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'I just try to remember that God has a plan for all of us'



Young woman follows her dream to fulfill wishes of children, youths facing cancer

By John Shaughnessy

Like a young fairy godmother, 27-year-old Liz Niemiec has helped grant more than 2,500 wishes to children and teenagers battling cancer in the past 11 years.

Many of the wishes evoke touches of joy, including the ones where a child's wish of getting a dog leads to a beaming smile for the boy or girl.

Other wishes are beautiful and heartbreaking at the same time, including one that a teenager had for his family.

See **LITTLE WISH**, page 8

In this 2019 photo, a girl reacts with surprise as she hears about the gift she is receiving from the Little Wish Foundation, a non-profit foundation that Liz Niemiec, right, started when she was 16 to grant wishes to children and teenagers battling cancer. (Submitted photo)

Pope, Holocaust survivor talk about the importance of remembering

ROME (CNS)—A month after reading an interview in the Vatican newspaper with Edith Bruck, an author and Holocaust survivor, Pope Francis decided to pay her a visit at her home in the center of Rome.



Pope Francis

"I could never have imagined such a thing. When I opened the door, I burst out in tears and we embraced. We were both overcome with emotion," Bruck told Vatican News after the pope left on Feb. 20.

Bruck, 88, was born in Hungary to a poor Jewish family. In April 1944, they and their Jewish neighbors were rounded up and taken to the Nazi ghetto in Budapest and later that year sent to Auschwitz, where her mother died. Then they were sent to Dachau, where her father died, and on to Bergen-Belsen, which was liberated by the Allies in 1945. She moved to Rome in 1954 and has lived there since.

Her latest book, *Il Pane Perduto* (*The Lost Bread*) was published on Jan. 20. In connection with the book's publication and the annual commemoration of Holocaust Remembrance Day, Jan. 27, *L'Osservatore Romano*, the Vatican newspaper, published a long interview with her, recounting the horrors of the Shoah, but also the tiny points of light—small gestures of humanity—she experienced during her ordeal.

Bruck said that during the pope's visit, which lasted almost two hours, she shared her story with him, including the "five lights" she experienced in the camps. But the pope knew all about them. "He knew my book almost line by line."

According to the Vatican press office, "The conversation with the pope covered those moments of light sprinkled in the experience of the hell of the concentration camp," and the two spoke of "their fears and hopes for the time we are living in, underlining the value of remembrance and the role of elders in cultivating and passing it on."

"I have come to thank you for your witness and to pay homage to the people martyred by the insanity of Nazism," the

See **POPE**, page 7

Parishes should plan now how best to welcome back parishioners to church

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Even with the recent hopeful signs of vaccinations and the reduction in the number of COVID-19 cases, there is no certain date on which the coronavirus pandemic will be declared over.

That should not stop parishes from planning now to welcome back parishioners to Mass in the future.

"You can't be thinking, 'What will we do after the pandemic?' You have to be doing it now," said Dominican Sister Teresa Rickard, president and executive director of Renew International, which has been offering parish renewal programs since 1976.

"I would be doing things leading up to the fall and going into next Christmas," Sister Teresa added. "People have to be creative, innovating. It can't be about maintenance. It's got to be about mission."

"Don't dwell on what you can't do,

See **PANDEMIC**, page 7

Dominican Sister Teresa Rickard, president and executive director of Renew International, is seen in this 2018 file photo. (CNS photo/courtesy RENEW International)



Fight temptation with faith, prayer, penance, pope says at *Angelus*

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Christians must never engage in dialogue with the devil, but instead must fight against temptations with the same spiritual weapons Jesus used in the desert, Pope Francis said.

The Gospel account of Jesus' temptation in the desert, read each year at the beginning of Lent, is a reminder that following in the Lord's footsteps "is a battle against the spirit of evil," in the pope said on Feb. 21 during his Sunday *Angelus* address.



Pope Francis

"We must be aware of the presence of this astute enemy, who seeks our eternal condemnation, our failure, and prepare to defend ourselves against him and to combat him," he said. "The grace of God assures us—with faith, prayer and penance—of our victory over the enemy."

The Gospel says Jesus spent 40 days and 40 nights in the desert, which is an important "natural and symbolic environment" where God "speaks to the heart of the human person," the pope said.

However, he said, it is also a "place of trial and temptation" where the devil takes advantage of one's "human frailty and needs," and offers an alternative to God's voice "that makes you see another road, a road of deception."

Although Jesus ultimately overcame the devil's temptations, Pope Francis said his true victory came after his crucifixion and death.

"In reality, death was the last 'desert' to cross in order to finally defeat Satan and free us all from his power. And in this way Jesus won in the desert of death, so as to win in the resurrection," the pope said.

Nevertheless, while faith, prayer and penance are needed to overcome temptation, the pope said it was also important for Christians to imitate Jesus who never entered "into dialogue with the devil; never!"

While it may seem that there is a dialogue in the Gospel, he added, Jesus "does not respond with his words," but rather with the word of God.

"If we enter into dialogue with the devil, we will be defeated," the pope said. "Keep this in your head and in your heart: you can never enter into dialogue with the devil, no dialogue is possible. Only the word of God."

Pope Francis encouraged Christians to "not be afraid of the desert" but instead, to seek moments of more prayer and silence.

"Do not be afraid. We are called to walk in God's footsteps, renewing our baptismal promises: renouncing Satan, and all his works and all his empty promises," the pope said. "The enemy is crouching there; beware. But never dialogue with him." †

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 of 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.

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

In this 'Year of St. Joseph,' tell us how he has influenced your life and your faith

Pope Francis has proclaimed this year as the "Year of St. Joseph," 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 Shaughnessy by e-mail at jshaughnessy@archindy.org or by mail in care of *The Criterion*, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202. Please include your parish and a daytime phone number where you can be reached. †

Public Schedule of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson



February 27 – March 9, 2021

February 27 – 11 a.m.

Confirmation Mass for youths of St. Michael Parish in Brookville and St. Nicholas Parish in Ripley County at St. Louis Church, Batesville

February 27 – 2 p.m.

Confirmation Mass for youths of St. Louis Parish in Batesville and St. Anthony of Padua Parish in Morris at St. Louis Church, Batesville

February 28 – 9 a.m.

Mass at St. Mary-of-the-Woods Church, St. Mary-of-the-Woods

March 2 – 10 a.m.

Clergy Lenten Day of Prayer at Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish, Greenwood

March 3 – 10:30 a.m.

Visit to Our Lady of Providence High School, Clarksville

March 4 – 10 a.m.

Leadership Team meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis

March 4 – 5 p.m.

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) virtual National Advisory Council meeting

March 5 – 11 a.m.

USCCB virtual National Advisory Council meeting

March 5 – 1 p.m.

USCCB Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations virtual meeting

March 6 – 11 a.m.

USCCB virtual National Advisory Council meeting

March 7 – noon

USCCB virtual National Advisory Council meeting

March 9 – 10:30 a.m.

Priest Personnel Board meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center

Pope marks 90th anniversary of Divine Mercy apparition

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Marking the 90th anniversary of the apparition of Jesus to St. Faustina Kowalska, Pope Francis wrote a letter to Catholics in Poland expressing his hope that



St. Faustina Kowalska

Christ's message of divine mercy would remain "alive in the hearts of the faithful."

According to a statement released by the Polish bishops' conference on Feb. 22, the anniversary of the apparition, the pope said he was united

in prayer with those commemorating the anniversary at the Divine Mercy Shrine in Krakow and encouraged them to ask Jesus "for the gift of mercy."

"Let us have the courage to come back to Jesus to meet his love and mercy in the sacraments," he said. "Let us feel his closeness and tenderness, and then we will also be more capable of mercy, patience, forgiveness and love."

In her diary, St. Faustina wrote that she had witnessed a vision of Jesus on Feb. 22, 1931, while she was living at a convent in Plock, Poland.

Christ, she wrote, had one hand raised in benediction and the other resting on his breast, from which

emanated two rays of light. She said Christ demanded to have this image painted—along with the words "Jesus, I trust in you"—and venerated.

Her sainthood cause was opened in 1965 by then-Archbishop Karol Wojtyla of Krakow, who—after his election to the papacy—would go on to beatify her in 1993 and preside over her canonization in 2000.

Recalling St. John Paul II's devotion to St. Faustina Kowalska and Christ's message of divine mercy, the pope said his predecessor was "the Apostle of mercy" who "wanted the message of God's merciful love to reach all inhabitants of Earth."

Pope Francis also marked the anniversary of the apparition during his Sunday *Angelus* address on Feb. 21.

"Through St. John Paul II, this message reached the entire world, and it is none other than the Gospel of Jesus Christ, who died and rose again, and who gives us his Father's mercy," the pope said.

"Let us open our heart, saying with faith, 'Jesus, I trust in you,'" he added. †



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Climate is mixed for environmental issues important to Church

By Victoria Arthur

Catholics concerned about the environment are tracking a number of bills at the Indiana Statehouse through the lens of “*Laudato Si’*: On Care for Our Common Home,” the groundbreaking encyclical by Pope Francis that continues to influence the landscape nearly six years after its release.

Legislation that would repeal all of Indiana’s protections for state-regulated wetlands is a particular cause for alarm, according to members of the Creation Care Commission of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. Senate Bill 389, which passed the Senate on a 29-19 vote and is now awaiting action in the Indiana House of Representatives, would eliminate safeguards for up to 90% of the state’s wetlands.

Only about 10% of Indiana’s wetlands—those that are connected to a navigable body of water, such as a lake or a river—fall under federal jurisdiction and would remain unaffected. The rest, known as isolated wetlands, are under state control and would become subject to development without any permit process if Senate Bill 389 were to become law.

“This is a giant step backward,” said Benedictine Sister Sheila Marie Fitzpatrick, one of the founding members of the Creation Care Commission and a member of Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove. “We need to do a lot more education and build awareness among all constituents to help people realize the value of wetlands.”

Education and advocacy are at the root of the Creation Care Commission, which was formed in 2015 in response to the pope’s encyclical. In “*Laudato Si’*,” Pope Francis calls for dialogue and swift action worldwide to protect the environment, curb irresponsible development and respect God’s creation.

“One of the main points of ‘*Laudato Si’* is that everything is connected,” said Sister Sheila, who holds a degree in chemistry from the University of Illinois and serves as director of facilities for the Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center in Beech Grove. “When we look at something like an isolated wetland, it may seem

insignificant, but it’s really so connected to everything we hold dear—from the wildlife that lives there to the water that’s filtered and purified through it.

“So many things are dependent upon a strong ecosystem, and wetlands are a significant piece of that.”

Senate Bill 389 is opposed by more than 50 environmental and conservation organizations, as well as the Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC).

“The Church’s rich tradition of environmental stewardship and care for creation form the basis of our opposition to this bill,” said Alexander Mingus, associate director of the ICC, the public policy voice of the Catholic Church in Indiana. “Wetlands are a deeply important ecological resource that protect our communities from flooding, help ensure the quality of our drinking water and provide a necessary home for countless species. We have to recognize how necessary wetlands are for our human flourishing and for the flourishing of all creation.”

The ICC urges Catholics to reach out to their elected representatives in the House to oppose the bill.

By contrast, another environmental bill at the Statehouse has received unanimous support by the ICC and other advocates. Senate Bill 373, Carbon Credit Programs, would offer financial incentives to farmers to manage their lands in environmentally responsible ways.

The legislation would allow Indiana to join other states that operate in the carbon “market,” which involves companies across the nation seeking to reduce their carbon footprint and thereby curb global warming. These companies offset their environmental impacts by paying private farmers and landowners to preserve trees and conserve carbon in the soil, among other methods of “sequestering” carbon dioxide.

Senate Bill 373 awaits further action at the Statehouse following its initial committee passage. U.S. Sen. Mike Braun of Indiana is proposing similar legislation at the federal level.

“This is a very reasonable step in addressing the causes of climate change and one that has broad bipartisan support,” Mingus said.

Members of the archdiocese’s Creation Care Commission are equally enthusiastic about Senate Bill 373.



‘Wetlands are a deeply important ecological resource that protect our communities from flooding, help ensure the quality of our drinking water, and provide a necessary home for countless species. We have to recognize how necessary wetlands are for our human flourishing and for the flourishing of all creation.’

—Alexander Mingus, associate director of the Indiana Catholic Conference

“This bill encourages preservation of private woodlands as well as ways for farmers to not depend on chemical treatments so much,” said Joe Shierling, a member of the commission who grew up on a farm in Randolph County.

Members of his family still own the 70-acre parcel of land, consisting of 20 acres of forest and 50 acres of farmland rented to a local farmer. Shierling said he and his family encourage the farmer to adopt natural practices that promote the preservation of carbon, such as planting cover crops in the winter to increase nutrients in the soil.

“Considering what’s going forward in the Senate with the wetlands bill, it’s encouraging that [legislators] are looking positively at something that protects forests and looks at a different way of farming,” said Shierling, who spent an entire career working for the state of Indiana in various capacities.

He and other advocates, including the ICC, also support Senate Bill 367 and House Bill 1469, which would require coal companies to properly dispose of coal ash and other residuals, thereby protecting Indiana’s waterways.

For guidance in this and in everything

related to the environment, Shierling looks toward a long history of Catholic social teaching on caring for the earth, which Pope Francis distilled in his revolutionary encyclical.

“‘*Laudato Si’* is so important to me because it calls on each person in the world to look at our own lives and how we can lessen our negative effects on the environment,” said Shierling, a convert to Catholicism who has been a member of SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral Parish in Indianapolis for more than 30 years. “We all have a role to play.”

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.

To learn more about the work of the Creation Care Commission of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, visit www.ourcommonhome.org.

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



Pope’s prayer intention for March

- **Sacrament of Reconciliation**—Let us pray that we may experience the sacrament of reconciliation with renewed depth, to taste the infinite mercy of God.

See Pope Francis’ monthly intentions at archindy.org/popessintentions.



UNITED CATHOLIC APPEAL FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- 1 WHAT IS THE UNITED CATHOLIC APPEAL?**
The United Catholic Appeal is a unified effort in which all parishioners are asked to provide critical, financial support to archdiocesan ministries that serve thousands of people in need across central and southern Indiana.
- 2 WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR ME TO SUPPORT THE APPEAL?**
Your participation helps those whose needs are the greatest - the poor, the vulnerable, those on the margins. It shows your commitment to Catholic education. It shows that you are fighting for the unborn. Your support says “thank you” to our retired priests who have given their lives in service to the Church. It affords counseling to children, people struggling with addiction, those who grieve, and helps strengthen struggling families. It affords homeless families hot meals and a safe place to rest. It says “we believe in you” to our seminarians who are answering the call to the priesthood. It helps prepare future deacons who serve our parishes. Your gift provides hope.
- 3 HOW DOES MY PARISH BENEFIT FROM THE APPEAL?**
100% of gifts made to the United Catholic Appeal go to support archdiocesan programs and ministries which in turn provide services that no one parish can offer on its own.
- 4 IS IT BETTER TO MAKE A PLEDGE OR A ONE-TIME GIFT?**
Making a pledge allows you to spread your gift over 12 months, making it easier for you to budget, and may also allow you to give a larger gift.
- 5 HOW DO I MAKE A PLEDGE TO THE UNITED CATHOLIC APPEAL?**
You can make your pledge easily and securely online at www.archindy.org/UCA. Simply click on “Donate to UCA” in the top, right-hand corner and then follow the prompts. Questions? Call our office at (317) 236-1425. We are here to help!

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Editorial



Nearly 50 pro-life advocates gather for the 40 Days for Life fall campaign kickoff event outside the Indianapolis Planned Parenthood abortion facility on Sept. 26, 2018. (File photo by Natalie Hoefler)

40 Days for Life campaign can be a season of hope

Are you a person of hope?

That question, which recently came to mind after reflecting on a homily, is a simple one. But for many of us, there is no simple answer.

Perpetual turmoil appears to be the norm on the political landscape in our nation's capital—and in several states across the U.S. for that matter. Many are still concerned about the civil unrest that occurred in many cities last summer, and in Washington at the U.S. Capitol in early January. And we continue to hope and pray we make positive strides as we battle the COVID-19 pandemic, which has left more than 500,000 Americans dead and many families reeling that have been adversely impacted by the illness.

Some may ask: How can “hope” be a part of any conversation when we are dealing with so much turmoil?

The Lenten season is a time of prayer, fasting and almsgiving, a time to closely examine our lives of faith and how we can become more Christ-like in all we say and do.

But maybe this year it can also become a season of hope through our actions and prayers.

Our faith teaches us we are to be a people of hope. And the 40 Days for Life campaign happening now offers us a unique opportunity to plant seeds of faith, hope and love where the unborn are concerned.

We've heard the statistics, and they are staggering: Since the U.S. Supreme Court legalized abortion on demand in 1973, more than 62 million unborn babies have been aborted.

The 40 Days for Life spring campaign, which runs from Feb. 17-March 28, is an international effort that seeks to end abortion through peaceful prayer vigils at abortion centers, and to raise community awareness of the consequences of abortion. An annual 40 Days for Life campaign also occurs each fall.

During the 40-day campaigns, individuals silently pray during one-hour time slots in front of abortion centers around the world.

For those who think these petitions don't make a difference, think again: According to 40 Days for Life officials, since 2007 when the campaign began, 18,017 lives have been saved, 211 abortion workers have quit and 109 abortion centers have closed. And since the 40 Days for Life campaign began last week, 15 unborn babies have already been saved from the tragedy of abortion—thanks be to God!

As in years past, there are 40 Days for Life sites located in central and southern Indiana and around the surrounding region for those interested in prayerfully standing up for life. All campaigns are in need of volunteers to sign up to pray.

