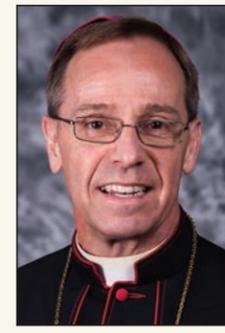




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Christ the Cornerstone

Respect for human dignity requires legal protection for the unborn, page 5.

CriterionOnline.com

January 22, 2021

Vol. LXI, No. 15 75¢



‘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

See COATS, page 8

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)

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.

“For much 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



Pope Francis

of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. to work nonviolently for harmony and equality for all, Pope Francis said.

“Each one of us is called to be an artisan 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 injustice.

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 building a just and equal society and where reconciliation and redemption can thrive.

“In 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 timely,” the pope wrote.

What is essential, he said, is to see each other as neighbors “in the truth of our share 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 “divine blessings of wisdom and peace” upon all the summit participants. †

KING

continued from page 1

country. Sadly, it is still true that the ‘color of our skin’ often matters more in our society than the ‘content of our character,’” the archbishop said, quoting the words of Rev. King from more than 50 years ago.

Violent protests over the summer and the violence that took place inside the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6 show “our country has become too angry, too bitter and too divided,” Archbishop Gomez said.

“As we confront our deep divisions, we face the same choices that Rev. King and the civil rights movement faced. For us, too, the question is how will we struggle against the injustices in our society, what means will we use?” the archbishop asked in his statement, released late on Jan. 15.

The challenge “for every one of us who believes in the promise of America and seeks to renew the soul of this great nation,” he said, can be found in words Rev. King wrote in 1958: “Along the way of life, someone must have the sense enough and the morality enough to cut off the chain of hate. This can only be done by projecting the ethics of love to the center of our lives.”

“We must learn again the wisdom of the Gospel and love our enemies and bless those who oppose us,” Archbishop Gomez said. “In this moment, Rev. King would counsel everyone in public life to seek reconciliation and reject the easy temptation to reprisals and recrimination.”

He continued: “We do not love those who oppose us because they are lovable, or even likable, Rev. King once said. We love them because God loves them. And by our love, we seek their conversion and friendship, not their humiliation.

“This is our Christian duty in this moment—to be healers and peacemakers, to overcome evil and lies, not by more

of the same, but with words of truth and works of love.”

Archbishop Gomez concluded by asking Mary, the Queen of Peace “to guide us in this moment of transition and uncertainty in our country. May she help us to keep believing in the power of love.”

Other statements issued for the King holiday included one from the new bishop of Buffalo, N.Y.—Bishop Michael W. Fisher, who was installed on Jan. 15.

On the day “when all lovers of peace” honor Rev. King’s memory and legacy, the bishop said, “let us recommit ourselves to cherishing and promoting the dignity of every person; to defeating what Pope Francis defines as the ‘sin of racism,’ whether in mind or in action and however blatant or subtle; and to demonstrating in these days of conflict and tension the desire for dialogue, understanding and mutual respect.”

Quoting Rev. King, Bishop Fisher added: “People fail to get along because they fear each other; they fear each other because they don’t know each other; they do not know each other because they have not communicated with each other.”

The bishop prayed the civil rights leader’s memory will “inspire us always and in every place to discern the good in others and, by our actions, reveal the grace and goodness of God himself.”

Alveda King, the niece of Rev. King, who is the founder of Alveda King Ministries, issued a statement reiterating her uncle’s words about love—he said he would “stick with love,” because “hate is too great a burden to bear,” she said, quoting her uncle.

She urged people to remember the King holiday should be a day of service. “We can all find something constructive to do in our communities, even if it’s just shaking the hand of the neighbor who supported a different candidate. Anything we can do to increase the peace is more than worth our efforts,” King said. †



Public Schedule of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

January 22–30, 2021

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

January 26 – 9:30 a.m.

Visit to Father Thomas Scecina Memorial High School, Indianapolis

January 26 – 1 p.m.

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

January 28 – 10 a.m.

Leadership Team meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center

January 30 – 11 a.m.

Dedication of St. Michael Church, Greenfield

‘A failure’ of love and solidarity creates societal divisions, says archbishop

SOUTH BEND, Ind. (CNS)—Love is the solution to the deep divisions that trouble societies, Archbishop Jose H. Gomez of Los Angeles, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), said in his Jan. 12 keynote for a virtual conference at the University of Notre Dame.

The archbishop focused on migrants and the global refugee crisis. But he also alluded to “the violence last week at our nation’s Capitol, and the deep polarization and divisions in our country.”

His address came six days after the storming of the Capitol in Washington by supporters of President Donald J. Trump.

All of these problems are more than a failure of politics or diplomacy, he said. “It’s a failure of human fraternity and solidarity. It’s a failure of love.”

Archbishop Gomez’s keynote “What Do We Owe the Immigrant?” reflected the conference theme: “We Belong to Each Other,” a quotation from St. Teresa of Calcutta.

He related that he has worked for more than 20 years on immigration reform and advocating for migrants and refugees, and he has come to realize these issues are part of deeper questions about God and the human person, namely that God is love and has created humans in his own image “that calls us to form one human family and to live together in love as brothers and sisters.

“Unless we believe that we have a Father in heaven, there’s no necessary reason for us to treat one another as brothers and sisters on Earth,” Archbishop Gomez said.

Without these truths, we can’t understand our Christian commitments to migrants and refugees, the poor, the

unborn, the imprisoned, the sick and the environment, he explained. Nor can we “understand how to create a society that will be good for human beings,” and he reminded the conference that “our society has lost its bearings.”

Currently, Western nations, corporations, agencies, etc., attempt to build a global economic and political order excluding traditional Judeo-Christian principles, he continued. And when those values are lost, we lose that principle of a loving God who creates persons in his own image, and the result, he said, is “an aggressively secular society.

“Without belief in a Creator who establishes values, we have no authority higher than our own politics and procedures,” he explained. “We are left with no solid foundation for our commitments to human dignity, freedom, equality and fraternity.”

This “crisis of truth” causes many hardships and injustices in society, he said, but we Christians know the truth and should proclaim it.

“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.”

Referring to the current national turmoil, Archbishop Gomez stressed that “we have an urgent duty in this moment to bear witness to the truth. ... This beautiful truth about God and the human person is the key to healing and reconciliation; it’s the way forward, the way we can come together as one nation under God.”

By serving our neighbors and caring for each other, particularly the weak and vulnerable, he concluded, “We can change our country and we can change the world. We can help our neighbors to know this God, and to know his love.” †



Archbishop Jose H. Gomez

The Criterion

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

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

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

Web site: www.CriterionOnline.com

E-mail: criterion@archindy.org

Published weekly except the last week of December and the first week of January.
 Mailing address: 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367. Periodical postage paid at Indianapolis, IN. Copyright © 2020 Criterion Press Inc. ISSN 0574-4350.

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

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

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Royals replace Rebels in high school lineup at Roncalli

By John Shaughnessy

For everyone keeping score at home, a new nickname has entered the lineup of Catholic high schools in the archdiocese.

Replacing its longtime nickname of Rebels, Roncalli High School in Indianapolis announced on Jan. 15 that its new nickname will be Royals.

The Roncalli Royals now join the formidable Catholic high school lineup of the Bishop Chatard Trojans, the Brebeuf Jesuit Braves, the Cardinal Ritter Raiders, the Cathedral Irish, the Father Thomas Secunia Memorial Crusaders, the Father Michael Shawe Memorial Hilltoppers, the Lumen Christi Saints, the Oldenburg Academy of the Immaculate Conception Twisters, the Our Lady of Providence Pioneers, the Providence Cristo Rey Wolves and the Seton Catholic Cardinals.

In announcing its new nickname of Royals, Roncalli issued a press release explaining its choice:

“Choosing this nickname acknowledges Jesus Christ as our King, and Our Blessed Mother as our Queen. As Christians, we are God’s children by adoption through Jesus [Eph 1:5], and this nickname signifies

that we participate in his royal, divine mission.”

The decision to change the school’s nickname was made in the summer of 2020 as Roncalli celebrated its 50th anniversary and as the United States was in the midst of social unrest.

“The confusion and negative connotations attached to the nickname ‘Rebels’ are also a source of concern as we move forward over the next 50 years,” said Terese Carson, Roncalli’s vice president for institutional advancement, at the time.

“We have had alumni and community members express concerns about how this nickname can be misunderstood, particularly as it relates to our deep commitment to honoring the dignity of every person—as Christ calls us to do.”

At the time, Roncalli’s interim president Father Robert Robeson noted that the nickname of Rebels was originally chosen to reflect the “revolutionary spirit of Angelo Roncalli,” who as Pope John XXIII convened the Second Vatican Council in 1962, which led to many changes in the Church.

Yet school officials believed that Rebels didn’t appropriately reflect his true spirit against the background of the cultural climate of 2020.



‘As we have learned more about St. John XXIII, it is clear that characterizing him as a rebel, in many ways, misses the mark. In fact, he was a visionary leader. He was a saint who was deeply rooted in his love for Jesus Christ, his devotion to the Catholic faith and his respect for the dignity of all people.’

—Chuck Weisenbach, principal of Roncalli High School

“As we have learned more about St. John XXIII, it is clear that characterizing him as a rebel, in many ways, misses the mark,” said Chuck Weisenbach, Roncalli’s principal, at the time, who will become the school’s president on July 1. “In fact, he was a visionary leader. He was a saint who was deeply rooted in his love for Jesus Christ, his devotion to the Catholic faith and his respect for the dignity of all people. These qualities are what formed him into the great saint that we venerate today.”

