Oregon archbishop urges end to violence, return to campaign for justice

PORTLAND, Ore. (CNS)—As the national spotlight landed on his city and its ongoing protests, Portland Archbishop Alexander K. Sample on July 24 made a plea for citizens to leave violence behind and return to a campaign for racial justice.

“Who remembers George Floyd anymore?” Archbishop Sample said during one of his “Chapel Chats,” weekly 30-minute sessions livestreamed from his Portland home.

“This all began over the tragic killing of a man” and the racial inequity the killing revealed, the archbishop told viewers. “We need to stay focused on the issue that gave rise to this. Let’s stay focused on what we can do to eradicate this evil.”

Since Floyd, a Black man, died while in the custody of white police officers in Minneapolis on May 25, protests for racial justice have risen every evening in downtown Portland. The demonstrations begin peacefully, but in the wee hours turned violent in the vicinity of the federal courthouse.

Portland police initially turned to tear gas, but as the weeks wore on scaled back. Protests began to taper off. The energy and violence surged in early July after camouflage-clad federal officers arrived in the city and began arresting protesters. Local officials decried the uninvited federal presence. The Trump administration said it was protecting federal property.

When protesters breach a fence around the courthouse each evening, federal police exit the building using tear gas, batons and sometimes nonlethal bullets. One nonviolent protester, 26-year-old Donavan La Bella, suffered a fractured skull on July 11 when hit by a plastic projectile fired by a federal officer. Even Portland’s mayor, Ted Wheeler, was enveloped in tear gas on July 22 when...
Show grandparents, the elderly that you care, Pope Francis tells young people

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope Francis called on young people to reach out to their grandparents or the elderly who may be lonely or on their own.

“Do not leave them by themselves,” he said after praying the Angelus with visitors in St. Peter’s Square on July 26. “Use the inventiveness of love, make phone calls, video calls, send messages, listen to them and, where possible, in compliance with health care regulations, go to visit them, too. Send them a hug,” he said before leaving visitors in giving a big round of applause for all grandparents.

The pope made his remarks on the memorial of SS. Joachim and Anne—Mary’s parents, Jesus’ grandparents and the patron saints of grandparents.

“Let’s go to visit them, too. Send them a hug,” he said after praying the Angelus.

Fleming steps down as superintendent; interim leaders of schools are named

Gina Kunz Fleming resigned as superintendent of Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis on July 22 to accept a position in another school corporation. The archdiocese will begin a search for the next superintendent as soon as possible.

In the interim, assistant superintendents Mary McCoy, Rob Rash and Michelle Radomsky will oversee the day-to-day operations of archdiocesan schools. They will report to Annette “Mickey” Lentz, archdiocesan chancellor, who previously served as executive director of Catholic Education and Faith Formation for the archdiocese.

“Mickey” Lentz, archdiocesan chancellor, who previously served as executive director of Catholic Education and Faith Formation for the archdiocese.

Fleming thanked Archbishop Charles C. Thompson for her 14 years of service as a principal, assistant superintendent and superintendent in the archdiocese.

“Your invitation to young people is to reach out to the loneliest elderly people in their neighborhood or parish and send them a hug, according to the request of the pope, by means of a phone call, a video call or by sending an image. Wherever possible or whenever the health emergency will allow it, we invite young people to make the embrace even more concrete by visiting the elderly in person,” he said. †
By Colleen Schena
Special to The Criterion

“What energy!” read the text from nationally known speaker Mike Patin after receiving symbolic applause from the Missionary Disciples Institute (MDI). “What energy!”

In lieu of clapping, every high school student participant held their hands up close to their device’s camera and wiggled their fingers with as much enthusiasm as they could project. Quickly the screen filled with hundreds of hands and accompanying smiles. This had become a tradition at “MDI Online” as the week unfolded. While it may have been unusually silent, the energy radiating from the passionate students filled the space.

The bold invitation to join a weeklong evangelization, in-person boot camp sponsored and hosted by Marian University in Indianapolis. The goal of this experience was to have a group of teenagers encounter others—especially those whom they might not usually come in contact with—and find ways to build community in the greater Indianapolis area.

But 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, “MDI Online” took place on June 22-26. MDI made the decision to venture into the online community to encourage the growth of passionate students into driven missionary disciples. Even easier was to have a group of teenagers encounter others—especially those whom they might not usually come in contact with—and find ways to build community in the greater Indianapolis area.

As the 80-plus participants signed off to re-enter the world around them, the zeal for missionary discipleship continued within them. This “groundbreaking experience,” in the words of student director Elizabeth Lee, molded them into missions that would lead them forth after their blessing and commissioning.

As human beings we are finding ways to share in our joys and our sufferings,” Molly Church, a college mentor said. “We have been creating community right here online.”

A similar sentiment from participant Emma Morgan exponents upon the needs of the Institute: “MDI has impacted me by showing me that community is vital to the Catholic faith, but we have no need to fear about the inability to be together during this quarantine.”

Emma noted that her personal prayer life had been “transformed,” and she aspired to bring this renewed life to her high school as a missionary disciple. Missionary discipleship can take many forms, often those seeming impossible or inconvenient, noted keynote speaker Kristin Koehl imagined the institute participants saying in the years to come. The students and staff alike are sure that they will not forget this unique opportunity offered in a time when few like it existed.

