Prayer service shows Burmese community in the archdiocese ‘our hearts are with you’

By Natalie Hofer

On Feb. 1, Myanmar refugee and Indianapolis resident Paul Hnin scrolled through news articles online when a headline seized him with shock and fear: the Myanmar military had overthrown the country’s democratic government.

“I couldn’t think,” said the 37-year-old member of St. Barnabas Parish in Indianapolis. “We don’t want to go through this again. We need democracy!”

With 24,000 refugees from Myanmar—formerly known as Burma—Indianapolis is home to one of the nation’s largest Burmese communities.

A large number of them are Catholic. Those of various ethnic tribes settled near three Indianapolis parishes—the Hakha Chin at St. Barnabas, the Zomi Chin at St. Mark the Evangelist, and the Karenni at St. Pius X.

In support of the city’s Burmese population following the coup, the three faith communities hosted a prayer service on Feb. 11 at Roncalli High School in Indianapolis.

Roughly 150 people—including non-Burmese—attended the service, which featured a welcome from Indianopolis Mayor Joe Hogarth and a message from Archbishop Charles C. Thompson.

“Let us affirm in silence our commitment to stand with the people of Myanmar and with the Burmese parishes in our archdiocese,” the archbishop said in the Mass.

In a prepared statement, the Archdiocese of Indianapolis said it was “heartened” to host the service.

“During this time of heightened uncertainty, ourBurmese community here in Indianapolis finds strength in its faith and in the knowledge that it is being supported and prayed for by so many others,” said the archdiocese.

“Lent is a time of renewal and growth. By participating in the Lenten prayer service, our Burmese community was able to come together in solidarity with their fellow believers.”

The service was a “show of solidarity,” said Paul San, one of the staff priests at St. Barnabas.

“Seeing people from different faiths come together in prayer and support for our Burmese sisters and brothers was a beautiful sight,” he said.

New website hopes to set Catholic youths on fire for their faith

By John Shaughnessy

At 17, Sarah Getman knows that many teenagers struggle with feelings of being alone and isolated—who wish there was someone to talk to about the direction of their lives and the questions they have surrounding their faith and their relationship with God.

“Being a young person in the Church can feel lonely and daunting, especially in areas in which there is a small Catholic population or few young people to talk to,” says Sarah, a member of St. Mary Parish in the southern Indiana community of Mitchell.

“In high school and college, we begin really pondering the facts of our existence as we start to form our own ideas about the world, often diverging from the ideas of our parents. Although young people may have mentors and adults in the Church that can help them as they grapple with these questions, there are situations in which they don’t have people their own age to talk to who are also experiencing these things.”

That’s why Sarah became involved with INFLAME Catholic, a website that provides resources and guidance for Catholic youth.

“I wanted to create a website where teenagers could come and learn more about their faith and receive support from other Catholic youth,” she said.

“INFLAME Catholic is a place where teenagers can connect with each other and with the Church in a way that is relevant to their lives.”

The website offers resources such as articles, videos, and podcasts, as well as a community forum where teenagers can ask questions and share their experiences.

“INFLAME Catholic is a resource that provides support and encouragement for Catholic youth as they navigate their faith journey.”

The website has been well-received by Catholic youth across the country, who have found it to be a valuable resource.

“I love that INFLAME Catholic provides a space for teenagers to connect with each other and with the Church in a way that is authentic and relevant to their lives,” said one teenager who has become involved with the website.

“I feel more connected to the Church and my faith than I ever have before, thanks to INFLAME Catholic.”

The website continues to grow in popularity, with more and more teenagers discovering INFLAME Catholic as a valuable resource for their faith journey.
Iraq announces COVID-19 restrictions ahead of papal trip

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Two days after the Iraqi government announced stringent COVID-19 precautions, including closure of mosques, churches and music halls, and ordered the closure of event halls, the government Feb. 18-March 8. Grocery stores, bakeries and public places will have a curfew on Friday-Sunday and an 8 p.m.-8 a.m. curfew. The prime minister had chaired a meeting on Feb. 13 of the Higher Committee for Health and National Security, which responded to a rising number of coronavirus infections with new restrictions, including a “total curfew” on Friday-Sunday and an 8 p.m.-8 a.m. curfew the rest of the week from Feb. 18-March 8. Grocery stores, bakeries and pharmacies are exempt. In addition to the closure of all mosques and churches, the government banned public funerals and weddings in event halls, and ordered the closure of hair salons, gyms, parks and cinemas for two weeks. Schools are to move to an online format, and restaurants are allowed to provide delivery service only.

According to the Worldometer COVID-19 tracker, Iraq had been experiencing a daily increase of new coronavirus infections daily since Feb. 1. As of Feb. 15, the tracker said, Iraq had a total of 643,852 cases since the pandemic began a year earlier and 13,179 people had died. With slightly more than 23,000 active cases on Feb 14, the situation is much better than early October, when the number of active cases peaked at more than 20,000.

The Vatican did not comment on the new restrictions that would impact the planned trip—which could be postponed—or the activities of the pope, the small entourage of Vatican officials expected to travel with him and the 75 journalists accredited to the papal flight. The pope and all those traveling with him have received or were to receive their second doses of the COVID-19 vaccine at least a week before the trip was scheduled to begin.

In line with current health recommendations, they still would be required to be tested for the coronavirus before boarding the flight and to wear approved face masks on the flight and while in Iraq.

In a meeting with members of Catholic News Service’s (CNS) Rome bureau on Feb. 1, Pope Francis said that unless there is a serious wave of COVID-19 infections in Iraq, he had every intention of visiting the country in early March. 

Jesus and continue to help believers experience and express the conversion, the pope wrote.

“The path of poverty and self-denial” through fasting, “concern and loving care for the poor” through almsgiving and “childlike dialogue with the Father” through prayer, he said, “make it possible for us to live lives of sincere faith, living hope and effective charity.”

Pope Francis emphasized the importance of fasting “as a form of self-redemption” to rediscover one’s total dependence on God and to open one’s heart to the poor.

“The fast involves being free from all that weighs us down—like consumerism or an excess of information, whether true or false—in order to open the doors of our hearts to the one who comes to us, poor in all things, yet full of grace and truth: the son of God our savior.”