In fact, “Saints” was one of the three possible choices for the school’s new nickname. The other was “Rams.”

The three choices initiated from

a task force of students, faculty, administrators, alumni and parents that Father Robeson appointed in August of 2020.

From those three choices, Roncalli students voted on a new nickname on Jan. 12 and 13. They “selected Royals by a substantial majority,” according to the press release.

“Over the next few months, the Roncalli marketing and communications team will work toward developing several images representing the new nickname,” the press release noted. “A logo and mascot will be chosen after further feedback is gathered from the task force, students and members of the Roncalli community.” †

Every call of God is a call of 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



Pope Francis

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 be 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,” St. John wrote in his Gospel that “‘it was about four in the afternoon’ [Jn 1:39]—he wrote the time,” the pope said. “Every authentic 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 matrimony, 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 only with 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. †

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MARIE

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PETE AND MELANIE

Adopted their young daughter through Catholic Charities

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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 of 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 daily, 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 1:16), but Luke’s Gospel says it was Heli (Lk 3:23).

We think of Joseph as a carpenter, but he apparently was more than that. The Gospels use the Greek word *tekton*, 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 homes and other structures are built with stone.

We know that Joseph lived in Nazareth in Galilee. We can speculate he did construction work in Sepphoris, about 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 but accepts portions of the work. For example, we got the names of the Blessed Virgin’s parents, Anne and Joachim, from the *Protoevangelium*, which tells of events prior to those in the canonical Gospels.

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 idea persisted that Joseph was considerably older than Mary.

Joseph was most likely older than Mary, but probably not as old as some old paintings depict.

We know that Mary conceived of the Holy Spirit after she and Joseph went through the first part of the 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.

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 remained in Jerusalem when he 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.

—John F. Fink

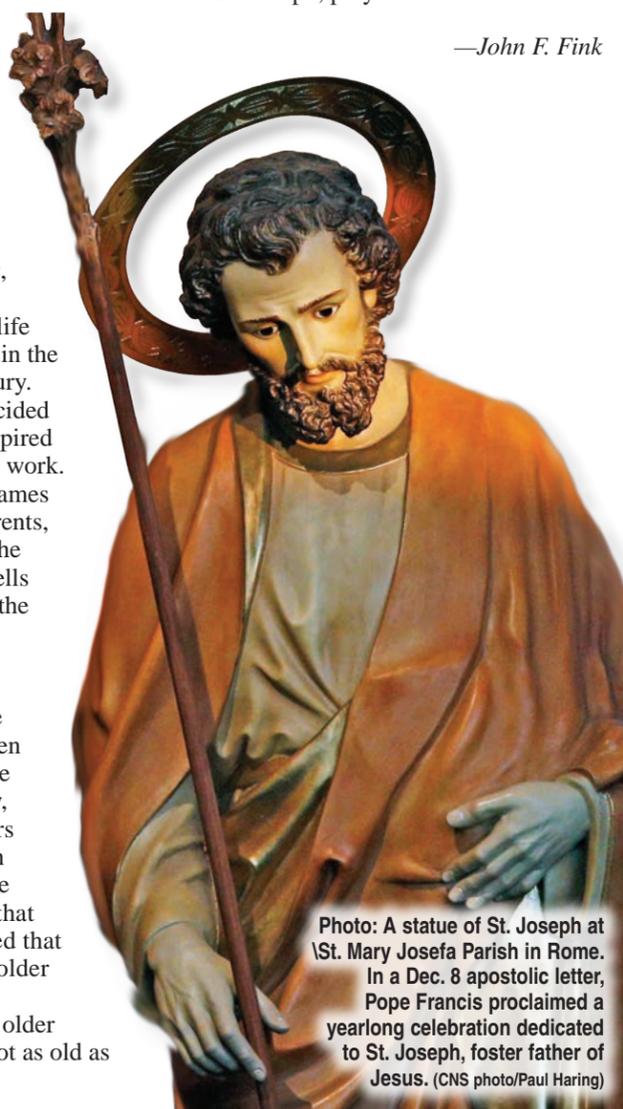


Photo: A statue of St. Joseph at St. Mary Josefa Parish in Rome. In a Dec. 8 apostolic letter, Pope Francis proclaimed a yearlong celebration dedicated to St. Joseph, foster father of Jesus. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

Be Our Guest/Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia

The Church must go out

Nowadays, the Church cannot be a mere guardian of ideas and beliefs, however good and righteous that may



be. The mystery of life, that is, the way God dwells in history, must not only be safeguarded and protected, but also pragmatically proclaimed as much as possible, because men and women on this planet need to perceive the salvific presence of the Spirit in their lives. This change of approach is extremely relevant today.

First, as Pope Francis often says, the Church and all of us, the community of believers, must be out and about, not shut up inside, to proclaim our Christian values and principles in everyday life. We must bring Christianity back to the streets, where its lifeblood is much needed. A profound rethinking of the questions that are crucial for humanity implicitly needs everyone’s help.

Let us consider, for instance, the members of the Pontifical Academy for Life: Among them there are Catholics of course but also Orthodox, Protestants, Muslims, Jews, Taoists, even nonbelievers. This results in an overall impression of enriching diversity because differences are genuine portals of discovery and regeneration. Arid are those who regard differences only as problematic and divisive aspects.

The academy is meant to be a place for dialogue, where science and contemporary cultures are combined with religion and ethic to render a service to humanity.

In the academy, we are convinced that we will have to face a perspective that in a synthetic way can be called biopolitics. In the face of a new condition of globalized humanity, political forces at

all levels must be careful to rethink and redesign the role of politics itself. We must avoid a rich Global North that does not take into account the large number of poor countries. We must prevent discrimination within the same country.

The pandemic we are experiencing makes us understand the need to rethink and reorganize health care, treatments, technologies and public health in a more shared and more equal way. The academy is putting a great deal of thought into it. It is also committed to preventing the so-called “surveillance society” from prevailing, where technology owners could become the absolute masters of citizens’ lives.

As you can see, the number of topics to be addressed is increasing, but they are all directed toward the perspective of the unity of the human family that dwells in the only habitable planet we have, and it must be so for this generation, for the next one and for those to come.

In my vision, our academy is similar to the talents of the Gospel parable: The pope gave them to us expecting us to realize a profit, to make them grow, just as the wise servant did. That’s the reason why we must “live” in contemporary cultures, to discuss and be confronted with them, to take part in the scientific and academic debates.

We must not be like that fearful, lazy, indifferent servant who buries his talent in the ground. That would be a big mistake. I am not referring only to the gifts entrusted to each of us. Here I mean that unique gift that is our academy, a family of scholars and researchers, passionate and giving professionals, including religious and nonbelievers.

Our common goal is to invest our lives to protect, defend and promote the gift of life. That is the academy’s mission.

(Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia is president of the Pontifical Academy for Life.) †

Be Our Guest/Elise Italiano Ureneck

History’s greatest inaugural speeches

Having been a resident of Washington for 10 years, I was privileged to witness three presidential inaugurations. Despite the fact that the ceremonies were for



representatives of different political parties, and the fact that one was a re-election, the same excitement permeated the air for each of them.

I think that’s because inaugurations speak to our innate need to start over from time to time, to express new hopes and fears, to realign our priorities and make sure the path we’re walking on is the right one. We relish the opportunity to turn the page and gaze upon a blank one that’s wide open with possibility.

My favorite part of any Inauguration Day is the speech. As a former speechwriter, I love to dissect why each word might have been chosen, how the speaker’s cadence affects the length and how the text reveals how well our leaders know themselves and us, their fellow countrymen. It’s how we learn what their priorities will be and how they align with ours.

In his inaugural address, President George Washington confessed his doubts about assuming the office, citing his own deficiencies. At the same time, he assured his fellow citizens that God, the “Great Author of every public and private good” would keep the United States of America under his providential care. His speech could be summarized: “This is bigger than you and me, and that’s a good thing.” It speaks to the perennial need to know our place in the larger scheme of things.

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 for unity and a “just and lasting peace”: maybe not that day, or in the years of his second 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 poverty and all forms of human life.” It was a speech rousing his fellow Americans to self-sacrifice and moral greatness.

The greatest inaugural address in history is not a political one but a biblical one. It addresses the deepest longings of the human heart, not only by the words spoken, but because it was the Word speaking them.

Such is the address that Jesus gives at the beginning of his public ministry, when he recites the words of the prophet Isaiah: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the

See GUEST, page 10

ARCHBISHOP/ARZOBISPO CHARLES C. THOMPSON



Christ the Cornerstone

Respect for human dignity requires legal protection for the unborn

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 restoration of the legal guarantee of the right to life and of penance for violence committed against unborn children through abortion. In addition to prayer and penance, 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 protected against acts of lawless violence. This principle includes abolition of the death penalty, protection for migrants and displaced (or homeless) persons, respect for the rights of minorities, and safeguarding the human rights of all persons, including those with whom we disagree.

Catholics join with other religious traditions, and with others who share our commitment to the fundamental value of human dignity, in placing particular emphasis on legal protection for the unborn.

Each child is made in God's image

and is loved by all who understand and respect the dignity of human life. A child in his or her mother's womb is completely defenseless, requiring maximum protection and care.

Society has an obligation to safeguard unborn human beings, and to provide women who are in difficult pregnancies with alternatives that respect their rights and dignity without violating each child's right to life.

In recent years, we have witnessed a disturbing increase in incidents of hatred and violence against members of our own communities. The social unrest and economic uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 pandemic have aggravated this trend, but as Pope Francis has observed, these sinful tendencies are not new to us. The pandemic has accelerated the growth and intensity of many social sins (including racism and other forms of bigotry and intolerance), but these evils are always present in human society.

