‘There are people out there who need help’

A girl’s birthday wish leads to special gift that helps to wrap a community in warmth

By John Shaughnessy

Having been born in December, Gracelyn Raelson decided to ask for something warm for her 12th birthday—something that would give her a toasty feeling through winter, something that would also add an extra sensation of warmth throughout the parish and the community that she calls home.

In advance of her recent birthday on Dec. 7, Gracelyn told her family, her friends and her classmates in the sixth grade at Holy Family School in New Albany that the only thing she wanted was a winter coat—more specifically, she wanted help in collecting 100 coats that could be given to children, women and men in their southern Indiana community who needed one to stay warm through the winter.

With everyone’s help, Gracelyn far surpassed her goal, ending up with 224 coats that have been distributed throughout southern Indiana and northern Kentucky, including to many people who are homeless.

Yet as much as that number thrills Gracelyn, what means just as much to her is seeing her classmates and fellow parish members, who had gathered around her birthday wish, take the next step to help someone in need.

Photo: To celebrate her 12th birthday, Gracelyn Raelson asked her family, friends, classmates and fellow parish members to help her collect winter coats to distribute to people who needed one in southern Indiana and northern Kentucky. Her smile shows her joy about the 224 coats she collected. (Submitted photo)

See COATS, page 8

Church encourages use of vaccines, masks for the common good

By Victoria Arthur

As the new COVID-19 vaccines gain more widespread use, they are provoking debate among Indiana lawmakers and the public while also prompting questions by the Catholic faithful.

At the same time, even face masks—nearly universal in their presence since the global coronavirus pandemic began—proved to be a source of contention at the Statehouse in Indianapolis earlier this month.

Dozens of people who gathered there to testify in favor of a vaccination-related bill on Jan. 14 defied Statehouse guidelines by refusing to wear a mask once inside the building, causing others—mostly opponents of the potential legislation—to leave before having a chance to testify. Senate Bill 74 would prohibit Indiana companies from requiring employees or prospective employees to receive immunizations of any type if doing so would compromise their health or violate their conscience.

The Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC) emphasizes that Catholic social teaching on the common good should underscore decision-making in all of these areas.

“While the COVID-19 vaccines cannot be mandated, the Catholic Church has made it clear that it is not only morally acceptable to receive the vaccines, but encouraged as a means of turning the tide on this deadly pandemic,” said Angela Espada, executive director of the ICC, the public policy voice of the Catholic Church in Indiana.

As has been widely reported, Pope Francis and retired Pope Benedict XVI—both at high risk for complications from the virus because of their age—received their first doses of the vaccine earlier this month.

Espada also pointed to the recent statement on ethical considerations related to the vaccines by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), co-authored by Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend. Bishop Rhoades serves as the chairman of the committee on doctrine for the USCCB.

See ICC, page 8

Gomez: As Rev. King urged, meet forces of hate, ignorance ‘with the power of love’

WASHINGTON (CNS)—In the spirit of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., “we must meet the forces of hate and ignorance with the power of love,” the president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) said in a statement for the Jan. 18 federal observance of the slain civil rights leader’s birthday.

“This year as we commemorate the legacy of this great American, we remember especially Rev. King’s belief in nonviolence and the power of love,” Los Angeles Archbishop Jose H. Gomez said.

Rev. King, who was assassinated in 1968 at age 39, would have turned 92 on Jan. 15. Martin Luther King Jr. Day is observed on the third Monday of January each year.

“Four decades of the past year, America has been reckoning with the legacy of slavery and the persistence of racial injustice in our See KING, page 2

The Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial is seen in Washington on Jan. 17, 2020. (CNS photo/Tyler Orsburn)
Pope: King’s ‘vision of harmony, equality’ for all remains timely

ATLANTA (CNS)—With “social injustice, division and conflict” threatening the common good, people need to rediscover and recommit to the vision of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. to work nonviolently for harmony, equality for all, Pope Francis said.

“Each one of us is called to be an artist of peace by uniting and not dividing, by extinguishing hatred and not holding on to it, by opening paths of dialogue,” the pope, quoting his encyclical on global fraternity, said in his message to the Jan. 18 “Beloved Community Summit.”

The summit was an online event marking the King holiday and promoting his vision of a community where differences are resolved through dialogue and where people work together to perfect equality and to end evil.

The pope’s letter was sent to the Rev. Bernice King, daughter of the slain civil rights leader and CEO of the King Center in Atlanta.

Her father wrote frequently about the urgency of forming the “beloved community.” He insisted that nonviolent protest was not the goal, but simply the necessary means of forming a just and equal society and where reconciliation and redemption can thrive.

“Today’s world, which increasingly faces the challenges of social injustice, division and conflict that hinder the realization of the common good, Dr. King’s vision of harmony and equality for all people, attained through nonviolent and peaceful means, remains ever timelier,” the pope wrote.

What is essential, he said, is to see each other as neighbors “in the truth of our shared dignity as children of Almighty God. ‘Only by striving daily to put this vision into practice can we work together to create a community built upon justice and fraternal love,’ Pope Francis wrote, praying for the “beloved communities” of the nation.

On Jan. 18, the archbishop said, “let us recommit ourselves to cherishing and promoting the dignity of the human person in every way.”

“Let us remember that the dignity of the human person is the key to healing and unity,” said Bishop Gomez. “We cannot forget the human person, the image of God, in our interactions and choose the path of peace, as opposed to the path of division.”

“Referring to the current national turmoil, Archbishop Gomez stressed that we must be united in our commitment to protect the innocent. ‘We need to tell them the good news that we are all children of God, that there is a greatness to human life,’ the archbishop said. ‘That every one of us is created in God’s image, endowed with God-given rights and responsibilities, and called to a transcendent destiny.’

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Every call of God is love, Pope Francis says at Angelus

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—When a person senses God’s call, it can be intimidating or frightening, Pope Francis said, but Christians can be sure that the call flows from God’s love and that responding to the call will be a means of sharing God’s love.

“Each one of God’s calls is an initiative of his love,” the pope said on Jan. 17 before reciting the Angelus prayer. “God calls to life, he calls to faith and he calls to a particular state in life: ‘I want you here.’”

Livestreaming his Angelus address from the library of the Apostolic Palace, Pope Francis focused on the day’s Gospel reading, which recounted Jesus calling Andrew and Simon Peter to his disciples.

Pope Francis said it is interesting to note that when the two ask Jesus where he is staying, Jesus does not respond with information, but with an invitation, “Come and you will see” (Jn 1:39).

And another thing “that catches our attention: 60 years later, or maybe more,” the pope wrote in his Gospel that “it was about four in the afternoon” [Jn 1:39]—he wrote the time,” the pope said. “Every encounter with Jesus remains alive in the memory; it is never forgotten.”

Life is a series of God’s calls, the pope said. “God’s first call is to life, through which he makes us persons; it is an individual call because God does not make things in sets. Then God calls us to faith and to become part of his family as children of God.

Lastly,” he said, “God calls us to a particular state in life—to give of ourselves on the path of marriage, or that of the priesthood or the consecrated life. They are different ways of realizing the plan God has for each one of us, always a plan of love.

“The greatest joy for every believer is to respond to that call, offering one’s entire being to the service of God and one’s brothers and sisters,” the pope said.

“God’s call,” he said, “can reach us in a thousand ways—including through other people or happy or sad events.”

Sometimes people are tempted to say “no” to God’s call out of fear or because “it seems to be in contrast to our aspirations,” or they believe it may be too demanding, the pope said.

“But God’s call is always love,” he said. “We need to try to discover the love behind each call, and it should be responded to with only love.”

“At the end of his Angelus address, Pope Francis offered prayers for the people of Sulawesi, Indonesia, where an earthquake on Jan. 15 and dozens of aftershocks left at least 46 people dead, hundreds injured and thousands homeless.

The pope also encouraged Catholics to participate in the Jan. 18-25 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

WHY WE GIVE

JIM AND KATHY
Parents of three adult children
Education was an important part of our children’s lives and we wanted to help ensure that good education which is available in Catholic schools.

SUE
Converted to Catholicism at 89
Iwant to help others to hear about the Catholic faith and help them like I have been helped.

MARIE
Teenage girl
A lot of good things came out of going to the Church. This is a great thing to do. I love to help the people, I know some of them can’t afford their education and I think we need more good priests in our Church.

PETE AND MELANIE
Dedicated their young daughter through Catholic Charities
When we saw all the good Catholic Charities do we just knew we wanted to help them. That’s what we do to help other people more than anything else.