In Bloomington, the campaign will take place outside of the Planned Parenthood abortion center at 421 S. College Ave. To participate, call your parish to see if there is a 40 Days for Life coordinator, or go to www.40daysforlife.com/bloomington to sign up. For more information, contact Deacon Russell Woodard of Holy Trinity Parish in Edinburgh at 317-759-1225 or deaconrussw@gmail.com.

The Central Indiana 40 Days for Life campaign will take place on the public right-of-way outside of the Planned Parenthood abortion facility at 8590 Georgetown Road in Indianapolis. A midpoint rally will be held there from 1-2 p.m. on March 7. Parking is available on the shoulder on both sides of Georgetown Road, just south of the Planned Parenthood facility. Do not park in the lots of neighboring businesses, including Women's Care Center.

This year, the Indianapolis campaign is offering 24-hour coverage by inviting participants to sign up for an hour to pray at home between 7 p.m.-7 a.m. on Monday through Saturday, and 7 p.m. on Saturday through noon on Sunday. This is a great option for seniors, those who are sick, those who don't drive and those who are concerned about being exposed to others due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

To participate either in-person or at home, call your parish to see if there is a 40 Days for Life coordinator, or sign up at www.40daysforlife.com/indianapolis. For more information, contact Tim O'Donnell at 317-372-0040 or idipsumsapere@me.com.

For more information or to sign up at sites outside of the archdiocese, go to www.40daysforlife.com and click on “Find a Campaign.”

Those who take part in 40 Days for Life campaigns are encouraged to follow the COVID-19 protocols in their local area. For most, that will mean wearing a mask and keeping 6 feet apart to adhere to social distancing guidelines.

Through our prayers and actions during the 40 Days for Life campaign, we can bring tremendous hope by being voices for the voiceless this spring.

And in the process, God willing, change minds and hearts.

—Mike Krokos

Be Our Guest/Roberto Dell'Oro

A humanism bursts from God's love for his people during the pandemic

During the past year, the Pontifical Academy for Life has invested considerable thinking and action into the issues generated by COVID-19, addressing the challenges of the pandemic from several different angles. I would summarize the contribution of the academy as threefold: ethical, existential and spiritual.



First, with its documents in March and July 2020, and most recently with a joint statement with the Vatican COVID-19 Commission, the academy has tackled all the major ethical issues generated by the pandemic. While in the beginning problems of clinical ethics were dominant—for example, the need to articulate criteria for resource rationing in intensive care units—issues of public health became progressively more relevant, especially with respect to the equitable distribution of the vaccine.

Relying upon a matrix of ethical considerations grounded in the principles of justice, solidarity and inclusiveness, the statements of the academy speak to a global perspective, asking for rich countries in the West to measure their own perception and response to the problems raised by the pandemic with the predicament of poorer countries in the global south.

Though all rich and poor nations have been vulnerable to the virus, the latter have paid the highest price, bearing the long-term consequences from the lack of cooperation and failure of international solidarity. The pandemic has worsened the inequalities already associated with processes of globalization, making more people vulnerable and marginalized without health care, employment and social safety nets.

Certain key categories have become central to the ethical discourse of the academy, such as the notion of “pharmaceutical marginality,” the “universal destination of goods,” the overcoming of the logic of “vaccine nationalism,” and so on. With its documents, the academy has provided both the Catholic Church and the international community with an ethical framework to address all the different phases of the pandemic.

I think of its effort as an act of intellectual solidarity with which, speaking on behalf of the Church, the academy contributes to the universality of ethical discourse and a call for action on behalf of the most poor and vulnerable.

There is also an existential component to the statements of the academy. They offer an invitation to reflect, sharing in the universality of the puzzlement brought about by the pandemic, without any attitude of assertive superiority. The Church is made of human beings who experience, with other human beings, the vulnerability of the human condition.

Choosing a meditative style, together with more overtly normative recommendations, the academy has reminded all people of goodwill, on behalf of the Church, that the pandemic has brought into relief the limits of our freedom and the ambiguous character of our autonomous pretensions, recognizing the universal dimension of our human frailty.

The Church knows how to listen, in addition to exercising its responsibility to teach. Other human beings are fellow travelers in the journey of life, companions in that search for truth God's Spirit sustains with its universal presence.

Finally, the spiritual dimension. Although in its texts the academy does

See GUEST, page 13

Be Our Guest/Stephen Kappes

Thanks to all who helped with Mass remembering 2,400-plus unborn children

On Feb. 12 at Holy Name of Jesus Church in Beech Grove, a 15-decade rosary was prayed prior to a memorial Mass marking the one-year anniversary of the burial of 2,411 aborted babies, whose remains were interred in Southlawn Cemetery in South Bend, Ind.

The babies had been aborted between 2000 and 2003 by the late Dr. Ulrich “George” Klopfer, who operated abortion centers in Indiana starting in the 1970s. He performed an estimated 30,000 abortions before having his license revoked in 2016.

The medically preserved remains of those fetuses had been transported across state lines and stored for years on Klopfer's Illinois property, in his garage and in the trunk of a car.

The grisly discovery of the remains was made after his death in early September 2019. Members of the Will County, Ill., Sheriff's Department discovered the more than 2,400 human remains from Indiana after fielding a telephone call from the attorney of Klopfer's wife after her husband's death.

Marc Tuttle, director of Right to Life of Indianapolis, spoke at the Feb. 12 liturgy. He addressed the more than 50 people gathered and was followed by Linda Kile, director of the Great Lakes Gabriel Project, a pro-life organization that helps women in unexpected pregnancies choose life. Father Binu Mathew, parochial vicar of Holy Name of Jesus Parish, also provided a soul-lifting homily during the Mass.

We wanted to offer a thank-you to all who helped promote this gathering, including Catholic Radio Indy; Bri

Anne Varick, archdiocesan Office of Human Life and Dignity coordinator; Eric Slaughter of Catholics United for the Faith; Richard Santangelo of the Knights of Columbus; Larry Timko of the Serra Club of Indianapolis; and John F. Fink of the Knights of Malta.

Thanks also to Tom Monaghan, founder of Ave Maria University for the Legatus message; Raymond Arroyo of EWTN; Father Frank Pavone of Priests for Life; Father Shenan Boquet of Human Life International; Judie Brown of the American Life League; Carroll and Judy Lanning of Guardian Angel Preservation Organization; Holy Name parishioners Margaret Hartman and Roberta Hannon; and Holy Name's Respect Life Committee.

Also thank you to Bob Kelly, who notified Knight of Columbus Msgr. Downey Council 3660, and the Ancient Order of Hibernians; the Daughters of Mary Mother of Mercy; Helen Deppe of the Daughters of Isabella; Mr. and Mrs. Steph Cooper and family of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis Division of the Blue Army; Dennis Buckley, mayor of Beech Grove; U.S. Sen. Todd Young; Angela Espada, executive director of the Indiana Catholic Conference; Father Robert Robeson, pastor of Holy Name of Jesus Parish; and Archbishop Charles C. Thompson.

Their networking on such short notice led to our large group being able to represent these unborn children.

(Stephen Kappes is a member of Holy Name of Jesus Parish in Beech Grove.) †



Christ the Cornerstone

The essential connection between love and sacrifice

The Scripture readings for the Second Sunday in Lent speak to us about God's sacrificial love for us. God did not spare his own Son, St. Paul tells us in the second reading (Rom 8:31b-34), but handed him over to the powers of darkness and death for our sake. This echoes the popular verse in St. John's Gospel: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life" (Jn 3:16).

This same sacrificial love is what God demanded of Abraham in the first reading (Gn 22:1-2, 9a, 10-13, 15-18). Even knowing that God relents in the end and spares Isaac from becoming a human sacrifice at the hand of his own father, we still shudder at the thought that God would ask anyone—let alone his most faithful servant—to give up his own son in the most brutal way imaginable. Yet this is exactly what God the Father himself did when he sent his only Son to suffer and die for us.

In our contemporary culture, we tend to forget that there is an essential connection between "love" and "sacrifice." To really love someone else,

we must be prepared to make sacrifices, to give up our own needs and desires for the sake of another.

This is true of the little things in life such as choosing not to go out with friends, which we would really like to do, so that we can spend time at home with our spouse and children. But it's also true of life's bigger moments such as the decision to move to another city, which we really do not want to do, because our husband or wife has a once-in-a-lifetime career opportunity.

Sacrifice and love go hand in hand. There is no such thing as selfish or self-centered love in spite of what we are told by our culture. Love means letting go of our own desires for the good of others. It means making sacrifices for the greater good.

This does not mean that lovers are dreary, unhappy people who are always giving in to the whims of others. On the contrary, genuine love is joyous and free.

We might even say that love transfigures us from people who are slaves of our own desires into people who are intimately connected with other people, including family members, friends and neighbors and

even strangers or enemies. As many of Jesus' parables illustrate, there is something truly liberating about sacrificing our own desires for the benefit of others.

The Gospel reading for the Second Sunday in Lent tells the story of Jesus' transfiguration. As St. Mark says:

"Jesus took Peter, James, and John and led them up a high mountain apart by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no fuller on Earth could bleach them. Then Elijah appeared to them along with Moses, and they were conversing with Jesus" (Mk 9:2-4).

The conclusion to this powerful reading helps us to better understand what the Transfiguration means. After God the Father expresses his complete confidence in his beloved Son, and the terrified Apostles are reassured that all will be well, Jesus swears them to secrecy. "As they were coming down from the mountain, he charged them not to relate what they had seen to anyone, except when the Son of Man had risen from the dead. So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what rising from the dead meant" (Mk 9:9-10).

God's sacrificial love is what has set us free from the bondage of sin and death. Jesus' acceptance of his mission—to suffer and die for us, to surrender everything for our salvation—confirms that he truly is God's Son and that we are called to imitate his self-sacrificing love.

Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son to the Lord is rewarded by God's promise:

"I will bless you abundantly and make your descendants as countless as the stars of the sky and the sands of the seashore; your descendants shall take possession of the gates of their enemies, and in your descendants all the nations of the Earth shall find blessing—all this because you obeyed my command" (Gn 22:17-18).

And as Abraham proved, the *willingness* to sacrifice what we love for the greater good, even when we don't understand it, is all that God asks of us.

Jesus demonstrates by his own words and actions that love, which requires sacrifice, is its own reward. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that we might have eternal life" (Jn 3:16). †



Cristo, la piedra angular

La conexión esencial entre el amor y el sacrificio

Las lecturas de las Escrituras para el segundo domingo de Cuaresma nos hablan del amor sacrificado de Dios por nosotros. En la segunda lectura (Rom 8:31b-34), san Pablo nos dice que Dios no perdonó a su propio Hijo sino que lo entregó a los poderes de las tinieblas y de la muerte por nosotros. Esto refleja el popular verso del Evangelio de san Juan: "Porque de tal manera amó Dios al mundo, que ha dado a su Hijo unigénito para que todo aquel que en él cree no se pierda mas tenga vida eterna" (Jn 3:16).

Este mismo amor sacrificado es el que Dios exigió a Abraham en la primera lectura (Gn 22:1-2; 9; 10-13; 15-18). Incluso sabiendo que Dios cede al final y evita que Isaac se convierta en un sacrificio humano a manos de su propio padre, seguimos estremeciéndonos ante la idea de que Dios le pida a cualquiera—mucho menos a su siervo más fiel—que entregue a su propio hijo de la forma más brutal que se pueda imaginar. Sin embargo, esto es exactamente lo que hizo el propio Dios Padre cuando envió a su único Hijo a sufrir y morir por nosotros.

En nuestra cultura contemporánea, tendemos a olvidar que existe una conexión esencial entre "amor" y "sacrificio." Para amar realmente a otra persona, debemos estar

dispuestos a hacer sacrificios, a renunciar a nuestras propias necesidades y deseos por el bien del otro.

Esto se aplica a las pequeñas cosas de la vida, como elegir no salir con los amigos, algo que realmente nos gustaría hacer, para poder pasar tiempo en casa con nuestro cónyuge e hijos. Pero también es cierto en los momentos más importantes de la vida, como la decisión de mudarse a otra ciudad, a pesar de que en verdad no lo queramos, porque nuestro marido o esposa tiene una oportunidad profesional única en la vida.

El sacrificio y el amor van de la mano. A pesar de lo que nos dice nuestra cultura, el amor egoísta o egocéntrico no existe. El amor significa dejar de lado nuestros propios deseos por el bien de los demás. Significa hacer sacrificios por un bien superior.

Esto no implica que las parejas sean personas sombrías e infelices que siempre ceden a los caprichos de los demás; por el contrario: el amor genuino es alegre y libre.

Podríamos incluso decir que el amor nos transfigura de personas esclavas de nuestros propios deseos en personas íntimamente conectadas con los demás, incluidos nuestros parientes, amigos y vecinos e incluso

los extraños o los enemigos. Como ilustran muchas de las parábolas de Jesús, hay algo verdaderamente liberador en sacrificar nuestros propios deseos para beneficio de los demás.

La lectura del Evangelio del segundo domingo de Cuaresma relata la historia de la transfiguración de Jesús. Tal como narra san Marcos:

"Jesús tomó consigo a Pedro, a Jacobo y a Juan, y les hizo subir aparte, a solas, a un monte alto, y fue transfigurado delante de ellos. Sus vestiduras se hicieron resplandecientes, muy blancas, tanto que ningún lavadero en la tierra las puede dejar tan blancas. Y les apareció Elías con Moisés, y estaban hablando con Jesús" (Mc 9:2-4).

La conclusión de esta poderosa lectura nos ayuda a comprender mejor lo que significa la Transfiguración. Después de que Dios Padre expresó su total confianza en su amado Hijo, y de que los aterrizados Apóstoles estuvieran seguros de que todo iría bien, Jesús les jura guardar el secreto. "Mientras descendían ellos del monte, Jesús les ordenó que no contaran a nadie lo que habían visto sino cuando el Hijo del Hombre resucitara de entre los muertos. Y ellos guardaron la palabra entre sí, discutiendo qué significaría aquello de resucitar de entre los

muertos" (Mc 9:9-10).

El amor sacrificado de Dios es lo que nos ha liberado de la esclavitud del pecado y de la muerte. La aceptación por parte de Jesús de su misión de sufrir y morir por nosotros y entregarlo todo por nuestra salvación, confirma que realmente es el Hijo de Dios y que estamos llamados a imitar su amor abnegado.

La voluntad de Abraham de sacrificar a su hijo al Señor es recompensada con la promesa de Dios:

"De cierto te bendeciré y en gran manera multiplicaré tu descendencia como las estrellas del cielo y como la arena que está en la orilla del mar. Tu descendencia poseerá las ciudades de sus enemigos. En tu descendencia serán benditas todas las naciones de la tierra, por cuanto obedeciste mi voz" (Gn 22:17-18).

Y como demostró Abraham, la *voluntad* de sacrificar lo que amamos por un bien superior, incluso cuando no lo entendemos, es lo único que Dios nos pide.

Jesús demuestra con sus propias palabras y acciones que el amor, que requiere sacrificio, es su propia recompensa. "Porque de tal manera amó Dios al mundo, que ha dado a su Hijo unigénito para que todo aquel que en él cree no se pierda mas tenga vida eterna" (Jn 3:16). †

Events Calendar

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

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.

March 4

The Eucharist Source and Summit of Faith, through Old Testament and the Gospels, via Zoom, sponsored by St. Michael Parish, Greenfield, 1-2:30 p.m., third of six stand-alone sessions (March 11, 18, and 25), led by graduates of Guadalupe Bible College, free. Information and registration: Darlene Davis, ljdarlene@gmail.com.

March 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.

St. Anthony of Padua Parish, 316 N. Sherwood Ave., Clarksville. **Men's Club Annual Fish Fry**, Fridays through March 19 (March 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-\$5. Information: parish.office@stanthony-clarksville.com or 812-282-2290.

St. Thomas the Apostle Parish Knights of Columbus #15712, 523 S. Merrill St., Fortville. **Friday Night Lenten Fish Fry**, Fridays during Lent and Holy Week (March 12, 19, 26, April 2), 5 p.m. until supplies last, includes fish sandwich, steak fries, coleslaw, dessert, \$10. Information: kofc115712info@gmail.com or 317-485-5102.

March 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.

March 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.

March 11

The Eucharist, Source and Summit of Faith, through Old Testament and the Gospels, via Zoom, sponsored by St. Michael Parish, Greenfield, 1-2:30 p.m., fourth of six stand-alone sessions (March 18 and 25), led by graduates of Guadalupe Bible

College, free. Information and registration: Darlene Davis, ljdarlene@gmail.com.

March 12

St. Anthony of Padua Parish, 316 N. Sherwood Ave., Clarksville. **Men's Club Annual Fish Fry**, Fridays through March 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-\$5. Information: parish.office@stanthony-clarksville.com or 812-282-2290.

St. Thomas the Apostle Parish Knights of Columbus #15712, 523 S. Merrill St., Fortville. **Friday Night Lenten Fish Fry**, Fridays during Lent and Holy Week (March 19, 26, April 2), 5 p.m. until supplies last, includes fish sandwich, steak fries, coleslaw, dessert, \$10. Information: kofc115712info@gmail.com or 317-485-5102.

March 17

Calvary Mausoleum Chapel, 435 W. Troy Ave., Indianapolis. **Monthly Mass**, 2 p.m. Information:

317-784-4439 or www.catholiccemeteries.cc.

March 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 Eucharist, Source and Summit of Faith, through Old Testament and the Gospels, via Zoom, sponsored by St. Michael Parish, Greenfield, 1-2:30 p.m., fifth of six stand-alone sessions (March 25), led by graduates of Guadalupe Bible College, free. Information and registration: Darlene Davis, ljdarlene@gmail.com.