That's why it's so important to be vigilant in prayer and personal conversion. It's also why we must advocate for, and work to achieve, legal protection for all human persons, especially the most vulnerable.

In "We Are One in Christ: A Pastoral

Letter on Fundamentals of Christian Anthropology," published on Feb. 14, 2018, I wrote: "No legislation could by itself do away with the fears, prejudices, and attitudes of pride and selfishness which obstruct the establishment of truly fraternal societies." Such behavior will cease only through the virtues of justice and charity that find in every human being—regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, social or economic status, or sexual orientation—a neighbor, a sister or brother in Christ.

On this special day of prayer for the legal protection of our unborn, we apply the most fundamental principles of justice and charity to the most vulnerable members of our Church and our society. We extend the tender love and compassion of God to all women who have had abortions in the past, and we solemnly promise to do everything in our power to help those who may be considering abortion in the future.

Pope Francis has proclaimed 2021 as the Year of St. Joseph. This great saint, the guardian of our Redeemer, should inspire all of us to work for the protection and care of all children, born and unborn.

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's gift of fortitude. Only the Lord can give us the strength needed to accept life as it is, with all its contradictions, frustrations and disappointments" (#4).

Working for the full restoration of the legal guarantee of the right to life for all unborn children requires the courage of our convictions. It also demands that we seek and accept the grace of the Holy Spirit, which is absolutely necessary if we hope to resist the powerful cultural influences that support and defend the status quo.

Let's turn to St. Joseph to guide us in the protection and care of all our children. Let's ask him to help us open our minds and hearts to the wisdom and strength 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, in the words of Pope Francis:

Blessed Joseph, to us too, show yourself a father and guide us in the path of life. Obtain for us grace, mercy and courage, and defend us from every evil. Amen. †



Cristo, la piedra angular

El respeto a la dignidad humana exige la protección legal de los bebés en gestación

La fecha de publicación de esta columna es el viernes 22 de enero de 2021. En nuestro país, la Iglesia observa este día como un momento en el que ofrecemos oraciones especiales para el pleno restablecimiento de la garantía legal del derecho a la vida y de la penitencia por la violencia cometida contra los bebés en gestación a través del aborto. Además de la oración y la penitencia, este día es un recordatorio de que cada uno de nosotros tiene la responsabilidad de abogar por el fin de la legislación permisiva aquí en Indiana y en todo el país.

La protección jurídica de toda la vida humana es esencial para la existencia de una sociedad justa y libre, ya que sin ella, reinaría el caos y todos estaríamos expuestos a la impunidad y la violencia. Este principio incluye la abolición de la pena de muerte, la protección de los migrantes y las personas desplazadas (o sin hogar), el respeto de los derechos de las minorías y la salvaguardia de los derechos humanos de todas las personas, incluidas aquellas con las que no estamos de acuerdo.

Los católicos se unen a otras tradiciones de fe y a otros que comparten nuestro compromiso con el valor fundamental de la dignidad humana, para hacer un énfasis especial a la protección legal de los bebés en gestación.

Cada niño está hecho a imagen y semejanza de Dios y es objeto del amor de todos los que entienden y respetan

la dignidad de la vida humana. Un niño en el vientre de su madre está completamente indefenso y requiere la máxima protección y cuidado.

La sociedad tiene la obligación de salvaguardar a los seres humanos en gestación y de ofrecer a las mujeres embarazadas que enfrenten situaciones difíciles alternativas que respeten sus derechos y su dignidad sin violar el derecho a la vida de cada niño.

En los últimos años hemos sido testigos de un inquietante aumento de los incidentes de odio y violencia contra miembros de nuestras propias comunidades. El malestar social y la incertidumbre económica causados por la pandemia de la COVID-19 han agravado esta tendencia, pero como ha observado el papa Francisco, estas tendencias pecaminosas no nos resultan nuevas. La pandemia ha acelerado el crecimiento y la intensidad de muchos pecados sociales (incluidos el racismo y otras formas de intolerancia y fanatismo), pero estos males están siempre presentes en la sociedad humana.

Por eso es tan importante mantenernos atentos en la oración y en la conversión personal, y por lo que debemos abogar y trabajar para lograr la protección legal de todas las personas, especialmente las más vulnerables.

En "Somos uno con Jesucristo: Carta pastoral sobre los fundamentos de la antropología cristiana," publicada el 14

de febrero de 2018, escribí: "Ninguna legislación podría por sí misma hacer desaparecer los temores, los prejuicios, las actitudes de soberbia y de egoísmo que obstaculizan el establecimiento de sociedades verdaderamente fraternas." Tal comportamiento cesará únicamente a través de las virtudes de la justicia y la caridad que se encuentran en cada ser humano—sin distinción de raza, credo, etnia, estatus social o económico, u orientación sexual—ya sea el prójimo, una hermana o un hermano en Cristo.

En este día especial de oración por la protección legal de los bebés en gestación, aplicamos los principios más fundamentales de justicia y caridad a los miembros más vulnerables de nuestra Iglesia y nuestra sociedad. Extendemos el tierno amor y la compasión de Dios a todas las mujeres que han abortado en el pasado, y prometemos solemnemente hacer todo lo que esté a nuestro alcance para ayudar a aquellas que puedan estar considerando abortar en el futuro.

El papa Francisco ha proclamado el 2021 como el Año de San José. Este gran santo, el guardián de nuestro Redentor, debería inspirarnos a todos a trabajar por la protección y el cuidado de todos los niños, nacidos y no nacidos.

Tal como el papa Francisco escribe en su carta apostólica, "Patris Corde" ("Con corazón de padre"), "José no es

un hombre que se resigna pasivamente. Es un protagonista valiente y fuerte. La acogida es un modo por el que se manifiesta en nuestra vida el don de la fortaleza que nos viene del Espíritu Santo. Sólo el Señor puede darnos la fuerza para acoger la vida tal como es, para hacer sitio incluso a esa parte contradictoria, inesperada y decepcionante de la existencia" (#4).

Trabajar por el restablecimiento pleno de la garantía legal del derecho a la vida para todos los bebés en gestación requiere el valor de nuestras convicciones. También exige que busquemos y aceptemos la gracia del Espíritu Santo, que es indispensable si esperamos resistir las poderosas influencias culturales que apoyan y defienden el *status quo*.

Recurramos a san José para que nos guíe en la protección y el cuidado de todos nuestros hijos. Pidámonos que nos ayude a abrir nuestras mentes y corazones a la sabiduría y la fuerza del Espíritu Santo, y que de esta forma nos convierta en valientes y francos defensores de la protección legal de nuestros hermanos y hermanas más vulnerables. Y recemos, en las palabras del papa Francisco:

Oh, bienaventurado José, muéstrate padre también a nosotros y guíanos en el camino de la vida. Concédenos gracia, misericordia y valentía, y defiéndenos de todo mal. Amén. †

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 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.

Log on: carmelthirddoption.org/web then click on link at top of page. Information: carmelthirddoption.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

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. Log on: carmelthirddoption.org/web then click on link at top of page. Information: carmelthirddoption.org/web, or Keith Ingram, kingram@aicinvest.com or 317-324-8446.

February 17

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

February 18

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.

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: carmelthirddoption.org/web then click on link at top of page. Information: carmelthirddoption.org/web, or Keith Ingram, kingram@aicinvest.com or 317-324-8446.

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 information: 812-535-2952, provctr@spsmw.org or www.spsmw.org/event.

Annual Shawe and Pope John Virtual Auction Dinner, benefitting Prince of Peace schools in Madison, two raffles, prizes up to \$10,000, 200 raffle tickets at \$200 each. To buy tickets, donate items or sponsor event: 812-273-5835 ext. 246, or 812-801-1660. Online auction link goes live on Feb. 1: qtogo.net/qlink/popauction21.

March 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. †

Retreats and Programs

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

February 8

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.

February 15

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.

February 17

Benedict Inn Retreat & Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. **Grace: An Ash Wednesday Day of Reflection**, 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Benedictine Sister Karen Byerly presenting, \$60, includes lunch. Registration: www.benedictinn.org/retreats-programs. Information: benedictinn@benedictinn.org, 317-788-7581.

February 18

Scriptures of Lent/Spring virtual study via Zoom, first of six stand-alone sessions (Feb. 25, March 4, 11, 18

and 25), offered by Providence Spirituality & Conference Center, 6:15-7:45 p.m., \$5/session, \$25 for all six, register by Feb. 15. Information, registration: 812-535-2952, provctr@spsmw.org, www.spsmw.org/event.

February 19

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.

February 20

Second Half of Life virtual program via Zoom, offered by Oldenburg Franciscan Center, 9:30-11:30 p.m., Franciscan Sister Olga Wittekind facilitating, \$25, \$40 with CEUs. Information, registration: center@oldenburgosf.com, oldenburgfranciscancenter.org/programs.

February 21

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

February 22

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.

February 23

Benedict Inn Retreat & Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. **Combating Racism: A Spiritual Journey**, first of six stand-alone sessions (March 2, 9, 16, 23 and 30), 7-8:30 p.m., Mary Beth Riner presenting, \$25 per session, \$125 for six sessions. Registration: www.benedictinn.org/retreats-programs. Information: benedictinn@benedictinn.org, 317-788-7581.

March 2-4

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 100 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Preparing for Holy Week Retreat**, Benedictine Father Jeremy King presenting, \$255 single, \$425 double. Registration: saintmeinrad.org/retreats. †

Send your events to 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202, ATTN: Ann Lewis, or by fax at 317-236-1593.

