USCCB president ‘deeply concerned’ about court’s LGBT ruling

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Eucharist heals, gives strength to serve others, Holy Father says

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—The Eucharist heals people of their wounds, emptiness and sadness, and gives them the strength to share Christ’s loving mercy with others, Pope Francis said.

“The joy of the Lord can change lives, the pope said in his homily during Mass on June 14, the feast of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ.

“This is the strength of the Eucharist, which transforms us into bringers of God, brings of joy, not negativity,” he said during the morning Mass, which was celebrated in St. Peter’s Basilica with a small congregation of about 50 people, the majority of whom wore masks and maintained social distance.

Drastically reducing the size of the congregation and not holding a traditional outdoor Corpus Christi procession after Mass were part of the ongoing efforts to contain the spread of the coronavirus.

Over many decades, popes have celebrated the feast either in different neighborhoods in and around Rome or at the Basilica of St. John Lateran following a one-mile procession to the Basilica of St. Mary Major. The solemn procession, in which the pope or a priest conveys a monstrance containing the Blessed Sacrament through the streets, would be lined with thousands of people.

For the feast day celebration on June 14, however, the entire ceremony was held inside St. Peter’s Basilica and concluded with a long moment of silent prayer.

In his homily, Pope Francis said, “The Eucharist allows us to receive him, they can say, ‘He is the Lord; he remembers me!’”

The Eucharist, he said, also heals the many ways one’s memory may be wounded.

“The Eucharist first heals our occupied memory,” caused by a past darkened by a lack of affection and “bitter disappointments caused by those who should have given them love and instead oppressed them,” he said.

“The past cannot be changed, he said, however, God can heal those wounds ‘by placing within our memory a greater love—his own love,’” which is always consoling and faithful.

“Through the Eucharist, Jesus also heals negative memory,” which harbors all the things that have gone wrong and leaves people thinking they are useless or only make mistakes.

“Every time we receive him, he reminds us that we are precious, that we are guests he has invited to his banquet,” the pope said.

“The Lord knows that evil and sins do not define us; they are diseases, infections. And he comes to heal them with the Eucharist, which brings consolations and removes our negative memory,” he said.

Finally, the pope said, the Eucharist heals a closed memory filled with wounds that make people fearful, suspicious, cynical and indifferent.

“Only love can heal fear at its root,” he said, “and free us from the self-centeredness that imprisons us,” he said.

“Jesus approaches people gently, “in the disarming simplicity of the host,” as bread that has been broken “in order to break open the shells of our selfishness,” he said.

Daily Mass is also offered on EWTN (Eternal Word Television Network), and Catholic Radio Indy 89.1 FM and 90.9 FM broadcasts a daily Mass at 8 a.m. each day from the EWTN chapel in Indianapolis.

Catholic TV also broadcasts Mass on its website, www.catholictv.org/masses/catholctv-mass.
Scholarship will honor Chris Beaty, who put ‘his life on the line’ for others

By John Shaughnessy

When someone was considering which high school to attend, Chris Beaty never wavered from his belief that the choice should be Cathedral High School in Indianapolis.

“When I was picking a high school, he was a very outspoken advocate for Cathedral,” recalls Jared Thomas, one of Beaty’s nephews. “He said that in four years, it prepared you not only academically and athletically, but also for life. He went to Cathedral and really found who he was as a person.”

From his heart hugs to his efforts to break down racial barriers, Beaty lived his life “with a giant heart filled with love for everyone he met,” say the friends and family members of the 2000 Cathedral graduate. And he died in the same way, putting “his life on the line” for others.

In the midst of the May 30 riots in downtown Indianapolis after protests about the deaths of black Americans by police, Beaty was shot and killed when he tried to help two women being attacked near his apartment.

So, to honor the person that Beaty became and the two schools he loved, family and friends have established the Chris Beaty Memorial Scholarship Fund to raise money for scholarships to Cathedral and Indiana University, where he graduated from college.

A GoFundMe effort set up for that purpose reached its initial goal of $150,000 on June 13—the day of Beaty’s graduation. And he died in the same way, putting “his life on the line” for others.

“The scholarship opportunity from Chris’ family is exactly what Chris would have wanted. I hope I am around long enough to meet the kids that receive this, to let them know what Chris was all about.”

(For anyone who wants to donate to the Chris Beaty Memorial Scholarship Fund, go to www.gofundme.com/Chris-beaty-memorial-fund)

Documentary on potential Native American saint to air on June 21

A United States Conference of Catholic Bishops’ (USCCB) documentary on Nicholas Black Elk, an Oglala Lakota native American Catholic convert whose cause for canonization opens, will air on WRTV in Indianapolis at 6 a.m. on June 21.

Titled “Walking the Red Road: Nicholas Black Elk’s Journey to SAintthood,” the documentary was funded by the USCCB’s Catholic Communication Campaign and is an in-depth look at this Native American Catholic high school where Beaty was a member of three state championship football teams.

“There are so many people from everywhere across the country who have reached out to us about what Chris did for them. It’s been an outpouring of love for him,” says Thomas, a 2015 Cathedral graduate who organized the scholarship effort.

“It has not been a surprise because Chris lived and loved passionately every day of his 38 years on this Earth. We encourage everyone to live like Chris—to love others boldly, to stand up for what’s right, to live every day to the fullest.”

Scholarships that provide opportunities for others are a fitting tribute to Beaty, says Nicole (Farrell) Beasley, a longtime friend who met Beaty at Cathedral.

“He always wanted to know what he could do for you. He was the ultimate giver,” says Beasley, now Cathedral’s executive vice president for advancement.

“The world witnessed a seed God planted when giving Chris life on Earth. Chris always had a student he was mentoring. He would always advocate that tuition assistance be available for students that could not afford to attend Cathedral. Through this scholarship in his name, his legacy is ensured to live out forever.”

There’s another important part of Beaty’s legacy to remember, says Rick Streiff, Cathedral’s head football coach during the time Beaty played there.

“He became a very good player but a better teammate,” says Streiff, now the school’s athletic director. “We used to talk with our teams about how your best friends in the world will be part of this team, and Streiff has one last wish about his former player.

“The scholarship opportunity from Chris’ family is exactly what Chris would have wanted. I hope I am around long enough to meet the kids that receive this, to let them know what Chris was all about.”

