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Criterion

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Christ the Cornerstone

Celebrating a different kind of kingship: the reign of God, page 5.

CriterionOnline.com

November 20, 2020

Vol. LXI, No. 8 75¢

COVID crisis leads 34 Catholic schools in Marion County to return to virtual learning

By John Shaughnessy

When Mary McCoy learned that the 34 Catholic schools in Marion County would be required to return to virtual learning by Nov. 30, the archdiocese's interim superintendent of Catholics schools once again focused on how this latest result of the COVID-19 crisis would impact students, teachers, principals, parents and families.



Mary McCoy

"It's hard for our students, our teachers and our administrators. It's hard for our parents and our families," McCoy said. "We all just need to work together. This is not the archdiocese causing this. This is not the principals causing this. This is not the teachers causing this. It's the virus that is causing this. We need to remember this is new to all of us. We're trying to navigate through this, and we have to do it together."

The directive for a return to virtual learning for all Marion County schools from Nov. 30 through at least Jan. 15 came on Nov. 12 from Dr. Virginia Caine, director of the county's public health department.

In announcing this requirement that impacts 34 of the archdiocese's 68 schools, Caine said that Marion County has seen an increase in positivity rates for the coronavirus in all school-age groups: 18% for high school students, slightly more than 14% for middle school students, and 8% and rising for elementary school students. She also noted that 13% was the criteria for schools going virtual.

Caine called McCoy on the night of Nov. 11 to give her a heads-up about the pending announcement.

"I wasn't shocked because we've been having this conversation since school started," McCoy said. "In August, our prayers were that we could get our students in there and keep them for two weeks. Then it turned into four weeks, and then it turned into six weeks.

See **SCHOOLS**, page 16



'A lovely exchange'

Katie and Trent Lloyd smile with their daughter Eliza, whom they adopted on Nov. 13, 2019, through Adoption Bridges of Kentuckiana, an agency of St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities in New Albany. (Submitted photo)

Couple rejoices in their daughter—and celebrates the relationships and blessings of open adoption

By Natalie Hoefler

When Katie and Trent Lloyd said "I do" in 2014, their hearts were open to welcoming children—and not just their own.

"We always wanted to adopt," said Katie. "We wanted to have both biological and adopted children. It took a little longer on the

biological part, but adoption was never a 'second choice' for us."

So even as they waited for a child of their own, the Lloyds pursued adoption. Katie, 31, and Trent, 34, were hopeful after fostering a little girl for nine months.

"Then she left us abruptly," Katie recalled. "We were not feeling hopeful—we were more toward feeling desperate.

See **ADOPTION**, page 16

Amid pandemic, readers share blessings as Thanksgiving nears

By John Shaughnessy

A woman finds the friendships she needs after the death of her mother.

School children live their faith with a creative effort to connect with people from a different generation.

And a woman initially distraught about being stranded in another country discovers the joy of unexpected blessings.

These stories are among the ones that readers of *The Criterion* shared about the blessings they have experienced in this unsettling year that has been marked by racial strife, political division and a deadly virus.

Their stories are presented here as a

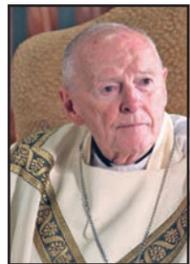
prelude to the upcoming week of Thanksgiving, a time to celebrate the gifts of friendship, faith, family and love in our lives.

See **THANKSGIVING**, page 8



Bishops air feelings, solutions to prevent another ‘predator’ in their midst

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Bishop Joseph E. Strickland of Tyler, Texas, said the recently released report on former



Theodore E. McCarrick

cardinal Theodore E. McCarrick, describing his ascent to the highest rungs of the Church, even amid rumors of abuse, read like a list of the seven deadly sins.

“Lust, greed, gluttony, wrath, sloth, envy, pride—pretty much the report covers all of them.”

said Bishop Strickland during the more than half-hour U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) allowed the prelates on Nov. 16 to discuss the report released by the Vatican on Nov. 10.

It was the first time the U.S. prelates as a group discussed the findings of the investigation of one its own after its long-awaited release.

The session was part of the first day of the U.S. bishops’ annual fall general assembly held online on Nov. 16 and 17 this year because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“I think we need to, really, as pastors, acknowledge that we’re all sinners, and we’re all called away from sin,” but the report shows sometimes pastors and others can turn a blind eye to sin, Bishop Strickland said. “I think that could be the title of the report.”

In 460 pages, the report showed how laity, seminarians and even prelates through decades made an effort, in writing and sometimes verbally, to call the attention of the Church’s hierarchy to incidences of abuse on the part of McCarrick.

The report details how one mother said she wrote several letters to Church leaders about her misgivings and how McCarrick touched her sons. Seminarians and young priests said they told bishops about inappropriate touching and sexual incidents instigated by McCarrick; and even a past archbishop of New York, Cardinal John J. O’Connor, wrote a lengthy letter to the papal nuncio to the United States at the time about McCarrick sharing the same bed with younger men. Yet, McCarrick still became a cardinal.

“It’s very clear that there’s still very much a tendency in the world and in the Church to turn a blind eye to many of these sins,” said Bishop Strickland of McCarrick, now laicized and whose whereabouts are not publicly known since he left a Capuchin friary in Kansas earlier this year.

Bishop Michael F. Olson of Fort Worth, Texas, mentioned that the people and organizations to whom McCarrick gave money were not named in the report, nor were the amounts of money. He also thanked survivor James Grein for coming forward with his account of abuse at the hands of the former cardinal.

“It’s curious to wonder what McCarrick would be doing today if he

[Grein] had not come forward,” Bishop Olson said.

Bishop Olson said transparency about the financial gifts is important because “we have to give an accounting to the faithful for this. We have to respond to their questions, and this is one of several issues that they are asking. And I hope that we can discuss this during the session and also beyond the session.”

He said it was important to address the undisclosed financial matters for the “continuing of our conversion, for the continuing of the purification of our Church and its transparency.”

Bishop David L. Ricken of Green Bay, Wis., said that given how the report described the way McCarrick operated at various levels, with the laity, with the hierarchy and among dioceses, it would be of great service to know and understand the personality traits and activities of a person like McCarrick—“predators”—so that prelates might be able to spot them and prevent another similar incident in the future.

“Very often they are highly manipulative, very attractive to people. Successful, if you want to put it that way, use all kinds of methods to groom young people into very dangerous situations and then they take advantage of them,” Bishop Ricken said.

“From what I read about McCarrick, he had these traits,” the bishop said, “and I think it would be very helpful to all of us to be able to understand the personality traits that someone like this brings forth and uses.”

He said prelates would do well to have professionals teach them to “identify these types of behaviors [among their own] ... and in seminarians, when they first begin their studies, so that we’re not getting dangerous people in any contact with children.”

Bishop Mark E. Brennan of Wheeling-Charleston, W.Va., said that even though there is a secret process to decide who will become a bishop, that perhaps when a determination about that person is made, the name of the person being considered should be made known public for a period.

He was named to head the statewide West Virginia diocese in 2019 after Pope Francis accepted the resignation of Bishop Michael J. Bransfield in September 2018 following allegations of sexual harassment of adults. The pope authorized Baltimore Archbishop William E. Lori to investigate the allegations of sexual and financial improprieties by Bishop Bransfield.

“To me, it will be helpful to avoid future problems if that name be made known, that name be published ... in a time frame of 30 or 60 days for people to comment,” Bishop Brennan said. “You might well surface things at that time that would affirm the appointment ... or a deterrent to say that ‘this is not a good idea.’”

Newark’s Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin said it was important to also address “what has been done since the terrible



Public Schedule of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

November 21–28, 2020

November 21 – 10 a.m.

Confirmation Mass for youths of St. Gabriel Parish in Connerville, St. Mary (Immaculate Conception) Parish in Rushville and St. Bridget of Ireland Parish in Liberty, at St. Gabriel Church

November 21 – 2:30 p.m.

Confirmation Mass for youths of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Richmond, St. Elizabeth of Hungary Parish in Cambridge City and St. Anne Parish in New Castle, at St. Andrew Church of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish, Richmond

November 24 – 1 p.m.

Council of Priests meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis

November 28 – 1 p.m.

Wedding at St. Augustine Church, Lebanon, Ky.

revelations about Theodore McCarrick took place in the summer of 2018.”

“I think it’s worthwhile because we’ve invested a lot in these measures, and I’m referring first to the International



Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin

Conference on Clerical Sex Abuse with an emphasis on episcopal responsibility that took place in February of 2019,” he said. “I think it would be ungrateful of us not to recognize ... what has been done and also for people to know about the 800-number available.”

The Catholic Bishop Abuse Reporting Service has established 800-276-1562 and ReportBishopAbuse.org for the public to make reports regarding sexual abuse involving bishops.

Chicago’s Cardinal Blase J. Cupich

said Pope Francis had taken historic action in issuing the document as well as other unprecedented measures.

“It really has been a watershed moment,” he said. “And something that we should continue to study and read, but let’s be honest about this.

“The report mandated by the Holy Father was historic and so were his initiatives, and we have structures in place now to move forward, and we should pay attention to that, but also doing it in a way that’s in unity and with respecting collegiality with him,” the cardinal said.

“We have to make sure that we never again have a situation where anyone from our conference is taking sides in this, with the Holy Father or challenging him or even being with those who are calling for his resignation,” Cardinal Cupich continued. “That kind of thing really has to cease, and the Holy Father pointed the way in which we take up this initiative together in a collegial manner.” †

How has your Catholic education had an impact on your life?

As part of our coverage for the upcoming Catholic Schools Week supplement in late January, *The Criterion* is inviting our readers to share their thoughts and stories about how their Catholic education has had an impact on their lives and their families.

Send your submissions to John Shaughnessy by e-mail at jshaughnessy@archindy.org or by mail in care of *The Criterion*, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202. Please include your parish and a daytime phone number where you can be reached. †

Check your parish for opportunities to receive the sacrament of reconciliation during Advent

The liturgical season of Advent begins the weekend of Nov. 28-29.

Because of the ongoing COVID-19

pandemic, parishioners are encouraged to consult their local parish for opportunities to receive the sacrament of reconciliation. †

The Criterion

Phone Numbers:
 Main office: 317-236-1570
 Advertising: 317-236-1585
 Toll free: 1-800-382-9836, ext. 1570
 Circulation: 317-236-1585
 Toll free: 1-800-382-9836, ext. 1585

Price: \$22.00 per year, 75 cents per copy

Postmaster:
 Send address changes to *The Criterion*, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367

Web site: www.CriterionOnline.com

E-mail: criterion@archindy.org

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The Criterion (ISSN 0574-4350) is published weekly except the last week of December and the first week of January.

1400 N. Meridian St.
 Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367
 317-236-1570
 800-382-9836 ext. 1570
criterion@archindy.org

Periodical postage paid at Indianapolis, IN.
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POSTMASTER:
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Alito sees religious freedom ‘fast becoming’ a ‘disfavored right’ for some

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Religious liberty “is fast becoming a disfavored right” in certain quarters in this country,



Justice Samuel Alito

Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito said in a keynote speech to the Federalist Society late on Nov. 12.

“It pains me to say this,” he said, as he pointed to several recent trends, some recent court decisions as well as restrictions on houses of worship that states have put

in place as part of their COVID-19 safety protocols.

He also pointed to increasing restrictions on the freedom of speech, which like freedom of religion is guaranteed by the First Amendment, and growing threats against the Second Amendment, which allows law-abiding citizens the right to bear arms for self-protection.

He spoke during the society’s annual National Lawyers Convention, held virtually this year because of the pandemic.

“The pandemic has resulted in previously unimaginable restrictions on individual liberty,” said Alito, one of six Catholics now on the court with the Oct. 26 confirmation of Justice Amy Coney Barrett. Alito was appointed by President George W. Bush in 2006.

“Notice what I am not saying or even implying—I am not diminishing the severity of the virus’ threat to public health. And putting aside what I will say shortly about a few Supreme Court cases, I’m not saying anything about the legality of COVID restrictions,” he said.

On the issue of religious liberty, there has been “a surprising turns of events” since the 1990s, Alito said.

In 1990, in the case *Employment Division, Department of Human Resources of Oregon v. Smith*, the Supreme Court ruled the state could deny unemployment benefits to a person fired for violating a state prohibition on the use of peyote, even though the use of the drug was part of a religious ritual.

The decision “cut back sharply on the protection provided by the free exercise clause of the First Amendment. Congress was quick to respond,” Alito said. “It passed the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, RFRA, to ensure broad protection for religious liberty. The law had almost universal support.

“In the House, the vote was unanimous. In the Senate, it was

merely 97 to three, and the bill was enthusiastically signed by President [Bill] Clinton. Today that widespread support has vanished,” Alito continued.

“When states have considered or gone ahead and adopted their own versions of RFRA, they have been threatened with punishing economic boycotts,” he said.

He highlighted several recent cases that “illustrate this same trend,” including “the protracted campaign against the Little Sisters of the Poor ... who have dedicated their lives to caring for the elderly, poor, regardless of religion.”

In July, the Little Sisters won relief from the U.S. Supreme Court, which sided with them in their nine years of litigation over the Obama-era contraceptive, abortifacient and sterilization mandate.

In a 7-2 decision on July 8, the court upheld regulations put in place by the Trump administration to allow employers, like the Little Sisters, more ability to opt out of providing contraceptive, abortifacient and sterilization coverage in their health plans for moral and religious reasons.

The mandate originally had an exemption for houses of worship. And for religious employers, it provided an accommodation whereby these employers could have a third party provide the coverage. But the Little Sisters also objected to the accommodation, arguing it still made them complicit in coverage they found morally objectionable.

Alito said in his keynote he is certain the Little Sisters will be in court again, because Justice Elena Kagan in a separate dissenting opinion left the door open for Pennsylvania and New Jersey to file another suit against them again challenging their exemption.

The Little Sisters “have been under unrelenting attack for the better part of a decade” for refusing to cover contraceptives, abortifacients and sterilization for their employees, despite the fact no employee, Alito added, has claimed they have been harmed by that decision.

He cited two other religious freedom cases—one involving a pharmacy in Olympia, Wash., that refused on religious grounds to stock the so-called “morning after” abortion pill, and the Colorado cake maker who refused to make a wedding cake for a same-sex couple.

In each situation, he said, customers were referred to nearby outlets that would accommodate their needs, so they were not denied what they sought—but the pharmacy and cake baker were still taken to court.

“For many today, religious liberty is

not a cherished freedom,” Alito said. “It’s often [seen as] just an excuse for bigotry, and it can’t be tolerated, even when there is no evidence that anybody has been harmed.”

Regarding COVID-19 restrictions, Alito again emphasized he was not diminishing the pandemic’s seriousness but pointed to two applications the Supreme Court received over the summer to stay COVID-19 restrictions he said blatantly discriminated against houses of worship—from California and Nevada.

“In both cases, the court allowed the discrimination to stand,” he said. “The only justification given was that we should defer to the judgment of the governors because they have the responsibility to safeguard the public health.”

Alito also said freedom of speech is “in danger.”

“Even before the pandemic, there was growing hostility to the expression of unfashionable views,” he said.

One such “unfashionable” view is support for traditional marriage between one man and one woman, he said.

Since the court’s 2015 *Obergefell v. Hodges* decision legalizing same-sex marriage, those who express support for traditional marriage in public “risk being labeled as bigots and treated as such by governments, employers and schools.”

Now COVID-19 rules “have restricted speech in unprecedented ways,” he said.

“Attendance at speeches, lectures, conferences, conventions, rallies and other similar events has been banned or limited. And some of these restrictions are alleged to have included discrimination based on the viewpoint of the speaker,” he noted.

