24
Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18

Thursday, June 18
Sirach 48:1-4
Psalm 97:1-7
Matthew 6:7-15

Friday, June 19
The Most Sacred Heart of Jesus
Deuteronomy 7:6-11

Palm 103:1-4, 8, 10
1 John 4:7-16
Matthew 11:25-30

Saturday, June 20
The Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary
2 Chronicles 24:17-25
Psalm 100:1-5, 6-9
Luke 2:41-45

Sunday, June 21
Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Jeremiah 20:10-13
Psalm 10:7-12, 13-15
Romans 5:12-15
Matthew 10:26-33

My Journey to God

Triumphant Love

By Gayle Schrank

Everyone seems to have a label these days. And we react by what we think we know. Everyone seems to have a label these days. And we react by what we think we know.

By Gayle Schrank (Gayle Schrank is a member of St. Mary Parish in Navilleton. Photo: A man and woman hold hands in London’s Hyde Park during a “Black Lives Matter” protest on June 6, 2020. In the background, the death of George Floyd, an African American man who was taken into custody by Minneapolis police and later died at a Minneapolis hospital. [CBS News photo/Ethan Miller, Reuters])

The Criterion Friday, June 12, 2020

Daily Readings

Tuesday, June 16
1 Kings 21:17-29
Psalm 5:3-6b, 11, 16
Matthew 5:43-48

Wednesday, June 17
2 Kings 2:1-25
Psalm 31:20-21, 24
Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18

Thursday, June 18
Sirach 48:1-4
Psalm 97:1-7
Matthew 6:7-15

Friday, June 19
The Most Sacred Heart of Jesus
Deuteronomy 7:6-11

Jesus’ freed the just who died before him when he descended into hell

Q

receive our diocesan newspaper and have enjoyed reading your column over the years. But I do have a question that has always bothered me, even though I have made more than 30 retreats at a Jesuit retreat center and have taught CCD (religious education). In the Apostles’ Creed, why does it say that Jesus descended into hell and rose on the third day? How could Jesus go to hell? He had no sins—he was God. (Virginia)

A

During the celebration of the Mass on Sundays and other solemnities, the Apostles’ Creed may be used as an option in place of the more traditional Nicene Creed, and that prayer does say that Jesus, following his death, descended into hell to deliver the damned, but it could also denote the place where the righteous awaited redemption. Until Jesus had completed his death and resurrection, the just could not yet know the joys of being in God’s presence.

So, the first act of Christ after his death on Calvary was to go and rescue the just who had already died and bring them with him into the glory of the Father. As the Catechism of the Catholic Church states: “Jesus did not descend into hell to deliver the damned, nor to destroy the hell of Damnation, but to free the just who had gone before him” (#693).

Questions may be sent to Fether Kenneth Doyle at askfatherdoyle@gmail.com and 30 Columbus Circle, New York, New York 10019.
The publication of obituaries in The Criterion is suspended until further notice. This was the result of the unanimous vote of the staff of The Criterion working from their homes in order to shelter-in-place in response to the coronavirus pandemic. As these orders have begun to be relaxed, The Criterion is resuming the publication of obituaries in this issue. We received many obituaries during the shutdown and will publish them in subsequent issues. Our goal is to keep the obituaries of religious and lay communities in the archdiocese of those who served in central and southern Indiana and of the parents of archdiocesan priests that we received during the shutdown.


HUFF, Donald D., 77, Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Jeffersonville, March 5. Husband of Susan Watter. Great-grandfather of one.


ROTH, Donald W., 78, St. Agnes, Nashville, Feb. 20. Husband of Sharon Roth. Father of Sarah Jabbari, Amanda and Brian Roth. Brother of Kevin Roth. Grandfather of four.


THORNBURG, George, 67, St. Roch, Indianapolis, Feb. 28. Son of Donald and Dorothy (Cahill) Lecher. Brother of Joy Dill and Larry Dill. Great-grandfather of two.