(The archdiocesan Office of Human Life and Dignity is accepting nominations for the Archbishops’ O’Meara Respect Life Award and the Our Lady of Guadalupe Pro-Life Youth Award through Sept. 12. The Archbishops O’Meara Respect Life Award honors an adult or married couple who demonstrates leadership in promoting the dignity and sanctity of human life from birth to natural death in the parish community and in the archdiocese. The Our Lady of Guadalupe Pro-Life Youth Award honors a high school student who demonstrates leadership in promoting the dignity and sanctity of all human life in the parish community, school community and in central and southern Indiana).

The awards will be presented at the Respect Life Mass to be celebrated by Archbishop Charles C. Thompson at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, 1347 N. Meridian St., in Indianapolis, at 10:30 a.m. on Oct. 4.

Printable nomination forms can be found at archindy.org/respectlife. Completed forms should be mailed to the Office of Human Life and Dignity, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202, or e-mailed to beichhorn@archindy.org.

For more information, call Keri Carroll at 317-236-1521 or e-mail kcarroll@archindy.org.

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Your gift to the United Catholic Appeal goes a long way in bringing hope to those who think it no longer exists.

Thank you for your generosity!
Our history of racism

We hope that the peaceful demonstrations against racism, which have extended throughout the world, will have some lasting effects. Somehow we must learn that all humans are made in the image and likeness of God, and end discrimination.

After the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis, Catholic leaders from Pope Francis to the American bishops have issued statements re-emphasizing that racism is a life issue that must be condemned. "We cannot tolerate or turn a blind eye to racism and exclusion in any form and yet claim to defend the sacredness of every human life," the pope said.

In all honesty, though, we must admit that American Catholics haven’t always rejected racism. And that could play a role in why only about 3 percent of Catholics are African-Americans.

We have to acknowledge that there was a time when many parishes would not admit black Americans, or, if they did, they would have to remain in the back of the church and receive Communion on a plate by the door. Religious orders owned black slaves.

Thankfully, all that has changed, or is changing. But it seems that the Jesuits apologize for their sins of the past. Georgetown University, for example, apologized to the descendants of 272 enslaved people owned by the Jesuits and sold in 1838 to help finance the first Catholic college in the United States.

It’s difficult to admit, but many Catholics tended to be racists well into the 20th century. When New Orleans Archbishop Francis J. Rummel demanded the desegregation of churches and schools in his archdiocese in 1953, he met so much opposition that, as late as May 25, 1953, he moved to such action.

Venerable Hennizette Delile, born in New Orleans in 1812, was known as “a free woman of color.” She founded the Congregation of the Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary to catechize African-Americans, and members of the congregation lived in great poverty.

Venerable Augustus Tolton (baptized Augustine) was a former slave in Hannibal, Mo., who became a slave in Hannibal, Mo., and was freed under the Fugitive Slave Act in 1856. He moved to Baltimore where he eventually became a priest.

Servant of God Mary Lange founded the Oblate Sisters of Providence in Baltimore to educate free black children. She was eventually sold into slavery in 1808. She was eventually freed under the Fugitive Slave Act. She is being considered for sainthood.

Baltimore to educate black children. She would pull a red wagon through the streets to bring food, coal, clothing and groceries to the needy.

Servant of God Thea Bowman was a remarkable woman who died of cancer in 1990 at age 52. Immediately before her death, sitting in her wheelchair, she gave a powerful speech to the U.S. bishops on what she said was her favorite topic: evangelization among the black population. She finished her talk by urging young Americans to embrace the African-American hymnal. The bishops gave her a standing ovation when she finished.

Perhaps one of the best things American Catholics could do as we strive to help eradicate racism would be to advocate for the early beatification of these six people. May our hearts be moved to such action.

—John F. Fink
El Sagrado Corazón de Jesús nos invita a amar sin reservas

“El núcleo esencial del cristianismo se expresa en el Corazón de Jesús. … Su Corazón divino llama a nuestros corazones, invitándonos a salir de nosotros mismos, abandonar nuestras certezas humanas para confiar en él, siguiendo su ejemplo, hacer de nosotros un don de amor sin reservas” (Papa Benedicto XVI).

La fecha de publicación de esta columna es el viernes 19 de junio, la Solemnidad del Sagrado Corazón de Jesús. En el Evangelio de hoy (Mt 11:25-30), figura una cita de nuestro Señor, en la que dice: “Vengan a mi todos ustedes que están cansados y agobiados, y yo los daré descanso. Carguen con mi yugo y aprendan de mí, pues yo soy apacible y humilde de corazón, y encontrarán descanso para su alma. Porque mi yugo es suave y mi carga es liviana” (Mt 11:28-30).

Jesús, el único Hijo de Dios Todopoderoso, se presenta a sí mismo como manso y humilde de corazón. Esta no es la grandezza como el de Caín. Es la grandezza divina, una fuerza tan poderosa que puede, paradoxalmente, expresarse en la mansedumbre y el amor abnegado.

Jesús no necesita exaltarse a sí mismo sobre nosotros. Él sabe quién es, y por qué fue enviado por el Padre para tomar sobre sí el yugo de nuestro egoísmo y la carga de nuestros pecados. Nos invita a imitarlo, a compartir su sofrimiento y a encontrar consuelo y descanso en él. En la primera lectura de hoy (Dt 7:6-11), Moisés dice a los israelitas (y a nosotros): “Porque para el Señor tu Dios eres un pueblo santo: él te eligió para que fueras su posesión exclusiva entre todos los pueblos de la tierra” (Dt 7:6). Él Señor se ha “encariñado” con nosotros (Dt 7:7), no por nuestra grandeza, riqueza o poder. Nos ha escogido, a pesar de nuestra debilidad, porque nos ama. Y nos invita a unirnos a él para aceptar las cargas de la humildad y el amor para que podamos ser libres.

En la segunda lectura de hoy (1 Jn 4:9-12), declaramos que con el mismo amor en que fue amado a Dios, amamos a nuestros hermanos. No olvidemos que ese amor es ilimitado, comerá en amor y en bondad, y el amor que encontramos será un amor que nos devolverá, que nos dará un amor verdadero, un amor que nunca nos abandonará.