“One of the great challenges for the

Supreme Court going forward will be to protect freedom of speech,” he said, and to “prevent it from becoming a second-tier constitutional right.”

Alito said in the minds of some, “the ultimate second-tier constitutional right ... is the Second Amendment right to keep and bear arms.”

Until its last term, the court had not taken a Second Amendment case since 2010. That year in a 5-4 ruling in *McDonald v. Chicago*, the court upheld the constitutional right of an individual to “keep and bear arms.” Alito wrote the majority opinion.

In its 2019-20 term, the court took up a challenge to a New York City ordinance that made it difficult for a law-abiding resident to comply with a requirement that to get and keep a license to own a gun in the home for self-defense, the owner had to visit a shooting range.

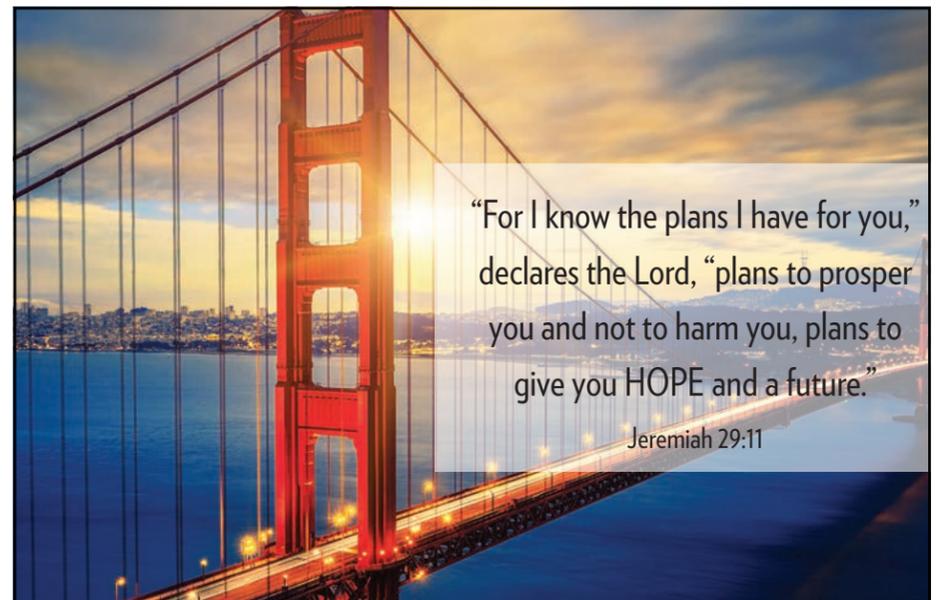
The city prohibited gun owners from going to a range just outside the city, but inside the city, the only ranges were for members and their guests.

New York changed the ordinance somewhat and asked the court to dismiss the case, which it initially refused to do.

In a brief that five U.S senators filed in support of the city, they wrote that “the Supreme Court is a sick institution” and if it “did not mend its ways, well, it might have to be, quote, ‘restructured,’ ” Alito said.

A majority of the justices held the case was moot and “said nothing about the Second Amendment,” said Alito. He and two other justices objected to the decision.

“I’m not suggesting that the court’s decision was influenced by the senators’ threat,” he said, but the episode “may provide a foretaste of what the Supreme Court will face in the future.” †



“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you HOPE and a future.”

Jeremiah 29:11

Have you ever been so excited to see something as magnificent as the Golden Gate Bridge only to find that when you did see it, it wasn’t what you had imagined at all?

Sean Hussey, Coordinator of Evangelization and Discipleship with the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, found this to be very true when he, as a young boy, visited San Francisco for the first time with his family.

Take a moment to listen to Sean’s testimony about how we can just as easily assume what God’s plan is for our lives, causing us to miss the beauty and purpose of what God has in store for us.



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Editorial



Pope Francis arrives to celebrate Mass marking World Day of the Poor in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican on Nov. 15. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

Parable reminds us to use our talents to help the poor

We are less than a week from Thanksgiving, with the Advent and Christmas seasons to soon follow.

What we have learned during the past eight months is that these last few weeks of 2020 will no doubt be unlike any other.

As the number of cases of COVID-19 continue to increase in record numbers across the United States—including here in Indiana—many of us are of the opinion that these last six weeks of the calendar year cannot go fast enough to get us to 2021.

But as people of faith, we know God is with us in these challenging times, always walking by our side, and carrying us when necessary.

Although these are times of uncertainty, our Creator still expects much of us. Pope Francis said as much while marking the World Day of the Poor on Nov. 15 at St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican.

During the liturgy, the pope urged Christians to spend their lives in prayers, charity and witness to the Gospel on behalf of those in need.

With its theme of “Stretch forth your hand to the poor,” the fourth annual World Day of the Poor offered us a chance to reflect on the talents God has given to each of us, the Holy Father said.

While reflecting on the day's Gospel reading about the parable of the talents (Mt 25:14-30), the pope said, “We possess a great wealth that depends not on what we possess but on what we are: the life we have received, the good within us, the indelible beauty God has given us by making us in his image.”

Instead of focusing on the things we lack, we must not forget the gifts God has given to each of us, he continued.

Using the phrase “if only” “prevents you from seeing the good all around us,” Pope Francis said. “They make us forget the talents we possess. You may not have *that*, but you do have *this*, and the ‘if only’ makes us forget this. Yet God gave those talents to us because he knows each of us and he knows our abilities. He trusts us, despite our weaknesses.”

Like the servants in the parable, our faith calls us to use our gifts in service to others, he noted.

“It makes our talents bear fruit and it gives meaning to our lives. Those who do not live to serve, serve for little in this life.

We must repeat this, and repeat it often: those who do not live to serve, serve for little in this life,” Pope Francis said.

Good servants, he continued, take risks, are not fearful and overcautious, do not cling to what they possess, and put their talents to good use.

“For if goodness is not invested, it is lost, and the grandeur of our lives is not measured by how much we save but by the fruit we bear,” the Holy Father said. “How many people spend their lives simply accumulating possessions, concerned only about the *good life* and not the *good they can do*? Yet how empty is a life centered on *our needs* and blind to the *needs of others*! The reason we *have* gifts is so that we can *be* gifts for others.”

The pope continued: “We should ask ourselves the questions: ‘Do I only follow my own needs, or am I able to look to the needs of others, to whoever is in need? Are my hands open, or are they closed?’”

Our faith teaches us to never forget the poor, and we are reminded we must be the hands and feet of Christ to them as well. We are to see Jesus in them, and be Jesus to them.

A life is empty when it is only focused on one's own needs and is “blind to the needs of others,” the pope said.

The poor “help us become rich in love,” he added. “For the worst kind of poverty needing to be combatted is our poverty of love.”

During his *Angelus* address after the liturgy, the pope reminded those gathered, “There is so much hunger, even in the heart of our cities. ... Often we enter into a mindset of indifference: the poor person is there, but we look the other way.” Instead, he continued, “stretch forth your hand to the poor: he is Christ.”

The pope also pointed to the Blessed Virgin Mary as an example for all of us. She “received a great gift, Jesus himself, but she did not keep him to herself. She gave him to the world,” he said.

“May we learn from her to stretch forth our hands to the poor,” the pope said.

As we journey through the remainder of 2020 and beyond, may we never be afraid to do so as well.

—Mike Krokos

Sight Unseen/Brandon A. Evans

The stone which God cannot move

There is a very old philosophical question that goes roughly like this:
Could God create a stone which he cannot move?



Despite the motivation of the one asking, most give the same answer: no.

For the unbeliever this answer is proof that God cannot be truly omnipotent, or even be God at all.

For believers, it is the very question which is invalid. It is as silly as asking whether God can simultaneously make himself exist and not exist. The law of non-contradiction is not a human law, or even a universal one: it is a divine law, part of the very essence of God. So, no, infinite power cannot be used to overcome itself.

But for some time, I've had a nagging doubt about this most orthodox and faithful of answers. I am convinced that for all it's precision, it is wrong.

I believe the answer is *yes*.

God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and Earth, all-knowing and all-powerful, perfect in splendor, might and majesty, *can* create a stone which he cannot move.

He's done it before, and is doing it still.

The stone is not one of rock, but of flesh and soul, and the place where both meet most intimately: the human heart.

God desires—more than anything—the love of his people. His divine heart *burns* for it, and there is nothing he would not give to obtain it. Yet, he cannot command it. The very act of forcing anyone to love him would tear asunder their free will and make void the very meaning of the offering.

Thus, it is the *free-willed heart* that is the stone God cannot move and the only thing he cannot give himself. Our choice to love him is all that is beyond the reach of the active will of the Maker.

And yet the weight of that unmoved stone is not heavy at all: it is only the weight of *will*; the simplest turning to God breaks the spell cast over us in Eden, the spell that urges us to disbelieve our destiny.

After all, Jesus Christ has already saved the world. Our sins are forgiven by the blood of the Cross, our lives given their full meaning in his life, the gates of heaven flung open and a place made ready for us.

Even death and demons have been conquered, but they are not the last foe.

We are. For that simple turning of the will is not, for us, simple at all...or so it seems.

The greatest weapon of the devil is not in tempting us to sin, or inflicting suffering upon us; it is not in war and famine and poverty and sickness; neither is it in the gentle poison of luxury and decadence.

It is *despair* that the dark angel wants. It is to get us to believe all the little lies we've ever told ourselves: that we have fallen too many times to be worthy of

Jesus, that our efforts will always come up short, our dreams never be met, our tears never wiped away. More to the point, that we have already endured too much pain to risk giving God anything more.

This is the great con, the greatest there ever can be: to steal eternity from those who were born to possess it; to make them to lay it down freely and give them nothing in return.

In the trials of life, our hearts can become like immovable stones sunk down in a river, our mournful eyes cast beyond to mountains we shall never reach.

We grow cold.

But God waits.

He looks down at his little stone, whispering to it through the rush of water and the dancing light from the waves above. He doesn't leave it in the chill of winter, nor in the darkest night.

He is patient, gentle even.

He watches as we struggle and bind our own hands into chosen slaveries; watches as we snare our thoughts into a tightening net of despair.

We try so mightily to make things right, to fix ourselves, to earn our heaven, to think the proper thoughts and say the proper prayers.

But a stone cannot move itself. We struggle and despair, over and over.

And over and over, God speaks. He speaks always and insistently.

“Let it go. Let *all of it go*.”

The paradox of our immovability—our lack of being able to save ourselves and God's in not being able to force it upon us—is shattered. God and man, strength and will, working together do the impossible.

In only our slightest submission is hidden the glory by which power is made perfect in weakness. Our inability to bear the weight of our wounds is transformed by God, who, with our consent, is able to carry us to the great heights we have only dreamt of and make whole all that we've lost.

It is God himself who upholds the soul that surrenders to him; it is *his* work that carries it through the suffering of life and gives it things which it could never earn or merit. All goodness and hope *and strength* lie just on of the other side of that turning.

Such is the glory—and the peril—of free will, as it has been from the beginning. God plays a dangerous game and one for all the stakes.

In the end, our heart can be made of unmovable stone if we *choose* it to be; it is only through our own hideous strength that we can make ourselves to sink down into the depths of eternity, set against God and left to ourselves forever.

It needn't be as such, though. The mercy of God is that life, to the very, *very* last breath, is none but a series of chances to cast up our gaze, listen to our Creator and let everything else go.

(*Sight Unseen* is an occasional column that explores God and the world. Brandon A. Evans is the online editor and graphic designer of *The Criterion* and a member of St. Susanna Parish in Plainfield.) †

Letters Policy

Letters from readers are published in *The Criterion* as part of the newspaper's commitment to “the responsible exchange of freely-held and expressed opinion among the People of God” (*Communio et Progressio*, 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 sense of courtesy 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. Concise letters (usually less 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,” *The Criterion*, 1400 N. Meridian Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367. Readers with access to e-mail may send letters to criterion@archindy.org. †



Christ the Cornerstone

Celebrating a different kind of kingship: the reign of God

This Sunday, we conclude the Church's year of grace with the celebration of the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ King of the Universe (Christ the King). As missionary disciples of Jesus Christ, we believe in his lordship over all God's creation.

But in him, we acknowledge a very different kind of ruler, one that is characterized by meekness, humility and forgiveness rather than ambition, arrogance or vengeance. Christ is our king, but his power is life-giving and his leadership style is service.

The Gospel reading for this Sunday (Mt 25:31-46) speaks of the Last Judgment. It lays out in some detail what Christ our king expects from us.

When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit upon his glorious throne, and all the nations will be assembled before him. And he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will place the sheep on his right, and the goats on his left.

"Sheep" and "goats" are images for the righteous and the wicked. Those who do right (the sheep) are not

necessarily the most pious or law-abiding citizens. They may or may not be successful in the eyes of the world. Those who are wicked (the goats) may appear to be ordinary folks who obey the law and go about their daily business without causing anyone harm or committing overt acts of injustice or immorality.

What distinguishes the sheep from the goats in the eyes of Christ the King?

Those whom the Son of Man, the King of Kings, will reward on the last day are the ones who showed compassion and who acted generously toward their lord and master when presented to them in the guise of people who were hungry, naked, thirsty, ill, imprisoned and estranged from human society. When the righteous ask: "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?" (Mt 25:37-39) The king will say to them in reply, "Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you

did for me" (Mt 25:40).

The king we celebrate on this last Sunday of the Church year stands for justice and peace, kindness and mercy, love and fraternity for all. He is our judge, but also our redeemer. His reign is everlasting, and he extends his open arms to all who confess their unworthiness and seek to follow in his footsteps.

At the same time, this just judge will not tolerate those who abuse their rights and privileges as citizens of God's kingdom by committing sins of omission or indifference.

"Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you accursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, a stranger and you gave me no welcome, naked and you gave me no clothing, ill and in prison, and you did not care for me'" (Mt 25:41-43).

And when those who are wicked (the goats) plead their ignorance, the king will reply: "Amen, I say to you, what you did not do for one of these least ones, you did not do for me" (Mt 25:45). And these will go off to eternal punishment, but the

righteous to eternal life.

The king we celebrate this weekend commands that we care for one another and for all his creation, our common home. His humility and meekness should never be mistaken for weakness. Christ the King is not a wimp. He is all-powerful even as he is all-loving and merciful. He will hold us accountable for all our sins, for what we have done and for what we have failed to do. This shouldn't frighten us. Christ gives us every opportunity imaginable to repent our sins and begin anew.

Let's use this solemn feast day as an occasion for rejoicing, and as an opportunity for renewal of our commitment to live in accordance with the principles and policies of Christ our heavenly king. By caring for "the least of these," our sisters and brothers, we prove ourselves to be loyal citizens and faithful members of the City of God.

May Christ our king help us by the power of his grace to be the kind of "sheep" he has commanded us to be: honest, just, forgiving, kind, generous and welcoming toward all our brothers and sisters. †



Cristo, la piedra angular

La celebración de un reino distinto: el reino de Dios

Este domingo, concluimos el año de gracia de la Iglesia con la celebración de la Solemnidad de Nuestro Señor Jesucristo Rey del Universo (Cristo Rey). Como discípulos misioneros de Jesucristo creemos en su señorío sobre toda la creación de Dios.

Pero en Él, reconocemos un tipo muy diferente de gobernante, uno que se caracteriza por la mansedumbre, la humildad y el perdón en lugar de la ambición, la arrogancia o la venganza. Cristo es nuestro rey, pero su poder es vivificante y su estilo de liderazgo es de servicio.

La lectura del Evangelio de este domingo (Mt 25:31-46) habla del Juicio Final. Expone con cierto detalle lo que Cristo nuestro rey espera de nosotros.

