Two great passions will guide new Catholic school superintendent for the archdiocese

By John Shaughnessy

After the announcement on April 14 that Brian Disney will become the new superintendent of Catholic schools in the archdiocese on July 1, he shared three snapshots of the person and educator he is—snapshots that provide a glimpse of the leader he will be.

Focusing on his emphasis of service to others, Disney said, “Students and staff would not be surprised to see me with a mop, cleaning up a spill in the hallway or cafeteria.”

Stressing his focus on being there for students, the principal of Mooresville High School shared, “We had a young lady who tragically lost both of her parents. When she returned to the school, she wanted to talk with me as her principal. And she continued to come to me for help and support.”

And emphasizing his belief that education should be a journey touched with joy, he recalled that he “wore a hot dog outfit and handed out candy to make students and staff laugh right after state testing ended.”

Then there is the most telling part of Disney’s desire to become the leader of the 68 Catholic schools in the archdiocese that serve more than 20,000 students across central and southern Indiana. That was the emphasis that the member of St. Thomas More Parish in Mooresville shared in his letter to the search committee.

Disney wrote, “I am interested in combining my two great passions: education of future generations and my Catholic faith.”

“My personal life mission is to build up the kingdom of God through servant leadership in educating hearts, minds and souls,” he said in an interview with The Criterion.

Stories highlight ministries, honor Lentz at archdiocese’s inaugural Legacy Gala

By Natalie Hoefer

It was an evening of stories—some informative, some funny, many touching—told virtually from locations around central and Indiana. Half of the stories focused on the vital works and impact throughout the archdiocese’s 39-county region of three Catholic ministries—Catholic Charities, Catholic schools and seminarian formation—and their continuing need for support.

The other half honored archdiocesan chancellor Annette “Mickey” Lentz, whose 60 years of service to the Archdiocese of Indianapolis span nearly one-third of the archdiocese’s 187-year history.

There was even a surprise ending to Lentz’ ministerial story that was revealed at the end of the event—an honor she now shares with presidents, astronauts and a cardinal of the Church. These stories comprised the archdiocese’s inaugural Legacy Gala.

Stories highlight ministries, honor Lentz at archdiocese’s inaugural Legacy Gala

By Natalie Hoefer

FedEx tragedy strikes couple preparing for 50th wedding anniversary

By John Shaughnessy

As John and Mary Weisert looked forward to their 50th wedding anniversary later this year, they did so from the foundations of love and faith that still deeply marked their marriage.

Members of St. Luke the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis, the couple always seemed to be by each other’s side, from participating in Mass faithfully together to attending monthly meetings of the parish’s social group for senior citizens.

The college sweethearts who met at the University of Minnesota even shared a preference for being known by their middle names. John was Steve to those who knew him best, and Mary was known as Carol.

So as the late night of April 15 turned into the early morning of April 16 and Steve still hadn’t returned from his part-time job as a package handler...
Brian Disney, newly appointed superintendent of Catholic Schools for the archdiocese, is pictured with his wife Tracy and their daughter Kate. (Photo by Swanson)

and Family, Teach and Lead.” Faith and family are the core of who I am. Teach and lead is how I express and live who I am.”

Married for nearly 25 years to his wife Tracy, the 50-year-old Disney is the father of Kate, a junior in college.

“My family and I are extremely excited for this opportunity to serve the Church and our Catholic schools,” he said. “I’m looking forward to having an impact on the upcoming generations of Catholic leaders who will make a positive difference in our state, country and world. I feel overwhelmed with this responsibility but know that the Holy Spirit will be guiding me.”

A leader of “enthusiasm, passion and faith”

Disney brings a wealth of credentials to his new position. He earned his bachelor’s degree in secondary mathematics at Butler University in Indianapolis, a master’s degree in school counseling from Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, and a doctorate in educational leadership from Indiana University.

In his 28 years as an educator, he has been a teacher, a coach, a counselor and, since 2013, the principal of Mooresville High School.

Disney was chosen by an archdiocesan committee that began a nationwide search after Gina Fleming resigned in August as superintendent Mary McCoy has served for 10 years in the archdiocese.

The archbishop also focused on the character of Disney, saying, “Brian is a very devout Catholic who is seeking reader interaction and stories by April 30 to Natalie Hoefer—Mary, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202. Please include the name of your parish and a daytime phone number where you can be reached.”

Disney was also praised by the leaders of the archdiocesan search committee, chancellor Annette “Mickey” Lentz and vice chancellor Christopher Walsh.

“I am most impressed by his faith, his commitment to education and his vision for the archdiocese moving forward,” Lentz said. “Brian will be well-received in the archdiocese and by the school administrators because he is a caring person and very authentic in how he leads and how he wants to serve. I see him as being able, in time, to build relationships both within and outside the archdiocese. We are blessed to have him.”

Walsh also was impressed by Disney: “The combination of his Christ-centered values, his energy and passion for education and his rich experience as an education leader make Brian an outstanding choice to safeguard the standard of excellence for which our archdiocesan schools are known.”

“I have regular conversations with God”

The emphasis on faith that Disney will bring to the superintendent position is a focus that has lived in his family’s faith in St. Thomas More Parish.

He has served as a lector, the chair of the stewardship committee, an extraordinary minister of holy Communion and a member of the capital campaign team. He has also taught catechism classes for youths and helped to prepare them for confirmation.

He credits his involvement to the great example of his parents and grandparents, noting they have also shaped his faith.

“My commitment to Jesus Christ and his teachings has only grown,” he said. “I have regular conversations with God, and I know that he is always there for me. Whether things are going well, or it is a tough day, I know that God is present and is sharing the day with me. Jesus is one of my best friends, and a highlight of the week is spending time with him in eucharistic adoration.”

His goal for Catholic students across the archdiocese is that they will learn to build their lives on the foundations of serving others and developing a deep relationship with God.

“My hope is that our Catholic students will have the courage to pursue greatness in all areas of their lives,” Disney said. “They will strive to live the Gospel values as their lives as they grow in their faith and journey to sanctity and everlasting life with God. “I look forward to partnering with the families—the domestic churches—in helping their children grow spiritually, academically, athletically. Our graduates will become men and women of God who joyfully serve others and the Church.”

A father’s influence, and a calling from God

In seeking that goal, Disney said he will be guided by an approach that he learned from watching his role model in education—his father.

“My dad, Jim, was a teacher, coach, athletic director and principal as I was growing up,” Disney recalled. “By observing him, I was able to see how to live one’s Catholic identity by serving others through education.

“My faith has also helped me to see my students as people with hearts, minds and souls that all need to be developed and cultivated. My belief that all people are good—and we have to bring that out in them—has helped in dealing with students facing challenging circumstances. Jesus told us multiple times not to judge, so I try to not judge students, but to teach and encourage them to be their best selves.”

Disney views the opportunity to lead Catholic Schools in the archdiocese as another way to bring out his best.

“I feel that God has called me to this position at this time, and that the Holy Spirit led the entire process. “I’m excited that I will be able to share my faith with our students and families. I’m excited that I will be able to participate in daily Mass more often. I’m excited that I will be able to talk about helping to develop saints and instill Gospel values.”

What role has the Blessed Mother played in your life of faith?

Perhaps no saint in heaven is more beloved, fosters more devotion or is called upon more frequently for intercession and aid than the Blessed Mother Mary.

The month of May is dedicated to the Blessed Mother. To honor her, The Criterion is seeking reader responses on the role Mary plays in your faith. How has she worked in your life to offer assistance or consolation? Do you have special devotion to her under a particular title, and if so, why? How has she brought you closer to the Lord Jesus Christ?

Send your thoughts, experiences and stories by April 30 to Natalie Hoefer at nhoefer@archindy.org or by mail to The Criterion, attention, Natalie Hoefer—Mary, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46203. Please include the name of your parish and a daytime phone number where you can be reached.

