



The

Criterion

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It's All Good

Embrace a childlike faith, modeled by Mary, in 2021, page 12.

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'I always want people to know they're not alone'

Even a frightening threat didn't stop Joan Hess from sharing God's light in people's darkness

By John Shaughnessy

The threat from the man sitting across from her gripped Joan Hess with fear.

She tried to look calm on the outside, but inside her heart and her mind raced.

Seeing the desperation in the man's face and hearing his threat, she knew that everything that happened in the next few moments would come to a point of life or death.

She started to talk to him. She tried to tell him that he didn't want to do this, that they could find a way to work

together through *this*—the man being so distraught about his life that he threatened to kill himself right here, right now, right in front of Hess.

"I was scared: 'Oh my God, he's going to kill himself here!'" Hess recalls about that moment that took place in her office at Catholic Charities Tell City. "I looked at him and said, 'No, you're not going to do that now, and you're not going to do it later. We're not going to solve all your problems today, but we're going to work on them one at a time.'

"By the time he left the office, he was laughing, and we

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Pandemic focuses priorities for ICC during 2021 General Assembly

By Victoria Arthur

For the Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC), the 2021 state legislative session will bring unique challenges due to social distancing—along with a heightened focus on Catholic social teaching—as the global coronavirus pandemic continues to take its toll.



The 122nd Indiana

General Assembly opened for business on Jan. 4 under new safety protocols and

a tighter agenda, with fewer bills expected to be introduced and an overarching goal of crafting and passing the state's two-year budget.

But as COVID-19 persists, ravaging the economy and devastating the most vulnerable, the Catholic Church and other advocates for the poor will double down on their efforts to influence the debate.

"Now more than ever, it's critically important that we seek the common good and help people who are struggling," said Angela Espada, executive director of the



Angela Espada

ICC, the public policy voice of the Catholic Church in Indiana. "We must be in solidarity with those in most need, because in the midst of this pandemic, the needs have never been greater."

Espada pointed to two longstanding priorities that she expects will come to the forefront for the ICC and its allies this year—restricting the payday lending industry and modernizing the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program.

A long overdue updating of TANF was passed over during the 2020 legislative session, to the dismay of the ICC and other advocates for the poor. TANF is a federal government program that provides grants to the states for distribution to families in dire economic circumstances. Because of antiquated state guidelines, the \$288 maximum monthly payout for a family

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The community of Tell City thanked Joan Hess, left, on Dec. 18, 2020, for her 14 years as the director of Catholic Charities Tell City, honoring her with gifts and a drive-by salute. (Submitted photo)

Christ's human condition is a sign of God's love, Pope Francis says at Angelus

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—By taking on the frail human condition, God showed his love for humanity and his desire to share in people's joys and sufferings, Pope Francis said.

During his Sunday *Angelus* address on Jan. 3, the pope said that God made the "bold" decision to become human "to tell us, to tell you, that he loves us like that, in our frailty, in

your frailty, right there, where we are most ashamed, where you are most ashamed.

"He enters into our shame, to become our brother, to share the path of life," he said.

After praying the *Angelus* prayer and renewing his good wishes for the new year, Pope Francis said that Christians, without resorting to "the mentality of fatalism or magic," know that "things will improve to the extent that, with God's help, we work together for the common good,

placing the weakest and most disadvantaged at the center.

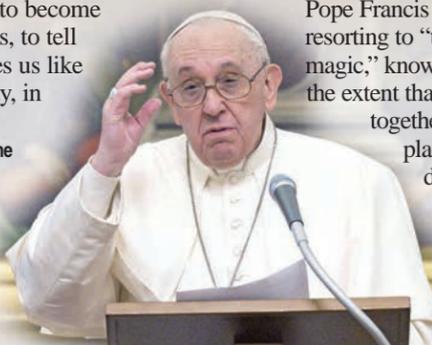
"We do not know what 2021 holds for us, but what each one of us, and all of us together, can do is

to take care of each other and of creation, our common home," he said.

Nevertheless, he also warned of the temptation to "take care only of our own interests, to continue to wage war," or to live "hedonistically, that is, seeking

See ANGELUS, page 8

Pope Francis leads the *Angelus* prayer from the library of the Apostolic Palace at the Vatican on Jan. 3. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)



Archbishop to speak at virtual vigil on Jan. 12 prior to federal execution

By Natalie Hoefler

Archbishop Charles C. Thompson will participate in an online vigil from 2-3 p.m. on Jan. 12 prior to the scheduled execution of death-row inmate Lisa Montgomery at the Federal Correctional Complex in Terre Haute.

The virtual vigil is offered by Catholic Mobilizing Network (CMN).

“CMN’s Virtual Prayer Vigils offer a space to pray and lament as a faith community in the face of these wrong-headed attacks on human dignity,” said Krisanne Vaillancourt Murphy, executive director of the non-profit organization. “Vigils feature prayers, petitions and Scripture reflections from Catholic bishops, Church leaders, and other allies from across the abolition movement.”

In response to the reinstatement of the federal death penalty last summer after a 17-year hiatus, Archbishop Thompson issued a statement on June 18, 2020. In it, he noted that, “In accordance

with the revision of paragraph 2267 of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, as promulgated by Pope Francis, ‘the death penalty is inadmissible because it is an attack on the inviolability and dignity of the person.’ ... The Church has consistently held up the dignity of the person and sacredness of life from the moment of conception to natural death.”

While noting the inmates’ “grave criminal acts ... cannot be overlooked,” Archbishop Thompson added that the “taking of life, no matter how ‘sanitary’ or ‘humane,’ is always an act of violence. ... I make this plea against the death penalty out of ultimate concern for the eternal soul of humanity.”

To sign up for the Jan. 12 vigil or the CMN vigils scheduled from 2-3 p.m. on Jan. 14 and 15 prior to the pending federal executions of Corey Johnson and Dustin Higgs, respectively, go to catholicmobilizing.org/virtual-vigils.

For updates on currently scheduled executions, go to catholicmobilizing.org/death-penalty/executions. †



Public Schedule of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

January 10–22, 2021

January 10 – 8 a.m.
Mass at Holy Cross Church, St. Croix

January 10 – 10 a.m.
Mass at St. Augustine Church, Leopold

January 12 – 10:30 a.m.
Priest Personnel Board meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis

January 12 – 2 p.m.
Virtual vigil for federal execution of Lisa Montgomery

January 14 – 8:15 a.m.
Judicatories virtual meeting

January 14 – 10 a.m.
Leadership Team meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center

January 14 – 2 p.m.
Legal Review meeting, Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center

January 14 – 7 p.m.
Confirmation Mass for youths of St. Malachy Parish at St. Malachy Church, Brownsburg

January 17 – 9:45 a.m.
Department Heads meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center

January 20 – 8:30 a.m.
School Mass at Holy Spirit Church, Indianapolis

January 22 – 10:30 a.m.
Respect Life Mass at St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church, Indianapolis

January 22 – Noon
Indiana March for Life, Indianapolis

Updated information for Indiana March for Life events on Jan. 21 and 22, and for Terre Haute vigil on Jan. 30

By Natalie Hoefler

The Criterion has obtained more information regarding the Jan. 22 Indiana March for Life march and rally, held in solemn observance of the 1973 Supreme Court *Roe v. Wade* decision legalizing abortion.

Due to Marion County COVID restrictions, the march and rally are now limited to 250 people, and registration is required. To register for the march and rally, go to www.rtlindy.org (separate

registration is still required for the Mass—see below for details).

Also, the location for the diaper drive has been set. Diapers to benefit three Indianapolis pregnancy care centers can be dropped off in the parking lot of St. John the Evangelist Church, 126 W. Georgia St., in Indianapolis, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. See below for more details.

Following is detailed information about the Indiana March for Life vigil on Jan. 21; the Mass, march, rally and diaper drive on Jan. 22; and the *Roe v. Wade* solemn observance in Terre Haute on Jan. 30.

Jan. 21 Vigil

The events will begin with a prayer vigil, organized by the Lafayette Diocese, from 7-9 p.m. on Jan. 21 at St. Elizabeth Seton Church, 10655 Haverstick Road, in Carmel, Ind. (Lafayette Diocese). The evening will include eucharistic adoration, praise and worship music and the opportunity to receive the sacrament of reconciliation.

Seating is limited to 200 due to COVID-19 restrictions, and mask-wearing and social distancing will be observed. Registration is required at vigilforlifecarmel2021.eventbrite.com.

Jan. 22 Mass

The archdiocesan Office of Human Life and Dignity is sponsoring the Mass on Jan. 22. It will be celebrated by Archbishop Charles C. Thompson at St. John the Evangelist Church, 126 W. Georgia St., in Indianapolis, at 10:30 a.m. Due to

coronavirus safety measures, the church capacity is currently 250. Therefore, registration for the Mass is required, and tickets (paper or by showing e-mailed ticket on a mobile device) will be gathered at the church entrances.

To register, go to cutt.ly/IndyMarch4LifeMass. Guidelines and regulations may change per Marion County recommendations, so the number of tickets available will be updated to allow as many people to attend the Mass as possible.

Updates can be found at www.archindy.org/humanlifeanddignity. The Mass will also be livestreamed at www.facebook.com/stjohnsindy and www.stjohnsindy.org/mass-feed.html.

Jan. 22 march, rally and diaper drive

The march and rally, coordinated by Right to Life of Indianapolis, will take place at noon, starting on Georgia Street between Capitol Avenue and Illinois Street near St. John the Evangelist Church. The march will process to Monument Circle, then around the Indiana state capitol building, ending on the south lawn, where a rally will take place. Masks and social distancing will be observed. For information on how to register for the march and rally and for updates, go to www.rtlindy.org.

The Indiana March for Life is also a registered stop this year on March for Life Chicago’s “Moving the Movement” Midwest tour. The tour includes seven events in Illinois, Iowa, Nebraska and

Wisconsin, as well as Indianapolis and Fort Wayne, Ind., between Jan. 2 and Jan. 23.

Also new this year as part of the Moving the Movement tour, all are asked to donate diapers on Jan. 22 in the parking lot of St. John the Evangelist Church from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Diaper donations are welcome regardless of participation in the march or rally. The goal is to gather 130,000 diapers, one for every child aborted on average annually in the Midwest.

The diapers will be donated to Birthline, Life Centers and Women’s Care Center. Financial donations to purchase diapers can also be made at cutt.ly/IndyMarch4LifeDiapers, with the ability to direct the contribution to the three designated pregnancy care centers and ministries in Indianapolis.

For updates regarding the march and rally—particularly in terms of changes to the number allowed to participate—and the diaper drive, go to www.rtlindy.org.

Jan. 30 Terre Haute solemn observance

In solemn observance of the *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court decision, all are invited to join in a peaceful, prayerful and pro-life gathering in front of the Vigo County Court House, located at 3rd Street and Wabash Avenue in Terre Haute, from 2-3 p.m. on Jan. 30. Signs will be provided. Parking may be available behind the Vigo County Court House. For more information, call Tom McBroom at 812-841-0060. †



Lafayette Bishop Timothy L. Doherty, left, concelebrates as Archbishop Charles C. Thompson raises the Blessed Sacrament during a Jan. 22, 2020, Mass at St. John the Evangelist Church in Indianapolis prior to the Indiana March for Life. (Criterion file photo by Sean Gallagher)

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Sister Nancy Nolan served as general superior of Sisters of Providence

Criterion staff report

Providence Sister Nancy Nolan (formerly Sister Jean Paula) died on Dec. 20 at Mother Theodore Hall on the motherhouse campus of the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods in St. Mary-of-the-Woods. She was 84 and had served as general superior of her religious order from 1986-96.



Sr. Nancy Nolan, S.P.

Because of the coronavirus pandemic, a virtual funeral service was held on Dec. 28. Burial followed at the sisters' cemetery.

Sister Nancy was born on May 13, 1936, in Galesburg, Ill. She entered the Sisters of Providence on Feb. 2, 1955, and professed final vows on Aug. 15, 1962.

Her family had deep connections to the community, with two of her sisters joining it before her.

"My grandfather's sister, Sister Modesta Nolan, joined the Sisters of Providence, so the sisters were always important to our family," Sister Nancy once said. "My

memory is in fourth grade when a sister asked what we wanted to be when we grew up, and I knew I wanted to be a sister. I know I was influenced by the sisters who taught me. That is important because my two sisters joined the community before I did, but I remembered I wanted to join before they did."

Sister Nancy earned a bachelor's degree in education at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College, a master's degree in education at the University of Illinois and a master's degree in pastoral studies at Loyola University Chicago.

In her 66 years as a member of the Sisters of Providence, Sister Nancy ministered for 12 years in Catholic schools in Illinois, Indiana and Oklahoma. In the archdiocese, she served at St. Philip Neri School in Indianapolis from 1959-65 and as associate administrator and director of religious education at the former St. Ann Parish in Terre Haute from 1985-86.

In the 1970s, Sister Nancy began serving in positions of leadership, ministering as provincial of her community's St. Joseph Province in Illinois and then as the associate executive secretary for the Asian Bishops Conference, based in Taiwan.

After she returned to the United States, she was elected

general superior of the Sisters of Providence, serving in that role from 1986-96.

"It was the greatest privilege of my life," Sister Nancy said of her years of service as general superior. "I felt very honored to be in that position. And I said many times that it probably was the best 10 years of my life."

During her tenure, the community celebrated the 150th anniversary of its founding and saw progress made on the beatification and canonization cause of its foundress, Mother Theodore Guérin, who was declared Indiana's first saint by Pope Benedict XVI in 2006.

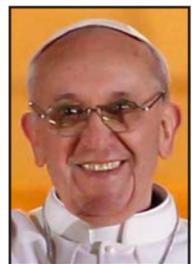
Providence Sister Ann Casper, who served as the community's general secretary at the time that Sister Nancy ministered as general superior, said that Sister Nancy "was the perfect leader for those 10 years. Her laid-back style was somewhat misleading, for she was a woman of great wisdom, vision, strength and courage."

Sister Nancy is survived by a brother, John Nolan, and two sisters, Providence Sister Carol Nolan and Providence Sister Lucille Nolan.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Sisters of Providence, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, IN, 47876. †

In new year, share the blessing of your time, Pope Francis writes in homily

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—At the beginning of a year people hope will mark the end of the COVID-19 pandemic, Pope



Pope Francis

Francis urged them to create a "culture of care," including by sharing the gift of their time with others.

Despite suffering from a bout of sciatica, nerve pain, that left him unable to preside over Mass on Jan. 1 in St. Peter's Basilica, the pope sent

a homily focused on God's blessings and on sharing those blessings with others.

Consecrating the new year to Mary, the pope prayed that she would "care for us, bless our time, and teach us to find time for God and for others."

Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state, read the pope's homily as he celebrated the Mass for the feast of

Mary, Mother of God, and for the Catholic Church's celebration of World Peace Day.

Only about 100 people, all wearing masks, were in the socially distanced congregation for the Mass at the Altar of the Chair in St. Peter's Basilica. Two dozen cardinals, also wearing masks, concelebrated.

In the homily he wrote, Pope Francis returned to themes from his World Peace Day message—"A Culture of Care as a Path to Peace"—and a recent general audience talk about prayers of blessing.

"This year, while we hope for new beginnings and new cures, let us not neglect care," the pope wrote. "Together with a vaccine for our bodies, we need a vaccine for our hearts. That vaccine is care. This will be a good year if we take care of others, as Our Lady does with us.

"The Lord knows how much we need to be blessed," the pope wrote. "The first thing he did after creating the world was to say that everything was good and to say of us that that we were very good."

But with the birth of Jesus, he said, "we receive not only words of blessing, but the blessing itself: Jesus is himself the blessing of the Father.

"Every time we open our hearts to Jesus, God's blessing enters our lives," he said.

The example of Mary, blessed in a special way, he wrote, "teaches us that blessings are received in order to be given."

Referring to the Latin roots of the word "benediction"—to speak well—Pope Francis wrote that "we, too, are called to bless, to 'speak well' in God's name.

"Our world is gravely polluted by the way we speak and think badly of others, of society, of ourselves," he said. But complaining and denigrating others "corrupts and decays, whereas blessing restores life and gives the strength needed to begin anew."