GREG
Huband and father
To our Church is family. We want to see our kids why wouldn’t we give to our Church.

Scan to make your pledge to our security online.
On Dec. 8 of last year, Pope Francis unexpectedly declared the Year of St. Joseph, from then until Dec. 8 this year, as a special time to get to know the foster father of Jesus. The pope attached many indulgences to meditating about St. Joseph or praying the Litany of St. Joseph or other prayers directed to the spouse of the Blessed Virgin.

But how can we meditate about St. Joseph when we really know so little about him? Pope Francis himself called him “the man who goes unnoticed, a discreet and hidden presence.” What do we know about St. Joseph? What are we not sure about? And what can we conjecture?

We know through Scripture that he was descended from King David, but we’re not sure about his father’s name. According to Matthew’s Gospel, it was Jacob (Mt 1:1-16), but Luke’s Gospel says it was Heli (Lk 3:23).

We think of him as the man who worked as a carpenter, but he apparently was more than that. The Gospels use the Greek word teknon, which is a master builder, somebody who works on the various materials needed for construction work, including timber and iron, but usually stone. Since there is so much stone in the Holy Land, most houses and other structures are built with stone.

We know that Joseph lived in Nazareth in Galilee. We can speculate he did construction work, perhaps, an hour’s walk from Nazareth. Sepphoris was the capital of Galilee at the time and a much larger city than Nazareth.

How much older was Joseph than Mary? Again, we don’t know. Most paintings of the Holy Family depict Joseph as an older man. Where did that come from?

It originated from a document called the Protoevangelium of James, one of more than 15 non-canonical accounts of the life of Jesus, probably written in the middle of the second century. The Church eventually decided that it was not divinely inspired and not to be considered the canonical accounts of the life of Jesus, probably written in the middle of the second century. The Church eventually decided that it was not divinely inspired and not to be considered one of more than 15 non-canonical accounts of the life of Jesus, probably written in the middle of the second century. The Church eventually decided that it was not divinely inspired and not to be considered.

According to the Protoevangelium, Joseph blamed himself when he learned of Mary’s pregnancy because he said, “I received her as a virgin out of the Temple of the Lord my God and have not protected her.”

Then Joseph shows us how resourceful he was when they went to Bethlehem and Jesus was born. He and Mary undoubtedly went prepared to stay for a while rather than return with a newborn baby, at least for 40 days until Mary’s purification and Jesus’ presentation in the Temple. Perhaps Joseph led an extra donkey with their belongings and tools he needed to support them while they were gone. He didn’t expect his family to become refugees from Herod’s soldiers, but they did, and he led Mary and Jesus to Egypt.

After their return to Nazareth, the only time Joseph appears again in the Gospels is when Jesus was 12. Joseph quietly cared for his family until his happy death, undoubtedly in the arms of Jesus and Mary. St. Joseph, pray for us.

On the first Sunday of Lent, we will remember Joseph when we light a candle for the next candle. He was a man who knew how to light a candle and keep it alight, but even more important, he was the one who kept the flame alive in the many times when everything seemed lost.

John F. Fink

Editorial

What we know about St. Joseph

On Dec. 8 of last year, Pope Francis unexpectedly declared the Year of St. Joseph, from then until Dec. 8 this year, as a special time to get to know the foster father of Jesus. The pope attached many indulgences to meditating about St. Joseph or praying the Litany of St. Joseph or other prayers directed to the spouse of the Blessed Virgin.

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We know that Mary conceived of the Holy Spirit after she and Joseph went through the first Jewish wedding procedure, the betrothal, but before the second part when the groom took the bride into his home. How did Mary explain that to Joseph? Whatever she said, Joseph did not believe it because he decided to divorce her quietly. He changed his mind after he had that dream in which he was told that it was through the Holy Spirit that Mary conceived.

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President Abraham Lincoln’s second inaugural address was a somber call for peace: He recounted how the cause of the war—the expansion of slavery—had been rendered null and void by the Emancipation Proclamation, yet the war raged on. His hope was that America would “go forth as a just and lasting peace”: maybe not that day, or in the first 100 days of administration, but someday. His was a call for citizens to have “malice toward none” and “charity for all.” It was a bold, biblical summons to mercy and communion.

Our first Catholic president, John F. Kennedy, focused on uniting countries around the world in the common cause of protecting liberty, given to us by God. He called on fellow citizens and global friends to work for peace against the backdrop of a deadly arms race. Of the moral quandary of the modern era, President Kennedy said, “For man holds in his mortal hands the power to abolish all forms of human conflict, to make the earth a paradise or make it uninhabitable.”

In my vision, our academy is similar to Joseph’s academy, a family of scholars where its lifeblood is much needed. A place to be a face for dialogue, where science and contemporary professionals, including religious and nonbelievers. This results in an overall impression of enriching diversity because differences are genuine portals of discovery and not merely the differences who regard differences only as problematic and divisive aspects.

The academy is meant to be a place for dialogue, where science and contemporary professionals, including religious and nonbelievers. We must bring Christianity back to the streets, to discuss and be confronted with, to take part in the scientific and academic debates. We must be like that fearful, lazy, indifferent servant who buries his talent in the ground. That would be a mistake. I am not only a member of the academy, but I am dedicated to each of us. Here I mean that unique gift that is our academy, a family of scholars and professionals, including religious and nonbelievers.

But how can we meditate about St. Joseph? What do we know about St. Joseph? What are we not sure about? And what can we conjecture?

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According to the Protoevangelium, Mary spent her childhood in the Temple in Jerusalem. When it was time for her to leave when she reached puberty, the priests called widowers together and chose Joseph to be Mary’s husband. The Western Church rejected that story, but the Church of East insisted that Joseph was considerably older than Mary.

Joseph was most likely older than Mary, but probably not as old as some old paintings depict.
The publication date for this column is Friday, Jan. 22, 2021. In our country, the Church observes this date as a time when we offer special prayers for the full and complete legal protection of the right to life and of pence for violence committed against unborn children through abortion. In addition to prayer and pence, this day serves as a reminder that each of us has a responsibility to advocate for an end to permissive legislation here in Indiana and throughout our country.

Legal protection for all human life is essential to a just and free society. Without it, chaos reigns and no one is essential to a just and free society. As Pope Francis writes in his apostolic letter, "Patris Corde" (“With a father’s heart”), “Joseph is certainly not passively resigned, but courageously and firmly proactive. In our own lives, acceptance and welcome can be an expression of the Holy Spirit and, so become courageous and outspoken advocates for the legal protection of our most vulnerable sisters and brothers. And let’s pray for the work of Pope Francis, Blessed Joseph, to us too, show yourself a father and guardian of our children’s life. Obtain for us grace, mercy and courage, and defend us from every evil. Amen.”

ARCHBISHOP/ARZOBISPO CHARLES C. THOMPSON
Events Calendar

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

January 30
Vigo County Court House, 75 Grand Ave., Terre Haute. Solemn Observance of Roe v. Wade, 2-3 p.m., prayer, speakers, provisions. Information: Tom McBroom, 812-841-0060 or mbroom.tom@gmail.com.

February 3
MCL Cafeteria, 5520 Castleton Corner Lane, Indianapolis. Solo. 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 discussion group. Information: 317-796-8805 or 317-243-0777.

February 4
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. Log on: www.carthedralbцион.org/web or Keith Ingram, kinzmann@csinewest.com or 317-324-8446.

February 5

February 6
Our Lady of the Greenwood Church, 335 S. Meridian St., Greenwood. First Friday bilinguial celebration of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, offered by the Marianists, following Mass until 9 p.m., sacrament of reconciliation available. Information: 317-750-7309, marquisj@hotmail.com.

February 9
Lenten Study Group, 1717 W. 58th St., Indianapolis. Monthly Tuesday Taize Prayer Service, 8 p.m., silent and spoken prayers, simple music, silence. Log on: TaizeSistersofProvidence.org. Information: provid@usps.org or 317-5952, provid@usps.org.

February 11
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, provct@usps.org or www.whiteviolet.org.

February 18
The Third Option virtual marriage crisis/enrichment class, “Understanding Expectations,” 7-8 p.m., Thursdays bi-weekly through May 20, viewing all sessions recommended but not required, no registration needed. Free. Log on: www.carthedralbцион.org/web or Keith Ingram, kinzmann@csinewest.com or 317-324-8446.

February 17

February 19
Indiana Beacon of Our Lady of Peace Cemetery Mausoleum, 9001 Haverstick Road, Indianapolis. Monthly Mass, devotional prayers, 8:30 a.m. Information: 317-574-8399 or www.catholicchurchesex.org.