Cardinal Peter Turkson, prefect of the dicastery for promoting integral human development, who presented the message at a news conference, also insisted on the importance of “fasting and all forms of abstinence, for example, by giving up time watching TV, so we can go to church, pray or say a rosary. It is only through self-denial that we discipline ourselves to be able to take the gaze off ourselves and to recognize the other, reckon with his needs and thus create access to benefits and goods for people,” ensuring respect for their dignity and rights.

How has the COVID-19 pandemic had an impact on your faith?

A year ago, the COVID-19 pandemic began to have a dramatic and often devastating impact on every aspect of life in the United States and around the world. A significant part of that impact extended to the faith lives of people—and their faith communities. It’s an impact that continues today and will undoubtedly continue into the future. As part of our coverage of the ongoing influence that the pandemic is having on the faith lives of people, The Criterion invites you, our readers, to share your thoughts, experiences and stories about how the COVID-19 crisis has affected your faith—the way you live your faith, the way you celebrate your faith, and whether it has deepened or weakened your faith.

In this ‘Year of St. Joseph,’ tell us how he has impacted your life and your faith

Pope Francis has proclaimed this year the “Year of St. Joseph,” the honoring him for his faithfulness to God, his dignity as a worker, and his love and devotion as a husband to Mary and as a foster father to Jesus. With St. Joseph’s feast day approaching on March 19, The Criterion invites you to share your thoughts and stories about how St. Joseph has influenced your life. Let us know how he has inspired you, guided you or served as a role model in your faith, your family, your marriage, your fatherhood, your work.

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

February 20 – 10:30 a.m.
Rite of Election at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church, New Albany

February 21 – 2 p.m.
Rite of Election at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, Indianapolis

February 21 – 4 p.m.
Rite of Election at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral

February 21 – 6 p.m.
Rite of Election at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral

February 22 – 11 a.m.
Funeral for Father John Peter Gallagher, St. Joseph Church, Shelbyville

February 23 – 8:30 a.m.
Visit at Providence Cristo Rey High School, Indianapolis

February 23 – 1 p.m.
Council of Priests meeting, Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis

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Legal path to driving for undocumented population gaining traction

Judging a pandemic capacity limits placed on New York houses of worship

Despite roadblocks, momentum continues to grow across the state for providing undocumented immigrants with legal driving privileges—a move that some lawmakers and advocates, including the Catholic Church, believe would address basic human needs while offering larger economic and public safety benefits.

For the seventh year, legislation been introduced in the General Assembly to issue driving privilege cards to residents of Indiana who cannot provide proof of their identity and lawful status in the United States. Indiana is home to an estimated 100,000 undocumented immigrants, and the cards would allow them to drive legally and to purchase car insurance.

"This can be boiled down to one simple word, and that’s opportunity," said Sen. David Niezgodski (D-South Bend), whose Senate Bill 319 is his fourth attempt to bring forth driving-card legislation. "Undocumented residents should have the opportunity to do things that we don’t even think twice about—going to buy groceries, looking for a job to do better by their families, taking their children to a doctor when they’re sick."

The lawmaker points that every day throughout Indiana, undocumented residents are driving without proper training or licensing and living in fear. "All of these things are happening, and there’s no need for it whatsoever," said Niezgodski, a member of the Baptist Parish in South Bend. "We can’t just continue to look the other way."

Once again, however, his efforts have hit an impasse. Senate Bill 319 was assigned to the Committee on Homeland Security and Transportation, but will not receive a hearing. A similar bill in the House of Representatives, House Bill 1138, is awaiting action in the Committee on Roads and Transportation.

Niezgodski said education—both for fellow legislators and for the public—is key to gaining further support for driving cards. A starting point is making clear that the cards would be restricted only to matters related to driving and purchasing insurance—not for voting, for instance.

Despite the legislative setbacks, the northern Indiana lawmaker believes he has made inroads in the past year—and he gives much of the credit to a diligent group of young advocates in his own backyard.

Undergraduates with the Notre Dame Student Policy Network (SPN), a student initiative at the University of Notre Dame, took on this issue as a public policy topic and conducted extensive research. The result was "Safer Roads, A Stronger Indiana: Projected Social and Economic Effects of Driving Privilege Card Legislation in Indiana," a report that could influence the public debate for years to come.

Patrick Aimone, one of the founders of SPN, said the students’ research uncovered numerous reasons for Indiana to join nearly 20 other states in offering driving cards to undocumented residents. They found that granting driving privileges would boost the state’s economy—from $68 million in increased revenue for insurance companies to $141 million in additional car sales through three years, as well as a higher overall spending on goods and services. There would also be savings in public safety.

"Right now, if undocumented residents get into an accident, regardless of whether it’s their fault, it triggers fears of legal consequences for driving without a license," Aimone said. "So there are greater rates for hit-and-runs, and it’s harder for police to do their investigations.”

Aimone also views his work through the lens of Catholic social teaching. "I see this campaign as a corporal work of mercy," Aimone said. "The federal government is in charge of enforcing immigration law, and that belongs to them, but this is an issue of state law. And it’s a question of whether or not senators and representatives have it in their hearts to be merciful toward people who are living here, who have set down ties to their communities but who are probably living in fear.”

An advocate at the opposite end of the state knows this struggle all too well. Bertha Melendres, director of Hispanic outreach for the Archdiocese of Evansville, came to the United States from Mexico at age 11 as an undocumented immigrant. As a resident of California, for years until she was able to obtain legal citizenship, Melendres drove to school, work and church—without a license and with constant anxiety.

"I know how scary this is,” said Melendres, who moved to Evansville four years ago. “It’s a big issue here, too. As a Catholic, my convictions are always founded on our faith. We are called to welcome the stranger, to embrace them and help them become productive in society. How can they do that if they don’t have the tools to do the most basic things?”

The Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC) stands in support of driving privilege legislation. "We are encouraged to see all the involvement across the state with regard to this issue," said Angela Espada, executive director of the ICC, the public policy voice of the Catholic Church in Indiana. "While we are disappointed that Senate Bill 319 did not get a hearing, we will continue our efforts to advocate for this type of legislation that we know has had positive outcomes in other states.”