山东农村。
**Marking World Environment Day, pope says: Don’t look the other way**

VAATNIC CTS (CNS)—Building a healthier, better world depends on everyone, Pope Francis said in his message marking World Environment Day on June 5. “We cannot remain silent before the outcry when we realize the very high costs of the destruction and exploitation of the ecosystem. This is not a time to continue looking the other way, indifferent to the signs that our planet is being plundered and violated by greed for profit, very often in the name of progress,” he wrote. “We have the chance to reverse course, to commit ourselves to a better, healthier world and to pass it on to future generations. Everything depends on us, if we really want it,” he added.

The pope sent his message to President Ivan Duque Marquez of Colombia, which had been scheduled to host a global meeting for World Environment Day. Events, instead, were being held “virtually” because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In his written message in Spanish, the pope said the pandemic served as a reminder that “in the face of adversity, new paths always open in order for us to be united as a great human family.”

The environment and the planet’s biodiversity affect everyone, he said, which is why “we cannot pretend to be healthy in a world that is sick. The wounds inflicted on our Mother Earth are wounds that also blight us. Caring for ecosystems is part of a wider concern for life, and protecting those ecosystems is meant for benefiting everyone,” Pope Francis noted.

“Our attitude toward the present state of our planet should indeed make us concerned for and witnesses to the gravity of the situation,” the pope wrote.

Highlighting the fifth anniversary of his encyclical, “Laudato Si’,” the pope invited those organizing and taking part in virtual events for World Environment Day “to participate in the special year that I have announced to reflect in light of that document and, together, to become more committed to the care and protection of our common home and of our most vulnerable and marginalized brothers and sisters in society.”

“I encourage you in this task that lies before you. I trust that your deliberations and conclusions will always foster the building of an increasingly habitable world and a more humane society, where all of us have a place and no one is ever left behind,” he wrote.†

**OLEA continued from page 12**

at home or not being able to see my family, I think about how the pandemic is impacting my community. When one of us is hurting, we’re all hurting. It’s not about my own health, it’s about the health of my community. It’s the fact that black and Latino communities are literally dying disproportionately from COVID-19. I choose to stay home because I cannot bear being responsible for spreading the virus to a community that is at risk, even if unintentionally. On the contrary, it’s my responsibility as a Christian to protect the vulnerable.

Choosing to practice solidarity is not a game of politics. Living solidarity requires self-sacrifice as Christ sacrificed himself for us on the cross. Let us remember the commandment that Jesus left us, “Love your neighbor as yourself” (Mt 22:39).

(Edith Avila Olea is associate director of justice and peace for the Diocese of Joliet, Ill. The 2015 winner of the Cardinal Bernardin New Leadership Award, she holds a master’s degree in public policy and a bachelor’s degree in organizational communication.)†

**Employment**

President, Roncalli High School

Roncalli High School, an archdiocesan parochial Catholic high school serving grades 9-12, is currently accepting applications for the position of president. Located on the near southside of Indianapolis, the school serves a growing, diverse student population of 1,200 and is accredited by the State of Indiana. The institution is blessed with exceptional teaching and administrative staff and a dedicated group of parents, friends, and alumni.

The president is the chief executive of the operational vitality for the institution, including development/advancement, marketing/enrollment, finances, and capital projects. The president leads and articulates the school’s mission and vision, creates and implements strategic plans, and builds and nurtures relationships. The president reports to and is evaluated by the Superintendent of Catholic Schools.

Applicants must foster a strong Catholic identity, value diversity, and possess strong leadership and interpersonal skills. Applicants must be practicing Roman Catholics who have demonstrated their commitment to servant leadership. Preferred candidates will have a master’s degree and/or equivalent work experience and a track record of building community and serving others.

Interested, qualified candidates are encouraged to apply by June 22, 2020; applications will be accepted until the position is filled.