Public Schedule of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

April 24 – 11 a.m. Confirmation for youths of Immaculate Conception Parish, Millisoune; St. John the Baptist Parish, Osgood; St. Mary Parish, Greensburg; St. Maurice Parish, Napoleon; and St. Catherine of Siena Parish, Decatur County, at St. Mary Church, Greensburg

April 24 – 3 p.m. Confirmation Mass for youths of Holy Family Parish in Oldenburg at Holy Family Church

April 25 – 11 a.m. Mass at St. Jude the Apostle Church, Spencer

April 27 – 10 a.m. Spring Business Meeting for priests and parish life coordinators at St. John the Apostle Parish, Bloomington

April 27 – 1 p.m. Priest Council meeting at St. John the Apostle Parish, Bloomington

April 28 – 10:30 a.m. Visit at Seton Catholic High School, Richmond

April 28 – 7 p.m. Confirmation Mass for youths of Mary, Queen of Peace Parish in Danville and St. Mark the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis, at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, Indianapolis

April 29 – 10 a.m. Leaside Dinner meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis

April 29 – 7 p.m. Confirmation Mass for youths of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Indianapolis and Holy Name of Jesus Parish in Beech Grove, at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral.

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The Criterion • 1400 N. Meridian St. • Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367

Page 2 The Criterion, Friday, April 23, 2021
As the 2021 legislative session drew to a close this week, the Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC) and other advocates were hoping to see a long-sought-after update to a crucial cash assistance program for the neediest Hoosiers. But that pivotal portion of the legislation concerning Indiana’s Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program appeared to be heading for another roadblock. During a conference committee meeting on April 19, lawmakers removed recently added language to a TANF bill that would have increased cash payments to families in deep poverty for the first time since 1988.

“We are very grateful that many important provisions remain intact in the Senate bill,” Sen. Jon Ford (R-Terre Haute) has said. “However, it is disappointing to get this close yet again to making a meaningful expansion to TANF and not reach the finishing line,” said Jessica Fraser, program manager for Families (TANF) program appeared to be a close this week, the Indiana Catholic Conference. “As the 2021 legislative session drew to a close this week, the Indiana Catholic Conference has been frustrated and puzzled as to why efforts to modernize TANF in Indiana continue to stall at the Statehouse. Families in Indiana need these changes, and they have needed them for a long time,” Fraser said. “We will keep up the fight.”

To follow this and other priority legislation of the ICC, visit www.indianaicc.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.

Advocates continue quest to help those in deepest poverty

By Victoria Arthur

WASHINGTON (CNS)—The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has published a proposed rule to rescind the Trump administration’s enforcement of a Title X provision that “draws a bright line between abortion and family planning,” as the U.S. bishops’ pro-life committee chairman has described it.

Title X, enacted by the Family Planning Services and Population Research Act of 1970, covers reproductive health care services for low-income people in areas such as wellness exams, cervical and breast cancer screenings, contraceptives, and testing and treatment for sexually transmitted infections.

Title X prohibited federal funds from being used to provide, or provide assistance in programs where abortion is a method of family planning. In February 2019, the Trump administration implemented the “Protect Life Rule,” enforcing Title X’s ban on taxpayer funds from being used to promote, or provide assistance in programs where abortion is a method of family planning. The 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the rule on Feb. 24, 2020.

In his recent administration’s proposed rule to rescind this “is a terrible policy,” said Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann of Kansas City, Kan., chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ (USCCB) Committee on Pro-Life Activities. “It would mandate abortion into what is supposed to be a pre-pregnancy family planning program. It is in spite of explicit prohibitions in federal law and clear congressional intent that abortion may not be a part of this program, it has repeatedly been swept by budgetary restrictions and reduced funding over the years.”

Archbishop Naumann had strong objections to government funding of contraceptives, and he was among the officials urging the court to rescind the “terrible policy.”

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For the future of the Church.
Mike Krokos, were killed by gun violence and Nationwide, more than 19,000 people dramatic increase in violent crime. for about 89 percent of Indianapolis that number, shootings were responsible senseless acts of violence will stop.”

As our brothers and sisters’ keepers, our faith demands we not sit idly by. If we are to work toward that peace, we must be able to have constructive conversations about gun violence, mental health issues and suicide. We need a consensus on how we can move forward in addressing these challenging issues. As our sisters and brothers’ keepers, our faith demands we not sit idly by. The U.S. Catholic bishops have long supported changes in the law to control the sale and use of firearms,” Archbishop Thompson said. “May we all recognize that we are made in the image and likeness of God and continue to do what we can to end this senseless violence and to live together in peace.”

—Mike Krokos

Prayer that never ceases

There’s nothing wrong with Catholic prayer in and of itself. In faith and substance, the prayers of the Church are incarnate: there is a thread wound through them that connects us to one another and to the otherworldly to our human senses. We sing and kneel and breathe ince; we cross ourselves with holy water; we wear blessed medals and adorn our houses with the icons of our faith. The sacraments are our anchors amid a tapestry of other prayers; without their formulas are certainties of grace meant to free us from preoccupation and doubt so that our spirits can go deeper.

But, as is often the case in our fallen world, such strength can turn back on itself.

We can coe through Mass on autopilot, mumbling the same words we’ve heard a thousand times; our rosaries can become vain repetitions on our way to some set number; we can war the promises attached to Catholic prayer until we almost believe them to be a vending machine for life’s problems.

Worse, we can become lost in the machinery and precision of it all, mistaking the form for the purpose and detaching its meaning from anything in our lives.

For if the person of Jesus Christ is the lifeblood of all things, then without a constant encounter with him even the grandest liturgy lies dormant for us: it becomes—subjectively, at least—not simply a prayer without substance, but no prayer at all. It turns to stone from the inside out— and our spiritual lives along with it.

We begin living in place where we perceive our only way out is to simply pray more and pray harder, to say the right words in the right way—to control our lives by forcing grace to serve us. We grow tired, and sometimes fall away from prayer entirely, believing it to be all in vain.

But even now and again, blessedly, the dawn in which we are awoken by books and words and prayers and scripture, which when we are reminded that there is always hope, even when we seem to be at a dead end. I would ask our political leaders, and all people of good will, once more to examine this issue and propose prudential solutions.

“It is good that President [Joe] Biden and some leaders in Congress are drawing renewed attention to this. For a comprehensive and long-lasting path to peace, it will take bipartisan cooperation. In the spirit of Easter, let us pray for renewed reverence for the gift of life, and faith that by the grace of God, we can always begin again and work toward peace.”

By as we work toward that peace, we must be able to have constructive conversations about gun violence, mental health issues and suicide. We need a consensus on how we can move forward in addressing these challenging issues. As our sisters and brothers’ keepers, our faith demands we not sit idly by. The U.S. Catholic bishops have long supported changes in the law to control the sale and use of firearms,” Archbishop Thompson said. “May we all recognize that we are made in the image and likeness of God and continue to do what we can to end this senseless violence and to live together in peace.”

Pages 4 & 5: The Criterion, Friday, April 23, 2021

OPINION

Sight Unseen/Brandon A. Evans

Letters to the Editor

Letters from readers are published in The Criterion as part of the newspaper’s commitment to responsive and responsible exchange of freely-held and expressed opinion among the People of God (Comunio et Progressio, 116).

Letters from readers are welcome and every effort will be made to include letters from as many people and representing as many viewpoints as possible. Letters should be informed, relevant and expressed and temperate in tone. They must reflect a basic sense of courtesy and respect.

The editors reserve the right to select the letters that will be published and to edit letters from readers as necessary based on space limitations, pastoral sensibility, content (including spelling and grammar). In order to encourage opinions from a variety of readers, no more than one letter per writer will ordinarily be limited to one letter every three months. Concise letters (usually less than 200 words) may be printed.

