Dispensation for Sunday Mass extended until Nov. 1

The five Catholic bishops of Indiana have extended the dispensation for the obligation to participate in Mass on Sundays to all the faithful until Nov. 1, 2020.

“While commending our pastors and pastoral life coordinators who have gone to great lengths to assure safe worship spaces in our churches, due to the increase in the COVID-19 cases in our state, the Indiana bishops have decided to extend the dispensation from the obligation of Sunday Mass attendance beyond Aug. 15 until Nov. 1, 2020, unless further developments determine otherwise,” said an Aug. 3 statement of the bishops from the Province of Indianapolis, which is comprised of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis and the Dioceses of Gary, Evansville, Fort Wayne-South Bend and Lafayette.

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

This extension is motivated in part by the continued need of social distancing because of the coronavirus, which will limit the seating capacity of churches and affect the distribution of Communion.

After closing churches on March 18 and suspending public worship across Indiana in an effort to slow the spread of the coronavirus, a phased resumption of the public celebration of the Mass and other sacraments began in archdiocesan parishes in late May and early June. SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis and other parishes across central and southern Indiana will continue livestreaming Masses.

Weekday Masses at the Cathedral are celebrated Monday through Friday at 5:15 p.m. Weekend Masses include the Saturday Vigil Mass at 5 p.m. and the Sunday liturgy at 10:30 a.m. Links to these Masses are available at www.archindy.org/streaming.

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 Irondale, Ala.

A desire to change the lives of people in poverty helps leader transform his own life

By John Shaughnessy

The moment brought John Ryan to tears.

As the president of the Indianapolis council of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Ryan tries to attend every graduation ceremony for people in the organization’s Changing Lives Forever program—an 18-week program that gives people the tools to help them leave a life of poverty.

“At the graduation, the people get up and talk about how their lives have changed,” Ryan notes. “It’s so humbling to listen to what they have encountered, where they’ve been and where they are today.

“One guy stood up. He was probably in his 50s or 60s. He said, ‘I haven’t graduated from anything. I haven’t graduated from grade school. I haven’t graduated from high school. This is the first time I’ve ever graduated from something.’ I thought, ‘Oh, my God!’ ”

Ryan paused as he became emotionally overwhelmed again in recalling that moment. Then he added, “You should have seen the face of this gentleman. He was just beaming. You could just tell his life has just completely changed.

“That’s one of many examples where people have been homeless or in utter poverty. They’re still in poverty, but now they see a way to get out. They’ve learned about finance and business and photography and production. They’ve grown up so much.”

Challenges and hopes await for students, teachers as another school year begins

By John Shaughnessy

Mary McCoy knows that the approaching academic year for Catholic schools in the archdiocese is already being marked by a combination of uncertainty and anxiety—just as fears concerning the coronavirus have had an impact on every school system in the United States.

At the same time, the assistant superintendent for the Office of Catholic Schools in the archdiocese knows how hard administrators, principals and teachers have worked and prepared this summer to make the 68 Catholic schools across central and southern Indiana as safe as possible.

“Our principals and our teachers want nothing more than for our students to be safe,” McCoy said. “Our Catholic schools have been known to be safe environments, and they will continue to be safe environments. They’re just going to look a little different.

“Our teachers and principals have worked all summer to ensure there’s a safe environment for our kids to come back to because they do miss them. They miss them so much. They know their kids so well, and they know their families so well. That’s the beauty of our Catholic schools.”

McCoy shared one more key element that has guided administrators, principals and teachers as Catholic schools in the archdiocese prepare to open throughout August for in-school instruction.

“A big concern we’ve heard from principals and teachers is that in Catholic schools we focus so much on relationships,” she said. “So the prayers have been to get the kids in the building and really focus on those relationships at the beginning of the year so if they do have to go virtual, they’ve at least got those relationships built with their students.”

Those insights about the hopes and challenges of this school year were part of an Aug. 3 conversation that The Criterion had with McCoy and her two fellow
German author says retired Pope Benedict is 'extremely frail' 

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—An author with a long and close relationship to retired Pope Benedict XVI told a German newspaper that the 93-year-old retired pope is “extremely frail.”

Peter Seewald, the author who has published four widely read and long interviews with the retired pope, was quoted in the Aug. 3 edition of the Bavarian tabloid Passauer Neue Presse. Seewald said he visited with Pope Benedict on Aug. 1 to present him with a copy of the authorized biography, Benedict XVI: A Life.

The retired pope lives in the Mater Ecclesiae monastery in the Vatican Gardens. Seewald said he visited with him there in the company of Archbishop Georg Gaenswein, Pope Benedict’s personal secretary.

The Criterion
Effective August 3, 2020

Deacon Patrick Bower, currently serving in ministry at St. Barnabas Parish in Indianapolis and coordinator of extraneous Ministry of the Eucharist for Indiana University Hospital’s Methodist, IU Medical Center and Riley campuses, assigned to ministry at St. Rose of Lima Parish in Franklin while continuing as coordinator of extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist at the Indiana University Hospital campuses.

Official Appointments

Deacon Marc Kellams, currently serving in ministry at St. Charles Borromeo Parish in Bloomington and Corrections Ministry Coordinator for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, assigned to ministry at SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi Parish in Greenwood while continuing as Corrections Ministry Coordinator.

Deacon Steve Touzel, currently serving in ministry at St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross Parish in Lawrenceburg, assigned to ministry at St. Michael Parish in Bay City and St. Peter Parish in Franklin County.

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

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The Criterion, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367

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This is the pinnacle of my career. I love it. At times, I've thought all of those other support groups and all the things in the world I rely on. It's truly pretty neat.”

“Before I came here, I was retired,” says Ryan, who’s now 73. “I can only read so many books. You can only go on so many tours and cruises. I came here because I wanted to give myself to helping people in poverty, to do charity work.

I've learned what that main purpose in being a Vincentian is, that through charity, you hope to become more holy, and you also hope to make others to holiness. And that has been monumental. So today when I pray, I pray to become more holy and to bring others to holiness. Six years ago, I never would have dreamed that.

Ryan, six years as president of the society’s Indianapolis council will end on Oct. 25. As the end of his tenure draws near, Ryan, in a Criterion interview, met with him to hear his story of how the organization has changed dramatically in the past six years.