To follow priority legislation of the ICC, visit www.indianacatholic.org. This website includes access to ICAN, the Indiana Catholic Action Network, which offers the Church’s position on key issues. Those who sign up for ICAN receive alerts on legislation moving forward and ways to contact their elected representatives.

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“..."You can do what I cannot do, I can do what you cannot do. Together we can do great things.” — Mother Teresa
Editorial

Pope Francis hears the confession of a priest at the Basilica of St. John Lateran in Rome in this March 7, 2019, file photo. In his message for Lent, Pope Francis said the season is “a time for renewing faith, hope and love.” (CNS photo/Vatican Media)

Use Lent as a time of conversion, to draw closer to the Lord

We have begun the season of Lent, a time of prayer, fasting and almsgiving in our Church.

And like the end of the Lenten season in 2020, we continue facing the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. Although the celebration of Mass is available at parishes throughout central and southern Indiana, social distancing is still the norm. Keeping 6-feet apart and wearing masks is part of our new normal throughout society—even while attending church.

Many parishes have every other pew marked off to ensure social distancing, choirs are absent from the celebration, and a sign of peace is currently not a part of the liturgy as well.

But we still have the greatest gift of our faith—the reception of the Eucharist—available to those of us who are able in person to take part in the holy Mass. And one prayer for this liturgical season should be that one day soon—God willing—we will be able to return God’s love, and he invites us to return God’s love.

Were we able even to make the only offering we can: our emptiness. Our total and complete dependence on a Savior.

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Lenten season is a time of healing and hope

Ash Wednesday (Feb. 17) and the First Sunday of Lent (Feb. 21) are early this year. This is a blessing. It gives us an opportunity to experience the spiritual discipline and prayerful reflection that are the special graces of this season. Lent is a time of healing and hope, a period of intense preparation for the joy of Easter.

The distribution of ashes was a little different this year. According to the special instructions we received from the Vatican’s Congregation for Divine Worship:

After blessing the ashes and sprinkling them with holy water in silence, the priest addresses those present, reciting once the formula found in the Roman Missal: “Repent, and believe in the Gospel,” or “Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

At that point, the note continues, the priest “cleanses his hands, puts on a face mask, and distributes ashes to those who come to him or, if appropriate, he goes to those who are standing.”

He then sprinkles the ashes on each person’s head “without saying anything.”

What was different in parishes throughout the world this year was the fact that, due to the pandemic, after sprinkling the ashes in silence, the administration of ashes to the parishes in the Gospel” or “Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return” was recited only once and not addressed to each person as he or she received the ashes. What was the same was the public recognition that we are all sinners who need the healing power of the Gospel.

The Gospel reading for the First Sunday of Lent ( Mk 1:12-15) tells us that “The Spirit drove Jesus out into the desert, and he remained in the desert for forty days, tempted by Satan. He was among wild beasts, and the angels ministered to him” ( Mk 1:12-13). The season of Lent recalls Jesus’ time in the desert, and it provides us with an opportunity to share in this experience through a renewed commitment to the spiritual disciplines of prayer, fasting and almsgiving.

The first and second readings for the First Sunday of Lent (Gn 9:8-15 and 1 Pt 3:18-22) reference God’s promise to Noah following the great flood that “restored the face of the ground” (Gn 9:11) and nearly destroyed the entire human race. St. Peter explains that this flood “prefigured baptism” (1 Pt 3:21).

Like the sacrament of our rebirth in Christ, the cleansing and reinforcement during Lent “is not a removal of dirt from the body but an appeal to God for a clear conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers subject to him” (1 Pt 3:21-22).

Lent is a time of spiritual renewal, a time to acknowledge our selfishness and sin, and a chance to overcome the temptations that distract us from living the Gospel values that define who we are as missionary disciples of Jesus Christ.

“Repent and believe in the Gospel” is the invitation we have received from our Savior, Jesus Christ. Along with the other Ash Wednesday admonition, “Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return,” this is a powerful reminder that there is more to life than the seductive promises of “the world, the flesh and the devil.” We do not live by bread alone, Jesus tells Satan. We have spiritual lives that can only be fed by the word of God which comes to us in the Scriptures, in the sacraments (especially the Eucharist) and in our service to our sisters and brothers in need.

Lent is its time for feeding our souls. It’s a time to heal the wounds caused by sin, and it’s an opportunity to let the grace of the Holy Spirit set us free from whatever chains bind us to this world and its sorrows. The rainbow, which signifies God’s promise to Noah, is “the sign that I am giving for all ages to come, of the covenant between me and you and every living creature with you” (Gn 9:12).

During Lent, we are all invited to spend time with Jesus in the desert. To accept this invitation, we must turn away from all the things that distract us from communication with God in prayer. We also have to abstain from those activities (however good in and of themselves) that divert our attention from genuine spiritual growth.

Finally, to truly experience the spiritual growth offered to us during this holy season, we have to be generous stewards of all the gifts God has given us.

May this Lent be a time of healing and hope for all. May we grow closer to Christ, and each other, this season of Lent.

La Cuaresma es una época de oración, ayuno y limosna

El Miércoles de Ceniza (17 de febrero) y el Primer Domingo de Cuaresma (21 de febrero) se adelantan este año. Esto es una bendición ya que tenemos la oportunidad de experimentar más temprano la disciplina espiritual y la reflexión en oración que son las más temprano la disciplina espiritual este año. Esto es una bendición ya que Cuaresma (21 de febrero) se adelanta y la Cuaresma (21 de febrero) se adelanta esta año. Esto es una bendición ya que Cuaresma (21 de febrero) se adelanta.

Lo que fue diferente en las

En ese momento—continúa la nota—el sacerdote dice: “El Espíritu lo impulsó al desierto, y estuvo en el desierto cuarenta días, siendo tentado por Satanás. Estaba con las fieras y los devoradores de almas que se nos ofrece durante este tiempo santo, tenemos que ser administradores generosos de todos los dones que Dios nos ha dado.

Que esta Cuaresma sea un tiempo de curación y esperanza para todos. Que nos acerquemos más a Cristo y a los demás, en este tiempo de Cuaresma. ¶
Department of Justice "Family Changes Everything: Current Trends and What's Next?" webinar, sponsored by archdiocesan Catholic Charities-Social Concerns office, noon-1 p.m., archdiocesan Refugee and Immigrant Services policy advisor Laura McCarter and an immigration attorney discuss current policies and how individuals can advocate for future needs. Registration: familychangeseverything.eventbrite.com. Information: Simona Raising, 317-236-1457 or thering@archindy.org.