March 19

St. Anthony of Padua Parish, 316 N. Sherwood Ave., Clarksville. **Men's Club Annual Fish Fry**, 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-\$5. Information: parish.office@stanthony-clarksville.com or 812-282-2290.

St. Thomas the Apostle Parish Knights of Columbus #15712, 523 S. Merrill St., Fortville. **Friday Night Lenten Fish Fry**, Fridays during Lent and Holy Week (March 26, April 2), 5 p.m. until supplies last, includes fish sandwich, steak fries, coleslaw, dessert, \$10. Information: kofc115712info@gmail.com or 317-485-5102.

March 25

The Eucharist, Source and Summit of Faith, through Old Testament and the Gospels, via Zoom, sponsored by St. Michael Parish, Greenfield, 1-2:30 p.m., last of six stand-alone sessions, led by graduates of Guadalupe Bible College, free. Information and registration: Darlene Davis, ljdarlene@gmail.com. †

Retreats and Programs

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

March 10-March 24

Mount Saint Francis Center for Spirituality, Pump House Studio, 101 St. Anthony Dr., Mt. St. Francis. **Watercolor 101**, Wednesdays 9:30-11:30 a.m. or 6:30-8:30 p.m., learn basic watercolor techniques from Conventual Franciscan Father Vincent Petersen, open to all levels, bring watercolor paper; easels and drawing tables provided, watercolors available for purchase, \$20 per session. Registration: mountsaintfrancis.org/retreats or 812-923-8817.

March 13

Mount Saint Francis Center for Spirituality, 101 St. Anthony Dr., Mt. St. Francis. **Lessons Learned through Loss and Lament**, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., Conventual Franciscan Father Vincent Petersen,

Judy Ribar and Tina Ridge presenting, \$50 includes lunch. Registration: mountsaintfrancis.org/retreats or 812-923-8817.

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat Center, 5353 East 56th St., Indianapolis. **Divine Wine & Art with Heart**, 8 a.m.-4 p.m., Hayley Mosson presenting, \$45, includes program, wine, snacks and all painting supplies. Registration: www.archindy.org/fatima, 317-545-7681 or jburger@archindy.org.

March 16

Benedict Inn Retreat & Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. **Combating Racism: A Spiritual Journey**, fourth of six stand-alone sessions (March 23 and 30), 7-8:30 p.m., Mary Beth Riner presenting, \$25. Registration:

www.benedictinn.org/retreats-programs. Information: benedictinn@benedictinn.org, 317-788-7581.

March 18

Scriptures of Lent/Spring virtual study via Zoom, fifth of six stand-alone sessions (March 25), offered by Providence Spirituality & Conference Center, 6:15-7:45 p.m., \$5/session, register by March 15. Information, registration: 812-535-2952, provctr@spsmw.org or www.spsmw.org/event.

Lenten Letting Go Series, on Zoom, fifth of six stand-alone sessions (March 25), sponsored by Mount Saint Francis Center for Spirituality, 7-8:30 p.m., Judy Ribar presenting, \$20. Registration: mountsaintfrancis.org/retreats or 812-923-8817. †

'The Third Option' skills-based virtual group sessions help build better marriages

"The Third Option" virtual series for married couples of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis and the Diocese of Lafayette, Ind., is available most Thursdays from 7-8 p.m. through May 20. The sessions are free, and no registration is required.

The series can be used as marriage enrichment or as crisis intervention. Couples may choose to join all or specific sessions.

The title of the series comes from hurting couples often seeing only two options: painful endurance or divorce. But there is a third option: reconciliation.

The dates and topics for the spring sessions are:

- March 4: Re-Defining Power Struggle
- March 11: Control Issues

- March 18: Listening Beyond the Words
- March 25: Personality Differences
- April 8: Childhood Issues and Emotional Baggage
- April 15: Handling Anger Constructively
- April 22: Speaking the Truth in Love
- April 29: How to Fight Fair and Conflict Resolution
- May 6: Feelings and the Hurt Spiral
- May 13: Forgiveness and Repair
- April 20: Rebuilding Trust

To join a session, go to carmelthirddoption.org/web and click on link at top of page. For more information, go to carmelthirddoption.org/web or contact Keith Ingram at kingram@aicinvest.com or 317-324-8446. †

Franciscan Sisters offer weekly virtual Lenten 'I AM' series in March

The Oldenburg Franciscan Center of the Sisters of the Third Order Regular of St. Francis in Oldenburg is offering a virtual Lenten series called "I AM" via Zoom from 6-8:30 p.m. on Thursdays in March.

The series explores several of Christ's "I am" statements in the Gospel and what they mean for individuals today.

The dates and topics are:

- March 4: "I AM the Bread of Life"
- March 11: "I AM the Light of the World"
- March 18: "I AM the Good Shepherd"
- March 25: "I AM the Resurrection and the Life"

The cost is \$55 for all sessions, or \$15 for individual sessions. For more information or to register, go to cutt.ly/IAMSeries or email center@oldenburgosf.com. †

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

Wedding ANNIVERSARIES

DAVID AND KATHRYN (DAMM) REISING



DEACON DAVID AND KATHRYN (DAMM) REISING, members of St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Bedford, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on Feb. 27.

The couple was married in St. Agnes Church in Evansville, Ind. (Evansville Diocese), on Feb. 27, 1971.

They have two children: April Steber and Amy Miskuf.

The couple also has three grandchildren.

Deacon Reising is a permanent deacon for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis who ministers at the parishes of St. Vincent de Paul in Bedford and St. Mary in Mitchell. †

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.

PANDEMIC

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focus on what you can do,” said Jack Beers, content director for Dynamic Catholic, which sees as its mission “to re-energize the Catholic Church in America by developing world-class resources that inspire people to rediscover the genius of Catholicism.”

There had long been a “gravitational pull toward the parish—the social life, educational life, the worship life—all revolve around the parish,” Beers told Catholic News Service (CNS) in a Feb. 18 phone interview. “That’s not true anymore. Worse than that, because of the pandemic, people are reluctant to come back. There’s a fear to [come back]. ... There needs to be something to get them over the hump to come back, to sort of overcome the repellent.”

“The main reason that people will come back to church is for community,” said Amy Ekeh, director of Little Rock Scripture Study, a small-group Bible study program serving Catholic parishes. “If they were already experiencing community as a parish, they’ll come back to that. Small groups is one way in parishes to experience that community.”

Asked whether there is a carrot-or-stick approach needed to entice pandemic-shy Catholics to return to church, Ekeh replied, “I think the carrot already had to be there,” referring to the sense of community parishioners feel. “They’re self-motivated by that. I don’t know if you can create a carrot if it wasn’t already there. And don’t even try the stick!”

Nor is it likely that Catholics would embrace “back to church” on a set date any more than they would for “back to school” for their children, according to Peter Dwyer, director of Liturgical Press.

“It’s probably healthier to think about gradually,” Dwyer said. “I too have

thought about ‘we’re back’ the first Sunday we’re all back, but that’s not likely to happen because people will not feel comfortable.”

He added, “We have to be attentive to people who are not afraid and people who are very afraid. I think a parish leadership needs to be attentive to ... what makes them feel welcome? It’s a tough call.”

Ekeh, who lives in the Archdiocese of Hartford, Conn., said: “I’m finding things all over the map in our archdiocese and the country. It depends on the leadership of the parish and the ministers.”

She added, “How do we bring together the best of both worlds—gathering together again in person but making use of these online tools as best they can?”

Beers said imitating the model of Jesus can be a big help. “Jesus didn’t wait on people,” he said. “He went to the people and went to the people—to go to the people and tell them to return to God.”

He added, “Most people’s first move toward going [back to church] isn’t a faith step, it’s a selfish one. What we’ve found in our work with parishes is that people miss a connection. ... Many people start asking the question of what’s missing in my life, how can I gain this connection. What opportunities are there for us as a [parish]? We have the only thing that can fill people’s lives, and that’s God. There’s a God-sized hole in people’s lives.”

Both Beers and Sister Teresa say parishes should be phoning parishioners right now.

Beers calls it “a simple act of just connecting with people,” and not just making one call and thinking the job is done.

“Check in: ‘How are you doing. Can we pray for you? What’s an obstacle for you at this time in your life?’ ” he said. “Some things are just practical, that people need a bridge. Or people need the Eucharist but they don’t know how, and they’re afraid: ‘How safe is Mass? Have

you had any cases [of COVID-19]?’ But in most cases, they don’t want anything from you and are just concerned about how things are at church.”

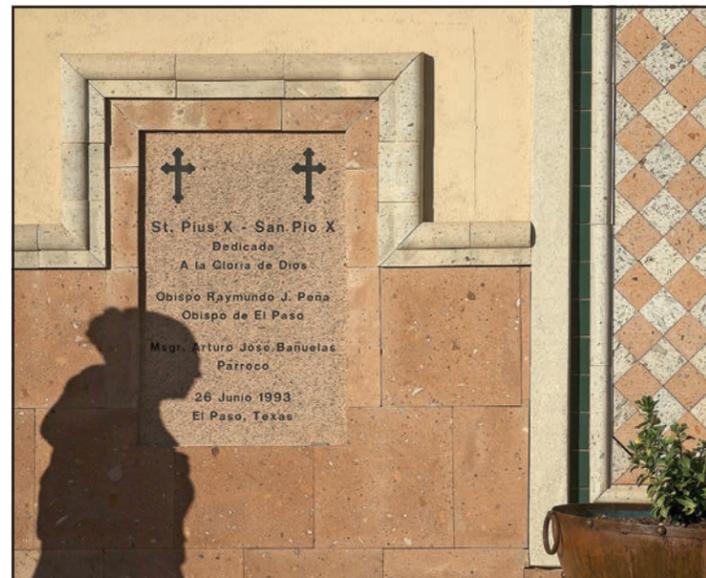
“You’ve got to do the personal touch. You’ve got to start encouraging people,” Sister Teresa told CNS. “Soon, more people will be coming to Mass. And you’ve got to be making your case why you should be going to Mass.” And that case, she added, cannot be “you’re going to hell if you don’t go.”

Instead, Sister Teresa said, tell people: “We miss being together, we’ll be together soon—personal outreach, telling people you care about them, and the power of community.”

Liturgical Press’ Dwyer said a “simple thing” for a parish to do would be for its hospitality committee “for some time—maybe for a long time—to offer masks, disposable masks, at the entrance to church, just to have them available as you would have a bulletin available.”

Cold and flu numbers were way down this winter, he noted, “because we were not in contact. Contact brings us all kinds of things we’d rather not have. What are the practices we can install as a community—and instill—as a way to make them feel comfortable?”

Dwyer said, “There’ll be all kinds of challenges. The communities that



The shadow of a woman entering St. Pius X Church in El Paso, Texas, is seen Sept. 23, 2019. (CNS photo/Tyler Orsburn)

are growing, they don’t have room for everybody, and we don’t have enough clergy to do 10 Masses a day, day after day, so we’ll have to make choices.” He added streaming Masses should continue, especially for parishioners who feel ill.

“Most people will make that choice anyway,” he said, “rather than come into contact with others.”

Parishes thinking outside the box are getting more people now,” Sister Teresa said, taking note of a parish that dispensed drive-by ashes on Ash Wednesday. “I think people will appreciate it, and when they feel safe, it’ll be better,” she added. “Parishes that haven’t done much have to start catching up.”

Sister Teresa said, “When it got really safe, I’d have welcome-home Sundays, and not just once. Everything’s a new beginning, a celebration. And I would do a gradual rollout. Even in the fall, we’ll still be wearing masks.” †

POPE

continued from page 1

Vatican quoted the pope as telling Bruck. “With sincerity, I repeat the words I pronounced in the heart of Yad Vashem [the Shoah memorial in Jerusalem] and which I repeat before every person like you who suffered so much because of it:

‘Forgive, Lord, in the name of humanity.’ ”

The pope, Bruck said, expressed his sorrow at “the innocents who were annihilated” during the Shoah.

“But there is always hope. There is always a tiny light, even in the pitch black,” she said. “Without hope, we cannot live. In the concentration camps, all it took was a German looking at you with a human gaze. All it took was a

gesture. All it took was a human gaze. They gave me a glove with a hole in it; they left me some jam in the bottom of a plate. That was life inside. That is hope.

“Systematic cruelty, absolute evil” reigned in the camps, she had said in the January interview.

“If understanding is impossible, knowing is imperative, because what happened could happen again.’ I’ve made these words of

Primo Levi my own,” she said. “I have never harbored hatred or feelings of revenge, but rather disbelief and infinite sorrow.

“Evil only generates evil,” she said. “Remembering is painful, but I have never shied away from it. Enlightening a single conscience is worth the effort and pain of keeping alive the memory of what has been. For me, memory is living, and writing is breathing.” †



Pope Francis talks with Edith Bruck, a Holocaust survivor and author, during a visit to her home in central Rome on Feb. 20. The pope earlier this month received his second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)

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LITTLE WISH

continued from page 1

The teenager—who knew he was dying from cancer—made a wish to have enough money so he could buy presents for the last Christmas he would share with his family.

Then there is the most memorable wish for Niemiec, the one that she fulfilled when she was 16, the one that marked the beginning of her Little Wish Foundation.

“Every one of the wishes is special because of the kids I’ve met, but the one that will stick with me forever is the very first wish we granted,” says Niemiec, an Indianapolis resident. “It was for my high school classmate who sat in front of me in class. Tia stopped coming to class, and she didn’t come back. She had brain cancer.

“We had finally raised a little money to grant one little wish. Her wish was for an iPod [a digital music player].”

Tia filled the iPod with her favorite songs, a source of joy and connection during a time when she could no longer be with her friends. She died several weeks after receiving her wish, but her influence on Niemiec continues.

“I saw her appreciation and her kindness back to me, and that really made me want to continue doing this.”

In the 11 years since that first wish, Niemiec has granted wishes to children and youths in 14 hospitals across the country, including four in Indiana: Peyton Manning Children’s Hospital at St. Vincent in Indianapolis, Riley Hospital for Children in Indianapolis, Lutheran Hospital in Fort Wayne and Memorial Hospital in South Bend.

While Tia’s impact has stayed strong at the Little Wish Foundation, so have two other influences on Niemiec.

‘My faith continues to help me’

The first of those two influences takes Niemiec back to her days as a student at Queen of All Saints School in the far northern Indiana community of Michigan City.

“I grew up going to a Catholic school through eighth grade,” she says. “It definitely shaped me as a person. I’ve always wanted to help others. That’s what I was taught in my upbringing and my school. They taught me to be a better person, to do my part.

“My faith continues to help me get

through difficult times. Praying and looking at other people’s strong faith have helped me, too.”

Her efforts have also been inspired by a child named Max Olson. Both their moms taught at Queen of All Saints School, and Max’s mom was Niemiec’s fifth-grade teacher.

The family connection continued when Niemiec was 16, a time when Max died of cancer at the age of 7.

Niemiec went to the funeral home with her mother for Max’s wake. On the drive home, she couldn’t stop thinking of him. She recalled the one wish that he had always longed for, a wish that wasn’t possible while he was undergoing treatments for the disease. Yet when doctors determined there was nothing more they could do for Max, his parents made his wish come true. They gave him a dog.

Seeing the comfort and happiness that gift brought Max, Niemiec also saw how “one little thing can make a difference in someone’s life.” She told her mom that she wanted to honor Max’s too-short life with a plan that would help other children suffering from cancer.

In 2020, Niemiec created another way to honor Max.

‘Please continue to spread this love and kindness’

She wrote a children’s book, *Lizzy Girl and the Big Little Wish*—a book whose dedication page notes, “To Max. And to all brave kids who have smiled because of him.”

“We started the foundation in 2010, and last year we wanted to celebrate our 10th anniversary, but with COVID, it was a difficult year for everyone, including for a small non-profit,” she says. “The children’s book was a way of commemorating creating the foundation

when I was young—and the impact it’s had. I also hoped it would inspire others to help, to lighten other people’s lives.”

Niemiec has made that impact with the help of sponsors, donations and fundraising events. And 100% of the proceeds from the sale of the book go directly to the foundation, whose granting of wishes has included swing sets, musical instruments, sewing machines, shopping sprees, electronic devices and about 50 dogs.

The thank-you notes that Little Wish receives from families show the power of such gifts.

“Thank you for getting Erika an iPad. She plays games and talks with her friends

from school. By not attending school, this gives her a chance to see them and she really needed that.”

Another one notes, “I just wanted to thank you again for bringing my son this tremendous joy! He has gone through so much and has wanted this dog for so long. With all the stuff my family has gone through over the last couple of years, it’s really lifting the spirits up of everyone in this family. Please continue to spread this love and kindness to other families.”

While the gifts bring a measure of joy to children, youths and their families, the children and youths who battle cancer continue to have a dramatic influence on Niemiec.

‘You want to give them that joy, that moment’

“I’ve met so many of the kids. I’ve witnessed the darkest moment for a kid, to see how cancer changes their lives,” she says. “When I walk into a room and hear their stories and how their lives have unfolded in battling cancer, it’s really sad. But these kids have a lot of hope. Seeing them battle this gives a perspective on what they’re going through. I admire their bravery.”

In response to them, she tries to provide “a moment of hope, comfort and joy.”

“When you’re a kid and you’re sick, so many special moments are taken away,” she says. “You want to give them that joy, that moment. The best part is getting to see the impact you’ve made when the child gets their wish. You get to see their smile and know you’ve helped in some way.”

She sighs before she adds, “The hardest part is definitely hearing or knowing a child didn’t make it. You see the struggle that they’re going through, that their parents and family are going through. It’s affected me. I’ve witnessed a lot of suffering. We do what we can with the gift we have. We try to give them hope and joy, to make their life a little better.

“I just try to remember that God has a plan for all of us. My faith has made me stronger to keep going.”