Cuando el Hijo del Hombre venga en su gloria, y todos los ángeles con él, se sentará en su trono glorioso, y todas las naciones se reunirá ante él. Y separará a unos de otros, como el pastor separa las ovejas de los cabritos. Colocará las ovejas a su derecha y los cabritos a su izquierda.

Las "ovejas" y las "cabras" son alegorías de justos y malvados. Los que hacen el bien (las ovejas) no son necesariamente los ciudadanos más

piadosos o respetuosos de la ley; a los ojos del mundo, podrían ser personas de éxito o no. Los malvados (los cabritos) pueden parecer gente común que obedece la ley y se dedica a sus asuntos cotidianos sin causar daño a nadie ni cometer actos manifiestos de injusticia o inmoralidad.

¿Qué distingue a las ovejas de los cabritos a los ojos de Cristo Rey?

Aquellos a quienes el Hijo del Hombre, el Rey de Reyes, recompensará en el último día son los que mostraron compasión y actuaron generosamente con su señor y maestro cuando se les presentó en forma de personas hambrientas, desnudas, sedientas, enfermas, encarceladas y alejadas de la sociedad humana. Cuando los justos le preguntaron: "Señor, ¿cuándo te vimos hambriento y te dimos de comer, o sediento y te dimos de beber? ¿Y cuándo te vimos como extranjero y te recibimos, o desnudo y te vestimos? ¿Cuándo te vimos enfermo o en la cárcel y vinimos a Ti?" (Mt 25:37-39). El Rey les responderá: "Les aseguro que todo lo que hicieron por uno de mis hermanos, aun por el más pequeño, lo hicieron por mí" (Mt 25:40).

El rey que celebramos en este

último domingo del año de la Iglesia representa la justicia y la paz, la bondad y la misericordia, el amor y la fraternidad para todos. Es nuestro juez, pero también nuestro redentor. Su reinado es eterno y extiende sus brazos abiertos a todos los que confiesan su indignidad y buscan seguir sus pasos.

Al mismo tiempo, este justo juez no tolerará a aquellos que abusen de sus derechos y privilegios como ciudadanos del reino de Dios cometiendo pecados de omisión o indiferencia.

"Entonces dirá también a los de Su izquierda: 'Apártense de Mí, malditos, al fuego eterno que ha sido preparado para el diablo y sus ángeles. Porque tuve hambre, y ustedes no me dieron de comer; tuve sed, y no me dieron de beber; fui extranjero, y no me recibieron; estaba desnudo, y no me vistieron; enfermo, y en la cárcel, y no me visitaron'" (Mt 25:41-43).

Y cuando los malvados (los cabritos) aleguen su ignorancia, el rey responderá: "En verdad les digo que en cuanto ustedes no lo hicieron a uno de los más pequeños de estos, tampoco a Mí lo hicieron" (Mt 25:45). Estos irán al castigo eterno y los justos a la vida eterna.

El rey que celebramos este fin de semana ordena que nos cuidemos los unos a los otros y a toda su creación, nuestro hogar común. Su humildad y mansedumbre nunca deben ser confundidas con debilidad. Cristo Rey no es un cobarde; es todopoderoso, incluso cuando es todo amor y misericordia. Nos hará responsables de todos nuestros pecados, de lo que hemos hecho y de lo que no. Esto no debería asustarnos. Cristo nos da todas las oportunidades imaginables para arrepentirnos de nuestros pecados y empezar de nuevo.

Usemos este solemne día de fiesta como una ocasión de regocijo, y como una oportunidad para renovar nuestro compromiso de vivir de acuerdo con los principios y políticas de Cristo nuestro rey celestial. Cuidando a "los más pequeños," nuestras hermanas y hermanos, demostramos ser ciudadanos leales y miembros fieles de la Ciudad de Dios.

Que Cristo nuestro rey nos ayude por el poder de su gracia a ser la clase de "ovejas" que nos ha ordenado ser: honestos, justos, perdonadores, amables, generosos y acogedores con todos nuestros hermanos y hermanas. †

Events Calendar

For a list of events for the next four weeks as reported to The Criterion, log on to www.archindy.org/events.

November 22-30

Becky's Place virtual Run for Hope 5K, cost includes T-shirt, \$20 for in-person race packet pick-up at 1108 5th St., Bedford, 4-6 p.m. Nov. 19 and 24, \$30 to have race packet mailed, register online through Nov. or in person per time and date above. Information, registration: beckysplacebedford.org.

November 26

St. Louis de Montfort Parish, Craig Willy Hall, 11441 Hague Road, Fishers (Lafayette Diocese). **Free Thanksgiving Day Dinner**, 11 a.m.-2 p.m., turkey, mashed potatoes, stuffing, vegetables, rolls, dessert, all are welcome. Information: 317-517-4256.

December 1

Becky's Place virtual Open

House, 7-8 p.m., Facebook livestream tour, interviews from Catholic Charities Bloomington women's homeless shelter in Bedford, free. Information: 812-275-5773 or chayes@ccb.in.

The Bridgewater Club, 2525 East 161st St., Carmel (Lafayette Diocese). **Indiana Right to Life Women's Luncheon**, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m., abortion survivor Claire Culwell speaking, \$20. Reservations: irtl.org/luncheon. Information: 317-413-9123.

Ritz Charles, 12156 N. Meridian St., Carmel (Lafayette Diocese). **Indiana Right to Life Christmas Gala**, 6:30 p.m., pro-life executive film producer/president of Movie to

Movement and the Human Rights Education Organization James Jones speaking, table for six guests \$360, individual reservations \$60. Reservations: irtl.org/gala. Information: 317-413.9123.

December 2

MCL Cafeteria, 5520 Castleton Corner Lane, Indianapolis. **Solo Seniors**, 5 p.m., Catholic, educational, charitable and social singles—separated, widowed or divorced—age 50 and older, new members welcome, also call about regular Friday night dinner events. Information: 317-796-8605 or 317-243-0777.

December 4

Women's Care Center, 4901 W. 86th St., Indianapolis. **First Friday Mass**, 5 p.m.,

Father James Farrell celebrant, optional tour of center to follow. Information: 317-829-6800, www.womenscarecenter.org.

Our Lady of the Greenwood Church, 335 S. Meridian St., Greenwood. **First Friday bilingual celebration of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus**, Mass 5:45 p.m., exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, following Mass until 9 p.m., sacrament of reconciliation available. Information: 317-750-7309, msross1@hotmail.com.

December 5

Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. **Shop Inn-spined Annual Christmas Sale and Open House**, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

John Paul II Parish, St. Paul Chapel, 216 Schellers Ave., Sellersburg. **First Saturday Marian Devotion**, 8 a.m. rosary, meditation, prayer; 8:30 a.m. Mass with confessions prior. Information: 812-246-3522.

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.

December 8

Sisters of Providence **virtual "Act justly, Love tenderly, Walk humbly" Monthly Taizé Prayer Service**, 7-8 p.m., silent and spoken prayers, simple music, silence. Link: cutt.ly/Taize. Information:

812-535-2952, provctr@spsmw.org.

December 16

Calvary Mausoleum Chapel, 435 W. Troy Ave., Indianapolis. **Christmas Mass**, 2 p.m. Information: 317-784-4439 or www.catholiccemeteries.cc.

December 17

St. Joseph Parish, 1401 S. Mickley 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. **Christmas Mass**, 2 p.m. Information: 317-574-8898 or www.catholiccemeteries.cc. †

Retreats and Programs

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

December 8

Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. **Personal Day of Retreat**, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., includes private room for the day and lunch, \$40, spiritual direction for additional fee of \$30 (must be scheduled in advance). Registration: www.benedictinn.org/retreats-programs. Information: benedictinn@benedictinn.org, 317-788-7581.

December 11

Sisters of St. Francis, 22143 Main St., Oldenburg. **A Day of Quiet Renewal**, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., self-guided tour or private retreat, dine at local restaurants or bring packed

lunch, room with bathroom available \$20, or \$70 with spiritual direction. Information and registration: 812-933-6437 or cutt.ly/oldbgprograms.

December 12

Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. **Sunday Advent Scripture Readings: How They Speak to Us**, 9-11:30 a.m., presented by Father Jeffrey Godecker, \$35. Registration: www.benedictinn.org/retreats-programs. Information: benedictinn@benedictinn.org, 317-788-7581.

December 13

Virtual Coffee Talk: Native

American Spirituality, via Zoom, 10:45 a.m.-noon, Franciscan Sister Mary Ann Stoffregen, presenter, focuses on Black Elk, Oglala Lakota medicine man and convert to Catholicism, freewill donation. Information: center@oldenburgsf.com. Registration: cutt.ly/BlackElk.

December 26

Sisters of St. Francis, 22143 Main St., Oldenburg. **Audubon Bird Count**, 7:30 a.m.-1 p.m., meet at Michaela Farm, no experience necessary, \$10 for lunch. Information, registration: center@oldenburgsf.com or www.oldenburgfranciscancenter.org/programs.html. †

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House offers Advent Days of Silence on Dec. 15-18

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., in Indianapolis, will offer four Advent Days of Silence from 8 a.m.-4 p.m. on Dec. 15-18.

Each day includes breakfast and lunch, a private room to use throughout the day and access to common areas and the facility's 13 acres with wooded trails, Stations of the Cross, rosary walk and labyrinth.

The cost is \$35 per day. An overnight stay is an additional \$28 per

night, depending on room availability, and a dinner plate is \$9 when available.

For more information or to register, contact Jennifer Burger at 317-545-7681, jburger@archindy.org or go to www.archindy.org/fatima.

To schedule a spiritual direction session for a suggested donation while participating in a day of silence, contact Georgene Beiriger at gbeiriger@archindy.org or 317-545-7681, ext. 105. †

Sisters of St. Francis will offer Day of Quiet Renewal and virtual Advent program in December

The Sisters of St. Francis, 22143 Main St., in Oldenburg, will offer a Day of Quiet Renewal from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. on Dec. 11, and an online Advent retreat via Zoom from 9:30-11:30 a.m. on Dec. 12.

The **Day of Quiet Renewal** allows participants to be still with God in several ways. Guests will have access to a private room as well as the grounds, which include shrines, Michaela Farm and a labyrinth. Participants may dine at a local restaurant for lunch or bring their own meal. The cost is \$20, or \$70

with a spiritual direction session.

The **two-hour virtual Advent retreat** on Dec. 12 is titled "Mary Heard the Word of God and Conceived the Word." Presented by Franciscan Sister Olga Wittekind, the program will look at Mary's trust in the words of God spoken to her by the archangel Gabriel, and how to emulate her trust when life is distressing or changes unexpectedly. The cost is \$25.

For more information or to register for either of these offerings, go to cutt.ly/oldbgprograms or call 812-933-6437. †

Wedding ANNIVERSARIES

65 Years



John and Janet (Steffey) McMullen, members of St. Jude the Apostle Parish in Spencer, celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary on Nov. 19.

The couple was married in Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Indianapolis on Nov. 19, 1955.

They have five children: Cynthia Slavens, Colleen, Kevin, Michael and the late Stephen McMullen.

The couple also has eight grandchildren and 15 great-grandchildren. †

55 Years



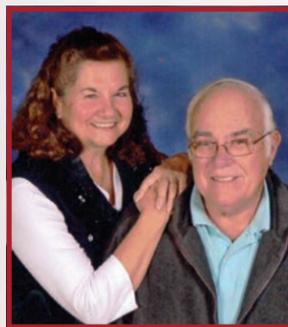
Richard and Martha (Darnell) Knecht, members of St. Michael Parish in Greenfield, will celebrate their 55th wedding anniversary on Nov. 25.

The couple was married in St. Mary (Immaculate Conception) Church in Rushville on Nov. 25, 1965.

They have six children: Kris Leising, Katie Schwertfeger, Donna Strong, Doug, Duane and Greg Knecht.

The couple also has 16 grandchildren. †

50 Years



Al and Sue (Pavey) Odum, members of St. Mary (Immaculate Conception) Parish in Rushville, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on Nov. 26.

The couple was married in St. Mary (Immaculate Conception) Church in Rushville on Nov. 26, 1970.

They have six children: Heather Ballenger, Elisha Marcum, Christin Nicholls, Jami Reed, Rebecca Thompson and Abbie Odum.

The couple also has 18 grandchildren. †

Announcements for couples celebrating 50, 55, 60, 65, 70 or more years of marriage are accepted. Go to bit.ly/2M4MQms or call 317-236-1585.

Events and retreats can be submitted to The Criterion by logging on to www.archindy.org/events/submission, or by mailing us at 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202, ATTN: Ann Lewis, or by fax at 317-236-1593.



The Face of Mercy

By Daniel Conway



Understanding the pope's message on marriage and civil unions

A veritable media storm erupted last month when it was reported that a new documentary film about Pope Francis included comments in which the pope appeared to endorse civil unions for same-sex couples.

In the film *Francesco*, which had not yet been released at the time his comments were made public, the pope was allegedly quoted as saying, "Homosexual people have the right to be in a family. They are children of God and have a right to a family. Nobody should be thrown out or be made miserable over it. What we have to have is a civil union law—that way they are legally covered. I supported that."

As has been reported in several Catholic News Service articles in *The Criterion*, the "quote" was actually an edited compilation of different comments from the pope during an interview with another media source last year. He spliced the different statements together to serve an agenda.

According to Colleen Dulle, in the October 22 issue of *America* magazine, the pope's message is:

"... an endorsement of civil union protections for same-sex couples, in that the pope publicly expressed support for them."

"But as the pope has often said, this does not mean that he believes that same-sex couples should be allowed to marry. On a number of occasions,

Francis has warned against threats to the institution of marriage and described marriage as 'between a man and a woman.' Accepting gay family members or accommodating same-sex partnerships in civil law, he said, 'does not mean approving of homosexual acts.'

"*Marriage is between a man and a woman,*" drawing his usual distinction between a marriage and a civil union, the pope explained that states "want to justify civil unions to regulate different situations of coexistence, driven by the need to regulate economic aspects between people, such as ensuring health care."

Clearly Pope Francis supports the sanctity of marriage and its exclusive relationship between a man and a woman. At the same time, the pope is concerned about ensuring the human rights and dignity of all people.

In his installation homily on July 27, 2017, Indianapolis Archbishop Charles C. Thompson discussed what he calls "The Catholic Both/And":

"*Far too often, we are being confronted with an 'either/or' mentality. We must dare to counter the growing polarization, division and radical individualism that breed fear, distrust, hatred, indifference, prejudice, selfishness, despair, violence and radical ideology. Our role as people of faith—I especially hold myself accountable as*

bishop—is to be willing to stand in the breach of the divide, drawing people back from the ledges of extremism in self-indulgence and self-righteousness by serving as bridges of unity, ambassadors of hope, instruments of peace. To do so, we must allow the seed, as the Gospel reminds us, the word of everlasting life, Jesus himself, to take root in the very rich soil of our very souls, of our being."

The growing polarization that Archbishop Thompson warns against is surely present in Catholics' reactions to the pope's comments both on marriage and on human rights for all as reported in the media. Instead of hearing his words as a "both/and" (both a defense of marriage and an affirmation of human rights for all), too many people—on all sides of the question—insist on an "either/or" interpretation.