February 26
St. Anthony of Padua Parish, 316 N. Sherwood Ave., Clarksville. Men’s Club Annual Fish Fry. Fridays through March 19 (March 5, 12 and 19), 5-7:30 p.m., take-out only, includes baked or fried fish, oysters and shrimp, two sides, adult dinners $7.50-$9.50, children’s dinners $3.50. Information: parish.office@stanthony-clarksville.com or 812-282-2290.

St. Thomas the Apostle Parish of Columbus, 15712, 523 S. Merrill St., Fortville. Friday Night Lenten Fish Fry. Fridays during Lent and Holy Week (March 5, 12, 19, 26, April 2), 5 p.m. until supplies last, includes fish sandwich, steak fries, coleslaw, dessert. $10. Information: kofc15712info@gmail.com or 812-282-2290.

March 27
Sisters of Providence White Violet Center “Virtual Alpaca Encounter” via Zoom, 10-11 a.m. $15 plus optional $10 per alpaca ornament fee. Register by Feb. 19. Registration and information: 812-535-2952, provctr@spsmw.org or www.spsmw.org/prov.

Annual Shawe and Pope John Virtual Auction Dinner, benefiting Prince of Peace schools in Madison, two raffles, prizes up to $10,000, 200 raffle tickets at $20 each. To buy tickets, donate items or sponsor event: 812-273-3835 ext. 246, or 812-801-1600. Action link goes live on Feb. 1: gop pledg eme/ projectiont3.

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, members welcome, also call about regular Friday night dinner events. Information: 317-796-1605 or 317-243-0772.

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Faith Alive!

Church offers many resources to enrich Lent during pandemic

By Lindsey Weishar

I don’t know about you, but I often mentally brace myself for Lent. The season feels so long, so winter-ridden, and in this time of lingering pandemic, especially isolating. Yet, the Online Etymology Dictionary reminds me that Lent comes from an Old English word meaning “lengthening of the day,” “spring.”

Perhaps we’re called to approach Lent not as a marathon of tasks meant to break our will, but as a blossoming born of accompanying Christ through the desert, an opportunity to grow in our relationship with him along the way.

As we begin Lent, it may be useful to make a spiritual “game plan” for cultivating this relationship. It’s important to remember that, though we take on Lenten practices, the practices are primarily meant to orient us toward relationship with Christ and others. In the process, we grow our hearts.

If you’re looking to meaningfully deepen your relationship with Christ, below are a few ways to nourish you on what may feel like a long road to Easter.

As the reality of COVID-19 has continued to make some traditional forms of gathering difficult this year, these ideas may be incorporated into family and individual life at home.

Prayer

• Listen to sacred music. If you enjoy praying with music, be sure to check out the work of Harpa Dei, a choir whose mission is evangelization. The four siblings who make up Harpa Dei sing from a variety of Catholic, Orthodox and Jewish traditions and in multiple languages. Born in Germany, they grew up in Ecuador. Listening to their music is a peaceful experience that connects listeners to a rich treasury of music from around the world. You can find Harpa Dei on YouTube, and their music is a wonderful accompaniment to personal or family prayer time.

• Honor St. Joseph. Pope Francis has declared this year the “Year of St. Joseph” and shared a beautiful apostolic letter titled “Patris Corde.” Consider reading “Patris Corde” with family or friends and reflecting on the fatherhood of St. Joseph. One of the letter’s themes that has personally inspired me is, “Tenderness with family or friends and Patris Corde.” Consider reading and shared a beautiful apostolic letter titled “Patris Corde” this year the “Year of St. Joseph” and reflecting on the fatherhood of St. Joseph. One of the letter’s themes that has personally inspired me is, “Tenderness with family or friends and Patris Corde.”

• Fast from negativity. One Lent during my college years, my Newman Center challenged students to fast from negativity, giving up a small practice to do each day, like sitting next to someone we didn’t know during a meal or staying off social media for a day. With family or friends, consider creating your own personalized fast with small, doable, daily practices.

• Fast from self. Add extra beauty to your Holy Week by engaging in traditional practices that promote emptying of self. Tenebrae services might not be happening in your parish or diocese this year, but it’s possible to find the readings and psalms for this beautiful service online and to read them with family or friends. On Good Friday, consider making hot cross buns, the traditional food eaten on this day to remember Jesus’ death and provide needed sustenance. Another way to fast from self is to engage in prayerful reflection on the experiences of biblical figures (like Mary Magdalene, Simon of Cyrene and Mary, the mother of Jesus) during the passion and death of Christ by reading Scripture or praying through the Stations of the Cross. If stations are not offered inside your church this year, pray the stations as you walk through your neighborhood or near your church. Some churches may have outdoor stations.

Almsgiving

• Give materially. With family or friends, consider choosing an organization, community service or religious group to financially support this Lent. Though some organizations are not open to volunteers at this time, financial help allows them to continue serving others. You might decide to collect not only spare change but more information about the organization’s mission, charism and goals. How might you or your family creatively live out the spirit of this organization or community in your own lives? Don’t forget to pray for this organization; send a card or spiritual bouquet with your financial gift to give your offering a personal touch.

• Give time or talent. Though many of our usual ministries may not be fully up and running, you can still make your time and gifts available to others this Lent. This might be in the form of tutoring a student via video call, virtually gathering friends for a Bible study (check out Father Mike Schmitz’s Bible in a Year study) or calling homebound parishioners to check on their needs. If you stumble along the way this Lent, remember that our Lord delights in our imperfections and will walk beside us. He is traveling beside us and is a gracious companion. May our spiritual practices lead us to better knowing him.

Pay attention to the other Scripture at Mass this Lent

Promoting Christian Unity outlined a "practical ecumenism," a "pastoral ecumenism."

In my small home office this week, I found myself surrounded by mounds of photographs. But there aren’t many pictures on glossy paper. No, these are memories, and a lifetime of blessings as reflected in the photographs.