Liz Niemiec poses with the children’s book she has written with Anna Clark as a fundraising project for the Little Wish Foundation, *Lizzy Girl and the Big Little Wish*. (Submitted photo)

So has her relationship with her mother.

‘It’s always been an emotional thing’

When a child has cancer, the journey of struggle and hope, of heartbreak and love becomes the same journey for the child’s parents. The 11-year journey of the Little Wish Foundation has also led to a stronger bond between Liz and Therese Niemiec.

While Liz focuses on the creative side of the foundation, Therese handles the business side. On a deeper level, their connection with cancer-stricken children and their parents has reinforced their belief that the child-parent bond should never be taken for granted, especially in terms of the amount of time that children and parents get to share in life.

“It’s just such an interesting and dynamic relationship we have,” Liz says. “We’ve always worked on this together. She’s always believed in my dream and my vision to make the Little Wish Foundation come true. It’s great to have a mother who believes in you so much.”

Therese gets emotional when she talks about her daughter. Her tears flow as she says, “As a mom, it’s an incredible experience to work with your daughter. From the beginning, it was great to see her start it. And it became my passion, too.

“It’s always been an emotional thing—just the way it started with the innocence and the pure joy in her heart, to make her want to make a difference in the lives of kids who have cancer.”

Both of their thoughts return to the children, the youths and their families.

“To see how this has impacted kids’ lives, I just want it to go on,” Liz says.

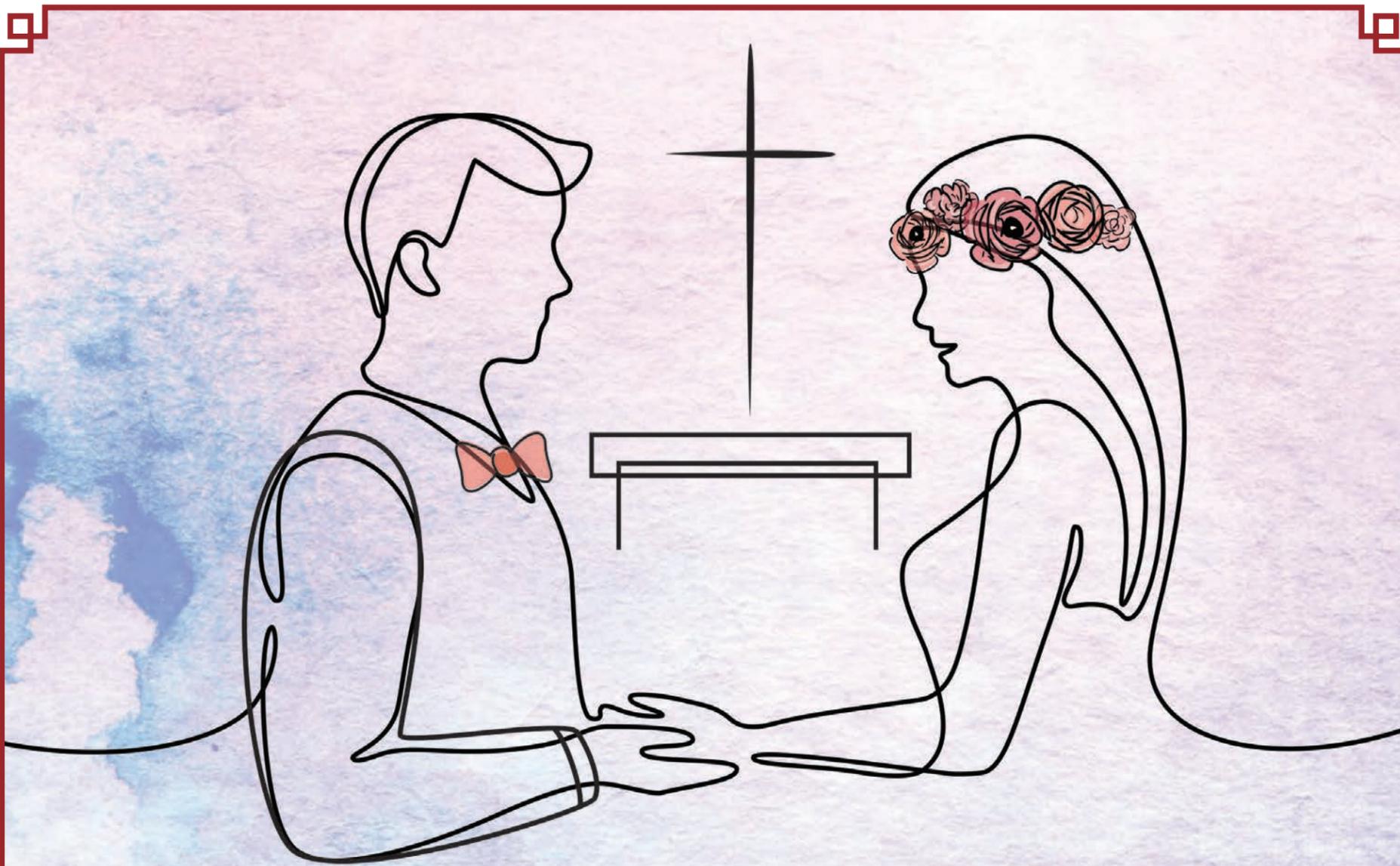
Therese adds, “We keep in touch with some of the families and form a bond with them. That cancer journey is so tough. If we can give them a smile and have tears of joy, it’s worth all the work.

“It just ties into our faith of living a life of giving to others in need. I mean, that’s what Jesus did.”

(For more information about the Little Wish Foundation or to buy a copy of *Lizzy Girl and the Big Little Wish*, visit its website, www.littlewishfoundation.org.) †



Their shared involvement in the Little Wish Foundation has brought Therese and Liz Niemiec even closer as mother and daughter. (Submitted photo)



Marriage Supplement

SPRING 2021

Wedding coordinators help sacramental marriages get ‘off to a great start’

By Natalie Hoefler

The moment is played out time and again in Catholic churches: The music begins. The bridal party processes down the aisle, then all stand for the radiant bride as she enters the nave and the doors to the narthex close behind her.

What happens in the narthex then?

“That’s when I breathe!”

“I can take a breath, and Father takes it from there!”

“I can step back and enjoy the moment!”

So say wedding coordinators from St. Monica Parish in Indianapolis, St. Agnes Parish in Nashville and St. Ambrose Parish in Seymour.

Theirs is a role that involves many tasks to make a couple’s special day go smoothly. But they are more than just helpers. They are servants in a ministry that supports sacramental marriage.

Four parish wedding coordinators spoke with *The Criterion* about their role, shared stories both humorous and touching, and addressed the sacrament at the heart of their marriage ministry.

‘This is a sacrament, this is a church’

Being a parish wedding coordinator “takes a servant’s heart,” says 15-year veteran Joyce Brooks, one of several wedding coordinators at St. Monica Parish.

In short, the wedding coordinator’s role is to “serve as a liaison between the parish and the couple and their guests,” she explains. “I want to help keep things smooth and peaceful as I can because this is the day that the bride has probably planned for a year at least, and because it’s a sacrament.”

That effort starts with calling or meeting with the

couple well before the wedding date to gather and share information.

“We ask them questions and help to guide them as far as following the rules of the parish,” says Brooks.

It’s during such meetings that the coordinator’s role in supporting sacramental marriage begins.

“We’re not preparing them for marriage or delving deep into it,” says Cheryl Bedwell, parish wedding coordinator at St. Agnes Parish. “But through our conversations, when they ask how to prepare [the church], we always remind them that this is a sacrament, and this is a church.”

“So no, you can’t have your dog walk with you down the aisle—someone asked about that once. ... We remind them of the seriousness and sacredness of everything.”

But there is plenty of joy and fun, too, especially starting with the rehearsal.

“I love people, and this is a happy occasion,” says Brooks. “I get to meet [the couple’s] families and learn more about them.”

And sometimes there are surprises. Like the time when, on the day of a rehearsal, Brooks received an “oh-by-the-way” request from the bride.

“She said, ‘We need something to set the flowers on. What can you do to help us?’” Brooks recalls.

She and her assistant scrambled to help. They found some boxes and lace at the church, “and some purple

cloth we were pretty sure matched her colors.

“We wrapped the boxes and put the lace over it—and it just blended in with the whole décor. It was fun! We just hoped the material wouldn’t slip and everyone would see the flowers were sitting on top of used paper supply boxes!”

‘My back was turned, and I heard a splash’

The day of the wedding arrives, and so do the wedding coordinators—before any of the bridal party.

See **COORDINATORS**, page 12



St. Ambrose Parish wedding co-coordinators Renee Hodge, left, and Jamie Armes pose for a wedding ministry photo in the church of their Seymour faith community. (Submitted photo by Katie Hodge)

(Graphic above provided by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops)

INSIDE...

- Engagement and Wedding Announcements, pages 10-11
- Planning Your Wedding Liturgy, page 12
- Marriage Preparation Information on Pre-Cana, Tobit and One in Christ, page 11
- Submit Your Wedding Announcement to Appear in our Fall Marriage Supplement, page 11

Wedding ANNOUNCEMENTS

DAINE-HOFFMAN



Andrea Camille Daine and Wesley Michael Hoffman will be married on July 4 at St. Joan of Arc Church in Indianapolis. The bride is the daughter of Randall and Joan Daine. The groom is the son of James Hoffman and Jane Hoffman.

ECKRICH-BRANTLEY



Helen Rose Eckrich and Floyd Richard Brantley were married on Oct. 10, 2020, at St. Luke the Evangelist Church in Indianapolis. The bride is the daughter of Kathleen and the late Bill Eckrich. The groom is the son of Randall and Dominique Brantley.

LAYMAN-HUGHETT



Sarah Elizabeth Layman and Mark Lantus Hughett were married on Sept. 5, 2020, at St. Roch Church in Indianapolis. The bride is the daughter of Danny and Cheryl Layman. The groom is the son of Jim and Machel Hughett.

PARKER-HINTON



Alexis Dyanna Parker and Bradley Austin Hinton were married on Jan. 30 at St. Roch Church in Indianapolis. The bride is the daughter of Jim Parker and Julie Jabusch. The groom is the son of John and Brenda Hinton.

SMITH-PIERCE



Madeline Inez Smith and Tyler Evan Pierce will be married on April 17 at SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi Church in Greenwood. The bride is the daughter of Todd and Kelly Smith. The groom is the son of Ivan and Brianna Pierce.

BERTY-BRENNENBORG



Jordan Elizabeth Berty and Michael Charles Brennenborg were married on Sept. 5, 2020, at St. Christopher Church in Indianapolis. The bride is the daughter of J. Jeffry and Judith Berty. The groom is the son of Mark Brennenborg and Anna Marie Jeroski.

DEITZ-ROSSWURM



Mary Beth Deitz and Michael Rosswurm will be married on April 10 at St. Joan of Arc Church in Indianapolis. The bride is the daughter of Gregory and Joyce Deitz. The groom is the son of Daniel and Carol Rosswurm.

ELLINGTON-FORD



Hannah Jayne Ellington and Samuel James Ford were married on Aug. 8, 2020, at St. Barnabas Church in Indianapolis. The bride is the daughter of Doug II and Lisa Ellington. The groom is the son of Jeff and Rhonda Ford.

LEONARD-HENDRIXSON



Sarah Elizabeth Leonard and Joseph Allen Hendrixson will be married on Aug. 28 at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church in Indianapolis. The bride is the daughter of William and Elizabeth Leonard. The groom is the son of Steven and Cheryl Hendrixson.

PREUSZ-STALEY



Vanessa Renae Preusz and Zachary Nathaniel Staley were married on Aug. 8, 2020, at Sacred Heart of Jesus Church in Indianapolis. The bride is the daughter of James and Brenda Preusz. The groom is the son of James Staley and Kyan Arnold.

VAHLING-STECKLER



Kaitlin Rae Vahling and Gavin Andrew Steckler will be married on May 15 at St. Thomas the Apostle Church in Newton, Ill. The bride is the daughter of Mark and Janet Vahling. The groom is the son of Stanley and Martha Steckler.

BRUCE-ALLEN



Sara Suzanne Bruce and Harold Thomas Allen, Jr. were married on Sept. 4, 2020, at St. Roch Church in Indianapolis. The bride is the daughter of Kevin and Deb Bruce and Jeff and Terry Moore. The groom is the son of Harold and Donna Allen.

DELANEY-BEDWELL



Allison Denise Delaney and Matthew Christopher Bedwell will be married on April 10 at SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi Church in Greenwood. The bride is the daughter of Michael and Lisa Delaney. The groom is the son of Tony and Amanda Bedwell.

ETCHASON-PERKINS



Claire Marie Etchason and Nicholas John Perkins will be married on May 1 at St. John the Evangelist Church in Indianapolis. The bride is the daughter of Mac and Lisa Etchason. The groom is the son of Mark and Jane Perkins.

LEWIS-COLVIN



Macy Lauren Lewis and Walter Q. Colvin, III, were married on Dec. 31, 2020, at St. Roch Church in Indianapolis. The bride is the daughter of Aaron and the late Cristi Lewis. The groom is the son of Chad and Kelly Colvin.

RAMEY-BROCKMANN



Courtney Ann Ramey and Michael Patrick Brockmann were married on Aug. 7, 2020, at St. Roch Church in Indianapolis. The bride is the daughter of Brian and Marjorie Ramey. The groom is the son of Paul and Denise Brockmann.

WEBB-FISCHER



Jessica Nicole Webb and Adam Joseph Fischer were married on Oct. 31, 2020, at St. Meinrad Church in St. Meinrad. The bride is the daughter of William Webb and Jane Stevens. The groom is the son of Daniel and Darlene Fischer.

BURROW-BRYANT



Emily Ruth Burrow and Patrick Frankoviak Bryant will be married on June 19 at St. Luke the Evangelist Church in Indianapolis. The bride is the daughter of Michael and Cherie Burrow. The groom is the son of Russell and Mary Jane Bryant.

DODSON-SPARKS



Margaret Kuhn Dodson and Gene Andrew Sparks will be married on June 26 at St. Pius X Church in Indianapolis. The bride is the daughter of James and Dori Dodson. The groom is the son of Gene and Julie Sparks.

FISCHER-CRAWFORD



Jenna Elise Fischer and Andre Boniface Crawford will be married on May 8 at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church in Indianapolis. The bride is the daughter of Dr. Donald Fischer and Beth Viellieu-Fischer. The groom is the son of Gregory and Michelle Crawford.

MATTOX-DEAK



Karlie Joelle Mattox and Drew Alan Deak will be married on June 26 at Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ Church in Indianapolis. The bride is the daughter of Andrew and Kristy Jo Mattox. The groom is the son of Paul and Debra Deak.

ROUTON



Thomas and Linda Routon convalidated their marriage of 43 years at St. Ann Church in Indianapolis on July 25, 2020.

WHITE-KOCH



Charlotte White and Jacob Koch will be married on April 24 in St. Martin Church of All Saints Parish in Dearborn County. The bride is the daughter of Ed and Cindy White. The groom is the son of Jason and Kirsten Koch.

BUSH-GAUCK



Rachael Catherine Bush and Tyler Gerald Gauck will be married on July 3 at St. Charles Borromeo Church in Milan. The bride is the daughter of Hugh and Patricia Bush. The groom is the son of Bart and Tammy Gauck.

DOLL-FOSTER



Christina Marie Doll and Derek Keith Foster were married on Dec. 5, 2020, at St. Anthony of Padua Church in Morris. The bride is the daughter of Randall and Donna Doll. The groom is the son of Douglas and Sandra Foster.

JUNGEMANN-SANDERS



Jill Carol Jungemann and Harry Munford Sanders, IV, were married on Jan. 9 at St. Joan of Arc Church in Indianapolis. The bride is the daughter of Craig and Mary Jungemann. The groom is the son of Harry III and Mari Ann Sanders.

MCCRAY-HORNER



Whitney Lee Catherine McCray and Andrew Joseph Michael Horner will be married on April 10 at St. Anthony of Padua Church in Morris. The bride is the daughter of Benjamin and Elizabeth McCray. The groom is the son of Melvin and Diane Horner.

SHIELDS-CARLISLE



Drué Jacquilynn Shields and Bradley Charles Carlisle will be married on May 8 at Christ the King Church in Indianapolis. The bride is the daughter of Nancy Shields. The groom is the son of Kim and Pam Carlisle.

CURTIN-CHADWELL



Leigha Elizabeth Curtin and Justin Ryan Chadwell will be married on May 22 at St. Agnes Church in Nashville. The bride is the daughter of Michael and Diane Curtin. The groom is the son of Donald and Deborah Chadwell.

DRISTAS-OTLEY



Raegan Ann Dristas and Nathaniel David Otley were married on July 11, 2020, at Sacred Heart of Jesus Church in Indianapolis. The bride is the daughter of Christopher and Beth Dristas. The groom is the son of James and Sophia Otley.

LAW-CHOW



Sarah Renée Law and Justin Hoong Wai Chow were married on Feb. 6 at St. Joan of Arc Church in Indianapolis. The bride is the daughter of Nicholas Law and Carla Keeney. The groom is the son of Michael and Christine Chow.

Pre-Cana Conference, Tobit Weekend and One in Christ program prepare engaged couples for marriage

Criterion staff report

Three marriage preparation programs offered in the archdiocese—Pre-Cana Conference, Tobit Weekend and One in Christ—help prepare engaged couples for the sacrament of marriage as well as the challenges of married life.

In response to the coronavirus pandemic, the Pre-Cana program moved online in November of 2020. It is available in English or Spanish, and couples receive a certificate of completion. Pre-Cana will return to an

in-person format this summer. Dates will be posted at www.archindy.org/precana as they become available.

For questions or more information, call the archdiocesan Office of Marriage and Family Life at 317-592-4007.