Porque si el Corazón de Jesús, el único Hijo de Dios, el único Hijo de Dios, el único Hijo de Dios, es manso y humilde, ¿cómo no debemos imitarlo, ¿cómo no debemos amar sin reservas? ¿Cómo no debemos ser como él, ¿cómo no debemos amar sin reservas, como él nos tiene amado? Porque si el Corazón de Jesús, el único Hijo de Dios, el único Hijo de Dios, es manso y humilde, ¿cómo no debemos imitarlo, ¿cómo no debemos amar sin reservas? ¿Cómo no debemos ser como él, ¿cómo no debemos amar sin reservas, como él nos tiene amado?
Catholics of all ages, races march in Atlanta for racial justice

ATLANTA (CNS)—A peaceful protest against racism and racial injustice in Atlanta on June 11 brought together Catholics of all ages and races, including families, students, teachers, priests, deacons, religious, chancery staff and local faith organizations and ministries. More than 400 Catholics filled the street in front of the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. Shrine volunteers greeted attendees, and name tags were provided to help people recognize familiar faces hidden by masks, a required safety precaution due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Social distancing also was encouraged during the march.

Cathy Harmon-Christian was one of many volunteers from the Atlanta shrine greeting marchers. “I was grateful to see this show of solidarity,” she told The Georgia Bulletin, newspaper of the Archdiocese of Atlanta.

George Harris led a call and response on the steps of the shrine at the beginning of the protest. He is a member of St. Anthony of Padua Parish in Atlanta and marched with his wife and two daughters. Originally from Birmingham, Ala., Harris grew up knowing victims of the 16th Street Baptist Church bombing in 1963 committed by four known Klansmen and segregationists. Four girls were killed and 22 other people were injured.

“That was the event that shocked the nation, shocked the world,” said Harris. “The murder of George Floyd was one of those events that shocked a number of people’s consciousness.”

“This is a peaceful and prayerful march for justice,” said Father Victor Galier, pastor of St. Anthony of Padua Parish and a member of the planning committee for the march. He had hoped for at least 50 people to participate, but attendance exceeded that number by hundreds.

“We must examine our own consciences for the times we have let racism take root in our conversations, our lives and in our nation,” he added.

“At the very least, the people of St. Anthony of Padua are hurting,” said Father Galier of his community. The parish in Atlanta’s West End consists of predominantly black Catholics.

“The pastor has been protesting racism and injustice in Atlanta during the past couple of weeks in demonstrations, which were sparked by the recent murders of black Americans, including Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor and Floyd.

In the early morning hours of June 13, the city of Atlanta was roiled by the fatal police shooting of an African-American man, Rayshard Brooks, 27.

Officers said he resisted arrest and stole an officer’s taser after initially agreeing to a sobriety test. Brooks’ death has been ruled a homicide: One officer was fired, another officer was put on administrative leave, and the city’s police chief resigned.

Atlanta Archbishop Gregory J. Hartmayer participated in the march.

“For those who think marching against racism is not important, Archbishop Hartmayer cited history, hope and conversion as the reasons to do so.

“We want to join generations of people who left their homes and took to the streets to demand justice,” said the archbishop. “Racism continues to plague this country. And the time is right, once again, to seek radical change within our society and ourselves. Our African-American families are hurting,” said Archbishop Hartmayer. “We need to listen to their voices. We need to walk with them on this new journey. We march because we are in need of another conversion. And we start by gathering as a community to share Scripture and prayer.”

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“Human beings are storytellers because we are engaged in a process of constant growth, discovering ourselves, and becoming enriched in the tapestry of the human experience. At the very beginning, our story has been threatened: evil snakes its way through history. (Pope Francis in his message for World Communications Day)

All children love stories, especially at bedtime or around a campfire. “Stories leave their mark on us,” Pope Francis says. “They shape our convictions and our behavior. They can help us understand and communicate who we are.” They can also reveal to us who God is, the deepest meaning and purpose of our lives.

In his message for World Communications Day on May 24, Pope Francis chose to call attention to the role of storytelling in the formation of human minds and hearts. This universal experience, which involves the painting of verbal or written portraits through images that inspire, entertain and sometimes frighten us, can either build up or tear down the human spirit.

“No stories are good stories,” the pope reminds us. From the very beginning, in the Garden of Eden, the lies (false narratives) told by the Evil One have destroyed trust and inspired actions that are destructive rather than life-giving. “Often we mistake the parables for the parabolists,” the Holy Father warns, “instead of constructive stories which serve to strengthen social ties and the cultural fabric, we find destructive and provocative stories that wear down and break the fragile threads binding us together as a society.”

And yet, we continue to seek and find good stories, ones that illustrate the splendor of God’s creation, the wondrous love of Jesus who suffered and died to redeem humanity from its sinfulness, and the grace of the Holy Spirit which can open hardened hearts and transform communities that are bound by systemic evils.

According to Pope Francis, the Bible is “the story of stories.” The Bible recounts the history of God’s love for all creation, God’s patience with us rebellious and ungrateful children, and the story of Jesus, the master storyteller, who speaks of God “not with abstract concepts, heavy, brief stories taken from every day life.” We encounter Jesus in the stories told about him in the Gospels, and we can actually hear his story as it is revealed more fully in the lives of Mary and all the saints.

“Often the Bible truly is a creative and suggestive story ever told! It does not sugarcane the reality of evil or the desplicable actions of human beings who reject God’s love. But it weaves through the story of human history God’s unconditional love and ever-present mercy, like truly good news for all whose hearts are troubled by the burden of our sins.”

What Pope Francis calls “the story of stories” is, in fact, the story of every one of us. As the pope tells us: “As we read the Scriptures, the stories of the saints, and also those texts that have shed light on the human heart and its beauty, the Holy Spirit is free to write in our hearts, reviving our memory of what we are in God’s eyes. When we remember the love that created and saved us, and when we make love a part of our daily stories, when we weave the tapestry of our days with mercy, we are turning children into saints. We no longer remain tied to regrets and sadness, bound to an unhealthy memory that burdens our hearts, redoing ourselves to others, we open ourselves to the same vision of the great storyteller. Telling God our story is never useless even if the record of events remains the same, the meaning and perspective are always changing.”

Making love part of our daily stories is our vocation as missionary disciples of Jesus Christ. In re-telling his story through our own words and actions, we bear witness “to what the Spirit writes in our hearts,” and we reveal to everyone that all our stories “contain marvelous things.” In this way, our individual stories become part of the continuing story of stories. We become both narrators and protagonists in the greatest story ever told.

Pope Francis concludes his message for World Day of Communications with a prayer to the Blessed Virgin Mary, who “wove the divine Word into your womb” and “recounted by your life the magnificent works of God.” May your story become our stories, the pope prays. “Help us build stories of peace, stories that point to the future. And show us the way to live them together.”

(Daniel Conway is a member of The Criterion’s editorial committee.) †
another person, I think it’s beautiful.