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.

Missionary Disciples Institute participants give speaker Arthur Wilson a round of applause. (Submitted photos by Colleen Schena)
Editorial

What Jesus, Mary and the saints look like is important

The iconic novels which seek to remove, erase or destroy images of Jesus can be directly tied to the contemporary sensibilities of some has raised the important question. “What should Jesus look like?” An article in The Wall Street Journal by Francis X. Rocca on July 24 discusses this issue in a balanced way with a view to historical accuracy.

According to Rocca, the question of how (or whether) to portray Jesus has confronted Christians from the very beginning. In fact, during the course of 2,000 years, our Savior has been depicted in many diverse ways in cultures as varied as those found in Asia, Africa, Latin America, Europe and North America. None of these are photographic images of what Jesus really looked like (or looks like now). They are all artistic representations designed to evoke, move, and less suggestive, their existence, personality and experiences of a man unlike any other human being who ever lived. Some of these works of art are sublime, some are awful, and some (perhaps most) are merely adequate. What should Jesus look like now?

According to Rocca, Shaun King, a prominent activist with the Black Lives Matter movement, has recently that “all masts and stained- glass windows of white Jesus, and his European mother, and their white friends should also come down. They are a gross form [of] white supremacy. Created as tools of oppression,” Racism is real.

Rocca also quotes Jesuit Father James Martin, who responded to King’s argument by saying that “the images but agreeing that “Jesus should be impose its above and beyond superficial physicality.” Regardless, if done well, successfully, it can be a powerful man appears in his raw reality.

Nick Rick, an artist who has provided sculptures for churches in Indiana and many other states, says: “A question I contemplate when I represent Jesus and saints. I keep in mind the parish and the region, and ultimately the multicultural nations that would or could have access to the images that I create. Because of modern advances in transportation and the accessibility to ‘things’ in the world by all, it becomes problematic creating these images. So they wind up with features that can’t be specifically prescribed to one particular race or a skin color and become accessible to all. That’s the peculiarity of our post-modern society, our times. Regardless, if done well, successfully, the transcendent and mysterious nature is revealed upon contemplation and prayer above and beyond superficial physicality.”

Pope St. John Paul II famously said that the Church should never impose its teaching on anyone. We should propose what we believe, not force it down anyone’s throat.

The same is true of sacred art. Images of Jesus, Mary and all the saints should not be forced on anyone. They should be proposed as representing how an artist, or a community of believers, sees the holy men and women to be revered as gifts from the God who is close to us and who accompanies us on our life’s journey.

What should Jesus look like? He should look like all of us, his sisters and brothers.

—Daniel Conway

Making Sense of Bioethics

Fr. Tad Pucholczyk

Spiritual lessons from the pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has left many of us with a great deal of uncertainty: uncertainty about the virus and what precautions the virus is and about the best way to treat it; uncertainty about how long our personal immunity will last after we get infected and whether a vaccine will ever be developed; uncertainty about the future of the economy and whether jobs will still be there for the millions of newly unemployed; uncertainty about how long the public questions should last; uncertainty about what will happen to ourselves, our businesses, our families and our friends. In the midst of so much uncertainty, we naturally look for something firm to hold onto. Cataclysmic disruptors, whether an outbreak of war, widespread riots and looting, or a new coronavirus, humble us and remind us how we cannot guarantee our own future.

Yet we instinctively yearn for a way to assure and secure that for ourselves and our children. For safety? Probably not, even in the middle of the pandemic. The virus has been with us for a long time and we have learned to live with it. But we are still afraid. Perhaps we need to think about how to respond to this fear in a more constructive way.

One lesson of the pandemic is not to place our hope in undeserving sources. For example, consider the role that vaccines or other treatments may play in our future. There are vaccines that promise to stop the virus from spreading but we cannot be sure if they will work. We cannot place all our hope in vaccines or other treatments. We need to look to something deeper.

What should we look to? The answer to the uncertainties surrounding the pandemic lies in our relationship with God. Our relationship with God is the foundation of everything we do in life. It is in our relationship with God that we find safety and security. It is in our relationship with God that we find hope and peace.

Dr. David A. Nealy

Greenwood

Opinion Letters Policy

Letters from readers are welcome and should be informed, relevant, well-expressed, concise, temperate in tone, courteous and respectful. Responds to “Letters to the Editor,” The Criterion, 1400 N. Meridian Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367. Send letters to “Letters to the Editor,” The Criterion, 1400 N. Meridian Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367. Readers with access to e-mail may send letters to criterion@archindy.org.

Letter to the Editor

We cannot forget violence of abortion, reader says

In the recent months since the tragic events in Minneapolis, Louisville, Atlanta and Indianapolis, many people are concerned. The dialogue has been properly focused on the seemingly intractable problem of street violence in the Black community. While the violence is a concern elevated by the contentious and legitimate issue of lethal action by police officers against Black Americans.

Without diminishing for a moment this great tragedy—and the importance of resolving an all-too-frequent perversion of justice—it may be appropriate to revisit the chilling example of “legally sanctioned violence” against innocent Black lives within their mother’s womb by the nation’s abortion clinics.