Early registration is recommended for the Tobit and One in Christ in-person marriage preparation programs, as each fills up quickly.

Tobit Weekend retreats take place at Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., in Indianapolis.

See PREPARATION, page 12

Couples may announce engagement or marriage this fall in *The Criterion*

Engagement announcements will be published in a July 2021 issue of *The Criterion* for couples who are planning to wed between July 15 and Jan. 31, 2022, in a marriage that is recognized by the Church as a valid sacramental or valid natural marriage.

Couples who were wed in the first half of 2021 in a marriage that is recognized by the Church as a valid sacramental or valid natural marriage may also submit an announcement if their engagement announcement was not published in *The Criterion*.

The wedding announcement form is available online at www.criteriononline.com by selecting "Send Us Information" from the menu on the left side of the screen, then choosing "Wedding Announcements."

An engagement or wedding photo may be submitted by e-mail to alewis@archindy.org. Digital photos must be clear, high-resolution images with the couple close together. Photos can also be mailed to Ann Lewis, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN, 46202. To receive the photo back, include a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Due to print quality, Xerox copies of photos will not be accepted. †

Couples should seek ‘mind of the Church’ when planning wedding liturgy

By Ann Margaret Lewis

A great deal goes into planning for an engaged couple’s wedding day, but without proper focus, couples can make a crucial mistake in this process.

Andrew Motyka, director of archdiocesan and cathedral liturgical music, has worked with hundreds of couples as they have prepared for their wedding ceremonies. He points out that the number one mistake he sees couples make when approaching their wedding ceremony is that they “spend a lot of time, energy and most of all money preparing for their *wedding*, but not nearly as much effort into preparing for their *marriage*.”

While there is much to consider when planning a wedding, including cultural pressures, Motyka notes that most couples approach ceremony planning as if trying to make it “a big show, rather than a focus on the sacrament.” This, he says, takes away from the truth of the event.

Of course, the Church requires couples to participate in a sacrament of marriage preparation program prior to the wedding. This program isn’t a mere formality, but something a couple should take seriously. With a solid understanding of the sacrament, Motyka says, a couple can turn their focus to the planning of their wedding ceremony in a more effective way.

Being a Church liturgy, the wedding ceremony is not merely the couple’s big day, but a celebration of the entire Church, says Motyka. If a couple can recognize that their wedding liturgy, their sacrament, is bigger than just the two of them—that it involves “the mind of the Church” itself—they’ll have an easier and more meaningful time planning and participating in the wedding liturgy and in married life, she says.

Motyka recommends that when planning their wedding liturgy, a couple

should become familiar with the words of the Rite of Marriage itself and really understand them. “[Ask yourselves] just what is happening here? What are the readings focusing on? What do the prayers and propers of the Mass tell us? Try to get into the mind of the Church on these things,” he suggests.

To help couples study the marriage rite, resources that include appropriate Scripture readings and wedding vows can be obtained from the pastor marrying the couple or the parish’s wedding coordinator or office.

Motyka recommends that couples become familiar with, or even memorize, their vows.

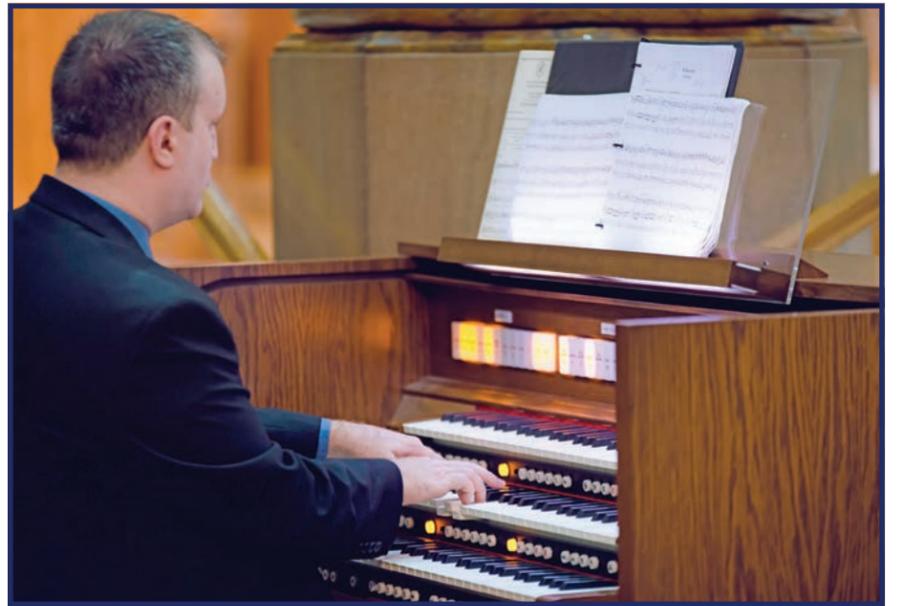
“They’re not long,” he says, “only a couple of sentences. If you don’t know just what you are vowing for the rest of your lives, what are you doing?”

He recognizes that some people might be too nervous to recite a vow from memory, and it is acceptable for the couple to repeat the vows as spoken to them by the celebrant. “But it’s important to be very familiar with what you are promising.”

Thinking with “the mind of the Church” is equally important when couples choose the music for their ceremony. For this, Motyka stresses that a couple work closely with their parish music director.

“It’s common nowadays for people to go straight to YouTube and come up with their own set of music for the liturgy,” he says. But music directors “have planned and played for many weddings. They know what works, and they know the local guidelines of the parish and diocesan church. They also probably know several pieces that [the couple might have] never heard or thought of before.”

Thinking with “the mind of the Church,” is part of the music director’s job, he says. They should be familiar with Church documents that express



Andrew Motyka, director of archdiocesan and cathedral liturgical music, plays the organ for his sister-in-law’s wedding Mass at St. Mary Church in Indianapolis in October 2019.

(Photo credit: Amy Counts Photography)

what is and is not appropriate for such a liturgy and can guide a couple in making good choices.

“Are you choosing hymns or psalms just because it says ‘love’ once or twice?” Motyka asks. It would be better, he notes, to examine pieces that express the fullness of sacramental marriage.

He believes the focus on a wedding ceremony being a show rather than a sacrament comes from the wedding industry itself. According to theknot.com, the average cost of a wedding in the Midwest is \$20,000-\$30,000, which feeds into a \$53 billion industry.

“We need to nip this trend in the bud,” says Motyka. “Weddings are a sacrament, and we need to draw couples, parishes and the rest of the Church into the idea that this sacrament, central to society, doesn’t need to be crushingly expensive.”

This cost, he says, is one reason why some people are choosing not to get married at all.

“We could set an example by celebrating weddings without trying to go ‘over the top’ with decorations, flowers, all of the expenses of an elaborate reception, or even a professional wedding planner,” he says. “There is nothing stopping you from getting married on a Sunday. Speak with your pastor.”

Motyka concludes that if we, as a Church, focus on forming good Christians, we should then encourage them to build good marriages.

“You won’t remember too many details from your wedding day,” Motyka adds. “But you will absolutely benefit from the good understanding, formation and work that goes into building a solid marriage.” †

COORDINATORS

continued from page 9

“We arrive early to prepare the individual rooms for the bride’s and groom’s parties, to be there when the flowers arrive, to talk to the photographer on what they may need from us,” says Jamie Armes, wedding co-coordinator at St. Ambrose Parish.

She and co-coordinator Renee Hodge help decorate and prepare the sanctuary.

“We also answer questions of all kinds, calm people down who are nervous, provide water and snacks for the wedding party in case they were too busy to eat—we don’t want anyone fainting during the ceremony because of hunger!”

Wedding coordinators are dedicated to seeing that all goes as planned on the couple’s special day. But some things are simply out of their control.

Brooks recalls a time when a young boy was playing by St. Monica’s partial-immersion baptismal font in the narthex.



Joyce Brooks

“It was 20 minutes before the wedding. My back was turned, and I heard a splash. He was all wet—and he was supposed to be one of the ring bearers! They held up the wedding trying to dry him off, but they had to go on without him.”

With two years as wedding coordinator assistant and four years as coordinator, Bedwell has had her share of challenges. The most stressful experience she recalls is the time a groom was missing from the church.

“There was something back at the lodge he wanted,” she recalls. “So, he left to get it 15 minutes before the wedding started! We just had to wait for him to come back before the wedding could start.”

Sometimes, though, couples roll with the challenges—and the COVID-19 pandemic has served up plenty of them.

“Can we *please* take off our masks for the wedding?” Brooks recalls one couple pleading during their planning meeting. “I had to tell them, ‘No, just for pictures.’”

“That wedding, they made masks with their wedding date, put them in a little package with hand sanitizer and passed them out as the guests arrived. I thought that was really creative!”

Three dresses, three sacraments

The positive and touching moments far outweigh the chaotic ones, says Bedwell, moments that capture the essence of marriage as a sacrament.

“I remember one wedding where the bride and groom came early to the rehearsal so they could sit in the chapel to pray,” she says. “And they had arranged for the priest to come early so they could go to confession before their wedding.”

Brooks recalls a touching encounter before a wedding that, despite happening early in her time as coordinator, remains in her mind.

“I wanted to tell the bride something,” she says. “I started to push the door open to the room where the bride’s party was getting ready. Then I noticed that she and her bridesmaids were kneeling and praying the rosary. It was so beautiful. I’ll never forget that.”

In their two years as co-coordinators at St. Ambrose, Armes and Hodge have witnessed many moving moments. One involved a mother of the bride, a photographer and three dresses.

“A mother of the bride had brought her daughter’s wedding gown to the church early on the wedding day,” Armes recalls. “Without the bride knowing, she had also brought her daughter’s baptismal gown and first Communion dress.”

“The photographer came early and hung all three dresses. ... The sun was shining through a stained-glass window where the dresses were hanging. It was a beautiful picture on a special day to help remember three very special sacraments in a young lady’s spiritual life.”

‘It is a special privilege’

The four parish wedding coordinators agree: It’s the memorable moments coming together in a sacramental marriage that make all their effort and time—as much as 12 hours per wedding—worth it.

“The day of the wedding can be pretty busy,” Bedwell admits. “But it’s rewarding to see it all come together for [the couple] and that they’ve had a good experience with their sacrament of marriage. It’s a joy to be a part of that.”

Brooks echoes Bedwell’s sentiments.

“It’s a sacrament I can be a part of,” she says. “I’ve seen couples get married and have their first child, and I feel a part of that.”

Serving as wedding coordinators is an honor for Armes and Hodge.

“It is a special privilege to share in and be a part of a wedding, the day when two people start a new life together,” says Hodge. “If we can help make the wedding day go as planned, then we feel the sacrament of marriage is off to a great start.” †



Cheryl Bedwell

PREPARATION

continued from page 11

There are three currently scheduled in 2021: April 30-May 2, June 25-27 and Sept. 17-19.

A registration fee of \$298 includes program materials, meals, snacks and separate overnight accommodations for the weekend.

To register, go to www.archindy.org/fatima/

marriage.html. For registration questions, contact Jennifer Burger at jburger@archindy.org or 317-545-7681. For more information about the program and its contents, contact Cheryl McSweeney at cmcsweeney@archindy.org or 317-545-7681, ext. 106.

One in Christ marriage preparation, which includes a medical panel to address questions regarding reproduction and fertility, is a three-day program spanning a weekend and the following Saturday. The first day of the program is 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m., the second day is 10:30 a.m.-4 p.m.,

and the third day is 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m.

There are three sessions currently scheduled for 2021: —March 6, 7 and 13 at Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish, 335 S. Main St., in Greenwood.

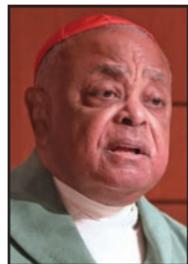
—July 10, 11 and 17 at St. Malachy Parish, 9833 E. County Road 750 N., in Brownsburg.

—Oct. 9, 10 and 16 at Our Lady of the Greenwood.

The cost is \$250, which covers meals and materials. For more information call 317-600-5629, e-mail info@OICIndy.com or go to www.OICIndy.com. †

Cardinal prays on program marking 500,000 COVID-19 deaths

WASHINGTON (CNS)—During a Feb. 22 evening program on CNN, Washington Cardinal Wilton D. Gregory offered a prayer for those who have died from COVID-19, asking God to “grant eternal peace to all our sisters and brothers lost to this disease.”



Cardinal Wilton D. Gregory

“Let us now open our hearts to recall those who have died from the coronavirus,” Cardinal Gregory prayed. “Strengthen those families and friends who remain behind, to comfort one another and to wipe the tears from our eyes. May each one find peace and let the memory of our loved ones itself be a blessing.”

The cardinal called it “a great honor and privilege” to offer the prayer at the invitation of Jake

Tapper, CNN anchor and chief Washington correspondent on the program “We Remember 500,000: A National Memorial Service for COVID-19.”

It commemorated the milestone reached on Feb. 22 when the United States surpassed 500,000 deaths due to the coronavirus.

More than 1,200 coronavirus deaths were reported on Feb. 22, bringing the nationwide total to 500,103. More than 28.2 million Americans have been infected by the virus. Also, as of Feb. 22, close to 13% of the U.S. population has received the first round of the COVID-19 vaccine, and about 6% of Americans have received both shots.

“We pray that—regardless of race, age, religious heritage, economic or immigration status—all people are able to receive the life-saving vaccine to bring an end to our common suffering,” Cardinal Gregory prayed.

He also said that “our hearts are filled with gratitude for our doctors, nurses and emergency personnel,” and prayed that “they remain well and be strengthened.”

“May the one who fashioned us help us to focus on our mutual humanity,” Cardinal Gregory prayed. “Although weary from so many months of isolation, help us not to lose hope, help us to continue to care for our neighbors as we remember those we have lost in this pandemic.”

Before he said the prayer, the cardinal pointed out that “the poor, the elderly, [and] people of color have experienced a disproportionate amount of sadness” due to the coronavirus, and he added that the pandemic “has increased our awareness of our common humanity.”

“We have been brought to a deeper awareness we are



President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris stand with their spouses at the White House in Washington on Feb. 22 during a candlelit ceremony to commemorate the grim milestone of more than 500,000 U.S. deaths from the coronavirus. (CNS photo/Jonathan Ernst, Reuters)

one people and this illness, this disease, this virus is no respecter of persons,” he said.

When asked by Tapper what the Catholic faith teaches about helping one another when it is not safe to physically come together, Cardinal Gregory said: “We Catholics are grateful that we have each other, even under these limited and painful moments when we cannot be with each other, to reach out and embrace and be in the presence of those who are suffering.”

He said the “sacramental reality” of the Catholic faith “is expressed in word and sacrament, in sign and prayer and music,” and “not being able to have a full display of those sacramental signs of our faith is itself an additional sorrow.”

In interviews during recent months, the cardinal has stressed the need to pray for those who have died of the coronavirus as well as their families and friends, and to

get the vaccine when it is made available to them.

On Jan. 19, he offered the invocation at a pre-inauguration memorial service beside the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool attended by President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris to remember the 400,000 Americans who had died from COVID-19 at that point.

In a livestreamed Mass in January for the community of Archbishop Carroll High School in Washington, Cardinal Gregory encouraged people to get the coronavirus vaccine when it is made available to them.

“We have the vaccines that are effective in helping to protect us, and I urge and plead and invite all of our students, faculty, parents, grandparents, teachers [and] benefactors to make good use of those vaccines, to get vaccinated,” he said. †

Pandemic, security pose challenges, but pope, Iraqis, hopeful for visit

AMMAN, Jordan (CNS)—Despite challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and security concerns, Pope Francis hopes to visit Iraq, an opportunity that eluded his predecessors.

Iraqis are excited that he is scheduled to come, despite those concerns.

“Iraqi Christians are very much optimistic because it’s a sign of hope and solidarity despite the pandemic, despite the security challenge. It’s a strong sign of solidarity,” Iraqi Father Emanuel Youkhana told Catholic News Service (CNS) by phone from the northern city of Dahuk. Father Youkhana is a priest, or archimandrite, of the Assyrian Church of the East, which is part of the Catholic Church.

The 84-year-old pope, newly vaccinated, is moving forward with his March 5-8 trip unless there is a serious new wave of coronavirus infection there. It marks his first foreign trip since being grounded for 16 months due to the pandemic.

Pope Francis told CNS staffers at the Vatican it is important that the Iraqis “will see the pope is there in their country,” even if most would see him only on television because of social distancing requirements.

It’s the first-of-its kind visit by the pope after St. John Paul II’s scheduled trip to Iraq in 2000 had to be canceled due to regional tensions. St. John Paul wept that he could not go, as he especially wanted to visit the city of Ur, the birthplace of Abraham, recognized as the patriarch of faith in one God by Jews, Christians and Muslims.

In mid-2019, Pope Francis announced that he intended to make his first visit to Iraq the following year, but the trip was postponed amid regional tensions and ongoing anti-government protests across the southern and central parts of the country. The pope told CNS in early February that he does not want to disappoint the Iraqis for a second time.

Iraq is set to receive thousands of Pfizer-BioNTech vaccines in addition to the Chinese Sinovac vaccine this month. As of Feb. 20, the Iraqi Health Ministry

reported 3,273 new COVID-19 cases, bringing the total number of confirmed infections to 664,750. New lockdown measures took effect in Iraq a day earlier as it recorded its highest new coronavirus caseload in 2021—double the daily figures from the previous week.

On Jan. 21, the day after the Vatican announced plans for the papal trip to Iraq, two suicide bombers detonated explosive vests in a crowded market in central Baghdad, an attack claimed by the Islamic State group. At least 32 people died and more than 100 were injured.