In his Oct. 27 blogspot, "Truth in Love," Seattle Archbishop Paul D. Etienne observes:

"*When the Holy Father speaks and or teaches, he is almost always speaking to the universal Church. The United States already recognizes civil unions of same-sex couples, who are able to marry and receive all the legal protections which that guarantees. However, in many other parts of the world, people with same-sex attraction face considerable oppression, including in some countries, death.*

"*Similarly, and this is very important, Pope Francis continues to strongly support the teaching of the Church that marriage is between a man and a woman and is a permanent union. He has no problem making the necessary distinction between the two realities of civil unions and marriage. His focus on civil unions is more about public policy than Church teaching.*"

The Church teaches—and Pope Francis firmly upholds—that marriage is only possible between one man and one woman. Civil unions are legal constructs intended to guarantee civil rights. Making a distinction between the two cannot possibly please those who insist on an either/or position, but it is consistent with Church teaching which opposes homosexual activity but affirms the rights and dignity of all persons.

As Dulle quoted the pope in her article, "Accepting gay family members, or accommodating same-sex partnerships in civil law, 'does not mean approving of homosexual acts.'"

This both/and perspective clearly reflects the pastoral approach characteristic of Pope Francis, who insists that people with same-sex attraction should be welcomed, not shunned, in their own families and in society at large.

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

El rostro de la misericordia/Daniel Conway

El mensaje del papa sobre el matrimonio y las uniones civiles

El mes pasado estalló una verdadera tormenta mediática cuando se informó que un nuevo documental sobre el papa Francisco incluía comentarios en los que este parecía apoyar las uniones civiles de parejas del mismo sexo.

En la película, *Francesco*, que aún no se había estrenado al momento en que sus comentarios salieron a la luz pública, figura una cita en la que presuntamente el papa dijo que: "Las personas homosexuales tienen derecho a estar en una familia. Son hijos de Dios y tienen derecho a una familia. No se debería expulsar a nadie ni hacerles la vida imposible por ello. Lo que debería existir es una ley con respecto a la unión civil; de esa manera estarán legalmente cubiertos. Yo apoyé eso."

Como se ha informado en varios artículos del Servicio de Noticias Católicas que han aparecido en *The Criterion*, la "cita" fue en realidad una compilación editada de diferentes comentarios del papa durante una entrevista con otro medio de comunicación el año pasado. Se combinaron las diferentes declaraciones para atender un propósito.

Según Colleen Dulle, en el número del 22 de octubre de la revista *America*, el mensaje del papa es:

"[una] protección a la unión civil de las parejas del mismo sexo, en el sentido de que el papa expresó públicamente su apoyo a estas."

"Pero como el propio papa ha dicho a menudo, esto no significa que crea que las parejas del mismo sexo deban casarse. En varias ocasiones, Francisco

ha advertido contra las amenazas a la institución del matrimonio y ha descrito el matrimonio como "entre un hombre y una mujer". Aceptar a los familiares homosexuales o admitir a las parejas del mismo sexo en el derecho civil, dijo, "no implica aprobar los actos homosexuales."

Al expresar que "el matrimonio es entre un hombre y una mujer," el papa trazó su habitual distinción entre un matrimonio y una unión civil, y explicó que los estados "quieren justificar las uniones civiles para regular diferentes situaciones de convivencia, impulsados por la necesidad de reglamentar aspectos económicos entre las personas, como por ejemplo garantizar la atención médica."

Claramente el papa Francisco apoya la santidad del matrimonio y su relación exclusiva entre un hombre y una mujer. Al mismo tiempo, el papa se preocupa de asegurar los derechos humanos y la dignidad de todas las personas.

En su homilía de investidura el 27 de julio de 2017, el arzobispo de Indianápolis Charles C. Thompson habló de lo que él llama los "católicos del tanto y el como":

"*Demasiado a menudo, nos enfrentamos a una mentalidad excluyente. Debemos atrevernos a contrarrestar la creciente polarización, división e individualismo radical que engendran miedo, desconfianza, odio, indiferencia, prejuicios, egoísmo, desesperación, violencia e ideología radical. Como pueblo de fe, y especialmente en mi caso como obispo, considero que nuestra función es estar dispuestos a situarnos en la brecha*

divisoria y atraer a la gente que se encuentra en los bordes del extremismo, la autoindulgencia y la superioridad moral, actuando como puentes de unidad, embajadores de fe e instrumentos de paz. Para poder lograrlo, tal como el Evangelio nos recuerda, debemos dejar que la semilla, la palabra de la vida eterna, el propio Jesús, se arraigue en el terreno sumamente fértil de nuestras propias almas, de nuestro ser."

La creciente polarización contra la que advierte el arzobispo Thompson ciertamente está presente en las reacciones de los católicos frente a los comentarios del papa sobre el matrimonio y los derechos humanos de todos, tal y como se ha informado en los medios de comunicación. En lugar de escuchar sus palabras como "un tanto y un como" (tanto una defensa del matrimonio como una afirmación de los derechos humanos para todos), demasiada gente, en ambos lados de la contienda, insisten en una interpretación excluyente.

En la entrada del 27 de octubre de su blog "Truth in Love" (La verdad en el amor), el arzobispo de Seattle Paul D. Etienne observa:

"*Cuando el Santo Padre habla o enseña, casi siempre se dirige a la Iglesia universal. Estados Unidos ya reconoce las uniones civiles de parejas del mismo sexo, que pueden casarse y recibir todas las protecciones legales que eso garantiza. Sin embargo, en muchas otras partes del mundo las personas a quienes les atrae el mismo sexo se enfrentan a una considerable opresión, incluyendo la muerte en algunos países.*

"*Del mismo modo—y esto es muy importante—el papa Francisco sigue apoyando firmemente la enseñanza de la Iglesia de que el matrimonio es entre un hombre y una mujer y es una unión permanente. No tiene problema alguno en hacer la necesaria distinción entre las dos realidades de las uniones civiles y el matrimonio. Su enfoque en las uniones civiles es más sobre política pública que sobre la enseñanza de la Iglesia.*"

La Iglesia enseña—y el papa Francisco defiende firmemente—que el matrimonio únicamente es posible entre un hombre y una mujer, y que las uniones civiles son construcciones legales destinadas a garantizar los derechos civiles. Distinguir ambos conceptos no puede agrandar a quienes insisten en una posición excluyente, pero es coherente con la enseñanza de la Iglesia que se opone a la actividad homosexual pero afirma los derechos y la dignidad de todas las personas.

Tal como lo expresó Dulle en su artículo: "Aceptar a los familiares homosexuales o admitir a las parejas del mismo sexo en el derecho civil, no implica aprobar los actos homosexuales."

Esta perspectiva del "tanto y el como" refleja claramente el enfoque pastoral característico del papa Francisco que insiste en que las personas que sienten atracción por el mismo sexo deben ser bienvenidas, no rechazadas, en sus propias familias y en la sociedad en general.

(Daniel Conway es integrante del comité editorial de The Criterion.) †

THANKSGIVING

continued from page 1

The gifts of friendship and a mother's love

The influence of a mother's love is powerful in the life of Mary Schott, partly because her mother died at a pivotal point in Schott's life.



Mary Schott

Still, she thanks and praises God for all the women he has placed in her life since that moment.

"God took my mom at her young age of 58, and my tender age of 18, but he has been faithful," says Schott, who is now 64 and a member of Holy Name of Jesus Parish in Beech Grove. "He has brought myriad good and steadfast women into my life to mentor and walk alongside me, through all my griefs and trials.

"Women need their mothers and sometimes heavenly ones aren't enough. I am glad God put skin on some of mine: Janice, Patty, Suzanne, Kathleen and Lucy, and many more. I keep them close to my heart. Thank you, God."

In a year that has been challenged by COVID-19 and racial struggles, Schott also celebrates her friendship with Mary Jacobs, whom she first met during a Cursillo retreat that she attended to deepen her relationship with God.

"I happened to get very lucky by being blessed to have one of the very best Catholics, a Black Catholic, as my table leader on my retreat in 2010," Schott says.

Jacobs introduced Schott to Our Lady of Kibeho. From 1981 through 1989, the Blessed Mother appeared to a group of children in the African country of Rwanda, sharing the message for people to repent and pray the rosary.

"It would be a dream for me to visit that site with Mary and pray there together for Our Mother's intercession," Schott says.

The faith journey that she already shares with Jacobs is one of the many blessings that Schott will savor this Thanksgiving.

"I am finding people who are humbling themselves, praying and fasting and calling on our Lord to heal our land. It is good to be in their number."

'We bring Christ with us wherever we are'

In the Connersville Deanery, Catholic adults and children have been making special efforts in October and November "to show God's love" for residents who are isolated in nursing homes in Connersville because of the COVID crisis.

It all started when members of St. Gabriel Parish in Connersville and St. Bridget of Ireland Parish in Liberty participated in "Rosary Walks" to the nursing homes. Then the third-grade class at St. Gabriel School joined the effort.

"As a part of this effort to let the residents know that we are thinking of them and praying for them, the students in the third-grade class made bird feeders," says Michelle Struewing, their teacher. "They have also colored pictures and sent prayers for residents that are not receiving any mail. We will continue to send these pictures as a sort of pen pal project."

Struewing says the children's outreach is part of the school's mission "to help the students understand the need for their involvement in the community, as well as allowing the community to see that we are here to help and that we bring Christ with us wherever we are."

The third-graders have embraced their connection with the nursing home residents.

"The Rosary Walk helps us to pray for a lot of people," says Julianna Seibert. "The birds visiting the bird feeders can help them imagine it is a part of their family visiting them."

Kedryn Stapleton adds, "They may feel lonely, but when they look outside the windows and see the bird feeder, they will realize that we are all in this together."

Ada Vu expresses the hope that everyone has: "Even though they are quarantined, the bird feeders represent that this will soon be over. We have hope!"

'I counted my blessings instead'

The disappointment and anxiousness hit Lydia Abad hard at first. Then came a series of unexpected blessings.

"Since my retirement, I have been spending winter months in the Philippines," says Abad, a member of St. Monica Parish in Indianapolis. "In January, I flew there with a return ticket in April. Then the quarantine was issued in March. I thought I could still be back by April, but how wrong I was."

Before she finally returned to Indianapolis in July, it would be the longest time she stayed in the Philippines since she left her homeland to live in the United States. It would also be her most fulfilling time there.

"After getting over the anxieties by not focusing on it all the time, I counted my blessings instead," Abad says. "The blessings were getting to know and reconnect with my relatives and friends and meeting new ones. Before the quarantine, I was invited to join a Bible study group. Therefore, I got to know the priest and members of the study group."

"I also got to be more involved in my neighborhood. During this crisis, I was able to help with meals and especially financial assistance for the children. On Easter Sunday, we had goodies for them in the open field. I also felt glad to be there for our housekeeper and her family who needed guidance during this time."

All those bonds and memories filled her heart when she was able to take a flight to Indianapolis in July.

"So grateful to be back," she says. "However, the seven months were also a blessing for me to be able to share God's gifts with others."

A challenging reality becomes a wonderful opportunity

In 43 years of teaching in Catholic schools in the archdiocese, Chris Evans has strived to find the unique specialness of each child and each situation.

That approach has especially guided her in a year when the COVID-19 crisis has challenged the talents and gifts of every teacher and administrator.

Evans has also found a way to bring her 11 first-grade students at St. Christopher School in Indianapolis closer to God.

In a usual school year, the students at St. Christopher participate together in a weekly all-school Mass.

But in a year when the COVID crisis demands social distancing, only one grade each week goes to Mass in the parish church while the students in the other grades watch a video feed of the



As third-grade students at St. Gabriel School in Connersville, Sammi Lakes, left, and Claire Harvey show the bird feeders they made for residents who are isolated in nursing homes because of the COVID crisis. (Submitted photo)



As a first-grade teacher at St. Christopher School in Indianapolis, Chris Evans takes a moment to explain to Joyce Mongu a part of her Mass booklet. (Submitted photo)

Mass in their classrooms. It's a reality that Evans has turned into an opportunity.

"In first grade, kids don't understand all the different parts of the Mass," says Evans, who has taught 42 years at St. Christopher. "And when you're in church, you can't stop and explain it to them."

"But when we're in our room watching on the smart boards, I can stop and say, 'Boys and girls, this is the consecration. That's the part of the Mass where Father is actually changing the bread and wine into Jesus right here. This is when Jesus shared his meal at the Last Supper with the Apostles, and we get to share in the meal, too.' "My kids are learning the parts of the Mass easier now. It's more meaningful to them."

Coming together as a family

The memories and stories came rushing back to the grown children of Rose Marie Leonhard. And the tears and the laughter helped fill the holes in their hearts as they came together in the last days of the woman who had blessed their lives with so much care, so much love.

Those shared moments also brought the siblings and their spouses even closer as a family.

"This year, I find myself grateful for blessings within the most difficult times, especially the opportunity to be with my mother in her last weeks of life this past August," says Franciscan Sister Barbara Leonhard.

"Like so many people in assisted living or nursing home residences, due to the COVID pandemic, Mom was unable to have visitors from mid-March until she was taken to the hospital. In the end, we were able to be with her daily. I was reminded of the blessings that surrounded our family along the way. Never was I more thankful for my siblings and their spouses. We supported one another each step of the way, each of us using our gifts in the ways we could best care for Mom."

Sister Barbara also praised the people on the frontlines who cared for her mother, who would have turned 100 on Dec. 3.

"We felt so thankful for the nurses and doctors who treated Mom with gentleness and respect, and who spent time with us as we made our way toward decisions we found difficult to make."

Her thoughts then returned to her mom.

"Needless to say, I am hugely grateful for Mom—her resilience, her creativity, her enjoyment of life, her smile, her love of family and friends. She was the best."

The gift of a lifetime

Mary Ann Krueger celebrated her 90th birthday on Oct. 27, a celebration that was marked by what she considers the best gift of her life—her family.

A party had been planned for her at her parish, St. Mary-of-the-Knobs in Floyd County. Yet while the coronavirus crisis derailed that plan, she did celebrate with each of her six living children individually.

On her special day, she also celebrated two other blessings: the fact that she is able to live by herself and that five of her

children are within two minutes of her home.

"My family is my whole life. They are so caring, and they make it possible for me to live by myself."

Krueger says. "Another child lives in Indianapolis, and she calls to give me pep talks. And my in-laws are the best people in the world. I am so very thankful for my family every day."

Krueger is also grateful for her 62 years of marriage to her late husband John. And she talks fondly of her daughter Martina—"my child in heaven"—who lived a long life after being born with Down syndrome.

"I asked God to take care of her, and he did," she says. "My faith has meant a lot to me. It's gotten me through tough times."

She hadn't been able to attend Mass in person since March because of the coronavirus, but she drove to her church on Nov. 8 when the parish came together on a beautiful autumn Sunday morning for an outdoor Mass.

"I stayed in my car, but it was good to be there," she says.

She begins every day with that approach of gratitude, sharing an e-mail with her children that contains a positive poem or quote. Here is one of her favorites, a timely thought for Thanksgiving:

"I am so thankful
For all of you
Let your hands
Be so busy
Catching blessings
There is no room to
Hold on to grudges
Be kind
Love you." †



When Rose Marie Leonhard, left, celebrated her 99th birthday last December, her daughter Franciscan Sister Barbara Leonhard was part of the celebration. (Submitted photo)

In thanksgiving: The power of prayer is a blessing in a mother's journey home

By Mike Krokos

As I ended the conversation with my cousin Tatiana, I was numb.

She had just informed me that my mother was admitted to a hospital in Quito, Ecuador, with a pulmonary embolism and kidney infection.

"The prognosis is grave," she warned me on that March evening.

Here in Indiana, we had just begun to see the early effects of the coronavirus pandemic. A few days earlier, public Masses had been suspended, the Archbishop Edward O'Meara Catholic Center in Indianapolis and archdiocesan agencies were shut down until further notice, and our daughter's high school and son's elementary school had closed their school buildings. Online classes would become the norm for the next several weeks—and beyond.