February 20
Mount Saint Francis Center for Spirituality Spiritual virtual “Mondays at the Mount,” 30-minute study by Conventional Franciscan Father Vince Petersen and Andrew Hennessey on upcoming Sunday Scripture readings, saints and liturgical seasons, posted on Monday mornings at in facebook.com/MountStFrancis.

February 22
Mount Saint Francis Center for Spirituality Spiritual virtual “Mondays at the Mount,” 30-minute study by Conventional Franciscan Father Vince Petersen and Andrew Hennessey on upcoming Sunday Scripture readings, saints and liturgical seasons, posted on Monday mornings at in facebook.com/MountStFrancis.

February 21
Sacred Heart of Mary Guesthouse, 100 Hill Dr., Beech Grove. “50 Years of Guérin” will be offered by the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, along with a Providence Associate, who will share some of the challenges St. Mother Theodore Guérin faced in her lifetime, and correlate those challenges to those currently faced by society.

February 23
Benedict Inn Retreat & Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. Grace: An Ash Wednesday Day of Reflection, 10 a.m.-3:30 p.m., Benedictine Sister Karen Byerly presenting, 60, includes lunch. Registration: www.benedictinn.org/retreats or call 812-923-8817. Email: retreats@benedictinn.org.

February 26
Mount Saint Francis Center for Spirituality Spiritual virtual “Mondays at the Mount,” 30-minute study by Conventional Franciscan Father Vince Petersen and Andrew Hennessey on upcoming Sunday Scripture readings, saints and liturgical seasons, posted on Monday mornings at in facebook.com/MountStFrancis.

February 27
Sisters of Providence White Violet Center “Virtual Alpaca Encounter,” via Zoom, 10-11 a.m., $15 plus optional $10 per alpaca ornament felting kit, register by Feb. 19. Registration and informations: www.spsmw.org/event or provct@usps.org or www.usps.org/event.

March 3
MCL Cafeteria, 5520 Castleton Corner Lane, Indianapolis. Solo. 5 p.m., Catholic, educational, charitable and social singles—separated, widowed or divorced—age 30 and older, new members welcome, also call about regular Friday night discussion group. Information: 317-796-8805 or 317-243-0777.

Events

February 11
February 18
February 23
February 27
February 20
February 19
February 25
February 26
February 22
February 18
Mount Saint Francis Center to offer retreat for couples on Feb. 13

“A Day for Couples: Friendship in the Lord” will be held at Mount Saint Francis Center for Spirituality, 101 St. Anthony Dr., in Mt. St. Francis, from 10 a.m. – 7 p.m. on Feb. 13. The day retreat, presented by Conventional Franciscan Father Vincent Peterson, is for married and unmarried couples who wish to grow in their relationship with God and one another. It will include time for prayer, reflection, fun activities and sharing lunch and a festive dinner are included.

The cost is $100 per couple. To register or for more information, go to mountstfranciscenter.org/retreats or call 812-923-8817.

FACING CHALLENGES WITH MOTHER THÉODORE GUÉRIN’ VIRTUAL PANEL AND DISCUSSION WILL BE HELD ON FEB. 4

A virtual presentation “Facing Challenges with St. Mother Theodore Guérin” will be offered by the Sisters of Providence from 7-8:30 p.m. on Feb. 4. A panel of Sisters of Providence of St. Mary-of-the-Woods, along with a Providence Associate, will share some of the challenges St. Mother Theodore Guérin faced in her lifetime, and correlate those challenges to those currently faced by society.

After the panel presentation, participants will join small breakout groups for sharing and reflection. Panelists include Providence Sisters Denise Allen, Jan Craven and Jessica Vitence, and Providence Associate Helen Flannery.

There is no charge for the event. To register, go to FacingChallenges.SistersofProvidence.org.

Mount Saint Francis Center to offer retreat for couples on Feb. 13

ANNIVERSARIES

ALBERT AND ELLIE (WERNER) AMBERGER, members of St. Louis Parish in Batesville, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on Jan. 30. The couple was married in St. John the Evangelist Church in Enochsburg (now a campus of St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Decatur County) on Jan. 30, 1971.

They have four children: Karen Moore, Lisa Ritter, Laura Vogelsang and Kurt Amberger. The couple also has 13 grandchildren.

DENNIS AND MARY (THERO) KRUS, members of All Saints Parish in Dearborn County, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on Jan. 19, 1971.

The couple was married in St. Paul Church in New Alsace (now a campus of All Saints Parish in Dearborn County) on Jan. 19, 1971. They have five children: Valerie Caudill, Janie Rittman, Emily, Anthony and Dennis Kraus. The couple also has five grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Almonds, Pecans Or Peanuts?

The traditional practice of offering almonds, pecans or peanuts at the end of a party is a longstanding tradition in many cultures around the world. While the exact origins of this practice are unknown, it is believed to have its roots in ancient Greek and Roman times. In these cultures, almonds and walnuts were considered symbols of fertility and abundance, and the act of scattering these nuts at the end of a banquet was seen as a way to bestow good fortune upon the guests. Over time, the practice of offering nuts at the end of a party was adopted by a variety of cultures around the world, and the types of nuts offered varied depending on regional customs and traditions. In some cultures, almonds are the preferred nut, while in others, pecans or peanuts are more commonly used. In recent years, as global trade and travel have made it easier to access a wider variety of nuts, new types of nuts have begun to enter the market, such as macadamia nuts, cashews and hazelnuts, which have also begun to be used in this traditional practice. Ultimately, the choice of which type of nut to offer at the end of a party depends on personal preference and cultural tradition, and the act of scattering nuts remains a symbol of hospitality and good wishes to this day.
E6 Catholic Men’s Conference will be livestreamed on Feb. 27

By Sean Gallagher

Father Jonathan Meyer, All Saints’ pastor. “But we will not allow this new season we are in to keep us from forming men, building up families and spreading hope and joy.”

This year’s E6 conference will take place on Feb. 27 on the St. Joseph campus of All Saints Parish. Only 150 tickets for in-person attendance were offered, and they were sold in a matter of hours.

But the conference will also be livestreamed online. The cost for access to the livestream is $10. This registration fee is per location, regardless of the number of people watching from that location.

The speakers for this year’s conference are Catholic author and speaker Deacon Harold Burke-Sivers of the Archdiocese of Portland, Ore.; Jason Evert, an author and speaker known for his efforts in promoting the Church’s teaching on chastity; and Patrick Coffin, who is a former host of the Catholic Answers Live radio show, a Catholic author and current host of his own online interview show.

The conference will begin at 8:50 a.m. and conclude at 3:30 p.m. In addition to its speakers, the conference will also include Mass and eucharistic adoration—all livestreamed.

Although the pandemic will greatly limit the number of men who can hear these speakers in person, Father Meyer is convinced that livestreaming the conference might broaden its reach.

“There are more than 28,000 men across the U.S. right now participating in Exodus 90 (a 90-day spiritual retreat for men). There are 1.7 million members of the Knights of Columbus,” he said. “Imagine the power of these men meeting locally at a parish hall or someone’s home, tuning in and being engaged in catechesis, fraternity and prayer. The stronger men are, the better marriages, families and children are.”

(For more information about this year’s E6 Catholic Men’s Conference, including how to register for a livestream of the conference, visit www.e6catholicmensconference.com.)

Pope Francis receive their first doses of COVID-19 vaccine

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Both Pope Francis and retired Pope Benedict XVI have received the first dose of the vaccine against COVID-19 after the Vatican started vaccinating its employees and residents on Jan. 13.

The Vatican’s vaccination program was developed in conjunction with BioNTech.

Pope Francis had said in a television interview broadcast on Jan. 10 that he too would be vaccinated against the coronavirus as soon as it was available. He said he believed that from an ethical point of view, everyone should take the vaccine because those who did not would not only put their own lives at risk, but also the lives of others.

In a press release on Jan. 2, the Vatican’s health services department added, “The Vatican’s vaccination program was voluntary. The Vatican health service was giving priority to its health care workers, security personnel, employees who deal with the public and older residents, employees and retirees.

In early December, Dr. Andrea Arcangeli, director of the Vatican health service, said they would begin with the Pfizer vaccine, which was developed in conjunction with BioNTech.

Pope Francis, the 84-year-old pontiff, is in “very frail and only his voice has weakened. “He is very frail and only can walk a little with a walker,” Ganswein added.