“Everything you can think of, we've added an all-volunteer effort to now also having 34 paid employees, from providing more nutritional food to helping people get into the workforce and everything in between,” Ryan said. “The organization is always changing, always moving. We have about 1,400 customers a week it serves at one of the largest food pantries in the country to opening two new stores downtown just this past year. The stores that have been so successful are professional staff and programs to help people get out of poverty. And I also say that in those six years my life has changed dramatically for Ryan, a retired attorney who has been a deputy mayor for Indianapolis, a partner in a large law firm, a vice president of an insurance company and director of Indiana’s Department of Child Services. Here is an edited version of the conversation with Ryan.

Q. How would you describe your six years as the president of the St. Vincent de Paul Society?

A. “Extremely fulfilling. I've always been the type of person who has always enjoyed every job I've had in my career. At times, I’ve thought all of those other positions were preparing me for this. That's also a part of it. I love coming to the office every day.”

Q. Have these six years given you a different perspective on the world?

A. “You would think with all of my experience working people and poverty. That and couldn't be farther from the truth. I'm ashamed that I didn't understand it. I did not comprehend the magnitude of poverty in the archdiocese. Whether you're in rural Indiana or in a city, one in seven people in Indiana is in poverty. In Marion County, 35,000 of those folks are children. When I see folks going through the line, that breaks my heart. That’s why I'm the elder. I think, 'My goodness, this is the United States, how can we allow the elder to show up at a food pantry line. ’I wish people could come here and see the large crowds, the long lines at this food pantry. It takes two hours to get food here. I'm asked frequently. Do people really need this food? Would you spend two hours in line for food? Poor people come on a bus. And some people take two buses to get here.”

Q. Talk about the dignity that the Society of St. Vincent de Paul tries to give people who often aren't treated with dignity.

A. “Maybe you could put me in that category before I came here. I had all these biases and prejudices that sadly were with me. ‘Why can’t people get a job?’ I’ve learned through here that frequently people don’t have control of their lives. I don’t think anybody wants to stay in poverty. It’s hell. What we try to do is we’re honoring them here, to show them the respect that they absolutely deserve. We see the face of Jesus Christ in every one of them. They haven’t been asked to be where they are. But because of generational poverty or situational poverty, they are.”

Q. Has your experience here given you a different perspective on your faith?

A. “Oh my goodness, yes. It’s the direction of trying to be holy and lead others to holiness. And hopefully, it’s also led to a better appreciation, understanding. I would have to think. Well, anybody can get a job. All you have to do is go out there and work. Why in the world are people in poverty in America? ”

“I didn’t understand generational poverty. If three generations of a family are in poverty, they’re in generational poverty. And you can guess the likelihood of where that fourth generation is going to be. More than likely, they’re going to be poor and do this over and over and over. And it is bad. Why is that bad? Because back at the first generation, they didn’t have the skill set to get out of poverty. You take a family that has the basics of being in the middle class through our family, our friends, our support the intake desk, and it is much more respectful to that family. They go into the store just like the shoppers out there. And you can’t tell the difference between the two. They’re picking out their clothing, their couch, et cetera. It’s just completely different. That’s just one of the examples of the respect we’re now giving to those individuals. How did that happen?” I’m convinced it’s the Holy Spirit saying, ‘You folks can come up with a better way to serve these people in poverty with respect.”

Q. You have paid employees now, right?

A. “The vast majority of this organization is still volunteers, and always will be. But in certain key functions and responsibilities, we were having difficulty. So we now have a full-time executive director, who has raised us more money, for example. And that’s one of the reasons of the respect we’re now giving to those individuals. How did that happen?” I’m convinced it’s the Holy Spirit saying, ‘You folks can come up with a better way to serve these people in poverty with respect.”

Q. You've made some significant changes in the Changing Lives Forever program. Talk about that.

A. “When I came on board, we were doing one class a year in this conference room, the criterion room. And it’s just wonderful. It’s a defined program on how to give folks the ability to get out of poverty. It doesn’t get out of poverty, but it begins that progression.

“So we suggested let’s push that down to the parishes. So in each parish, there’s a St. Vincent de Paul conference. So let’s support the 57 conferences that we have, let’s teach them how to do the program, let’s pay for the program, and let’s do it where the people live. Transportation is such an issue and an access issue. It’s all related.

“Six years ago, they had one class of 12 people a year. We’re now up to about 12 classes a year in an intensity conference and our goal is to get to 20. We have over 300 graduates now. And what the graduates have told us is that it’s been very helpful. Lives have been changed, but their family lives have been changed. The people in their families see how they’ve been changed and the families want some of that. It has rippled out into the community.”

Q. During your leadership, one of the success stories is the addition of two thrift shops called Mission 27. Talk about Mission 27 and how the proceeds from the thrift shops have helped the organization expand its help to people.

A. “We have two stores now. One’s downtown [in Indianapolis] and the other one is about four blocks south of Fountain Square proper.

“When I looked at the organization — we didn’t have a two-year development person then — I thought, ‘How can we raise funds to pay for all these Changing Lives Forever programs?’ And how can we increase our food budget so we can buy more nutritional food?”

“We did a strategic plan and we fell upon opening a thrift store. We put 23 collection bins in parish parking lots. The clothing just started to come in. We knew we had the product. We have another 20 bins we’re ordered, and we’re going to put them in about 12 more parishes, that don’t have them and the six Catholic high schools in Indianapolis. We’re going to have about 45 bins now.

“The stores have nice clothing, furniture, glasses, pots and pans, linens, blankets, just all household furnishings, things of the clothing comes from the clothing bins, and our trucks go out and pick up all the household furnishings and appliances. We have a group of men who fix appliances down at the distribution center. That all goes into the stores.”

Q. The Mission 27 stores are open to the public to shop. They’re also a place where people in need receive vouchers to choose what they need. Talk about that concept.

A. “An incredible amount of merchandise still goes out to people in need. Now, Tuesday through Saturday, people come with their vouchers. They come to the intake desk, and it is much more respectful to that family. They go into the store just like the shoppers out there. And you can’t tell the difference between the two. They’re picking out their clothing, their couch, etcetera. It’s just completely different. That’s just one of the examples of the respect we’re now giving to those individuals. How did that happen?” I’m convinced it’s the Holy Spirit saying, ‘You folks can come up with a better way to serve these people in poverty with respect.”

Q. Are you going to miss this?

A. “Oh, my goodness, yes! I will miss the people, both the volunteers and the clients. I’m thinking of taking a break, to give the next president a little room. Then I may come back. I volunteered here about a year before I became president. Some of the clients became friends, the regulars. Hopefully, I can get reconnected with the clients again.”