To apply:

1. Please submit the following items electronically to Joni Ripa (jripa@archindy.org):
   - Letter of Interest, addressed to Gina Kunz Fleming, Superintendent of Catholic Schools, including responses to the following two questions:
     - What experience have you had leveraging diversity to achieve success?
     - How can you be a champion for the Catholic education and formation of young people in the role of president?
   - Resume
   - Three letters of recommendations or contact information for three professional references
   - 2. Complete the online application using the following link: https://www.applicantpro.com/openings/archindy/203/415961-366233

For questions about this Catholic leadership position, please email or call:

Rob Rash
Office of Catholic Schools
rash@archindy.org
317.236.1544
Free to Believe explores religious liberty from legal and biblical perspectives

By Sean Gallagher

Luke Goodrich is one of the country’s foremost experts on religious freedom. In his work as a lead attorney at the Washington-based Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, he’s been involved in some of the most high-profile religious freedom cases to come before the U.S. Supreme Court in recent years, representing the Little Sisters of the Poor and the Green family, which owns the Hobby Lobby chain of arts and crafts stores.

The religious liberty of his clients was upheld in both of those landmark cases and in others that Goodrich has argued before the high court.

So, one might think that Goodrich would have a singular focus on winning his clients’ cases and defeating their opponents.

But he doesn’t. In Free to Believe: The Battle over Religious Liberty in America (Multnomah, 2019), Goodrich instead advises his readers to “let go of winning.” Turning their attention to Scripture, he writes that “we’re called not to win, but to be like Jesus; not to fear suffering, but to fear God; not to be surprised at hostility, but to expect it; not to complain when we lose, but to rejoice; not to lash out at our opponents, but to love them. We’re called not to avoid losing at all costs, but to love God at all costs.”

Although Goodrich presents in his book a reason-based argument for religious liberty that could appeal to people of all faiths or none at all, it is clear that his primary audience is Christians who are already convinced of the validity and importance of religious freedom.

At the same time, as one would expect of an attorney involved in important religious liberty cases, Goodrich shows a clear understanding of the arguments of those who advocate for a narrow understanding of the conscience rights of religious individuals and organizations.

When explaining their views, Goodrich does so in a matter-of-fact manner, showing no ill will toward those who oppose religious liberty. And he gives a sober analysis of where legal challenges to religious freedom may go in the months and years ahead, and what churches, religious individuals and organizations can do to put themselves in the best position possible to be victorious in court.

While these cases are often complex and involve detailed legal arguments on both sides, Goodrich shows throughout his book a deft ability to express the often-complex legal realities of religious liberty litigation in ways that a general audience will understand without oversimplifying them.

This skill in communicating legal concepts and how they apply to everyday life might be expected of a top-flight lawyer like Goodrich.

What might more surprise readers is Goodrich’s thoughtful approach to exploring how religious liberty is treated in sacred Scripture.

He shows in examining passages from both the Old and New Testaments that religious liberty is at the heart of both the Jewish and Christian understanding of the human person.

Goodrich goes on to observe how figures throughout the Bible—from prophets like Jeremiah and Daniel to the Apostles and first members of the Church—took different approaches in dealing with challenges to their religious liberty, depending on the particular circumstances of the situation.

Some found ways of accommodation with governmental authorities while others accepted suffering for their fidelity to the Lord. The Apostles, in fact, saw such tribulations as a badge of honor, “rejoicing that they had been found worthy to suffer dishonor for the sake of the name” (Acts 5:41).

In the end, Goodrich looks to both the recent history of religious liberty litigation in the U.S. and the wisdom of the Scriptures in giving advice for Christians in America regarding how to deal with challenges to their conscience rights in the future.

He calls on Christians to be faithful to the teachings of their faith and to communicate clearly how those teachings are relevant to their mission and employment practices. At the same time, they should always seek peace with those who disagree with them if such peace is possible. All of this and other recommendations Goodrich makes in the end, he says, are simply calls for Christians to be more Christ-like. That, by no means, will guarantee courtroom victories, for Christ himself suffered a terrible legal injustice at the hands of Pontius Pilate.

In either victory or defeat, however, Christians seeking to be faithful to God and defending religious liberty when necessary will provide to the broader society a witness to the Gospel and the “glorious freedom of the children of God” that it proclaims (Rom 8:21). †