This trajectory of destruction could be somewhat obscured by the current coronavirus pandemic. However, it is notable that through a three-month period ending in late June this year, roughly 120,000 Americans had died of the viral epidemic while the nation’s abortion centers eliminated about 270,000 innocent lives in the womb!

—Readers with access to e-mail may send letters to criterion@archindy.org.
¿Qué nos separará del amor de Cristo? ¿Angustia, o distreses, o persecución, o fatiga, o hambre, o desnudez, o peces, o peces?...ugg, in all these things we conquer overwhelmingly through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Rom 8:35, 37).

The readings for next weekend, the 18th Sunday in Ordinary Time, are especially good news in these troubled times. Summarized briefly, all three readings assure us that whatever difficulties we face, God will provide us with what we need.

In the first reading from the prophet Isaiah (Is 55:1-3), we hear words that may seem too good to be true: “All you who are thirsty, come to the waters! You who have no money, come, receive grain and eat; Come, without paying and without cost, drink wine and milk.” How is it possible that the Lord nourishes us with food and drink without requiring those who have no money to pay for it? Isaiah follows this statement with a caution: “Why spend money on what is not good, and on what will not fill you with profit? Buy the ancient wine, and let us keep the traditions straight. If we turn to him, and trust in his abundant goodness, God will give us “our daily bread.”

St. Matthew’s Gospel (Mt 14:13-21) powerfully illustrates this principle. Jesus withdraws to a deserted place to mourn the death of John the Baptist, his cousin and the one who had prepared the way for Jesus’ ministry. The crowds follow him, and in his compassion Jesus welcomes them and cures those who are sick. When it was evening, the disciples approach him and say: “This is a deserted place and it is already late; dismiss the crowds so they can go to the villages and buy food for themselves” (Mt 14:15). Jesus replies, “There is no need for them to go away; give them some food yourselves.” (Mt 14:16). But they say to him, “Five loaves and two fish are all we have here” (Mt 14:17).

We know how the story ends. Jesus performs one of his greatest miracles. With next to nothing, the meager provisions of five loaves and two fish, Jesus looks up to heaven, blesses the food and feeds an enormous crowd of people. “They all ate and were satisfied,” St. Matthew tells us, “and they packed the fragments left over—twelve wicker baskets full. Those who were about five thousand men, not counting women and children” (Mt 14:20-21).

Our worries about life’s day-to-day problems are understandable. Jesus doesn’t dismiss them. He is moved with pity and responds to our human needs. But as St. Paul tells the Romans, and all of us, in the second reading for this Sunday (Rom 8:35, 37-39), nothing we can think of can ever separate us from the love of Christ. Not COVID-19, not unemployment, not “angustias, or distreses, or persecution, or fatigas, or hambres, or desnudez, or peces” (Rom 8:37-39), nothing can never separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Rom 8:35, 37).

In the second reading for this weekend from the letter to the Romans (Rom 8:35-39), Paul, the apostle, responds: “You who are the Spirit’s, and in the Spirit we live! For the Spirit God gives us will not deny us the nourishment we receive from God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Our job is to do two things: Trust in God and share what we have with others, especially those who are most in need of our help.

“We’ve also heard the saying: ‘God helps those who help themselves.’ Perhaps it would be more accurate if we said, “God helps those who help others.” As Sunday’s Gospel demonstrates, the miracle of the five loaves and two fish is both a testimony to God’s abundance and an admonition to take what little we have and share it generously with our sisters and brothers in need. Why spend our money on things that can never satisfy us? How much better off we would all be if we placed our trust in God and shared his gifts with others?

“Seek and you shall find; knock and the door will be opened to you,” St. Matthew tells us (Mt 7:7-8). “Come to me, heedfully, listen, that you may have life. I will renew with you the everlasting covenant” (Is 55:1).

Our job is to do two things: Trust in God and share what we have with others, especially those who are most in need of our help. He will hear and answer us. †

¿Quién nos separará del amor de Cristo? ¿Angustia, o distreses, o persecución, o fatiga, o hambre, o desnudez, o peces, o peces? [...] En todas estas cosas somos más que vencedores por medio de aquel que nos amó. Porque estoy convencido de que ni la muerte, ni la vida, ni angelés, ni principados, ni lo presente, ni lo por venir, ni los poderes, ni el alto, ni lo profundo, ni ninguna otra cosa creada nos podrá separar del amor de Dios que en Cristo Jesús Señor nuestro (Rom 8:35-37).

Las lecturas del próximo fin de semana, el 18º domingo del Tiempo Ordinario, son especialmente buenas noticias en estos tiempos difíciles. Para resumirlas brevemente, las tres lecturas nos aseguran que cualesquiera que sean las dificultades que enfrentemos, Dios nos proveerá de lo que necesitemos.

En la primera lectura del profeta Isaías (Is 55:1-3), escuchamos palabras que también pueden parecer demasiado buenas para ser verdad: “Todo el que está hambriento, venga a las aguas; y los que no tienen dinero, compren alimentos” (Is 55:1). “No hay necesidad de que se vayan; dadles vuestros panes como comestibles” (Mt 14:16). A lo cual ellos le responden: “No tenemos aquí más que cinco panes y dos peces” (Mt 14:17).