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CONVERSATIONS ABOUT GUN VIOLENCE, MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES ARE NECESSARY FOR PEACE

The headlines are becoming too eerily familiar. A shooter fires a weapon in a place of business, at a residence, in a school, on the street—practically anywhere and everywhere—resulting in injuries and, sadly, multiples lost lives of innocence. That heartbreaking reality occurred once again on April 15 in Indianapolis when eight people were shot and killed and several others were injured at the FedEx Ground Plainfield Operations Center before the shooter took his own life.

That tragedy became another in an ever-growing list of mass shootings across the United States. Atlanta, Ga.; Boulder, Colo.; Kenosha, Wis.; and Austin, Texas, are a few of the cities across the United States. Atlanta, Ga.; Boulder, Colo.; Kenosha, Wis.; and Austin, Texas, are a few of the cities recently rocked by similar acts of violence.

It was the third mass shooting in Indianapolis since January.

On Jan. 24, six people, including an expectant mother and her unborn child, were killed on the northwest side of Indianapolis. On March 13, four people, including two children, were killed on the east side.

“Once again, our nation is mourning the loss of lives in a mass shooting, and on this day of celebration, we pray for the shooting victims’ families, those employed at the FedEx facility, the shooter’s family and our faith communities,” said Greg A. Otolski, archdiocesan communications director. “As our brothers’ and sisters’ keepers, those who were murdered as well as those affected by this senseless act of violence will stop.”

As our brothers and sisters’ keepers, our faith demands we not sit idly by. If we are to work toward that peace, we must be able to have constructive conversations about gun violence, mental health issues and suicide. We need a consensus on how we can move forward in addressing these challenging issues. As our sisters and brothers’ keepers, our faith demands we not sit idly by. The U.S. Catholic bishops have long supported changes in the law to control the sale and use of firearms,” Archbishop Thompson said. “May we all recognize that we are made in the image and likeness of God and continue to do what we can to end this senseless violence and to live together in peace.”

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Los sacerdotes están llamados a ser pastores del pueblo de Dios

“El buen pastor da su vida por las ovejas” (Jn 10:11).

El cuarto domingo de Pascua se conoce como el Domingo del Buen Pastor, y en la lectura del Evangelio de este domingo (Jn 10:11-18), Jesús nos dice que “Yo soy el buen pastor; el buen pastor da su vida por sus ovejas” (Jn 10:11).

En su exhortación apostólica “Pastores Dabo Vobis” (“I Will Give You Shepherds”), el papa Juan Pablo II nos recuerda que “los pastores, mediante el sacramento del Orden, están unidos con un vínculo personal e indisoluble a Cristo, único Sacerdote. El Orden se confiere a cada uno en singular, pero quedan insertos en la comunidad del presbiterio unido con el Obispo” (74).

Esto significa, por supuesto, que los que han sido ordenados al sacerdocio ministerial estamos llamados (individualmente y como hermanos sacerdotes) a ser buenos pastores del pueblo de Dios. El núcleo principal de un sacerdote, es decir, la relación fundamental e indispensable que genera y mantiene su ministerio, es con Cristo. Nada puede reemplazar esta conexión íntima e indisoluble entre Cristo y sus sacerdotes. Al mismo tiempo, tal como nos lo recuerda el Santo Padre, este vínculo de amor entre Cristo y sus sacerdotes tiene una dimensión comunal, ya que cuando un sacerdote recibe el sacramento del Orden, se une a todos los hermanos sacerdotes y al obispo en un presbiterio. Un obispo comparte su ministerio con sus sacerdotes y juntos llevan a cabo la obra del Señor: por su proclamación de la Palabra de Dios, por su celebración de los sacramentos y por su liderazgo pastoral. El obispo y sus sacerdotes son verdaderos socios en el ministerio y aunque tengan distintas responsabilidades, el Señor los llama a estar unidos por el bien de la misión de la Iglesia. En la primera lectura de este domingo, encontramos lo siguiente: “Entonces Pedro, lleno del Espíritu Santo, les dijo: ‘Gobernantes y ancianos del pueblo: Ya que hoy se nos interrumpa acerca del beneficio orotado a un hombre enfermo, y de cómo fue sanado, sepan todos ustedes, y todo el pueblo de Israel, que este hombre está en presencia de ustedes gracias al nombre de Jesucristo de Nazaret, a quien Dios resucitó a los muertos. Este Jesús es la piedra que ustedes, los edificadores, rechazaron, y que no obstante ha llegado a ser la piedra angular. En ningún otro hay salvación, porque no se ha dado a la humanidad ningún otro nombre bajo el cielo mediante el cual podemos alcanzar la salvación’” (Hechos 4:8-12). Los buenos pastores no ministran en su propio nombre. Solo tienen éxito en la medida en que ejercen sus responsabilidades en nombre de Jesús, y basan todo lo que dicen y hacen en la piedra rechazada por los constructores que se ha convertido en la piedra angular. Los obispos y los sacerdotes están llamados a convertirse en guías del pueblo de Dios, a compartir el amor que han recibido del Padre en las profundidades de su corazón al asumir su papel como pastores. El Buen Pastor (Jesús) se entrega completamente a su rebaño, y los sacerdotes están llamados a hacer lo mismo. Sin embargo, como somos seres humanos, tenemos fallos y pecados, las responsabilidades de la vida y el ministerio sacerdotal serían demasiado para nosotros sin la gracia que recibimos del Espíritu Santo y nos permite pastorear al pueblo de Dios en nombre de Jesús. En el Salmo Responsorial de este fin de semana (Sal 118), proclamamos con alegría: “Alabemos al Señor, porque él es bueno; porque su misericordia permanece para siempre” (Sal 118:2).

“La piedra que los constructores rechazaron, ha llegado a ser la piedra angular. Esto viene de parte del Señor, y al verlo nuestros ojos se quedan maravillados” (Sal 118:22-23).

“Alabemos al Señor, porque él es bueno; porque su misericordia permanece para siempre!” (Sal 118:29).

Toda la vida cristiana, y ciertamente, todo el ministerio sacerdotal, debe fundamentarse en Cristo, cuya enseñanza, ejemplo y presencia en nuestras vidas es la única fuente de nuestra salvación. En él, y por él, podemos ver “cuánto nos ama el Padre, que nos ha concedido ser llamados hijos de Dios” (1 Jn 3:1).

Cuando los obispos y los sacerdotes crecen juntos en la santidad, y cuando han basado su ministerio en Cristo como piedra angular, están en la mejor situación para predicar eficazmente el Evangelio, celebrar los sacramentos y atender las necesidades pastorales del pueblo que les ha confiado como buenos pastores del pueblo santo de Dios, el rebaño que Él ha elegido como suyo.

Recemos por nuestros obispos y sacerdotes, para que sean siempre abiertos a la gracia de Dios; que basemos nuestro ministerio en Cristo, la piedra angular, y que sean buenos pastores de las personas que Dios nos ha confiado. †

Priests called to become shepherds of God’s people

“The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep” (Jn 10:11).

The Fourth Sunday of Easter is known as Good Shepherd Sunday, and in the Gospel reading for this Sunday (Jn 10:11-18), Jesus tells us that “I am the good shepherd. A good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep” (Jn 10:11).

In his apostolic exhortation “Pastores Dabo Vobis” (“I Will Give You Shepherds”), the late Pope St. John Paul II reminds us that “priests, by means of the sacrament of orders are tied with a personal and indissoluble bond to Christ. The sacrament of holy orders is conferred upon each one of them as individuals, but they are inserted into the communion of the presbyterate united with the bishop” (74).

This means, of course, that we who have been ordained to the ministerial priesthood are called (individually and as brother priests) to be good shepherds of God’s people.

A priest’s primary bond, the fundamental and indispensable relationship that creates and sustains his ministry, is with Christ. Nothing can replace this intimate, indissoluble connection between Christ and his priests.

At the same time, as the Holy Father reminds us, this bond of love between Christ and his priests has a communal and corporate dimension. When the priest receives the sacrament of holy orders, he is joined with his brother priests—and his bishop—in a presbyterate.