Shortly afterward, Cardinal Louis Sako, the Baghdad-based patriarch of the Chaldean Catholic Church, called on the faithful to fast and pray for peace in Iraq and for an end to the pandemic. He dismissed the significance of the bombing on the overall security situation in Iraq and said, “There is no risk for the pope.”

There have also been security incidents in February. A rocket attack on an airbase housing U.S. troops near Erbil’s airport in northern Iraq on Feb. 15 killed a contractor for the U.S.-led coalition and injured at least nine other people, drawing international condemnation. A little-known group called Saraya Awliya al-Dam claimed responsibility for the attack, but provided no evidence for the claim.

On Feb. 22, three rockets were fired at the capital, Baghdad’s heavily fortified Green Zone, without causing any casualties. Security officials said the U.S. Embassy was the target.

The Iraqi government is responsible for the pope’s safety and that of his entourage during the visit.

“There are security challenges, that is quite clear, because everywhere there are militias and terrorist groups. The Shiite militias will help [the Shiite-dominated government] in securing the visit. We hope, we pray there will be nothing,” said Father Youkhana, who operates the Christian Aid Program Northern Iraq.

The Christian program assists displaced

Iraqis around Dahuk and the Ninevah Plain, where tens of thousands were displaced by Islamic State militants in 2014. “But if you follow the news in Iraq, ISIS is there. ISIS is still active,” he said.

“The government will not want to risk any situation with the pope’s visit, because it would cause a failure for [our] country. The pope is respected in many sectors of Iraqi society,” Iraqi Dominican Father Ameer Jaje, an expert in Shiite relations, told CNS by phone from Baghdad.

He added that it is difficult for clergy to comment on security as it is the domain of the Iraqi government. Iraqi President Barham Salih said he hoped a papal visit would help the country “heal” after years of strife.

More than 500 people have been killed in more than a year as young Iraqis have protested, advocating for civil rights and a better economy and against sectarianism, corruption and unemployment. The protests were mainly in Baghdad and the south.

Despite reaching historic numbers in late 2019 and successfully mounting pressure on political elites, the protests wound down in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic. Also, the violent

crackdown by Iraqi security forces and militia groups, as well as kidnappings and targeted assassinations, caused their numbers to recede. Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi has been vocal about his support for the protesters’ demands.

Father Ameer said he believes Pope Francis has a special message for Iraq’s young people, who are tired of the sectarianism tearing their country apart.

“Iraqi youth say: ‘No, to divisions on sectarian lines.’ They want to live like other people in the world. I believe these people are looking forward to the pope’s visit, because he will deliver a message of hope to them, an encouragement for the country to live and reject the kind of sectarianism that has been destroying Iraq,” said Father Ameer, who is also an adviser to the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue.

“Many youths have sacrificed their lives for Iraq’s sovereignty and the desire to live together as one people: Iraqis, whether Sunni Muslim, Shiites, Christians or whomever. I believe the pope will encourage Iraq to reclaim its sovereignty and put an end to violence,” Father Ameer told CNS. †

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not shy away from clear exhortation to action, it does so ultimately on faith premises, relying upon a vision of the human being and of the world that rests on God’s disclosure of love.

As Pope Francis reminded the academy, in his 2019 letter “*Humana Communitas*,” “In our time, the Church is called, once more, to propose the humanism of the life that bursts forth from God’s passion for human beings. Our commitment to valuing, supporting and defending the life of every human

being is ultimately motivated by God’s unconditional love.”

Believers and nonbelievers can be grateful for the academy’s threefold witness: to discern the call of the good in uncertain times, to share in the companionship of serious thinking and to speak with the hope that nourishes the never-ending confidence in the tenderness of God.

(Roberto Dell’Oro is the director of the Bioethics Institute and a professor in the department of theological studies at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles. He is a member of the Pontifical Academy for Life.) †

School enrollment, hit by pandemic, is at its lowest in 50 years

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Catholic school enrollment figures in the U.S. for the current school year—significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic—dropped 6.4% or more than 111,000 students from the previous school year, which is the largest single year decline in almost 50 years.

The National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA) issued highlights from its annual report on school enrollment on Feb. 8. The full report is titled “United States Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools 2020-2021.”

The annual figures show the number of Catholic elementary school students declined by 8.1% from the previous academic year while the decline for Catholic secondary schools was only 2.5%. But the elementary school decline could impact secondary school numbers within the next five to 10 years.

The sharpest enrollment decline was for prekindergarten enrollment at Catholic schools, which went down 26.6% this year from last year.

Current Catholic school enrollment is 1,626,291 in 5,981 Catholic schools. There are 4,812 elementary schools and 1,169 secondary schools.

In the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, total Catholic school enrollment declined from 21,590 in the 2019-20 school year to 20,343 in the 2020-21 school year, according to Mary McCoy, the archdiocese’s interim superintendent of Catholic schools.

“We would assume the pandemic is responsible for the decrease, but we won’t know for certain until next year when the pandemic is behind us, especially since [the drop] appears to be at the primary level,” McCoy said.

“Twelve schools in the archdiocese did not show a decrease in enrollment, while the high schools show some

decrease in enrollment but generally nothing significant. We did have a preschool not reopen this year, and several preschools are down in enrollment as well. Total pre-kindergarten is down 361 students. Overall, that’s a 17.3% drop. Parents were apprehensive to enroll their child in a preschool program not knowing what this year would look like.”

The challenges related to COVID-19 have forced all schools to educate students differently this past year. More than 90% of Catholic schools nationally have been open for in-person learning and working within sanctioned health guidelines. By the start of the current school year, 209 Catholic schools had closed—many because of COVID-19, but others due to declining enrollment and financial instability.

Some states and cities have seen an uptick in Catholic school enrollment with an influx of transfer students opting for in-person classes and choosing Catholic schools. But the full story is still unfolding as Catholic schools have experienced an overall dramatic decline in enrollment and an increase in school closures.

Only 10 of the 174 dioceses with Catholic schools had an increase of 1% or more in student enrollment: Duluth, Minn.; Charleston, S.C.; Charlotte, N.C.; Reno, Nev.; Manchester, N.H.; Phoenix, Ariz.; Bismarck, N.D.; Denver; Greensburg, Pa.;



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson, right, and Father Michael Keucher, pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Shelbyville, distribute Communion during the annual Catholic Schools Week Mass at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis on Feb. 3. (Photo by John Shaughnessy)

and Las Vegas. But the report also noted that none of these dioceses had enrollment increases the year before that, suggesting this might not be part of a trend.

The NCEA report said media coverage of the pandemic’s impact on school enrollment so far “has suggested that Catholic schools and other types of nonpublic schools have benefited from pandemic-induced suspension of in-person instruction. However, NCEA’s research suggests that systems of Catholic schools have largely suffered notable enrollment losses, including the largest Catholic school systems.”

It also noted the broad availability of state-funded parental choice programs did not seem to have an impact on enrollment trends. For example, of the four states with significant parental choice programs—Arizona, Ohio, Indiana and Florida—only Arizona’s Catholic school enrollment remained stable, while Catholic school enrollment in the other states declined.

In the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, McCoy noted that the number of students who received an Indiana Choice Scholarship—a voucher—declined from 8,463 in the 2019-20 school year to 8,333 in the 2020-21 school year.

The report points out that parental choice programs have long been viewed as “a potential solution to increasing challenges of Catholic school viability,” but the current enrollment figures and the decline even in states with choice programs “does not seem to be sufficient enough to turn the tide,” the report said.

Some positive numbers in the current report relate to school waiting lists and school staff numbers. Currently, more schools reported having students on an enrollment waitlist than prior years, but this also could be due to “artificially decreased enrollment capacities in the midst of social-distancing requirements.”

Catholic school staffing did not decline at the same rate as the overall student enrollment decline—decreasing only 2.3%—which was partly due to the availability and utilization of the Paycheck Protection Program, or PPP, in the spring of 2020. Based on NCEA’s research, less than one third of Catholic schools nationally made adjustments to staffing during the pandemic.

The low student to teacher ratio—11:1 in 2020—has long been a feature of Catholic schools, but it also means the cost to educate students in Catholic

schools, which costs less than in public schools, has increased as student enrollment has decreased.

One form of relief for Catholic school leaders created by Congress on Dec. 21 is the Emergency Assistance to Non-Public Schools program, which allocates \$2.5 billion of funding for nonpersonnel expenses incurred as a result of the pandemic. However, schools must choose to take advantage of this program or the second round of the PPP—but not both.

If schools use relief funding for non-personnel expenses, they are likely to see either drastic staffing declines or potentially more enrollment declines as the cost to educate and cost of tuition increase to support retaining current staffing levels.

The NCEA report points out that of the 209 Catholic schools that closed or consolidated at the end of the 2019-2020 school year, elementary schools made up most of this figure—186. Without PPP and school reserve funds, more schools could have closed.

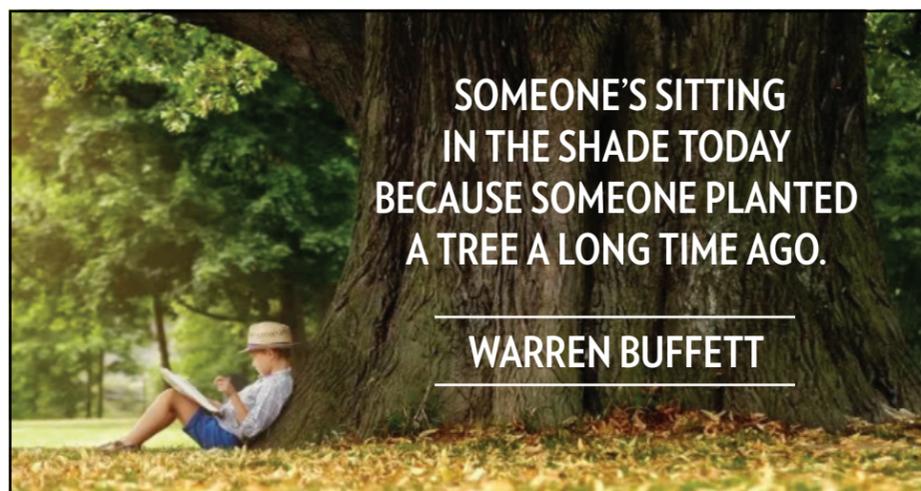
The school closings, many in urban settings, also “disproportionately impacted underserved families and non-Catholic families,” the report noted, which it said was significant because Catholic schools were created to serve immigrant families or those marginalized by other schooling options.

“The erasure of Catholic schools from communities across the nation, particularly underserved communities, amounts to a disruptive divestment of social capital and pathways of opportunity for all families,” the report said, adding it also decreases the “diversity of Catholic school communities that enriches all families regardless of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status or opportunity.”

Concerning the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, McCoy stressed the importance of Catholic schools to their communities.

“Catholic schools have stayed consistent with providing a Catholic education throughout this past school year in spite of the challenges,” she said. “Teachers have gone above and beyond to ensure students stay engaged and fill the gap of those students who fell behind since this pandemic closed our schools last March. We continue to do what we know best—meet the needs of students.”

(Criterion assistant editor John Shaughnessy contributed to this story.) †



SOMEONE’S SITTING
IN THE SHADE TODAY
BECAUSE SOMEONE PLANTED
A TREE A LONG TIME AGO.

WARREN BUFFETT

FOR GOD. FOR OTHERS. FOREVER.

One of the most popular ways people provide long-term support for their parish is to leave the parish a gift in their will. There are a number of reasons individuals might choose this gift option:

1. To make a statement about personal values
2. To benefit future generations
3. To provide a gift that inspires others to give

Tax planning can also be an important factor in this decision. With some foresight, you can make a gift in your will that fulfills specific planning goals as an integral part of an estate plan.

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‘We would assume the pandemic is responsible for the decrease, but we won’t know for certain until next year when the pandemic is behind us, especially since [the drop] appears to be at the primary level.’

—Mary McCoy, interim superintendent of archdiocesan Catholic schools

Faith *Alive!*

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Open up to the transformative power of prayer in Lent

By Fr. Richard G. Malloy, S.J.

In college, I made Bluto Blutarsky from *Animal House* look like a choir boy. One night I got rip-roaring drunk, fell backward down a flight of stairs, and split my head open. I spent the night in the hospital and got 12 stitches. My wild man act and partying was getting deadly dangerous.

A couple of nights later on the quad, I looked up at a brilliant, full moon, pondering what the hell I was doing with my life. For some reason, I voiced a simple prayer. “OK, God. If you’re there, do something.”

Nothing happened.

I went back to the fraternity and opened, at random, a small New Testament, the “Good News for Modern Man” translation. I got to some passage from Romans that was incomprehensible to me at the time. So much for prayer.

But in a very curious manner, a few weeks later, I got a summer job as an orderly at a nursing home. Caring for the elderly as they prepared for death filled me with joy. I began to ask the big questions about life, God and why we are here.

That prayer on the quad changed my life.

Welcome to Lent and the call to prayer. Why pray?

Prayer changes what we desire. Prayer transforms us into those who can live with God forever. Prayer impels us toward *metanoia*, an ancient Christian Greek term for conversion and repentance, a change in our ways of thinking, doing and being. When we really open our minds and hearts in prayer to the God who creates and so desperately loves us, watch out. Anything can happen!

So, prayer is a risk. We fear that prayer is a waste of time, that prayer doesn’t work. I prayed that I would get a new job or that my mother be cured of cancer, and my prayers weren’t answered.

Or we fear that prayer may really work, that God will change us as deeply and radically as the people in the Scriptures who were caught up in God’s plans, giving us tasks and purposes to transform ourselves and our world. We can be Moses and Mary and liberate our people and bring

Christ into the world. We can be the Peter, Paul and Mary Magdalene of our times.

“Do not be afraid” is the most repeated phrase in the Bible. Don’t underestimate yourself. God wants to make use of the talents you have been given. Prayer shows us how to use and multiply our gifts (Jn 6:8-11).

Prayer plunges us into powerful processes of transformation begun at baptism. God becomes what we are so we might become what God is. That’s not some crazy Jesuit spin on theology. That’s St. Athanasius in the fourth century. (See the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #460.)

Pray any way you like. Read Scripture. Quietly ponder the mysteries of the rosary. Explore the Eucharist. A Jesuit once said, “When we come to celebrate Eucharist, we should wear crash helmets.”

At Mass, heaven and Earth meet. We are in communion with all who have gone before us marked with the sign of faith. We are united with all who receive Jesus.

Engage in the *Examen* of St. Ignatius of Loyola. There are five simple steps:

- 1) Place yourself in God’s presence.
- 2) Give thanks for the past 24 hours. 3)

Replay, gently, the past day in your mind. Notice where you were in contact with God’s grace and love—and when you were not. 4) Notice what you need to work on. 5) Promise to move in the direction God leads. Pay attention to consolations (ways we move toward God and others) and desolations (ways we move away from God and others).

Open your heart and mind to the beauty and pregnant possibilities of silence. Trappist centering prayer is 20 minutes of just sitting without doing anything but focusing on God. Based on the 14th-century mystical text *The Cloud of Unknowing*, this is demanding but rewarding prayer.

Comedian Lily Tomlin once joked, “Why ... when we talk to God we’re said to be praying; but when God talks to us,

we’re schizophrenic?” Making God’s reality too self-evident would make it impossible for us freely to answer, “Yes.” God is always mediated to us and is always ever greater than us.

Jesuit Father Karl Rahner once asked in prayer if we ever really hear anything but our own internal rumblings? Surprisingly, he answered, “No.” But what happens is, we pray and then listen. In response, the word God speaks to us is our life.

For good books on a prayer, read Jesuit Father Mark Thibodeaux’s *Armchair Mystic*, a great introduction on how to actually pray.

St. Ignatius teaches that prayer is like exercise. I go to the gym three times a week, once a year. The lack of results is obvious. Regular prayer, like regular exercise, will show itself in our being more rooted in awareness of God, in service of others, and in the joy and peace radiating in our lives. Actually praying, daily, will get us in spiritual shape, ready to meet the challenges of following Jesus.

(Jesuit Father Richard G. Malloy is director of mission integration at Cristo Rey High School in Baltimore.) †



A woman prays during Mass at St. Pius X Church in El Paso, Texas, on Sept. 24, 2019. Lent can be a time when Catholics open themselves up to the transformative power of prayer. (CNS photo/Tyler Orsburn)

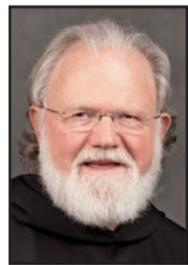


People in St. Peter’s Square pray as Pope Francis leads the *Angelus* at the Vatican on Oct. 25, 2020. Praying daily will get us in spiritual shape, ready to meet the challenges of following Jesus. (CNS photo/Remo Casilli, Reuters)

Corrections Corner/Fr. Jeremy King, O.S.B.

Let's do our part to support those incarcerated

Well, it is now February of 2021. January, the first month of the year, has 31 days, and is named after the two-faced Roman god Janus who is always imaged looking both forward and backward. After our experiences of 2020, not many of us wanted to look back, but the events of this past month have caused mixed emotions of how 2021 was starting off.



I recently had occasion to bury a 94-year-old man, and about two months later a 28-year-old, who died very suddenly and tragically. For both funerals, I used a song from Jonathan Larson's Broadway musical *Rent*. It is titled "Seasons of Love." It begins thus: "525,600 minutes/525,600 minutes in a year." And then the song asks: "How do we measure a life in a year?"

For each of us, there are most important minutes in our lives—the minute we are born and the minute we die being the most significant.

But for too many, it is the minute they took the first drink or pill or injected the first drug. It might also be the first time they heard the jail or prison cell door close behind them. For the families of those who are incarcerated, those same minutes are significant as well. On the other hand, there are the minutes when a modification is granted, or the minute when a person has been behind bars for decades is set free.