And only 16,000 kidney transplants

The gift of life

donor when Barcenas went on the

wanted others to have that same blessing

blessing to have her so active in our

and parish activities. It was a great
career in the newspaper world.

for Barcenas and her daughters was the

and give her more time with her children.”

and 9-year-old Carmen.

six years. They were active members of

the Spanish community in Masses, and

against the odds

morning of May 14 when Father

Wadelton. And she's helped another person as

Jesus. He’s an example of truly the kind of person who donates a kidney—completely

unselfish. Just the giving of self to help someone else is truly remarkable. Donors

are such exceptional people. The beautiful thing about a living donor is it helps

two people. He’s helped

For Father Wadelton, it was another

Good thing come to a good end.”

of his transplant.

donating his kidney to Barcenas.

I couldn’t believe it,” she says.

Father Chris is an amazing person and a

very good priest that worries for his

people and is always willing to do

human rights. He always tries to help in

whatever way he can without wanting

the ingressum of a person “is made in the image and likeness

of God,” the USCCB filing read.

The court’s majority seemed to be writing

a new lawsuit and “massive liabilities

unjust discrimination does not require

priest, noting that he runs about four

same time in his life when he believed God had

His surgery at IU Health’s University

hospital began first, an operation to

remove one of his two kidneys that lasted

21 1/2 years of testing along

about being a living donor, Father

Wadelton recommends checking the

website, www.isheath.org/find-medical-services/living-organ-donation/
The love of the Eucharist shines through in readers’ stories

( 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. This is the last of the three-part series. )

By John Shaughnessy

Pauline Lancaster is quick to share two of the great blessings in her life, starting with the fact that all four of her grown children still attend Mass weekly with their families. The other blessing, in her view, is that all four children received their first Communion at home.

That family tradition started with their sons, Nick and Patrick, in the late 1970s when Pauline’s husband Steve was serving in the military in Charlottesville, Va. One of the options for receiving the sacrament for the first time was during a Mass in the child’s home.

“If they chose a home Mass, some parishioners needed to be included, as they are the child’s parish family, and they offer support and encouragement,” Pauline recalls. “My husband and I thought a home Mass would give our children a chance to be more involved in the ceremony.

“It would also be a great learning experience for them to be so close to the priest and see what was happening. We used our four children’s baptismal candles on our altar, making sure they all knew they were included. The child making their first Communion read one of the readings and helped make the eucharistic bread.”

That tradition continued for their daughters, Polly and Stephanie, when Steve’s military assignment led the family to live in Germany in the early 1980s.

“We were fortunate that our priests allowed us to continue the home Mass tradition for them,” Pauline says. “Even though we moved between the two events, some of our friends had moved to the same location and were present for both events.”

Now members of St. Joseph Parish in Shelbyville, the Lancasters still cherish the memories of having their children’s first Communions at home with close friends.

“Our families were far away so most could not come,” Pauline notes. Having this sacrament celebrated in our home made us feel we were among family.”

The joy and the wonder

The small book is worn after 65 years, but that just adds to the story of how much Dee Janik’s love for the Eucharist pours from her heart.

“I still have my first Communion prayer book, Jesus, Make Me Worthy,” Janik says. “Albeit, 65 years have given this remembrance a time-worn appearance, but I cherish this tiny book with all my heart and still read it.”

At the same time, Janik’s love for the Eucharist has also deepened as an adult. Her joy and wonder for the sacrament shines through in the way she describes her role as one of the coordinators of the eucharistic adoration ministry at St. Joan of Arc Parish in Indianapolis.

“Each time one steps into the sacristy, candles are lit on and beside the altar,” she notes. “The monstrance is set on the altar, front and center. And the tabernacle is open to bring out and place the luna in the monstrance.” (The luna is the object that holds the Blessed Sacrament, which is placed in the monstrance.)

“I was holding our Lord the Christ in my hands!”

Janik has also started to anticipate the first Communion of her oldest grandchild in the spring of 2021. It shows again that the story of her love for the Eucharist is ever new.

“So many memories and the promise of spring in the air,” she says. “Best of all is knowing Jesus is coming to me, my family and friends—to our souls. The Eucharist is our Lord, body, blood, soul and divinity.”

‘Jesus, I love you’

The impact of receiving her first Communion has stayed with LaVerne Weston for nearly 75 years. So has the prayer she learned when she first received the Eucharist: “Jesus, I love you. Thank you for coming to me. Every hour, I will think of you. Ugly thoughts, words and actions keep far away from me. I wish to receive Holy Communion every week.”

“I was taught this prayer to say after receiving my first Communion,” notes Weston, a member of St. Lawrence Parish in Lawrenceburg who turned 81 on May 5.

“I have been saying this since the second grade. I’ve said it after each Communion I’ve received.”

Sixty-five years have passed since her first Communion, but Dee Janik still has her prayer book from receiving the sacrament. (Submitted photo)

Ashley and Andrew Wells share a light moment with their daughter Olivia during a June 13 Mass at Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Church in Indianapolis at which Olivia received her first Communion. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

‘I wanted to be part of it’

Debbie Hartman’s detailed memories of her first Communion even extend to the weather.

“It poured rain that morning,” she notes about that April day in 1961 in St. Mark the Evangelist Church in Indianapolis. “I had looked forward to my first Communion for a long time. It seemed so grown up to me, and I wanted to be part of it.”

“We had prepared at school for quite awhile and understood how special it was to be close to Jesus. We made our first confession. I enjoyed my special prayer book and rosary to carry in the little white purse the girls received.

“Mom and Dad had planned a family party that afternoon at our house. Plans changed when my brother came down with the measles. The party was moved to my grandparents’ house, and Dad took me to the party. Mom had to stay home with Mark, and I missed them being there.”

Fifty-nine years have passed, but she says she still has that desire to “experience Christ in the Eucharist.”

‘This beauty has changed me’

Maria Cossell becomes poetic when she describes the impact that eucharistic adoration has on her.

“Beauty is in a small consecrated host within a golden monstrance,” Cossell notes. “That is where the true essence of beauty can be found. God, who became man and was brutally killed, has left us with his heart. His heart is the source of love and mercy that is the balm to the wounds of humanity.

“This beauty I see stirs my heart. I am drawn to it like a newborn baby to its mother. I long to be redeemed and healed—to tell others about my encounter with God. I long to become what I experience, to give myself to others without a forethought of what suffering I may or may not endure.”