A bishop shares his ministry with his priests. Together they carry out the Lord’s work, by their proclamation of the word of God, by their celebration of the sacraments, and by their pastoral leadership. A bishop and his priests are true partners in ministry. Although they have different responsibilities, the Lord calls them to be united for the sake of the Church’s mission.

In the first reading for this Sunday, we read: “Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said: ‘Leaders of the people and elders: If we are being examined today about a good deed done to a cripple, namely, by what means he was saved, then all of you and all the people of Israel should know that it was in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazorean whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead; in his name this man stands before you healed. He is the stone rejected by the builders, which has become the cornerstone. There is no salvation through anyone else, nor is there any other name under heaven given to the human race by which we are to be saved’ “ (Acts 4:8-12).

Good shepherds do not minister in their own names. They are successful only to the extent that they exercise their responsibilities in Jesus’ name, and use everything they say and do on the stone rejected by the builders that has become the cornerstone.

Bishops and priests are called to become guides for God’s people, sharing the love they have received in the depth of their hearts from God the Father as they take up their role as shepherds.

The Good Shepherd (Jesus) gives himself completely to his flock, and priests are called to do the same. However, because we are ordinary, sinful human beings, the responsibilities of priestly life and ministry would be too much for us without the grace given to us by the Holy Spirit, which enables us to shepherd God’s people in Jesus’ name.

In the Responsorial Psalm this weekend (Psalms 118), we read: “Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his mercy endures forever” (Ps 118:2).

“The stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. By the Lord this has been done; it is wonderful in our eyes” (Ps 118:29).

All of Christian life, and certainly all priestly ministry, must be founded on Christ whose teaching, example and presence in our lives is the only source of our salvation. In him, and through him, we can see “what love the Father has bestowed on us that we may be called the children of God” (1 Jn 3:1).

When bishops and priests are growing in holiness together, when they have based their ministry on Christ the cornerstone, they are in the best possible position to effectively preach the Gospel, celebrate the sacraments and serve the pastoral needs of the people entrusted to their care as good shepherds of God’s holy people, the flock he has chosen as his own.

Let’s pray for our bishops and priests. May we always be open to God’s grace, and be a base upon the ministry on Christ the cornerstone; and may we be good shepherds of the people that God has entrusted to our care. †
April 24-May 1
St. Vincent de Paul Virtual “Love Your Neighbor Th. Row/ Walk,” run or walk 5K anytime/ anywhere. Cost: ages 23 and older $5 or $3 for students 6-22. $20 with no T-shirt, information: www.svdpindy.org or 317-924-7679, ext. 238.

April 26, May 3, 10, 17, St. Therese of the Child Jesus (Little Flower) Parish Center. St. Therese Room, 4720 S.HIRN AVE., Indianapolis. SoulCore Rosary Workout. 6:30-7:15 p.m. Information: 317-727-1167, lcjdarlene@gmail.com or soulcore.com.

April 29, May 6, 13, 20, The Third Option virtual marriage crisis/relationship class, 7.5 p.m., series offered most Thursdays through May 20, no registration needed, most Thursdays through May 20. 1-2:30 p.m. series of stand-alone sessions offered Thursdays through May 20. Led by graduates of Guadalupe Bible College, free. Information and registration: Darlene Davis, ldalondav@gmail.com or 317-498-2242. 

May 2
St. Malachy Parish, 9833 E. County Rd. 750 N., Brownie Brunch at St. Malachy Church, all weekend Masses, Father Joseph Moriarty, rector of Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary in Indianapolis, will celebrate Mass and share how the liturgy forms future priests. Information: Ellen Sanders, 317-236-1501 or esanders@archindy.org.

May 5
MCL Cafeteria, 5520 Caletcon Corner Lane, Indianapolis. Solo Seniors. 5:30 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.

May 7

May 8
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, msmda@hotmail.com.

May 10
John Paul II Parish, St. Paul Chapel, 208 Schellers Ave., Sellersburg, First Saturday Marian Devotion, 8 a.m. rosary, meditation, prayer, 8:30 a.m. Information: 317-815-9501 or esanders@archindy.org.

May 15
Our Lady of the Greenwood Church, 335 S. Meridian St., Greenwood. The Amazing Race, marriage enrichment sponsored by Celebrate Marriage ministry, 2-7 p.m., dress as a team to compete for most fun couple, photo scavenger hunt, tailgate dinner and awards, $30 per couple, beer and wine bracelet $5. Information: 317-489-1557 or olga@katie5kwalk.com.

May 16
Roncalli High School, 3300 Pragel Rd., Indianapolis. Katie’s 5K Run/Walk for Hope, registration 12:30 p.m., start time 2 p.m., benefiting Katie Lynch Scholarship Fund, picnic to follow at St. Jude pavilion, register online by May 1 to receive T-shirt, $25 adults, $15 students, $100 family. Online registration also accepted. Information: 317-302-1979 or katies5kwalk@gmail.com.

May 19

May 20
St. Joseph Church, 1401 S. Mickey Ave., Indianapolis. Third Thursday Adoration, interceding for women and men.

May 25

May 8
Mount Saint Francis Center for Spirituality, 101 St. Anthony Dr., Mt. St. Francis. A Day with Mary, 9 a.m.–4 p.m., Judy Ribar presenter. $50 includes box lunch. Registration: 812-933-6437.

May 26
Our Lady of Peace Church, 435 W. Troy Ave., Indianapolis. Annual Mass, Following Mass, Father Andrew Syberg, formation dean of Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary in Indianapolis, will celebrate Mass and share how the liturgy forms future priests. Information: Ellen Sanders, 317-236-1501 or esanders@archindy.org.

May 7
Eugene and Catherine (Basinger) Sanders, 317-236-1501 or esanders@archindy.org.

Then, at the same time, the couple was married in St. Patrick Church in Enfield, Ill., on April 26, 1971. They have five children: Janice Fiori, Christopher, Michael, Patrick and Timothy Trapp.

The couple also has 13 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

David and Jeanne (Newman) O’Donnell, members of St. Michael Parish in Greenfield, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on April 24. The couple was married in St. Patrick Church in Enfield, Ill., on April 26, 1971. They have five children: Brian, Matthew and Michael O’Donnell. The couple also has 13 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

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

Events Calendar

For events listed in the next few weeks as reported to The Criterion, log on to www.archindy.org/events.
Pastors reflect on parish ministry a year after start of pandemic

By Sean Gallagher

On March 19, 2020, the feast of St. Joseph, Father Michael Keucher sat in a church in Shelbyville dedicated to the saint.

The church that can seat 700 worshippers was empty. A day before, public worship had been suspended across the state due to the coronavirus pandemic.

"I remember sitting in front pew in front of the Blessed Mother statue crying," Father Keucher recalled. "I thought, 'What does this mean?' There were so many uncertainties." But there were also certainties. For Father Keucher and many other parish leaders across central and southern Indiana at the start of the pandemic, there was the rock-solid certainty of faith in God and the help of all his angels and saints.

"We just entrusted the whole thing to St. Joseph—the whole pandemic and all the uncertainties," Father Keucher said. That faith spurred creativity in priests and their parish staff members across the archdiocese—a creativity that remained after public worship and other parish activities and ministries resumed in mid-May 2020.

Now a year into the pandemic, with more knowledge of how to protect people from COVID-19 and with the introduction of vaccines, archdiocesan pastors spoke with The Criterion about their experience of the challenges and blessings of parish ministry during the pandemic.

'We were reaching more people'

With parishioners unable to come to parishes, several pastoral leaders turned to the internet to continue their ministry.

Many archdiocesan parishes were not prepared to post and livestream video at the start of the pandemic. Grants awarded by the Center for Congregations early on helped 53 parishes across central and southern Indiana upgrade digital technology and make online ministry a real possibility.