(If anyone needs help from the Society of St. Vincent de Paul—or wants to make a donation to the volunteers—check the website, www.svdpindy.org, or call 317-924-5769.)
Now is a time Christians must courageously share with others

It has been said countless times during the last several months, but it bears repeating: We are in uncharted territory. No one could have imagined the 2020 calendar year would present so much uncertainty across the globe.

From Africa to Asia, from Australia to Africa—and pick nearly any other spot throughout the world—we have all been impacted by the coronavirus. We knew in the United States that 2020 would bring a presidential election. We knew of the poverty, war, human trafficking and other societal challenges that would continue to exist. We knew that 2020 would bring a presidential election. We knew of the poverty, war, human trafficking and other societal challenges that would continue to exist. We knew the pandemic would impact the economy, our way of life and our health across the globe.

And we figured we’d be enjoying our annual summer rituals of long-planned vacations and taking part in annual parish festivals, among other regular seasonal plans. Wrong again, for many of us.

We have heard the famous phrase “nothing in this world is certain, except death and taxes,” but as people of faith, we know there is so much more to our lives—including being our brothers and sisters’ keepers when unforeseen challenges shake the very foundation of how we live in.

Pope Francis reminded us once again before praying the Angelus on Aug. 2 how our vocations as disciples of Christ must include true compassion and “courageous sharing” when we see others in need.

Our faith teaches us that God operates according to “the logic of taking responsibility for others… the logic of not looking the other way,” the Holy Father said.

According to a Catholic News Service story service, the pope said telling others “to fend for themselves” should not be a part of a Christian’s vocabulary.

We knew of the poverty, war, human trafficking and other societal challenges that so many faced before COVID-19, which became an international illness that has affected millions and has killed nearly 700,000 thus far.

But what we didn’t foresee was how all this would be exacerbated by a global pandemic.

During his catechesis before the Angelus, Pope Francis reflected on Jesus’ miracle of the multiplication of the loaves (Mt 14:13-21). In that Gospel encounter, Jesus multiplied five loaves and two fish to feed about 5,000 men. He said: “They all ate and were satisfied, and they picked up the fragments left over—twelve wicker baskets full” (Mt 14:20). “With this gesture, Jesus demonstrates his power; not in a spectacular way, but as a sign of charity, of God the Father’s generosity toward his weary and needy children,” the pope said.

We see Jesus fully “immersed in the life of his people. He understands their fatigue and their limitations, but he does not allow anyone to be lost, or to lose out. He nourishes them with his word and provides food in plenty for sustenance,” the Holy Father said.

Like the crowd of thousands in the Gospel, as Catholics, we are nurtured and drawn strength each time we listen to God’s word and receive the Eucharist.

And now more than ever, our brethren must see a compassion that is not “sentimentality, but rather the concrete manifestation of the love that cares for the people’s needs,” the pope said. We must have the ability to suffer with others, and “to take others’ sorrows on ourselves.”

“Perhaps it would do us good today to ask ourselves: Do I feel compassion when I read news about war, when I hear about hunger, about the pandemic?” he was asked.

“Do I feel compassion toward the people who are close to me? Am I capable of suffering with them, or do I look the other way, or [say] ‘they can fend for themselves’?”

Times like these offer a reminder that our faith must be at the heart of all we do. And like Jesus, we must show the same compassion and tenderness to our brothers and sisters in need—now, more than ever.

May we always remember the weary and needy in our prayers and our acts of charity.

—Mike Krokos

Letters from readers are published in TheCriterion as part of the newspaper’s commitment to “the responsible exchange of freely-held and expressed opinion among the People of God” (Communio et Progressus, 116).

Letters from readers are welcome and every effort will be made to include letters from as many people and representing as many viewpoints as possible. Letters should be informed, relevant, well-expressed and temperate in tone. They must reflect a basic courtesy of tone and respect.

The editors reserve the right to select the letters that will be published and to edit letters from readers as necessary based on space limitations, pastoral sensitivity and content (including spelling and grammar). In order to encourage opinions from a variety of readers, frequent writers will ordinarily be limited to one letter every three months. Consumer edition letters (fewer than 300 words) are more likely to be printed.

Letters must be signed, but for serious reasons, names may be withheld.

Send letters to “Letters to the Editor,” TheCriterion, 1400 N. Meridian Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367. Readers with access to e-mail may send letters to criterion@archindy.org
No importa cuán fuerte sea la tormenta, mantente cerca de Jesús

“¿Elías llegó a un lugar donde se bañó el Señor, el monte de Dios. Allí pasó la noche en una cueva. El Señor le ordenó: Sal y presente ante mí en la montaña, porque estás a punto de pasar por algo. Como a Heraldos del Señor vino un viento, violento y que portó lluvia y nieve. Pero el Señor no estaba en el viento. Después del viento hubo un terremoto, pero el Señor tampoco estaba en el terremoto. Tras el terremoto vino un fuego, pero el Señor tampoco estaba en el fuego. Y después del fuego vino un pequeño murmullo. Cuando Elías lo oyó, se acurrucó juntos con miedo e incertidumbre. Nos preguntamos: ‘¿Dónde está Dios?’. ¿Cómo pudo Jesús abandonarnos en estos tiempos difíciles?’”

Los escritores modernos de la Sagrada Escritura nos dan estas preguntas sobre nuestra fe y nos impean cambiar nuestra actitud y nuestra fe. Pero en los tiempos que vivimos, cuando las tormentas se agravan, es más importante que nunca estar cerca de Jesús. En la vida, a través de la fe, todo será posible.

“En esta historia ocurren tres cosas importantes: Primero, Jesús demuestra que está cerca de sus discípulos en un momento de angustia. Nada puede perjudicarlos mientras Jesús esté presente entre ellos, ya sea en su oración a solas en la montaña, o en su acercamiento a ellos en el mar tempestuoso. En segundo lugar, Pedro revela una vez más que su fe es genuina pero inmadura. Le pide con audacia a Jesús que le permita caminar sobre el agua, llegar hasta donde está él sin sufrir daños, pero al final pierde el valor y comienza a hundirse. Y al gritar: “¡Señor, salvame!” (Mt 14:30) Y, por último, el Señor anima a Pedro a tomar un riesgo audaz y, al final, soporta su fe débil diciendo: “¡Hombre de poca fe!” (Mt 14:31).