Sabemos cómo termina la historia. Jesús realiza una de sus mayores milagros: con casi nada, las escasas provisiones de cinco panes y dos peces, Jesús mira al cielo, bendice la comida y alimenta a una enorme multitud. “Dios ayuda a los que ayudan a los demás,” dice san Pablo. “Y comieron todos y se saciaron,” nos dice san Mateo, “y los que comieron fueron unos cinco mil hombres, sin contar las mujeres y los niños” (Mt 14:20-21).

Nuestras preocupaciones por los problemas cotidianos de la vida son comprensibles. Jesús no nos descarta; la compasión lo comuove y responde a nuestras necesidades humanas. Pero tal como san Pablo les dice a los romanos, y a todos nosotros, en la segunda lectura de este domingo (Rom 8:35-37, 39), nada de lo que se nos ocurra podrá separarnos del amor de Cristo. Ni siquiera la COVID-19, ni el desempleo, ni “la tribulación, o angustias, o persecución, o hambre, o desnudez, o peces” (Rom 8:37-39) nos podrá separar de la bendición que Dios provee. ‘Christo, la piedra angular’

¿Cuálesquiera que sean las dificultades que enfrentemos, Dios proveerá...


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Bishops’ (USCCB) website at www.usccb.org and the many different cultures in the Church has always been diverse and is the Church as a diverse place where all on people of faith to study the history of Catholic bishops in the U.S., also called us to embrace in loving one another.”

accept the challenge that Jesus Christ calls people, once we are able to put a face and respect for the dignity of human life,” he said. “When organizations take a clear departure from the teaching of the Church,” he said. “When embrace the moral and social interests of Catholics to join grassroots organizations.”

Bishop Fabre believes the document “I really believe these encounters with “This is also a time,” he continued, “to such encounters can go a long way...“Act justly, Love tenderly, Walk humbly” Monthly “I think what the pastoral letter does, to the roots of the Catholic faith, the teaching of the Church...then moved it forward.”

RACISM continued from page 1


The couple was married in Our Lady of Holy Pluchar. The couple also has 11 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. †

The couple was married in Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis.

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis.

“Out of the Heart virtual formation opportunity, 9 a.m.-noon, $20 per person for groups of five or more. Information: 317-587-4006 or smarrtretreats@archindy.org.

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis.

“arcs of Providence online “Act justly, Love tenderly, Walk humbly” Catholic Taize Prayer Service. 7-8 p.m., silent and spoken prayers, single mass, and silence. Information: 812-633-2952, prayer@usccb.org.

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis.

August 15

Office of Youth Ministry online into “Out of the Heart” virtual formation opportunity, 9 a.m.-noon, $20 per person for groups of five or more. Information: 317-587-4006 or smarrtretreats@archindy.org.

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Prayer is the appropriate Christian response to evil

During his June 29 homily on the Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul, the twin pillars whose fidelity to Christ still upholds the Church 2,000 years after their martyrdom, Pope Francis appeared to contradict those who argue that “prayer is not enough” in times of crisis.

In fact, the Holy Father says, when bad things happen, prayer should be the Christian’s first and most consistent response. “If we spent more time in prayer and less time complaining, the pope said, “so many doors would be opened, so many chains that bind would be broken.”

Of course, the Holy Father does not mean to suggest that we should be passive or indifferent in the face of evil. We are called to be a prophetic people who speak the truth with love. “Today we need prophecy, real prophecy,” Pope Francis says. As he understands the gift of prophecy, it does not consist in spectacular displays, but in bearing witness in one’s life to the love of God.

“Prophecy is born when we allow ourselves to be challenged by the mirror, to continually look at you,” the Holy Father says. “He who prays says: ‘the sin of indifference.’ This is the sin committed by the priest and the Levite in Jesus’ parable of the Good Samaritan. They were indifferent to the plight of the man beaten by robbers and simply continued on their way without stopping to help him. The Samaritan, a despised foreigner, showed that he was a man with compassion, a good neighbor. He was a man of action who went out of his way to help someone in need.”

Pope Francis would say that the Good Samaritan’s compassionate response was made possible because he was not a narcissist (someone concerned only with himself). He cared for others—even strangers. He was also not a pessimist or a complainer (someone who spends all his or her time bemoaning the way things are today without ever lifting a finger to alter the status quo). “It is useless, and even harmful, to carelessly spend our time complaining about the world, society, what is wrong. Complaints don’t change anything,” the pope says.

“Narcissism takes you to the mirror, to continually look at you,” said the Holy Father. “Yesterday, he points out, ‘there were so many chains that bind them, and we must be people of prayer who give witness to the merciful love of Christ in both our words and our actions.’ According to Pope Francis, at a time when Peter was arrested, during a severe persecution of the early Christians, “Héroes de la oración que den testimonio del amor de Dios.”

That “prayer is not enough” in times of crisis.

According to Pope Francis, at a time when Peter was arrested, during a severe persecution of the early Christians, “Héroes de la oración que den testimonio del amor de Dios.”

Those Christians did not blame, but prayed, he said. “What would happen if we prayed more and murmured less, with the language a little calmer? What happened to Peter in prison: as then, so now many doors that separate would open, so many chains that paralyze would fall. And we would be amazed.”