The blessing of Jesus' birth, he wrote,

is all the more amazing because God sent the Savior into the world as a baby, who was formed in the flesh within the womb of Mary.

"The heart of the Lord began to beat within Mary; the God of life drew oxygen from her," the pope wrote. "Through Mary, we encounter God the way he wants us to: in tender love, in intimacy, in the flesh."

As 2021 begins, he said, people should make a commitment to finding time for others.

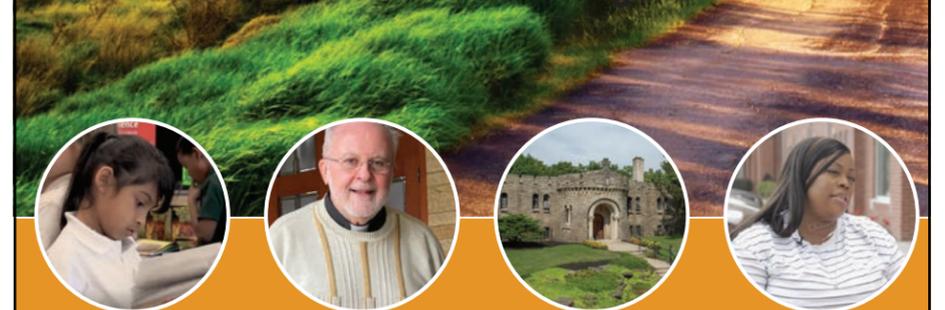
"Time is a treasure that all of us possess, yet we guard it jealously, since we want to use it only for ourselves," he wrote. "Let us ask for the grace to find time for God and for our neighbor—for those who are alone or suffering, for those who need someone to listen and show concern for them." †



Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state, swings a censer over a statue of the Christ Child as he celebrates Mass on the feast of Mary, Mother of God, and Word Peace Day on Jan. 1 in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)



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Editorial



Pope Francis wears a mask as he attends an encounter to pray for peace in Piazza del Campidoglio in Rome in this Oct. 20, 2020, file photo. In his 2021 World Day of Peace Message, the pope cited how the COVID-19 health crisis has impacted the world. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

The liberating power of unselfish love

In his 2021 World Day of Peace Message, Pope Francis describes what he calls a “culture of care” that is indispensable to achieving true peace.

The Holy Father says: “The culture of care thus calls for a common, supportive and inclusive commitment to protecting and promoting the dignity and good of all, a willingness to show care and compassion, to work for reconciliation and healing, and to advance mutual respect and acceptance. As such, it represents a privileged path to peace. ‘In many parts of the world, there is a need for paths of peace to heal open wounds. There is also a need for peacemakers, men and women prepared to work boldly and creatively to initiate processes of healing and renewed encounter’ ” (“*Fratelli Tutti: On Fraternity and Social Friendship*,” #225).

A culture of care—for human life and for all of God’s creation—is essential to overcoming the sins of violence, exploitation of the environment and indifference to the needs of our sisters and brothers here in Indiana and throughout the world.

“Caring” is, of course, another word for *caritas* (charity), the greatest of all the virtues. Unless we develop a culture of charity, of the love that comes from God’s own heart, we cannot be at peace with ourselves, with our neighbors or with the world we inhabit. If we really don’t care about anything or anyone, we have become trapped within a hardened shell of indifference and resentment.

What Pope Francis calls “a culture of care” is the network of relationships with God and with others that allows us to move beyond selfishness and sin in order to experience the liberating power of unselfish love.

According to Pope Francis, this culture of care is eminently practical. As he says in his World Day of Peace message: “The year 2020 was marked by the massive COVID-19 health crisis, which became a global phenomenon cutting across boundaries, aggravating deeply interrelated crises like those of the climate, food, the economy and migration, and causing great suffering and hardship. I think especially of all those who lost family members or loved ones, and all who lost their jobs. I think too of physicians and nurses, pharmacists, researchers, volunteers, chaplains and the personnel of hospitals and health care centers. They have made, and are continuing to make, great sacrifices to

be present to the sick, to alleviate their sufferings and to save their lives; indeed, many of them have died in the process.”

Equally practical, unfortunately, are the instances when we have failed to express the love of God in our dealings with one another. “Sad to say, alongside all these testimonies of love and solidarity, we have also seen a surge in various forms of nationalism, racism and xenophobia, and wars and conflicts that bring only death and destruction in their wake,” the Holy Father says. “These and other events that marked humanity’s path this past year have taught us how important it is to care for one another and for creation in our efforts to build a more fraternal society.”

Since our world first began to experience the devastating effects of the pandemic, Pope Francis has repeatedly reminded us that sins of indifference and neglect can be every bit as lethal as the coronavirus. Unless we use this crisis as an opportunity to care for one another and for our common home, the destruction caused by the pandemic will go far beyond its consequences for public health and the economy. It will be a worldwide spiritual malady whose effects will negatively influence our lives for generations.

The ultimate cure for this spiritual disease of callous neglect and indifference is charity. We find the greatest examples of this kind of caring in the ministry of Jesus.

As Pope Francis points out: “In his compassion, Christ drew near to the sick in body and spirit, and brought them healing; he pardoned sinners and gave them new life. Jesus is the Good Shepherd who cares for his sheep [Jn 10:11-18; Ez 34:1-31]. He is the Good Samaritan who stoops to help the injured man, binds his wounds and cares for him [Lk 10:30-37]. At the culmination of his mission, Jesus gave the ultimate proof of his care for us by offering himself on the cross to set us free from the slavery of sin and death. By the sacrificial gift of his life, he opened for us the path of love. To each of us he says, ‘Follow me; go and do likewise’ ” (Lk 10:37).

As we begin this new year, let’s resolve to imitate Jesus in our commitment to care for each other. Let’s be true peacemakers working to build cultures of care in our homes, our neighborhoods, our nation and our world.

—Daniel Conway

Be Our Guest/Shannen Dee Williams

An extraordinary nun and champion of Black Catholic history

2020 was a year of monumental losses for the nation’s community of women religious.



Among them was the passing of 88-year-old Oblate Sister of Providence Mary Reginald Gerdes.

On Sept. 7, Sister Mary Reginald, a former leader of Baltimore’s St. Frances Academy, the nation’s oldest

historically Black Catholic school, and longest-serving archivist of the Oblate Sisters of Providence, died of heart failure at her order’s motherhouse in Arbutus, Md.

In a racially and economically tumultuous year that saw a significant rise in calls for the Church to acknowledge and make reparations for its largely unreconciled practices of slavery and segregation, the loss of Sister Mary, and her expertise in African American Catholic history, was especially wrenching.

That is, of course, for those who knew Sister Mary Reginald’s story and all that she did to recover, preserve and disseminate the history of the Church’s Black faithful and their widely overlooked roles in the making of U.S. Catholicism.

Born Althea Mary Gerdes on Sept. 3, 1932, Sister Mary Reginald was a proud member of New Orleans’ longstanding Afro-Creole and Black Catholic communities. Her mother, Elmira (née Raymond) Gerdes was a homemaker, and her father Louis Gerdes owned a roofing company that served Black and white households and businesses in the Crescent City’s famed French Quarter.

As a member of one of New Orleans’ largest Black Catholic parishes, Corpus Christi, and a pupil of historically white Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament for elementary and high school, Sister Mary Reginald grew up in a vibrant community of faithfulness and was shielded from the most dehumanizing humiliations forced upon Black faithful in their racially segregated Church for much of her childhood.

Nonetheless, her journey, like most Black Catholics who came of age during the civil rights and Black power eras, would not be free from struggle against segregation and exclusion.

In 1952, Sister Mary Reginald opted to leave New Orleans and enter the historically Black Oblate Sisters of Providence in Baltimore. Three decades earlier, her aunt, Mother Martin (Cecile) Lalonier, in response to the exclusionary admissions policies of local white women’s religious communities and deep South segregation, had done the same.

Through the next 30 years, Sister Mary Reginald, who earned a bachelor’s degree from Marillac College and a master’s degree in education from Duke University, became a well-respected biology teacher, school leader and champion of Black freedom and educational excellence.

During the civil rights movement, she participated in local desegregation campaigns while ministering at her order’s Immaculate Conception School in Charleston, S.C.

In the 1970s, Sister Mary Reginald with the support of a diversity of sisters, Oblate Sister of Providence alumni and state officials played a leading role

in helping to reopen and secure the financial future of Baltimore’s St. Frances Academy, her order’s first school, which had closed in 1972 due to desegregation and lack of archdiocesan support.

After retiring from teaching and school administration in the 1980s, Sister Mary Reginald began her “second career” as her order’s full-time archivist, where she undertook a monumental campaign to organize the Oblate Sister of Providence’s invaluable repository of records, collect oral histories and research the life of her community’s foundress, Mother Mary Lange, in support of her canonization cause.

In 1988, Sister Mary Reginald published a seminal article in the *U.S. Catholic Historian*, documenting her order’s pioneering role in founding Black Catholic schools during slavery and in the immediate decades following emancipation when much of the former slaveholding Church abandoned the Black Catholic community.

Sister Mary Reginald also taught African American heritage at the Community College of Baltimore County, wrote a regular Black history column for *The Catholic Review*, newspaper of the Archdiocese of Baltimore, and joined the Maryland Humanities Speaker’s Bureau, offering dynamic lectures on the experiences of Black nuns in the U.S. slave society across the state.

While Sister Mary Reginald’s name may not be as recognizable as that of the late Benedictine Father Cyprian Davis of Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad, the Church’s most prolific historian of the Black Catholic experience, or the late Father Peter Hogan, the longtime administrator of the Josephite Archives in Baltimore, she was undoubtedly one of the Church’s most important archivists and chroniclers of the American Catholic experience in the 20th and early 21st centuries.

Like so many members of her congregation who pioneered the teaching of Black and Black Catholic history in the U.S. Church, Sister Mary Reginald understood that the history of Black nuns and the larger Black Catholic community fundamentally mattered. Moreover, her herculean efforts in organizing and safeguarding her congregation’s archive made it possible for scores of academic and independent researchers to unlock countless secrets about the American Catholic past documented in their records.

As we move into a new year confronted with the enduring challenges of racism buttressed by miseducation and misinformation, I cannot help but consider how much more difficult the fight ahead would be without the intellectual and archival activism of Sister Mary Reginald.

In the face of scholarly silence, erasure and outright lies about her order and the wider African American Catholic community, she chose to fight back with historical truth telling, education and unwavering grace.

And for that and so much more, the Church should be forever grateful.

(Shannen Dee Williams is the Albert LePage assistant professor of history at Villanova University. She is completing her first book, *Subversive Habits: Black Catholic Nuns in the Long African American Freedom Struggle*. Follow her on Twitter at @Blknunhistorian.) †

Letters Policy

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. The editors reserve the right to select the letters that will be

published and to edit letters from readers as necessary. 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

Jesus' baptism calls us to share in his humility, holiness

“One mightier than I is coming after me. I am not worthy to stoop and loosen the thongs of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit” (Mk 1:7-8).

It's appropriate that the Gospel reading for this Sunday, the Baptism of the Lord, features St. John the Baptist.

John was a key figure in our observance of Advent last month. He was the self-proclaimed “voice crying in the wilderness,” calling us all to repentance and rebirth through a baptism of water. His mission was to prepare the way for the long-awaited Messiah, and so it is significant that he is present as a witness to Jesus' entry into public life and ministry.

The Gospels paint a portrait of John the Baptist as an austere man, a prophet who spoke the truth to power and, as a consequence, was rewarded with a martyr's death.

John was keenly aware of who he was—and who he was not. “One mightier than I is coming after me,” John proclaimed. “I am not worthy to stoop and loosen the thongs of his sandals.”

St. Mark describes for us the miracle that John the Baptist witnessed:

“It happened in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized in the Jordan by John. On coming up out of the water he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit, like a dove, descending upon him. And a voice came from the heavens, ‘You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased’” (Mk 1:9-11).

But even after witnessing this great epiphany at the time he baptized Jesus in the Jordan River, John could only guess at the true identity and mission of his younger cousin. Like so many of us, John needed to be told that “the blind see, the lame walk, and the poor have the Good News preached to them” (Mt 11:5) before he was ready to believe.

What the baptism in the Jordan signifies is that Jesus' ministry is a work of the Triune God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Jesus never acts in isolation. His words and actions are always united with the will of his Father; they are always empowered by his Holy Spirit. Jesus' baptism inaugurates the Lord's public ministry.

From this moment on, he spends the rest of his short life on Earth preaching, healing, comforting and challenging all who have ears to hear.

The Baptism of the Lord celebrates Jesus' humility and his holiness. He didn't need to repent. He didn't need to be reborn spiritually. He chose to submit himself to this ritual cleansing as a sign that this kind of action is essential for those of us, his disciples, who want to follow him. Unless we surrender ourselves to the Father's will, and let ourselves be filled with the sanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit, we cannot successfully carry on the work of Jesus: proclaiming the Good News, healing others' wounds and bringing comfort and joy to a sad and weary world.

To follow Jesus as missionary disciples, we must be humble and holy as he was. We must be servants who lead with a quiet confidence in God's power to do things that would be impossible for us alone. St. John the Evangelist tells us that “John [the Baptist] saw Jesus approaching him, and said: ‘Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world’” (Jn 1:29).

This humble, holy man—the “Lamb of God”—can take away the sins of the world precisely because everything he says and does is in perfect conformity to God's will. Every miracle of healing and hope that he performs is made possible by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Baptism of the Lord is a feast that invites us to carry forward the joy we experienced during the Christmas season. Jesus shows us the way to be his humble, holy missionary disciples. He invites us to surrender ourselves to the Father's will, and to be filled with the grace of the Holy Spirit, so that in Jesus' name we can bring healing and hope to all our sisters and brothers here at home and throughout the world.

As we begin this new calendar year 2021, let's ask the Lamb of God to take away the sins of the world that we experienced so intensely last year. May we all find ways to surrender our egos and be filled with God's grace so that the healing and unity our world so desperately needs can happen in and through us.

Have a blessed New Year! †



Cristo, la piedra angular

El bautismo de Jesús nos llama a compartir su humildad, su santidad

“Tras mí viene uno que es más poderoso que yo, a quien no soy digno de desatar, inclinándome, la correa de sus sandalias. Yo os bauticé con agua, pero Él os bautizará con el Espíritu Santo” (Mc 1:7-8).

Resulta apropiado que la lectura del Evangelio de este domingo, el Bautismo del Señor, incluya a san Juan el Bautista, quien fue una figura clave durante el período de Adviento. Él fue la autoproclamada “voz que clama en el desierto,” llamándonos a todos al arrepentimiento y al renacimiento a través de un bautismo de agua. Su misión era preparar el camino para el tan esperado Mesías, por lo que es significativo que esté presente como testigo del ingreso de Jesús en la vida pública y en su ministerio.

Los Evangelios ilustran a Juan el Bautista como un hombre austero, un profeta que declaró la verdad ante el poder y, como consecuencia, fue recompensado con la muerte de un mártir.

Juan estaba muy consciente de lo que era y lo que no. “Tras mí viene uno que es más poderoso que yo—proclama Juan—a quien no soy digno de desatar, inclinándome, la correa de sus sandalias.”

San Marcos nos describe el milagro que presenció Juan el Bautista:

“Y sucedió en aquellos días que Jesús vino de Nazaret de Galilea, y fue bautizado por Juan en el Jordán. E inmediatamente, al salir del agua, vio que los cielos se abrían, y que el Espíritu como paloma descendía sobre Él; Entonces vino una voz del cielo, que decía: ‘Tú eres mi Hijo amado, en quien me complazco’” (Mc 1:9-11).

Pero incluso después de ser testigo de esta gran epifanía en el momento en que bautizó a Jesús en el río Jordán, Juan apenas podía adivinar la verdadera identidad y misión de su primo menor. Como muchos de nosotros, Juan necesitaba que le dijeran que “los ciegos ven, los cojos caminan y los pobres reciben la Buena Nueva” (Mt 11:5) para poder estar listo para creer.