The 2,700 grants totaling more than $13 million that the Center for Congregations awarded to parishes across the state were primarily funded by the Indianapolis-based Lilly Endowment, Inc. All Saints Parish in Dearborn County jumped into livestreaming worship and catechetical presentations headfirst from March 18, 2020, until March 18, 2021, All Saints livestreamed or uploaded 1,391 videos—an average of nearly four per day for an entire year. They included daily livestreamed Masses and holy hours.

The Batesville Deanery faith community had been posting some videos before COVID-19 and had 15,000 subscribers to its YouTube channel a year ago. But its increased efforts during the pandemic has doubled its subscribers a year later.

"We actually started doing more work during the shutdown than we were prior to it," said Father Jonathan Meyer, pastor of All Saints Parish. "Even though our churches were closed, we were reaching more people and being more effective intentionally in our ministry than we were even before." Father Keucher and his staff at St. Joseph made a similar effort in livestreaming online ministry.

But as active as he was and with the good responses he received from many people who benefited from St. Joseph’s videos, there was still a hole in Father Keucher’s heart.

"I felt like a father who was not able to provide a meal for his family," he said. "I’m the spiritual father of the family that we call St. Joe Parish and I wasn’t able to give them the sacraments, which is the food that our souls require. To know how much the people were hurting because of that was very hard.

"To gain back some of that personal connection, Father Keucher and Billy Cross, St. Joseph’s pastoral associate, drove the parish’s school bus around Shelby County to the homes of St. Joseph School students to visit them through windows.

"Even though we weren’t able to hug them or give them high fives, we were able to see them," Father Keucher said. "And the smiles on their faces were just beautiful—and the smiles on ours, too.

Old technology for new challenges

That personal and spiritual connection was maintained in many parishes through leveraging older technologies—telephone and print.

Father Meyer and his parish staff members reached out by phone regularly to parishioners who were sick or homebound.

"We went full throttle," he said. "We made the commitment of calling them every single week.

And he found that the connections between him, his staff members and those parishioners were deepened. In the past, visits to their home may have been focused on giving them Communion. With home visits and the sacraments unavailable, personal conversations came to the fore.

"We were doing more than we were doing previously—in different ways," Father Meyer said.

Father Todd Goodson and his staff at Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish in Greenwood had a similar experience in reaching out by phone to parishioners.

"The more personal and one-on-one the connection is, the better," Father Goodson said. "That was very well received by the parish. And I think the staff enjoyed it. We were used to responding to requests that came in. It was nice to be able to minister, offer prayer and just check in with people.

Beneficentine Father Luke Waugh found he had many spiritual phone conversations with the members of St. Isidore the Farmer Parish in Perry County that he leads.

Soon after the shutdown began, he launched a weekly parish newsletter called "Farming the Soul." Within weeks, a group of parishioners helped produce it, which included information ordinarily found in a parish bulletin, but also featured articles written by parishioners of all ages, reflection questions on Scripture passages, news about parishioners, Catholic humor and trivia questions.

Print copies of the newsletter were mailed to older parishioners who didn’t have access to the internet. They were also available online.

"I spent more time on the phone talking with people based on what they had read in the newsletter. It was intended to keep the parish together when we couldn’t stay together physically."

First of a two-part series

‘God was with us’

Bundled up for snow and temperatures in the teens, worshippers pray during an outdoor midnight Mass on Dec. 25, 2020, on the St. John the Baptist campus of All Saints Parish in Dearborn County. In order to accommodate more worshippers than would be allowed indoors, the Batesville Deanery faith community has celebrated Sunday and holy day Masses outside during the coronavirus pandemic. (Submitted photo)

‘I spent more time on the phone talking with people based on what they had read in the newsletter. It was intended to keep the parish together when we couldn’t stay together physically.’

Benedictine Father Luke Waugh, pastor of St. Isidore the Farmer Parish in Perry County

‘God was with us’

Bundled up for snow and temperatures in the teens, worshippers pray during an outdoor midnight Mass on Dec. 25, 2020, on the St. John the Baptist campus of All Saints Parish in Dearborn County. In order to accommodate more worshippers than would be allowed indoors, the Batesville Deanery faith community has celebrated Sunday and holy day Masses outside during the coronavirus pandemic. (Submitted photo)
We started planning this gala nearly two years ago,” Archbishop Charles C. Thompson said during his recorded message. “It was very exciting to sit in on the meeting and see all that was planned for our archdiocesan inaugural Legacy Gala on April 16 at the JW Marriott in Indianapolis. It was a night to remember!”

After prayer and a moment of silence followed by words of thanks for all who made the gala possible, Archbishop Thompson congratulated Lentz on her sacrifice.

“We have been dedicated throughout 2020 to making the archdiocese “a home for all.” It was a night to remember!”

“I humbly ask you to support us in our archdiocese. In spite of all of her accomplishments, Mickey never made anyone feel like she was overshadowing them,” Lentz said as she received the award. But the accolades were not finished, and the archbishop asked her to remain on the stage for one more honor.

“I’m not sure words can express my feelings about this tremendous recognition,” Lentz said. “Especially when I’m doing what I love to do—serve others.”

“I have always felt that with people with respect and dignity, you earn it back in many ways, and the relationship builds into trust. That philosophy has proven successful. The proof was seen in the money-recorded and donors, and thank cards and best wishes for Lentz—as well as memories and humorous stories—shared by her co-workers and friends throughout the event. The evening culminated with gala chairpersons John and Melissa Duffy spoke of the importance of Catholic schools helping the next generation by supporting archdiocesan ministries now. ‘We’re trying to be good role models for our children and at the same time observe what we do with volunteering, to ‘work back,’ ” said Melissa. “Because things don’t work without love and without everyone caring.”

I thank Archbishop Charles C. Thompson, Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin and me.”

I am grateful for the opportunity to serve God, “Might you be calling me to serve in the archdiocese, she noted. “It was a night to remember!”

If someone is unsure if they want to give their time or talent or financial support to the Church, he said, “I would encourage you, if you feel drawn, to look at the things we’ve been able to do in our faith because of people in our past.”

“God dwells here … in these very men”

The last stop on the video tour was Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary in Indianapolis. “This is holy ground,” Lentz said of the former Carmelite monastery where young men pursue a degree from nearby Marian University while discerning a possible call to the priesthood. “Christ is the foundation and the cornerstone” of the college seminary, said Joseph Moriarty, a letter writers addressed in the seminary’s chapel.

“I humbly ask you to support us in the effort of all the good work that’s begun in this house—in the lives of these men—to continue to be a place they can call home,” Father Moriarty said. “‘Might you be calling me to serve in the archdiocese,’ she noted. “It’s only fitting to take a moment of silence and prayer before God to bring reconciliation and peace. Let us hold these people, these victims and their families in our prayers.”

During the office’s presentation, Lentz has proven a living legend herself, Lentz has said. She later shared her reaction with Archbishop Thompson during his time as archbishop of the Indianapolis Archdiocese.

“Thank you to everyone!” Lentz said enthusiastically. “I am so grateful to all who recognized me in such a way. So many best wishes, tokens and wonderful memories shared. It was a night to remember!”

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2021 Archdiocesan chancellor Annette “Mickey” Lentz was present at the in-person portion of the Legacy Gala on April 16 at the JW Marriott in Indianapolis. (Submitted photo by Rob Banayote)

Archdiocesan chancellor Annette “Mickey” Lentz was present at the in-person portion of the Legacy Gala on April 16 at the JW Marriott in Indianapolis. (Submitted photo by Rob Banayote)
Expressing sorrow for the loss of life in yet another mass shooting in the U.S., this time at a FedEx facility in Indianapolis, Archbishop Charles C. Thompson prayed for the victims and their families. He also prayed that “these senseless acts of violence will stop.”

“Once again, our nation is mourning the loss of lives in a mass shooting and this time it is eight of our own neighbors who were killed at the Indianapolis FedEx Ground center,” the archbishop said in an April 16 statement. “We pray for the victims and loved ones of those who were murdered as well as those who were injured.”