He rests more, “but we still go out every afternoon, despite the cold, in the Vatican Gardens,” he added.

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In a press release on Jan. 2, the Vatican’s health services department said it purchased an “ultra-low temperature refrigerator” for storing the vaccines and said it expected to receive enough doses to cover “the needs of the Vatican’s health services department and since then there have been another 25 reported cases—including 11 Swiss guards last October.

Pope Francis’s personal doctor died on Jan. 9 of complications caused by COVID-19. Fabrizio Soccorsi, 78, had been admitted to Rome’s Gemelli hospital on Dec. 26 because of cancer, according to the Italian Catholic agency SIR, on Jan. 9.

However, he died because of “pulmonary complications” caused by COVID-19, the agency said, without providing further details.

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 address: 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 deadline."

— Use this form to furnish information —

Clip and mail to: BRIDES, The Criterion, ATTN: Engagements, 1400 N. Meridian Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202-2467 (only photos) with photo Friday, Feb. 12 at 10 a.m. Please print or type:

Signature of person furnishing information      Relationship Daytime Phone

Deadline with photos: Clip and mail to: BRIDES, The Criterion, ATTN: Engagements, 1400 N. Meridian Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202-2467 (only photos) with photo Friday, Feb. 12 at 10 a.m. Please print or type:

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WASHINGTON (CNS)—For the first time since 1974, when it first began, the message of the national March for Life to participants is: Stay home.

Like the satellite events connected to the annual National Mall rally and march to the Supreme Court, including the Rose Dinner, a youth conference and the March for Life’s five-week online only event, March 19-29, March organizers had already hired a production company to make a livestreamed event possible in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, to enforce mask wearing and social distancing.

But the plan was still to have as large a live rally as could be arranged. Many of the buses from the Midwest, long a staple of the event, were canceled last fall as a result of the pandemic, and the assault on the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6 and threats of subsequent violence by domestic terrorist groups, as reported by the FBI, made security impossible.

“The protection of all of those who participate in the annual March, as well as the many law enforcement personnel and others who work tirelessly each year to ensure a safe and peaceful event, is a top priority of the March for Life,” Jeanne Mancini, president of the March for Life Defense and Education Fund, said in a statement issued late on Jan. 15.

“In light of the fact that we are in the midst of a pandemic which may be peaking, and in view of the heightened pressures that law enforcement officers and others are currently facing in and around the Capitol ... the annual rally will take place virtually, and we are asking all participants to stay home and to join the March virtually,” she added.

There will still be a small in-person presence. “We will invite a small group of pro-life leaders from across the country to march from the U.S. Capitol to the Supreme Court,” Mancini said.

“These leaders will represent pro-life Americans everywhere who, each in their own unique ways, work tirelessly and without compunction and build a culture where every human life is valued and protected,” she added.

Marches in recent years have drawn at least 100,000 participants, and last year’s event, when President Donald J. Trump spoke at the rally, was believed to have had the largest attendance in its history. The smallest March for Life to this was in 1987 during a snowstorm, and drew an estimated 5,000.

The march is held on or near the anniversary of the Supreme Court’s 1973 Roe v. Wade decision, which legalized abortion on demand.

The National Park Service closed “core areas” of the National Mall Jan. 15. They were to remain closed at least through Jan. 21.

People walk up Constitution Avenue headed toward the U.S. Supreme Court while participating in the 47th annual March for Life in Washington Jan. 24, 2020. The 2021 March for Life in Washington will be held virtually because of the coronavirus pandemic and ongoing political unrest in the nation’s capital. (CNS photo/Tyler Orsburn)

Most marches and prayer vigils affiliated with the March for Life at state capitals are still planned, and some have already been held. State marches have been postponed in Arkansas and Oregon, and an online alternative has been

(For more information, visit the website www.marchforlife.org.)

In view of the gravity of the current pandemic and the lack of available alternatives, the reasons to accept the new COVID-19 vaccines from Pfizer and Moderna are sufficiently serious to justify their use, despite their remote connection to morally compromised cell lines, the bishops said.

“Receiving one of the COVID-19 vaccines ought to be understood as an act of charity toward the other members of our community. In this way, being vaccinated against COVID-19 should be considered an act of love of our neighbor and part of our moral responsibility for the common good,” the bishops said.

The bishops found the third COVID-19 vaccine, developed by pharmaceutical giant Astrazeneca and not yet approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, to be “more morally compromised” than the others, and concluded that it “should be avoided” if alternatives are available. In all cases, the bishops urge Catholics to remain “on guard so that the new COVID-19 vaccines do not desensitize us or weaken our determination to oppose the evil of abortion itself and the subsequent use of fetal cells in research.”

The bishops praised Bishop Rhoades for his leadership on this issue.

“It is wonderful that one of Indiana’s own is at the forefront of these important ethical discussions,” Espada said.

With regard to the use of masks—at the Statehouse and elsewhere in public, Espada says the matter is even more straightforward.

“We encourage people to wear masks in this time of global crisis to protect themselves and others because it’s the right thing to do,” she said.

“If anyone wants to testify during this legislative session on issues important to the ICC—and we certainly encourage people to do so—they should always wear masks.”

Espada was an uneventful week on the legislative front. All government offices were closed Monday for Martin Luther King Jr. Day. In addition, the Indiana General Assembly cancelled all legislative activity for the entire week, and Gov. Eric Holcomb closed the state government complex for most of the week. This was out of an abundance of caution surrounding threats to state capitals related to the Jan. 6 breach on the U.S. Capitol and the Jan. 20 inauguration of President Joe Biden.

The General Assembly is expected to resume its business on Monday, Jan. 25.

To follow priority legislation of the ICC, visit www.in.gov.icc. This website includes information about 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 Arthure, a member of St. Malachy Parish in Brownburg, is a corresponding editor for The Criterion.)

Our religion class and our school focus a lot on helping others. Our school supports the ministry that our parish does. We have about five food drives every year. They also teach about kindness and stuff. It makes me feel good because it makes me realize I’m not the only one who realizes there is work to be done.

—Gracelyn Raelson, a sixth-grade student at Holy Family School in New Albany

In Heaven’s Eyes.

Our religion class and our school focus a lot on helping others,“ she says. “Our school supports the ministry that our parish does. We have about five food drives every year. They also teach about kindness and stuff. It makes me feel good because it makes me realize I’m not the only one who realizes there is work to be done.”

The “coats go to homeless people or anyone who just needs a coat and can’t afford it. They go to men, women and children. There’s a great need on both sides of the Otoe River. To see that spirit in a young girl like that, it can catch on fire with her friends, and it’s a help to the whole community.”

Gracelyn first embraced that need to help in the late part of 2019—just before she turned 11—when she heard a local radio station announce a winter coat drive.

“It was about three weeks before my birthday, and I thought, ‘What do I really want for my birthday?’ I really want people to be warm on my birthday.”

“I told my family. Two days before my birthday, we dropped off about 25 coats.”

When the radio station canceled the coat drive in late 2020 because of concerns about the COVID-19 crisis, Gracelyn decided to ramp up her coat-collecting efforts that had begun earlier in the year with a yard sale.

With the help of her parents, Ryan and Sara, and her younger brothers Brennan and Sawyer, the family kicked in about $300 that Gracelyn used to buy some coats and a large bin to store them.

Just because the radio station wasn’t doing it this year didn’t mean I couldn’t do it,” Gracelyn says. “People need the coats.”

She credits her initiative to the example of her parents, the lessons she learns at Holy Family School, and the influence of In Heaven’s Eyes.

Our religion class and our school focus a lot on helping others,” she says. “Our school supports the ministry that our parish does. We have about five food drives every year. They also teach about kindness and stuff. It makes me feel good because it makes me realize I’m not the only one who realizes there is work to be done.”

Gracelyn’s mother also points to the faith-filled impact of the school and the parish on her daughter.

“We’ve said for years now that Holy Family School has really been valuable for us as parents in cultivating a spirit of giving for our children,” Sara says.

“This is not something that Gracelyn has been prompted to do. I feel it comes second nature to her to think of other people, and a lot of that comes from Holy Family. She’s been surrounded by teachers and families that model for her what it means to live a Christ-like life.”

When Gracelyn is asked what she thinks God would say about her efforts, she says, “I think he’s proud.”