Hoy, como todos los días, es importante que experimentemos la cercanía de Jesús y su poder para salvarnos de las tormentas que encontramos en nuestra vida personal y en la sociedad. Atendamos las palabras de un hombre popular. “NINGUNA tormenta puede sacudir mi calma interior mientras a esa roca me afiero. ¿Cómo no iba a cantar si el amor es dueño del cielo y de la tierra?” Pedro (que significa “roca”) es cada uno de nosotros. Su fe es sólida, pero no perfecta. Toma decisiones precipitadas y deja que su miedo lo abruma, pero siempre vuelve a Jesús porque sabe, en el fondo de su corazón, que Jesús es el Señor del cielo y de la tierra. Ni siquiera a él, ningún poder físico o espiritual puede destruirnos.

La primera lectura del próximo domingo (1 Rm 19:5-11) nos recuerda que Dios está cerca de nosotros en formas que no esperamos. Como Elías, esperamos que la presencia de Dios se revele de manera dramática: un viento fuerte y pesado, terremotos e incendios, o relámpagos arrojados desde los cielos. Pero la mayoría de las veces, Dios se nos presenta de maneras mucho más simples. Para Elías “suave murmullo” (1 Rv 19:12) le reveló la presencia divina. Para nosotros, puede ser una sorpresa amigable o una palabra amable pronunciada en medio de una devastadora pandemia.

Jesus, a quien el papa Francisco nos recuerda que es “el rostro de Dios,” está cerca de nosotros de maneras que no esperamos. Nos invita a “dirigir a arriarros y a salir a las campanas de la ciudad y seguridad de nuestra vida diaria para unirnos a Él en medio de los caóticos mares de este mundo.” Estamos listos para tomar este riesgo y, a diferencia de Pedro, para sostener nuestra decisión—con la ayuda de la gracia de Dios—de caminar con Jesús sin importar cuán fuertes o pesados sean los vientos corren. Muy a menudo nos encontramos, al igual que Pedro y los discípulos, acurrucados juntos con miedo e incertidumbre. Nos preguntamos: “¿Dónde está Dios?” ¿Cómo puedo Jesús abandonarnos en estos tiempos difíciles? ¿Podemos permitirnos abandonar nuestras zonas de comodidad y arriarros a salir al encuentro del Señor? Y, si asumimos este riesgo, ¿seremos realmente capaces de “caminar sobre el agua” como Pedro lo hizo hasta que perdió la confianza en la capacidad de Jesús para sostenerlo? Una vez más, Jesús es el usuario calificado que nos dice a cada uno de nosotros “VEN.” Si confiamos en él, nos sostendrá sin importar cuán difícil sean las cosas. Ninguna tormenta puede sacudir nuestra calma interior si nos aferramos al Señor del Amor.

Afirmemos a Jesús. Abandone nuestras miedos, y nuestra necesidad de seguridad, y tomemos los riesgos que exige nuestra fe. El Señor siempre está cerca de nosotros. †
August 11

August 15
Into the Heart virtual formation opportunity for catechists of teens sponsored by archdiocesan Office of Youth Ministry, 9 a.m.-noon. $20 per person for groups of 1-4, $15 per person for groups of five or more. Information: 317-592-4066 or emasconi@srdarylch.com.

August 16
St. Nicholas Parish, 6461 E. St. Nicholas Dr., Summan, Drive-thru Chicken Dinner, 11:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. for Adults (RCIA) team members and evangelizers, Rite of Christian Initiation of Teens (RCIAT) teens and their families, especially sibling groups and teens. Information: 317-592-4066, log on to archindy.org/trafficking or information or to register, go to www.villageskids.org. †

August 18
Archdiocesan Anti-trafficking Ministry will hold a virtual Zoom event to kick off online on Aug. 18, or by mailing us at 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202, ATTN: Ann Lewis, or by fax at 317-236-1593. †

August 20
St. Joseph Parish, 1401 S. Mickey Ave., Indianapolis. Third Thursday Adoration, interceding for women experiencing crisis pregnancy, 11 a.m.-7 p.m., with Mass at 5:45 p.m.

August 20
Our Lady of Peace Cemetery and Mausoleum, 9001 Haverstick Road, Indianapolis. Mass, 2 p.m. Information: 317-574-8898 or www.catholiccemeteries.com.

September 4

September 5
St. Michael Church, 145 St. Michael Blvd., Brookville. First Saturday Marian Devotional Prayer Group, Mass, devotional prayers, Rosary, 8 a.m. Information: 765-647-5462.

September 8

September 15

September 17
St. Joseph Parish, 1401 S. Mickey Ave., Indianapolis. Third Thursday Adoration, interceding for women experiencing crisis pregnancy, 11 a.m.-7 p.m., with Mass at 5:45 p.m.

Our Lady of Peace Cemetery and Mausoleum, 9001 Haverstick Road, Indianapolis. Memorial Mass for all who are in heaven and in purgatory, 11 a.m.-7 p.m., with Mass at 5:45 p.m.

Events Calendar

For a complete list of events as reported to The Criterion, log on to www.archindy.org/events.

August 12
Office of Catechesis to host first annual Gathering of Disciples online on Sept. 12.

For a complete list of retreats as reported to The Criterion, log on to www.archindy.org/events.

August 13

August 19

August 20

September 4

September 5
St. Michael Church, 145 St. Michael Blvd., Brookville. First Saturday Marian Devotional Prayer Group, Mass, devotional prayers, Rosary, 8 a.m. Information: 765-647-5462.

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VIPS

Retreats and Programs

August 12
The archdiocesan Office of Catechesis will host its fifth annual “Gathering of Disciples” formation event from 9 a.m. to noon on Sept. 12. The event—offered in English and Spanish—is designed for catechists, evangelizers, Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA) team members and all who are passionate about worship, evangelization and worship.

The keynote speaker is Tim Staple, author and director of apologistics and evangelization for Catholic Answers. Other speakers include Danny Klee, Bill Keimig and a member from The Magis Center. The Huesy Brothers will provide music and a witness. Topics during the event include connecting religion and science, teaching tips for catechists of middle school and high school youths, building on the RCIA experience, and the role of apologistics in parish evangelization outreach.

Parish groups and individuals are both welcome. The cost is $10 per person, with a $50 maximum per parish. When registering, the ticket price will be listed as “free” because parishes will be assessed for the cost of registration.

For more information or to register, go to cthysthathering or call 317-236-1550.