Wedding

ANNIVERSARIES

50 Years

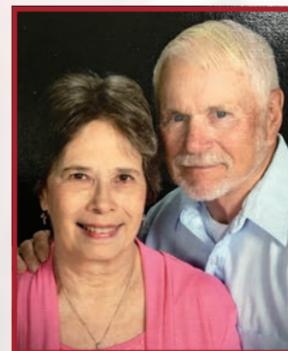


ALBERT AND ELLIE (WERNER) AMBERGER, members of St. Louis Parish in Batesville, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on Jan. 30.

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, Lissa Ritter, Laura Vogelsang and Kurt Amberger.

The couple also has 13 grandchildren. †



DENNIS AND MARY (THEBO) KRAUS, members of All Saints Parish in Dearborn County, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on Jan. 9.

The couple was married in St. Paul Church in New Alsace (now a campus of All Saints Parish in Dearborn County) on Jan. 9, 1971.

They have five children: Valerie Caudill, Janet Rullman, Emily, Anthony and Dennis Kraus.

The couple also has five grandchildren and two 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.

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 Conventual 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 mountsaintfrancis.org/retreats or call 812-923-8817. †

‘Facing Challenges with St. Mother Theodore Guérin’ virtual panel and discussion will be held on Feb. 4

The 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 Wilkinson, Jan Craven and Jessica Vitente, and Providence Associate Helen Flavin.

There is no charge for the event.

To register, go to FacingChallenges.SistersofProvidence.org. †

E6 Catholic Men's Conference will be livestreamed on Feb. 27

By Sean Gallagher

Some 1,500 men packed the auditorium of East Central High School in St. Leon on Feb. 22, 2020, for the fifth annual E6 Catholic



Deacon Harold Burke-Sivers

Men's Conference, sponsored by All Saints Parish in Dearborn County.

Just weeks later, the coronavirus pandemic made such indoor gatherings impossible. And they still are today.

But the E6 conference organizers are determined to offer Catholic men ways to grow in their faith, their vocation and in fellowship with each other—even in the midst of pandemic-related restrictions.

"It is very sad to not be able to gather this year like last year," said

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."



Jason Evert

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



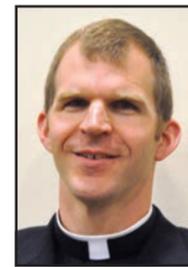
Patrick Coffin

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,"



Fr. Jonathan Meyer

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.) †

Popes Francis, Benedict 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



Pope Francis

employees and residents on Jan. 13.

Matteo Bruni, director of the Vatican Press Office, confirmed the news on Jan. 14.

While it was widely reported that Pope Francis received the vaccine on Jan. 13, the

retired pope's secretary, Archbishop Georg Ganswein, told Vatican News that Pope Benedict received his shot on the morning of Jan. 14.

The archbishop had told the German Catholic news agency KNA on Jan. 11 that the 93-year-old pope, who lives in a converted monastery in the Vatican Gardens, and his entire household staff wanted to be vaccinated as soon as the vaccine was available in Vatican City State.

He told Vatican News that the retired pope has been following the news "on television, and he shares our concerns about

the pandemic, about what is happening in the world, about the many people who have lost their life because of the virus.

"There have been people he knows who have died because of COVID-19," he added.



Pope Benedict XVI

Archbishop Ganswein said the retired pope is still very sharp mentally, but that his voice and physical strength have weakened. "He is very frail and only can walk a little with a walker."

He rests more, "but we still go out every afternoon, despite the cold, in the Vatican Gardens," he 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 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 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

Holy See and Vatican City State."

The Vatican reported its first known case of infection early in March 2020, and since then there have been another 25 reported cases—including 11 Swiss guards last October.

Pope Francis' 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: 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:

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City State

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Heavy security and pandemic mean March for Life will be virtual

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 Mass for Life, the rest of it will be online only on Jan. 29.

March organizers had already hired a production company to make a livestreamed event possible in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, and 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 bus caravans 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.”

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 this year,” Mancini said.

“These leaders will represent pro-life Americans everywhere who, each in their own unique ways, work to make abortion unthinkable and build a culture where every human life is valued and protected,” she added.

Marches in recent years had 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



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)

Life previous 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.

Most marches and prayer vigils affiliated with the March for Life at state capitols 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.) †

ICC

continued from page 1

In the document, he and Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann of Kansas City, Kan., chairman of the USCCB’s committee on pro-life activities, addressed the moral concerns that stem from the three COVID-19 vaccines having some connection to cell lines that originated with tissue obtained from abortions.

“In view of the gravity of the current pandemic and the lack of availability of alternative vaccines, 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’ statement reads. “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 safely 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 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 urged 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.”

Espada 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.”

It 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 capitols 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.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.) †



Angela Espada

COATS

continued from page 1

her is all the help she received.

For her, it’s not a story of how one child made a difference. It’s a story of how her family, her school and her parish make so much of a difference in her life that she wants to help others who aren’t as blessed as she is.

“I really am appreciating my community, my school, my family and friends because they see this as a problem, and they know there are people out there

who need help,” Gracelyn says. “It makes me feel good because some people just need the extra warmth in their life.”

Volunteers and organizations that help the homeless and other people in need appreciate Gracelyn’s efforts.

“What a sweet young lady,” says David Schraffenberger, the point person for In Heaven’s Eyes, a ministry of Holy Family Parish that provides clothing, toiletries, blankets and food to individuals, families and charitable organizations in southern Indiana and northern Kentucky. “We were getting kind of low on coats, and when we heard she was doing this, it was just terrific.

“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 Ohio 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 hauled in about \$100 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.” †



“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

Pandemic, violence change March for Life plans, but not its commitment

WASHINGTON (CNS)—If all goes well on Jan. 29, Jeanne Mancini, president of the March for Life Defense and Education Fund, and other pro-life advocates, including clergy, maybe some politicians and a handful of Knights of Columbus, will walk from the National Mall to the Supreme Court to carry out the march portion of the national March for Life.

They'll constitute the smallest group that's ever marched. Because Jan. 6, even more so than the COVID-19 pandemic, changed everything.

A symbol of continuity for the nation's largest pro-life event, which will be entirely virtual for the first time, matters. But it also may stand as an act of courage greater than the first time Nellie Gray, founder of the march, stepped off the sidewalk on Jan. 22, 1974.

That first march was supposed to be a one-time event to protest the Supreme Court's *Roe v. Wade* ruling, which legalized abortion the year before. The idea was to form a "circle of life" around the Capitol and Supreme Court.

Since it drew around 20,000 participants, Gray and the Knights of Columbus decided they could keep attracting public support for overturning the decision. By 1979, the march drew around 40,000, and not even a 1987 snowstorm slowed it down. That year, the official tally march officials gave was 5,000.

Although their National Park Service permit application said 50,000 were expected for the rally, organizers of

the event this year prepared for an event diminished considerably by the pandemic. The bus

caravans from the Midwest that swelled participation to well more than 100,000 had been, for the most part, canceled, and plans were in place to require face masks, social distancing and hand sanitizer for the Mall rally before the march up Constitution Avenue to the Supreme Court.

Mancini also hired a production company to livestream all the speeches and interact with participants to give viewers "untethered access."

But that's just one aspect. The other requirement of the March for Life, not as well publicized since Mancini, who took over in 2013, enlarged it as an educational event for college and high school students, is that it be held on a day that Congress is in session.

It is meant to be seen and heard by lawmakers, and also for them to meet with marchers in their offices. Sometimes, members of Congress meet with entire state delegations.

That was the custom before Jan. 6, anyway. The after-effects of the violence of the Capitol attack by insurrectionists trying to reverse the Electoral College certification of the presidential election are going to linger.

Decades of in-person Capitol Hill lobbying by advocacy groups now seem like a faraway time that's unlikely to return



People gather during the annual March for Life rally in Washington Jan. 24, 2020. For the 48th anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*, the national March for Life scheduled for Jan. 29, 2021, will be virtual this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but pro-life advocates said while they were disappointed, they were not discouraged and planned to hold local events. (CNS photo/Tyler Orsburn)

anytime soon after the tall fences around the Capitol and Mall are taken down.

So when Mancini, in her red scarf that recalls Gray's red overcoat, and her small group march, it will be not only with the expectation the pandemic will pass, but also in the hope that one awful day of violence won't stop the march for more than a year.

Washington may not seem so much like a war zone on Jan. 29, but a joyfully decorous and reverent street event the size of the March for Life is momentarily unimaginable given additional restrictions on size and security that could be imposed by the District of Columbia and National Park Service on such large gatherings.

Also ahead is a Biden presidency, the 10th in the life of the march. It's also the first time in four years that the march has faced a Democratic administration that supports *Roe v. Wade*.

Like other advocacy groups, March for Life deals only with the political landscape in front of it after an election is decided. The new House of Representatives has a record 29 pro-life female members, all Republicans, according to the Susan B. Anthony List.

The most prominent at the moment is freshman Rep. Michelle Fischbach of Minnesota, who is scheduled to participate in a Students for Life virtual event along with Rep. Jeff Shipley of Iowa. Rep. Jim Banks of Indiana, beginning his third term, will participate in an online March for Life forum on Jan. 28.

President Donald J. Trump, in 2020, became the first president to appear in person at the Mall rally, after having spoken through video hookup the previous two years.

Speakers through the past four years also included Vice President Mike Pence, who made his first March for Life appearance in 2002 as an Indiana congressman, White House counselor Kellyanne Conway, and, at the National Pro-Life Youth Summit last year, Russ Vought, director of the White House Office of Management and Budget.