Lo que significa el bautismo en el Jordán es que el ministerio de Jesús es una obra del Dios Trino, Padre, Hijo y Espíritu Santo. Jesús nunca actúa por sí solo; sus palabras y acciones están siempre unidas a la voluntad de su Padre; siempre están potenciadas por su Espíritu Santo. El bautismo de Jesús inaugura el ministerio público del Señor. A partir

de ese momento, pasa el resto de su corta vida en la Tierra predicando, curando, consolando y desafiando a todos los que tienen oídos para oír.

El Bautismo del Señor celebra la humildad y la santidad de Jesús. No tenía que arrepentirse ni renacer espiritualmente. Eligió someterse a este ritual de limpieza como una señal de que este tipo de acción es esencial para aquellos de nosotros, sus discípulos, que quieran seguirlo. A menos que nos entreguemos a la voluntad del Padre y nos dejemos llenar con la gracia santificante del Espíritu Santo, no podremos llevar a cabo con éxito el trabajo de Jesús: proclamar la Buena Nueva, curar las heridas de los demás y llevar consuelo y alegría a un mundo triste y cansado.

Para seguir a Jesús como discípulos misioneros, debemos ser humildes y santos como él; debemos ser sirvientes que lideren con una confianza serena en el poder de Dios para lograr cosas que nos resultarían imposibles de alcanzar por nosotros mismos. San Juan Evangelista nos dice que “[Juan el Bautista] vio a Jesús que venía hacia él, y dijo: He ahí el Cordero de Dios que quita el pecado del mundo” (Jn 1:29).

Este hombre humilde y santo, el “Cordero de Dios,” puede quitar los

pecados del mundo precisamente porque todo lo que dice y hace está en perfecta conformidad con la voluntad de Dios. Cada milagro de curación y esperanza que realiza es posible por el poder del Espíritu Santo.

El Bautismo del Señor es una fiesta que nos invita a llevar adelante la alegría que experimentamos en la época de la Navidad. Jesús nos muestra el camino para ser sus humildes y santos discípulos misioneros. Nos invita a entregarnos a la voluntad del Padre y a llenarnos de la gracia del Espíritu Santo, para que en el nombre de Jesús podamos traer sanación y esperanza a todas nuestras hermanas y hermanos aquí en casa y en todo el mundo.

Al comenzar este nuevo año calendario 2021, pidamos al Cordero de Dios que quite los pecados del mundo que experimentamos tan intensamente el año pasado. Que todos encontremos formas de entregar nuestros egos y llenarnos de la gracia de Dios para que la curación y la unidad que nuestro mundo necesita tan desesperadamente pueda ocurrir en y a través de nosotros.

¡Que tengan un bendecido año nuevo! †

Events Calendar

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

January 12

Monthly Virtual Taizé Prayer Service, 7-8 p.m., silent and spoken prayers, simple music, silence. Link: Taize.SistersofProvidence.org. Information: 812-535-2952, provctr@spsmw.org.

January 20

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

January 21

St. Elizabeth Seton Church, 10655 Haverstick Road, Carmel, Ind. (Lafayette Diocese), **Indiana March for Life Vigil**, 7-9 p.m., eucharistic adoration, praise and worship music, reconciliation, seating limited to 200 participants due to COVID-19 restrictions, mask-wearing and social distancing necessary. Registration required. vigilforlifecarmel2021.eventbrite.com.

St. Joseph Church, 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. **Monthly Mass**, 2 p.m. Information: 317-574-8898 or www.catholiccemeteries.cc.

January 22

St. John the Evangelist Church, 126 W. Georgia St., Indianapolis. **Indiana March for Life Mass with Archbishop Charles C. Thompson**, sponsored by archdiocesan Office of Human Life and Dignity, 10:30 a.m., mask-wearing and social distancing necessary, seating limited to 250 participants due to COVID-19 restrictions, registration required—must show paper or e-mailed ticket at church entrance. Registration: cutt.ly/IndyMarch4LifeMass. Livestream available at www.facebook.com/stjohnsindy and www.stjohnsindy.org/mass-feed.html.

Georgia St. between Capitol Ave. and Illinois St. near

St. John the Evangelist Church, Indianapolis. **Indiana March for Life and Rally**, noon following Mass, march will proceed to Monument Circle then south lawn of Capitol building, participation limited to 250 due to Marion County COVID restrictions, registration required. Registration and updated information: www.rtlindy.org.

St. John the Evangelist Church parking lot, 126 W. Georgia St., Indianapolis. **“Moving the Movement” Diaper Drive**, diapers for three Indianapolis pregnancy care organizations collected 10 a.m.-2 p.m., financial donations for diaper purchases accepted at cutt.ly/IndyMarch4LifeDiapers.

January 24

St. Matthew School, 4100 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **St. Matthew School Open House**, 1:30-3:30 p.m., for prospective families. Information: 317-251-3997, ext. 3913, or dsmock@saintmatt.org.

January 30

Vigo County Court House, 3rd St. and Wabash Ave.,

Terre Haute. **Solemn Observance of Roe v. Wade**, 2-3 p.m., peaceful prayer gathering, signs provided. Information, Tom McBroom, 812-841-0060 or mcbroom.tom@gmail.com.

February 3

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.

February 4

The Third Option virtual marriage crisis/enrichment class, “Building a Climate of Respect,” 7-8 p.m., Thursdays bi-weekly through May 20, viewing all sessions recommended but not required, no registration needed, free. Go to carmelthiroption.org/web then click on link at top of page. Information: carmelthiroption.org/web, or Keith Ingram, kingram@aicinvest.com or 317-324-8446.

February 5

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

February 6

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.

February 9

Monthly Virtual Taizé Prayer Service, 7-8 p.m., silent and spoken prayers, simple music, silence. Link: Taize.SistersofProvidence.org. Information: 812-535-2952, provctr@spsmw.org.

February 11

Sisters of Providence White Violet Center for Eco-Justice Virtual Workshop: Baking Sourdough Bread, via Zoom, 6:30-8 p.m., \$45 includes instruction materials and sourdough bread starter, register by Feb. 4. Registration and information: 812-535-2952, provctr@spsmw.org or www.spsmw.org/event.

The Third Option virtual marriage crisis/enrichment class, “Responsibility and Blame Game,” 7-8 p.m., Thursdays bi-weekly through May 20, viewing all sessions recommended but not required, no registration needed, free. Go to carmelthiroption.org/web then click on link at top of page. Information: carmelthiroption.org/web, or Keith Ingram, kingram@aicinvest.com or 317-324-8446. †

Retreats and Programs

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

January 18

Mount Saint Francis Center for Spirituality virtual “Mondays at the Mount,” 30-minute study by Conventual Franciscan Father Vince Petersen and Andrew Hennessey on upcoming Sunday Scripture readings, saints and liturgical seasons, posted on Monday mornings at m.facebook.com/pg/MountStFrancis.

Mount Saint Francis Center for Spirituality, 101 St. Anthony Dr., Mt. St. Francis. **Living the Gospel of Non-Violence: In the steps of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.**, in-person

or via Zoom, 7-8:30 p.m., Conventual Franciscan Father Vincent Peterson presenting, \$30. Information, registration: mountsaintfrancis.org/retreats or 812-923-8817.

January 12

Benedict Inn Retreat & 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 \$30 (must be scheduled in advance). Registration: cutt.ly/benedictinn_reg. Information: benedictinn@benedictinn.org, 317-788-7581.

January 20

A Good Book and a Glass of Wine virtual event via Zoom, offered by Providence Spirituality & Conference Center, 6:30-8 p.m., part one of four (Jan. 27, Feb. 3 and 10) on *Abounding in Kindness* by Elizabeth Johnson, \$25 for all four sessions, book not included, register by Jan. 16. Registration, information: 812-535-2952, provctr@spsmw.org, spsmw.org/event.

January 22

Oldenburg Franciscan Center, 22143 Main St., Oldenburg. **A Quiet Day of Renewal**,

self-guided retreat, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., \$20 includes private room, \$70 with spiritual direction. Information, registration: center@oldenburgosf.com, oldenburgfranciscancenter.org/programs.

January 23

Mindfulness Retreat, Oldenburg Franciscan Center via Zoom, 9:30-11:30 a.m., Franciscan Sister Olga Wittekind facilitating, \$25, \$40 with CEUs. Information, registration: center@oldenburgosf.com, oldenburgfranciscancenter.org/programs.

January 24

Virtual “Mystics & Prayer” Coffee Talk via Zoom: Caryll Houslander, offered by Oldenburg Franciscan Center, 10:45 a.m.-noon, Amy Kistner presenting. Information, registration: center@oldenburgosf.com, oldenburgfranciscancenter.org/programs.

January 25

Mount Saint Francis Center for Spirituality virtual “Mondays at the Mount,” 30-minute study by Conventual Franciscan Father Vince Petersen and Andrew Hennessey on

upcoming Sunday Scripture readings, saints and liturgical seasons, posted on Monday mornings at m.facebook.com/pg/MountStFrancis.

January 29-30

Benedict Inn Retreat & Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. **Soul Healing with Julian of Norwich**, 7 p.m. Fri. - 3:30 p.m. Sat., Carolyn Berghuis presenting, \$175 includes meals and room. Registration: www.benedictinn.org/retreats-programs. Information: benedictinn@benedictinn.org, 317-788-7581. †

Uniting in prayer



Father Rick Nagel, pastor of St. John the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis, leads about 250 Catholics in a eucharistic procession along a downtown street on Dec. 12 as part of a national movement called “Unite Our Nation.” The movement, led by a non-profit organization of the same name, calls for cities to host eucharistic processions accompanied by prayers for peace in our nation. The event was sponsored by Soldiers for Peace, a local Catholic organization inviting people to pray the rosary for peace throughout the streets of Indianapolis. Being held on Dec. 12, the procession included a statue of Our Lady of Guadalupe and children dancers dressed in festive traditional Mexican attire. (Submitted photo by Megan Fish)

Wedding

ANNIVERSARIES

60 Years



HAROLD AND ANNA MAE (MOORMAN) KRAMER, members of St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Decatur County, will celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary on Jan. 14.

The couple was married in St. Maurice Church in Decatur County on Jan. 14, 1961.

They have six children: Terri Boyd, Lori Garringer, Nancy Means, Suzanne Miller, Patrick and Tim Kramer.

The couple also has 13 grandchildren and four great-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.

'Salud!': Leaders say a better 2021 requires more than a toast

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Whether or not they raised a glass of bubbly as the new year made its debut, many people around the world were convinced that 2021 had to be better than 2020 was.

Pope Francis, leading the recitation of the *Angelus* on Jan. 3, had a simple-sounding idea for how to make that happen.

"We do not know what 2021 holds for us," he said, "but what each one of us, and all of us together, can do is to take care of each other and of creation, our common home."

The pope's hopes and best wishes for the new year were echoed, and expanded upon, by a variety of Catholic leaders reached by Catholic News Service (CNS).

"Maybe with the discovery of the vaccines, we can have some hope. But what gives me more confidence is that patients and people in general now know how to protect themselves and how to coexist with COVID," said one of Italy's front-line heroes, a religious from Congo who became a doctor to help her people and ended up working in Italy's hard-hit Bergamo region.

Disciples of the Redeemer Sister Angel Bipendu, a physician working in the public health service in Villa d'Alme, a small town near Bergamo, told CNS, "We are still battling COVID-19, there are still cases, but it is not like it was" last spring.

Until Dec. 13, she was focusing on COVID-19 patients, but she has since returned to her principal duties as the physician on call each night for the town of about 6,500 people. She still has not returned to the Canossian Sisters' convent where she was living prior to the pandemic. Many of the sisters there are



Disciples of the Redeemer Sister Angel Bipendu, a physician from Congo working in the public health service in Villa d'Alme, Italy, is seen in her office in this August 2020 photo. (CNS photo/courtesy Sister Angel Bipendu)

elderly, and Sister Angel will not take a chance on bringing the virus home to them.

After having seen so many people die and having had to comfort so many grieving families, Sister Angel said she has no patience for people who object to wearing a mask. "Having to wear a mask is not a violation of personal freedom. In fact, those who don't wear masks violate the rights of others because they can infect them. We all have an obligation to wear masks and observe the precautions."

The virus, she said, has or should have taught people some useful perspective. "We used to think we could dominate everything, but now we see that we were super-dominated by a pandemic."

Cardinal Michael Czerny, Vatican undersecretary for migrants and refugees, said that before the pandemic, wishing someone a happy New Year meant, "Here's wishing you more of the same good things" or good things "along with, if possible, a bit of improvement."

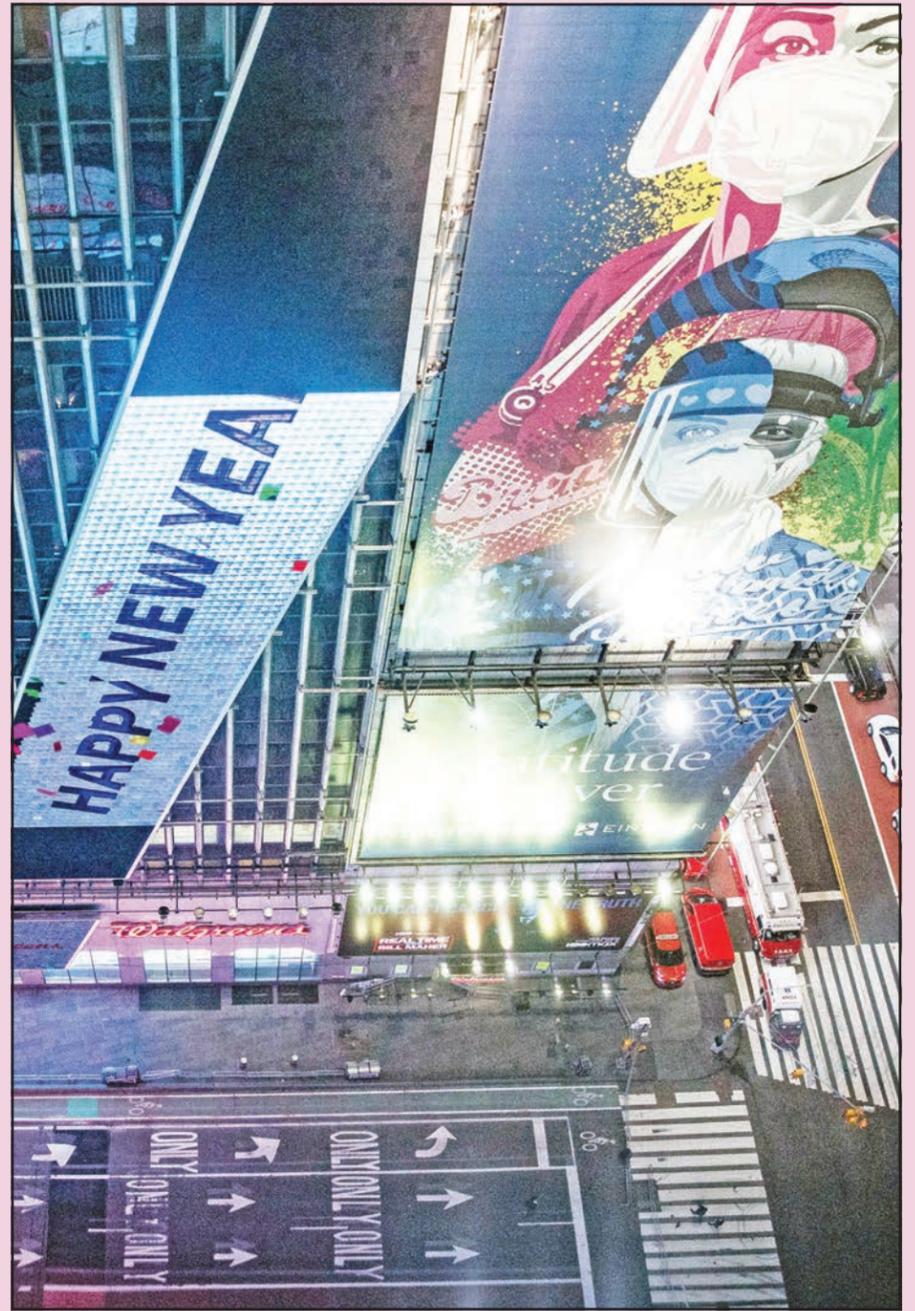
"But that doesn't work this time around," he said. "As Pope Francis often repeats, so eloquently, 'Anyone who thinks that the only lesson to be learned'—from the *annus horribilis* 2020—'is the need to improve what we were already doing ... is denying reality.'"