The Villages to offer free, online foster parent information sessions

The Villages of Indiana will host two virtual foster parent information sessions via Zoom from 6-8 p.m. on Aug. 31 and Sept. 28. Sessions are for anyone who is interested in becoming a foster parent to help 17,000 Hoosier children currently in need of safe, loving homes. The Villages of Indiana is the state’s largest private therapeutic foster care provider. The agency provides training and 24-hour professional support for families who are willing to provide loving foster homes for children, especially sibling groups and teens. For more information or to register, call The Villages at 800-874-6800 or visit www.villageskids.org.

Archdiocesan Anti-trafficking Ministry to kick off online on Aug. 18

The archdiocesan Anti-trafficking Ministry will hold a virtual Zoom Kick-Off from 6:30-8 p.m. on Aug. 18. The online event features a Human Trafficking1 presentation that focuses on education, information and support of victims and survivors.

There is no cost to attend; however, registration is required. For more information or to register, go to www.archindy.org/trafficking or contact Theresa Chamblee at 317-236-1404 or tchamblee@archindy.org.
Criterions staff honored for excellence in journalism

Staff members of The Criterion were recently honored for excellence in journalism by four organizations.

The recognition included awards from the Catholic Press Association of the United States and Canada (CPA), the Woman’s Press Club of Indiana (WPCI), National Federation of Press Women (NFPW) and the Knights of Columbus.

WPCI and NFPW awards

The recognition for work completed during the 2019 calendar year started in April when staff writer Natalie Hoefer was honored with five first-place awards:

- Specialty articles, History: ’Henryville parish marks 150 years of passing faith ‘one generation to another’
- Specialty articles, Religion: ’Catholic HEART work camps leave youths ‘Tired up’
- Photography, Single photograph, News or feature photo: ’’SEEK’-ing God in Indianapolis’’ (adoration photo)
- Creative verse, Single poem: ’Vertige’
- Photographer-writer: Contributions to National Catholic Youth Conference special edition.

All of her WPCI first-place entries advanced to the national NFPW competition, where her NCYC coverage won first-place in the Photography—Write category, and her Henryville parish anniversary story (Specialty Articles, History), Catholic HEART work camp story (Specialty Articles, Religion) and her SEEK conference photo (Photography, News or Feature Photo) all captured third-place awards.

CPA awards

The staff received more recognition on July 2 during the Catholic Press Association’s annual awards program, which recognizes achievements this year.

The team of Mike Krokos, John Shaughnessy, Natalie Hoefer, Sean Gallagher and others won first place in the Best Reporting on a Special Age-Group—Children and Teens Younger than 18 category for their stories, “’Vocation of women,’ ” an article on this small community of women of conviction who protect a common home. We need men and women of conviction who protect communication from all that would distort it or bend it to other purposes.”

Every day our staff aims to live up to the high standards for the media put forth by Pope Francis.” Otolski said. “The awards received by the staff of The Criterion this year are a testament to our efforts to bring the good news of the risen Christ to the people of central and southern Indiana.”

Writing on a local or Regional Event for her story, “At prayer vigil, Archdiocese Thompson recognizes dignity of those on death row to be executed,” and another in the Best Coverage of Pro-Life Issues for her package of stories, “’Loving sources of hope’ help women entering abortion centers choose life;”, “Based on book, Unplanned film on abortion shares a faith-filled story of hope, forgiveness and love” “Co-writers, co-producers and co-directors say God planned pro-life film.”

Knights of Columbus

Shaughnessy was awarded third place in the Knights of Columbus’ annual Father Michael J. McGinley Award for Distinguished Journalism. Named after the soon-to-be-beatified founder of the Knights, the award recognizes writers from CPA member publications who have, during the previous calendar year, published an outstanding story on the contributions that volunteers have made to Catholic parish life or the community.

His article, “Homeless advocate lives up to God’s counterfeiter,” was a feature story featuring Liz Stanton, who had spent nearly 13 years of her retirement collecting and providing items to the homeless.

In recognizing The Criterion staff for its dedication to serving the people of the archdiocese, associate publisher Greg Otolski noted that in a message last month to members of the Catholic Press Association, Pope Francis said: “We need media capable of building bridges, defending life and breaking down the walls, visible and invisible, that prevent sincere dialogue and truthful communication between individuals and communities. We need media that can help people, especially the young, to distinguish good from evil, to develop sound judgments based on a clear and unbiased presentation of the facts, and to understand the importance of working for justice, social concord and respect for our common home. We need men and women of conviction who protect communication from all that would distort it or bend it to other purposes.”

Every day our staff aims to live up to the high standards for the media put forth by Pope Francis.” Otolski said. “The awards received by the staff of The Criterion this year are a testament to our efforts to bring the good news of the risen Christ to the people of central and southern Indiana.”

Natalie Hoefer

John Shaughnessy

Mike Krokos

Sean Gallagher

Brandon A. Evans

Jane Lee

Katie Rutter

The Criterion staff received a first-place award from the Catholic Press Association of the United States and Canada for its coverage of the National Catholic Youth Conference during the 2019 calendar year. The award was in the Best Reporting on a Special Age-Group—Children and Teens Younger than 18.
It is not enough for Catholics to say life human is sacred. We must put our money where our mouths are. Education is one historically effective way of doing so. Jennifer Ospino need to shift some gears during this time of panic.

More than Catholic education that teaches about causes of death, Catholic education that proactively teaches practical ways to prevent physical death here, I mean precise, simple, speedy and widespread. This is not a time to rest solely on abstract theologizing and philosophizing, or to imagine possible worlds while escaping the one we so desperately need to dig our heels into political ideology. People are dying. Those who contract the virus have no guarantee that their lives will be the same. I see with dismay the exponential rise in the numbers of new cases and continuing deaths associated with the virus. If there are any educational campaigns to reduce or stop contagion, they seem to be failing. Perhaps people are not listening. Perhaps they are confused. People need to hear the message more often.

Churches are uniquely positioned to bring messages of health care to people and families where they are. Churches have a de facto receptive audience. In principle, the Catholic Church in the U.S. could drive the message to its nearly 70 million members. Even if only half of them listened, we would be influencing almost 10 percent of the entire U.S. population with lifesaving messages during this pandemic.

Everything that Catholics do share a message inspired by the Gospel is Catholic education. It happens everywhere and at all times. Catholics should take the lead at this historical moment and launch a message campaign to protect life. Involve everyone. An educational campaign needs talking points. A Catholic campaign to protect and save lives could start with a four-fold appeal. One, appeal to common sensical messages about hygiene and physical distancing. Two, appeal to values. Offer a renewed catechesis on the virtues of prudence, justice, temperance and courage. Third, appeal to a sense of charity that transcends individual whims and interests. Our Catholic ethical commitments challenge us to do what is right because it is true, to understand freedom as a way to achieve our human perfection, and to do so with the common good in mind.