Also last year, Attorney General William Barr stood on a balcony at the beginning of the march, attracting loud cheers.

One surprise that came from Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar at a Dec. 16 "Life Is Winning" event at the White House with Pence, was Azar saying he, too, had marched up Constitution Avenue in 2019. He joined an Orthodox Christian group.

Also at the event, Tom McClusky, March for Life's vice president, praised Pence: "In the summer of 2016, [Trump] picked one of us [pro-lifers] to be our [nation's] vice president. This is truly your legacy going forward, that is now our job to carry on."

Some decisions from the Biden administration are predictable. Following the precedent of other Democratic presidents, he is expected to quickly rescind the so-called Mexico City policy, which prohibits foreign organizations from using American aid money to promote abortion.

Vice President-elect Kamala Harris uses the term "reproductive justice" and has proposed states that intend to add restrictions on abortion must have preclearance from the Justice Department to determine if the new laws are constitutional.

"We anticipate a very difficult four years ahead of us with this administration. Looking at President-elect [Joe] Biden, and Vice President-elect [Kamala] Harris, and especially Vice President-elect Harris, with her track record," Mancini told Catholic News Service (CNS) in an interview. "We'll have to work aggressively on the defense, especially in light of the Georgia [senatorial] elections."

The Jan. 5 Senate election in Georgia saw the two Democratic candidates win, giving the Senate a 50-50 split between Republicans and Democrats, and Harris, who as vice president, is president of the Senate, would be the tiebreaker.

"So how do we position ourselves? We try to be open and welcoming to any administration. But we're pretty well aware that this is not a friendly administration, and we have to work hard to protect the gains we've made."

Those gains include the Supreme Court. One of Gray's signature rally lines was "Just one more justice." This

year, hopes are placed on three justices Trump appointed: Neil Gorsuch, Brett Kavanaugh and Amy Coney Barrett. They anchor a conservative court majority expected to eventually uphold state laws that, if not outright banning abortion, would severely restrict access.

Gray, a retired government lawyer, devoted herself to working to overturn *Roe*; she founded March for life as an organization in 1974. She took no salary and operated it from her Capitol Hill townhouse. In 2009, she reported a total revenue of slightly more than \$200,000.

After her death in 2012, the march moved into a suite of offices on 14th Street, added March for Life Action, a political arm headed by McClusky which offers voting scorecards on pro-life issues, and now has a paid staff of 10 and a budget of more than \$2 million, most of which comes from donations.

Participants can do their lobbying online this year through the March for Life website, sending e-mails that go straight to lawmakers' inboxes, and, McClusky promised, "we will print out your message in the form of a letter and hand deliver a hard copy to Capitol Hill."

Students for Life announced four days of online training for activists on Jan. 27-30, called #Stand4Life.

The Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington will not be open to the public that weekend, but in addition to the televised Mass for Life that begins at 8 p.m. on Jan. 28, bishops nationwide will hold a prayer vigil, taking turns leading livestreamed holy hours every hour on the hour. Those will be available on the website of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

The principal celebrant and homilist for the opening Mass will be Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann of Kansas City in Kansas, who chairs the U.S. bishops' Committee on Pro-Life Activities. The vigil will conclude at 8 a.m. on Jan. 29 with Mass celebrated by Archbishop William E. Lori of Baltimore.

(More information about this year's March for Life events is available online at www.marchforlife.org.) †

Bishops applaud HHS rule change that aids adoption and foster care providers

WASHINGTON (CNS)—A Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) modified rule that helps ensure that faith-based social service providers will not be excluded from certain federally funded programs was met with approval by the chairmen of three U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) committees.

The rule modification affects agencies that provide adoption and foster care services in particular. It will allow faith-based social service providers "to continue partnering with the government to assist children in need," the chairmen said in a Jan. 15 statement.

Welcoming the change were Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan of New York, chair of the Committee for Religious Liberty; Archbishop Paul S. Coakley of Oklahoma City, chair of the Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development; and Bishop David A. Konderla of Tulsa, Okla., chair of the Subcommittee for the Promotion and Defense of Marriage.

The rule modification affects a 2016 regulation put in place by 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 chairmen noted how Catholic and other faith-based agencies annually serve thousands of families through adoption and foster care. "Many of these agencies have been doing this work long before the government became involved," their statement said.

"It is a sad reality that state and local government agencies in multiple jurisdictions have already succeeded in shutting down Catholic adoption and foster care providers who operated in accordance with the teachings of the Catholic Church," 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 city of Philadelphia's 2018 exclusion of the foster program of Catholic Social Services of the Philadelphia Archdiocese because of the agency's policy of not placing children with same-sex couples or unmarried couples because such unions go against Church teaching on traditional marriage.

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 2015, Franciscan Brother Moises Gutierrez left an imprint.



Brother Moises Gutierrez, O.F.M.

Many will remember his work in helping create 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 Moises said at the time. “That is the beauty of diversity.”

So it should come as no surprise that Brother Moises’ 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 international mindset for global and local leadership.

“I am very grateful that my experiences in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis that prepared me for this,” Brother Moises 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, said Brother Moises, 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 programs for Catholics of Black, Burmese and Hispanic background. It also helped initiate an ethnic dinner series spotlighting African, Burmese, Korean, Mexican, Filipino and Vietnamese food and cultures, and assisted in highlighting special cultural Masses.

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

“I’m 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 Brother Moises said he is still exploring other opportunities and “discerning” what God is calling him to do next. He is also considering 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 Moises said he truly misses the people.

“Indianapolis has been one of the cities I felt at home so much quicker 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 Gutiérrez 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 universalidad 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 en aquel momento. “Eso es lo hermoso de la diversidad.”

Por lo tanto, no debería sorprendernos que el ministerio del hermano Moisés 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.

“Estoy muy agradecido de que mis experiencias en la Arquidiócesis de Indianapolis me hayan preparado para esto,” comentó el hermano Moisés durante una visita reciente a Indianapolis.

“Necesitamos una mentalidad internacional, incluso cuando lideramos a nivel local, como líderes locales,” señaló. “Esa fue mi experiencia aquí en Indianapolis.

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

Otros modelos de iniciativas internacionales están orientados a los negocios, aseguró el hermano Moisés, de 55 años; pero no así el de su tesis doctoral. “Sentí ... que necesitábamos algo que fuera más humano.”

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 africana, birmana, coreana, mexicana, filipina y vietnamita, y ayudó a resaltar las misas culturales especiales.

“Soy un aprendiz” afirmó el hermano Moisés, y su trabajo en Gonzaga “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 el hermano Moisés dijo que aún está explorando otras oportunidades y “discerniendo” aquello que Dios desea que haga ahora. 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.”

Al reflexionar sobre sus años de ministerio en la Arquidiócesis, el hermano Moisés dijo que realmente extraña a la gente.

“Indianapolis 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 ... conectándome con gente de diferentes culturas y orígenes. Eso me encantaba.

“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-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 Mifeprex, 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 signing a form acknowledging risks associated with it.

Carol Tobias, president of National Right to Life, said in a 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.”

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 fewer visits to a doctor.

The question about how women can obtain these drugs started with a challenge to 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

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 declined 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. †



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GUEST

continued from page 4

oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord” (Lk 4:18-19).

And then he speaks the words that all long to hear: “Today this Scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing” (Lk 4:21).

Each year, just after celebrating the feast of the Baptism of the Lord, the Church

should contemplate this Gospel. It’s our annual call to renewal, to keep our minds fixed on the most important truth we hold, that which grounds our life, liberty and happiness: Jesus is the long-awaited Savior who is present in our midst. Sweeter words have yet to be spoken.

(Elise Italiano Ureneck is a communications consultant and a columnist for Catholic News Service.) †

Faith *Alive!*

A supplement to Catholic newspapers published by Catholic News Service, 3211 Fourth Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20017-1100. All contents are copyrighted © 2020 by Catholic News Service.



New York Auxiliary Bishop Peter J. Byrne joins members of the Franciscan Sisters and Friars of the Renewal and other pro-life advocates as they pray across the street from an abortion clinic in New York City on Dec. 28, 2020. The Church teaches that individual human rights, such as religious liberty and freedom of speech and assembly, should be used to promote the common good of all. (CNS photo/Gregory A. Shemitz)

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 uplifting 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 Surufka, 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)

Living Well/Maureen Pratt

Savor and share God's gifts as we enter a new year

What a difference a year makes!

As I read holiday greetings from friends far and near, I was struck by how much has changed in our lives since January 2020.



Many alterations have not been happy. The losses of loved ones have hit us hard. The mandates to stay away from community worship and other religious activities in some states have

been tough to endure. The closure of long-standing, small businesses in our own backyards are daily reminders of how place after place has been forever changed.

But also, a bright light seems to shine through most of what my friends tell me (and what I've experienced, too). Although a whole year has passed, and this time has been unlike any other, in many cases what we have done during this unprecedented time has been remarkable, astounding and, yes, even blessed. And these activities bode well for the more active, opened up times that lie ahead.

A few months before the pandemic, I entered a Master of Theological Studies program online with the Jesuit School of Theology. Although I had been accepted by other, in-residence programs, I opted

to do this one because I could stay where I currently live.

I was surprised when others in the field told me, "You cannot do theology online," and worried there would be a great deal lacking in course content or interaction with students and faculty. But I shouldn't have worried; the experience began splendidly—and then the pandemic hit.

Everyone "had to" do theology online—and other subjects besides! As the virus continued to spread, more and more people of all ages took advantage of the stay-at-home to study-at-home, acquiring new skills and learning about new fields that could provide employment later, intellectual challenge now.