After a pause, she adds, “Next year, I’m going to go bigger than my goal was this year.”
Bishops applaud HHS rule change that aids adoption and foster care providers

WASHINGTON (CNS)—A Department of Health and Human Services rule change that helps ensure that faith-based social service providers will not be shut down and that the work they do will continue to be funded is a welcome development, said a Shrine cardinals who work together to take steps to increase—not decrease—opportunities for children to be placed with safe and loving families. The faith-based agencies annually serve thousands of families who operated in accordance with the teachings of the Church and are partnering with the government to assist children in need.

The rule modification affects a 2016 regulation put in place by then-President Barack Obama’s administration. The change would allow faith-based adoption and foster care agencies to continue receiving federal funding for their work that follows their religious beliefs.

The rule modification affects agencies that provide adoption and foster care services to children. It will allow faith-based social service providers “to continue partnering with the government to assist children in need,” said Don McColman, president of the Interfaith Social Action Network (ISAN), a coalition of faith-based agencies.

The ISAN, which centers on the archdioceses of Atlanta, Philadelphia, and the Diocese of Rockville Centre, has been working with Catholic adoption and foster care providers who operate in accordance with the teachings of the diocesan bishops, the chairmen said. “With more than 400,000 children in foster care, we need to work together to take steps to increase—not decrease—opportunities for children to be placed with safe and loving families.”

“We appreciate the finalization of these rule modifications,” they added.

The U.S. Supreme Court heard arguments on Nov. 4 in the case of Fulton v. Philadelphia, which centers on the right of faith-based adoption and foster care providers to continue receiving federal funding for their work that follows their religious beliefs.

The justices seemed willing to find a middle ground in the case, which pits the rights of religious groups against state anti-discrimination laws.

The HHS rule took effect on Jan. 19.†
Franciscan’s doctorate work has strong ties to local Church

By Mike Krokos

Although he moved on from his position as the archdiocesan director of the Office of Intercultural Ministry in 2014, Brother Moisés Moisés Gutierrez left an imprint.

Many will remember his work in creating the Intercultural Pastoral Institute (IPI), whose goal is to form pastoral and catechetical leaders within the various ethnic communities in the Church in central and southern Indiana.

Others will recall him helping organize the first-ever intercultural ministry gala in 2014—attended by several hundred people—which provided the archdiocese an opportunity to experience the universality of the local Church.

“The main goal, the main purpose is to help the archdiocese become more aware of the diversity here, and also to show the archdiocese this is something that we should celebrate,” Brother Moisés said at the time. “That is the beauty of diversity.”

So it should come as no surprise that Brother Moisés’ ministry in the archdiocese played a prominent role in his dissertation recently presented in Gonzaga University’s doctoral program of philosophy in leadership in Spokane, Wash.

In it, he developed a model for an intercultural pastoral set for global and local leadership.

“I am very grateful that my experiences in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis that prepared me for this,” Brother Moisés said during a recent visit to Indianapolis.

“We need a global mindset, even when we lead locally, even when we are local leaders,” he noted. “That was my experience here in Indianapolis.

“In the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, with the diversity present … with the Latinos, the African Catholics, the Koreans, the Filipinos, the Burmese, it showed the importance of really having a global mindset.

“Other global initiative models are business-oriented, but I believe Moisés, 55. But the one in his dissertation is not.

“I felt … we needed one that is more human.”

That humanity, he noted, was always on display here through the local Church.

“It included an expansion of the intercultural pastoral leadership program for Catholics of Black, Burmese and Hispanic background. It also helped initiate an ethnic dinner series spotlighting Burmese, Korean, Filipino and Vietnamese food and cultures, and activities highlighting special cultural Masses.

“I am a learner,” Brother Moisés said, and his work at Gonzaga “has opened so many other doors for ministry.

“I am excited about this next phase in my life—whatever it is—as a leader, as a Franciscan, as a person … as a Christian.

He has been offered a teaching position at Franciscan School of Theology at the University of San Diego but said he is still exploring other opportunities and “discerning” what God is calling him to.

He is currently working on his post-doctorate and doing “field work in different countries. That is the idea, to continue in reaching this model of global mindset.”

Reflecting on his years ministering in the archdiocese, Brother Moisés said he truly misses the people.

“Indianapolis has been one of the cities I have been so much involved in, and easier,” he said. “I guess part of that was the ministry I was doing. … connecting with people from different cultures and different backgrounds. I just loved that.

“I was enriched by my experience here,” he continued, “and I am so grateful to the archdiocese for allowing me to walk with the Catholics and the diversity here.”

Tesis doctoral franciscana fuertemente vinculada a la Iglesia local

Aunque desde 2015 ya no ocupa el puesto de director arquidiocesano de la Oficina del Ministerio Intercultural, la huella del hermano franciscano Moisés Gutierrez sigue estando presente.

Muchos recordarán su labor durante la creación del Instituto Pastoral Intercultural (IPI), cuyo objetivo es formar líderes pastorales y catequistas dentro de las diversas comunidades étnicas de la Iglesia en el centro y el sur de Indiana.

Otros lo recordarán ayudando a organizar la primera gala del Ministerio Intercultural en 2014, a la que asistieron varios cientos de personas, y que brindó a la Arquidiócesis la oportunidad de experimentar la universidad de la Iglesia local.

“El objetivo principal, el propósito principal, es contribuir a que la Arquidiócesis sea más consciente de la diversidad que existe aquí, y también demostrar que esto es motivo de celebración,” expresó el hermano Moisés Gutierrez en aquel momento. “Esos es el hermoso de la diversidad.”

Por lo tanto, no debería sorprendernos que el ministerio del hermano franciscano en la Arquidiócesis desempeñara un papel destacado en la disertación que presentó recientemente en el programa de doctorado de filosofía en liderazgo de la Universidad de Gonzaga en Spokane, Washington, a través del cual desarrolló un modelo de liderazgo mundial y local con mentalidad internacional.

Moisés Gutierrez, muy agradecido de que sus experiencias en la Arquidiócesis de Indianapolis le hayan preparado para esto, comentó el hermano Moisés durante una visita reciente a Indianapolis.


“Con la diversidad que existe en la Arquidiócesis de Indianapolis, latinos, católicos africanos, coreanos, filipinos, burmases … resaltó clara la importancia de tener una mentalidad verdaderamente internacional.”

Otros modelos de iniciativas interconocionales estaban en los negocios, aseguró el hermano Moisés, de 55 años; pero no así el de su tesis doctoral.

“Según explicó, esa humanidad, siempre fue evidente en la Iglesia local a través de ejemplos tales como la ampliación de los programas de liderazgo pastoral intercultural para los católicos de origen negro, birmano e hispano. También contribuyó a la creación una serie de cenas étnicas en las que se destacaron las comidas y las culturas africanas, birmanas, coreanas, mexicanas, filipinas y vietnamitas, y ayudó a resaltar las mismas culturales especiales.

“Soy un aprendiz” afirmó el hermano Moisés, y su trabajo en el oficina de la Arquidiócesis “ha abierto muchas otras puertas para el ministerio.

“Me entusiasma pensar en la próxima fase de mi vida, sea cual sea, como líder, como franciscano, como persona … como cristiano.”

Le han ofrecido un puesto de profesor en la Facultad Franciscana de Teología de la Universidad de San Diego, pero Moisés Moisés dijo que aún está explorando otras oportunidades y “discerniendo” aquello que desea hacer después. También está considerando la posibilidad de trabajar en un postdoctorado y hacer “trabajo de campo” en diferentes países. Esa es la idea, continuar difundiendo ese modelo de mentalidad internacional.

Atiende una serie de sesiones de ministerio en la Arquidiócesis, el hermano Moisés dijo que realmente extraña la experiencia.

“Indianápolis ha sido una de las ciudades en las que me he sentido como en casa fácilmente y de inmediato,” aseguró. “Supongo que parte de eso era el ministerio que estaba haciendo como sacerdote y, después, como persona.”

“La experiencia aquí me enriqueció—prosiguió—y estoy muy agradecido con la Arquidiócesis por permitirme caminar junto a los católicos y la gran diversidad que existe aquí.”

Supreme Court says abortion drugs must be obtained in person, not by mail

WASHINGTON (CNS)—The Supreme Court on Jan. 12 reinstated a federal requirement that women who are seeking abortion drugs must be obtained in person, not by mail during the pandemic, which the justices said was used to end pregnancies during the first trimester.

The justices said the need for the FDA to have protocols in place to protect women from potentially life-threatening and devastating side effects.

Catholic Church leaders have been vocal in their opposition to this drug since it was given FDA approval in 2000 and in 2016 when the FDA relaxed rules for its use, saying it could be administered with a challenge to their requirements for their distribution made last year by the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists.