So, the cardinal said, "the first step to really meaning 'Happy New Year of 2021' is to stop fantasizing about the old normal. The vaccine is good and important, but it won't bring 2019 back."

"Instead, we have to wish each other an entirely new, a radically new, new year of 2021, going forward differently and not turning back," Cardinal Czerny said. Like Pope Francis indicated, "2021 will be a good year only if we start taking care of each other and of our common home. And make no mistake, in this perspective, 'each other' doesn't mean 'our own and forget the rest'; it means all our brothers and sisters, beginning with the neediest and most vulnerable, as well as future generations, too."

Ginevra Ossola, a sustainability specialist serving as the junior coordinator of the ecology task force of the Vatican's COVID-19 Commission, said her hopes for the new year also are "to avoid going 'back to normal,'" and instead "realize and face the mistakes we have made as human beings until today."

"My biggest hope for 2021 is to stop harming our home, Earth, and to work together to regenerate what we helped destroy," she said. "I wish for a regeneration from the social, environmental and economic point of view, starting with the equal and safe vaccination for all, with maximum transparency and without unjust privileges."



An empty street is seen in Times Square in New York City during the virtual New Year's Eve event Dec. 31, 2020, amid the coronavirus pandemic. (CNS photo/Jeenah Moon, Reuters)

Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia, president of the Pontifical Academy for Life, said he already saw signs of hope in many of the ways people reacted to the challenges of 2020.

"The solidarity that I saw in action in the months of the pandemic was for me a strong sign of the rediscovery of our community roots," he said. "I think that next year we need to strengthen brotherhood, community, human bonds without borders. This is the deep root of Christianity: the spirit of universal brotherhood, through which we can work for truth, for justice, for peace, for a respectful development of the environment and peoples."

Salesian Sister Alessandra Smerilli, an economist and member of the Vatican COVID-19 Commission, said that for

her, hope is "the virtue that pushes us to build the future, our tomorrow, without being paralyzed and waiting for something to change. It makes us operative today, because what will come depends on us, too."

"In Italy," she said, "we have a saying: 'Push your heart over the obstacle and go after it.' Hope makes us look beyond the obstacles."

Sister Alessandra said she hoped Catholics model their behavior on that of the first Christian communities, sharing all they have to ensure that no one goes without basic necessities. "I would like love for one's brother and sister to be the distinctive trait of Christians today as well, and for us to be exemplary in showing personal and collective responsibility." †

Vatican news agency says 20 'missionaries' died violently in 2020

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Attacked because of their faith, killed in a robbery, murdered in a general climate of violence or struck down by someone with obvious mental difficulties, the 20 missionaries who died violent deaths in 2020 were witnesses of the Gospel, said Fides, the Vatican's missionary news agency.

Presenting its annual list of missionaries killed during the year, the news agency of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples explained, "We use the term 'missionary' for all the baptized, aware that in virtue of their baptism, all the members of the people of God have become missionary disciples."

Fides' 2020 list includes eight priests, six laypeople—including two girls, 10- and 12-year-old sisters, who were members of the Holy Childhood Association in Nicaragua—three women religious, two seminarians and a religious brother.

From 2000 to 2020, Fides said, 535 pastoral workers, including five bishops, were killed.

When Fides first began publishing the list and still today it focuses primarily on foreign missionaries or pastoral workers in mission lands, but also "tries to record all the baptized engaged in the life of the Church who died in a violent way, not only 'in hatred of the faith,'" the

agency explained. While the word "martyr" literally means "witness," the agency does not use the term for the missionaries killed "in order not to enter into the question of the judgment that the Church might eventually deliver upon some of them, after careful consideration, for beatification or canonization."

The murdered missionaries, Fides said, shared the life of the people with whom they lived and, in too many cases, shared the same kind of violent death.

They include Michael Nnadi, 18, one of four seminarians kidnapped in Nigeria from a seminary in Kakau. During a two-week period in late January, three of the seminarians were released. Nnadi's body was found on Feb. 1.

Police arrested Mustapha Mohammed, alleged leader of a gang that specialized in stopping cars and robbing the drivers, Fides reported. Mohammed confessed to killing Nnadi because "he kept preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ" to members of the gang.

The girls on Fides' list, Lilliam Yunielka Gonzalez and Blanca Marlene Gonzalez, were murdered with machetes on Sept. 15 in Mulukuku, Nicaragua. Their mother had already told police that Lilliam, the older girl, had been harassed. The bishop, U.S.-born Bishop Pablo Schmitz Simon, said their deaths were part of a widespread

pattern of violence against women and girls, and he urged Catholics in the diocese to report to police "anything that puts their physical, psychological and spiritual integrity at risk."

While most of the people on the list were killed in places many people would think of as mission lands, Fides included 51-year-old Father Roberto Malgesini, a priest of the Diocese of Como, Italy, who was stabbed to death on Sept. 15 by a mentally ill homeless man he was helping.

Eight of the 20 victims on the Fides list were killed in Central or South America, seven were killed in Africa, three in Asia and two in Italy; in addition to Father Malgesini, Fides listed Camillian Brother Leonardo Grasso, 78, who was beaten and then died in a fire set at the community for recovering addicts he operated in Riposto.

Fides also noted that the numbers would be much, much higher if one considered the number of priests, religious and laypeople who died after contracting COVID-19 while serving others as doctors, nurses or chaplains. The Council of European Bishops' Conferences had reported in late September that at least 400 priests had died in Europe after contracting the virus. †

Nine Sisters of St. Joseph die in COVID-19 outbreak in New York

ALBANY, N.Y. (CNS)—As COVID-19 cases and deaths continue to rise in the United States, the pandemic has taken a terrible toll on the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet in Latham. In December, nine sisters there died of COVID-19 as nearly half of the residents became infected during an outbreak at the provincial house that has affected 47 sisters and 26 employees since October.

“Like all members of our global community, the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet have been struggling with the tragic consequences of COVID-19. We are mourning the loss of nine beloved sisters to this awful disease,” said St. Joseph Sister Joan Mary Hartigan, director of the order’s Albany Province.

In a statement to *The Evangelist*, diocesan newspaper of Albany, Sister Joan Mary said of the 47 sisters, most have recovered, but three sisters at the provincial house are being treated by their personal physicians for the virus. The nine sisters who died ranged in age from 84 to 98. Twenty-one employees who tested positive have recovered while five staff members are quarantining at home.

She said the home is following all guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the New York State Department of Health “to limit the spread of the virus to the greatest extent possible, including using appropriate personal protective equipment, quarantining sisters who are COVID-19 positive and prohibiting all public access.” She added: “We pray the increasing

number of cases across our country is temporary, and we mourn the loss not only of our nine sisters but also the loss of all life during this pandemic. We look forward to the vaccine and the end of this worldwide health crisis.”

The *Albany Times Union* first reported the sisters’ deaths on Dec. 30.

The order’s provincial house in Latham, seven miles from Albany, is the headquarters of the Albany Province and home to 114 sisters; many are retired and in need of long-term care.

Since Thanksgiving, cases have skyrocketed across the country and in upstate New York. And with the recently celebrated Christmas and New Year’s holidays, many fear the worst is yet to come in January. The positivity rate, based on a seven-day average, which has been as high as 12.4 percent in Albany County, currently is 10.5 percent and 10.8 percent in Schenectady County, according to the state’s COVID-19 dashboard.

“All of us at the Diocese of Albany are praying for the sisters during this challenging time,” said Mary DeTurris Poust, director of communications for the Diocese of Albany. “In addition to the loss of so many beloved sisters who served others so selflessly for decades, there is the added difficulty of not being able to celebrate their lives as a community due to COVID restrictions. As for so many people who have lost loved ones in recent months, the already difficult task of grieving is made even more difficult by isolation and lack of closure.”



The front entrance to the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet’s provincial house in Latham, N.Y., is seen on Jan. 4. (CNS photo/Emily Benson, The Evangelist)

The recent rise in infections and deaths is all the more unsettling when taking into account the stringent procedures the sisters have had in place since the pandemic started such as ending public access and visits to the provincial house, including from other sisters, and canceling events, meetings and programs.

The sisters’ deaths follow the COVID-19 deaths of eight sisters in mid-December in Milwaukee who had been living at the

facility Notre Dame of Elm Grove.

Much like with the Sisters of St. Joseph, the School Sisters of Notre Dame Central Pacific Province, who are based in St. Louis and care for the sisters in the Wisconsin health facility, learned of a positive case within the community around Thanksgiving. The first death reportedly happened on Dec. 9, but the deadliest day came on Dec. 14 when four sisters died. Many of these sisters had been teachers. †

Creighton University plans to divest from fossil fuels within a decade

OMAHA, Neb. (CNS)—Creighton University plans to divest from fossil fuels over the next decade and turn toward investments in renewable

energy and energy efficiency. School officials announced the plan on Dec. 31, saying it marks a commitment to its Jesuit Catholic mission while continuing

to manage investments to provide for the university’s operations, academic programs, scholarships and other needs.

The plan calls for withdrawing from ownership of public securities of fossil fuel corporations within five years and exiting from holdings in private fossil fuel investments within 10 years.

“This modified policy signifies our strong commitment to sustainable investing—and sustainability in general across the university—and according to our investment advisers, it can be accomplished without a negative impact on the strength and overall performance of our endowment, which greatly serves the mission of the institution,” Jesuit Father Daniel Hendrickson, Creighton’s president, said in a statement.

Michael McCarthy, chairman of the university’s board of trustees, acknowledged Father Daniel’s leadership in encouraging board members to review the school’s investment policies.

The university said it will continue to vote shareholder proxies during

corporate annual meetings in favor of carbon-reduction resolutions while pursuing opportunities to partner with organizations that engage companies on environmental issues, such as the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility and the Jesuit Committee on Investment Responsibility.

The move comes as school officials have incorporated sustainability and care for creation campus wide. Among the steps the university has taken is a comprehensive composting program and stronger adherence to Pope Francis’ 2015 encyclical on environmental responsibility, “*Laudato Si*”, on Care for Our Common Home.”

“We have intensified and sharpened our efforts and focus and allocation of resources around sustainability, including hiring a new director of sustainability,” Father Daniel said. “This a significant issue for our world, and I hope that in many ways Creighton can lead the discussion and identify creative solutions.” †

Marriage

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Be a part of our Spring Marriage Edition

February 26 issue of *The Criterion*

Couples who are planning to be married between Feb. 26 and July 9 in a marriage that is recognized as a valid sacramental or valid natural marriage, or couples who were wed between July 1, 2020, and Feb. 12, 2021, in such a recognized marriage and did not have their engagement announcement in *The Criterion* are invited to submit the information for the upcoming Feb. 26 Spring Marriage Edition. Announcements can be submitted using the form below, or electronically at www.archindy.org/engagements.

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

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

Deadline
All announcements and photos must be received by 10 a.m. on Friday, Feb. 12. (No announcements or photos will be accepted after this date.)

— Use this form to furnish information —

Clip and mail to: BRIDES, *The Criterion*, ATTN: Ann Lewis, 1400 N. Meridian Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367
Deadline with photos: Friday, Feb. 12 at 10 a.m.
Please print or type:

Name of Bride (first, middle, last)	Daytime Phone
Mailing Address	City State Zip Code
Name of Bride’s Parents (first, last)	
City	State
Name of Bridegroom (first, middle, last)	
Name of Bridegroom’s Parents (first, last)	
City	State
Wedding Date	Church City State

Photo Enclosed
 Return photo
 No Picture

Signature of person furnishing information Relationship Daytime Phone

ANGELUS

continued from page 1

only to satisfy our own pleasure.”

Pope Francis said he had read in a newspaper about a country, “I forget which,” where people were leaving in private planes to “flee lockdown and enjoy the holidays.

“But those people, good people, did they not think about those who stayed at home, about the economic problems faced by many people who have been laid low by the lockdown or about the sick?” he asked. “They thought only about taking a holiday for their own pleasure. This pained me greatly.”

In his main talk, the pope reflected on the prologue of the Gospel of St. John, in which the evangelist says that “the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us” (Jn 1:14).

Calling Christ “the Word,” the pope explained, “means that from the beginning, God wants to communicate with us, he wants to talk to us.

“The only-begotten Son of the Father wants to tell us about the beauty of being children of God,” the pope said. “He is ‘the

true light’ and wants to remove the darkness of evil from us. He is ‘the life,’ who knows our lives and wants to tell us that he has always loved them. He loves us all.”

However, he continued, St. John’s specific use of the word “flesh” instead of a more “elegant” expression to define Christ’s humanity is meant to highlight “our human condition in all its weakness, in all its frailty.

“He tells us that God became fragile so he could touch our fragility up close,” the pope said. “So, from the moment that the Lord became flesh, nothing about our life is extraneous to him. There is nothing that he scorns; we can share everything with him, everything.”

Moreover, the pope said that Christ didn’t “put our humanity on like a garment that can be put on and taken off”; rather he “united himself forever to our humanity,” suffered, died, rose from the dead and ascended into heaven, body and soul.

As the Christmas season continued, Pope Francis encouraged Catholics to “pause in silence before the creche to savor the tenderness of God who came close [to us], who became flesh. And without fear, let’s invite him among us, into our homes, into our families.” †

'Christ is at the center' as St. Margaret Mary Parish marks centennial

By Natalie Hoefler

It was midnight on Christmas Eve, 1920. In the living room of a two-story house on the southern outskirts of Terre Haute, Harry Patrick Brentlinger joined with others for a special celebration. His son, Harry Patrick, Jr., was playing a special role in the event.

It was not a play or a Christmas program. Rather, it was the first Mass celebrated by the newly formed St. Margaret Mary Parish, and the young boy served at the altar.

"The church then was originally a farmhouse, I'm told," said lifetime parishioner Ted Brentlinger, 83. He is the son of Harry Patrick, Jr., and grandson of Harry Patrick, Sr., one of the founding members of the parish.

Brentlinger was unable to attend the parish's 100th anniversary Mass at 4 p.m. on Christmas Eve, 2020. While the congregation was limited to 150 people due to restrictions surrounding the coronavirus pandemic, it was still likely a larger group than the one gathered in the farmhouse living room 100 years prior.

Much has changed in the century between the two Masses. From a group of 115 families, St. Margaret Mary Parish has become what current pastor Father Daniel Bedel describes as "very welcoming, multi-cultural and very ecumenical, especially in reaching out to the broader community."

It all began with the desire of a bishop and the canonization of a new saint.

'Mass is important, you need to be here'

Terre Haute was growing in the early 1900s. By 1919, the city already had four parishes in its central and northern areas.

Bishop Joseph Chartrand of what was then the Diocese of Indianapolis saw a need to form a new parish for Catholics on the south side of Terre Haute. A farm was purchased and a pastor appointed in 1920. The farmhouse would serve as the parish's church until a new worship space was constructed.

As for the parish's name, the bishop looked to the Church's most recent saint of the time: St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, promoter of devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, who was canonized on May 13, 1920.

A newly-built church was consecrated in September 1921—but it was more than a place for worship.

"There was a meeting hall in the basement, the first floor was the church, and on the upper floor was the school," Brentlinger said.

Members of the nearby Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods taught at the school. Brentlinger recalled parishioners driving the sisters between the school and the motherhouse until 1941, when successful Terre Haute businessman and Catholic Tony Hulman bought a home for the sisters across from the parish campus.

The four-room school included grades one through eight, with two grades per room.

"The lower grade got to listen to the teacher teach the upper grade, so the next year was a whiz," Brentlinger said with a chuckle.

He recalled going to Mass on Sundays and sitting in the front pews reserved for the school children.