And now, my family had to deal with a health crisis thousands of miles away. Mom, who had moved in 2018 close to our home, was on vacation visiting her sisters when she fell ill.

I have a diverse family history, a family built on our Catholic faith. My late dad, Joseph Anthony Krokos, was from Pennsylvania, where his father was a coal miner. Our Polish roots were evident in the faith, food and fellowship that were at the heart of so many celebrations.

Grace Pilar Krokos, aka Mom, is a native of Guayaquil, Ecuador. She and Dad met when she was a college student in Madrid, Spain, and Dad was in the Air Force, stationed there.

Like the Krokos clan, the Robinson family—my Mom's side—embraced our faith, food and time together as well. My cousins were and continue to be like siblings. Their prayers—along with so many others—would be needed.

There is an irony here: Mom is a faith-filled woman, and she is almost always the first person our family reaches out to when they need prayers. Now, it was our turn to take the lead.

As my wife Madeline and I began to reach out to family members, I wondered if I would ever see Mom again. Tears streamed down my face as I pondered that possibility.

I knew surgery was to be performed in a few days, but what would be the outcome? I have never experienced a more helpless feeling than not being able to be there with Mom.

As my stress mounted, I turned to friends and co-workers for petitions as well.

My colleagues at the Catholic Center have always been prayer warriors. I can name not only people in my office, but people throughout archdiocesan agencies who have always stepped up when I have asked for prayers. This time was no different. That is one of the blessings of working for the Church.

Our home parish, St. Louis de Montfort in Fishers, Ind. (in the Lafayette Diocese), has a perpetual adoration chapel. Although it was closed in mid-March because of COVID-19, our priests, in their wisdom, moved the tabernacle within the Blessed Sacrament inside the doorway under the carport at the front entrance of the church. Parishioners were able to drive up and adore the Blessed Sacrament in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament offers peace. It did for me.

Several restless nights at home followed, then more time spent in prayer with each new day. Finally, the surgery was performed. I received a call from my cousin: everything went well, and the prognosis was good.



The prayers of family and friends were instrumental in helping Grace Krokos, mother of Criterion editor Mike Krokos, overcome a life-threatening health crisis in Ecuador earlier this year. Pictured, Grace, left; grandchildren Stephen and Elizabeth; and her son Mike. (Submitted photo by Madeline Krokos)

Mom would require several days of rehabilitation, and if all went well, she would be discharged.

Ten days later, Mom was back at my aunt's home in Quito.

Now a new challenge arose: Getting her back to the United States.

It was early April, and international flights to and from the U.S. were nowhere to be found because of COVID-19. In fact, countless flights—no matter where you looked across the globe—were cancelled.

My cousin Johnny, who is an international traveler, encouraged us to reach out to the U.S. embassy in Quito about travel.

The folks there were helpful, encouraging us to visit the embassy's website each day to see updated travel plans.

We then asked family and friends to begin a new petition: getting Mom home in a reasonable time frame so she could be with us in Indiana.

Initially, daily visits to the embassy website and occasional e-mails from them were fruitless.

Finally, two weeks after we began the process, a flight was scheduled from Quito to Fort Lauderdale, Fla. We quickly purchased a ticket, knowing that my mom would be back in the States—albeit in Florida—in a week.

Provisionally, my brother Paul and his family live in Fort Myers, and they were happy to pick Mom up in Fort Lauderdale and have her quarantine at their home for two weeks.

Finally, the last week of April, Mom was "back home in Indiana."

While others will remember 2020 for the COVID-19 pandemic, a tumultuous presidential election and for other front-page headlines, my family and I will remember the prayers from so many that were with us in our time of need.

Those prayers, we believe, are the main reason Mom is home with us, sharing her faith with the many people she loves.

(Mike Krokos is editor of The Criterion, newspaper of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.) †

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Voter behavior wasn't different in election, just the results

WASHINGTON (CNS)—If there is anything different about the 2020 presidential election, don't chalk it up to fickle voters.

"The big thing about this election is it happened during a pandemic," said John K. White, a politics professor at The Catholic University of America in Washington.

The election, White said, also produced "the highest [turnout] since 1900," with estimates ranging from 66.4% to 72.1% of registered voters casting ballots. There was also a pandemic-related all-time high in the number and percentage of ballots tendered away from polling places, with voters using the mail or drop boxes instead of risking long lines at election precincts.

"I don't see unusual behavior in terms of what was on their minds" when voters made their choices, White told Catholic News Service (CNS) in a Nov. 11 phone interview. "You had the economy, the coronavirus, you had race relations. That's certainly what shows up in the polling." But the coronavirus bettered the economy as a top issue by 10 percentage points among those surveyed, according to White.

"The election was a referendum on [President Donald J.] Trump," he said. "That's very typical when you have an incumbent seeking re-election. It was never, as Trump tried to make it, a choice—'you may not like me, but Biden is unacceptable.' That was a very hard thing to do with [President-elect] Joe Biden."

On Nov. 7, the media declared Biden the winner of the presidential election, but the Trump campaign has filed lawsuits in several states challenging vote counts.

In elections, a voter's age and sense of duty were once thought of as the best predictors of who would vote, said Jon Krosnick, a professor in three departments—political science,

psychology and communications—at Stanford University.

That notion has since been discarded. "It's now a function, partly, of the candidates who are running," Krosnick said. "Ninety percent of the Republicans are going to vote for the Republican, and 90% of the Democrats are going to vote for the Democrat, but 50% of the electorate is independent."

Voters are now seen as making their choices over a series of factors that resemble "soup that ingredients have been thrown in," Krosnick said.

First comes a set of criteria on "the health of the nation: how well we are doing economically, how well we're doing in terms of our safety and security, presidential approval—how do I feel about his performance in a particular domain. There are also factors involved of perceptions of the personalities of the candidates," Krosnick told CNS.

Then, there are four attributes considered by the electorate: competence, integrity or honesty, compassion and, finally, strength of leadership. "As a general rule, voters prefer candidates" with these attributes, he said.

"Another set of characteristics that play in the choice are the emotions that the candidates provoke in the voters," Krosnick added. If the candidate comes off as proud and optimistic, voters are more likely to vote for that person, he said. If the candidate comes off as angry, the voter is less likely to choose that person, he added.

"I believe a small number of swing voters behaved differently in that they had given Donald Trump a chance and were not happy with him. But I don't think the majority of voters—I would say 85%-90% of voters—voted as they had in the last election," said Fathali Moghaddam, a Georgetown University professor and director of its interdisciplinary program in cognitive science.

That number does not change much every four years, Moggahaddam said, and has grown into the norm over time because of the polarized nature of our politics, a concept he calls "mutual radicalization."

"The center is hollowed out. Unfortunately, this means that dialogue and constructive communication becomes more difficult. Because of mutual radicalization, when groups are pushing one another to become more and more extreme, anybody who dares to take a middle ground is shot at from both extremes," he said.

Trump drew higher percentages of Hispanic and Black men than analysts had predicted.

Asked whether that meant the GOP is becoming a "men's party" and the Democrats a "women's party," Moggahaddam replied, "I'm not sure it's going to translate into support for the Republican party as a whole. I think it is specific to the image prepared by Donald Trump—his image of anti-feminism, and his image of appealing to traditional gender roles, the idea that men and women have their traditional gender roles and it's best for them to stay in those positions."

In the 2020 election, noted Catholic University's White, "there are a whole host of life issues. Abortion is certainly one, and an important one. But so is immigration. So is climate. So is the way we treat one another. And you just saw this very active dialogue. Those on one extreme said, 'You can't be Catholic and vote for Biden.'"

Biden supports legal abortion. As a Catholic, he says he is personally opposed to abortion but cannot impose his view on the electorate.

"On the other side, [the U.S. bishops' quadrennial document] 'Faithful Citizenship' means informed consciences," White said. "I think that



An employee in Tucson, Ariz., wears a Halloween costume on Oct. 31, while processing early voting and absentee ballots ahead of the upcoming presidential election on Nov. 3. (CNS photo/Cheney Orr, Reuters)

dialogue is going to continue. I think it reflects what's going on in Rome with [Pope Francis]."

The dialogue was interesting to witness, "and I don't think it goes away with the election. I think it may continue," he added. "I see the USCCB [U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops] issued a rather gracious statement noting and congratulating Biden on his win, noting that they had disagreements with him, but noting there were things they very much agree with him on, like immigration and separation of children [from their parents]."

"Being a Catholic is who he is, and it's so tied up in his story of tragedy and loss," White said of Biden. "There's nothing fake about that. It's very much part of his cultural identity," he said, and is what helped Biden prevail not only in the Electoral College and the popular vote, but among Catholic voters as well. †

Federal judge: rules restricting DACA program were invalid

WASHINGTON (CNS)—A federal judge ruled on Nov. 14 that the suspension of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, announced this past summer by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), was invalid because the agency's top official, Chad Wolf, did not legally hold his position when he issued the order.

Judge Nicholas Garaufis, of the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of New York, said Wolf's appointment violated the Homeland Security Act of 2002, and the agency "failed to follow the order of succession as it was lawfully designated."

DHS has said that Wolf's appointment, which has not yet been confirmed by the Senate, is legal.

In July, Wolf issued a memorandum rejecting first-time applications for DACA, as the program is known, and limiting DACA renewals to one-year extensions instead of two.

After Wolf's memo was issued, faith leaders and immigrant advocates were highly critical of it. Leaders of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) said they were "deeply disappointed" by it, and Bishop Jaime Soto of Sacramento, Calif., said it was "irresponsible and recalcitrant."

The memo was issued more than a month after the Supreme Court ruled against efforts by the Trump administration to end DACA. President-elect Joe Biden plans to reinstate DACA, and he also is expected to use executive orders to reverse other immigration policies of President Donald J. Trump.

DACA, a 2012 program started by President Barack Obama, has enabled about 700,000 qualifying young people to work, go to college, get health insurance and a driver's license and not face deportation. These young adults were brought to the U.S. as children by their parents without legal documentation.

Wolf had said the Trump administration may try to end DACA by looking at it as a law enforcement issue potentially contributing to illegal immigration. He also had described his action as a temporary change while the federal government reviewed next steps.

Karen Tumlin, a lawyer who represented a plaintiff in one of the lawsuits challenging Wolf's order, said the judge's ruling was "another win for DACA recipients and those who have been waiting years to apply for the program for the first time."

She also tweeted on Nov. 16 that a hearing will take place on Nov. 18 to discuss what happens next. †

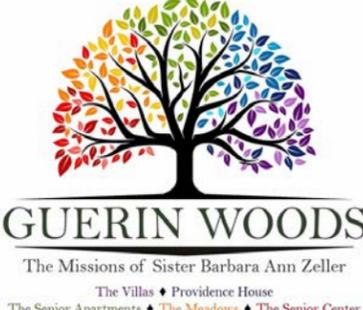


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Encyclical calls for 'a different culture' built on respect for all

By David Gibson

The social encyclical Pope Francis released in October extends a formidable challenge to us all, the challenge to create "a different culture." What kind of culture? It is the kind where people who basically are indifferent toward each other and deeply divided resolve their conflicts and begin to "care for one another" (#57).

His challenge is a tall order, to be sure. But he considers it an "urgent" need (#33). The encyclical's Italian title, "*Fratelli Tutti*," means "all brothers and sisters" or "all brothers," and refers to the brotherly or family-like relationships that he envisions as the standard for such a culture. It is taken from the words of the pope's namesake, St. Francis of Assisi, who addressed his followers in this way.

"In today's world, the sense of belonging to a single human family is fading, and the dream of working together for justice and peace seems an outdated utopia," the pope observes. "What reigns instead is a cool, comfortable and globalized indifference." The temptation is to become isolated and to withdraw into our "own interests" (#30).

But that is not the way to restore hope, Pope Francis makes clear. He exhorts his readers, "Isolation, no; closeness, yes" (#30).

Early in the encyclical, Pope Francis explains that he is extending this challenge "in the hope that in the face of present-day attempts to eliminate or ignore others, we may prove capable of responding with a new vision of fraternity and social friendship that will not remain at the level of words" (#6).

As he concludes his encyclical, he prays that God will "inspire in us a dream of renewed encounter, dialogue, justice and peace." The prayer continues, "May we recognize the goodness and beauty that you have sown in each of us" (#287).

The "conviction that all human beings are brothers and sisters" is this encyclical's foundation. Pope Francis cautions against allowing it to "remain an abstract idea," divorced from life's concrete realities. He insists that when this conviction finds "concrete embodiment" it forces "us to see things in



Katelyn Vandenhanel, 13, a student at St. Nicholas School in Freedom, Wis., passes a collection basket during Ash Wednesday Mass at St. Nicholas Church on Feb. 26. In his new encyclical letter, "*Fratelli Tutti: On Fraternity and Social Friendship*," Pope Francis calls his readers to be open to the dignity and gifts of every person. (CNS photo/Sam Lucero, The Compass)

a new light" (#128).

The encyclical is a nearly 43,000-word text, with chapters devoted to many important concerns in 21st-century societies. But a common thread weaves together its numerous timely concerns related to political action, immigration, the death penalty or war, for example. It is a thread that signifies the world's need today for a new culture of encounter.

I think that this common thread radiates as clearly as possible when the pope exclaims: "Let us arm our children

with the weapons of dialogue! Let us teach them to fight the good fight of the culture of encounter!" (#217).

Such a culture necessarily encompasses encounters with others who are different from me or you, the pope acknowledges. This is not easy. Much easier, in the pope's estimation, is to ignore the value of such encounters.

The "others" the pope has in mind include the poor, the stranger, the unemployed, migrants, victims of racism, members of other world religions, to mention a few. The pope is emphatic that

"the dignity of others is to be respected in all circumstances" (#213).

The 2,000-year-old parable of the good Samaritan is this encyclical's anchor. In the Gospel of Luke (Lk 10:25-37), the Samaritan, at real expense to himself in terms of time and money, aided a stranger encountered along the road. The injured stranger had been attacked by thieves.

Pope Francis cautions that society today must not turn "its back on suffering" (#65). He writes, "May we not sink to such depths!" The parable "summons us to rediscover our vocation as citizens of our respective nations and of the entire world, builders

of a new social bond" (#66).

But "social peace demands hard work, craftsmanship," the pope affirms. "It would be easier to keep freedoms and differences in check with cleverness and a few resources" (#217).

Nevertheless, "such a peace would be superficial and fragile, not the fruit of a culture of encounter that brings enduring stability." The pope comments that "integrating differences is a much more difficult and slow process, yet it is the guarantee of a genuine and lasting peace" (#217).

What is needed is "the ability to recognize other people's rights to be themselves and to be different," he advises (#218).

This, Pope Francis clarifies, does not imply renouncing one's own identity. Openness to others need not imply spurning our "own richness" (#143). For Christians, he explains, the Gospel remains essential.

He insists, "If the music of the Gospel ceases to sound in our homes, our public squares, our workplaces, our political and financial life, then we will no longer hear the strains that challenge us to defend the dignity of every man and woman" (#277).

The parable of the good Samaritan "eloquently presents the basic decision we need to make in order to rebuild our wounded world," says Pope Francis (#67). But how?

The parable, he writes, "shows us how a community can be rebuilt by men and women who identify with the vulnerability of others, who reject the creation of a society of exclusion, and act instead as neighbors, lifting up and rehabilitating the fallen for the sake of the common good" (#67).