I still remember the day my great-grandmother and I went to the Grand Canyon. She was so excited to see it, and I think she was even more excited to share the experience with me. We spent hours walking along the rim, taking in the breathtaking views of the canyon below. The air was crisp and cold, and the wind blew through our hair. It was such a special moment that I will always cherish.

I also remember the time my family and I took a trip to Disney World. We visited all the parks and rode all the roller coasters. I was so little at the time, but I remember being in awe of the huge crowds and the bright lights. I still have memories of the smell of popcorn and the sound of laughter.

One of the most memorable experiences I had was when I went to Europe for the first time. We visited Paris, Rome, London, and many other cites. I remember the feeling of being in a new place, seeing new sights, and trying new foods. It was an Adventure of a lifetime.

I have a lot of memories from my childhood, but one of the best is the time my family and I went camping in the mountains. We set up a tent and cooked our meals over a campfire. We spent hours exploring the forest and the nearby stream. It was such a peaceful and enjoyable experience.

I have so many memories from my life, but one of the most special is the day I graduated from college. It was a proud moment for my family and me, and I was so excited to start my career. I still remember the feeling of excitement and nervousness as I walked across the stage to receive my diploma.

I have a lot of memories, but I think the best are the ones that are shared with others. Whether it’s a family vacation, a birthday party, or a sports game, being with friends and family makes memories even more special. I love the feeling of connection and the shared experience of creating memories.

I am so grateful for all the memories I have, and I look forward to making many more in the future. Memories are a treasure, and I know that I will always cherish them.

Reminders of the past and the preciousness of each moment
The Sunday Readings

Sunday, February 21, 2021

- Genesis 9:8-15
- 1 Peter 3:18-22
- Mark 1:12-15

The first reading for Mass this weekend, which is from the Book of Genesis, presents the familiar story of Noah. It is a study of contrast and the consequences of this contrast. Noah was faithful, whereas his world almost universally was unfaithful.

God protected Noah from death to which the sinful world succumbed. Warned by God, Noah took his family, and couples of the various animals, onto the ark that Noah constructed. As the floodwaters ebbed, the ark settled on dry land. By God’s help, all aboard Noah’s ark survived.

God assured Noah and all people that now again would a flood destroy the Earth. God promised a covenant with Noah’s people. Under this covenant, or solemn agreement, people would obey God’s law. In turn, God would protect them from peril.

It is the foundational story of all that would be revealed in the long history of salvation. Sin destroys, while God gives life itself to the truly faithful.

The second reading is from the Second Epistle of St. Peter. It recalls the flood and Noah. It notes the covenant as God’s pledge. People ignore or altogether spurn God, but God’s promise and mercy endure. In this mercy came Christ, and in Christ people, if faithful, can anticipate eternal life.

Christians at the time required encouragement. This epistle provided it. Come what may, God protects the faithful, who in baptism and in holiness identify themselves with Jesus. St. Mark’s Gospel furnishes the last reading. It is brief, only a few verses, but its brevity gives it drama and directness in its message.

Use of the number 40 is revealing, suggesting as it does the 40 days spent by Moses in the desert before God gave him the law on Sinai. Jesus is the bearer of God’s holy word, as was Moses. Jesus is concentrated upon the task of serving God. He will bring hope and salvation.

In the Judean desert, wild beasts were everywhere. It was no liturgical figment in this Gospel, but a reality as it is today. An angry protected Jesus. Mark does not lose this chance to assert that Jesus is the Son of God.

At last, following John’s arrest and his removal from the role of prophet, the culmination of salvation awaited. Jesus stepped forward, proclaiming that God’s kingdom will be seen. The Lord called upon the people to repent. “The time of fulfillment” ( Mk 1:15) was at hand. God would be vindicated. Jesus came to set everything in balance. The sinful were laid low. The good endured.

Reflection

The Church has begun Lent, the most intense period in its year of calling its people to union with God. While Ash Wednesday was the first day of Lent, many Catholics will begin the Lenten process with this weekend’s Mass.

The readings for Mass this weekend call people to face the facts of life as humans, to separate good from evil, and to recognize the products of good and evil, in the world and in themselves.

Regardless of the exact details of the flood described in Genesis, despite the qubbling in the name of science as to its date and place, the religious message of Noah and his ark is clear. It supplies a fitting beginning to reflections for Lent. Sin, the willful rejection of God, leads necessarily and always to destruction.

The message of Christ never ends with woe and despair. God offers eternal life and peace. For those who fail, God is forgiving and merciful, so long as the wayward see necessity and always to destruction.

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A

For many centuries, the Catholic Church did not allow cremation. Historically, cremation was linked to the burial practices of pagans, whose religious beliefs did not include the expectation of eventual resurrection and viewed death as the definitive obliteration of the human person.

It was only in 1963 that the Church began to allow cremation as it became more commonplace for both economic and sanitary reasons.

As you indicate, though, Catholic teaching continues to prefer burial of the body because, in the Church’s mind, burial reflects a greater reverence and respect for the deceased and more clearly expresses the Christian belief in an eventual resurrection, when a person’s body and soul will be reunited.

As the appendix to the Order of Christian Funerals puts it: “The body of a deceased Catholic Christian is also the body once washed in baptism, anointed with the oil of salvation, and fed with the bread of life. ... The body of the faithful, therefore, most correctly to mind the Church’s conviction that the human body is in Christ a temple of the Holy Spirit and destined for future glory at the resurrection of the dead” (#412).

So, the choice is yours to make, but the Church’s preference is clearly for traditional burial. And as you mention, if the option is made for cremation, the cremated remains should be buried in a grave or entombed in a mausoleum.

Q

I recall some time ago a change in the language of the creed we say at Sunday Mass to make it more inclusive. The new phrases were like “For us and for our salvation” and “was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became one of us.” I realized recently, though, that our parish no longer uses this newer language and has gone back to “for us men” and “became man.”

When was it decided to revert to the older language? Or perhaps the inclusive language was not universal—in my case, perhaps it started at the parish of the university I attended (Pennsylvania).

The phrases that you quote—“For us and for our salvation” and “became one of us”—are “homemade versions” of the language of the Nicene Creed and have never enjoyed any official status. My guess is that the priest at the university parish you attended crafted what wording himself, so as not to offend any members of the congregation.

The actual text—as approved for use at Mass and as it appears in the Catechism of the Catholic Church—is the following: “For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.”