Pope Francis noted that St. Paul exhorted Christians to pray for everyone and first of all for those who govern. He said: “Let us pray for the rulers. Let us pray: they need prayer. It is a task that the Lord entrusts to us. Shall we? Or do we talk, insult, and that’s it? God expects that when we pray, we will also remember those who don’t think like us, those who have closed the door on us, those who struggle to forgive. Only prayer unites the chains, like Peter; only prayer paves the way for unity.”

Let’s be people of prayer whose action springs from caring hearts and a deep desire to let the Holy Spirit intervene and make us one in Christ.

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

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

—Pope Francis, “Misericordiae Vultus” (“The Face of Mercy”)

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

—Papa Francisco, “Misericordiae Vultus” (“El rostro de la misericordia”)

El rostro de la misericordia/Daniel Conway

La oración es la respuesta cristiana apropiada ante el mal

Durante su homilía del 29 de junio en la Soledad de los santo Pedro y Pablo, los pilares gemelos cuya fidelidad a Cristo todavía sostiene a la Iglesia 2,000 años después de su martirio, el papa Francisco contradijo a aquellos que sostienen que “la oración no es suficiente” en tiempos de crisis.

De hecho, el Santo Padre expresa que cuando ocurren cosas negativas, la oración debe ser la primera respuesta del cristiano y la más constante. “Si pasáramos más tiempo en la oración y menos tiempo quejándonos—dijo el Papa—se abrirían muchas puertas y se romperían muchas cadenas que atan.”

Por supuesto, la intención del Santo Padre no es sugerir que seamos pasivos o indiferentes ante el mal. Estamos llamados a ser un pueblo profético que dice la verdad con amor. “Hoy necesitamos una profecía, una verdadera profecía,” dice el papa Francisco. Según su interpretación del don de la profecía, esta no consiste en despliegues espectaculares, sino en dar testimonio del amor de Dios en nuestra propia vida. “La profecía nace cuando nos dejamos desafiar por Dios.”

El Papa nos ha advertido frecuentemente que tengamos cuidado con lo que él llama “el pecado de la indiferencia,” el mismo que cometieron el sacerdote y el levita en la parábola de Jesús del Buen Samaritano, al mostrarse indiferentes ante la situación del hombre golpeado por los ladrones y simplemente continuaron su camino sin detenerse a ayudarlo. El samaritano, un extranjero despreciado, demostró ser un hombre con compasión, un buen vecino. Era un hombre de acción que se esforzaba por ayudar a quien lo necesitaba. El papa Francisco comenta que la respuesta compasiva del Buen Samaritano se debió a que este no era un narcisista (alguien que solamente se preocupa por sí mismo), sino que preocupaba por los demás; incluso por los extraños. Tampoco era una persona pesimista o quejumbrosa (alguien que se pasa el tiempo lamentándose de cómo están las cosas hoy en día sin mover un dedo para alterar el status quo). “Es inútil, e incluso absurdo, que los cristianos perdieran el tiempo quejándose del mundo, de la sociedad, de lo que está mal. Las quejas no cambian nada,” dice el Papa.


Según el papa Francisco, en el momento del arresto de Pedro, durante una intensa persecución de los primeros cristianos, “Héroes de la oración que den testimonio del amor misericordioso de Cristo tanto en nuestras palabras como en nuestras acciones.”

Estos cristianos no culparon, sino que rezaron, aseguró: “¿Qué pasará si rezamos más, murmuramos menos y atenuamos las palabras? Lo que le pasó a Pedro en la cárcel, si entonces, se abrirían muchas puertas que se separan, cariñan muchas cadenas que paralizan. Y estaremos verdaderamente sorprendidos.”

El papa Francisco señaló que San Pablo exhortó a los cristianos a rezar para todos y en primer lugar por los que gobernaban. Expresó: “Recesemos por los gobernantes; Oremos: necesitan la oración. Es una tarea que el Señor nos confía. ¿Rezamos? ¿O hablamos, insultamos y nada más? Dios espera que cuando recemos, también recordemos a los que no piensan como nosotros, a los que nos han cerrado la puerta, a los que luchan por perdón. Solo la oración deshace las cadenas, como en el caso de Pedro; únicamente la oración allana el camino a la unidad.”

Seamos un pueblo de oración cuya acción brote de corazones atentos y un profundo deseo de dejar que el Espíritu Santo intervenga y no unifique en Cristo. (Daniel Conway es integrante del comité editorial de The Criterion.)
How Catholic organizations are weathering the pandemic

It is no surprise that Catholic dioceses, parishes, schools and organizations have been profoundly affected by the coronavirus pandemic. With unemployment impacting so many Catholic families, as well as the canceling of Masses and their offertory collections, many Catholic institutions that serve the communities they serve are in precarious shape.

A recent survey by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) showed that nearly 50 percent of diocesan offices have been forced to furlough or lay off workers, and more shoes are likely to drop if this crisis lasts into the fall. These statistics are the tip of the iceberg coming from this relentless pandemic—can be numbing. Yet what we are talking about is our neighbors and their families: teachers, maintenance workers, secretaries, workers in Catholic charities, bookkeepers. We are talking about families that are suffering not just from the threat of the disease, but also the threat of unemployment or reduced income.