There are different ways to measure a life. So often we measure in seconds, minutes, hours, days, weeks, months and years. We use a fixed measurement. But we can also look at a year as a collection of opportunities that cannot be fixed in time. We call them "ah-ha" moments, or "come to Jesus" moments. We all have them, but sometimes we let them slip by.

A new year allows us more opportunities to "start over." For folks that are facing "time" in jails and prisons, this January might not have seemed significant unless we who enjoy freedom on the "outside" let them know we were thinking about them and praying for them.

How many of us complain about the COVID-19 restrictions, even just having to

wear masks? How many of us found the holidays to be less enjoyable because we could not gather with family and friends? How much more frustrating are these conditions for our brothers and sisters who sleep in bunk beds in prison dorms with 250 others, or in an overcrowded jail cell in a "boat."

We all pray that the rest of 2021 brings relief from the pandemic with the potential effects of the vaccines that are available.

For our brothers and sisters who are incarcerated and for their families, 2021 could be as bad as or worse than 2020. It is within the power of each of us to take the opportunities found in just a few of the 525,600 minutes of 2021 to help prevent an incarceration, to support someone incarcerated and/or to assist a "returning" citizen find a job, a place to live and a faith community.

(Benedictine Father Jeremy King is a member of the archdiocese's Corrections Advisory Committee and is a frequent visiting chaplain in the Indiana Department of Correction.) †

Faith and Family/Sean Gallagher

'Divine choreography' makes marriage a beautiful dance

Through the years, my boys have enjoyed watching *The Sound of Music* together as a family. It makes me happy that they like it, for I loved listening to its music as my mom often played the soundtrack to the movie in our home when I was growing up.



My mind has been on that movie a good bit recently since the death of Christopher Plummer on Feb. 5. He played Captain Georg von Trapp in the movie, opposite of Julie Andrews, who played Maria.

One of my favorite scenes in the movie is when Georg and Maria dance a laendler, an Austrian folk dance. The steps to the dance are beautifully performed by them, and the music and setting only added to the beauty. So did the deepening relationship between Georg and Maria that the dance brought out.

Plummer and Andrews also made the dance look effortless. The way they moved their feet, hands and arms with each other seemed totally natural—all, again, adding beauty to the scene.

We can take the beauty of a dance like the laendler even further, though.

Consider a dance like this as an image of marriage.

When a husband and wife live out their mutual calling according to God's plan, their life together is a thing of beauty. It can be as graceful as two dancers who seem to be floating on air.

And, actually, it is grace-full, for husbands and wives cannot follow the divine choreography of marriage without God's grace that comes to them daily through their sacramental relationship.

It is like dancing partners moving their bodies in perfect time with the music and each other. One foot moving in while another moves back. The partners' arms and hands flow together without getting tied up in knots.

Only ... sometimes they do. Sometimes, partners step on each other's feet. Sometimes they bump into each other when they should smoothly pass by and around each other.

That's because dances that look as effortless as the laendler in *The Sound of Music* actually take a great deal of effort between the partners.

It takes effort from them to learn the steps and get them so much into muscle memory that they can make every movement without thinking. This requires practicing the dance again and again.

My wife Cindy and I have been practicing the steps for nearly 20 years. Some days, we get the dance just right and catch a glimpse of the beauty that God has woven into marriage.

There are other days when we step on each other's feet or knock heads instead of gliding by. I'll take a good amount of the blame for such missteps.

And as God blessed us with our five sons through the years, the steps of the dance have gotten more complex, but also filled with the potential for even greater grace and beauty.

Marriage, like a well-danced laendler, take a lot of hard work. But when everything comes together, it's a wonder to behold—and to take part in.

And it's attractive, drawing more and more people into the dance that is the Church's life of faith here on Earth.

Join in the dance, then, that leads to the great wedding feast in heaven where the divine choreography will be revealed in all its glory. †

Window Seat Wisdom/Katie Prejean McGrady

Waiting in joyful hope for the coming of Jesus Christ

Our bedtime routine with our 3-year-old daughter is quite simple.

Bath. Nighttime snack of strawberries and grapes. Read books. Brush teeth. Potty. Say our prayers. Tuck her under the covers. Kiss on the forehead. Lights out.



It takes about 30 minutes, give or take the number of books she grabs off the shelf.

Every night, as we walk out of her room, she softly asks, "Mommy? Daddy? Do you think the ice cream truck is gonna come tomorrow?"

The ice cream truck comes down our street on Sunday afternoons. We're faithful customers, even though it'd be far more cost effective to buy a box of ice cream sandwiches from the grocery store. But Rose loves to run to greet the mask-wearing ice cream truck driver, surrounded by the neighborhood kids rushing out of their homes to dance to the tinny music pouring out of the truck's old speakers.

Although the ice cream truck comes just once a week, Rose asks us every night if it's going to come the next day. Most nights, we softly reply, "Maybe ... we'll have to see." And Rose joyfully says back, "I hope so."

The innocent wish of a 3-year-old—she hopes that ice cream truck will come back, whether it's Tuesday or Friday or Sunday. She is convinced it'll come back, and even though she knows, logically, the truck will probably only stop by once a week, she still asks, and filled with hope, happily accepts our answer of "Maybe ..."

The disappointment of it not showing up midweek doesn't stop her asking. The reality that it probably won't swing by doesn't frustrate her. The fact that it only comes on Sunday doesn't diminish her happiness when it finally arrives.

When it shows up, she is delighted and continues to believe that the overpriced ice cream sandwich will come again.

So she always asks and holds onto the hope that it'll be here soon.

I wish I had that innocent, joyful, ever-present hope in my weary, jaded, often disappointed heart. I wish I could hold onto the good promises announced to me and trust they are true.

As believers in a good God who abundantly provides, we wait in joyful hope. We're invited to trust in what God has promised. And what is that promise? In what do we hope? Perhaps the hope of new opportunities, or the promise of healing and peace. Maybe the hope of being together, of normalcy and routine once again.

Every Sunday, we hear the priest say, in the middle of the Our Father, that we wait in joyful hope for something very specific: the coming of our savior, Jesus Christ.

This is our hope: him. His return. Jesus Christ, present to us. Our hope rests in his promise, that he will be with us until the end of the age, and that he will come back so we can be with him forever.

It is only with his return—his very presence in our lives—that we will find the opportunity to worship perfectly, the chance to heal fully, the blessing of perfect peace, united to him.

We don't necessarily know when that "coming" will be. It probably won't be tomorrow or even next week. But we still hold onto the hope that it will happen—someday. And we pray with fervent hope that we are ready. That we can greet him and say, "I am happy to see you, Lord," and that he will look at us and say, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

We wait in joyful hope and ask, "Will it happen tomorrow?" And we pray diligently that we will welcome the coming of our Savior with hearts ready for his return.

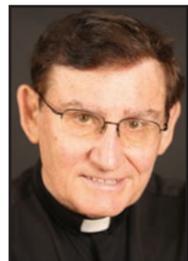
And maybe he'll show up in a battered old ice cream truck blaring a tin jingle, with an assortment of sweet treats ready for us all.

(Katie Prejean McGrady is an international Catholic speaker and award-winning author. She hosts the Ave Explores podcast and lives in Lake Charles, La., with her family.) †

The Human Side/Fr. Eugene Hemrick

The power of questions can create a hopeful destiny

"A prudent question is one-half wisdom." This insight by English philosopher Francis Bacon possesses a fundamental principle for coping with today's disquiet: to use the power of the question. Let's examine some examples of the strength of the questions.



Could much of the disunity we are experiencing be traced to tribalism? Tribalism is based on the behavior and attitudes that stem from strong loyalty to one's own tribe or social group.

An article in *Psychology Today* says tribalism is bad when it brings people together "out of anger, jealousy and spite, not for collective well-being." And it adds that bad tribalism "is easy to provoke but not healthy to

maintain. Staying angry is stressful" and detrimental to our health.

On the other hand, "good tribalism is difficult to build," but when practiced for the common good, it creates inspiring unity. Could it be that bad tribalism is increasing and is a major cause of our unrest?

Could adhering to outlandish beliefs be the result of clever psychological manipulations that are influencing people's minds?

Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote, "Sow a thought and you reap an action; sow an act and you reap a habit; sow a habit and you reap a character; sow a character and you reap a destiny." Are many of the words and images that we hear and see being used without any responsibility for our destiny and that of our children? If so, how do we combat this?

As ironic as it may sound, is employing solitude the answer? Is it possible that our ability to develop

our interiority is lacking? Interiority is needed to center our prudence and wholeness. Solitude enables us to earnestly develop the nobility of our character. Is the absence of thoughtful contemplation at the bottom of today's tumultuous times?

Have we slipped into an off-the-top-of-the-head atmosphere in which ideas are illogical, twisted and hollow—hasty thoughts at the mercy of a lust for prestige and appeasement rather than being thoughtful and guided by truth? Is in-depthness on the decline? If so, are we looking to solitude and prayer to reclaim it?

The hope of raising questions is what leads to "what-would-happen-if-we" questions—follow-up questions that create healthy progress and a hopeful destiny.

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

Second Sunday of Lent/Msgr. Owen F. Campion

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, February 28, 2021

- Genesis 22:1-2, 9a, 10-13, 15-18
- Romans 8:31b-34
- Mark 9:2-10

The first reading for Mass this weekend is from the Book of Genesis and is about Abraham, a very important figure in the process by which Jews reached a sense of their ethnic and personal identities. He is regarded as the father of the Hebrew people. Scholars believe that Abraham actually lived at one time. He is not a myth.



Genetic links between Jews of any age and Abraham are not the only consideration. The ancient Jewish faith is another. Abraham is seen as the great example of faith in God and of obedience to God.

Because of his faith, Christians and even Muslims also revere Abraham.

Eighty years ago, Pope Pius XI said that Christians fall within the category of children of Abraham, since Christians descend from him as a spiritual father, because of his faith.

In this reading, God promised divine protection to all of Abraham's descendants.

St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans furnishes the second reading. It was written amid the context surrounding all of the Pauline letters.

Although Christians were increasing in number in the last quarter of the first century, they still at the time formed only a tiny minority in the population of the Roman Empire. Because of their total commitment to the Gospel of love, they seemed foolish.

Moreover, they were viewed as a threat to the stability of the empire. By rejecting outright much of Roman culture, its basic philosophy and its pagan religion, they were regarded as enemies of the state.

Obviously, many Christians were uneasy. Paul reassured them. He called them to faithfulness regardless of the hardships, indeed terrors, that easily, even likely, might come their way.

He said that their knowledge of God was their advantage and privilege. God would save them. Christ had defeated death. In the Lord they would prevail over every adversary.

A reading from the Gospel of St. Mark offers the third lesson. It tells the story of the transfiguration of the Lord, a story also found in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke.

In the transfiguration, the Lord's identity as Son of God was magnificently displayed. Rich symbols abound, each with unmistakable roots in the Old Testament. Jesus stands atop a high mountain. He is as bright as the sun. God's voice sounds from the sky above. Each circumstance makes clear the fact of Christ's divine identity.

The lesson is that God shares with humans the very essence of the Holy Trinity, so that we all may know God.

Reflection

This weekend, we observe the Second Sunday of Lent. The penitential season is well underway, now nearly two weeks along.

Lent is meaningless unless it includes our total and free dedication to forming ourselves with the help of God's grace according to the image of Jesus, as Paul urged the Roman Christians. It requires absolute faith, trust, commitment, serious thought and deliberate action in prayer, penance and in living each day.

Is it worth it? Through the words of Paul, the Church reminds us of life amid hardships.

Outright persecution does not beset Christians in America, but modern life is challenging, even daunting. Times are not good for everyone. As were the ancient Roman Christians, we easily may be troubled.

Fears, doubts and our own smugness confound our ability to see things clearly and to act in what truly is our best interests.

The transfiguration consoles us by telling us that Christ will sustain us. Whatever confronts us on Earth, we have nothing to fear.

God is with us in Jesus, the eternal Son of God. His love is real, reaching out to us with reward and strength.

Although almighty, Jesus overwhelms no one. We freely must respond, especially when life is difficult. Lent is the process by which individually and voluntarily we accept the Lord and look ahead beyond our problems, worries and sorrows. †

Daily Readings

Monday, March 1

Daniel 9:4b-10
Psalm 79:8-9, 11, 13
Luke 6:36-38

Tuesday, March 2

Isaiah 1:10, 16-20
Psalm 50:8-9, 16bc-17, 21, 23
Matthew 23:1-12

Wednesday, March 3

St. Katharine Drexel, virgin
Jeremiah 18:18-20
Psalm 31:5-6, 14-16
Matthew 20:17-28

Thursday, March 4

St. Casimir
Jeremiah 17:5-10
Psalm 1:1-4, 6
Luke 16:19-31

Friday, March 5

Genesis 37:3-4, 12-13a, 17b-28a
Psalm 105:16-21
Matthew 21:33-43, 45-46

Saturday, March 6

Micah 7:14-15, 18-20
Psalm 103:1-4, 9-12
Luke 15:1-3, 11-32

Sunday, March 7

Third Sunday of Lent
Exodus 20:1-17
or Exodus 20:1-3, 7-8, 12-17
Psalm 19:8-11
1 Corinthians 1:22-25
John 2:13-25

Question Corner/Fr. Kenneth Doyle

Priestly celibacy is a discipline of the Church with deep historic roots

My wife and I were recently received into the communion of the Catholic Church. I know that a hot-button topic



in the Church is the question of whether there should be married priests. I have slowly come to the belief that unmarried priests make logical and biblical sense.

Seeing how hard our own parish priest works, it doesn't seem

that he would also have the time to care for a family, and I have read the biblical reasoning in Matthew 19:12 and Paul's guidance in First Corinthians. But my question is this: How does the Catholic Church reconcile this teaching with the fact that the chief Apostle and first pope, St. Peter, was married? (North Carolina)

In the Latin Church, the part of the Catholic Church that came to be in western Europe and which is most common in the United States, celibacy is today a prerequisite for ordination to the priesthood.

But that has not always been so; it is a discipline that developed through history. (Even today, married men are permitted to be ordained in Eastern Catholic Churches.) For the first several centuries of the Christian era, it was common throughout the Church for married men to be ordained.

As you mention, St. Peter was obviously married, since Luke 4:38 tells the story of Jesus healing Peter's mother-in-law. And St. Paul says in his First Letter to Timothy that "a bishop must be irreproachable, married only once, temperate, self-controlled" (1Tm 3:2).

Over time, the Church came to the realization—as you suggest—that a priest is most free to serve the people and his ministry by not having the responsibility of a family, and it

was the First Lateran Council in 1123 that finally mandated celibacy for clergy in the Latin Church.

That requirement, and the practical reason behind it, are reflected in the current *Code of Canon Law*: "Clerics are obliged to observe perfect and perpetual continence for the sake of the kingdom of heaven, and therefore are bound to celibacy which is a special gift of God by which sacred ministers can adhere more easily to Christ with an undivided heart and are able to dedicate themselves more freely to the service of God and humanity" (#277).

Further evidence, though, of the fact that clerical celibacy is not a revealed truth but a matter of Church law can be found in the fact that, in the United States, several dozen Episcopal and Lutheran married clergy who became Catholic have been allowed to be ordained as Roman Catholic priests while still remaining married.

I was married in the Catholic Church in 1965, then divorced in 1976 with two children. I never had the marriage annulled. I married a wonderful man in 1981, but unfortunately he died suddenly in 2018. I go to Mass and receive Communion regularly, and I feel that I am a devout Catholic.

Fast forward to 2021, and I have met a good Catholic man who was divorced but never had the marriage annulled. We have found a good life together and enjoy each other's families. I don't want to remarry because of financial considerations. We want to live together and would like to have this relationship blessed by a Catholic priest. Is there a way that this can take place? Please help. (Illinois)

In order for you to do what you want—to have that particular living situation blessed by a Catholic priest—the Church would have to abandon its biblically based teaching that marriage is a permanent commitment. The Church also believes that a couple should not be living together without being married.

I recognize your desire for the Eucharist and your eagerness to be a devout Catholic, but to be eligible to receive Communion, one has to be living in concert with the Church's teachings, including those concerning marriage.

Please consider meeting with a priest and discussing your situation. Meanwhile, I will pray that you make a decision about your future based on your deeply held faith.

(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

The Word of Truth

By Ron Lewis

It leads you from the darkness
And guides you to the light.
The Word of Truth is the only way
To all the things that are right.

It protects you from temptation.
"It is written," is how you start.
The Word of Truth will strengthen you,
When you hold it in your heart.

It teaches you to love your neighbor,
To seek and you shall find.
The Word of Truth is peace and hope,
And it calms a worried mind.

It prepares you for a godly life
On Earth and then in heaven.
The Word of Truth, it paves the way
To the life you should be living.



(Ron Lewis lives in Bloomington and is a Benedictine oblate of Saint Meinrad Archabbey.)

(Photo by Rod Long on [Unsplash.com](https://unsplash.com))

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.

BECRAFT, Ralph, 92, St. Mary (Immaculate Conception), Rushville, Jan. 19. Father of Joanna Brown, Kathy Williams, Chris, Jim and John Becraft. Grandfather of 13. Great-grandfather of 13. Great-great-grandfather of four.

BOIKE, Helen M., 94, St. John the Apostle, Bloomington, Jan. 19. Mother of Sandra Cobb and Debbie Kuhlenschmidt. Grandmother of four. Great-grandmother of two.

BRACIK, Thomas P., 76, Sacred Heart of Jesus, Indianapolis, Jan. 4. Husband of Maria Bracik. Father of Therese Houze, Tricia Hutton, Tiffany Maddox and Todd Bracik. Brother of John Bracik. Grandfather of six.