The group argued the in-person visits to obtain these pills during a pandemic violated after signing a form acknowledging risks of the Baptism of the Lord, the Church during a pandemic violated the Constitution by creating a substantial obstacle to women being able to get an abortion.

U.S. District Judge Theodore Chuang of Maryland agreed, ruling last summer that keeping the FDA requirement during the pandemic “would place a substantial obstacle in the path of women seeking a medication abortion and that may delay or preclude a medication abortion and thus may necessitate a more invasive procedure.”

Instead, he said, the pills could be sent by mail during the pandemic.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the 4th Circuit rejected the FDA’s request to put this ruling on hold and the FDA took the case to the Supreme Court, which decided to take it up last October.

The justices suggested the FDA go back to the District Court to ask the judge to modify or freeze his order and on Dec. 9, Chuang issued a new order denying the FDA’s request.

The Supreme Court said that women who are seeking abortion-inducing drugs must do so in person, not by mail, as a federal judge had allowed last year due to the pandemic and the high court had let stand.

In its 6-3 order, the justices said women must follow previous Food and Drug Administration (FDA) requirements that they had to visit a doctor’s office, hospital or clinic in person to obtain Mifepristone, the brand name for mifepristone, also called RU-486, which is used to end pregnancies during the first 10 weeks.

FDA regulations initially required patients to receive the drug in person after filing a form acknowledging risks associated with it.

Carol Tobias, president of National Right to Life, said in Jan. 12 statement that she was “pleased that the U.S. Supreme Court recognizes the serious nature of chemical abortions and the need for the FDA to have protocols in place to protect women from potentially life-threatening and devastating side effects.”

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Instead, he said, the pills could be sent by mail during the pandemic.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the 4th Circuit rejected the FDA’s request to put this ruling on hold and the FDA took the case to the Supreme Court, which decided to take it up last October.

The justices suggested the FDA go back to the District Court to ask the judge to modify or freeze his order and on Dec. 9, Chuang issued a new order denying the FDA’s request.

The Supreme Court said that women who are seeking abortion drugs must be obtained in person, not by mail.
Human rights are meant to promote the common good of all

By Stephen M. Colecchi

The Church believes that every person is created in the image and likeness of God. We are made in the image of a community of persons—Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Our God-given human rights develop and thrive in community. Our human dignity is both personal and social. We need one another to grow, to prosper and to reach our full potential. This basic teaching is not alien to Americans. Our Declaration of Independence pronounces: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.” The declaration goes on to acknowledge that “to secure these rights, governments are instituted.”

Our nation is not alone in upholding human rights. St. John XXIII said, in the encyclical “Pacem in Terris,” that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations in 1948, was “a solemn recognition of the personal dignity of every human being” (#144).

 Sadly, our nation and others have not always lived up to our commitments to human rights. Sometimes we have not even properly understood these rights. Discrimination based on race, ethnicity, religion, sex and other factors is evidence of our shortcomings; the failure to consistently defend the right to life is a principal one. It is true that “I have rights.” It is also incomplete. It would be better to say, “We all have rights.” Even this is incomplete. In the words of Pope John XXIII, human rights “are inextricably bound up with as many duties” (#28).

Only by exercising both our human rights and responsibilities can we protect the rights of all. When Americans think of rights, we often focus on freedom of religion, assembly, speech and the press as found in the Bill of Rights. Catholic teaching includes these rights and many more.

For the Church, human rights extend to the social structures that are needed for a life worthy of human dignity. These structures serve the common good. The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches that the common good is necessary for promoting human rights. Quoting the Second Vatican Council, the catechism defines the common good as “the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfillment more fully and more easily” (#1906).

“In the name of the common good, public authorities are bound to respect the fundamental and inalienable rights of the human person” (#1907).

Governments “should make accessible to each what is needed to lead a truly human life: food, clothing, health, work, education and culture, suitable information, the right to establish a family, and so on” (#1908).

Pope John XXIII explored many of these rights in “Pacem in Terris.” He began with “the right to live” and went on to affirm the “the right to bodily integrity and to the means necessary for the proper development of life, particularly food, clothing, shelter, medical care, rest, and, finally, the necessary social services” (#11).

He acknowledged the “right to be looked after in the event of ill health; disability stemming from his work; widowhood; old age; enforced unemployment; or whenever through no fault of his own he is deprived of the means of livelihood” (#11).

This holistic understanding of inalienable rights and the common good makes moral demands upon us. Beyond respecting ourselves and the rights of others, it “is necessary that all participate, each according to his position and role, in promoting the common good,” states the catechism (#1913).

In other words, we have both personal and social responsibilities that correspond to our rights. The Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church puts it this way: “The common good, therefore, involves all members of society. No one is exempt from cooperating, according to each one’s possibilities, in attaining it and developing it” (#167).

Government serves “the common good when it seeks to create a human environment that offers citizens the possibility of truly exercising their human rights and of fulfilling completely their corresponding duties” (#389). Especially in a democracy, we have both rights and duties.

St. John Paul II reminded us in his encyclical letter “Sollicitudo Rei Socialis” that “the goods of this world are originally meant for all.” He reaffirmed the “right to private property,” but taught that it is not absolute and was “under a social mortgage” (42).

In “Fratelli Tutti: On Fraternity and Social Friendship,” Pope Francis warned that “in practice, human rights are not equal for all” (#22). “Today, there is a tendency to claim ever broader individual—I am tempted to say individualistic—rights” (#111).

There is a danger in detaching individualistic rights from the common good. Such detachment leads to excessive inequality. “Development must not aim at the amassing of wealth by a few, but must ensure ‘human rights—personal and social, economic and political, including the rights of nations and of peoples,’” he wrote (#122).

As Catholics and human beings, our vocations are to exercise our own rights to develop our human potentials and to build a society in which others can do the same. Protecting human rights is linked to promoting the common good.

(Stephen M. Colecchi retired as director of the Office of International Justice and Peace of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in 2018. He currently serves as an independent consultant on Catholic social teaching and international issues of concern to the Church.)

John Suruljak, 97, plants cucumbers in one of the gardens at St. George Church in Tinley Park, Ill., on May 29, 2020. The vegetables are donated to the Tinley Park Food Pantry. The Church teaches that human rights, such as the right to private property and the ability to amass individual wealth, should ultimately be used to promote the common good of all. (CNS photo/Karen Callaway, Chicago Catholic)
Savor and share God’s gifts as we enter a new year

Worship and Evangelization Outreach/Jim Wood

ACRE brings us closer to Christ

As a former religion teacher and a current catechist in the archdiocese, I believe Catholic identity is one of the main considerations when assessing our students in religious education. While testing our students can show us how they are performing in a subject, it can also give insights about how they might be growing emotionally and spiritually.

We should also assess in religious education by use of the Assessment of Child/Youth Religious Education (ACRE). Through the cooperation of the National Catholic Education Association/Information for Growth (NCEA/IFG), CREI, and the archdiocese’s children at the fifth, eighth, and 11th grade levels.

The NCEA ACRE assessment results assist teachers, principals, and youth ministers in designing programs to meet the catechetical needs of the people they serve—whether children, parents, and teachers. The assessment is meant to provide data to enhance the programs and to make informed decisions about any catechetical program or catechist.

ACRE is used to evaluate the catechetical program and weaknesses. However, all involved in religious education want each learner to reach their fullest potential in building a relationship with God and the Church. We want our students to know and understand our faith, and to love and live our hearts.

With all this in mind, part of my job as the archdiocese’s Coordinator of Catechesis is to ensure that our teachers and administrators get the most out of ACRE. Annually, I report ACRE data on an anonymous basis and compare our archdiocese compares with others around the country. I show students answered from year to year so folks can compare growth or reduction in order to augment their current religious education program.

Through the years I have served as a catechist or teacher, there is one thing I have learned: our behaviors and attitudes as Catholics are a part of our faith, along with knowledge. We can share the cognitive (head) part in our classrooms, but we must share in the heart.

Behavior as Christians is not just learned in the classroom as knowledge of faith, but also as a part of the whole family, school, or parish. We not only teach the faith, but we also share it with young people in all aspects of our lives.

ACRE can measure some things as noted above, yet it cannot measure fully our faith because it is learned first through the family, then the parish and school. We are all responsible for passing on this faith. We learn it first through the family, then the parish and school. We are all responsible for passing on the faith, and also for showing young people how to have a disciple relationship with Jesus.

ACRE is administered in our schools, parishes, and schools, usually during the month of January. For more information about ACRE, contact me at 317-265-1569 or jwood@archindy.org.