Should it be of any comfort to you, as I have mentioned before in this column, the Latin word from which the English is translated—“hominis”—is generic; it means “person” or “human being,” not “member of the male sex.”

But the average participant at Mass can’t be expected to know this, and so I look forward to the day when the Mass text in English will reflect more clearly that wider meaning. Meanwhile, if you choose to use instead the Apostles’ Creed, which is a permissible liturgical alternative and whose language cannot be misunderstood as exclusive.

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

Daily Readings

Monday, February 22
The Chair of St. Peter the Apostle
Psalm 5:1-4
Psalm 23:1-6
Matthew 16:13-19

Tuesday, February 23
St. Polycarp, bishop and martyr
Psalm 51:3-4, 12-13, 18-19
Matthew 6:7-15

Wednesday, February 24
Jonah 3:1-10
Psalm 51:3-4, 12-13, 18-19
Luke 11:29-32

Thursday, February 25
Esther C:12, 14-16, 23-25
Psalm 138:1-3, 7-8
Matthew 7:7-12

Friday, February 26
Ezekiel 18:21-28
Psalm 130:1-8
Matthew 5:20-26

Saturday, February 27
Deuteronomy 26:16-19
Psalm 119:1-2, 4, 5, 7-8
Matthew 5:43-48

Sunday, February 28
Second Sunday of Lent
Genesis 22:1-2, 9a, 10-13, 15-18
Psalm 116:10, 15-19
Romans 10:9-14
Mark 9:2-10

The Criterion Friday, February 19, 2021

Question Corner

Fr. Kenneth Doyle

The Church allows cremation, requires that cremated remains be interred

Q

I’ve been having conflicting ideas about cremation. My husband wants to be cremated. At first, I was all for it, but now I’m having a difficult time with that decision. I know in the Apostles’ Creed it says, “the resurrection of the body,” and I also know that the Church prefers burial of the body, even though it does allow cremation followed by immediate burial of the ashes. Can you help me with these two options? (Kanas)

A

For many centuries, the Catholic Church did not allow cremation. Historically, cremation was linked to the burial practices of pagans, whose religious beliefs did not include the expectation of eventual resurrection and viewed death as the definitive obliteration of the human person. It was only in 1963 that the Church began to allow cremation as it became more commonplace for both economic and sanitary reasons.

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relatively new website and social media platform run by the group that has been designed to build a community of young Catholics and other Christians—and create an outlet where they can share their thoughts and questions about their faith.

“I hope INFLAME is a beacon of hope, a sign that there are others who are seeking, and that we’re there to help each other along the way,” Sarah says. “There are so many uncertainties we’re all seeking the truth, also grappling with the questions and struggles of life; but we believe in the promises of God and God will give us the help we need.”

A ‘positive way that glorifies God’

The inspiration for INFLAME came to Aidan Gall, now 19, when he attended the Missionary Disciples Institute at Marian University in Indianapolis during the summer of 2019. Every participant there was challenged to come up with a plan to improve their communities. Now, Aidan initially thought of writing a few articles about his faith and submitting them to websites. Yet after talking with other participants at the institute, he decided to create a website where “anyone can write whatever they want about their own faith experiences.”

“Also, we had a lot of ideas that we had as young people and as followers of God. Not only did we want to answer their questions for ourselves, but we wanted to provide a credible, positive place for people like us to go to resolve those concerns,” he says. “INFLAME was the best way that I could think of that I could better my community.”

Aidan views INFLAME as his way to follow God’s call to have a spiritual impact on his peers.

“Catholicism and God have always been at the center of everything I do,” he says. “I’m mostly motivated by what God taught me as a kid. To live my life as I love myself, and to treat them as I would treat Jesus himself. I’ve learned that when God cares about something, there’s no choice but to do it. And, INFLAME is certainly a big one of those things for me.”

A main element of INFLAME’s website, along with building this online community for our faithful peers, is to provide a place to express our creativity in a positive way that glorifies God. That will include a YouTube channel in the not-so-distant future where we’re hoping to put skills, music, podcasts and any other form of Catholic, entertaining and creative content we can think up.

“The hope of our faith”

At 18, Piper Ogden joined the INFLAME staff as social media assistant after she “was struck by the personal, inspiring stories of teenagers’ intimate encounters with Christ” that appeared on its website.

That theme resonated with her.

“God and his constant presence of a relationship with me means everything,” says Piper, a member of St. Pius X Parish in Reynoldsburg, Ohio, in the Diocese of Columbus, Ohio.

“My faith shapes my decisions. My faith is my moral compass. My faith helps me discover my purpose, assume the best in people, and serve those around me.”

She has also counted on her Catholic faith to help her through the toughest times of her life.

“I have especially had to rely upon my faith in times of loss and hardship,” she says. “What keeps me going is the hope our faith gives: the promise of eternal life, Christ’s example of sacrificial love, and the fact that whenever we have some heavy weights on our shoulders, God is always helping us to carry our cross and healing our brokenness.”

Being involved with INFLAME gives her a way to share that foundation of faith with others, she says.

“My hopes for INFLAME Catholic are to share the love of Christ with other teens, reminding them of their infinite value as children of God.”

“I hope we can provide a welcoming, safe space for all youth to have a voice, for those super invested in their faith, to those questioning their beliefs, to those initially encountering the Lord.”

Sharing faith in the 21st century

The faith and commitment of INFLAME’s leadership team has impressed its mentor, Joe Ruf, the youth minister at St. Jude Parish in Indianapolis.

“Each individual has a heart for service and is using that to help bring other members of the young Church closer to God,” Ruf says. “They stay behind the scenes, bringing their God-given talents to INFLAME so that their ministry remains focused on Christ and not themselves.”

“The team is a powerful witness to the universal Church.”

As one of INFLAME’s leaders, 16-year-old Drew Early stresses that “any young Catholic can join our team.”

“Our target audience is other Catholic youth, though we love it when people of all ages or religious beliefs interact with our content,” says Drew, a member of St. Benedict Cathedral Parish in Evansville, Ind., in the Evansville Diocese.

Piper notes that INFLAME’s website and social media connections reflect the way people are called to share their faith in the 21st century.

“It’s using the gift of technology to work for the glory of God,” Piper says.