Fourth, appeal to a Gospel-informed conscience. We care about others’ lives in the here and now of history, regardless of their skin color or culture or social location, simply because they are the face of Christ. No exception.

Such a Catholic campaign requires every available tool. Such a campaign, if effective, the campaign needs to be consistent and repetitive until the pandemic is over. In this manner, write a pastoral letter now on this topic? Why? Not say something in every homily. Each week, let it be in the regular cycles of life, preparation of the Word, in prayer, in the liturgy, in all of the sacraments. All Catholic newspapers and magazines should dedicate a notice section to this health campaign. Inform the faithful of regular cycles of conversation through social media, ignore the Catholic blogsphere about it. Catholic schools and colleges should highlight this message in their teaching, research projects and other educational practices.

Mime the potential of Catholic television. Mindful of its size and outreach, I would love to see EWTN take the lead. Spain’s private RAC1 Every ad cycle should have a commercial with this educational message. Do likewise through Catholic radio. This is the perfect time to save lives. Let us make history in the way we address this pandemics. Catholic as a community.

Jennifer Ospino is professor of theology and religious education at Boston College.

Recently, I was reminded of an important lesson about time. At this point in my life, I should understand that God’s timing is always perfect. But I am still tempted to desire answers prayed on my timeline. An early morning walk with my friend, Jennifer Ospino, illustrated this insight that made reconsider how I was looking at time. When we met to walk the trails near her neighborhood, she asked for an update on my house.

We sold our home a few months ago and have been waiting to move into our new place. Unfortunately, we’ve met with repeated delays, disappointments and some seemingly deceptive “bait-and-switch” tactics from the builder. I ventured to my friend about how the builder promised one thing, and then delivered something different. I complained that problems could not come soon enough, and harshly stated that each additional week they pushed our days away so that we could move in already. Instead, I should time away so that we could move in already. Instead, I should appreciate each season and each moment, present to God and to others. I was embarrassed that I had been viewing time in the opposite manner as my friend. I was wanting to hit “fast forward” and Jennifer was cherishing each day.

I fondly recall a story my friend Father Bob Gilday recounted from a homily Bishop John fog in 1972. I’m paraphrasing, but the cardinal posed this question to a group of seminarians: “If the plane goes down on the way back to the U.S. from Rome, who are you looking forward to seeing first? That your life had been wasted since you prepared for years to be a priest and life would end before you could serve as one? If so, then you haven’t understood or lived well!” He implied that their lives would have significance anyway, even if they never achieved their goal. I need to say with statements like, “I’ll be happy when …” and appreciate the present in whatever form it takes. I’ll try to do better at seeing time as a gift from God, and an opportunity to love and serve those he’s placed around me.

Jennifer explained to me that she plans to treasure each moment spent with her mom. She talked about some things that she has difficulty in sharing with her mother. I am not sure that her mother was having days good enough to engage with family.

“God’s timeline,” she added. “In that regard,避免 this need to help me to do something she has a knack for—doubtless viewing life through a lens of wisdom and faith.” A verse from Psalm 90 came to mind: “Teach us to count our days aright, that we may gain wisdom of heart” (Ps 90:12).

When we met to walk the trails near her neighborhood, she asked for an update on my house. Jennifer kindly listened to my diatribe and empathized with me. We began to laugh about my need to stop with statements like, “I’ll be happy when …,” meet us face to face till we have faces?” (Rom 8:28).

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The First Book of Kings is the source of the first reading for Mass this weekend. The two Books of Kings highlight the kings of the united kingdom of Israel, Saul, David and Solomon. This other book ultimately is a political history. Both are religious works, written to call the people to be loyal to God.

Thus, along with the kings, and often more emphatically and extensively than the kings, these books mention prophets, who spoke for God. For example, this weekend’s reading comes from the prophet Elijah. He tries to hear God, believing that God will speak to him. But he fails to hear God in phenomena in which he expects him to speak: raging storms and violent upheavals.

It is only in a whispering sound that Elijah hears the voice of God. Several lessons are in this reading.

First, God communicates with humanity in ways that they can perceive.

Second, in communicating with humans, God does not always meet their expectations. Often, it is the other way. Elijah looked for God in great outbursts of nature, in a storm or in an earthquake, believing that since God is supreme over nature, he would speak through nature’s power. As the New Testament eventually would specifically teach, God’s ways are not human ways. Not acting in human ways, God appears in places and events and forms least expected, such as in tiny whispering sounds in the middle of storms and Earth tremors.

St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans again this weekend furnishes the second reading.

In this reading, Paul verifies his own status as an Apostle and his own credentials, so to speak. He confronts imposters. This passage makes clear the fact that some disputed Paul, questioning his claim to be an Apostle. He also mourns that many of his kin do not accept God or him. Despite the fact that some walked away from the Gospel, however, Paul insists that he will remain true to his calling as a Christian and as an Apostle. He urged the Romans also to be faithful. For its last reading, the Church turns to St. Matthew’s Gospel.

In this story, the Lord literally walks across water to reach the boat from which the Apostles were fishing. St. Peter, impulsive as was his personality, leaps from the boat, attempting to meet Jesus. Indeed, Jesus had invited Peter to come forward. As often happened, Peter’s initial exuberance gives way to uncertainty. When these feelings take hold, Peter loses his ability to walk on the water and starts to sink.

Jesus, not at all outdone by Peter’s lack of faith, pulls Peter from the water, rescuing the Apostle from death.

Reflection
It is a tourism to say that God’s ways are not our ways. Of course, they are not. We are limited. Our perceptions are blunted. Selfishness and fear lead us astray.

Life cannot be measured just by earthly standards. It must be measured by its totality, in other words, with attention given the fact of eternity.

Jesus is the Son of God. He walked on water. He saved Peter from drowning. He is the source of life. He is the only security. He gives eternal life.

The greatest practical lesson to learn from these readings is that in fact we are only human. Our outlook is not necessarily precise. Our wishes are not always pure. We may love the Lord and may attempt to follow the Lord, but at times we try to find happiness by relying upon ourselves. When we try to walk on water, without Jesus, we sink.

First of all, we must humbly realize who and what we are. †

Question Corner
Fr. Kenneth Doyle

Church teaching on original sin related to ‘an inherited inclination to evil’

When I was a Protestant, I never heard original sin mentioned.