Another blessing has been reconnecting with people I've lost touch with or otherwise had only rarely spoken with and getting to know my neighbors. Almost simultaneously it seemed, we went back into our address books, got in touch and not only rekindled past ties, but were able to forge fresh friendships in the common experience of having much of life "on hold," or seeming so.

The opportunity to clean, declutter and rearrange where I live has been another welcomed and needed pastime. My houseplants thrived with extra attention, some blooming for the first time in years.

Also, I've been able to gift and repurpose things that I'm sure others can make good

use of. The feeling of freshness within these same walls is so palpable, I hope to continue with this work for a good long while—and I know many others who have also taken to year-round "spring" cleaning.

At the beginning of 2020, all speaking engagements, workshops and travel were canceled. Yet, as the year progressed, other opportunities arose for online events. Blessedly, I was even able to give a half-day retreat for caregivers in the fall and have more planned in 2021. It has been amazing to witness a new, exciting and effective way of work emerging.

Indeed, the theme of emergence seems key to 2021. Much like the cycle of time written in Ecclesiastes 3:1-9, there has been a time for weeping and mourning. But soon this winter will give way to spring. The vaccines will become widely available. The pandemic will wane.

And each of us will bring our newly learned skills, rekindled friendships and heartfelt lessons learned into sun-splashed summer days and beyond.

In that new time, oh, how thankful I will be, joining with all to remember and rejoice while savoring and sharing God's every good gift.

(Maureen Pratt writes for Catholic News Service. Her website is www.maureenpratt.com.) †

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 paramount



within our schools and parish catechetical programs.

Catholic identity is a holistic reality that encompasses both knowing the loving Jesus Christ and expressing that in a Catholic way of life.

One factor in

Catholic identity is 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.

Within our archdiocese, we assess students 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), ACRE assesses our children at the fifth, eighth and 11th grade levels.

The NCEA ACRE assessment results assist principals, parish catechetical leaders and youth ministers in designing programs to meet the catechetical needs of the people they serve—students, parents and teachers. The assessment is meant to provide data to enhance the programs and as a tool for growth.

Not only do we test their Catholic religious knowledge, but we also apply the group data about students' religious practices, attitudes, behaviors and beliefs to curricular emphasis. It is not a sort of "gotcha!" program intended to be a punitive tool for any catechetical program or catechist.

ACRE is used to evaluate the catechetical program's strengths 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 so as to live it inside their hearts.

With all this in mind, part of my job as the archdiocese's Coordinator of Catechetical Resources is to help our teachers and administrators get the most out of ACRE. Annually, I report ACRE data on an archdiocesan level that shows how the archdiocese compares with others around the country. I show how 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 Christians are big parts of our faith, along with knowledge. We can share the cognitive (head) part in our classrooms, yet show only a little bit about our heart.

Behavior as Christians is not just learned in the classroom as knowledge of faith, because behavior is a part of the whole family, school or parish. We not only teach the faith, but we also share it with young people as a disciple relationship with Jesus.

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

ACRE is administered annually by all schools and parishes, usually during the month of January. For more information about ACRE, contact me at 317-236-1569 or jwood@archindy.org.

(Jim Wood is archdiocesan coordinator of catechetical resources and a diaconal candidate for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.) †

For the Journey/Effie Caldarola

Dream, pray, choose and act toward a better future

A few stale Christmas cookies linger, but the mailbox has yielded its last, tardy Christmas card, and those not-so-merry tax documents are showing up instead. Bah humbug.



Soon, we will begin the inexorable trek through Ordinary Time that will lead to a February Ash Wednesday. Time marches on.

There's an old Irish tradition of leaving the front door open so the new year can enter. But maybe 2021 should ring the doorbell like a proper guest so we can see what it's bringing.

For me, a hopeful new book by Pope Francis ushered in the first days of 2021.

Let Us Dream: The Path to a Better

Future is Pope Francis' call to examine how the COVID-19 crisis can change us for the better in the time we have before us. Pope Francis dreams of a redesigned economy, a new respect for our natural world, a renewed focus on the poor and marginalized.

"To dream of a different future," Pope Francis writes, "we need to choose fraternity over individualism as our organizing principle."

I see this as a tough choice for many Americans. I'm thinking of those who feel deprived of some imaginary "right" by being asked to wear a mask to protect others during COVID-19. Or those who believe that the Second Amendment right to bear arms means that we can't ask for background checks or restrict the mentally ill or domestic abusers from amassing arsenals.

We've taken this rugged individualism to deadly extremes.

When Pope Francis speaks of the "hyperinflation of the individual," I think of those examples in my own culture. In my own life, I wonder how often I look in the mirror versus how often I look out the window.

Pope Francis believes "this crisis unmasks our vulnerability, exposes the false securities on which we had based our lives." It makes us aware that we need not revert to the same old throwaway culture, the misuse of natural resources, the reliance on constant economic growth as a marker of our "progress." All of these things are connected.

This small book doesn't read like a weighty Vatican tome. It's accessible and challenging, a collaboration between Pope Francis and the British writer Austen Ivereigh, who interviewed the pope, and worked with his suggestions and revisions as the document took shape.

Essentially, it's a call to conversion as we move forward from COVID-19, and it relies on Catholic teaching to shape our consciences. For example, it speaks of the preferential option for the poor, which Pope Francis explains means "we need always to keep in mind how any decision we make might impact the poor."

Another Catholic principle Pope Francis emphasizes is the "universal destination of goods." God has created the goods of this Earth for all. While private property is a right, its "use and regulation need to keep in mind this key principle."

See CALDAROLA, page 15

Amid the Fray/Greg Erlandson

Remove barriers to help us step back from the brink

Jan. 6, 2021, was an epiphany of sorts for Americans who watched in horror as a mob breached the U.S. Capitol, assaulted police and vandalized offices.



It was both shockingly unexpected and shockingly unsurprising given growing extremism, a polarized electorate and the relentless marketing of allegations that a huge, if unproven, conspiracy had stolen the election.

This has been an age of conspiracies, so the soil has been well prepared by such weirdly gnostic phenomena like "Q," and outrageous allegations of perversion and murder on the part of political opponents. Was anyone surprised that almost as soon as the Capitol was cleared, voices on social media were asserting that antifa—the anti-fascist *bête noire* of various nationalist and white supremacist factions—had cleverly engineered the debacle?

Yet what unfolded before our eyes was

obvious and terrible: Confederate flags waving from the halls of the Capitol. Signs reading "Jesus saves" being held above the rioting crowd. Attackers battling the police and committing acts of vandalism while lawmakers cowered. At times, it had the eerie look of a zombie apocalypse movie.

Those cowering lawmakers and their parties, collectively, bear some of the blame for the state we find ourselves in. Many Catholic leaders and others have been warning of the perils of polarization. As each side demonizes the other—making dialogue, compromise or even mutual understanding impossible—the gulf between us has grown.

With it is added a toxic mix of self-righteousness and victimhood. Because we believe ourselves both in the right and unfairly treated, we confer on ourselves a special status that obviates any need to understand, much less compromise with, those we believe are to blame.

The attack on the Capitol was both the nadir of this polarized state that imprisons us, and a foretaste of how bad it will become if we don't commit to a different path.

Unfortunately, if we look to social media for this different path, we are unlikely to find much solace. Social media has become the psycho playground of the nation's id. The level of discussion is not much loftier than two kids yelling at each other: "You started it!" "No, you did!"

If we continue to frame every issue in apocalyptic terms, we leave no room for anything other than an apocalypse. It is the antithesis of what a democracy should be, and it is the antithesis of Christian dialogue and charity.

Despite the hand-wringing, despite President-elect Joe Biden's stated intention to unite not divide, the forces of greed and division seem stronger than the pull of unity.

There is money to be made in extremism, not moderation or dialogue. Feeding the sense of entitlement or grievance pays. Too many people across the ideological divide are too financially committed to division. In a universe of facts and alternative facts, too much money is being made reinforcing the prejudices and base instincts of their audiences.

See ERLANDSON, page 15

Third Sunday in Ordinary Time/Msgr. Owen F. Campion

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 Syria. He went there at God's command 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 time and again to conquests. But of all these conquerors, 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 been. Corinth was depraved, utterly engulfed in paganism and wickedness.

St. Paul calls upon the Christians of Corinth to remember that time passes quickly and that life is short. They have before them two options. The first is life in Jesus, a life that is everlasting, but which requires fidelity to the Gospel and its values. The other option is eternal death, awaiting those who spurn the Gospel.

In this comparison, Paul obviously

urges the Corinthians to be holy.

The Gospel of St. Mark provides the last reading. It is the story of the Lord's calling of Andrew, Simon Peter, James and John to be Apostles. They were simple men. Yet, Jesus called them, and they accepted their call.

All the early Christians found stories of the Twelve especially important. The Apostles were key in learning the Gospel of Jesus. Going far and wide, the Apostles were the links with Jesus. Imposters, maybe well-meaning, also came and went among the early Christians. Knowing who was an authentic Apostle was imperative, in order to know the genuine teaching of Jesus.

The authentic Apostles possessed the credentials of having been personally called, taught and sent by Christ. Thus, the Gospels carefully report their names and callings.

Reflection

The Church called us to celebrate the birth of Christ. Two weeks later, it led us to the celebration of the feast of the Epiphany of the Lord. Then, it offered us the feast of the Lord's baptism by John in the Jordan River.

All these celebrations, among the greatest of the Church's year of worship, taught critical lessons about Jesus. He is human, the son of Mary. He is the Son of God. He is the Savior, assuming our sins even though Jesus was sinless.