The FedEx Ground Plainfield Operations Center is near the Indianapolis International Airport, and the shooting took place on the night of April 15. CNN quoted a police official as saying enforcement arrived “to a very chaotic scene, with victims and witnesses running everywhere.”

Eight people were killed and several others were wounded by a gunman who killed himself after his shooting spree. In a late afternoon story on April 16, the Associated Press said the shooter had been identified as 19-year-old Brandon Scott Hole of Indianapolis, a former employee who last worked for the company in 2020.

Law enforcement officials identified the victims as Matthew R. Alexander, 32; Samaria Blackwell, 19; Amarjeet Johal, 68; Jaswinder Kaur, 46; Jaswinder Singh, 68; Amarjeet Sekhon, 48; Karl Smith, 19; and John “Steve” Weisert, 74. (See related story, page 1.)

Deputy Police Chief Craig McCartt told AP and CNN that witnesses said the gunman “got out of his car, and pretty quickly started some random shooting” in the parking lot then went inside the facility and continued shooting.

By the time police arrived, he had not gotten too far inside and “apparently killed himself shortly before police entered the building,” AP reported.

According to an April 19 news report, the motive for the shooting was still being investigated. Hole was known to federal and local authorities after his mother raised concerns about his mental state and suicidal tendencies. She also said he had a potential for violence, according to three law enforcement sources familiar with the matter who spoke to CNN. However, Hole was able to buy two assault rifles legally. According to an April 16 statement, offered prayers for all involved.

“Tragically, we awoke to learn of another mass shooting today, this time in Indianapolis, that has reportedly left eight dead and several wounded,” Archbishop Coakley said. “As we heard at Mass yesterday, ‘The Lord is close to the brokenhearted’ [Ps 34:19]. We again need prayer and concrete acts of charity for the families, and for all victims of violent crime.”

“The U.S. Catholic bishops have long supported changes in the law to control the sale and use of firearms,” Archbishop Thompson said in his statement. “May we all recognize that we are made in the image and likeness of God and continue to do what we can to end this senseless violence and to live together in peace.”

Archbishop Coakley likewise said the U.S. bishops “continue to support a number of policy measures to try to reduce homicides and suicides.”

Four of the eight who were killed were members of Indiana’s growing Sikh community. About 75 people attended a vigil at Monument Circle in downtown Indianapolis on the afternoon of April 18 while a similarly sized group gathered in the rain to pray at City Hall in nearby Beech Grove in the evening.

John Cadwallader, an Indianapolis clinical psychologist, spoke with The Criterion after it was learned that the shooter in the FedEx incident had been identified as a person with violent and suicidal tendencies.

Cadwallader, who incorporates the Church’s spiritual traditions and understanding of the human person into his professional training and experience, said that suicide prevention should be seen as part of the Church’s mission.

“We are our brother’s keeper,” Cadwallader said. “The mission of the Church has always been to protect the dignity of human life. We, as disciples of Jesus, are called to care for others in this most important way. As the prevalence of suicide is growing exponentially in recent years, we must be vigilant, as this concern is a reality that will affect all of us.”

The clinical psychologist said the signs and symptoms of a person with suicidal tendencies can include “depressed mood, mood instability, withdrawing from activities of interest, changes in sleep patterns, low self-esteem, increased isolation, excessive anger at self or others, hopelessness and despair [and] recurrent thoughts of death.

“If a loved one or someone you know seems to be struggling with depression, do not be afraid to talk with them. We can easily dismiss the concern, as we fear that we will be wrong in our observation. Better to show your care and concern being wrong, than to ignore a cry for help.”

“If a loved one or someone you know seems to be struggling with depression, do not be afraid to talk with them. We can easily dismiss the concern, as we fear that we will be wrong in our observation. Better to show your care and concern being wrong, than to ignore a cry for help.”

Archbishop Thompson prays for shooting victims, a stop to ‘senseless violence’
Race for Vocations to be in-person event on May 8 in Greenfield

C. Thompson is scheduled to be the principal celebrant of the liturgy.

A pasta dinner, which costs $10, will take place after the Mass at the Knights of Columbus McGowan Hall, 1305 N. Delaware Street, in Indianapolis. Registration is required. The Race for Vocations is sponsored by the Indiana State Knights of Columbus. For more information about the Race for Vocations or to register for the Race for Vocations and the pasta dinner, go to raceforvocations.org.

Members of the Race for Vocations team pose on May 6, 2017, in Military Park in Indianapolis after participating in the Onemove 500 Festival Mini-Marathon or the Finish Line 500 Festival 5K, both in Indianapolis.

Advocates, editors call on President Biden to end federal death penalty

WASHINGTON (CNS)—The death penalty has been getting attention across the country this year with legislation introduced or voted on in several states aimed at limiting, repealing or even renewing capital punishment.

These discussions in state capitols, along with the lack of action by President Joe Biden to end the federal death penalty, have prompted advocates to keep speaking out and also have led to a number of newspaper editorials condemning continued use of the death penalty and the need for elected officials to put an end to it.

The death penalty still exists in 27 states, including Indiana, and about 50 prisoners are currently on federal death row.

In late March, Virginia announced it was abolishing the death penalty and became the first southern state to do so. In recent weeks, state legislators in Ohio, Nevada, Wyoming and Florida have made advances to limit or even fully outlaw capital punishment.

In Montana, a bill that would have allowed the state to resume executions after a 15-year hiatus was defeated in the state Senate on April 16. In Arizona, the state’s governor is similarly clear that the U.S. is moving in the direction of abolition—regardless of political affiliation.

On April 16, in a call to Catholic News Service, she said advocates for ending the death penalty are “still celebrating Virginia’s death penalty repeal, particularly as it follows the Montana legal victory as one of the most active death penalty states.”

She said when Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam, a Democrat, signed the bill ending capital punishment on March 24, he was surrounded by Republicans and Democrats as he said the practice is fundamentally flawed and has no place in the state or the country.

The state’s action was praised by Virginia’s Catholic bishops and Archbishop Paul S. Coakley of Oklahoma City, chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ (USCCB) Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development, who called it “a bold step toward a cure of life.”

She also said support against capital punishment has not just come from Democrats. In Montana, the bill to reinstate the death penalty was pushed by Montana’s Republican attorney general, but the state’s Senate Republicans spoke against it on the floor, she said.

In his testimony before Montana’s House Judiciary Committee in February, Matthew Brower, executive director of the Montana Catholic Conference, said, the proposed legislation would move the state “further away from embracing a vision of mercy and justice.”

He said the number of families of crime victims “who have rejected capital punishment as a system that denies the goodness and families of crime victims “who have rejected capital punishment as a system that denies the goodness and beauty of their loved ones and perpetuates an unending cycle of violence.”

Brower said the Catholic Church has long been vocal in its opposition to the death penalty, noting it is “not some novel shift” introduced by Pope Francis, but stressed by the two popes before him and Church leaders dating back to St. Augustine in the year 412.

As the states examine their own death penalty laws, Vaillancourt Murphy said, it is also time to look at, and end, the federal death penalty, adding that there is momentum behind this in the wake of the “unprecedented federal execution spree by the Trump administration.”

She stressed that Biden—who she described as “the first sitting U.S. president publicly to publicly oppose capital punishment and to have campaigned on an explicitly anti-death penalty platform”—has now formalized his opposition to the death penalty.

Concrete steps he could take, she said, would be to declare “an official moratorium on executions, commuting the death sentences of those on the federal death row and advocating to end the death penalty in law with Congress and the states.”

Catholic Mobilizing Network has been calling for the president to take this action in an online letter: bit.ly/M4D3Z.

Vaillancourt Murphy sees a strong connection between ending the federal death penalty and the president’s platform of racial justice and said he needs to “prioritize dismantling the archaic, broken systems that prop up racism in our country.”