A member of St. Joan of Arc Parish in Indianapolis, Cossell longs for others to share this feeling.

“This beauty has changed me and has the ability to change the world. Will you open your eyes to this beauty?”

“Ugly thoughts, words and actions keep far away from me. I wish to receive Holy Communion every week.”
Cadwallader said such social distancing can sometimes bring to the surface for some people psychological and emotional challenges that might have been more hidden in the past. “With the separation and silence, a lot of things that are in our heads and in our hearts are rising up in some ways,” he said. “Some of that has been the realization that we’re not ultimately in control. We’re actually utterly dependent upon God at all times.”

“That’s something which is always true. It’s a reminder of who God is and what we are. We have to trust in his providence to be able to, not just survive this pandemic, but actually be able to thrive. There’s actually a lot of goodness coming out of this for a lot of people.”

Such social separation has been an aspect of Catholic spirituality for more than 1,500 years, noted Chamblee. He pointed to monks who lived in deserts in Egypt and the Middle East starting in the late third century. Living apart from the rest of society “created for them a time for personal separation causing by the pandemic “can be an opportunity for us to recognize something which is always true. It’s a reminder of who God is and what we are. We have to trust in his providence to be able to, not just survive this pandemic, but actually be able to thrive. There’s actually a lot of goodness coming out of this for a lot of people.”

With our own experience as Catholics, “For us, our experience has been that separation and silence, a lot of things that are in our heads and in our hearts are rising up in some ways,” said Chamblee. “Some of that has been the realization that we’re not ultimately in control. We’re actually utterly dependent upon God at all times.”

Joining the Catholic faith with mental health therapy offers added help to clients

By Sean Gallagher

John Cadwallader, Jonathan Chamblee and Pauline Kattady are three mental health clinicians who practice at Central Psychological Services in Indianapolis. They seek to help clients’ mental health both through their professional training and experience, and through the Church’s deep spiritual traditions and its understanding of the human person (which can be described as a “Catholic anthropology”).

This stands in contrast to a large majority of mental health clinicians, Cadwallader said, who either have reservations about incorporating faith into their practice or, as atheists or agnostics, are opposed to it.

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A Special Word to Those Who Have Had an Abortion...
Do not give in to discouragement and do not lose hope.... If you have not already done so, give yourselves over with humility and trust to repentance. The Father of mercies is ready to give you his forgiveness and his peace.

~Saint John Paul II, The Gospel Life
Fathers shape the lives of their children through the power of their example

By Mike Nelson

“My son,” says the Book of Proverbs, “do not despise the Lord’s discipline, and do not resent his rebuke, because the Lord disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in” (Prv 3:11-12).

If that’s the case, I must have been one delightful son, seeing as how my father—whom I loved very much—could have taught a master class in “discipline” and “rebuke.”

And, like a lot of fathers, he had a way of getting his children to do things they didn’t necessarily want to do.

Even Jesus’ heavenly father asked him to do something that no father I know would ever suggest: sacrifice his life for the sake of the world.

Luke (Lk 22:42) tells us that Jesus trembled with a human dread before the passion and death he was to face (“Father, if you are willing, take this cup away from me”), but dutifully acquiesced to his Father’s request (“Not my will, but yours be done”).

But then, Jesus himself was able to get people to do things they might not do otherwise. No one knew his power of persuasion better than his first disciples.

Two of them, James and John, were working with their father, Zebedee, mending their fishing nets in their boat, when Jesus called them.

“Immediately,” writes St. Matthew, “they left their boat and their father and followed him” (Mt 4:22).

I shudder to imagine what would have happened if I or my brothers were, let’s say, doing yardwork with our dad, and a stranger came along and said, “Follow me,” and we’d up and leave our dad holding the leaf rake. I’m not sure we’d have been anxious to return home anytime soon. (Come to think of it, Scripture doesn’t tell us that James and John ever returned home, either.)

It is, of course, possible to follow Jesus and to love and honor our parents.

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right,” says St. Paul (Eph 6:1-3). “ ‘Honour your father and mother.’ This is the first commandment with a promise, that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the Earth.”

But in the very next sentence, Paul has instructions for fathers as well: “Fathers, do not provoke your children in anger, but bring them up with the training and instruction of the Lord” (Eph 6:4).

In that regard, I am grateful that my parents—both raised in families who regularly attended church on Sundays—sent my brothers and I to Lutheran Sunday School when we were young. Such is the call of the Book of Proverbs: “Train the young in the way they should go; even when old, they will not swerve from it” (Prv 22:6).

The same book also tells us that “the fear of the Lord is a strong defense, a refuge even for one’s children” (Prv 14:26). That early faith foundation—an awareness of and belief in God the Father and his Son Jesus—has been both refuge and sustenance for me, even in my adolescent and teen years, when I rarely attended church.

To be honest, I was just as happy to spend my weekends playing games, watching TV and sleeping late. Which is why I am forever blessed that my wife and toddler son drew me not only back to the practice of my faith, but also into the full communion of the Church as a Catholic.

She, a lifelong Catholic, became director of our parish preschool when our son turned 3, and I joined other dads (some regular churchgoers, some not) in “helping out”—moving chairs, laying out floor mats and setting up tables in the classrooms.

Soon, I was attending Mass each week with our son, and within two years I was confirmed. That was 35 years ago, and we have remained an active, church-going family ever since.

My wife and I are doubly blessed that our son, throughout his life, has attended Mass willingly and, for the most part, joyfully. He is a lector and usher, always lends a hand when (and often before) he is asked, and is truly a son his parents “delight in.”

His attitude, I admit, contrasts with my own. In my case, I was sometimes unwilling to do something the Church called me to do because I didn’t want to—particularly as I came of age, and began to question things I was being asked to do.

Perhaps his best example was articulated by St. Paul to the people of Corinth: “Stand firm in the faith, be courageous, be strong. Your every act should be done with love” (1 Cor 16:13-14).


(Catholic journalist Mike Nelson writes from Southern California.)
All others were suspect (Catholicism, Judaism, Islam). They were even more suspect.

Wherever in the world today there is a majority religion in a country or region, there is often an accompanying "privilege." It's better for those who are of the majority. A friend of mine asked recently if the need to differentiate, to the point of diminishment of human value, is innate. I could not answer anthropologically, religiously or culturally.

I did say that there is clearly an identifiable tendency toward "them" vs. "us," "better" vs. "lesser" and true vs. "questionable."