Jim Wood is archdiocesan coordinator of catechetical resources and a diocesan candidate for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.
The Sunday Readings

Sunday, January 24, 2021

• jonah 3:1-5, 10
• 1 Corinthians 7:29-31
• Mark 1:14-20

The Book of Jonah is the source for the first reading. Scholars believe that it was written sometime after the Babylonian exile of the Jews. This reading speaks of Jonah’s visit to Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian Empire, located roughly in the region of modern day Turkey. It is said that at God’s command they went to Nineveh to call the people to conversion. The Jews who first heard this reading had a definite mindset about Nineveh and its inhabitants. By the time that this book was written, foreigners already had subjected God’s people to their time and again to conquest. By all of these events, none was more brutal than the Assyrians. Brutality and viciousness were their hallmarks. As a result, the Jews regarded Assyrians as utterly evil, not just as threats to the Jewish population, but by possibly annihilating the Jews, they were upsetting the worship of the One God of Israel.

Nineveh was the capital of Assyria, the heart of this inhumane empire. Yet Jonah succeeded in converting the people of the city. The lesson is clear. Anyone, even someone with the hardest of hearts, can repent. Also, God wants all people to repent.

This weekend’s second reading is from St. Paul’s First Epistle to the Corinthians. Paul had a challenge in leading the Corinthian Christians to a fully devout Christian life. The city was in its time (the first century) what Nineveh was imagined to have beenCroeseaSp. It was a city of great wealth and power, and its rulers were known for their oppression and violence. By the time that this book was written, the city had fallen into disrepute, and its inhabitants were seen as oppressors.

In his letter to the Corinthians, Paul calls upon the Christians of Corinth to remember that time passes and that the city is just a shadow of its former self. The Corinthians were facing challenges and temptations that were threatening their faith. Paul urges them to remember the lessons of the past and to be faithful to their beliefs and values.

The third reading for this weekend is from the Book of Jonah, which is one of the prophetic books of the Old Testament. The Book of Jonah is the source of the story of the prophet Jonah and the city of Nineveh. In this story, Jonah receives a call from God to go to Nineveh and proclaim a message of repentance. Jonah resists this call and goes in the opposite direction, but he is eventually forced to confront his fears and fulfill his mission.

The Gospel Reading for this weekend is from the Gospel of St. Mark, which is one of the four Gospels of the New Testament. The Gospel of St. Mark is one of the earliest to be written and is known for its conciseness and directness. In this passage, Jesus is teaching about the kingdom of heaven and the importance of repentance. He speaks of the need for people to repent and turn away from their sins.

Q
Catholics are blessed to have the sacrament of penance. But what about other faiths? How do non-Catholics have their sins forgiven? (Hawaii)

A
The Catholic Church has a long history of the confession of sins. In the earliest centuries, confession was actually done in public, the thinking being that when we sin, we damage not only our own friendship with God but our relationships within the community of faith. But around the sixth century, Irish monks began hearing confessions one-on-one, and that practice spread to the universal Church.

Though most Catholics may not know this, there are types of individual confession in other religious traditions as well, although, apart from the Orthodox Churches, Catholics would not consider them as to offer sacramental absolution. Eastern Orthodox priests hear confessions not in a confessional but in the main part of the church, before a Gospel book and an icon of Jesus Christ. (This serves as a reminder to the penitent that the confession is really made not to another human being, but to God himself.)

Lutherans have a form of confession known as “Holy Absolution,” that is done privately to a clergyman on request. After the penitent has confessed his or her sins, the minister declares: “In the stead and by the command of our Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” In the Anglican tradition, confession and absolution is usually done by an entire congregation as part of a eucharistic service, but certain Anglicans, particularly Anglo-Catholics, do practice private auricular confession. The Catholic Church teaches that venial sins can be forgiven by prayer, acts of charity and the reception of holy communion, but it requires individual confession at least annually for grave (mortal) sins and encourages penitents to confess venial (non-mortal) sins also, as a way to grow in holiness.

It’s noteworthy to mention that during the pandemic, in 2020 the Apostolic Penitentiary (the Vatican tribunal that deals with matters of conscience) urged Catholic priests to exercise the of absolution, the belief that, when they find themselves with “the painful impossibility of receiving sacramental absolution,” they can act of contrition directly to God in prayer. If they are sincere and promise to go to confession as soon as possible, the Vatican tribunal, “they obtain the forgiveness of sins, even mortal sins.”

Q
I heard on a Catholic channel that on holy days of obligation, all proceeds from the collection plate stay with the parish—as distinguished from Sunday offerings, where there is a split with the diocese. Is this true? (Location withheld)

A
Although there is some variation from diocese to diocese, I am not familiar with any place that has the arrangement you describe—where holy day revenue would go to the parish, while Sunday collections would be divided with the diocese.

Instead, all collections typically go first to the parish, where they are used to keep the lights and heat on in parish buildings, pay the salaries of parish staff, provide Catholic education through a parish school and/or religious education program, etc. The parish then forwards to the diocese a yearly tax, called an assessment, that is used to run the chancery office and the marriage tribunal, to train seminarians, etc. That assessment, according to Georgetown University’s Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, averages about 13% of the monies collected at parish masses throughout the year.

Questions may be sent to Father Kenneth Doyle at askfatherdoyle@gmail.com and 30 Columbus Circle Dir, Albany, New York 12203.
RIP SECTIONS:


PONCE, Marlon Noel Santos Miguel Juarez Anunez, 26, St. Lawrence, Indianapolis, Nov. 4. Son of Santos Juarez Ponce and Anna Maria Ponce. Brother of Loyda Juarez, Jana, Jeffery and Olmer Juarez Ponce and Roger and Sam, and great-grandfather of four.


STOCKRAHM, Mary E. (Wittmer), 94, St. Michael, Camestos, Dec. 25. Aunt of several.


Papal trip to Argentina, Uruguay still on the table, Pope Francis tells ambassador

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope Francis told Uruguay’s new ambassador to the Holy See that a future visit to the country as well as to his native Argentina is still very much on the table.

In an interview with Catholic News Service (CNS) on Jan. 13, Guzmán Carrara, who prior to his appointment as Uruguay’s ambassador served as secretary of the Pontifical Commission for Latin America, said he decided to ask the pope about the long-awaited visit when he presented his credentials to the Holy See on Jan. 9.

After years of doubt as to whether Pope Francis will ever make the long-awaited visit to Uruguay and Argentina, Carrara said it mustered up “the courage to ask the pope, ‘Is it a trip out of the question?’”

“No way is it out of the question!” the pope exclaimed, according to Carrara. “I have the desire and the intention to travel to Rio de la Plata—to Uruguay and to my country.” The Rio del la Plata forms part of the border between the two South American countries.

The pope made similar remarks in a November 2019 interview with the Argentine news agency Telam, in which he said that he was “eager to go” visit his homeland.

Carrara told CNS that Pope Francis said he originally planned a visit to Uruguay, Argentina and Chile in October 2017.

The pope explained that if he had gone, “I wouldn’t have found anyone in Uruguay and Argentina because in the month of January, everybody goes to the beach; the cities are empty,” Carrara recalled.

“Now I must wait for the pandemic to end and for favorable conditions to happen in government, and make the trip when providence allows it,” he said, according to the ambassador.

Carrara is no stranger to the Vatican. He was named bureau chief of the Pontifical Council for the Laity in 1977 to St. Paul VI. In 1991, St. Paul II named him undersecretary of the same pontifical council, a position he held until 2011 when Pope Benedict XVI appointed him secretary of the Pontifical Commission for Latin America.†
U.S., the travesties of abortion and the death penalty. He fears we will try to gloss over the many societal problems that COVID-19 exposed. He criticizes the "infamous trickle-down theory" of the economy. "For a long time, we carried on thinking we could be healthy in a world that was sick," the pontiff writes. "We can shape the future. We need to dream, pray, choose and act."

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**CALDAROLA**

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I’m reminded of how income inequality in the U.S. has soared since the 1950s—salaries for the vast majority have not kept pace, while billionaires have taken over vast swaths of America’s wealth.

Pope Francis doesn’t dodge the hard issues. He talks about the mistakes made after the 2008 financial meltdown. He speaks of George Floyd, gun violence in the U.S., the travesties of abortion and the death penalty. He fears we will try to gloss over the many societal problems that COVID-19 exposed. He criticizes the “infamous trickle-down theory” of the economy. “For a long time, we carried on thinking we could be healthy in a world that was sick,” the pontiff writes. “We can shape the future. We need to dream, pray, choose and act.”