At the same time, it’s also using the gift of one’s personal faith to draw others closer to God, Sarah says.

“One of the things I love about our faith is that it is made for the inquisitive of mind, but it is also made for the inquisitive of heart,” Sarah says.

“For me, Catholicism has been an adventure of the mind and the soul—a path which I’ve wandered through every stage of my life, has informed and influenced my worldview, and that has made me who I am today. I’m excited to grow in my faith by telling others about it.”

(Fore more information about INFLAME, visit hoosiercatholic.org/registrar/)

Aiden Gall, center left, and Alex Rapp, center right, speak with Archbishop Charles C. Thompson alongside other participants of the Missionary Disciples Institute hosted by Marian University on June 20, 2019. During the conference, Aidan had the inspiration to create INFLAME Catholic, a website and social media platform run by teenagers that is designed to build a community of young Catholics and other Christians. (FueledInPrint)

Bloomingon parish seeks interns to increase outreach to IU students

By Sean Gallaher

The campus of Indiana University in Bloomington is a mission field of tremendous opportunity for the Church in central and southern Indiana.

Tens of thousands of young adults from around the world, including many from within the archdiocese, call it home at a particularly formative part of their lives. St. Paul’s Catholic Center in Bloomington has for decades sought to bring these young adults closer to Christ and the Church. It is now seeking four people to serve as pastoral interns to reach out to IU students and others who don’t ordinarily come to the faith community at the north end of the university’s campus.

“We’ve done an incredible job of creating opportunities for people who are explicitly evangelized and invited into discipleship formation,” said Dominican Father P. Hyde, St. Paul’s pastor. “At the same time, for every one student or so who’s in a Bible study … ”

The internship, which will begin in July and last for a year with an option of a second year for individual interns, has four areas of ministry focus: hospitality; outreach; retreats and liturgy; and service.

Each of the interns will focus on one of those particular areas of ministry while also welcoming visitors and taking phone calls one day per week at St. Paul’s front desk and working in its development office.

Interns will fundraise about half of their living expenses and monthly $1,000 stipend.

Father Patrick hopes to select two men and two women as interns and envisions them as being recent college graduates, but “is open to whoever the Lord sends us.”

The interns will live in single-sex apartments or condominums provided by St. Paul. They will gather regularly for community time and prayer, including Mass each day and a holy hour on weekdays.

“I see this as an opportunity for those who are called to explore the possibility of ministry but aren’t yet willing to make a longer commitment or to graduate school right out of college,” said Father Patrick. “It’s an opportunity for young men and women who are trying to discern God’s will in their lives, to take a year to be intentional about their prayer and ministerial life and see if God is calling them, perhaps to the priesthood or religious life.”

Missionaries from the Fellowship of Catholic University Students will continue to serve at St. Paul, in ongoing Bible study groups and helping form student missionaries. Father Patrick sees the new interns as helping St. Paul to build relationships with students who aren’t yet active in the faith community.

Once that relationship starts to form through service opportunities, retreats or social events at St. Paul, the students can then be invited to explore the faith more deeply in Bible studies, regular attendance at Mass and discipleship formation. The new internship program, Father Patrick says, “allows and creates a greater breadth of ministry while opening up new doors for young people.”

“The disconnect between many young adults and the Church has only increased, he said, because of the coronavirus pandemic. The new internship can, he said, be a catalyst to help St. Paul re-enliven the life of faith of many IU students.

“When we start to come out of COVID in the fall, we are going to need to go out and find those students who aren’t coming to Mass anymore because they’ve gotten out of the habit,” Father Patrick said.

The pandemic, he said, is an opportunity for the Church in general and St. Paul in particular to look at ministry and evangelization in new ways. The new pastoral internship program is one such effort.

“In a way, the world has hit the reset button because of COVID,” Father Patrick said. “Everything has changed. As a result, everything is uncertain and unstable. That can be frightening … At the same time, Jesus has already won. He has conquered sin and death.”

(The application deadline for the new pastoral internship program at St. Paul Catholic Center in Bloomington is March 5. For more information on the program, visit hoosiercatholic.org/job-openings/)
team long ago. Pictures of my husband and me as young Jesuit volunteers in Bush Alaska. And then, our wedding, our first home, our many friends.

But the real challenge? The pictures of kids. Did I take a picture to record every day of my first child’s life, birth through kindergarten? Possibly, every day of my first child’s life, holding my daughter’s hand tightly in an old photo.

This leads to reflection. How did God walk through my life, often without me even noticing, from the farm where I grew up, portrayed here in black and white, to all that followed? If you’re called to reflect on your spirituality autobiography, an old box (or boxes) of photos will guide your way.

But then the hard part, the letting go. How many different pictures of this soccer player kicking the ball on this field. This year? That year? The elegant prom pictures—do we need one from every angle? But then the hard part, the letting go. How many different pictures of this soccer player kicking the ball on this field. This year? That year? The elegant prom pictures—do we need one from every angle?

(St. Ignatius teaches us to “find God in all things.” Taking time to look through hundreds of old photos definitely brings one to God, the God who brought all these people—and these beautiful children—into my life. It’s good to take a moment to pray for each old friend, the special aunt, the crazy cousin, the grandma who died this year, holding my daughter’s hand tightly in an old photo.

And then, our wedding, our first child, who’s this kid? The garbage bag of memories given by a gracious God, a reminder of the swift passage of time and the preciousness of each moment and person, and the challenge of letting go.

In our second century, CNS will continue to honor that trust that the bishops, our clients and our readers have placed in us. In the words of Pope Francis, we will always strive “to serve the truth with humility and responsibility.”

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

Coordinator of Evangelization and Discipleship

The Office of Evangelization of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Indianapolis is seeking a full-time Coordinator of Evangelization and Discipleship. This position is focused on helping parishes develop evangelization teams for outreach to the unchurched and alienated as well as enhancing a sense of discipleship among practicing Catholics.

Candidates must be practicing Roman Catholics with an in-depth knowledge of the Faith and Catholic catechesis. Excellent oral and written communication skills along with previous experience in project management and pastoral skills are required. A Bachelor’s degree in catechetics, religious education, theology or a related field is required. Previous employment or volunteer experience in the Catholic Church in parish ministry or teaching is required. Spanish speaking/ writing ability is preferred.