Every instance reveals that such dyads or hierarchies are innate. I could not answer anthropologically, religiously or culturally.

As a priest for 37 years, I have kept a close eye on "clerical privilege." It can be very real.

I have tried to live well beyond any sense of it in my ministry. When I recall that I came from the pews in which I sat as a young boy, I was baptized and called to holiness like them. I am called to serve as I have been served faithfully by so many.

As an example of a moment of interreligious dialogue, I know that religions must come to grips with "religious privilege" in our own time and how it has played out in the history of our religious relationships. A few examples are warranted.

I gather with religions that are in the minority in our city each fall at the Festival of Faiths. While there, I represent a minority religion among the more predominant Christian denominations in our city. Yet I am privileged because I am a Catholic priest. There is no need for me to justify why I am here. That is the stuff of privilege.

Growing up in medieval Europe, Catholicism was "privileged" for the dominant religions of the day and daily living. All other religions were "lesser," "suspect" or "dangerous."

Growing up in the Ottoman Empire, Islam was privileged. True, in that particular society, there was such a tolerance that those who could "succeed" were Muslim; all others were lesser than.

In 16th-century England, Tudor privilege favored the Church of England over all others to the detriment—even cruel treatment—of those who refused to change.

In Russia in the 19th century, Orthodoxy was "privileged."

And yet I know that if I were to go to a country where there are no Catholic priests, I could not do the job of being a priest.

I’d be willing to bet that not many of us have watched a day in the life of those who don’t go to war or work in the military. It is not uncommon for us to often witness to the last breath of another during the course of a day.

We don’t see a lifeless body rolled over onto a stretcher, head dangling limply.

The actor Jerry Seinfeld once observed that people’s number one fear is public speaking; it even outranked the fear of death. That meant, Seinfeld joked, that at a funeral, we are free to occupy the casket than give the eulogy.

Despite being second in the poll, the fear of death is still something that we often avoid or never confront. Recent news about COVID-19 pandemic is unlikely to make us confront our mortality. But if we ignore the fear of death, we will probably not come to grips with it and will continue to have a short fuse to a long-standing powder keg that awaits the right moment to ignite.

The reason why the fear of death is still something that we often ignore or never confront is that people are not confrontational by nature. And yet we are all mortality. We have experienced it directly, we have witnessed it indirectly, and we will experience it ourselves.

ThatAll May Be One

Fr. Rick Ginther

A time of prayer and prayer

on the issue of privilege

Privilige. It is a word curiously much maligned here in United States.

From my experience, its use is meant to call us to personal reflection. How are we a person of "privileged"? As we experience it? Do we see ourselves in a privileged group? Do we see ourselves denied some basic dignity because we are not so privileged? As a priest for 37 years, I have kept a close eye on "clerical privilege." It can be very real.

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The reason why the fear of death is still something that we often ignore or never confront is that people are not confrontational by nature. And yet we are all mortality. We have experienced it directly, we have witnessed it indirectly, and we will experience it ourselves.
The Book of Jeremiah supplies the first reading for Mass this weekend. Jeremiah wrote at a time when life was hard for God’s chosen people. Only briefly was life good for God’s people. Their nation was unified under one ruler for a relatively short period of time, comparatively speaking. They enjoyed only one golden age, namely the years of the reign of David and then the time of the rule of David’s son, Solomon.

After Solomon, the country divided. Weakened, often at odds among themselves, the two resulting kingdoms never attained the level of prosperity and contentment that the single nation had known under David and his son. Moreover, dismembered and quarreling with each other, the two Hebrew states were attractive targets for ambitious neighbors. All this was bad enough. For prophets such as Jeremiah, the worst aspect was that the people had grown sluggish in their obedience to God’s law and in their reverence for him. The prophets saw in this delusion in religious enthusiasm the principal threat to the future safety of the people. In other words, the people had brought this sad state of affairs. It calls the people to one coming to help on their behalf. Jeremiah, writing as he did, was no poet, but a great prophet. He expressed his teaching in the form of poetry, as is usual with poetry.

In this text, the Lord encourages the Apostles, bracing them for what they will encounter. At a time when Christians and so many others, were acceded no respect, it must have been most uplifting to know that God treasured every hair on their heads.

Reflection

Times have changed since the first Christians endured the bitter hostility of their neighbors and of the mighty Roman Empire. Then again, times have not changed. Thankfully, Christians today, at least in this country, have no reason to fear that the police will suddenly break down their doors to arrest them for the crime of Christianity. But the culture in which we live is boldly hostile to many of the basic ideas of the Gospel and can thus place Christians under difficult pressure to compromise their beliefs.

These readings speak to us. Just as Jeremiah warned his contemporaries that turning away from God is the doorway to disaster, certainly to eternal death, Paul warns us that Jesus is alone the source of life and joy.

The Lord encouraged the Apostles. He encourages us in this reading. The reward will be immeasurable. †

My Journey to God

If Jesus came to your town, what do you think He’d see? Would He find the people lacking in what He taught them to be? If Jesus visited your church, St. where He is meant to dwell, would He sense a touch of heaven, or just an empty shell? Would Jesus find you loving your neighbor the way He said to do, or would it be only the neighbor who looks a lot like you?

If Jesus walked among the homeless, would someone give Him bread, Or would everyone pass by Him as if He were already dead? If Jesus visited a clinic, would He begin to weep When seeing all the unborn babies lying in a heap? And if Jesus knuckled on your door and asked to be let in, would you smile and step aside, or turn your back on Him?

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The Sunday Readings

Sunday, June 28, 2020

• Jeremiah 20:10-13
• Romans 5:12-15
• Matthew 10:26-33

The Sunday Readings

Monday, June 22

Tuesday, June 23
2 Kings 19:9b-11, 14-21, 31-35a, 36 Psalms 48:2-4, 10-11 Matthew 7:6, 12-14

Vigil Mass of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist
Jeremiah 1:1-14a, 5-6b, 15ab, 17 1 Peter 1:8-12 Luke 1:15-17

Wednesday, June 24

Thursday, June 25
2 Kings 24:36-17 Psalm 19:1-5, 6-9 Matthew 7:21-29

Friday, June 26
2 Kings 15:1-12 Psalm 137:1-6 Matthew 8:1-4

Saturday, June 27
St. Cyril of Alexandria, bishop and doctor of the Church Lamentations 2:10, 14-19, 18-19 Psalm 41:10-12, 20-21 Matthew 8:5-17