All of which is why Catholics have been up in arms about July 10 Associated Press story suggesting that it was somehow wrong for Catholic organizations, dioceses and parishes to receive emergency government Paycheck Protection Program (PPP). The AP published a long article detailing the Catholic Church’s “special and unprecedented exemption” to “amass at least $1.4 billion in taxpayer-backed coming aid, and with millions going to dioceses that have paid huge settlements because of clergy sexual abuse cover-ups.”

The AP stitched together a rather flimsy case of implications: that the Church should not receive government funds, while also implying it was somehow wrong about the Church from its sex abuse liabilities.

What was unassailable was that the “special exemption” was an exempt particular approved by Congress and signed by the president. Nor did the law that was passed say that any company or organization facing lawsuits was to be excluded. The loans were intended to help meet payroll, keep organizations and companies afloat, and that is just what they did.

It felt like a cheap shot by the AP at a favorite punching bag, overlooking the reality of this pandemic and the needs of parishes and dioceses, and doing everything the all ways that Catholic organizations have been helping communities suffering the impact of the pandemic.

“The Catholic Church is the largest nongovernmental supplier of social services in the United States,” said Archbishop Paul S. Coakley of Oklahoma City and chair of the U.S. bishops’ domestic policy committee in the AG story. He said the loans allowed “essential ministries to continue to function in a time of national emergency.”

“These loans have been an essential lifeline to keep hundreds of thousands of employees on payroll and help families maintain their health insurance and enable lay workers to continue serving children, families and others during this crisis,” he added.

Many jobs were saved by the PPP loans in dioceses, including thousand of positions at risk. Catholics have been slow to return to Mass because of the continued threat of coronavirus, and churches are closing again in California and elsewhere.

There are two lessons from all of this. The first is that your parish, your diocese, your school, your Catholic Charities office need your help. If you can give, please do. The second is that the AP story is exactly why we need a dynamic, responsive Catholic press. We need to be able to tell our story, honestly and fully. We can’t count on others to get it right.

—Greg Erdlanndon, director and editor-in-chief of Catholic News Service, can be reached at gerdlanndon@catholicnews.com

Parents are blessed by entering into the innocent joy of their children

My family’s home on the east side of Indianapolis probably wouldn’t be a draw for those who love the great outdoors. Located in a fairly old neighborhood and the homes are built close together. There are some nice trees there, including a giant pin oak in our front yard. But, for the most part, the natural beauty around our home is a far cry from the Bartholomew County where we lived previously.

There’s no way to tell my 11-year-old son Philip from soaking in the beauty of God’s creation available to him. He has an acute sense of beauty. He is quick to point out how we are the small lot. (Our oak tree, with the many small acorns it produces, is a squirrels’ Walnuts.)

He also has a great interest in the birds we visit the feeder boards and—chasing away—whenever they popula his head. He especially thrilled during the coronavirus pandemic shutdown in the spring when a couple of blue jays flew over the park. Philip was so enthused to see them on our feeders and to hear their distinctive, hawk-like call.

He has an innocent love of God’s good gifts to us that surely pleases our Lord. In the past few years, it developed a cynical indifference to life’s simple pleasures that sometimes infections affects his mind.

May God help him hold on to this youthful enthusiasm as he grows into his teenage years. For my part, I hope to encourage it in Philip by continuing to show interest in this wholesome pastime of his.

Entering into the innocent joy of our children can be a blessing for us parents, too. It can draw us out of a pride-filled reticence to rejoice in the beauty of the world around us and transcend a humble openness to the great gift God has given us in creation—even in the simplest sparrow or squirrel.

Maybe this youthful attitude toward life is part of what our Lord was teaching us when he said that “Whoever does not accept the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it” (Lk 18:17).

Our kingdom breaks into our world here and now in part through the beauty of his creation. And we enter into this kingdom by opening our hearts and minds to God like little children bubbling with joy over enjoying a simple birthday gift.

We parents can often be blown away by the many little and sometimes big wonders of caring for our children in our daily lives.

As important as fulfilling our duties to our families and other obligations, we need to develop a guard against those tasks blind us to the beauty of God’s creation that surrounds you. Allow your children and their innocent enthusiasm in life’s simple pleasures to lead you into the boundless joy of God’s kingdom.

—Sean Gallagher, Faith and Family
The Sunday Readings
Sunday, August 2, 2020

• Isaiah 55:1-3
• Romans 8:35, 37-39
• Matthew 14:13-21

The last and third section of the Book of Isaiah is the source of the first reading for Mass this weekend.

The first section of Isaiah was written when the Hebrews still were living in the promised land, although clashes among them had divided the land into two kingdoms. Divided, weakened and small, the two kingdoms were vulnerable before the imperialistic ambitions of neighboring powers. These vulnerabilities proved decisive when the strong Babylonian Empire overran the Hebrew kingdoms. It was a fearful time. Many died. Others were taken to Babylon, the empire’s capital, located in modern Iraq. Those who were left in the land languished in misery and want. At last, Babylon itself fell. The exiles returned, only to find a sterile and unhappy place. Little had improved with the passage of several generations.

Amid the disappointment of the returning exiles came the composition of the third section of Isaiah. It was bad. People literally had to worry about the next meal. So, this prophet’s words were very relevant. They assured discouraged audiences that God would supply their needs and was their only source of life and sustenance. Still, for many, it was a hard proposition to accept. When would God supply the people in their need?