Now, the Church moves into the process of asking us to respond. To an extent, we all live in Nineveh and Corinth. Sin surrounds us. God is rejected, but no one is beyond redemption.

Jesus forgives us, heals us and calls each of us to discipleship. We simply must choose to heed the call by being faithful to the Gospel. It is to our advantage to respond affirmatively. Death is the other option.

We may never altogether depart Nineveh or Corinth in this life, but the Lord guides us to the peace of heaven. †

Daily Readings

Monday, January 25

The Conversion of St. Paul the Apostle
Acts 22:3-16
or *Acts 9:1-22*
Psalm 117:1-2
Mark 16:15-18

Tuesday, January 26

St. Timothy, bishop
St. Titus, bishop
2 Timothy 1:1-8
or *Titus 1:1-5*
Psalm 96:1-3, 7-8a, 10
Mark 3:31-35

Wednesday, January 27

St. Angela Merici, virgin
Hebrews 10:11-18
Psalm 110:1-4
Mark 4:1-20

Thursday, January 28

St. Thomas Aquinas, priest and doctor of the Church
Hebrews 10:19-25
Psalm 24:1-4b, 5-6
Mark 4:21-25

Friday, January 29

Hebrews 10:32-39
Psalm 37:3-6, 23-24, 39-40
Mark 4:26-34

Saturday, January 30

Hebrews 11:1-2, 8-19
(Response) *Luke 1:69-75*
Mark 4:35-41

Sunday, January 31

Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Deuteronomy 18:15-20
Psalm 95:1-2, 6-9
1 Corinthians 7:32-35
Mark 1:21-28

Question Corner/Fr. Kenneth Doyle

Non-Catholic religious traditions have practices for the forgiveness of 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 cleric upon request. After the penitent has confessed his or her sins, the minister declares: "In the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive 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 lesser (venial) sins also, as a way to grow in holiness.

It's noteworthy to mention that during the pandemic, in March 2020 the Apostolic Penitentiary (the Vatican tribunal that deals with matters of conscience) urged Catholic priests to remind the faithful that, when they find themselves with "the painful impossibility of receiving sacramental absolution," they can make an act of contrition directly to God in prayer. If they are sincere and promise to go to confession as soon as possible, said 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 among dioceses, 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 Columbia Circle Dr., Albany, New York 12203.) †

My Journey to God

Lost

By C.S. Likins

The places the faces
all that time erases
the changes of society
there is no more piety
lost respect for tradition
embracing perdition
gone so wrong
for so long
turned and walked away
like a stray
with no name
and no home
trusting no one
needing and pleading
yet refusing the bleeding
of the Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ
lift your eyes to Him
pray and let His healing begin

(C.S. Likins is a member of St. Malachy Parish in Brownsburg. Photo: Self-taught restorer Lyne Robichaud from Victoriaville, Quebec, Canada, saves religious statues, including this image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus that was found outdoors.

(CNS photo/courtesy Lyne Robichaud via Presence)



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.

BABCOCK, Glenn M., 68, St. Peter, Harrison County, Dec. 23. Brother of Sara Deatrick, Barbara Robson, Brenda Shircliff, Dale, Fred and Tim Babcock.

BURKHART, Lee Ann, 59, St. Mary, Greensburg, Dec. 26. Wife of Charlie Burkhardt. Mother of Amber Abplanalp and Ryan Burkhardt. Sister of Kim Poole, Tammy Saylor, Jodi, Brad and Chad Davis. Grandmother of three.

CAVALLARO, E. Peter, 97, St. Barnabas, Indianapolis, Dec. 29. Father of Marianne Dickey and Judy Ralph. Grandfather of nine. Great-grandfather of 13.

DANDA, Pauline, 91, St. Malachy, Brownsburg, Nov. 28. Mother of Patricia, David and Richard Danda. Grandmother of five. Great-grandmother of two. Great-great-grandmother of one.

DENNY, Mary A., 94, Good Shepherd, Indianapolis, Dec. 27. Mother of Helen Martin, Jaqueline Stone, Darrell and John Denney. Grandmother of 13.

DICKMAN HEROLD, Hilda (Luerman), 92, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Richmond, Dec. 23. Mother of Marilyn Haber, Barb, Jim, Joe, John, Mike and Tom Dickman. Stepmother of Cheri Gaddis, Mike, Rick, Ron and Tom Herold. Sister of Martha Dickman and Father John Luerman. Grandmother of 15. Great-grandmother of 18.

DUGAN, Barbara J., 85, St. Bartholomew, Columbus, Dec. 26. Mother of Anne Collins, Mary McCorkle, Dr. Margaret Workman, Gregory, Joseph, Michael and Paul Dugan. Sister of Rita Novick. Grandmother of 27.



Father Andrew Summerson breaks through the ice on Lake Michigan in Hammond, Ind., on Jan. 10 and plunges a processional cross to complete the Great Blessing of Water, a rite in the Byzantine Catholic Church that commemorates the feast of Theophany, or the Baptism of the Lord. Father Summerson is administrator of St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church in Whiting, Ind., in the Eparchy of Parma, Ohio. (CNS photo/Laura Ieraci)

DUGAN, Gerald, 84, St. Pius X, Indianapolis, Dec. 16. Husband of Carol Dugan. Father of Kelly Arvin, Jeannie White, Christopher, Daniel, Gerald, III, and Kevin Dugan. Brother of Mary Jo Fangman, Colleen Kane, Wilma Smith and Denny Dugan. Grandfather of seven. Great-grandfather of five.

FREEMAN, Verna C. (Kieser), 95, St. Paul, Tell City, Dec. 23. Wife of Norman Freeman. Mother of Tom Freeman. Sister of Etta Jean Conen. Grandmother of three. Great-grandmother of four.

HACKMAN, Marvin, 86, St. Pius X, Indianapolis, Nov. 22. Husband of Jane Hackman. Father of Anne, Dan, Mike and Steve Hackman. Grandfather of 11. Great-grandfather of four.

HAHN, Barbara, 97, St. Lawrence, Indianapolis, Dec. 9. Mother of George Hahn. Sister of Eva Gaal. Grandmother of four. Great-grandmother of 12. Great-great-grandmother of five.

HILBER, Gary J., 76, St. Bartholomew, Columbus, Dec. 24. Husband of Robin Hilber. Father of Erin Brandstaetter, Jennifer Johnson, Stephanie Kautzman, C. Jordan and Jonathan Hilber. Brother of Shari Cannon,

Shannon Klein and Michael Hilber. Grandfather of seven. Great-grandfather of one.

KNECHT, Ruth J., 88, St. Mary, Greensburg, Dec. 24. Wife of Albert Knecht. Mother of Jane Storie, Daryl, Keith, Michael and Ronald Knecht. Sister of Dorine Bruns, Carole Effron and Betty Meyer. Grandmother of 17. Great-grandmother of nine.

LEVELL, Gene, 85, St. Martin of Tours, Martinsville, Dec. 23. Husband of Sue Levell. Father of Becky Levell Cannon and Angelique Levell. Brother of Jim Levell. Grandfather of one.

LUTGRING, JoAnn F., 93, St. Mark, Perry County, Dec. 3. Mother of Laura Thomasson, David, Erick, Jon and Keith Lutgring. Sister of three. Grandmother of 13. Great-grandmother of nine.

MARKET, Stanley C., 92, St. Elizabeth of Hungary, Cambridge City, Dec. 25. Father of Christine Brown, Mary Lou Griffey, Diann Market, Ginny Schwab, Debbie Turner and Linda Ulerich. Brother of Helen Cornet. Grandfather of 18. Great-grandfather of 32.

MURPHY, Raymond G., 91, St. Charles Borromeo, Bloomington, Dec. 25. Father

of Cathleen Gage, Ellen Porter and Christine Wright. Grandfather of six. Great-grandfather of 11.

NOLAN, Jr., Herbert H., 71, Prince of Peace, Madison, Dec. 25. Father of Brandon Boldery. Brother of Velma Coduti, Burtch Decker, Jerry Nighbert and George Nolan. Grandfather of four. Great-grandfather of one.

OATIS, Michael, 62, St. Michael the Archangel, Indianapolis, Dec. 15. Husband of Julie Oatis. Father of Allyson Garner and Jeff Oatis. Brother of Deborah, James, Patrick and Peter Oatis. Grandfather of one.

OBERJOHANN, Diane H., 76, St. Lawrence, Lawrenceburg, Dec. 24. Wife of Eugene Oberjohann. Mother of Kathi Hiatt and Ken Honroth. Sister of Ron Koch. Grandmother of 12. Great-grandmother of one.

PENISH, William R., 93, St. Barnabas, Dec. 29. Father of Stacy Crane, Catherine Dawson, Lynn Gearries and William Penish. Grandfather of six. Great-grandfather of three.

PONCE, Marlon Noel Juarez, 26, St. Lawrence, Indianapolis, Nov. 4. Son of Santos Miguel Juarez Anunez and Ann Maria Ponce. Brother of Leyda Juarez, Jairo, Jeffery

and Olmer Juarez Ponce, and Roger and Santos Ponce.

SCHEME, Jeanne M., 80, St., Maurice, Napoleon, Dec. 30. Wife of Jerry Schene. Mother of Craig and Eric Schene. Grandmother of three.

SHOCKEY, Ronald L., 73, St. Mark the Evangelist, Indianapolis, Dec. 24. Husband of Sharon Shockey. Father of Sarah Duffer and Ron Shockey. Grandfather of six.