Sunday, June 28
Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time 2 Kings 4:8-11, 14-16a Psalm 89:2-3, 16-19 Romans 6:3, 4, 8-11 Matthew 10:37-42

Daily Readings

Question Corner/ Fr. Kenneth Doyle

Bishops may allow priests to celebrate three Masses on Sundays, holy days

During the current pandemic, given the limitation on attendance imposed by some civil authorities, we are planning to celebrate simultaneous Masses in our church and parish. We anticipate having to schedule a total of 11 weekend Masses, but there are only two priests assigned to our parish, with another one coming to help on a regular basis. So, my question is this: Can a bishop dispense from the limitation by which a priest may celebrate only two Masses on a particular Sunday? (California)

The governing statute in this regard is found in the Church’s Code of Canon Law. It provides that, in ordinary circumstances, a priest is permitted to celebrate Mass only once a day. However—and this relates directly to your question—that same canon also says, “If there is a shortage of priests, the local ordinary can allow priests to celebrate twice a day for a just cause, or if pastoral necessity requires it, even three times on Sundays or holy days of obligation.” Also, of course, a Saturday afternoon or evening vigil Mass can be celebrated, which fulfills the Sunday obligation. And note, by the way, that many dioceses have now extended the dispensation from required attendance while the coronavirus pandemic persists. So, in regard to your own parish, with three priests—and the bishop’s permission—you should be able to cover the 11 weekend Masses. I will, from my own experience, that such a schedule will be wearing on the priests involved, so I would hope it won’t need to endure for very long.

Can the cremation place bury my ashes in an urn in the ocean without my relatives and friends present? The people close to me plan on having a memorial Mass for me afterward, without my ashes. (California)

A Burial at sea is permitted by the Vatican’s 2016 guidelines, so long as the cremated remains are not scattered over the waters but buried in a dignified and well-protected container. There is no requirement that relatives and friends be present, but it would certainly be nice to have a religious context to your burial.

Do you suppose the “cremation place” could arrange for a priest or deacon to say some prayers at the ceremony? The Church’s Order of Christian Funerals has a beautiful prayer written just for such occasions.

It reads: “Lord God, by the power of your word you stilled the chaos of the primordial seas, you made the raging waters of the flood subside, and calmed the storm on the sea of Galilee. As we commit the body of our brother/sister N. to the deep, grant him/her peace and tranquility until that day when he/she and all who believe in you will be raised to the glory of new life promised in baptism.”

It’s very good that you are planning to have a Memorial Mass celebrated later on, but might I suggest another possibility?

If it were my own future at stake, I know that I would want to have a priest and congregation offering the Eucharist, the Church’s most powerful prayer, for me at the earliest opportunity.

(Questions may be sent to Father Kenneth Doyle at askfatherdoyle@gmail.com and 30 Columbus Circle Dr., Albany, New York 12203.)
## Providence Sister Christina Patrick served in Catholic education for 44 years

Sister Christina Patrick died on March 18 at Mother Theodore Hall at the motherhouse of the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods in Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana. She was 90.

Because of the coronavirus pandemic, a virtual funeral service was held. The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on March 27. Burial followed at the sisters' cemetery.

Sister Christina was born on Feb. 5, 1931, and grew up as a member of St. Philip Neri Parish in Indianapolis. After graduating from the former St. Agnes Academy in Indianapolis, she entered the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods in Feb. 2, 1950, professing final vows on Aug. 15, 1957.

Sister Christina earned a bachelor’s degree at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College and a master’s degree at Indiana University in Bloomington.

During her 70 years as a member of the Sisters of Providence, Sister Christina ministered as an educator for 44 years in schools in Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Oklahoma and Washington, D.C. She also served as a provincial councilor for four years in Massachutes.

In the archdiocese, Sister Christina served at the former Margaret Phelps School in St. Louis from 1965-1970, and in the former Central Catholic School from 1970-77 (both schools are now Central Catholic School in Indianapolis). She also served as a health care aide at the motherhouse from 1982-83.

She is survived by a sister, Zoe Booker of Indianapolis.

Memorial gifts may be sent to the Sisters of Providence, 1 Sisters of Providence Road, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, IN 47876.

## Online Lay Ministry Formation

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

- Earn certificate in Lay Ministry
- Complete 12 courses online with ND STP program
- Credits can be used toward Lay Ministry Certification from the University of Notre Dame

For more information, please log on to www.archindy.org/layministry

## Providence Church in Rome-open

Father Davide Carbonaro, pastor of Rome’s Santa Maria in Campitelli parish, celebrates Mass on Mar. 18, the first day Masses with a congregation were allowed after the COVID-19 lockdown. The Carbonaro told Catholic News Service he had been longings to celebrate with a congregation again, “because a priest without his parishioners—obviously, something essential is missing.” (cns photo/Salvatore Di Nolfi)
Cardinal Antonio Canizares Llovera made headlines when he described as a “work of the devil” attempts to find a COVID-19 vaccine using cell lines created from fetuses aborted voluntarily decades ago.

While his remarks on June 14 at Mass in the Valencia cathedral were stronger than many others have used, the Vatican and bishops around the world have been urging government officials and scientists to support the development of vaccines that have no connection to abortion.

A spokesman for the Pontifical Academy for Life said on June 15 that the academy is working on a statement specifically regarding the development of vaccines for COVID-19, which he said would follow Church teaching as explained in 2008 by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and the academy’s 2017 note on the importance of vaccines.

In the document, “Dignitas Personae” (“The Dignity of the Person”), the doctrinal congregation said research and development of an ethical duty not to use “biological material” obtained from morally illicit procedures, especially abortion.

However, the document also recognized that—from apart from the question of the material used to develop a vaccine—the actual use of a successful vaccine involves “differing degrees of responsibility. Grave reasons may be morally proportionate to justify the use of such ‘biological material.’ Thus, for example, danger to the health of children could permit parents to use a vaccine which was developed using cell lines of illicit origin, while keeping in mind that everyone has the duty to make known their disagreement and to ask that their health care system make other types of vaccines available.”

An article published online by science mag.org on June 5 said that at least five of the 10 potential COVID-19 vaccines that have been approved for human trials “use one of two human fetal cell lines: HEK-293, a kidney cell line widely used in research and industry that comes from a fetus aborted in about 1972; and PER.C6, a proprietary cell line owned by Janssen, a subsidiary of Johnson & Johnson, developed from retinal cells from an 18-week-old fetus aborted in 1985.”