We were told that each person is responsible for their own sins—and need not even worry about sin until we approached “the age of accountability” (usually said to be about the age of 10). Until then, we were told, people are in a “state of grace”—meaning that, if they died, we would go to heaven.

Now, as a Catholic, I hear original sin mentioned almost weekly, and, we seem, all (from birth on) are held responsible for Adam and Eve’s initial sin in the Garden of Eden—and if we die kids, too, prior to some kind of salvific experience to erase it, we will go to hell. Could you please help me understand what this sin more thoroughly? (Indiana)

Actually, I am a bit surprised that you heard no mention of original sin during your years as a Protestant. The doctrine of original sin, first articulated precisely by St. Augustine in the fifth century, was popular with Protestant reformers, including Martin Luther and John Calvin.

The Catholic understanding is that original sin involves a personal guilt on our own part. It simply means that, as a consequence of the fall of our earliest parents, we have been weakened in our ability to resist temptation—we still possess free will, but we are born into the world with an inherited inclination to evil.

As the Catechism of the Catholic Church states, “Original sin is called ‘sin’ only in an analogical sense; it is a sin ‘contracted’ and not ‘committed’—a state and not an act” (#404).

As to your concern about children who die without baptism gaining hell, that is not the belief of the Church.

In fact, in 2007, the Church’s International Theological Commission, with the authorization of Pope Benedict XVI, published a document that concluded explicitly that “there are theological and liturgical reasons to hope that infants who die without baptism may be saved.”

At the same time, the Church still encourages parents to give their children the great gift of grace that God offers in baptism. This is especially the case for children who may be in danger of death. Regarding this, the Catechism notes “all the more urgent is the Church’s call not to prevent little children coming to Christ through the gift of holy baptism.” (#1261).

During the current coronavirus pandemic, when we are not obligated to attend Mass, I believe that we should be required to watch the Mass on television when possible. Does this obligation vary from diocese to diocese?

Some people take this dispensation to mean that they have no bother about Mass at all, and I believe that this could lead to lower Mass attendance when the crisis is over. Another concern I have is the possibility of spreading the virus when Communion is given on the tongue. I would be more comfortable if everyone received in the hand. (Georgia)

There is no binding obligation, in any diocese I am aware of, to watch the Mass on television for those who are at home because of the pandemic. However, there is strong encouragement to do so, and I know of instances where families are making this a part of their regular Sunday routine. I, too, share your concern that some may not have come back to regular practice when the crisis is over—although my experience has been that people are eager to return.

As for your worry about those who receive Communion on the tongue, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (in an advisory sent in April) said that people should continue to have that option. In the two parishes where I serve, I ask those who prefer to receive on the tongue to wait until the others have received before approaching the altar. That way, the Communion ministers can sanitize their hands anew and after someone chooses to receive the host on the tongue.

(Questions may be sent to Father Kenneth Doyle at askfatherdoydley@gmail.com and 30 Columbia Circle Dr., Albany, New York 12201.) †


BAGESCU, Adrian, 80, All Saints Parish, Deardrum County, July 12. Husband of Patricia Badescu. Father of G narcisse Badescu, Derek Badescu and David Badescu. Great-grandfather of two.


DARGIE, Bob, 76, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Richmond, July 15. Father of Mary Beard, Rebecca Schneider, Bruce, Chris, Mark, Mike and Patricia Dargie. Brother of Lorraine Fitziggins. Grandfather of 27. Great-grandfather of 25.


GRAFFITI, Dina, 80, Christ the King, Indianapolis, July 18. Mother of Arlene Grafflin-Clark, Diane Grafflin and Anita Topoll. Grandmother of five.


MCDONALD, John, 69, St. Margaret Mary, Brownburg, July 15. Son of Margaret McDonald. Brother of Kathy McDonald, Debbie and Nancy McDonald. Grandfather of 10. Great-grandfather of one.


QUINN, Jean, 84, St. Luke the Evangelist, Indianapolis, July 15.웨. Mother of Heather, Michael and John Quinn. Sister of Mary Clare Broadhurst and Steve Ponder.


HUNGRY HUMMINGBIRD

A hummingbird approaches a feeder on July 24 in rural Decatur County. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)
Beatitude of Father McGivney to take place Oct. 31 in Connecticut

HARTFORD, Conn. (CNS)—Father Michael McGivney, the founder of the Knights of Columbus, will be beatified during a special Mass on Oct. 31 at the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Hartford.

On May 27, the Vatican announced that Pope Francis, who met with the board of directors of the Knights of Columbus in February, had signed the decree recognizing a miracle through the intercession of Father McGivney, clearing the way for his beatification. Once he is beatified, he will be given the title “Blessed.”

Details of the beatification ceremony have not been released, including what COVID-19 restrictions might still be in place in the fall, such as limiting congregation size, social distancing and the wearing of face coverings.

The miracle recognized by the Vatican occurred in 2015 and involved an U.S. baby, whose life-threatening condition, that under most circumstances, could have led to an abortion. That baby, now 5, was given a promise by his mother, who is now 5. His parents, Dan and Michelle Schackle, of Dickson, Tenn., prayed to Father McGivney to intercede with God to save their son, still in his mother’s womb, who was given no hope of surviving a life-threatening case of fetal hydrops.

Father McGivney (1852-1890), the son of Irish immigrants, was born in Waterbury, Conn., and was ordained a priest in 1877 for what is now the Archdiocese of Hartford. He founded the Knights of Columbus at St. Mary’s Parish in New Haven, Conn., in 1882.

He originally started the Knights as a service organization to help widows and orphans. At the time of his death, McGivney was an assistant pastor at St. Mary’s Parish. He is buried in New Haven.

The external examination, which has become the largest lay Catholic organization in the world with 2 million members and sponsors a wide range of educational, charitable and religious activities.

Father McGivney, who will be the first American parish priest to be beatified and has long been a hero of working-class Catholics, can be viewed as a martyr of a pandemic. When he died of pneumonias complications at age 38 in 1890, it was during an outbreak of influenza known as the Russian flu in Thomaston, Conn. Some recent evidence, according to the Knights, indicates the outbreak may have been the result of a coronavirus strain.

After the announcement, the Knights were beatified, Supreme Knight Carl A. Anderson, said, “This is an answer to our prayer.”

For more information, visit www.kofc.org. †

By Erik Eigenbrod
Special to The Criterion

“I have been all things unfaithful. If God can work through me, he can work through anyone,” said St. Francis of Assisi.