She isn’t alone in calling the president to act. Two recent editorials on this topic offer similar pleas: “Biden should make good on pledge to end death penalty,” the April 7 editorial in the Chicago Sun Times, and “Stop the Executions, President Biden” was the headline for a March 26 New York Times editorial.

The New York Times’ editorial urged Biden to help break the cycle by “responding with an immediate moratorium on federal executions, and communting the sentences of the 50 or so inmates on federal death row.”

The Chicago Sun Times editorial noted similar advice and also said the president could “push legislation through Congress to abolish the death penalty, as many states have done.”

This would be the best option, if Congress will have it,” it said. “But what matters most is that Biden send a message: The death penalty is broken and can’t be fixed.”

Saying he missed people, Pope Francis returns to window for Sunday prayer

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Greeting visitors in St. Peter’s Square after nearly a month of tight restrictions due to the pandemic, Pope Francis said he was happy to see people allowed to gather and be present for Sunday noonday prayer.

“I offer a warm greeting to all of you, people of Rome and pilgrims,” he said, pointing out the many flags he could see being held high.

A few hundred people, all wearing masks and socially distanced, attended the station of the cross in the Regina Coeli prayer on April 18 after nearly a month of tighter controls on gatherings in an ongoing attempt to curb the spread of the coronavirus.

“Thanks be to God, we can find ourselves again in St. Peter’s Square for the Sunday and holiday appointment,” he said, adding how much he misses greeting people in the square when he must recite the midday prayer inside the apostolic library.

“I am happy, thanks to God! And thank you for your presence,” he said to applause.

In his main talk, Pope Francis said Jesus is a real living person whose presence always leaves the person encountering him astonished, which “goes beyond enthusiasm, beyond joy; it is another experience” that is profoundly beautiful.

He said the day’s Gospel reading of the risen Christ’s appearance to the disciples in Jerusalem “tells us that Jesus is not a ‘ghost,’ but a living person,” who fills people with joy.

“Being Christian is not first of all a doctrine or a moral ideal, it is a living relationship with him, with the risen Lord: we look at him, we touch him, we are nourished by him, and transformed by his love, we look at, touch and nourish others as brothers and sisters,” he said.

Jesus invites his disciples to truly look at him, which involves “intention, will” and an attitude of loving care and concern, he said.

More than seeing, it is the way parents look at their child, “lovers gaze at each other, a good doctor looks at the patient carefully... Looking is a first step against indifference, against the temptation to look the other way before the difficulties and sufferings of others,” the pope said.

By inviting the disciples to touch him, he said, Jesus shows a relationship with him and with one’s brothers and sisters “cannot remain at a distance,” but requires a love that looks and comes close, making contact, sharing and “entering into a communion of life, a communion with him.”

And the verb, to eat, clearly expresses “our humanity,” he said, “and our need to nourish ourselves in order to live.”

When people come together to eat, it becomes “an expression of communion, an expression of communion, of celebration,” which is why “the eucharistic banquet has become the emblematic sign of the Christian community. Eating together the Body of Christ: this is the core of Christian life,” the pope said.
Border ministry advocates for protection of migrants’ dignity

By Josephine von Dohnen

A few years ago, a woman migrating from Mexico to the United States with her children arrived at Kino Border Initiative’s center in Nogales, Ariz. Her family had suffered in custody with border control as her children’s food was taken from them and they were forced into a cold room. She had been cussed at and called names.

As she shared her experience with Providence Sister Tracey Horan, a member the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, the religious sister asked her if she would like to file a formal report of what she experienced.

“I just saw her face change,” Sister Tracey said, that it clearly meant a lot to the woman “just to know that it was possible that she could be heard and that her story could make an impact and that someone cared and wanted to acknowledge that what had happened to her was unjust.”

At the heart of Kino Border Initiative’s ministry is education, advocacy and care for migrants—from listening to their stories, offering food and shelter, to providing them guidance throughout their journey. Through educational programming, Sister Tracey, the initiative’s associate director of education and advocacy, said she works to “move minds, hearts and policies toward more human migration.”

By inviting groups from throughout the United States and beyond to immerse themselves in the migrant experience, Sister Tracey said that people are able to really learn the truth about conditions at the border and encounter those who are in the midst of their “sacred journey of migrating.”

Prior to the pandemic, about 40 groups would visit Kino Border Initiative each year.

“We really challenge them to return home and take action in their communities in solidarity with migrants,” Sister Tracey said.

Working to advocate for migrants both in the United States and in Mexico, Kino Border Initiative documents abuses that migrants experience as they’re traveling to the border or while in the custody of U.S. officials and reports them to the proper authorities, Sister Tracey said.

“Part of it is just people having the chance to be heard,” she said. “Sometimes people will come in and say that this is the first time in months or even in a year that someone actually cared about their story or why they are migrating.”

Much of the work of the Kino Border Initiative is rooted in Catholic social teaching on the dignity of the human person and the respect that every individual deserves as a child of God.

“We think a lot about the Holy Family here because we see many holy families that come through our door fleeing persecution for a number of reasons,” she added. “Venezuelans who are fleeing dictatorship and political persecution, mothers with small kids fleeing domestic violence, young people fleeing abuse at the hands of organized crime.

“For me, it’s so easy to see how the person of Jesus is so present here,” Sister Tracey said.

Prior to the pandemic, Kino Border Initiative’s shelter and offices in Nogales would open up their soup kitchen to those who wished to attend Mass. Since the pandemic has introduced several challenges to their programming, Sister Tracey said that ensuring that their work continues to “encounter” migrants has become a main priority.

“You see their faces and recognize the way that they light up—and so often I think people come just as much for our company and the environment of welcome that we have as they do for the food,” Sister Tracey said.

As situations at the border are still difficult and often dangerous for migrants, Sister Tracey said, “we have a responsibility to lift up migrant voices and make sure their real experiences are being highlighted.”

She encouraged people to reach out to their elected officials, expressing their concern and care for the migrants seeking shelter in the U.S.

To learn more about Kino Border Initiative and their ministry to care for migrants, visit www.kinoborderinitiative.org.

(Josephine Von Dohnen is communications coordinator at Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land in America in Washington, D.C.)
Faith at Home/ Laura Kelly Fanucci

Ripping the roof off the house

Since I was young, leafing through color photographs of the Healing of St. Peter at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Indianapolis, I was greatly inspired. I loved the Gospel story where the friends lowered the paralyzed man through the roof of his home. Jesus was staying. It’s a story to seize the imagination: the crowd pressing close, the creativity of the friends, the drama of the man being lowered on a stretcher. But the part that catches me now—as a homeowner—is the roof.

When they removed tiles (Lk 5:19) or opened a hole in straw and clay ( Mk 2:4), they decided no barrier could keep their suffering friend from the hope of healing. Whether the roof could be ripped off or not, they had to get their friend closer to Jesus now.

This Gospel story teaches an important truth about dismantling barriers that keep others from God. The friends open up the roof, making a way where there was no way. That roof might need to be ripped off the structures we have built, to help people get closer to Jesus.

Jesus sees and affirms the faith of the roof-ripping friends. He doesn’t yell at them for not using the door; he doesn’t judge them not using the door like everyone else. He heals their friend’s paralysis and forgives their sins, and then he productivity!

Who in our life might be longing to get closer to God? What in our lives might be keeping people from closer communion with Christ?

Our first reaction might not always be the most compassionate or Christ-like response. I know it’s not mine! But I’ve learned the shaking of a firm foundation, this is unsettling like a pebble in the shoe or unsettling like the imagination:

It’s a story to seize what in our homes.

I’m challenged to consider whether this is true for my own home or heart: 

“Every house should have a Christ’s room. The coat which hangs in your closet belongs to the poor. If your brother comes to you and says, ‘Borrow me a pebble in the shoe or unsettling like the放眼 of a man close, the creativity of of the home where of Parenting and author of several books, including The Catechism of the Catholic Church have been included in a program. (Fader Rich Ginther is director of the archdiocesan Office of Ecumenism and Interreligious Affairs. He is also the pastor of) Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Indianapolis.)