In April, the chairman of four U.S. Bishops’ committees, joined by the leaders of several health care, bioethics and pro-life organizations, “urgently and respectfully” implored the commissioner of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to ensure vaccines developed for the coronavirus “are free from any connection to abortion.”

The letter noted that, “among the dozens of vaccines currently in development, some are being produced using old cell lines that were created from the cells of aborted babies” while others “utilize cell lines not connected to unethical procedures and methods.”

“It is critically important that Americans have access to a vaccine that is produced ethically: No American should be forced to choose between being vaccinated against this potentially deadly virus and violating his or her conscience,” the group said.

A prayer for the Pontifical Academy for Life, expressing a similar hope that scientists and governments would avoid using cell lines from aborted fetuses, also said on June 15 that when vaccines exist to protect people from serious contagions, there is a “moral obligation to guarantee the necessary vaccination coverage needed for the safety of others, especially weak and vulnerable subjects such as pregnant women and people with an immunodeficiency who could not directly be vaccinated against these pathologies.”

“As for the question of vaccines that in their preparation may or did use cell derived from voluntarily aborted fetuses, the statement said, “it must be pointed out that ‘evil’ in a moral sense resides in actions, not in things or material as such,” while abortion and the manipulation of fetal tissue are morally evil, a vaccine itself is not.

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leaders and evangelization team members will be reaching out to parishioners, encouraging use of a tool for deepening a disciple relationship with Jesus.

As our ability to interact with each other socially increases, let’s continue engaging in the faith formation that has deepened for so many of us during

discomfort of driving to work every day past a house with a Confederate flag on the garage door.

How do we understand the urgency of having “the talk” with our sons about how to be careful in any encounters with police? And how do we understand the trauma of seeing George Floyd’s lifeless body and thinking that that could be, not some stranger, but our own, our father?

People say racism is America’s original sin. That is not just a figure of speech. St. John Paul II and Pope Francis have both said that racism is a sin. It is a sin that haunts the human soul, and there is evidence of racism and deep ethnic prejudice across all continents and in all nations.

But because America was founded on the�lost ideals of—that all men and women are created equal—the sin stings more.

Social distancing —thanks in large part to the outreach efforts of our parish catechetical leaders. Let’s reach out in turn to our parish leaders, supporting them with our prayers as they stand ready to serve us, always, by God’s grace and mercy.

(Ken Ogorek is catechetical director within the archdiocesan Secretariat for Worship and Evangelization. He can be reached at ogorek@archindy.org.)

This is a moment of judgment: The virus, the crashing economy and Floyd’s murder have exposed the inequalities and flaws of our nation in education, in health care, in civil rights. This is also our moment to take a stand together. Yes, it is daunting and terrible. Yes, militarizing a response to peaceful protests is wrong.

But let us not let our eyes be turned away from the challenge at hand. Let us recommit as a nation, as a Church, to the belief that all are equal and desire equal opportunity, and that we must make this more than just talk.

For our address our shortcomings. Let us address our watch. We have no excuse at all for what we tolerated on our watch.

(Greg Erlanson, director and editor-in-chief of Catholic News Service, can be reached at erlanson@catholicnews.com.)

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 administers the 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 for the archdiocese with input from the board of directors.

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 Kuntz Fleming, Superintendent of Catholic Schools for the archdiocese
   • Resume
   • Three letters of recommendation or contact information for three professional references

2. Complete the online application using the following link: https://www.jobvite.com/careers/archindy/34150916-366233

For questions about this Catholic leadership position, please email or call: Rob Rash Office of Catholic Schools rash@archindy.org 317.236.1544
Institute to offer creative community in time of isolation

By Colleen Schena
Special to The Criterion

The continual trend of cancellations and postponements defines an uncharacteristically socially empty summer.

While many programs have chosen not to offer summer opportunities for the safety of the participants, one program has adapted in a way that will allow it to continue providing spiritual community and leadership formation to high school participants safely: the Missionary Disciples Institute (MDI). The institute has shifted from the campus of Marian University in Indianapolis to an accessible, online format in three short months.

In previous years, MDI was a weeklong evangelization boot camp sponsored and hosted by Marian. The goal of this experience was to have a group of teenagers encounter others—especially those whom they may not usually come in contact with—and find ways to build community in the greater Indianapolis area.

Because of the coronavirus, institute leaders decided to change this year’s format.

Featuring its own website, online sessions and boxes of materials carefully packed by the college mentors for the high school participants, the institute eagerly anticipates the beginning of “MDI Online” on June 22. MDI made the decision to venture into the online community to encourage the growth of passionate students into driven missionary disciples. Even in the reality of social distancing, a call still rings out to continue proclaiming the Gospel in even the most non-traditional of circumstances.

“MDI Online” is a unique way of embodying this call “to be innovators for the Gospel,” in the words of student director Elizabeth Kassab. She highlighted the accessibility of the virtual format, which offers a healthy geographic variety of students and speakers, as “another way of creating widespread community for the youth of our Church.” This new range has opened MDI to hosting the largest number of participants it will ever have, Kassab noted. Because of this, new college mentors were hired to join the experience.

“I think more than ever, there is a need for missionary disciples,” said Patrick Verhiley, the director of the institute.

“We can still move forward in our pursuit of Christ and serving those in our community.”

No matter the complexities of transitioning from an in-person format to an online version, the MDI team is viewing this experience as one of growth to meet spiritual needs in an isolating time. The high school students “want a community to be engaged with, they want to be around peers who are passionate about their faith,” Verhiley said. “We wanted to move forward because there is this longing from the high school students to engage in something.”

Once the decision was prayerfully made, the institute staff pressed forward to create the online encounter. “Planning this institute is like turning a very large ship,” added Verhiley, “it takes a while to turn and change course.”

Both challenges and support alike accompanied the change, he noted. “We have excellent leaders and outstanding people who would step up and support us.”

The love of Christ is still alive and well in the hearts of the participants, mentors, and MDI professionals, commented Kassab. “This work isn’t easy,” she noted, “but we’re here to do it because this is what our God wants of us.”

With the institute set for June 22-26, the team is pleased to see the 85 participating students already building community through lighthearted virtual gatherings, a massive group message and prayer requests.

Mentor and MDI alumnus Patrick Scheidler said in reflecting on this innovative transition, “No matter what is going on in our world, we are still disciples.”

(Colleen Schena is a senior at Marian University in Indianapolis and a member of Holy Family Parish in South Bend, Ind., in the Fort Wayne-South Bend Diocese.)