(David Gibson served on Catholic News Service's editorial staff for 37 years.) †



Volunteers from St. Gabriel Parish in Baltimore help families during a food drive on Oct. 13. In his new encyclical letter, "*Fratelli Tutti: On Fraternity and Social Friendship*," Pope Francis challenges his readers to create a "different culture" in which the dignity of each person is respected. (CNS photo/Lia Salinas, Archdiocese of Baltimore)

Worship and Evangelization Outreach/Andrew Motyka

Sacraments remind us that Christ is the High Priest

In August, a priest in the Archdiocese of Detroit discovered that his baptism, which he received 30 years ago, was invalid.



This story made waves all around the Catholic world, and it was accompanied by an affirmation from the Vatican that the formula, “We baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit”—rather than “I

baptize you”—is considered *invalid form* for the sacrament of baptism. While this seems like a minor issue, it is relevant to the administration of all sacraments. The words we use matter.

Sacramental form is the term we use to describe the words and gestures involved in celebrating a sacrament. All of the words and actions are important, as they are given to us by the Church, the supreme legislator of the sacraments.

Though the intent of the minister celebrating the sacraments plays a role, some of the words and actions are more important than others. If certain words or actions are changed, the sacrament

might even be *invalid* (meaning the action was not sacramental). In addition to sacramental form, a sacrament also needs the proper *matter*: the physical part of the sacrament, such as the bread and wine for Eucharist, or water for baptism. A sacrament must also be celebrated by a proper *minister*. Usually this is a priest or bishop, occasionally a deacon, and sometimes a lay person (for example, the sacrament of matrimony).

It is important to note, however, that the source of all the sacraments is Jesus Christ, who is the head of the Church and the high priest. The Church uses the term *in persona Christi Capitis* (in the person of Christ the Head [of the Church]) to describe Christ’s action through sacramental ministers.

As St. Thomas Aquinas says, “Christ is the source of all priesthood: the priest of the old law was a figure of Christ, and the priest of the new law acts in the person of Christ” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #1548). In other words, it is Christ himself who celebrates the sacraments.

This is best understood at Mass: when the priest says “This is my body . . .,” it is Jesus himself who says that. It is by

Christ’s action that all sacraments are brought about. This is not limited to the celebration of the Eucharist.

Every sacramental act is celebrated by Christ. When a priest, bishop, deacon or (in an emergency) layperson baptizes a person, it is Jesus who baptizes. This is why it is not proper to say “We baptize you,” since it is not a communal act, but “I baptize you,” because it is an act of Christ the high priest. Likewise, when a priest says, “I absolve you from your sins . . .” in the sacrament of reconciliation, it is Christ himself who absolves you.

The words and actions of our sacraments are important because they reflect the reality of our faith. It may seem pedantic to focus on such little changes, but they can make a big difference in the reality of our celebrations. What we do is real, and the words we use can shape our faith, so intentionality about our word choice is critical when celebrating the sacraments.

(Andrew Motyka works in the Office of Worship as the director of Archdiocesan and Cathedral Liturgical Music for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. He can be reached at amotyka@archindy.org.) †

For the Journey/Effie Caldarola

March toward Thanksgiving with gratitude

It was the day after Halloween and just two days until Election Day. As a nation, we were marking milestones in our long national COVID-19



trudge. Taking a neighborhood walk, I was struck by how fast Halloween decorations disappear. Here, for instance, was a driveway where a giant inflatable ghoulish had hovered

menacingly. Now, he had apparently gone to wherever ghouls spend the offseason.

But, then, surprisingly, I found a minion still standing, wearing a witch’s hat and an expression of abject terror. A minion is a little computer-animated comedy character, but this particular minion was anything but cheerful. When I mentioned this frightened inflatable to my daughter, she said, “Well, he’s probably terrified about the election.”

Ah, yes, Election Day. It seemed one thing united a divided nation: election apprehension. After the 2016 election, a priest friend told me he knew a psychiatrist who had to hospitalize a patient, so great was his postelection angst.

Everyone prepared for a long night, only to find the night dragging on to several days. The huge voter turnout underscored the fact that few of us were ambivalent.

We are a nation of passionate partisans.

Now, amid increasing COVID-19 fears, we march on toward Thanksgiving with a new president-elect but no strong mandate for either side. How can we incorporate this most American of holidays into a journey of healing for our divided country?

All great spiritual writers tell us gratitude is a key to spiritual growth. Whining, anxiety and negativity are not.

So let’s use this period—our national festival of thanks, and then the joyous and expectant season of Advent that follows—to focus on gratitude.

My gratitude list includes appreciation for Americans, in record-breaking numbers, who made the effort to vote by mail, or like me, dropped their ballot at the county office. Or who stood in a long line in the midst of a pandemic to vote. Thanks to each one of you.

I am grateful that in these brutal times, good people still run for office, for positions great and small. I appreciate the people who worked on campaigns. I’m thankful for my friends who made phone calls for their candidates.

I’m thankful for those who mailed postcards to voters and those who displayed yard signs, including the ones with whom I disagreed.

Thank you to those brave citizens who volunteered, despite COVID-19, to work at the polls. Thank you to those who counted votes, for days, in some cases.

Thanks to voters who studied all the ballot issues right down to the local utility district elections.

Kudos to those who fought for more polling stations and greater voter access.

Democracy can’t survive without a strong free press. To journalists, my deepest appreciation. For those Americans who kept an open mind, eschewed conspiracy theories and sought their news from many and credible sources, you are our civic backbone.

To those who refrained from making unkind, personal remarks on social media: bless you. To those—voter, candidate or office holder—who never, ever called anyone names, thanks.

For a future of hope and civility for our nation in the struggle ahead, we are grateful and ask God to bless us.

(Effie Caldarola writes for *Catholic News Service*.) †

That All May Be One/Fr. Rick Ginther

Pope’s new encyclical has universal religious application

Pope Francis latest encyclical “*Fratelli Tutti*: On Fraternity and Social Friendship,” was promulgated on Oct. 3—the eve of the feast of St. Francis of Assisi.



Addressed to the bishops of the world, it is a document with universal religious application.

Our worldwide experience of COVID-19, Francis notes, elicits “fraternal love” as proclaimed by Jesus Christ (#2).

The pope encourages the world—Christians and those of all religions—to be reborn into a universal spirit of “fraternity and social friendship” (#2).

The parable of the Good Samaritan—the one who acted as neighbor to a Jew left in a ditch to suffer or die—is the scriptural root. Compassion dissolves political and religious differences. The neighbor incorporates another, the innkeeper, to reach out in fraternal love.

A summary of the encyclical can be found at cutt.ly/FratelliTuttiSummary.

“Religions at the Service of Fraternity in our World” (chapter eight) concludes the pope’s urgings.

“The different religions, based on their respect for each human person as a creature called to be a child of God, contribute significantly to building fraternity and defending justice in society,” he writes (#271).

“[T]he goal of dialogue [among religions] is to establish friendship, peace and harmony, and to share spiritual and moral values and experiences in a spirit of truth and love” (#271).

“As believers, we are convinced that, without an openness to the Father of all, there will be no solid and stable reasons for an appeal to fraternity,” the pope continues (#272).

“From our faith experience and from the wisdom accumulated over centuries, but also from lessons learned from our many weaknesses and failures, we, the believers of different religions, know that our witness to God benefits our societies. The effort

to seek God with a sincere heart, provided it is never sullied by ideological or self-serving aims, helps us recognize one another as travelling companions, truly brothers and sisters” (#274).

“It should be acknowledged that ‘among the most important causes of the crises of the modern world are a desensitized human conscience, a distancing from religious values and the prevailing individualism accompanied by materialistic philosophies that deify the human person and introduce worldly and material values in place of supreme and transcendental principles,’” the pope notes (#275).

The Holy Father continues, noting that it is the role of the Church (and by inference, all Christians and other religions) to “‘reawaken the spiritual energy’ that can contribute to the betterment of society” (#276).

Echoing the esteem the Church has for how God works in other religions, the pope notes: “She has a high regard for other religions’ manner of life and conduct, their precepts and doctrines which . . . often reflect a ray of that truth which enlightens all men and women” (#277).

Pope Francis offers a sweeping metaphorical statement about all Christian believers: “We Christians are very much aware that ‘if the music of the Gospel ceases to resonate in our very being, we will lose the joy born of compassion, the tender love born of trust, the capacity for reconciliation that has its source in our knowledge that we have been forgiven and sent forth. If the music of the Gospel ceases to sound in our homes, our public squares, our workplaces, our political and financial life, then we will no longer hear the strains that challenge us to defend the dignity of every man and woman’ ” (#277).

“That all may be one” was the Lord’s mandate to the early Church (Jn 17:21). Twenty-one centuries later, it is a parallel mandate for all humanity.

(Father Rick Ginther is director of the archdiocesan Office of Ecumenism and Interreligious Affairs. He is also the pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Indianapolis.) †

Living Well/Maureen Pratt

New kind of togetherness can help during upcoming holidays

My mother lives in one of the nation’s hot spots for COVID-19 activity, and my own health issues prevent me from



traveling, so this holiday season will find us celebrating “together, but apart.” It’s not an ideal situation, but in these uncertain, unprecedented times, we are wise to be realistic and keep hope that soon, we will be

able to visit “as of old.”

No doubt others are reaching the same conclusion: Their visits with loved ones are also not possible this year, whether by traveling or even by gathering with groups of nearby family and friends. Still, the reality that drives our choices to be

more safe than potentially sorry cannot overshadow the “reason for the season.”

Holiday time is synonymous with togetherness, the fellowship that reflects and fosters the love God has for us, and the precious gift of his son Jesus Christ that is the focus of our faith. Looking past our disappointment at being apart, there are creative ways that we can foster togetherness despite geographic distance—even ones that do not rely on high-tech talent!

Perhaps we cannot physically be in the same room with our relatives, but we can use time and intentional planning to our benefit. With or without a videoconferencing app, we can unite with loved ones far and near by scheduling certain events at the same time for everyone.

Meals, tree trimming, baking and cooking, gift exchanging and package

opening—these and other holiday traditions can be “shared” by our doing them at the same time as others living elsewhere.

Rotating activities can foster engagement from everyone. Recipe or photo exchanges, or shipping batches of Christmas cookies and other treats brings in sensory sharing, including taste and smell—nothing like the scent of holiday cookies to trigger smiles and warmth!

Crafts shared or long-held treasures bring visual remembrance to another’s home. (That teddy bear you have cherished can travel when you cannot, and provide joy to a new generation of family members.)

Faith-based opportunities to connect abound. Scattered family members can read the same Scripture verses and share their reflections online or over the

See PRATT, page 15

Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe/

Msgr. Owen F. Campion

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, November 22, 2020

- Ezekiel 34:11-12, 15-17
- 1 Corinthians 15:20-26, 28
- Matthew 25:31-46

On this weekend, the Church concludes its liturgical year of 2019-20. Next week, a new year will begin with the First



Sunday of Advent. This weekend, the Church closes the year with an excited and fervent proclamation of Christ as the king of all.

The first reading comes from the ancient Book of Ezekiel. In this reading, God

speaks in the first person, promising protection of his flock, the people of God. He is the shepherd, seeking the lost, caring for the injured, rescuing the imperiled. God will also distinguish between the sheep and those who assume other identities because of their unfaithfulness.

St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians provides the second reading. This selection is a proclamation of the resurrection and of the role of the Lord as redeemer of humanity. He is the risen Lord, the first of those who will rise to everlasting life. Those who will follow Jesus in being raised from the dead are "those who belong" to Christ, in other words, those persons who have admitted God, through Jesus, into their lives, and who

have received from the Lord the gift of grace, eternal life and strength (1 Cor 15:23).

Paul frankly admits that there are forces hostile to God at work in the world. These forces cannot be dismissed as insignificant or timid. However, they are not omnipotent. In and through Jesus, the power and life of God will endure. God will triumph over all evil. No one bound to God should fear the powers of evil, although all must resist these powers.

For its final reading on this great feast, the Church offers us a passage from St. Matthew's Gospel. It is a glance forward, to the day when God's glory will be fully revealed to the world, to the day when Jesus will return in majesty and glory.

This expectation was a favorite theme in the early Church, in the community that surrounded and prompted the formation of the Gospels.

The reading repeats the description given in Ezekiel. In Ezekiel, God, the shepherd, separates the sheep from the goats, the good from the unfaithful. In this reading from Matthew, Jesus promises a final judgment to separate the faithful from the sinful.

The Lord beautifully defines who will be judged as faithful and as unfaithful. The faithful will not be those who only give lip-service to their belief in God, but

Daily Readings**Monday, November 23**

St. Clement I, pope and martyr
St. Columban, abbot
Blessed Miguel Pro, priest and martyr
Revelation 14:1-3, 4b-5
Psalm 24:1b-4b, 5-6
Luke 21:1-4

Tuesday, November 24

St. Andrew Dung-Lac, priest and companions, martyrs
Revelation 14:14-19
Psalm 96:10-13
Luke 21:5-11

Wednesday, November 25

St. Catherine of Alexandria, virgin and martyr
Revelation 15:1-4
Psalm 98:1-3b, 7-9
Luke 21:12-19

Thursday, November 26

Revelation 18:1-2, 21-23; 19:1-3, 9a
Psalm 100:1b-5
Luke 21:20-28

Friday, November 27

Revelation 20:1-4, 11-21:2
Psalm 84:3-6a, 8a
Luke 21:29-33

Saturday, November 28

Revelation 22:1-7
Psalm 95:1-7b
Luke 21:34-36

Sunday, November 29

First Sunday of Advent
Isaiah 63:16b-17, 19b; 64:2-7
Psalm 80:2-3, 15-16, 18-19
1 Corinthians 1:3-9
Mark 13:33-37

those who, in the model of Jesus, give themselves totally to the will of God.

Reflection

A popular motion picture from 2010, and a true story at that, was *The King's Speech*. It was about Great Britain's King George VI (1895-1952), on the throne from 1936 until his death, focusing on his determined efforts to overcome a serious speech defect.

The king and his wife, known for decades in her widowhood until her own death in 2002 as the Queen Mother, were courageous figures as the British struggled against enormous odds in the Second World War.

For long, terrifying, deadly months,

German bombing relentlessly tore British life apart. A German invasion seemed inevitable. Rumors spread that the royal family would flee to Canada.

One day, at the scene of a horrendous bombing attack, the queen was confronted. Would she and her husband send their young daughters to safety in Canada? Indeed, would she and the king flee?

The queen answered, "My daughters will not leave without me. I will not leave without the king, and, the king will *never, ever, ever* leave you!"

For us Christians, our king will never, ever, ever leave us. Jesus is with us now and always, guiding, healing, forgiving and strengthening us. †

My Journey to God**And the Crowd Yelled
"Barabbas"**

By Sonny Shanks

On a stage long ago in a faraway place

Two men stood condemned:

And the crowd yelled "Barabbas."

Barabbas was popular, the other not so much:

And the crowd yelled "Barabbas."

Barabbas was a political figure, a rebel, and a villain,

But the kind you could love:

And the crowd yelled "Barabbas."

The other was meek and spoke of love and forgiveness;

He'd fed some and healed others:

But the crowd yelled "Barabbas."

The officer in charge pleaded for the other:

But the crowd yelled "Barabbas."

Today too, at the big and not-so-big, local and even personal level,

We all face daily choices.

May we, unlike them, yell out "Jesus."

And in doing so, may we

Speak love and forgiveness to each other,

Feed and heal one another.

(Sonny Shanks is a member of St. Joseph Parish in Corydon. Photo below: A still shot from Mel Gibson's 2004 film *The Passion of the Christ* shows Pontius Pilate gesturing toward Christ with Barabbas looking on at right.)