This quote revealed to me the calling to holiness and to be a true disciple of Jesus Christ. Recently, I have recognized this calling by studying and preaching the faith. Through my Internet apostolate, I have made a promise to my Lord to strive to become that “anyone” that St. Francis mentioned.

I first recognized this call when I was very young. When my teachers talked about vocations, the priesthood always stood out to me. Thenceforth, I prayed earnestly to my Lord to show me his plans for my life so I may become the saint he asks me to become.

However, as I grew up, this desire to become a priest grew but faded away until I almost forgot about it completely. My great friend, Joe, reminded me of God’s plan for every one of us, but most importantly God’s plan for me.

After that life-altering moment, I have immersed myself into the faith and re-found my calling from God. With daily theological research, I try to live out the Gospel to my fullest ability. I also put my effort in implementing humility and the Beatitudes in my life.

Additionally, I frequently try to mitigate the amount of technology I use, to keep my heart from becoming attached to earthly possessions. Also, I ask the Holy Spirit to bless me with words of true love and compassion, especially for the conversion of poor sinners.

During this pursuit of spreading the Gospel, Joe and I created a small apostolate called the, “Knights of the Immaculate Heart.” In this group, Joe and I spread the idea of people struggling with sin to turn to Our Blessed Mother for refuge, chiefly through praying the rosary.

We also speak publicly about modern-day issues such as chastity, pornography and keeping reverence for the Holy Eucharist.

We post on technology, like Snapchat and Instagram, to spread Our Lord’s message. Using these media, we hope to reach as many young people as possible and help people on their road to sanctity.

After recognizing my calling from God, living out my calling and striving to become a true steward of the Lord, I have learned that the “now of God,” that amazing promise here on Earth is to become more like Christ and to help others understand his word and his love for everyone. “Your soul is called to raise itself to God by the elevator of love here on Earth is to become more like Christ that I am the “now of God,” and my purpose that St. Francis mentioned.

Serra Club Vocations Essay

Youth works with friend to help others grow in holiness, discipleship

Serra Club Vocations Essay Contest.

Erik and his parents, Kay and Craig Eigenbrod, are members of St. Malachy Parish in Brownsburg. He completed the eighth grade at Nativity School this spring and is the eighth-grade division winner in the Indianapolis Serra Club’s 2020 J. Kelley Vocations Essay Contest."
Bishops call Catholics to work for nuclear disarmament

CLEVELAND (CNS)—The path to true peace requires the world to abolish nuclear weapons, an American bishop and a Japanese archbishop said as the 75th anniversary of the atomic bombings at the end of World War II approached.

Speaking during a 30-minute webinar on Aug. 3, Bishop David J. Malloy of Rockford, Ill., and Archbishop Joseph Mitsuki Takami of Nagasaki, Japan, reiterated long-standing calls by the bishops’ conferences of both countries that the world must reverse the path toward a renewed arms race because of the threat it poses to God’s creation.

“As long as the idea that weapons are necessary for peacekeeping persists, it will be difficult to ever reduce the number of nuclear weapons, let alone to abolish nuclear weapons. It would be ideal if the U.S. and Japan could reconcile with each other and work together for the abolition of nuclear weapons,” Archbishop Takami said.

Recalling the words of Pope Francis, who during his visit to Japan in November 2019 called the world to remember its moral obligation to rid the world of nuclear weapons, Bishop Malloy said that all nations must “find the means for complete and mutual disarmament based on a shared commitment and trust that needs to be fostered and deepened.”

The bishops expressed concern that the world has overlooked the massive destructiveness of nuclear weapons as experienced in Japan in 1945 when U.S. atomic bombs detonated over Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Maryam Cusimano Love, associate professor of international politics at The Catholic University of America, hosted the prerecorded online event, introducing it with an overview of Catholic peacebuilding efforts in Japan and the United States.

She said Church-based efforts are rooted in Catholic theology, which holds that just peace is possible through a sustained commitment to achieve nuclear abolition. She said the threat of nuclear war has grown in recent years as international arms control treaties have been abandoned and more nations seek to add such weapons of mass destruction to their arsenals.

Archbishop Takami, president of the Japanese bishops’ conference, opened his remarks by explaining how he is a survivor of the bombing of Nagasaki, his hometown and the center of Japan’s Catholic faith community. He was in his mother’s womb at the time.

“I did not witness the horrific scenes that unfolded immediately following the bombing myself. But my maternal grandmother suffered burns all over her body and died a painful death after one week without receiving any medical attention,” the archbishop said.

He recalled that two of his aunts died as a result of the bombing. “My married aunt’s body was never found, and her husband also died,” he said.

Another aunt, a nun, was working outdoors when the bomb detonated. “She was exposed to the hot blast and was in pain for 12 days before dying,” he said.

At Nagasaki’s Urakami Cathedral, where 24 parishioners were preparing to receive the sacrament of reconciliation when the bomb exploded, little remained standing, he said.

Of the 12,000 parishioners, about 8,500 died, the archbishop added. The bombing was “spiritually damaging” to many parishioners, who he said lost their faith and left the Church.

Archbishop Takami drew widely from the words of St. John Paul II, who visited Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The pontiff called all people working toward the ratification of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which was approved in 2017 by a majority of United Nations member states. The Holy See became one of the first entities to ratify the agreement.

In response to Pope Francis’ appeal, Bishop Alexis Mitsuru Shirahama of Hiroshima on July 7 launched the Nuclear-Free World Foundation in collaboration with three peace organizations to support people working toward the ratification of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which was approved in 2017 by a majority of United Nations member states. The Holy See became one of the first entities to ratify the agreement.

The document committed the bishops, he said “to shaping the climate of opinion which will make it possible for our country to express profound sorrow over the atomic bombing of 1945. Without that sorrow, there is no possibility of finding a way of repudiating future use of nuclear weapons.”

The bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki can lead people to understand the “tremendous human suffering and human cost” that can occur when nuclear weapons are used in war, he said.

Bishop Malloy also cited the words of Pope Francis in his 2015 encyclical “Laudato Si’,” on Care for Our Common Home, in which the pontiff called all people “to see the world as a gift from the love of God.”

In this 2018 file photo, peace activists hold a Catholic prayer service on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., during a 10-day prayer for peace led by peace activists and Catholic bishops. Bishop Malloy also said the U.S. bishops remain dedicated to the vision for disarmament expressed in their 1983 pastoral letter “The Challenge of Peace: God’s Promise and Our Response.”

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