"You sat with your grade, and nuns took attendance to make sure every kid went to Sunday Mass," he said. "They would make arrangements for those who had trouble getting to church, and emphasize to them that Mass is important, and you need to be here."

When he left to join the army in the 1950s, Mass was still held on the first floor of the church/school building.



This undated photo shows the farmhouse that served as the site of the first Mass for the newly formed St. Margaret Mary Parish in Terre Haute on Dec. 24, 1920. (Photo courtesy of archdiocesan Archives)

By the time he returned to Terre Haute, said Brentlinger, "there was a whole new church."

'The church is historical'

By the mid-1950s, the school was bursting at the seams. Space from the church sanctuary was even carved out to make more room.

A fundraising campaign was held. In 1958, the church/school building was renovated to be used entirely as a school, and a new church was built. It was designed by parishioner Mark Yeager of Yeager Architects.

Around that time, the central southern Indiana city of Columbus was gaining international attention for its avant-garde, modernistic architecture.

"St. Margaret Mary Church was [Yeager's] first stab at a building like in Columbus," said Jerry Moorman, pastoral associate of the parish since 1998. "It's made with Indiana limestone and sandstone from St. Meinrad."

"Some don't like it, but actually, the church is historical," he said, noting that the structure "has been praised by Indiana Landmarks," an organization dedicated to preserving architecturally-significant buildings.

Brentlinger appreciated the structure because "it felt like a church a little more than the combination school/meeting hall/church," he said.

He admitted the new structure "was a difficulty for some people, because they had lived a large chunk of their life going to the old church. ... Some people found it hard to make the transition."

It wasn't long after the church was dedicated that the Second Vatican Council brought changes to the Mass, and consequently to church interiors.

"The pews and sanctuary were re-oriented to reflect some of Vatican II's edicts," and the former servers' sacristy was converted into an adoration chapel, recalled Brentlinger. "It changed the overall look of the church."

The 1958 structure is where members of St. Margaret Mary still worship today.

The church's construction and renovation were not the last major changes to the parish. In the last 20 years, said Brentlinger, "The complexion of the parish has changed to one that is more diverse."

'A rich experience'

Maryanne Dagat arrived in Terre Haute from the Philippines in 2003. An occupational therapist, she was one of many Filipinos working in the medical field to move to the area—and to become a member of St. Margaret Mary Parish.

The wave began with one Filipino doctor "who discovered a great need [for medical workers] here," said Dagat, 43. "He invited a friend of his from medical school [in the Philippines] to come work in Terre Haute."

As more Filipinos doctors and therapists came, they invited more of their friends and family in the health care industry to work in Terre Haute.

Likewise, said Dagat, "When I came just after I graduated, I brought the resúmes of two of my friends."

While the members are Anglo like the parish's founders, Moorman estimates that about 20% of parishioners are Filipino, plus a large number of Latinos.

The parish celebrates the cultural feasts and faith traditions of its ethnic members, such as Our Lady of Guadalupe on Dec. 12 and a Filipino Advent novena called Simbang Gabi.

Such variety has not resulted in three separate, ethnic-based communities in the parish.

"Even with the diversity, we are a family," said Dagat. "It's helped me grow spiritually, and I'm sure others feel the same way."

Brentlinger agrees.

"It feels like one parish," he said. "We are very well integrated, and I really like having other ethnic groups as a part of our parish. It reminds you that the Church is global. For me and many others, it's given a rich experience."

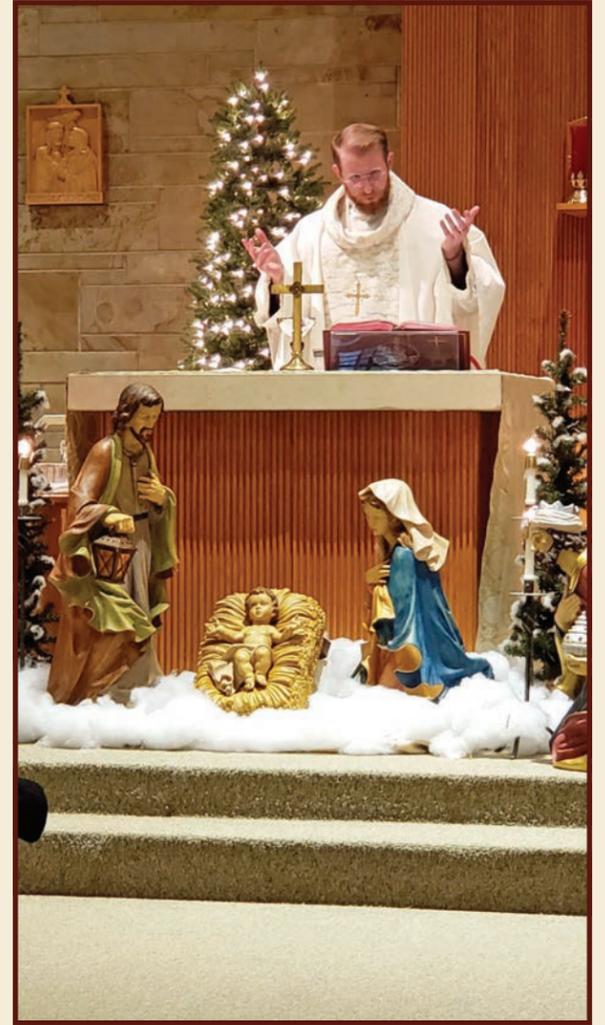
'A strong presence'

Another notable aspect of St. Margaret Mary Parish in addition to its diversity is its outreach, said Moorman.

"When I hear from some of the elderly parishioners about the ups and downs during the Great Depression and World War II, it's obvious the Church was a strong presence on the south side of Terre Haute," he noted.

He recalled when the parish "opened its doors to [death penalty] protesters and housed them" during the execution of Timothy McVeigh at the Federal Correctional Complex in Terre Haute in 2001, the first federal execution since 1963.

Serving the local and broader community is still important to the parish, said Father Bedel.



Father Daniel Bedel, pastor of St. Margaret Mary Parish in Terre Haute, celebrates Mass in the church on Jan. 3. (Submitted photo)

"The poverty level in our area is quite high," said the priest, who also serves as pastor of St. Patrick Parish in Terre Haute. "Every weekend, we collect food to donate to the Salvation Army Food Pantry. We have a brown bag program. We Christmas carol in nearby neighborhoods," although not this year because of the pandemic, he noted.

Most recently, the parish held a pajama and blanket drive for a local school, and a toy drive is underway for children in Louisiana affected by hurricanes.

"And that just scratches the surface," Father Bedel added.

Dagat appreciates the parish's outreach efforts.

"Our goal is to become saints, so we want to be a great example in the neighborhood," she said. "We hope a lot of our younger generation will see that, the vibrancy, peace and joy the [parish] community gives, and that they want that for themselves when they grow up."

'Christ is at the center'

The coronavirus pandemic curtailed many events planned in 2020 to celebrate the parish's 100th anniversary. A pilgrimage to the birthplace of St. Margaret Mary in France was canceled. So was a special Mass with Archbishop Charles C. Thompson, which has been rescheduled for this coming October.

That Mass, which will take place near the Oct. 16 feast of the parish's patron saint, will be the culminating event for a new year of celebrating the faith community's founding, starting with the 2020 Christmas Eve Mass.

"It's like when a baby is born—you celebrate their first birthday," Father Bedel explained.

There were a few ways in which the parish was able to honor its centennial in 2020. Ornaments and other memorabilia were sold, and Dagat and others on the parish's Centennial Committee interviewed members of the parish to create a DVD about the faith community's past and present.

But Father Bedel is especially pleased by a change made in the sanctuary during the parish's 100th year.

"We moved the tabernacle back into central church," he said. "It was inside a chapel that served its purpose. But in the course of church renovations, an old confessional next to the chapel was made into a handicap bathroom. It just wasn't the best place for the tabernacle."

"I'm so excited we got to [move the tabernacle] for the 100th anniversary," he said. "It shows that in our 100th year, Christ is at the center of our lives, our parish, all our outreach—and our future." †



Fr. Daniel Bedel

With land mines gone, Mass to be celebrated at West Bank baptismal site

QASR AL-YAHUD, West Bank (CNS)—For the first time in 54 years, a Mass will be celebrated on Jan. 10, the feast of the Baptism of the Lord, at St. John the Baptist Chapel on the banks of the Jordan River.

“It will be a very special day,” said Franciscan Father Ibrahim Faltas, chancellor of the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land, which cares for holy sites there. “After all this time, we have come back. This gives us hope for peace. For us, this is a sign not to lose hope, not to lose hope for peace.”

The almost 100-year-old church and monastery were vacated in 1967 at the outbreak of war between Israel and some of its Arab neighbors, including Jordan, just across the Jordan River. After Israel took control of the area from Jordan, the area was laid out with land mines by both the Israeli army and Palestinian gunmen who battled in the area in the 1960s and 1970s. It became a fenced military zone, off limits to pilgrims.

Today, the round, second-floor open-air chapel, with its two stairways curving around either side, is still riddled with bullet holes, as are the rooms in the small monastery underneath.

Father Ibrahim said the Franciscans first starting coming to this place in 1641 and began purchasing land in the area in early 1920 to build churches. In 1933, they built a chapel, which is now located on the edge of the river, and in 1935 built a larger St. John the Baptist Church, which was destroyed in an earthquake in 1956. The existing chapel was built in its place.

Clearing the area of land mines and making it possible for pilgrims to return has been a long process, with organized groups of pilgrims first allowed to come to the banks of the river in 1994 on the Epiphany and Easter holidays following the signing of the peace treaty with Jordan. A baptismal site was opened on the water’s edge in 2011 for all visitors, who had to walk down a dirt road to the river, with fences and warning signs on either side admonishing them not to veer off the path because of land mines.

Jordan completed demining its eastern bank of the river by 1999. There, Bethany Beyond the Jordan is recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, “believed to be the location where Jesus of Nazareth was baptized by John the Baptist.”

On the West Bank, the St. John the Baptist Chapel, along with chapels and monasteries belonging to other

Christian churches, remained off limits behind the fences, in the middle of the mine fields. The Israeli Ministry of Tourism administered the accessible area near the river as a national park.

In 2016, Israel began clearing the area with the help of the British HALO Trust, and finally in October the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land and Christian churches were able to take possession of their properties.

The Qasr Al-Yahud site is also revered by Jews as the crossing place along the Jordan River of the biblical Israelites into the Promised Land after having wandered the desert for 40 years.

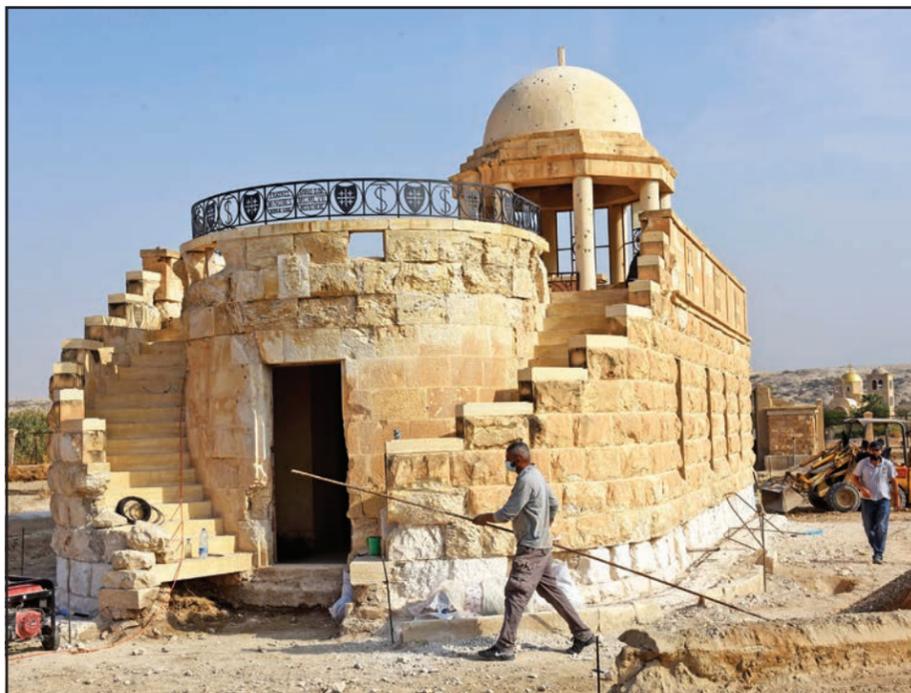
Leonardo DiMarco, a civil engineer and the director of the technical office of the Custody, said they are planning for 100 people to be present at the outdoor chapel for the Jan. 10 Mass, with socially distanced groupings set up and a mobile baptismal font and altar at the top of the chapel.

Pointing out the layout of the area on maps, DiMarco noted that the chapel is located in the middle of two paths that form a cross and lead to the river. He said the Franciscans were in discussions with the Israeli army to retain the original design.

There are plans to rehabilitate the compound’s walled garden, which through the years has been overtaken by the desert sands, and to build a number of smaller chapels inside the garden to allow for private group and solitary contemplation and prayers for pilgrims, said DiMarco.

“The idea is that pilgrims can come here in preparation to go down to the river,” he said.

DiMarco said he expects the restoration work to be



A Palestinian works on the Franciscan Chapel of St. John the Baptist at Qasr al-Yahud, on the West Bank of the Jordan River on Dec. 22, 2020. The bullet-marked chapel was returned to the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land after being closed by the Israelis in 1967 as a closed military zone with mine fields. (CNS photo/Debbie Hill)

completed by next year and, once travel is permitted again, the site will be open for pilgrimages.

“It is something special, the way the Custody found the place is exactly in the same condition it was after so many years. Everything was left the same, the furniture, small objects, were found in the same place they were left in 1967 when the friars had to leave in a hurry,” he said. He said the bullet holes would not be repaired, but would be kept as a reminder of the war.

“This is the past history of the place, you can’t cancel those things. The door is full of bullet holes, the inside wooden doors. This will be part of the experience of the pilgrims. The place itself is telling something important,” said DiMarco. “It is important; this is a religious place, but not only. It is also a place which was in the middle of a fight.” †

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Catholic social teaching is rooted in affirming the dignity of all people

By Mike Nelson

In recent centuries, dozens (if not hundreds) of Church documents address Catholic social teaching. But the essence of this teaching can be boiled down to a mere 10 words, written in the first century by St. John:

“Let us love one another, because love is of God” (1 Jn 4:7).

That lone sentence offers a clear framework for how we, as followers of Christ, are called to treat one another. To embrace Catholic social teaching mandates that we, as children of God, respect the God-given dignity inherent in everyone.

And it begins with love.

“Only love is capable of radically transforming the relationships that men maintain among themselves,” states the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, issued in 2004 by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. “This is the perspective that allows every person of goodwill to perceive the broad horizons of justice and human development in truth and goodness” (#4).

St. John Paul II made that point near the beginning of his 1995 encyclical, “*Evangelium Vitae*” (“The Gospel of Life”).

“Every individual, precisely by reason of the mystery of the Word of God who was made flesh ... is entrusted to the maternal care of the Church,” said the pope. “Therefore every threat to human dignity and life must necessarily be felt in the Church’s very heart; it cannot but affect her at the core of her faith in the redemptive incarnation of the Son of God, and engage her in her mission of proclaiming the Gospel of life in all the world and to every creature” (#3).

The life and dignity of the human person is, in fact, the first of seven themes of Catholic social teaching, as articulated by the U.S. bishops’ Office of Justice, Peace and Human Development.

“The Catholic Church proclaims that human life is sacred and that the dignity of the human person is the foundation of



Men eat while others wait in line at Dolores Mission Church in Los Angeles. The Jesuit-run parish’s Guadalupe Homeless Project provides housing and social services to homeless men and women. The most striking and convincing way to teach social justice has less to do with reading about it, and much more to do with actually practicing it. (CNS photo/David Maung)

a moral vision for society,” the bishops state. “This belief is the foundation of all the principles of our social teaching.”

The bishops note that in today’s world and society, human life is “under direct attack” from abortion and euthanasia, while its value “is being threatened” by cloning, embryonic stem-cell research and use of the death penalty.