(Photo courtesy of spreadingthefame.com)

**Question Corner/Fr. Kenneth Doyle****Christ's victory over death is a reason behind the name for 'Good Friday'**

Why do we call the day on which Jesus was crucified "Good" Friday? Christ was made to suffer horribly, so this has always bothered me. (Virginia)



A fair number of people agree with you, and some have suggested that "Black Friday" would be a more appropriate designation.

Interestingly, in the Greek Orthodox Church, the day is known not as "Good" but as the "Great and Holy Friday."

Certainly, if you had asked the friends of Jesus on that day itself, they would have seen nothing good in what transpired. Christ had been tortured, then executed as a common criminal, and his followers had begun to scatter. But less than 48 hours later, all that changed. The tomb of Christ was now empty, Jesus had risen from the dead and had already begun to appear to those who had been close to him.

One theory, supported by the *Oxford English Dictionary* and some other linguists, is that the word "good," as applied to the day of Christ's death, comes from an antiquated meaning of the word, meaning "holy." I prefer, though, the more traditional Christian explanation—namely, that we call the day "good" because, through it, Jesus has won victory over sin and death, both for himself and for us as well.

Our bishop has suggested that the elderly and those with compromised immune systems not attend Mass in person right now. Since I fit into both of these categories, I have not been going to Mass. I do watch a Mass on television every week, and to be honest, I get more out of that than I do from going to my parish—except, of course, that I can't receive Communion.

About four years ago, our pastor was replaced by a priest from Africa. While he is a nice person, I can't understand him. He

gives lengthy homilies (about 30 minutes) and then spends 10 minutes at the end of Mass talking about events or lecturing us on how to be a better parish. (Most parishioners refer to it as his "second sermon.")

This has been my home parish for more than 40 years; I raised my children here and took part in many parish ministries until I got sick. Our parish numbers have been dropping, and several of my friends have been discussing what we are going to do when we are expected to return to church. Do you have any suggestions? (Location withheld)

First, let me say how grateful I am that many foreign priests have volunteered to come and serve in the U.S. In much of Africa and in certain parts of Asia, vocations are plentiful—and without the generous sacrifice of these men, a fair number of American Catholic parishes would have had to close their doors.

I do acknowledge, though, that language can sometimes be a barrier to understanding and worship. Do you know anyone on your parish council? Why not share your concern that attendance is dropping—in part, you feel, due to the length of homilies and to the language difficulty.

Hopefully, that person could then speak directly to the priest—in a sympathetic and understanding fashion—suggesting that American Catholic congregations are more accustomed and receptive to shorter homilies. Perhaps the priest might even be open to having a deacon read the homily that the pastor has prepared.

Your last resort, of course, is to find another parish nearby. We all need to be nourished regularly by the Eucharist, and a televised Mass, while helpful, can never substitute for that. And if your health keeps you from attending, you can ask your parish that Communion be brought to your home.

(Questions may be sent to Father Kenneth Doyle at askfatherdoyle@gmail.com and 30 Columbia Circle Dr., Albany, New York 12203.) †

Rest in peace

Please submit in writing to our office by 10 a.m. Thursday before the week of publication; be sure to state date of death. Obituaries of archdiocesan priests serving our archdiocese are listed elsewhere in *The Criterion*. Order priests and religious sisters and brothers are included here, unless they are natives of the archdiocese or have other connections to it; those are separate obituaries on this page.

ALLEN, Linda K., 73, St. Mary, Greensburg, Nov. 5. Sister of Vickie DeSpain. Aunt, great-aunt and great-great-aunt of several.

ALLISON, James J., 83, St. Pius X, Indianapolis, Nov. 3. Husband of Julia Allison. Father of Marianne Heinzman, Michelle Henderson, Mark and Michael Allison. Brother of David Allison. Grandfather of 12. Great-grandfather of four.

BISCHOFF, Hazel P., 87, St. Nicholas, Ripley County, Nov. 5. Mother of Sheila Morrow, Judy Stenger and Thomas Bischoff. Grandmother of seven. Great-grandmother of four.

BUTLER, Mary Ellen, 90, Sacred Heart of Jesus, Indianapolis, Nov. 1. Mother of Mary Snyder, Jane, Patrice, Henry, Jr., Mark and Robert Butler. Sister of Betty McPherson. Grandmother of eight. Great-grandmother of eight.

CAHILL, Marjory, 86, Holy Name of Jesus, Oct. 31. Mother of Christine Denzer, Anne Elliott, Catherine Huser, Helen Stephon, Edward, John and Michael Cahill. Sister of Betty McPherson.



Pope Francis prays in front of a statue of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal during a private audience at the Vatican on Nov. 11. The statue was about to begin a pilgrimage through Italian dioceses marking the 190th anniversary of Mary's apparition to St. Catherine Laboure. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)

Grandmother of 31. Great-grandmother of 43.

CATRON, Darrell, 45, St. Michael the Archangel, Indianapolis, Nov. 7. Son of Vicky Anderson. Brother of Brian Catron.

CLEARY, Mary, 83, St. Malachy, Brownsburg, Nov. 4. Sister of Carol Armstrong, Janet Dodd, Gerry Zeunik, Catherine, Patricia, Michael and Thomas Cleary.

COPPLE, Michael D., 67, St. Bartholomew, Columbus, Nov. 3. Husband of Janie Copple. Father of Michelle Copple. Brother of Thomas Copple. Uncle of one.

ELBURG, Eva May (Zuber), 84, Prince of Peace, Madison, Nov. 8. Mother of Bonnie Chandler, Michelle Sullivan,

Mark and Michael Elburg. Grandmother of five. Great-grandmother of three.

ETTENSHOHN, Dorothy, 80, St. Paul, Tell City, Nov. 4. Mother of Joanie Cotton, Joe and Mark Ettenshoen. Sister of David and Richard Casey. Grandmother of nine.

FAHEY, Charles E., 87, St. Lawrence, Lawrenceburg, Nov. 6. Husband of Jane Fahey. Father of Angie McGuire, Bridget Weakly, Debbie Wunder, Andrew, Gene and Mike Fahey. Grandfather of 21. Great-grandfather of 19.

FONTANILLA, Dr. Abraham, 77, St. Malachy, Brownsburg, Oct. 21. Husband of Angelita Fontanilla. Father of Christine and Anthony Fontanilla.

GARDNER, Paul G., 95, St. Michael, Brookville, Nov. 5. Father of Michael Gardner. Grandfather of two. Great-grandfather of one.

HASTINGS, Geraldine, 74, St. Malachy, Brownsburg, Oct. 30. Mother of James and Patrick Hastings. Sister of Glenda Edele, Sue Kissling, Al, Frank, Jr., Randy, Ron and Steve Fischer. Grandmother of two.

KRAMER, Alvin, 73, St. Mary, Greensburg, Nov. 6. Husband of Cathy Kramer. Father of Adam, Chris and Eric Kramer. Stepfather of Brian, Jeff and Wade Wilson. Brother of Kathryn and Marilyn Berkemeier, Carol Bishop, Jean Campfield, Clara Dwenger, Rita Meyer, Harold, Jim and Norbert Kramer. Grandfather of 13.

KURTZ, Edward C., 96, St. Louis, Batesville, Nov. 4. Father of Daryl and Gary Kurtz. Brother of Francis Kurtz. Grandfather of eight. Great-grandfather of 15.

LANGE, Marlys (Mardel), 97, St. Bartholomew, Columbus, Oct. 28. Aunt of several.

MEISBERGER, John F., 81, St. Magdalene, New Marion, Nov. 7. Father of Jonny Meisberger. Brother of Nancy Watson and Robert Meisberger.

O'MALEY, Barbara, 82, Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Indianapolis, Oct. 28. Mother of Bryan and Michael O'Maley and Steve Klaiber. Sister of Michael Kasper. Grandmother of seven. Great-grandmother of four.

RAMSEY, Charles, 87, St. Michael, Cannelton, Nov. 7. Father of Lesa Pfeifer, Cheryl Sanders, Allen, Barry and Dennis Ramsey. Brother of Carlos Ramsey. Grandfather of 12. Great-grandfather of 11.

REDMOND, Barbara, 94, St. Luke the Evangelist, Indianapolis, Oct. 27. Mother of William Redmond, Jr. Grandmother of six. Great-grandmother of seven.

RICHARDSON, Clara J., 89, St. Malachy, Brownsburg, Oct. 4. Mother of Cathy Cooley, Debbie Robidoux, Cheryl Smith, Anthony, Gregory, James, Jeffery, Matthew, Roch and Timothy Richardson. Sister of Casey, George and Martin Gibbs. Grandmother of 21. Great-grandmother of 16.

RICKETTS, Helen M., 82, Prince of Peace, Madison, Oct. 29. Mother of Lisa Reverman, Lori Whitaker and Ed Ricketts. Grandmother of seven. Great-grandmother of two.

SCHAFFER, Kevin J., 68, St. Thomas Aquinas, Indianapolis, Oct. 6. Husband of Diane Schaffer. Brother of Alan, Brian, Joe and Leo Schaffer. Uncle of several. (correction)

STARLIN, Frances, 84, Christ the King, Indianapolis, Nov. 4. Mother of Julie Conklin, Jenny Pearlman, Lynn Remington and Joseph Starlin. Grandmother of six.

VELAZQUEZ, Alicia Perez, 36, Prince of Peace, Madison, Oct. 18. Son of Alicia Perez De Leon and Carmen de Leon Velazquez Santizo. Brother of Antonia and Edith Perez, Arturo, Apolinar, Ernesto, Gilberto, Jorge, Luis and Victor Perez Velazquez. Uncle of several.

VOEGELE, Altarose, 97, St. Louis, Batesville, Nov. 9. Mother of Carol Baker, Janet Meer, Nancy Metz, Linda Riggs and Ron Voegele. Grandmother of six. Great-grandmother of 11. Step-great-grandmother of one.

ZIRKELBACH, Brian K., 51, Christ the King, Indianapolis, Oct. 29. Husband of Robbi Zirkelbach. Stepfather of Casie, Caleb and Colton Zirkelbach. Son of Jim and Mary Zirkelbach. Brother of Kimberly Burns, Joan Cain, Tracy Werner, Bradley, Dennis, James, Mark and Robert Zirkelbach. Grandfather of three. †

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Kenyan bishops: People want 'better government,' not more government

NAIROBI, Kenya (CNS)—Kenya's Catholic bishops have expressed discomfort at proposals to expand government in a report from Building Bridges Initiative, a process President Uhuru Kenyatta and former Prime Minister Raila Odinga launched in 2018 to heal, reconcile and unite the East African nation.

The bishops' comments came as the country debated the report, which proposes major constitutional, administrative

and policy changes in the East African nation. It will be subjected to a national referendum sometime next year.

But the bishops are concerned that issues such as reconciliation and healing, restoration of values, democratic governance, and economic recovery and services are missing from the report.

"At this point, we want to strongly remind all actors, including ourselves as bishops, that this process has serious implications for the future of this country. The constitutional administrative and policy recommendations in the document ought to be seen in the light of discernment," Archbishop Philip Anyolo of Kisumu, chairman of the Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops, said during a news conference in Nakuru on Nov. 12.

The bishops warned that, if the report is implemented as it is, it would expand the executive, failing to tame the winner-take-all structure and create an imperial president. It would also bloat parliament, exacerbating the tax burden for the citizens currently paying 94 senators and 363 legislators, they said.

"There is no reason why we should have such a large number of legislators. We do not want more government, but better government," said Archbishop Anyolo. †

REPORT SEXUAL MISCONDUCT NOW

If you are a victim of sexual misconduct by a person ministering on behalf of the Church, or if you know of anyone who has been a victim of such misconduct, please contact the archdiocesan victim assistance coordinator. There are two ways to make a report:

1 Ethics Point
Confidential, Online Reporting
www.archdioceseofindianapolis.ethicspoint.com or 888-393-6810

2 Carla Hill, Archdiocese of Indianapolis, Victim Assistance Coordinator
P.O. Box 1410, Indianapolis, IN 46206-1410

317-236-1548 or 800-382-9836, ext. 1548
carlahill@archindy.org

Supreme Court seems ready to let Affordable Care Act stand

WASHINGTON (CNS)—On Nov. 10, when the fate of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) faced the Supreme Court for the third time since it was signed into law 10 years ago, the justices seemed willing to leave the bulk of the law intact even if they found one part of it to be unconstitutional.

The possible way forward during the two-hour oral arguments by teleconference was set by Chief Justice John Roberts and Justice Brett Kavanaugh.

The two justices repeatedly stressed that they didn't see how it was necessary to strike down the entire health care law even if its individual mandate, requiring each person to buy health insurance, was invalidated.

Roberts stressed that the move by Congress three years ago to drop the penalty for not buying health insurance did not indicate its intent to do away with the entire health care legislation.

"I think it's hard for you to argue Congress intended the entire act to fall if the mandate was struck down if the same Congress that lowered the tax penalty to zero did not even try to repeal the rest of the act," he said. Roberts also pointed out that Congress did not try to kill the entire law when it eliminated the tax penalty. "They wanted the court to do that, but that's not our job."

The case before the court, *California v. Texas*, was three pronged. It examined whether the challengers—18 Republican states and two individuals—even had the legal standing to bring this case forward. The justices also had to determine if changes made to the health care law by Congress in 2017 made the individual mandate unconstitutional, and if so, if that part of the law could be separated out or if the entire ACA, also known as Obamacare, would need to be struck down.

The ACA, which became law in 2010 and was fully implemented in 2015, survived its battles with the high court twice before, in 2012 and 2015. This year's challenge to the law also was backed by President Donald J. Trump's administration. The president has frequently said he hopes the court would throw out Obamacare in its entirety.

The stakes were high in this year's arguments. Outside the court on the warm November morning, protesters held signs urging the court to keep the ACA. The fear the law might be struck down, amid a pandemic, intensified during the confirmation hearings for Justice Amy Coney Barrett when Democratic senators raised suspicion that she could potentially vote to strike it down.

The legislation's repeat visit to the Supreme Court had Justice Samuel Alito quoting the Yogi Berra phrase: "It seems like *deja vu* all over again."

But he also said a sea change had occurred since prior arguments before the court due to Congress' action on the individual insurance requirement.

"In the first case, there was a strong reason to believe the individual mandate

was ... essential to keep the plane flying. Now the part has been taken out and the plane has not crashed," he said. "How would we explain why the individual mandate in its present form is essential to the operation of the act?"

Striking down the law would leave 20 million Americans uninsured, according to estimates from the Urban Institute.

The biggest loss would be for low-income adults eligible for Medicaid under the law after most states expanded the program to include them. Millions of other Americans would lose the private insurance plans they enrolled in via the ACA marketplaces, including young adults who had been eligible to stay on their parents' plans until they turned 26.

Another loss would be the health care law's protections of pre-existing conditions. Trump has said he would preserve that protection if the law was struck down, but he never offered any details on how that would happen.

The day before the case was argued before the court, Notre Dame Law School professor Richard Garnett, director of the school's Program on Church, State and Society, said it was unlikely the court would call the ACA unconstitutional.

He also said there was "very little chance that a majority of the justices will conclude" Congress' move to take away the penalty for individuals who did not buy insurance would undo the entire health care legislation.

Since 2010, the Catholic Church has had a complicated relationship with the health care law. Catholic hospitals have long emphasized the poor and vulnerable must have access to health care, but Church leaders have objected to the law's abortifacient, contraceptive and sterilization mandate, requiring that employee health insurance plans provide those coverages.

The Catholic Health Association (CHA) of the United States, which includes more than 2,200 Catholic hospitals, nursing homes, long-term care facilities, systems, sponsors and related organizations, filed a brief in support of the petitioners in this case. The brief stressed that CHA has "witnessed firsthand the devastating impact of the lack of affordable health insurance and health care on vulnerable members of our society."