For its second reading, the Church offers a selection from Paul’s Epistle to the Romans. This work also was written when stress was quite evident. The Christians in Rome lived in a culture very hostile to the Gospel. The political and legal systems were turning against them. Indeed, St. Paul himself eventually would be executed. Very clear in the reading is Paul’s encouragement and admonition. He calls upon those facing temptations and doubts to be strong in their resolve, urging them to hold to Christ, letting nothing separate them from the Lord.

St. Matthew’s Gospel provides the third reading. It is the familiar and beloved story of the feeding of the 5,000. In this story line, a large crowd is following Jesus. Within this crowd are sick people. Typically, and as surely the sick hoped, the compassionate Jesus healed the sick.

Here immediately, however, it should be noted that healing had then a meaning far different from treating an injury or disease today. It meant overcoming the evil effects of sin. The ancient Jewish idea was that human sin brought every distress into the world.

Finally, almost no food was available, only five loaves of bread and a few fish. Unwilling to send the people away, Jesus provided for them. He took the food, blessed it, gave it to the disciples to distribute, and the leftovers filled 12 baskets.

This miracle anticipates the Eucharist. Important in the story is the role of the disciples. They literally gave the food, blessed and multiplied by Jesus, to the great throng.

Refection

A great, constant, and underlying message of the New Testament is that there is more to life than what humans see or hear around them. A basic lesson of the Church, largely overlooked today, is that human life is eternal, either in heaven or hell.

Everything in the New Testament must be seen in this context. So, the story in this weekend’s Gospel is not simply about physical hunger, which passes with earthly death, but nourishment for the eternal soul.

This fact is obvious. Humans are weak and unable to provide everything for themselves. They cannot assure eternal life for themselves.

The Church’s reassuring message is that God provides—abundantly, completely, and finally. The Lord indeed gives food, the “bread of life.” Sin leaves us starving and desperate. Sin brings death. Faith gives life.

The Lord’s great, compassionate gift continues through the Church, founded on the disciples. Nourished by Jesus, to imitate Jesus, Christians should care for others in need.

Question Corner/Fr. Kenneth Doyle
Varying interpretations possible for natural phenomena at time of Christ’s death

Q I am a wandering Catholic. I identify as a Roman Catholic, although I have not been to a church service in quite a while. I have made excuses to myself and to our Lord as to why that is. I have started reading the Bible and would like to know if the King James version is accepted by the Church. I have been trying to get to church, as I feel this is the version used for the scriptural readings at Catholic Masses. (Virginia)

A First, about the Bible. The King James translation was completed in 1611, and is written in a lofty literary style. Like Catholic versions, its New Testament section includes 27 books. But in the King James version (as well as in other Protestant editions), the Old Testament has only 39 books while Catholic versions have 46 books.

The seven additional books in Catholic editions are: Tobit, Judith, First and Second Maccabees. (In addition, Catholic Bibles also include some sections of Esther and Daniel that are not found in Protestant Bibles.) These additional books are considered by the Catholic Church as inspired by the Holy Spirit.

But in the King James version Catholic Church does not forbid anyone from reading any version of the Bible. I am happy that you have begun to read the King James Bible, and believe that you will find inspiration in doing so.

At some point, though, you might want to obtain a version called the New American Bible. Last revised in 2011, this is the version used for the scriptural readings at Catholic Masses.

Now, about your being a “wandering Catholic.” I hope that when your health permits, you will decide to return regularly to Mass. I believe that this is the way to be most faithful to Jesus and the surest help for living his way.

Jesus told us at the Last Supper that he wanted his followers to come together regularly to celebrate their faith, to recall his life and teachings and to be nourished with his body and blood. It may be that legitimate health concerns make it wise right now for you to go to church, especially during the current pandemic. If that is the case, would you consider calling a priest at a nearby parish and asking to be placed on the Communion list for home visitation?

That way, you will be able to have your confession heard and feel the peace and the strength of Jesus in the Eucharist. (Questions may be sent to Father Kennedy Doyle at askfatherdoyle@gmail.com and 30 Columbus Circle Dr, Albany, New York 12203.)
Rest in peace

Please submit in writing to our office by 10 a.m. Thursday before date of publication; be sure to state date of death. Obituaries of archdiocesan priests and religious that are natives of the archdiocese or have served in the archdiocese are listed elsewhere in this section. Order priests and religious sisters and brothers are included here only if they are natives of the archdiocese or have served here. Other obituaries are separate on obituaries pages.


CLOUSER, Alfred L., 83, Christ the King, Indianapolis, July 4. Uncle of several.


GALBO, Mary Margaret (Aud), 96, Holy Spirit, Indianapolis, April 23. Mother of Mary Margaret Evans, Janie Landon, Jim and Joe Galbo. Grandmother of seven. Great-grandmother of nine.


TAYLOR, Jill E. (Bannning), 69, St. Michael Brookville, June 24. Sister of Terry Bannning, Jana Rae Fettig and Mike O’Conner. Aunt of several.