STENGER, Julianne, 59, St. Jude, Indianapolis, Dec. 17. Wife of Gregory Stenger. Mother of Kristin Snyder, Brett, Jonathan and Jordan Stenger. Sister of Colleen Meguiar, Dorothy Stenger, Andrew, John and Neil Burch. Grandmother of six.

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

THOMAS, Letha O., 85, St. Mary, Greensburg, Dec. 15. Wife of John Thomas. Mother of Kathy Vanderbur, Galen, James and John Thomas, Sister of Ethel Borneman, Kathy Reece and Dick Benham. Grandmother of 10. Great-grandmother of five.

WALLACE, Helen L., 82, St. Mary, Navilleton, Dec. 24. Mother of Janet Kruer, Jill, Brian, Jerry and Michael

Wallace. Sister of William End. Grandmother of 10. Great-grandmother of four.

WHITE, Donald, 92, St. Pius, X, Indianapolis, Dec. 1. Husband of Mary White. Father of Elaine Ford, Ann Hannant, Janet Method, Karen Ryan, Diane, Judy and Mark White. Grandfather of 11. Great-grandfather of 11.

WINDHOLTZ, Edward C., 83, St. Peter, Franklin County, Dec. 21. Brother of Joyce Bucher, Audrey and Barbara Windholtz. Uncle of several.

WITTMAN, Helen L. (Doogs), 88, St. Michael, Cannelton, Dec. 29. Wife of Clarence Wittman. Mother of Diane Fuchs-Saylor, Donna Fuchs-Hermann and Glenward Fuchs. Sister of Uneda East. Grandmother of five. Great-grandmother of seven.

WOLFSCHLAG, Thomas J., 82, Prince of Peace, Madison, Dec. 22. Husband of Diane Wolfschlag. Father of Andrea Michl, Anna Marie Wilson and Johanna Wolfschlag. Brother of Linda Smart and David Wolfschlag. Grandfather of four. Great-grandfather of five.

ZOLLMAN, Mary L., 98, Prince of Peace, Madison, Dec. 28. Mother of Doris Hendersen. Grandmother of three. Great-grandmother of two. †

Online Lay Ministry Formation

The Archdiocese of Indianapolis has partnered with the University of Notre Dame and Catholic Distance University (CDU) to offer not-for-credit online theology classes:

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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, Guzman Carriquiry, 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 letters of credential on Jan. 9.

After years of doubt as to whether Pope Francis will ever make the long-awaited visit to Uruguay and Argentina, Carriquiry said he mustered up "the courage to ask the pope, 'Is a trip out of the question?'"

"In no way is it out of the question!" the pope exclaimed, according to Carriquiry. "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.

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

"But then, the Chileans warned me that October was too close to the Chilean presidential election and wanted the visit to be moved in January," the pope told the Uruguayan ambassador.

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," Carriquiry recalled.

"Now I must wait for the pandemic to end and for favorable conditions to happen in general so that I make the trip when providence allows it," the pope said, according to the ambassador.

Carriquiry is no stranger to the Vatican. He was named bureau chief of the Pontifical Council for the Laity in 1977 by St. Paul VI. In 1991, St. John 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. †

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

CALDAROLA

continued from page 12

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.

(Effie Caldarola writes for Catholic News Service.) †

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 gerlandson@catholicnews.com.) †

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Employment

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Send resume & cover letter to: fr.dale@sfxmw.com
 Rev. Robert Dale Cieslik • Saint Francis Xavier Church
 155 Stringer Lane • Mount Washington, KY 40047
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Employment

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
 2322 N 13 1/2 St.
 Terre Haute, IN 47804
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barb@shjth.org

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Employment

RONCALLI HIGH SCHOOL - PRINCIPAL

Roncalli High School, Indianapolis, Indiana

Roncalli High School, the South Deanery Catholic high school of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, is seeking to fill the position of Principal beginning with the 2021-22 school year. The school operates under the President-Principal model of administration and as such the principal is directly responsible to the President and, by extension, the Board of Directors and the Archdiocesan Office of Catholic Schools.

As Christ has called upon each of us to "go make disciples of all nations" and to the extent that our namesake, St. John XXIII (Angelo Cardinal Roncalli) was committed to that task, it is Roncalli High School's intention to create disciples of Jesus in the image of St. John XXIII. The successful candidate will understand and embrace the Catholic mission of Roncalli High School. He/she should have a solid background in curriculum and instruction and possess strong leadership skills with a passion for assisting students and teachers in their pursuit of excellence.

Applicants for this position must possess an administrator's license, be a practicing Catholic, and have a minimum of three years of educational administrative experience. For more information and/or to submit supporting documentation (i.e., resume, cover letter, references), please contact Rob Rash, Office of Catholic Schools, Archdiocese of Indianapolis, 1400 N. Meridian Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202, or call 317-236-1544 or email rrash@archindy.org. Deadline for submission of materials is February 19, 2021. All applications and inquiries are confidential.

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.

Equal Opportunity Employer

Daily podcast that leads listeners through Bible's narrative is No. 1

ST. PAUL, Minn. (CNS)—If great minds had brainstormed how to create a podcast that would jump to No. 1 in Apple's podcast rankings, they never would have landed on "The Bible in a Year," joked Jeff Cavins, a Bible scholar and creator of the Great Adventure Bible Timeline.



Jeff Cavins

Yet, two weeks into 2021, "The Bible in a Year" with Father Mike Schmitz tops the charts—and has since 48 hours after its Jan. 1 launch.

With the backing of Ascension, a multimedia Catholic publisher, Cavins and Father Schmitz, a priest of the Diocese of Duluth, Minn., and popular Catholic speaker and author, created "The Bible in a Year," a daily podcast that leads listeners through the Bible's narrative.

The aim is for listeners to understand how God's plan for mankind's salvation undergirds biblical events and the lives of its central figures.

"Instead of just knowing stories of the Bible, we're trying to get people to know the story of salvation, of salvation history," said Cavins, a member of St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Brooklyn Park, Minn.

Each episode is about 20 minutes and includes Father Schmitz reading several chapters from Scripture, often from different books, and then giving a short reflection on the readings.

The reading chronology is based on the "Great Adventure Bible Timeline" reading plan, which organizes the 14 narrative books of the Bible into 12 periods in order to help readers understand how they relate to one another and to God's plan for salvation. That plan is designed for three months, so Cavins expanded it for "The Bible in a Year."

What makes the reading plan for "The Bible in a Year"—and the "Great Adventure Bible Timeline"—successful is that it helps readers follow the story without losing a sense of the narrative in a non-narrative book, Cavins told *The Catholic Spirit*, newspaper of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis.

Many people approach the Bible as a book to be read from cover to cover, and when they start at the beginning, they read through Genesis and Exodus—narrative books—only to get stuck in Leviticus—a non-narrative book—and abandon the project.

Rather than a single book, the Bible is better understood as a library, Cavins said, and people benefit from a "librarian" to help them understand how it works together.

"People are lost about how to read the Bible, and we feel that it's a crisis in the Church today," he said. "God wants us to know his heart ... and he wants us to know his plan."

Cavins and Father Schmitz expected to meet a need among Catholics for an entry point into understanding Scripture, but Cavins said he was amazed the program is so popular, with more than 1 million downloads in its first five days, and more than 3.5 million by Jan. 12.

Apple Podcasts listed it at No. 1 on Jan. 3, above chart-toppers "The Daily" from *The New York Times*, "Crime Junkie" and "The Joe Rogan Experience."

There's widespread hunger for the word of God and people want to find—and do—something positive after the hardships of 2020, Cavins said.

In a Jan. 5 news release, Ascension founder and president Matthew Pinto said the company is "overwhelmed by the staggering response to this podcast."

"We had hoped that this program would be exciting to our listeners, but this huge level of response is truly unbelievable," he said. "People are hungry for God, and we're honored to help them encounter God's word through a daily podcast, especially as so many of us continue to be cut off from our parishes, communities, and loved ones during these difficult days."

Cavins attributes the podcast's out-of-the-gates success to the simplicity and mobility of the medium itself, Catholics' familiarity with the "Great Adventure Bible Timeline" learning system and Father Schmitz's popularity as a speaker, which includes a large following for his catechetical YouTube videos, "Ascension Presents."

"We wanted to shine a light in the darkness," Cavins said. "The greatest

THE BIBLE IN A YEAR

WITH FR. MIKE SCHMITZ, FEATURING JEFF CAVINS

message that people need in their life right now is that God loves them and has a plan for their life. They are two things that we're trying to emphasize."

The podcast format makes it simple for subscribers to listen to the daily episode while commuting, making dinner or starting their day, Cavins said. And because most listeners are likely accessing it from their smartphones, it's "salvation history in your pocket," he said.

In Ascension's Jan. 5 news release, Father Schmitz said he wanted to create the podcast "because my own mind was being filled with a lot of chaotic voices."

"Some were wise, many were merely distracting," he said. "I think that a lot of people are tired of those same distracting and temporary voices. And they want what I want: to allow our hearts and minds to be shaped by something eternal—God's eternal word."

He said that Cavins' 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 then faith comes by hearing the word of God."

"We really do truly believe that if people will listen to God's word, it has a way of changing your life and your thinking," he said.

The show's 365 total podcasts will cover every verse of the Bible.

"The Bible in a Year" is 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 Catholic Church's relationships with other Churches and Christian 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 worship and 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 while 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 Catholic 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," the bishop 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 problems, you can overcome doubts" and really get to know the theologians representing the churches.

Staff of the pontifical 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 what ecumenical 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.



Bishop Brian Farrell

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 importance, not 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 collaboration between all the Christians. They stand together." †



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 Italy; and Cardinal Kurt Koch, president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, (CNS photo/Vatican Media)