In a Sept. 9 statement, Mercy Sister Mary Haddad, the organization's president and CEO, urged the court to uphold the current law, saying that striking it down would be devastating to millions of Americans, including those with COVID-19. "The pain of repeal would be borne by some of the most vulnerable in our society—pregnant women, racial minorities, and low-income individuals and families," she added.

She said if the court were to strike down the entire ACA, "it would wreak havoc on the U.S. health care system and irreparably harm those most in need of care" in the middle of a pandemic.

Sister Mary also emphasized that a ruling on one part of the law should not

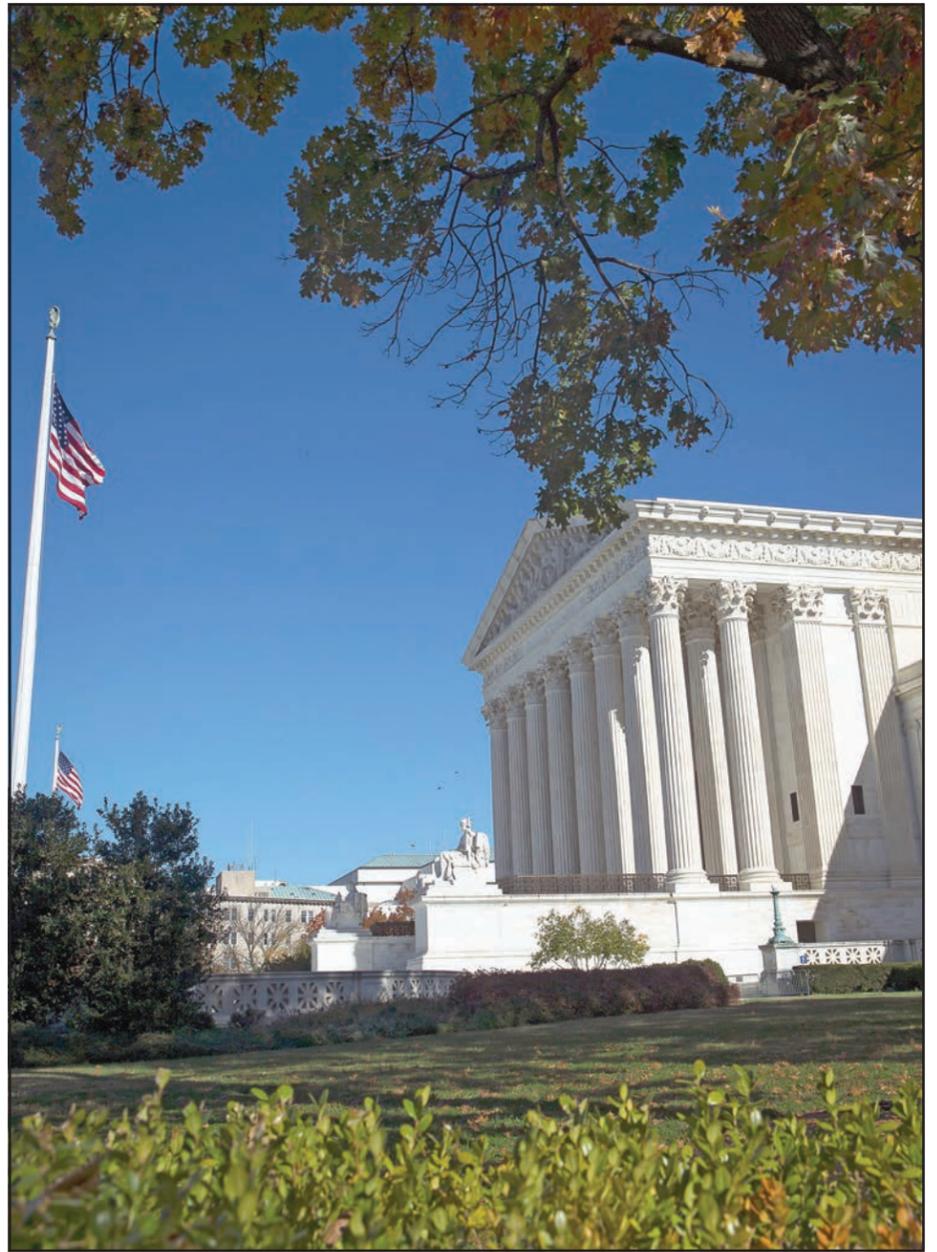
not the perfect answer to distanced holidays, but there are blessings to be found.

In the absence of physical gatherings, we don't have to worry about not having enough space, chairs, parking spots or dishes. We can widen our circle and, perhaps, reach out to those who would otherwise be entirely isolated from any festivities.

Intentional planning with all family and friends in mind helps us to reorder our priorities to what really matters to us. So, we might better appreciate each other and foster encouragement and love, rather than the "same old" arguments or patterns of disagreements.

Being apart this holiday season will undoubtedly be difficult. But by planning with care, we can enjoy a new kind of togetherness and continue to nurture our relationships with faith and love.

(Maureen Pratt's website is www.maureenpratt.com.) †



The U.S. Supreme Court is seen in Washington on Nov. 10. (CNS photo/Tyler Orsburn)

impact the law as a whole.

"We strongly urge the court to rule that the individual mandate is severable," she said "as clearly intended by Congress

when it eliminated the individual mandate penalty but did not repeal the entire ACA."

A decision on this case will be issued next year. †

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phone. Common prayer times can unite individuals in like-purpose. Armchair travel, quite popular today, can be targeted to visiting sacred sites online and sharing experiences from each family member's perspective.

Worshipping can also bring families together in faith. Earlier this year, I "shared" Mass with friends in Oregon. A priest we know on the East Coast streamed Mass, and my friends and I tuned in for the "live" feed, even texting "Peace be with you" at the appropriate moment in the liturgy.

Then, it felt a little strange to worship in this way, but now, so many of us have "attended" Mass online regularly that the sense of common fellowship seems much more cohesive.

Intentionally synchronizing activities is

ADOPTION

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“So to get a call that she was here meant everything.”

“She” is the Lloyd’s now-15-month-old daughter Eliza, whom the couple adopted on Nov. 13, 2019—coincidentally during Adoption Awareness Month.

The couple adopted her through Adoption Bridges of Kentuckiana (ABOK). The agency, which provides assistance for birth parents and adoptive parents and offers free pregnancy tests, falls under the umbrella of services offered by St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities in New Albany.

“It wasn’t just about adoption with them,” said Trent of why they chose to adopt through the agency. “They were concerned for the life of the mother and the child and the couple during the whole process.”

‘It’s a lovely exchange’

The Lloyds, both ministers at different Methodist churches, had researched and visited several adoption agencies.

“A lot of times we felt like we were being sold something, even at Christian agencies,” said Katie.

But their experience was different at ABOK. When they met with the agency’s adoption program director Julie Barkley, “she was really honest about the process,” said Trent.

And ABOK is “ethical and cares for birth parents and prospective birth parents,” Katie added. In a questionnaire from the agency, the Lloyds noted they were pleased that birth parents are “provided with the support and counseling they need” both pre-and post-birth—all at no cost.

“Up until then we weren’t sure about the timing,” said Katie. “But with them we said, ‘We can do this, and we can do this with them now.’”

Like most couples who adopt through the archdiocesan-supported agency, the Lloyds chose to have an open adoption, meaning they were open to meeting the birth mother in advance and to remaining in contact with her after the adoption was complete.

But in the Lloyd’s case, they didn’t meet Eliza’s birth mother until a month after the baby was born.

“She was born at 33 weeks,” Trent explained. “We were an emergency placement,” meaning the mother decided to place her child for adoption after giving birth.

When they did meet, he said, “It was really lovely. We got to know her story and hear about her life. And it was so neat for her to be able to hold Eliza and [to] see the love she had for her in that moment, even though it was a hard decision” to have another family raise her child.

Since then, the Lloyds and Eliza’s birth mother have remained in contact. The couple email photos of Eliza, and the birth mother shares pictures and updates about her own life.

“It’s a lovely exchange,” said Katie.

‘There isn’t this giant question mark’

Not everyone views open adoption so positively at first.

“We encounter a lot of fear and suspicion around the idea,” Katie noted. “We even have people at church say,

‘Aren’t you afraid she’ll come back to take the baby?’”

“That’s not the way [open adoption] works,” Trent explained. “Once the adoption is final, it’s final. Our daughter is just as much our daughter as if Katie gave birth to her.”

“Eliza is stuck with us,” Katie agreed with a laugh.

While recognizing that open adoption is “a relationship and a process,” she considers it “good on both sides.”

“It’s good for the adopted child because there isn’t this giant question mark,” said Katie. “As [Eliza] gets older, she can see how she looks like her birth mother. She can learn about the circumstances that led to her adoption and know ‘I wasn’t abandoned.’ She can talk to her birth mother and get the truth, and see people who look like her.”

As the couple noted on the questionnaire, providing such knowledge and understanding to Eliza is “a gift.” And their daughter “will be able to see how loved she is by her birth mom. The immense love and care her birth mother has for her comes through in every word.”

From the other point of view, Katie noted that “Eliza’s birth mom seems to really enjoy getting the pictures and updates.”

But her perspective extends beyond her daughter’s biological mother. Recently, Katie started working at Adoption Bridges of Kentuckiana as a birth parent advocate in addition to her ministerial job.

“I’ve heard other birth mothers say they appreciate seeing they made the right decision and seeing their child grow and be nurtured,” said Katie. “There’s no question about ‘How is my little one?’ It helps give peace and affirms the decision they made.”

‘A relationship and a process’

On the ABOK survey, the couple admitted that, while they were not afraid of open adoption, they thought it meant “you talked with the birth parents all the time and visited, and they became as close as other members of your family.”

Such closeness “is one beautiful way that open adoption can take place,” their answer continued.

“But over time, we learned that there are so many ways to have an open adoption, and all of them are beautiful. An open adoption can mean emailing or phone calls or it can mean visits. And what it looks like can change over time, and that’s part of the beauty of it.”

For now, the Lloyds email Eliza’s birth mother several times a month. They noted on the questionnaire that “this has worked well from the beginning, as it allows space for her birth mom to grieve and process but to still have photos and stories there when she’s ready to see them.”

They’re now such proponents of open adoption through Adoption Bridges of Kentuckiana that they refer other adoption-seeking couples pursuing to the agency.

“We keep sending so many people, we joke we should get a discount with our next adoption,” Katie said with a chuckle.

‘We felt hope’

On a more serious note, the Lloyds expressed their deep gratitude for the agency and the hope it brings to couples, birth parents and children.



Eliza Lloyd smiles on her first birthday in August. She was adopted by Katie and Trent Lloyd on Nov. 13, 2019, through Adoption Bridges of Kentuckiana, an agency of St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities in New Albany. (Submitted photo)

“We felt hope through the whole process,” said Katie. “Even though we had to wait a long time, we knew when that little person came, it would be worth it. ...

“And I imagine Eliza’s birth mother watching her grow and set goals for herself would give her hope.”

The Lloyds “absolutely” want to adopt another child through Adoption Bridges of Kentuckiana.

But not for a while—the couple is expecting their first biological child in April 2021.

In the meantime, the Lloyds have already started sharing with their daughter about her birth mother and biological family, using a book with photos and a simple story of her birth they compiled.

The relationships in an open adoption “can be complex, and there can be misunderstandings,” said Katie.

But she and Trent are thankful they did not “let fear keep us—or especially Eliza—from having this beautiful relationship in our lives,” she said.

“That would have been a true loss.”

(For more information on St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities’ services through Adoption Bridges of Kentuckiana, go to www.stecharities.org/adoption-bridges. For more information on the United Catholic Appeal and other ministries it supports throughout central and southern Indiana, or to donate to the United Catholic Appeal, go to storybook.link/UCAsstorybook.) †

SCHOOLS

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“We have been blessed that we have been able to have our students in the buildings, with face-to-face instruction, for almost the whole first semester. I never would have thought that would have happened back in August.”

McCoy shared her thoughts about this latest development during a conversation with *The Criterion*. Here is an edited version of that conversation, a conversation in which she called teachers and administrators “true heroes,” shared advice for parents, and asked everyone to keep their focus on their faith in the upcoming Advent and Christmas seasons as this challenging crisis continues.

Q. In August, you talked about how important it was for students and teachers to have a face-to-face connection to start the year. How has that worked out?

A. “It gave them that chance to build community. And community is what we’re all about in our Catholic schools. It hasn’t been without its challenges. While all the students are in the building face-to-face, they’re happy to be there and the teachers are happy to have them. But there’s still that challenge because they’re wearing masks, they’re social distancing, and they’re not touching or hugging each other. So again, it’s been a challenge to get that community built.

“But I can’t say enough about our teachers, our principals. They have

been in the trenches day in and day out, fighting these challenges of this virus. They are our true heroes. They truly need to be commended. They are the ones who have made this happen. They have done it with smiles on their faces and continue to get up every day and do it again.”

Q. Are schools better prepared for virtual learning now than in March when in-school instruction was first closed down because of the COVID-19 crisis?

A. “I would say triple-fold. They are more than ready to do the virtual learning. They have technology in place. They have hot spots for those who may have trouble getting internet connections. Teachers have had training on the different platforms to teach virtually. Teachers have also been able to have professional development to use the resources that are in place to meet those needs.

“Still, it’s not going to be without its challenges. You’re still going to have students who fall behind, or those students who don’t have the extra support at home that they need. Or those students who are struggling with staying engaged and getting online. But we’re in a much better position now than we were back in March. We’ve had time to prepare.”

Q. Obviously, virtual learning for their children is a challenge for parents who need to work. What advice do you have for parents during this time?

A. “We understand it’s hard for our parents and our families. It’s also hard for our teachers and administrators. Work with your children’s teachers and principals. Be patient. Be kind. If we’re not working together, we’re certainly not going to be able to create the best environment for our students and our families.

“Be engaged yourself. I know that’s difficult for some of our parents. I know they’re trying to do a full-time career as well. Look over your child’s assignments. See what they’re learning. See what’s happening in their classroom. And provide support in any way you can. And if you’re struggling, don’t hesitate to reach out to the school. They are more than happy to assist and provide any sort of guidance that they can.”

Q. The virus has caused some schools to go to virtual learning before this Marion County directive. Other schools have been spared, leading some people to say, “Our school is a safe place. We don’t have the virus. Why do we have to close down?” What would you tell people in that regard?

A. “It’s about the community. Marion County has a nearly 13% positivity rate.

When it gets so high, it’s putting our teachers and our students at risk because ultimately the community spread is going to come into our schools, and it already has in some of our schools. We have to take the attitude that it’s the whole community we need to think about.

“First and foremost for our principals and teachers is always teaching our faith. It’s also the safety of our students and our teachers. And we don’t want to take a risk that might just put one teacher or one student at risk. It’s better to follow the medical experts, to follow what the Marion County Health Department is telling us. They have the data. We want to make sure all our students, all our teachers and all our principals are safe.”

Q. We’re heading into Thanksgiving, Advent and Christmas. What advice would you give parents and families to keep their focus on their faith amid these challenging times?

A. “Now more than ever, our faith is what’s going to get us through these challenging times. Stay strong in your spiritual life. Don’t give up hope. Turn to Jesus Christ. And focus on your family. Thanksgiving and Christmas are times when I know we want to be with our families. Many of us might not be able to be with our extended families this year, but do focus on your most immediate family. Just do it in a safe way. And still celebrate. Celebrate the holidays and the birth of our Lord, Jesus Christ.” †