CAVE, Pauline M., 92, Mary, Queen of Peace, Danville, May 1, 2018. Mother of Cindy Cave Keller, Lisa Elison, Carolyn Wamsley, Margaret and Don Cave. Grandmother, great-grandmother and great-great-grandmother of several.

CONNER, Bill, 91, St. Paul, Tell City, Jan. 14. Husband of Joan Conner. Father of Christine Kanneberg, Julie Kohnert, Mary Riley, Theresa, David, Stephen and Tim Conner. Grandfather of 18. Great-grandfather of 12.

DEDDENS, Gerhard W., 89, All Saints, Dearborn County, Jan. 20. Father of Rose Linton, Lynn and David Deddens. Brother of Theo Deddens. Grandfather of 12. Great-grandfather of one.

EAGAN, Mary (Jansen), 86, St. Mark the Evangelist, Jan. 21. Wife of Bernie Eagan. Mother of Joanne Cleary, Diane, Andrew, Bernard and Thomas Eagan. Sister of

Anne Armbruster and Estelle Redouty. Grandmother of 10. Great-grandmother of nine.

ECKSTEIN, Russell J., 96, St. Louis, Batesville, Dec. 8. Husband of Rita Eckstein. Father of Michelle Roth, Dolly Stirn, Don, Kenny, Roger and Sam Eckstein. Brother of Alivna Hartman and Luella Ripperger. Grandfather of 13. Great-grandfather of eight.

ENGLAND, Wilber T., 81, St. Charles Borromeo, Bloomington, Jan. 14. Husband of Marjorie England. Father of Brent and Chris England. Brother of Victoria Wilton. Grandfather of two.

FRY, Mary Catherine, 70, St. Mark the Evangelist, Jan. 19. Sister of Bernice Keller and Lucy Nicksin. Aunt and great-aunt of several.

FUNK, Eulalia M. (Moser), 100, St. Thomas More, Mooresville, Nov. 19. Mother of Marianne Hawkins, Dennis, Harold and Joseph Funk. Sister of George Moser. Grandmother of 23. Great-grandmother of 33. Great-great-grandmother of three.

GRZELAK, Michael, 74, St. Michael, Greenfield, Jan. 22. Husband of Mary Ann Grzelak. Father of Kathleen Morrow, Ann Marie, Angie and Adam Grzelak. Brother of Maria Zinkan. Grandfather of five.

HAGEDORN, Roger V., 61, St. Mary, New Albany, Jan. 16. Husband of Carol Ann Hagedorn. Father of Emily Luzano, Hannah Stone and Aaron Hagedorn. Son of Mary Hagedorn. Brother of Denise Batliner, Debra Huber, Cheryl Pearce, Eugene, Joseph and Ronald Hagedorn. Grandfather of three. Great-grandfather of one.

HANLEY, Joseph V., 90, St. Barnabas, Jan. 18. Husband of Phillis Hanley. Father of Linda Bourne, Debbie Mills and Michael Hanley. Brother of John Hanley. Grandfather of eight. Great-grandfather of 21.

HENN, Jr., Carl W., 99, St. Joan of Arc, Indianapolis, Jan. 15. Husband of Polly Henn. Father of Amy Ball, Elizabeth Carlson, Martha Heavilon, Tess Mondello, Ellen, Gretchen, Laura, Merry and Carl Henn, III. Brother of Anthony, Eugene, James, Robert and Vincent Henn. Grandfather of 19. Great-grandfather of five.

HOLTEL, Martha T., 105, St. Gabriel, Connerville, Jan. 16. Wife of Marcellus Holtel. Mother of Donna Blotkamp, Elizabeth Fields, Therese Hollis, Mary Manchir, Judith Showalter, James and



A cardinal perches on a snow-covered statue of St. Francis of Assisi at Lake Santee in rural Decatur County. (Submitted photo by David Fry)

Raymond Holtel. Grandmother of 22. Great-grandmother of 33. Great-great-grandmother of five.

HORNBACH, Michael J., 61, All Saints, Dearborn County, Jan. 15. Husband of Lesa Hornbach. Father of Angie Miller and Amanda Naumann. Son of Andrew and Frances Hornbach. Grandfather of two.

KOOPMAN, Mary Kathryn, 77, St. John the Baptist, Starlight, Jan. 17. Wife of Norbert Koopman. Aunt of several.

LICHTENBERGER, Steven Q., 26, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Richmond, Jan. 15. Son of Craig and Vicki Lichtenberger. Brother of Emilee and Kimberlee Lichtenberger. Grandson of Etta Lichtenberger and Walter and Karen Horner.

LILLY, Eugene, 85, Holy Family, New Albany, Jan. 13. Husband of Evelyn Lilly. Father of Amy Franklin, Janine Kely, Pamela Kraft Jeffrey, Mark and Patrick Lilly. Brother of Mary Alexander, Rita Hunchman, Karen and Alan Rodman and Vincent Lilly. Grandfather of 17. Great-grandfather of 31.

MADDEN, Colleen M. (Chiles), 64, St. Matthew the Apostle, Indianapolis, Jan. 14. Wife of Paul Madden. Mother of Melissa, Jimmy, Martin, Paul, II, and Peter Madden. Sister of Karen, Kathy, Brian and Michael. Grandmother of 10.

MCKINLEY, Michael, 74, St. John Paul II, Sellersburg, Jan. 19. Husband of Mary McKinley. Father of Melissa Callahan and Bryan McKinley. Brother of Cheryl, Robert,

Tim and Tony McKinley. Grandfather of three.

MCMULLEN, John P., 85, St. Jude the Apostle, Spencer, Jan. 16. Father of Cynthia Slavens, Colleen, Kevin and Michael McMullen. Brother of Betty Brinker, Maryanna Kistner, Rose Mizer, George, Pat, Paul and Tom McMullen. Grandfather of eight. Great-grandfather of 15. Great-great-grandfather of two.

MCNULTY, Jane C., 84, St. Lawrence, Lawrenceburg, Jan. 21. Mother of Melissa Wanner. Sister of Carole Moltz. Grandmother of four. Great-grandmother of five.

O'DONNELL, Mary Alice, 99, Holy Spirit, Indianapolis, Jan. 16. Mother of Mary Theresa Snyder, James, Thomas and Timothy O'Donnell. Grandmother of 11. Great-grandmother of 13.

RATEKIN, Nancy, 78, St. Mary (Immaculate Conception), Rushville, Jan. 15. Wife of Rex Ratekin. Mother of Allana Edwards, Denis, Mark and Pete Ratekin. Sister of Rosare Marie Houze and Philip Shanahan. Grandmother of 10.

STEINER, William F., 70, St. Lawrence, Lawrenceburg, Jan. 14. Husband of Dena Steiner. Father of Holly Atrobus, Andrew and Steven Baudendistel. Brother of Mary Lou, Albert, Ed, Fred, Henry, Patrick and Ronald Steiner. Grandfather of six.

SULLIVAN, Rose Marie, 86, Sacred Heart of Jesus, Terre Haute, Jan. 19. Mother of Bonita Thompson, Laura Tucker, Timothy, Vincent and William Sullivan. Grandmother of 15. Great-grandmother of 7.

TRAUB, Paul W., 77, St. Pius X, Indianapolis, Jan. 19. Husband of JoAnn Traub. Father of Cindy Kindschuh, Brian and Dan Traub. Brother of Martha Nelson, Anne Thompson, Joan Traub-Martin, Jerry and Pat Traub. Grandfather of seven.

URRUTIA, Patricia J., 89, St. Jude, Indianapolis, Jan. 20. Wife of John Urrutia. Mother of Theresa Hurrle, Susan Miles, Nancy Stalnaker, Michael and Thomas Urrutia. Sister of David Kelley. Grandmother of 14. Great-grandmother of 28.

WELLMAN, Sandra (Cornelius), 87, St. Luke the Evangelist, Indianapolis, Jan. 10. Sister of Carol Hutton, David and John Cornelius. Aunt and great-aunt of several. †

Providence Sister Jacquelyn Hoffman served as a music teacher for 50 years

Providence Sister Jacquelyn Hoffman (formerly Sister Theodata), a member of the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods in St. Mary-of-the-Woods, died on Jan. 25 at Mother Theodore Hall on the campus of her religious community's motherhouse. She was 89.

Because of the coronavirus pandemic, a virtual funeral service was held on Feb. 16. Burial followed at the sisters' cemetery.

Sister Jacquelyn was born on Feb. 3, 1931, in Fort Wayne, Ind. She entered the Sisters of Providence on Feb. 2, 1950, and professed final vows on Aug. 15, 1957.

Sister Jacquelyn earned a bachelor's degree in music at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College and a master's degree in music at the

University of Illinois.

During her 71 years as a member of the Sisters of Providence, Sister Jacquelyn ministered as a music teacher for 50 years in schools in Illinois, Indiana and Missouri. When she returned to the motherhouse in 2004, she provided music for Providence Health Care, liturgical music for her community, served as a receptionist at the former Woods Day Care and was a coordinator for alumnae for the former Ladywood High School in Indianapolis.

She is survived by a sister, Patricia Toomey of Randolph, N.J.

Memorial gifts may be sent to the Sisters of Providence, 1 Sisters of Providence Road, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods, IN 47876. †

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:

- Earn certificate in Lay Ministry
- Complete 12 courses online with ND STEP program
- CDU offers classes on Catechism of the Catholic Church
- 20% discount for all employees, volunteers, and parishioners

For more information, please log on to www.archindy.org/layministry



REPORT SEXUAL MISCONDUCT NOW

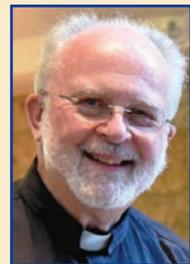
If you are a victim of sexual misconduct by a person ministering on behalf of the Church, or if you know of anyone who has been a victim of such misconduct, please contact the archdiocesan victim assistance coordinator. There are two ways to make a report:

- 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

Investing with Faith/Fr. Clement Davis

Planned giving, estate planning help parishes in times of need

Greetings friends! This winter is providing us with an unaccustomed taste of cold, snow and ice, and it's on one



of those unfriendly days that I am holed up in my apartment, keeping warm. So, it's a good time for me to share some thoughts about planned giving.

Chris Hirschfeld and I, who serve as co-chairpersons of the archdiocesan Catholic Community Foundation (CCF) Planned Giving Committee, have been asked to share our perspectives with you.

Mine on planned giving has been largely formed through pastoring two parishes for more than 36 years. During that time, I was blessed to have ministered to and worked side-by-side with amazing men and women of faith and of generosity.

Both parishes faced the daunting prospect of building churches to accommodate actual and anticipated growth, and to do so while maintaining all the parish ministries with their regular expenses. Great generosity was called for, and in both cases the challenges were met and our goals were exceeded. We kept the lights on and staff members continued to collect their salaries.

I've experienced how energy develops around the idea of growth and the wonder of seeing a parish community unite around a shared vision of what we can be, what we can do, together.

There is clearly excitement when a new building will result from these efforts, but the needs of a parish community are more frequently less dramatic and less obvious than a building site. The task of planned giving efforts in the Church is to raise and keep alive the awareness that every parishioner counts, and that everyone's gift—no matter the size—contributes to the spread of the Gospel.

While a building campaign brings financial needs to center stage in a parish, the fact is a parish will often be dealing with regular needs that expand and grow.

The St. Bartholomew School and Religious Education ministries in Columbus have benefitted from a Sesquicentennial Memorial Educational Endowment Fund established back in 1993, and those benefits have helped our catechetical ministries year after year.

Planned giving goes beyond the annual stewardship campaign. Estate planning is becoming a more common reality, not just for the rich and famous. All of us do well to look beyond our present needs to plan for the day we are no longer here to make day-to-day financial decisions.

Sometimes our parishioners inform us of their plans to remember the parish in their wills. Sometimes we receive a happy surprise. Such was the case when, just a year ago, we were faced with a pressing need for a technology upgrade for which we hadn't planned.

It had been the topic of a couple pastoral team meetings, with no solution in sight. Then a letter arrived with a "no-strings" gift from a parishioner who, without having informed us, had included the parish in her will.

A year or so prior, an air handler serving the church sanctuary was plagued with a failing compressor. Technicians from the manufacturer assured us there was no easy or quick fix. Equipment would need to be replaced at the cost of \$65,000 to \$70,000 that was not in the budget. We would have to raid the savings account or borrow the money. Before that step could be taken, the postman brought the notification that a parishioner who had died months earlier had included St. Bartholomew Parish in their will. The \$80,000 check was a totally unforeseen solution to our compressor problem.

These good people, who had served the Church and community so generously

See INVESTING, page 20

Classified Directory

Construction

Emerson Heights • Brothers Construction
 Chimneys cleaned & inspected \$99
 Concrete & Brick Specialist
 Sidewalks & Steps
 Call 317-501-4830
5066 E. Michigan Street—Serving the eastside since 1944

BCS Fencing
 Carpentry • Roofing
 Complete Tree Service
 Electrical & Plumbing
 Call 317-357-4099

**Call 317-236-1585
 TO ADVERTISE IN
 The Criterion**

Employment

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, organizational development, business administration or a related field. At least 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/employmentopportunities.html.

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.

Employment

Administrative Assistant

St. Elizabeth Seton Catholic Church, Carmel, Ind. is looking for a full-time Administrative Assistant to join the parish staff. As the point of "first contact," this position is vital to the integrity and professionalism of the Parish Offices. It is critical that this position supports the goal of ensuring efficient operation of the Parish Offices. It is also important that this employee understands and supports the Mission and purpose of the Roman Catholic Church and St. Elizabeth Seton Parish and be able to participate fully in the practice of the Roman Catholic Faith.

- Daily opening and closing of parish administration office.
- This person must have excellent people skills; good organizational skills and the ability to multi-task; Handle a high volume of telephone calls with courtesy, speed, accuracy and patience; Greet visitors to the Parish Office, including parishioners, volunteers and visitors, in a pleasant, professional, and sincere manner.

Interested Candidates should email resume to:

apply@setoncarmel.org
 St. Elizabeth Seton Catholic Church
 10655 Haverstick Road
 Carmel IN, 46033



DIRECTOR OF ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT

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 salaried 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 by living 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@guerincatholic.org. Please include at least three references as part of the résumé.

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

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

Medicare Insurance

Health Insurance Professionals



Dan Shea, RHU
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Bishops say fellow Texans' help for one another amid storm is 'edifying'

AUSTIN, Texas (CNS)—The Catholic bishops of Texas said on Feb. 20 that the generosity of their fellow Texans reaching out to help their neighbors, even while they were also managing their own needs during a historic winter storm, “is truly edifying.”

“We are grateful for the outpouring of concern from around the world for all who have been affected by the severe weather conditions in Texas,” they added in a joint statement issued by the Austin-based Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops, the bishops’ public policy arm.

“We affirm the state leaders who are now paying attention to the underlying pre-existing conditions which have exacerbated the suffering of so many,” they said.

The historic winter storms in February shattered electric plants across Texas, prompting energy providers to force blackouts across the state to preserve what fragile electricity they could generate. At least 58 deaths have been linked to the storms and subsequent power outages.

Record snowfall and single-digit temperatures froze the state’s electric systems, pushing more than 4.3 million into darkness. The outages, first expected to be “rolling” and only a few hours, stretched to days for millions of Texans. Their homes and cities were ill-prepared for such intense winter weather.

On Feb. 20, President Joe Biden approved Texas’ request for a major disaster declaration, making federal funding available for people affected by the winter storm. News reports on Feb. 22 said millions across Texas remained under boil water notices, and others were seeking financial relief.

Gov. Greg Abbott said on Feb. 21 that “the state continues to distribute aid to Texans while leaders also discuss strategies to ensure its energy system isn’t crippled by weather again in the future,” reported KHOU-TV Channel 11.

The Texas Catholic bishops in their statement said: “Please continue to pray with us for those who have died and been injured; for the first responders and utility workers who are going beyond professional expectations; for the restoration of power, water and food supplies; and for those who face the task



A shopper looks for food at an H-E-B Plus! supermarket in Corpus Christi, Texas, on Feb. 18 after a winter storm wreaked havoc throughout the region. (CNS photo/Courtney Sacco, Caller-Times, USA Today Network via Reuters)

of rebuilding and repairing their homes and businesses, as well as our damaged churches and parish facilities, even while all are attempting to remain safe from the coronavirus.

“May Our Lady of Guadalupe wrap us in her mantle of protection, especially the poor who are disproportionately impacted.”

There are 20 active archbishops, bishops and auxiliary bishops who shepherd approximately 8.5 million Catholics living in Texas, about 30% of the total population.

The bishops said donations to local Texas Catholic Charities agencies would “most efficiently reach Texans.” But they also said donations can be made to Catholic Charities USA at www.CCUSA.online/weather.

On Feb. 19, Los Angeles Archbishop José H. Gomez, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, also urged donations to Catholic Charities USA.

“In our Lenten almsgiving, let us find concrete ways to help our brothers and sisters,” he said in a statement.

The archbishop said he joined all U.S. Catholic bishops “in praying for all those who have died and been injured in the recent winter storms. We pray especially for those without power and heat and for first responders who are offering assistance to those with urgent needs.

“I entrust those who are suffering to the Immaculate Heart of our Blessed Mother Mary,” he added. “May she grant them all comfort and peace.” †

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while they lived in our midst, had also planned for the time when they would not be with us. And due to their planning and loving generosity, we have been blessed to be able to devote ourselves to sharing the Good News of our Savior Jesus Christ.

(Retired Father Clement Davis, who serves on the Catholic Community Foundation Advisory Board of Directors, is senior parochial vicar at St. Bartholomew Parish in Columbus. Tax or legal information provided herein is not intended as tax or legal advice. Always check with your legal, tax or financial advisors before implementing any gift plan.) †

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