(Ellie Caldarola writes for Catholic News Service.)

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**ERLANDSON**

continued from page 12

The Church is being subjected to these same gravitational pulls. We have our own extremists on both sides, well-funded and willing to challenge anyone from pope to pastor with whom they do not agree. And the line between political and ecclesial extremism is blurring. The conservative and liberal political agendas are driving Church agendas, and the same apocalyptic rhetoric is being adopted as well.

This is a tough time to be a leader in the Church, whether pope or pastor or parent. Yet we need those who can speak for humility, for selflessness and for the common good. We need to focus on those in need, not those aggrieved, and we need to find ways to dismantle the barriers so many of us have helped erect.

(Greg Erlandson, director and editor-in-chief of Catholic News Service, can be reached at erlandson@catholicsnews.com.)

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**Full-Time Co-coordinator of Youth Ministry**

The Terre Haute Catholic Community is seeking a full-time Co-coordinator of Youth Ministry to work collaboratively with the fellow Co-coordinator of Youth Ministry to facilitate a Total Youth Ministry program for four city parishes of Terre Haute, Grades 9-12. This includes, but is not limited to: religious education and Confirmation programs, retreats and prayer services, service projects, leadership development of students and volunteers, and fundraising.

Applicant should be a practicing Catholic and possess a love for and knowledge of the Catholic faith, as well as a strong commitment to the faith development of young people. The applicant must have the ability to organize, collaborate with co-coordinator, work well with volunteers, exhibit good leadership skills, creativity and initiative. Professional work ethic and excellent communication skills, both written and verbal, are essential. Bachelor’s Degree and Youth Ministry programming experience preferred. Possession of a Youth Ministry Certificate or the willingness to obtain one is essential. Some travel, evening and weekend work is required. This position is currently available and will be open until a qualified candidate is found.

Direct Inquiries/Resumes to:
Barbara Black
Sacred Heart of Jesus Church
3232 N. 13 1/2 St.
Terre Haute, IN 47804
812-466-1231
bbarb@shjth.org

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**Event and Volunteer Coordinator, Young Adult and College Campus Ministry**

The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Indianapolis is seeking a full-time Event and Volunteer Coordinator for the Office of Young Adult and College Campus Ministry (YACCM). The Event and Volunteer Coordinator has an integral role in the day-to-day operations of the ministry, but also will also serve to discern and shape the mission of YACCM alongside the Director and Associate Director.

Practically, the Event and Volunteer Coordinator will serve the office by running all vital details of major programs and events for the archdiocesan young adult community, alongside volunteers and staff. Specifically, the Event and Volunteer Coordinator will book and work with venues and presenters, build key relationships with local parishes, venues and volunteers, gather and communicate with volunteers, oversee all communications and social media responsibilities, as well as spearhead the launch and formation of a co-chair volunteer team. An ideal candidate would possess strong skills in organization, communications, marketing, event planning and peer mentoring.

Since its inception in 2008, IndyCatholic and The Office of Young Adult and College Campus Ministry (YACCM) has seen the Lord work in tremendous ways among the 18-39 demographic in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. We are blessed to lead a vibrant, ever-growing community of young adults around Central and Southern Indiana with a mission to seek, find and invite young adults to authentic life in Jesus Christ and to spiritually equip them to become lifelong, missionary disciples.

Candidates must be professed and practicing Catholics with a love for and understanding of the teachings of the Catholic Church. A minimum of a bachelor’s degree in theology or religious education, or hands-on ministry experience is required. Previous paid or volunteer ministerial experience with young adults and/or college students is preferred.

To apply, please e-mail your cover letter, resume, and list of references, in confidence, to:

Ed Isakson
Director, Human Resources
Archdiocese of Indianapolis
1400 N. Meridian St.
Indianapolis, IN 46202
E-mail: edisakson@archindy.org

Application deadline is January 31, 2021.

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**Equal Opportunity Employer**
Daily podcast that leads listeners through Bible’s narrative is No. 1

WITH FR. MIKE SCHMITZ, FEATURING JEFF CAVINS

He said that Cavins’s Great Adventure Bible Timeline changed his own relationship with Scripture, and called it a “phenomenal resource” for organizing the 73 books of Scripture.

“The Bible in a Year” includes a reading plan so subscribers can also read the day’s readings themselves, but Cavins said that “there is something powerful about hearing the word of God that goes into your heart.”

He pointed to Romans 10:17, “so faith comes by hearing the word of God.”

“We really do truly believe that if people will listen to God’s word, it has the power of changing your life and your thinking,” he said.

The show’s 365 total podcasts will cover every book of the Bible and more than 2.5 million by Jan. 12.

“Podcasts like “The Bible in a Year” are available on Apple Podcasts, Spotify and other podcast platforms, and through Hallow, a Catholic prayer app.

COVID-19 and ecumenism: Pandemic prompts prayer and action

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—The COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns and travel restrictions have had an impact on the Church’s ecumenical efforts with other Christian churches and communities, but the effects were not all bad.

Around the globe, Christians of different denominations have and continue to practice what Pope Francis has called the “ecumenism of charity,” working together to care for the sick, support the mourning and feed the hungry.

And the boom of online liturgies and conferences have given many Christians greater opportunities to participate in the work of ecumenical liturgies of their Christian neighbors and to “attend” online conferences and workshops with them.

For many people, the 2021 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity on Jan. 18-25 will be another occasion of virtual ecumenical prayer.

But the number of attendees will be extremely limited because of the pandemic, Pope Francis still plans to close the week by presiding over an ecumenical evening prayer service at Rome’s Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls. Most people will watch online.

But all relationships require face time, and that goes for the Church’s Church’s relationships with other Christian communities as well, said Bishop Brian Farrell, secretary of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity.

The COVID-19 precautions meant that dozens of ecumenical meetings during the past year were moved online.

“We find that video conferencing is very good for organizational, practical meetings, but makes ecumenical dialogue much more difficult in effect, because in dialogue you need the back and forth of exchange and discussion and reaction, which is very difficult on video,” Bishop Farrell said.

The official theological dialogues of the Catholic Church and its ecumenical partners usually involve research and work in small groups before the theologians and Church leaders meet in person over the course of several days. Those meetings include prayer and formal sessions, but also meals and time for relaxing together.

The informal moments and opportunities for conversation are very important, Bishop Farrell said, because “you can thrash out your points, you can overcome doubts” and really get to know the theologians representing the churches.

Still, as the pope pointed out, the council missed those real connections, he said, but postponing most of their travel also gave them an opportunity to devote more time to special projects. In December, the council published “The Bishop and Christian Unity: An Ecumenical Vademecum.” Work is progressing on a summary of the various written documents say about topics such as the sacramentality of the Church or ministry in the Church, and “remote preparation” has begun for the celebration in 2025 of the 17th centenary of the First Ecumenical Council of Nicea, which “is fundamental for all Christians because it settled Christological questions and gave us the Creed.”

In addition to the Week of Prayer, two upcoming events have significant ecumenical aspects, Bishop Farrell said, referring to the Catholic Church’s celebration on Jan. 24 of the Sunday of the Word of God and Pope Francis’ planned trip to Iraq in March.

Reading, studying and praying with the Scriptures “is fundamental to ecumenical life,” because it is fundamental in the life of every Christian, Bishop Farrell said.

“We have to read the Scriptures, and we have to be familiar with them, because this is God’s revelation and the foundation of everything that we are,” he said. “In the past, there was a kind of hesitancy to encourage Catholics to read the Bible but that belongs to a different era, which we have overcome.”

The pope’s possible trip to Iraq on March 5-8 will have obvious ecumenical significance, but only because Catholic and Oriental Orthodox Christians live side by side there but because for decades they have been committed to promoting Christian unity.

“It’s the pope’s desire to be close to those who have really suffered, and everybody knows that Christians in that area of the world, and in particular in Iraq, have undergone tremendous suffering in recent times and in recent decades,” Bishop Farrell said. “It will certainly be an ecumenical journey insofar as he will meet members of other Churches, visiting a country where there is very normal and ordinary cooperation between all the Christians. They stand together.”

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Christian leaders venerate the relics of St. Timothy during a prayer service in Rome’s Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls on Jan. 25, 2020, from left are Anglican Archbishop Ian Ernest, director of the Anglican Centre in Rome; Pope Francis; Orthodox Metropolitan Gennadios of California; and Cardinal Kurt Koch, president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity.

(CNS photo/Vatican Media)