And “the intentional targeting of civilians in war or terrorist attacks is always wrong,” say the bishops. Catholic teaching “calls on us to work to avoid war. Nations must protect the right to life by finding increasingly effective ways

to prevent conflicts and resolve them by peaceful means.”

“We believe,” state the bishops, “that every person is precious, that people are more important than things, and that the measure of every institution is whether it threatens or enhances the life and dignity of the human person.”

Pope Francis makes that very point in his encyclical letter “*Laudato Si*”, *On Care for Our Common Home*:

“When we fail to acknowledge as part of reality the worth of a poor person, a human embryo, a person with disabilities—to offer just a few

examples—it becomes difficult to hear the cry of nature itself,” says the pope. “Everything is connected” (#117).

Of course, the most striking and convincing way to teach social justice has less to do with reading about it and much more to do with actually practicing it. Jesus taught and preached endlessly about love and care for one’s neighbor, but what caught the eye of his disciples the most was his equally endless example on how to instill and spread God’s love in the world.

Perhaps no example was more revealing than his encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well (Jn 4:4-42). It is a profound lesson to love as Jesus loves, unconditionally.

For it did not matter to Jesus that the woman he encountered was from a people scorned by the Jews of that time or that she had five husbands, or that she was a woman or that he was speaking to her in public (actions that would, in the social mores of the time, be considered strikes one, two, three and four).

What mattered was that this woman was a creation of God, with God-given dignity, and therefore worthy of love and respect. It also mattered—to Jesus, certainly—that she was a woman with a heart ready for conversion to a new way of life.

Jesus’ treating the woman at the well with respect—and, just as important, his refusal to assume that her race, gender or occupation defined who she was—is a significant lesson for us all, especially in a time when we all too quickly make assumptions, generalizations and exaggerations about one another.

To do so is to deny one another’s dignity and status as a child of the God who gives us life and the capacity to love—and to be loved. Only by recognizing that each of us has value can we proclaim justice for all.



A doctor checks a malnourished child during an event organized by the Catholic aid agency Caritas at a church in Barquisimeto, Venezuela, on Aug. 10, 2019. “The Catholic Church proclaims that human life is sacred and that the dignity of the human person is the foundation of a moral vision for society,” the U.S. bishops state. (CNS photo/Carlos Garcia Rawlins, Reuters)

(Catholic journalist Mike Nelson writes from Southern California.) †

The Theology of Technology/Brett Robinson

Those who have faith have eyes to see the truth

It is ancient in internet terms, but do you remember the debate over “the dress”? An image of a dress went viral on Facebook back in 2015 and sparked an online debate about whether the dress was blue and black, or white and gold.



The Washington Post called it the “drama that divided the planet.” It turns out the competing views

over the color of the dress came down to poor lighting and the tricks our eyes can play on us, but the story belies a deeper point. If the internet can play tricks on our senses, what is it doing to the interior senses like judgment?

Before the blue dress, there was *The Green Book*, a grammar textbook that C.S. Lewis describes in his famous philosophical book, *The Abolition of Man*. *The Green Book* relates the story of two tourists looking at a waterfall. One calls it “sublime” and the other calls it “pretty.”

The authors of the textbook explain this difference away by suggesting that the words are just expressions of the tourists’ feelings. That is to say, neither of the tourists is saying anything important about the waterfall, they are just conveying their feelings.

Lewis wonders if a person can really

have sublime feelings. He explains that being in the presence of the sublime should actually lead to humble feelings. According to *The Green Book*, language does not give us access to reality, it only captures our feelings. Lewis disagrees.

A proper grammar is one that links language to creation, even when our experience of creation reaches beyond the material world and touches something sublime and even transcendent.

We are experiencing a new grammar in the digital age. The problem is no longer just poorly written textbooks, but the daily experience of filtering much of our reality through the giant textbook of the internet.

When one person online says a dress is blue and another says it’s white, we have to allow for the fact that both of them may be right. In the end, they are arguing over a digital projection of the dress and projecting their own biases onto it.

As a result, communication breaks down. Our ability to have a collective experience of anything, a sublime waterfall or a beautiful dress, is diminished when viewed through our digital window to the world.

The problem with this type of education is not that it actively promotes relativism—that there is no objective truth and that everyone is entitled to their own truth—but that it does so in the mode of a silly meme about a dress.

While millions of internet users have a

frivolous argument about the “real” color of the dress, the lingering effect of the whole affair is to plant the assumption that the world is illusory and that seeing is no longer believing.

The media we consume online are illusory, a stream of dreamlike images that amuse and bewitch us. Without leaving one’s desk or armchair, the fever dream of catastrophic news, hilarious memes and disembodied podcast voices leaves the viewer both stimulated and exhausted.

It’s easy to compare to Plato’s *Allegory of the Cave* in which chained prisoners believe that the dancing shadows on the wall in front of them are the fullness of reality because they are unable to see the real people and objects behind them who are casting the shadows.

As we move beyond our celebration of Christmas, it is worth remembering the shepherds’ expressions of awe and joy at Christ’s birth. Were they just expressing subjective feelings, or were they having a collective experience of humility and gratitude in the presence of the Word made flesh?

That debate, like the one over the dress, is a matter of perception. Those who have faith have eyes to see the truth.

(Brett Robinson is director of communications and Catholic media studies at the University of Notre Dame McGrath Institute for Church Life.) †

For the Journey/

Effie Caldarola

How generous are we?

Someone I know is a waiter. Like restaurants across the U.S. during the COVID-19 pandemic, his establishment has been open, closed, carry-out only, 50% capacity—in other words, his income has bounced like a yo-yo.



The other evening, with renewed closure rules going into effect, he served his last table. He chatted with these customers, and when

they left, he discovered they had left a \$200 tip—more than the cost of their meal.

This comes at a time of great need.

When I hear stories like this, it challenges my own generosity.

Am I a generous and spontaneous giver? Or do I parse out my treasure, my talents, my time, as if I’m budgeting for the electric bill? Do I overthink my giving? Or do I give freely and from my essence?

During Advent and Christmas, I reflected on the Gospel of John: “The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it” (Jn 1:5).

I have a Christmas candle I pull out every year. I can’t even remember where I got it. It’s sparkly silver. It’s very pretty. But as I prayed one morning, the thought came to me: Why have I never lit this candle? Isn’t a candle meant to be burned? Aren’t there more candles out there, which could replace this one when it’s used up? What am I waiting for? Why am I hoarding it?

The candle became a metaphor, of course, for my own generosity and my attitude toward giving, toward using what I have as God intends. What am I waiting for? So I lit the candle and now it burns while I pray, reminding me that light is meant to be shared generously.

There’s the ancient story from the desert fathers about the monk who came to “Abba Joseph” for advice, much like the rich young man who came to Jesus to ask whether he was doing what was necessary for salvation.

The monk told Abba the ways he was being a good person—prayer, fasting, keeping the rules—what more should he do?

The older monk reached his hands up to heaven and his fingers became like 10 lamps of fire, and he said, “Why not become fire?”

Jesus told the rich man something that at first sounds like different advice. Jesus told him to give up all his possessions and then “follow me” (Mt 19:21). Sometimes, when we read this, we decide it can’t apply to us. Most of us can’t give up everything. We need to save for retirement. We need to provide for our families. So Jesus isn’t talking to me, is he?

It has taken me a while to realize the point of the story isn’t about possessions. The point is that Jesus speaks to each of us individually about his will for us, but he always includes the call—we are always asked to follow him, and if we do, we become fire.

If we have the means, this year provides us the opportunity, the gift, of learning to stretch the warm fire of our generosity. Many parishes are experiencing a huge downturn in donations due to smaller crowds and closures. Food banks see lines snake mercilessly around city blocks. People are being evicted in unprecedented numbers. Our neighbors may be lonely or depressed and need a phone call.

My deacon friend was asked, “How much should I give?” He replied, “Give more.”

Don’t overthink it. We’re called to be lavishly, spontaneously, sacrificially generous with our time and resources.

When I light my candle, the flame reminds me of this.

(Effie Caldarola writes for Catholic News Service.) †

It’s All Good/Patti Lamb

Embrace a childlike faith, modeled by Mary, in 2021

A message conveyed by Father Rob Hausladen during his homily on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception has been lingering in my brain, especially as we begin a new calendar year.



My takeaway from our pastor at St. Susanna Parish in Plainfield that day was clear and concise. *Mary genuinely trusted*. When the angel departed from her, he didn’t leave her with a playbook outlining the next 30 plus years of her life. Even as the mother of Jesus, she didn’t receive inside information as to how everything would unfold for the glory of God and the salvation of humankind.

When she was about to give birth, there was no room at the inn, so she birthed a king in a manger in the company of livestock. As if that wasn’t enough of a surprise, then she and Joseph trusted an angel, instructing them to flee to Egypt. We know that, several decades later, Mary watched her son be beaten, mocked and left to die on a cross with nail marks through his flesh.

We recently celebrated the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, on the first day of January, and I can’t think of a better way to embrace a new year, reminded to trust like Mary.

That same day, I opened a 2021 calendar and began to write in birthdays, appointments and other important events in the year to come. As much as I’m ready to close the books on 2020, the uncertainty of what’s to come left me uneasy, and I felt a wave of anxiety.

Unexpected events occurred in 2020 for all of us, and while it’s nice to start a new chapter with 2021, I think we’re all a bit weary from these last 12 months.

My thoughts circle back to Father Rob’s message about how Mary got by—with pure faith in God and trust in his will, even when she didn’t know what the next turn of events would bring.

Mary’s trust is what I pray to model and cling to in the New Year. I know I will fail and be startled by curve balls, but my hope is to find the spiritual strength to echo Mary’s faith when she said, “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word” (Lk 1:38).

I’m learning that’s the kind of faith to which we’re ultimately called. It’s about believing when we don’t understand, as my Aunt Dolores used to say. Trust over circumstances.

An entry from the devotional, *God Calling*, says: “It is not passionate appeal that gains the Divine Ear, so much as the quiet placing of the difficulty and worry in the Divine Hands. So trust and be no more afraid than a child would be, who places its tangled skein of wool in the hands of a loving mother, and runs out to play, pleasing the mother more by its unquestioning confidence than if it went down on its knees and implored her help, which would pain her the rather, as it would imply she was not eager to help when the help was needed.”

Last week, my brother and sister-in-law loaded their three grandkids into their van after Mass. As each was busy buckling a child into a car seat, that left Cooper, a toddler, waiting for his turn. He stood there, bawling, with his arms raised up to my brother, as if to say, “Take care of me, Papa.”

Here’s to embracing childlike faith, modeled best by our Blessed Mother Mary, in 2021.

(Patti Lamb, a member of St. Susanna Parish in Plainfield, is a regular columnist for The Criterion.) †

The Human Side/Fr. Eugene Hemrick

When looking ahead, remember virtue of positive expectations

Are you fearful about the future? If so, read the first chapters of Luke’s Gospel.

They start with an angel announcing Zechariah’s wife Elizabeth will bear a son who will be great before the Lord.



Next, the angel Gabriel informs Mary she will conceive and bear Jesus.

Moving on, Simeon, a devout man, prophesizes, “Behold, this child is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel” (Lk 2:34). Finally, Anna, a prophetess, gives “thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were awaiting the redemption of Jerusalem” (Lk 2:38).

One way to interpret these events is

to see them as one expectation following another: an angel tells Zechariah to expect a son; Mary is expected to bear Jesus; Simeon speaks of Jesus as an expectation for the fall and rise of many in Israel; and Anna prophesies Christ as the expectation of Jerusalem’s redemption.

Related to the concept of expectation is the word “spectacle” and the idea of looking forward. Expectation suggests hope, faith and probability. Its positive effect is creating an excitement about possible events to happen. Most important, it contains the virtues of faith and hope in God’s providence.

Recently, I have encountered numerous people in depression who only see a declining world, meaninglessness and no light at the end of the tunnel. They have been infected with the doldrums. Countering this despair is as crucial as

conquering the coronavirus.

A spiritual exercise of St. Ignatius of Loyola is one means for handling fear of the future. Ignatius implores us to pray for what we most desire; what one thing do we most treasure? The exercise helps reveal our values and what we hold most important. It creates a reality check on who we are in contrast to what we should be in reality, especially in God’s eyes.

When we succumb to fear and dreaded expectations, our energy becomes sapped. Examining our center—our very soul—helps to change expectations by challenging us to reflect on our potential to face life rather than fear it—to turn to the Holy Spirit’s powers of faith and hope and the ability to look forward to a brighter future.

(Father Eugene Hemrick writes for Catholic News Service.) †

Solemnity of the Baptism of the Lord/Msgr. Owen F. Campion

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, January 10, 2021

- Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7
- Acts 10:34-38
- Mark 1:7-11



This weekend, the Church invites us to celebrate the great Solemnity of the Baptism of the Lord. It is great because it commemorates an important event in the life of Jesus and in the unfolding of salvation. It also draws our attention to marvelous and fundamental aspects of our salvation.

Jesus, the Son of God, the Redeemer, is the centerpiece of all three readings, although, of course, the Book of Isaiah, the source of the first reading, only prefigures Jesus.

Isaiah mentions no one by name, but the reading describes a faithful servant of God who, although suffering unjustly and greatly, will be steadfastly faithful to God.

Through the centuries, several passages from Isaiah, similar in literary construction and in reference to the figure that Christians have called the “suffering servant,” have been very popular among the pious. Believers through the ages have seen in them a description of Jesus. (These passages also provide readings for Holy Week, including Good Friday.)

In the second reading, from the Acts of the Apostles, St. Peter stands as the principal figure. He appeared before Cornelius, whose name indicates Roman origins. In itself, this encounter is greatly revealing. Peter did not limit his interest to Jews, whose heritage Peter shared.

Rather, Peter preached the Gospel to gentiles and indeed to the despised Romans, who were responsible for the military conquest and occupation of the Holy Land, a circumstance detested by the Jews.

Peter’s message was crisp and profound. Salvation is in Jesus. The Holy Spirit anointed Jesus as the Savior. God was with Jesus as the Lord went about “doing good works” and healing the sick (Acts 10:38).

This point, too, is crucial. The pagan Cornelius yearned for what is good and perfect and thus wholeheartedly accepted

Christ. Union with God fulfills every human’s need.

St. Mark’s Gospel furnishes the story of the Lord’s baptism in the River Jordan by John the Baptist.

Ritual washings, or baptisms, were popular in certain Jewish circles in the first century. Homes were built with ceremonial baths. A person could visibly state the desire to be rid of sin, as if sin literally soiled the body, by washing in water.

John the Baptist acknowledges Jesus as the Redeemer. John insists that he himself is not the Savior. John confesses that he is “not worthy to loosen” the sandal-strings of the Savior (Mk 1:7)

The Gospel reading is clear. Jesus is the perfect, innocent and utterly sinless Lord. Nonetheless, Jesus assumes the sinfulness of humankind. Then God identifies Jesus as the Savior and, moreover, as the Son of God. To make this declaration clear, God speaks and gestures in ancient Old Testament words and symbols that no Jew would have misunderstood.

Reflection

This feast is great because it clearly and expressly reveals to us the Lord’s identity. He is the Son of God. Not even a prophet of John’s holiness and tenacious faith was the Lord’s equal.

Secondly, Jesus assumed the sinfulness of us all. As stated elsewhere in the Scriptures by St. Paul, Jesus is the new Adam, a new and perfect representative of the human race. Unlike Adam, Jesus causes union with God, not estrangement from God. Jesus brings life not death, holiness not fault.

Common human nature unites all people with the Lord. He confirms this union by freeing us all from the eternal consequences of human sin.

We are sinners, but in Jesus, we find reconciliation with God. Our reconciliation through Jesus is perfect, unbroken and absolute. In it is eternal life.