Please e-mail 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: isakson@archindy.org

Equal Opportunity Employer

DIOCESE OF EVANSVILLE, INDIANA

Human Resources Director/Manager

The Catholic Diocese of Evansville, Indiana, which serves a Roman Catholic community of more than 75,800 across 12 counties in southwestern Indiana, seeks candidates for the newly created position of Human Resources Manager/ Director. The actual position title will be dependent on the qualifications and experience of the successful candidate.

The successful candidate will be responsible for all aspects of the diocesan benefits plan; develop, maintain and continuously improve the diocese’s comprehensive process for hiring employees; oversee the compensation system for diocesan agency employees; develop and maintain a performance-evaluation process; and serve as an advisor to pastors and management team members, parishes, schools and other diocesan agencies.

The successful candidate will be a Catholic in good standing, a bachelor’s degree is required (master’s degree preferred) in human-resources management, with five years of previous experience in human resources management is required. Designation as a Senior Professional in Human Resources or Professional in Human Resources is preferred. The successful candidate also must complete a full Criminal History Clearance.

A complete position announcement is available online at www.evdio.org. To apply, send a letter of application, resume and at least four references to: Search Committee, Human Resources, Diocese of Evansville, hr-manager@evdio.org. No phone calls, please.

St. Theodore Guerin High School, located in Noblesville, Indiana, is accepting applications for a full-time Director of Enrollment Management.

The Director of Enrollment Management is a full-time exempt position reporting to the President and is an integral part of the school’s leadership team. The Director of Enrollment Management is responsible for planning and implementing a strategic program to market St. Theodore Guerin High School to prospective students and their families; and, ultimately, for enrolling new students in numbers sufficient to meet annual goals. The Director will provide a creative vision and energetic oversight for all admissions and recruitment operations and retention efforts. The successful candidate will have demonstrated ability to coordinate an enrollment management program that will effectively attract, enroll, and retain students who desire to be a part of a dynamic faith based high school.

The qualifications for the position:

• A Bachelor’s Degree is required, and a master’s degree preferred.
• Experience in educational enrollment management preferred.
• Have a collaborative leadership philosophy that works well in a team atmosphere.
• Be a practicing Catholic in good standing and personal witness to the Catholic faith as lived in accordance with the doctrines and morals of the Roman Catholic Church.

For a detailed job description, please visit GuerinCatholic.org. Qualified candidates should email a current résumé and cover letter to apply@guerin catholic.org. Please include at least three references as part of the résumé.

St. Theodore Guerin High School is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Guerin Catholic High School
15300 Gray Road • Noblesville, IN 46062 • (317) 582-0120 • GuerinCatholic.org

Church often means there is pressure to report propaganda, not news, or to satisfy one ideological side or another. That’s why having a moment to reflect with the pope on our history and our mission to serve the Church was a rare and privileged opportunity. Now it is time to get back to work.

In our second century, CNS will continue to honor that trust that the bishops, our clients and our readers have placed in us. In the words of Pope Francis, we will always strive “to serve the truth with humility and responsibility.”

(Greg Erlandson, director and editor-in-chief of Catholic News Service, can be reached at erlandson@catholicnews.com)
the service in person, and many more watched via livestream, said St. Mark pastor Father Timothy Wyciskalla.

“Along with praying for the situation, we hope to raise awareness by doing this so people know what is going on in Myanmar,” he said. “And to allow for a show of solidarity with the Burmese who have made Indianapolis their home and enriched our community by being here.”

“God is never late.”

The various traditional outfits of those gathered from numerous Burmese tribes turned Roncalli’s auxiliary gym into a prism of color.

Those not from Myanmar turned out for the prayer service as well, including St. Mark Catholic School principal Rusty Albertson.

“We have 250 Burmese students in our school,” he said. “What happened in Myanmar with the coup and with so many of our families still having family there—brining the community together to pray and show our support is the right thing to do.”

St. Barnabas parochial vicar Father Eustace Thang noted the gathering’s significance.

“Another in 2007, left thousands dead,” he said, referring to military attacks that led to another landslide elections that led to another landslide victory for the NLD. He arrested Sun Kyi and other government leaders.

The country will be corrupt and people will suffer, and freedom and human rights [will be] extinguished.

When asked what Catholics of central and southern Indiana can do to support the Burmese people, Za Himung offered a two-fold answer.

“They should not only pray for us,” he said, “but they should lobby their governments to put economic sanctions and other political pressures on the Myanmar military.”

The Biden administration has already “levied sanctions against Myanmar officials,” noted Angela Espada, executive director of the Indiana Catholic Conference, the lobbying arm for the Church in Indiana. But she still encouraged Catholics to “contact their senators to express support for the sanctions, as well as holding the [Myanmar] officials accountable.

“Although it is far away, attacks on democracy or abuses of power should concern all of us who care about freedom and justice.”

Paul San of St. Barnabas Parish in Indianapolis holds his hand over his heart as he sings his native country’s national anthem during a prayer service at Roncalli High School in Indianapolis on Feb. 11. (Photo by Natalie Hoefer)

A new constitution in 2008 opened the door to democracy, which finally took place in 2015 in 13 Burmese dialects, representing about 80% of protesters,” said Joseph Kung Za Himung in an email interview with The Criterion. He is publisher and editor-in-chief of GloriaNews.com, a Catholic media outlet in Myanmar.

They are protesting, he said, because under military rule “we will be oppressed and persecuted with authoritarian laws, and our developing country will be in a miserable situation again.

A summary of military rule and recent events in Myanmar

Myanmar gained its independence from the British Empire in 1948, and existed as a democratic nation until its military began five decades of oppressive rule in 1962, according to NLD.com. Two major protests, one in 1988 and another in 2007, left thousands dead.

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As of The Criterion going to press, BBC.com reported military attacks on peaceful protesters, tanks rolling through major cities, and military warnings that protesters could face up to 20 years in prison if they obstruct the armed forces.

A significant [fact] is that youth—both Catholics and non-Catholics—between the ages of 15 to 25 are representing about 80% of protesters,” said Joseph Kung Za Himung in an email interview with The Criterion. He is publisher and editor-in-chief of GloriaNews.com, a Catholic media outlet in Myanmar.

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