Submitted my resignation and enrolled to be a part of that scheme. Soon after, I decided then and there that I would not be your boss.” I was appalled, and asked: “How will you teach him all you know, and, when he learns it, he is going to arrive, I want you to teach him all you work of mercy. We made sandwiches and cake pops for the hungry; sent letters to the imprisoned; made blankets for the homeless; and made rosary bracelets for the elderly. We also traveled into the community to paint Nativity scenes at a nursing home and went to the St. Elizabeth Coleman Pregnancy Center in Indianapolis, where we sorted clothes for children of all ages. My responsibility and my act of service was when we went to the St. Paul Hermitage in Beech Grove to sing Christmas songs, talk and play games with the residents. I also further God’s kingdom at school and at Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ Parish. I am an altar server at weekend Masses, and am in the cantor choir for school Masses on Thursdays. By doing this, I feel connected to God by praising him in music. I am on the Student Lighthouse Team, where I lead school tours and help students’ voices be heard. At school, I also help teachers with grading and organizing papers and cleaning their classrooms. I enjoy helping teachers, since they help me learn new things every day. By volunteering in the parish and school, I feel closer to God.

(Grace and her parents, Ryan and Jamie Danning, are members of Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ Parish in Indianapolis. She completed the seventh grade at Nativity School this spring, and is the seventh-grade division winner in the Indianapolis Serra Club’s 2020 John D. Kelley Vocations Essay Contest.)

WASHINGTON (CNS)—The Catholic Church in the U.S. convened a yearlong intercultural process with young adults and ministry leaders on July 25.

Called “Journeying Together,” the initiative aims to explore the Church’s engagement with young people of diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds and mobilize U.S. Catholics on issues and concerns related to culture and race in the United States, according to a July 22 news release from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB).

The USCCB’s Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church is leading the initiative, with the involvement of several USCCB secretariats—Catholic Education, Evangelization and Catechesis, and Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth. They will be joined by the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry.

Due to health concerns created by the novel coronavirus, the initiative will primarily take place online from July through next May. Plans call for a live gathering to take place next April in Indianapolis, pending health and safety directives.

It is based on Pope Francis’ call for encounter and dialogue in his 2019 apostolic exhortation “Christus Vivit.” (“Christ Lives”) on the 2018 Synod of Bishops on young people, the faith and vocational discernment.

The pope urged parishes and dioceses to rethink their young and young adult programs and to make changes based on the desires of young people they want and need. Youth ministry cannot be elitist or focused only on the teens and young adults already active in the Church’s life, he said.

He also called on Catholic youth to reach out to other young people, to not be afraid to mention Jesus and to invite friends to Church or a Church-sponsored activity.

The “Journeying Together” process will feature intercultural and intracultural digital gatherings and conversations with young adult delegates and key ministry leaders from different cultural communities, including African-Americans, Asian and Pacific Islanders, European Americans, Hispanic/Latinos, and Native Americans, as well as immigrant groups, migrants and refugees.

This dialogue comes at an incredibly important time in our nation’s history where we find ourselves engaged in a serious conversation about race and racism, with calls for meaningful and lasting social reform, a movement led in large part by young people across the country and around the world,” said Philadelphia Archbishop Nelson J. Perez, chairman of the Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church.

He told me a young man on the park service road crew with no education or experience in accounting would soon be joining us. McCaw said—“I will never forget his words—“When our new hire arrives, I want you to teach him all you know, and, when he learns it, he is going to be your boss.” I was appalled, and asked: “Since I am doing your work as well as mine and know everything about the accounting system, why can’t he be his boss?”

“Because that is the way it is,” he said. I decided then and there that I would not be a part of that scheme. Soon after, I submitted my resignation and enrolled at Colorado State University, where I discovered that journalism was the best career choice for me.

The experience at Rocky Mountain National Park could have left me bitter, but fortunately I subsequently found that diversity in the Church is leading the initiative, with the involvement of several USCCB secretariats—Catholic Education, Evangelization and Catechesis, and Laity, Marriage, Family, Life and Youth. They will be joined by the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry.

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Supreme Court upholds Nevada limits on congregation sizes in pandemic

WASHINGTON (CNS)—In a 5-4 decision on July 24, the Supreme Court upheld Nevada’s cap of 50 people for religious services—when other places only have to cut, churches do not,” it said. Nevada Gov. Steve Sisolak joined by Justices Clarence Thomas and Samuel Alito Jr., wrote a dissent that the state’s cap of 50 people only at worship services—when other places only have to cut, churches do not,” it said. Nevada Gov. Steve Sisolak joined by Justices Clarence Thomas and Samuel Alito Jr., wrote a dissent that the state’s cap of 50 people only at worship services—when other places only have to cut, churches do not,” it said. Nevada Gov. Steve Sisolak joined by Justices Clarence Thomas and Samuel Alito Jr., wrote a dissent that the state’s cap of 50 people only at worship services—when other places only have to cut, churches do not,” it said. Nevada Gov. Steve Sisolak joined by Justices Clarence Thomas and Samuel Alito Jr., wrote a dissent that the state’s cap of 50 people only at worship services—when other places only have to cut, churches do not,” it said. Nevada Gov. Steve Sisolak joined by Justices Clarence Thomas and Samuel Alito Jr., wrote a dissent that the state’s cap of 50 people only at worship services—when other places only have to cut, churches do not,” it said. Nevada Gov. Steve Sisolak joined by Justices Clarence Thomas and Samuel Alito Jr., wrote a dissent.