Especially note that Peter spoke for the other Apostles, for the Church and, most importantly, for Jesus. It affirms the papacy. †

Daily Readings

Monday, January 11

Hebrews 1:1-6
Psalm 97:1, 2b, 6, 7c, 9
Mark 1:14-20

Tuesday, January 12

Hebrews 2:5-12
Psalm 8:2ab, 5-9
Mark 1:21-28

Wednesday, January 13

St. Hilary, bishop and doctor of the Church
Hebrews 2:14-18
Psalm 105:1-4, 6-9
Mark 1:29-36

Thursday, January 14

Hebrews 3:7-14
Psalm 95:6-7c, 8-11
Mark 1:40-45

Friday, January 15

Hebrews 4:1-5, 11
Psalm 78:3, 4bc, 6c-8
Mark 2:1-12

Saturday, January 16

Hebrews 4:12-16
Psalm 19:8-10, 15
Mark 2:13-17

Sunday, January 17

Second Sunday in Ordinary Time
1 Samuel 3:3b-10, 19
Psalm 40:2, 4, 7-10
1 Corinthians 6:13c-15a, 17-20
John 1:35-42

Question Corner/Fr. Kenneth Doyle

Church sets conditions for baptism of children of non-practicing Catholics

QI was recently asked whether an infant can be baptized in the Church even if his parents, although Catholic (non-practicing), were married in a civil ceremony. The



parents were told by a priest that they had to be married in the Church before the infant could be baptized. I don’t think this is correct. What does Church law say? (Kansas)

A There is nothing in Church law that requires that parents be married in a Church ceremony prior to having their child baptized. although that, of course, would be the ideal.

In 2014, the Italian press reported that Pope Francis had baptized the child of an unmarried couple in a ceremony in the Sistine Chapel. And in 2009, while still a cardinal in Argentina, the pope was quoted as telling the Italian magazine *30 Giorni* that “the child has absolutely no responsibility for the state of the parents’ marriage.”

Canon law does say, though, that for a baptism to take place, “there must be a founded hope that the infant will be brought up in the Catholic religion” (#868). That same canon goes on to note that “if such hope is altogether lacking,

the baptism is to be delayed ... after the parents have been advised about the reason.” (The baptismal ceremony itself includes a pledge by the parents to raise and educate the child in the beliefs and practices of the Catholic faith.)

What I normally do is to meet for half an hour individually with each couple who are having their first child baptized. If I have not seen them regularly in church, I am particularly direct in highlighting their own responsibility to support the child’s growth in faith by their own Catholic practice. (Only a couple of times—in more than 50 years—have I sensed that this commitment was “altogether lacking.”)

QA friend’s sibling committed suicide about 20 years ago while in high school after struggling with depression for years, despite getting treatment, counseling and a lot of family support. The family was—and still is—devastated. At the time, the family’s priest said something about suicide being a sin, which added to the family’s hurt and turned them away from the Church.

I fully support respect for life, but I think I remember reading that the Church has changed its thinking about depression-related suicide in recent years and now relates it to an illness that might not be a sin in those circumstances. Is that correct, and do you have any suggestions for helping the family think about getting back to Church? (Location withheld)

AI commend you for your concern—and for your prayers for that family. The hurt from a suicide lasts a long time, and I will pray for them, too. Your question arrived in my e-mail during the same week that I was involved in a funeral for a suicide victim.

I have explained to this family that, when I was ordained (in the 1960s), the common practice of the Church was not to celebrate a funeral Mass for someone who had chosen to take his or her own life.

But that is no longer true. As psychological research has shown a connection between mental illness and many cases of suicide, the Church has acknowledged that grave cases of mental illness can sometimes mitigate—or even remove—a person’s capacity to make decisions and his or her moral responsibility for those choices.

Based on that, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches, “We should not despair of the eternal salvation of persons who have taken their own lives” (#2283). This family, I believe, has found some comfort in knowing that.

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

My Journey to God

Salvation is Won

By Hilda Buck

God of splendor, God of glory,
God of mercy and of love —
A tiny babe born this Holy Night
In the little town of Bethlehem

Angel choirs sing in exultation
Heaven and earth rejoice

Salvation is won.



(Hilda Buck, formerly of St. Lawrence Parish in Lawrenceburg, is now a member of St. Mary Parish in Anderson, in the Diocese of Lafayette, Ind. Art: This 17th-century painting titled “Adoration of the Shepherds” by Giovanni Benedetto Castiglione depicts the birth of Christ.) (Public domain image via Wikimedia Commons)

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.

AHAUS, Anthony E., 70, St. Roch, Indianapolis, Dec. 14. Husband of Gertrude Ahaus. Father of Edward and Raymond Ahaus. Brother of Carolyn, Cindy, Diane, Tom and Bernard. Grandfather of six.

BAILEY, Martha C., 91, St. Anne, New Castle, Dec. 10. Stepmother of Marisa Anderson and Kimberly Fowler. Grandmother of one.

BARRETT, Gerald, 81, St. Mary, Lanesville, Dec. 3. Husband of Marilyn Barrett. Father of Angela Forchlich and Paul Barrett. Brother of Ursuline Sister Ann Barrett. Grandfather of six. Great-grandfather of four.

BEDEL, Marjorie A., 86, St. Catherine of Siena, Decatur County, Dec. 10. Wife of Ferdinand Bedel. Mother of Mary Laudick, Jeannie Portis, Benson, Dan, John, Joseph and Michael Bedel. Sister of Martha and Arthur Blankman. Grandmother of 14. Great-grandmother of nine.

BEVAN, William J., 75, St. Jude, Indianapolis, Dec. 14. Husband of Sheryl Bevan. Father of Danielle Bevan. Brother of Judy Moran, Nancy Pullam and Steve Bevan. Uncle of several.

BEYER, Michael J., 64, St. Vincent de Paul, Shelby County, Dec. 7. Brother of Rose Mary Sheedy, Stephan, Thomas and Timothy Beyer. Uncle of several.

BIEHLE, Frank J., 94, St. Mary, North Vernon, Dec. 15. Father of Debra Heckman, Cynthia Speer, Donald and Mark Biehle. Brother of Deloris Sorg and

Ralph Biehle. Grandfather of 12. Great-grandfather of 21.

CAVANESS, Rita M., 76, St. Joseph, Shelbyville, Dec. 2. Mother of Elizabeth Brown, Theresa Ernestes, Dawn McIntyre and Barbara McPherson. Grandmother of nine. Great-grandmother of 16.

CLANCY, Robert C., 83, Holy Spirit, Indianapolis, Dec. 13. Husband of Linda Clancy. Father of Vicky Goins, Cindy Hughett, Bob, Jr., and Shawn Clancy. Stepfather of Michele LaCluse, Joe and Rob Banayote. Grandfather of 19. Great-Grandfather of 25.

DAGLEY, June M., 94, St. Joseph, Shelbyville, Nov. 20. Mother of Michael and Stephen Dagley. Grandmother of five. Great-grandmother of 10. Great-great-grandmother of three.

DECKER, Frank, 83, St. Augustine, Jeffersonville, Nov. 25. Husband of Burnis Decker. Father of Tracy Foster, Sherry Pollard, Steve and Tony Decker. Brother of Vera Seawright and Larry Decker. Grandfather of seven. Great-grandfather of nine.

FAUST, Alice E., 92, St. Anthony of Padua, Morris, Dec. 11. Mother of Karol Ingersoll, Pat Stenger, Greg, Rick and Tom Faust. Sister of Joan Eckstein, Marilyn Riehle and Edgar Lohman. Grandmother of 13. Great-grandmother of 14.

FULLER, Helen (Iacuone), 97, St. Anne, New Castle, Dec. 7. Mother of Victoria Knaack, Joseph, Robert and William Fuller. Grandmother of 11. Great-grandmother of 20.

GESELL, Joyce, 70, St. Michael, Brookville, Dec. 2. Wife of Glenn Gesell. Mother of Becky Bright, Christy, Mike and Nick Gesell. Sister of Kathy Stenger and Dan Schwegman. Grandmother of six.

GLENN, Jemma, 83, St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception, Aurora, Dec. 10. Mother of Debbie Huffman and Cindy Vogt. Grandmother of four.

HUDDLESTONE, Andrew R., 31, St. Mark the Evangelist, Indianapolis, Dec. 11. Son of Donnie Huddleston. Brother of Colby and Zachary Huddleston. Nephew of several.

JANSING, Mary Jane, 77, St. John the Baptist, Osgood, Dec. 9. Wife of Marcellus Jansing. Mother of Jill and

Haiti Mass



Father Rony Fabien, right, and Deacon Hernst Bellevue elevate the Eucharist during a Mass for Catholics of Haitian ancestry on the feast of Mary, Mother of God, at St. Agnes Cathedral in Rockville Centre, N.Y., on Jan. 1. The liturgy, hosted by the Diocese of Rockville Centre's Office of Multicultural Diversity, also marked the 217th anniversary of Haiti's declaration of political independence from France. (CNS photo/Gregory A. Shemitz)

Jeff Jansing. Sister of Margie Rach, Shirley Robbins and Gene Vernon. Grandmother of three.

JONES, Margaret Mary, 93, St. Joseph, Shelbyville, Dec. 1. Mother of Janet and Bruce Jones. Sister of Vernon Havens. Grandmother of five. Great-grandmother of 13.

LOWS, Mary E., 96, St. Lawrence, Lawrenceburg, Nov. 21. Aunt of several.

MILLER, William J., 71, St. Jude, Indianapolis, Dec. 6. Brother of Margaret Lindop, Nancy Morse, Jeannie Wilson, Franciscan Sister Ellen, Suzan and Robert Miller. Uncle and great-uncle of several.

NAVARRA, Rita R., 88, St. Mary, Greensburg, Dec. 12. Mother of Marilyn Ewer, Kathy Kress, Gina and Margie Langferman, Cecelia McNeal, Theresa Panhorst, Greg, Phil, Tom and Vince Navarra. Sister of Marcie Harping. Aunt of one.

NEELY DAVIS, Laverne F., 91, St. Mark the Evangelist,

Indianapolis, Dec. 12. Mother of Mary Ann Davis, Suzanne Schiffmacher, Daniel, David, John and Joseph Neely. Stepmother of Patricia Davis-Milburn-Pace, Mary, Ed, Frank, Jr., James and William Davis. Grandmother of several. Great-grandmother of three.

PHIELER, Elsie Mae, 83, St. Mary, Lanesville, Nov. 28. Mother of Betty Conklin, Kathleen, David, Glenn, Kevin and Michael Phielier. Grandmother of 11. Great-grandmother of seven.

POPP, George J., 91, St. John Paul II, Sellersburg, Dec. 1. Father of Theresa Lenfert, Rick and Tony Popp. Brother of Barbara Beavin, Joanie Renn, Esther Wheatley, Bill, Jim, Kenny, Maurice and Merlin Popp. Grandfather of six. Great-grandfather of 11.

SCHOETTNER, Charles E., 63, St. Mary, Greensburg, Dec. 9. Father of Amber, Lee and Travis Schoettmer. Brother of Joyce Comer, Mary Anne Smith, Leonard, Patrick,

Stanley and Steve Schoettmer. Grandfather of five.

SCHUMAN, Richard, 87, All Saints, Dearborn County, Dec. 8. Husband of Pat Schuman. Father of Connie Hornbach, Regina Kamos, Marilyn White, Joan, Cliff, John and Rick Schuman. Brother of Frances and Viola Andrews, Loretta Bihl, Matilda Bischoff, Alberta Mergenthal, Joe and Walter Schuman. Grandfather of 16. Great-grandfather of seven.

SCHWALLIE, Edward, 84, St. Lawrence, Lawrenceburg, Nov. 20. Husband of Bess Schwallie. Father of Andrea Rumrill, Nicholas and Timothy Schwallie. Brother of Janet Fritz and Ruby Mattox. Grandfather of four. Great-grandfather of three.

SCHWENDENMANN, Jerry, 71, St. Mary, Greensburg, Dec. 10. Brother of Mary Melcher and Tom Schwendenmann. Uncle of several.

VORBRÖKER, Rosemary, 94, St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception, Aurora, Oct. 29. Mother of Kathy Donselman, Dan, David and Jim Vorbroker. Grandmother of 16. Great-grandmother of 17.

WAGNER, Herman J., 85, St. Mary, Greensburg, Dec. 9. Husband of Agnes Wagner. Father of Susan Geis, Lisa Huff, Dennis and Michael Wagner. Brother of Amelia Carter, Kay Prather, Gail Waltz, Al, Charles, Daniel, Sam and Urban Wagner. Grandfather of eight. Great-grandfather of nine.

WANINGER, Jerry, 59, St. Paul, Tell City, Dec. 7. Husband of Jo Waninger. Father of Clint and Corey Waninger. Brother of Charles, Don and John Waninger. Uncle of several.

WEAVER, Paul J., 93, Christ the King, Indianapolis, Dec. 9. Father of Terri McLaughlin, Susie Sokol, Maribeth Wenclewicz, Larry and Paul Weaver. Grandfather of 11. Great-grandfather of three. †



Nigerian bishop, driver released by kidnappers

LAGOS, Nigeria (CNS)—Auxiliary Bishop Moses Chikwe of Owerri and his driver, Robert Ndubuisi, were released by their abductors on Jan. 1 after being kidnapped five days earlier.

Archbishop John Obinna of Owerri said when he

visited Bishop Chikwe at his residence, the bishop was "looking and feeling very weak from the traumatic experience." He said the bishop's driver had been taken to the hospital for treatment of a deep cut to his hand, received from the kidnappers.

The archbishop thanked state authorities and security agents for their work to get the two men released.

The 53-year-old bishop lived and worked in Southern California from 2005 to 2017. He completed a master's degree in educational administration at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles and a Ph.D. in education at the University of California at Los Angeles. He was appointed auxiliary bishop of his home archdiocese in 2019.

Bishop Chikwe's kidnapping came less than two weeks after the kidnapping and release in Imo state of Father Valentine Oluchukwu Ezeagu, a member of the Sons of Mary Mother of Mercy Congregation. The priest was stopped and taken by armed men on Dec. 15 as he was driving to his father's funeral in Anambra state, north of Imo. He was released unharmed the next day.

Bishop Chikwe remains the first Catholic bishop to be kidnapped in Nigeria since the Boko Haram insurgency began in 2009. Through the years, several priests and hundreds of others have been kidnapped. These include cases involving groups of school students. †

Saint Raphael
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of Indianapolis

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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

Florida hospital tests medications to lessen pandemic's deadly impact

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (CNS)—With public health officials warning that COVID-19 vaccination rollouts won't do much to tame the immediate dangers of the pandemic, a Florida Catholic hospital is looking at medications and protocols to protect and save lives.

The U.S. continues to lead the world in the number of reported deaths attributed to the coronavirus, topping 352,000 deaths on Jan. 4. Rapidly expanding hospitalization numbers are stressing health care workers and facilities in many regions.

"This is obviously, in many of our lifetimes, the most significant impact to public health, even to the point of disruption across the health care system," said Dr. Joshua Larned, a cardiologist with Holy Cross Medical Group in South Florida and a member of Holy Cross Hospital's steering committee on management of COVID-19, the illness caused by the coronavirus.

Larned also is a past research fellow at the Centers for Disease Control and National Center for Infectious Diseases in Atlanta.

"What we are seeing here is something that happened very quickly without a lot of initial understanding of how quickly the spread could occur; and we were a little behind in terms of processes to deal with it, in spite of other respiratory lessons from SARS or MERS. This one caught the world off guard," Larned told the *Florida Catholic*, newspaper of the Miami Archdiocese.

"One of the problems with COVID-19 is the fact that it doesn't just cause pneumonia. It can also be associated with a respiratory distress syndrome, a multi-inflammatory syndrome that can affect a multitude of different organ systems, including the heart. It can be associated with thrombosis where the body wants to form clots, and is associated, in its more severe form, with multi-organ failure," he said.

Holy Cross Hospital is participating in a study to understand if administering high doses of anticoagulants, or blood thinners, will safely reduce the risk of COVID-19 patients developing deadly clots.

Blood clots are one of the things that makes patients with COVID-19 severely ill, with clots forming either in the major arteries or veins leading to the lungs and other parts of the body, Larned explained.

He said many patients with even mild to moderate symptoms who are never hospitalized and will recover may experience lingering chronic fatigue, shortness of breath, excessive heart rate or long-term damage to lungs and heart.

Holy Cross is running two clinical trials in which COVID-19 patients under intensive care receive high doses of two anticoagulants—used together—to prevent arterial and venous clots.

Another clinical trial involves patients not in an ICU but admitted to the hospital with COVID-19 who randomly receive just one anticoagulant.

"Anecdotally, I can say the risk of having a blood clot in an artery or vein is a devastating disease that can occur to any sick patient who is admitted to a hospital, but we know the risk of that happening goes up significantly with COVID infection," Larned said.

While the number of COVID-19 infections in Broward County, Fla., is far lower than those in Miami-Dade County, Holy Cross moved quickly in the spring to prepare for the pandemic. It managed to continue normal operations and regular patient care while also accommodating patients sick with the coronavirus.

Hospitalizations at Holy Cross peaked in June, July and August. While there is growing concern that early 2021 may see a return to those same hospitalization levels, such a scenario has not yet arrived at Holy Cross, Larned said.

There is also no universal agreement on outpatient care for COVID-19 patients who are not sick enough to be hospitalized.

Some Holy Cross patients have qualified for medical trials with the antiviral medicines and other medications.

The hospital also is studying monoclonal antibodies, which are made in a lab to mirror the body's natural immune response to the virus. Not everyone qualifies for such treatment, Larned said, but the hospital is conducting clinical trials to determine whether every patient should receive it.

The ideal course of action for someone who tests positive for COVID-19 is to communicate with a physician, local health system or public health department to determine treatment options and eligibility for possible clinical trials.

There is no consensus on at-home treatments for the coronavirus, Larned added. That's why public health officials are urging caution to avoid the infection in the first place.

Holy Cross will follow the Operation Warp Speed national plan for vaccine rollout and distribution consistent with the Florida state plan, with various phases prioritizing nursing home residents, first responders and the elderly.

Larned said the size of both the Pfizer and Moderna vaccine trials—each with 30,000 individuals—offers encouragement that both vaccines are effective and safe, although no one can say how long they confer protection against coronavirus.

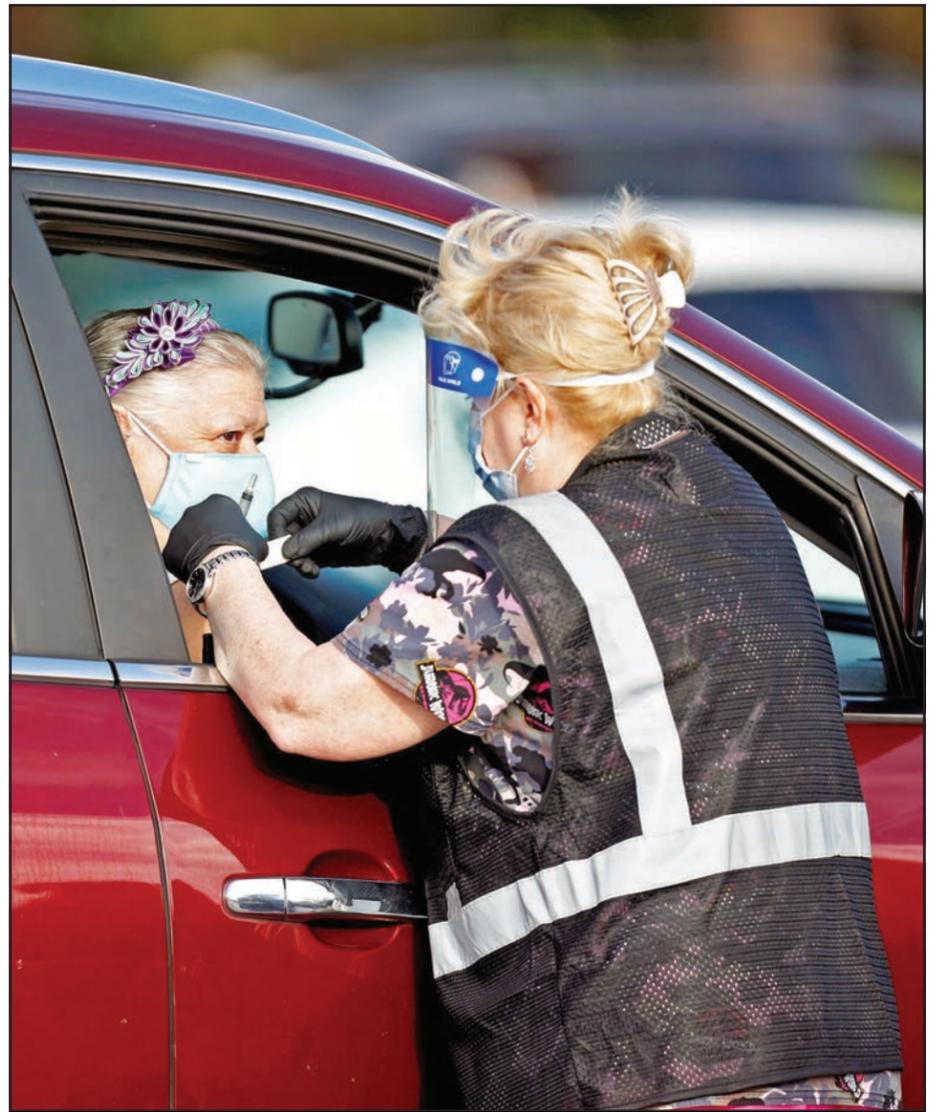
"It is going to be a leap of faith to take a vaccine, but you may recall the polio epidemic and how devastating that was to the population. With the commitment to a vaccine America took that leap of faith together and we got over that pandemic. We are going to need that commitment again," he said.

In the short term, Larned encouraged people to continue wearing masks, frequently wash hands and observe appropriate social distancing.

"We are reaching a point in the year where we are all starting to get tired of this and it is easy to let our guard down," he said, suggesting that simple things like wearing a mask and avoiding overly crowded indoor places are key to staying safe. †



Dr. Joshua Larned



A Florida Department of Health worker administers a COVID-19 vaccine in New Port Richey, Fla., on Dec. 31, 2020. (CNS photo/Octavio Jones, Reuters)

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Sister of Providence celebrated jubilee of religious life in 2020

Another Sister of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods celebrated her 60-year jubilee in 2020.



Sr. Ann Stephen Stouffer, S.P.

Sister Ann Stephen Stouffer, a native of Wabash, Ind., entered the congregation on Feb. 2, 1960, and professed perpetual vows on Aug. 15, 1967.

She earned a bachelor's degree

in education from Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College and a master's degree in

education from Indiana University.

In the archdiocese, Sister Ann Stephen served at the former St. Mary-of-the-Woods Village School in St. Mary-of-the-Woods (1963-64) and St. Malachy School in Brownsburg (1969-75). She also served at schools in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Ind., and in Illinois and California.

Sister Ann Stephen served as director of residential life and as administrator of Providence Hall at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods from 2008-2015, and volunteered in residential service ministry at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods from 2016-2019.

She currently ministers in prayer at the motherhouse. †

HESS

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were telling jokes. We solved a couple minor problems, and we had a plan of action for him. He's doing great to this day."

Still Hess takes no credit for the man's turnaround. "It wasn't me because I'm no therapist. It was God working through me. I was allowed to be the flesh-and-blood presence that this man could actually see. But it was God."

Hess served as God's presence for 14 years as the director of Catholic Charities Tell City before retiring on Dec. 31. She also served as a constant, compassionate voice for people whose lives are challenged by rural poverty in southern Indiana and across the state and the nation.

"Joan was a champion that we do not forget the faces of rural poverty," says David Bethuram, executive director of Catholic Charities for the archdiocese. "In our leadership meetings, state meetings and even at the national level at the Catholic Charities USA annual gathering, she often reminded her peers of the challenges the poor have in finding resources in our rural communities.

"Her advocacy for the rural poor enlightened her Catholic Charities peers on how important it is to keep striving for ways to enhance our outreach to our rural communities."

For Hess, all her efforts to help people in need flow from one defining approach: "I always want people to know they're not alone, that even when they're getting pushed down, there are people who care. And even when things are not easy, they can get better."

She then shared three connected stories that offer a glimpse of the difference she made—and the unexpected blessings that God and others provided for her efforts to help people who are vulnerable.

'I was where I needed to be'

The three stories happened within a two-week period during Hess' first year of work for Catholic Charities in Tell City in 2006.

"It started when I got a phone call from a lady who had left an abusive situation and found an apartment, but she needed a place where her kids could sleep. She said she needed a sleeper sofa," Hess recalls. "We don't have furniture, but I said I would ask around. The next day, I got a phone call from someone saying, 'I'm getting a new sleeper sofa, and I'd like to donate my old one. Do you have a use for it?'"

Two days later, a couple visited her office seeking

Joan was a champion that we do not forget the faces of rural poverty. ... Her advocacy for the rural poor enlightened her Catholic Charities peers on how important it is to keep striving for ways to enhance our outreach to our rural communities.'



— David Bethuram, executive director of Catholic Charities for the archdiocese

help with paying their utility bills. In passing, they also mentioned their need for a refrigerator and a washing machine.

"I'm driving down the street later and I get a call from my sister-in-law," Hess says. "She says someone is moving from town, and they have a washer and a dryer and a refrigerator, and they want to donate it. I pulled over and pointed up to the sky and said, 'You are so good!'"

"The next week, I get a phone call from a man who said he was bringing his wife home from the hospital because she was going to die. He said that he needed a hospital bed for her. A couple hours later, I got a phone call from the guy in charge of the plant facilities at Saint Meinrad Archabbey. He said, 'Joan, we're updating our infirmary and I have a couple of hospital beds that are still in good shape and we're getting rid of them. Would you need them?'"

Fourteen years have passed since those three blessings, and Hess is still stunned by them.

"This all happened within a two-week period. There wasn't a thing I did," Hess says. "People just called me, and I was the connection. I was where I needed to be."

She also felt those moments confirmed that she was where God needed her to be—a revelation that she had been waiting for all of her adult life.

Offering light in people's darkest hours

"I asked God so many times, 'I don't know what you have planned for me.' I think he finally decided to tell me," says the mother of two grown children about starting as the director of Catholic Charities Tell City at the age of 51. "I think he waited until my children were old enough so I could give 100 percent to this—to work nights and weekends when I needed to and not be away from my kids."

For her part, she never wasted any time or opportunity to help people during these past 14 years.

"People come to me at some of their darkest hours, and they share things that are hard to share," she says. "To be put in that place is amazing and humbling. I've become a conduit for what they need."

She's also been a source of inspiration and ideas for bringing people together to help others. Two of her favorite programs are "Table of Blessings" and "Birthday in a Box."

"We've heard a lot of foster children say they've never had a birthday party, and that's just wrong," the grandmother of three says. "With Birthday in a Box, we work with the local Department of Child Services, and they tell us how many foster children are having a birthday in the upcoming month. We put together a birthday party for them and give them a Walmart gift card. Every foster child gets a birthday party every year."

The joy exudes from Hess as she talks about that program. It's also there when she describes Table of Blessings.

"It's one of the things I'm most proud of," she says. "It's a once-a-week, hot-meal program that right now we're doing as a drive-thru because of COVID."

"It involves the entire community. Each week, a new group sponsors the meal and staffs the meal. There are different churches, nursing homes, banks, hospitals and political parties among the groups that take turns. We do it in coordination with the Evangelical United Church of Christ. It's just been amazing."

Two lessons to remember

In the days before she retired at 66, Hess shared the bittersweet feelings she had about that decision.

"When I look back, I feel like everything I ever did in my life led me to this job and prepared me to do a good



Before her recent retirement as the director of Catholic Charities Tell City, Joan Hess served for 14 years as a constant, compassionate voice for people whose lives are challenged by rural poverty. (Submitted photo)

job. I'm apprehensive for me. I've worked my whole life, and this place has been like my baby. There wasn't much when we started, and it's grown into an integral part of the community. It's hard, but it's time to let the baby go. It's time for a change for me and time for a change for the agency. It needs a new set of eyes to grow."

The past 14 years have taught Hess numerous lessons, including two main ones: never underestimate the goodness of God and people, and never take anything in life for granted.

That second lesson leads her to want to spend more time with her husband of 45 years, Tom, with her two grown children and her three grandchildren. At the same time, she knows she will miss the family she helped to create through her efforts to help people in times of need.

"I'm going to miss seeing a spark in someone's eyes when they realize their electricity won't be shut off. I'm going to miss a little kid's smile at the Table of Blessings when we give them their favorite dessert. I'm going to miss anytime someone has a need and knowing that need will be fulfilled because this community cares."

Bethuram says that Hess will be missed—"dearly"—too. Describing her as "an exemplary witness of the faith," he also cites "her great compassion and her personal interest in every detail of serving others."

Hess insists her own life is much better because of the people she has helped.

"I think I'm much more accepting of people. Before this, I didn't have much contact with people who are homeless or facing food insecurity. I think I've gained more compassion for all people. And I've learned not to judge people, to not judge prematurely.

"It's important to listen, listen, listen first—to hear their story before making any judgments on what they need as far as help. Everyone has a story."

Hess' story has a defining theme: She always cared deeply. †

(For more information about Catholic Charities Tell City, visit www.archindy.org/cc/tellcity.)

ICC

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of three in deep poverty has not been adjusted for inflation since 1988.

"People are needier now, so modernizing this program in Indiana is more important than it has ever been," Espada said. "With 33 years of inflation, and considering that we are in the midst of an economic downturn and a pandemic, now is the time to make it happen."

With respect to the payday lending industry, the ICC and its allies have supported past legislative efforts to cap the interest rate and fees that lenders may charge to an annual percentage rate of 36%. Currently, some payday lending institutions in Indiana charge up to 391% on the short-term loans that they offer.

"We are very worried about people not being able to make ends meet and turning to payday lending more in these very challenging times," Espada said.

Other key priorities for the ICC remain constant: promoting respect for life at

all stages, as well as protecting religious liberty and choice in education. One pro-life measure that Espada hopes to see back on the legislative agenda is providing reasonable accommodations in the workplace for pregnant employees, from more frequent breaks to exemptions from heavy lifting. Despite a broad base of support that included Indiana Gov. Eric Holcomb, a Senate bill designed to offer such protections stalled in 2020.

As in past years, the ICC will support certain legislation in keeping with Catholic social teaching, while opposing other proposed measures.

This year's legislative session, however, will be anything but business as usual. Due to the pandemic, social distancing will be the order of the day. Lawmakers will work both at the Statehouse in downtown Indianapolis and in adjoining government buildings.

This will be a long session of the legislature, held every two years and culminating in passage of the state budget, likely in late April. Redistricting for congressional and state legislative districts also is likely to be a major

agenda item, according to Espada.

The 2020 legislative session concluded in early March, just before COVID-19 drastically altered life for Hoosiers and all Americans. Last year's session also marked the final one with the longtime presence of Glenn Tebbe at the Statehouse. Tebbe had led the ICC for 16 years, advancing many of the Church's causes in the public arena before his retirement in May.

Now, Espada—an attorney who brought an extensive background in law and higher education leadership to the ICC when she was named executive director last year—will move the organization forward with a new partner. Alexander Mingus, formerly a leader of the



St. Vincent de Paul Society of Dayton, Ohio, was recently appointed associate director of the ICC.

In these unprecedented times, Espada

and Mingus are devising new ways to reach their various audiences. They recently hosted a series of webinars to educate the public about the ICC and engage the Catholic faithful in policy matters. Mingus has revamped the ICC website, and is also launching a weekly podcast to update listeners throughout the 2021 legislative session.

"I believe that the virtual orientation of this session will open avenues of communication with Catholics around the state," Mingus said. "I look forward to working with Angela and helping to amplify the voice of the Church."

To follow priority legislation of the ICC and listen to the podcasts, visit indianacc.org. This website includes access to I-CAN, the Indiana Catholic Action Network, which offers the Church's position on key issues. Those who sign up for I-CAN receive alerts on legislation moving forward and ways to contact their elected representatives.

(Victoria Arthur, a member of St. Malachy Parish in Brownsburg, is a correspondent for The Criterion.) †