That All May Be One/Fr. Richard Ginther

Take time to appreciate the faith and goodness in the stranger

(Following are musings based on reflections offered at the National Workshop on Christian Unity 2021 by Benedictine Father William Staudenaker.)

The Benedictine monks of St Meinrad Archabbey trained me. Based on the Rule of St. Benedict, they instilled in me a sense of “provincia.” “Let all guests who arrive be treated as Christ” (53:1).

I remember the day of my ordination. After laying my hands on me, the bishop said, “In this rite, you have become a minister of Christ. You are to love all your sisters and brothers as you love yourself.” The words were profound.

When I drive through a neighborhood in Indianapolis and see a stranger sitting on the sidewalk, I think of my ordination. I see him as a Christ who is not in heaven but in the flesh.

In Genesis 18, Abraham sits at his tent and encounters the divine spirit. When the messengers said to him, “Up, get up, and open the door,” Abraham poured oil and milk on the heads of his servants.

When the stranger’s head was full of oil, he asked, “How can we be unafraid to rip off the roof of our house and help others get closer to God, whatever it takes? How could we make our hearts become more porous, welcoming, in letting all in where others tuck in feet.”

Window Seat Wisdom/Katie Prejean McGrady

Daughter’s kindness reminds us of beauty of giving to others

Every morning, as we wait in the drop-off line at school, my daughter Beaming, Rose turned to me and said, “Sister! Because I love her!”

“See, Mom! I just wanted to share with Sister Mary Hannah at dinner. Funny thing, I was just thinking about how my friend has more than once told us that Sister Mary Hannah is the "best prayer partner ever you could imagine." It’s a pure love for this nun that my daughter has, and one that I deeply admire: A love so great, in fact, that she wanted to share some breakfast cookies with her.

Every morning, as we wait in the drop-off line at school, my daughter Beaming, Rose turns to me and says, “Mom, I don’t think I can do it anymore...”

Instead of a lunch box, she shares a pack of Belvita breakfast cookies. It’s usually my breakfast, half of it goes to Rose, who eats her own breakfast. But I don’t feel bad. I share the love she has for her friends.

"Every house should have a Christ’s room. The coat which hangs in your closet belongs to the poor. If your brother comes to you and says, ‘Borrow me...’"

(see MCGRADY page 15)
The Sunday Readings

Sunday, April 25, 2021

• Acts of the Apostles 4:8-12
• 1 John 3:1-2
• John 10:11-18

The first reading for Mass this weekend is from the Acts of the Apostles. Acts is fascinating. It reveals the priorities and beliefs of the first Christians. The setting is Jerusalem. A Christian community has formed, very visibly and deliberately clustered around St. Peter and the other Apostles. Prayer, total devotion to the Lord, great charity and a sense of unity characterize the early days of the Church there. Also vital to the community is its solemn responsibility to make Jesus known far beyond the circle of believers. In this reading, Peter preaches. He speaks for all the other Apostles and the community as a whole. Peter is the unchallenged leader of the Christians. Acts says that Peter was “filled with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 4:8). He was speaking in and with the power and grace of God. Peter emphasized that, in healing a cripple (recalled earlier in Acts), he acted with the healing power of Jesus. Acts says that Peter was “filled with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 4:8). He was speaking in and with the power and grace of God. Peter emphasized that, in healing a cripple (recalled earlier in Acts), he acted with the healing power of Jesus. Acts says that Peter was “filled with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 4:8). He was speaking in and with the power and grace of God. Peter emphasized that, in healing a cripple (recalled earlier in Acts), he acted with the healing power of Jesus. Acts says that Peter was “filled with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 4:8). He was speaking in and with the power and grace of God. Peter emphasized that, in healing a cripple (recalled earlier in Acts), he acted with the healing power of Jesus. Acts says that Peter was “filled with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 4:8). He was speaking in and with the power and grace of God. Peter emphasized that, in healing a cripple (recalled earlier in Acts), he acted with the healing power of Jesus. Acts says that Peter was “filled with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 4:8). He was speaking in and with the power and grace of God. Peter emphasized that, in healing a cripple (recalled earlier in Acts), he acted with the healing power of Jesus. Acts says that Peter was “filled with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 4:8). He was speaking in and with the power and grace of God. Peter emphasized that, in healing a cripple (recalled earlier in Acts), he acted with the healing power of Jesus. Acts says that Peter was “filled with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 4:8). He was speaking in and with the power and grace of God. Peter emphasized that, in healing a cripple (recalled earlier in Acts), he acted with the healing power of Jesus. Acts says that Peter was “filled with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 4:8). He was speaking in and with the power and grace of God. Peter emphasized that, in healing a cripple (recalled earlier in Acts), he acted with the healing power of Jesus. Acts says that Peter was “filled with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 4:8). He was speaking in and with the power and grace of God. Peter emphasized that, in healing a cripple (recalled earlier in Acts), he acted with the healing power of Jesus. Acts says that Peter was “filled with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 4:8). He was speaking in and with the power and grace of God. Peter emphasized that, in healing a cripple (recalled earlier in Acts), he acted with the healing power of Jesus. Acts says that Peter was “filled with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 4:8). He was speaking in and with the power and grace of God. Peter emphasized that, in healing a cripple (recalled earlier in Acts), he acted with the healing power of Jesus. Acts says that Peter was “filled with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 4:8). He was speaking in and with the power and grace of God. Peter emphasized that, in healing a cripple (recalled earlier in Acts), he acted with the healing power of Jesus. Acts says that Peter was “filled with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 4:8). He was speaking in and with the power and grace of God. Peter emphasized that, in healing a cripple (recalled earlier in Acts), he acted with the healing power of Jesus. Acts says that Peter was “filled with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 4:8). He was speaking in and with the power and grace of God. Peter emphasized that, in healing a cripple (recalled earlier in Acts), he acted with the healing power of Jesus. Acts says that Peter was “filled with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 4:8). He was speaking in and with the power and grace of God. Peter emphasized that, in healing a cripple (recalled earlier in Acts), he acted with the healing power of Jesus. Acts says that Peter was “filled with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 4:8). He was speaking in and with the power and grace of God. Peter emphasized that, in healing a cripple (recalled earlier in Acts), he acted with the healing power of Jesus. acts of the apostles 4:8-12

The imagery is strong. No other human act could outshine this one. Peter is the Good Shepherd. He lays down his life for his sheep. He wishes that none of us be lost. He is the Good Shepherd. It is an image that has survived the cultural transition in much of the world from the agrarian to the technological. This weekend’s liturgy builds on this image, presenting it in this marvelous reading from St. John’s Gospel. When the superb literary technique of this Gospel is added to the process, the image is stunning and beckoning in its brilliance. It is vital that believers, indeed all people, realize that humans are very much like sheep. In so many ways, humans are at risk. Our instincts do not always serve us well. Sin threatens our eternal lives. Jesus is the Good Shepherd who supplies all that we lack. He defends us against peril. He leads us to safety. In Jesus alone is life, as St. Peter proclaimed.  

Reflection

On several occasions in the Gospels, Jesus compares humans and sheep. The likeness is a fact, but a fact that humans prefer to forget. We are vulnerable. We need a shepherd. Jesus is the Good Shepherd. He lays down life itself for us. He wishes that none of us be lost. He is the Good Shepherd. It is an image that has survived the cultural transition in much of the world from the agrarian to the technological. This weekend’s liturgy builds on this image, presenting it in this marvelous reading from St. John’s Gospel. When the superb literary technique of this Gospel is added to the process, the image is stunning and beckoning in its brilliance. It is vital that believers, indeed all people, realize that humans are very much like sheep. In so many ways, humans are at risk. Our instincts do not always serve us well. Sin threatens our eternal lives. Jesus is the Good Shepherd who supplies all that we lack. He defends us against peril. He leads us to safety. In Jesus alone is life, as St. Peter proclaimed. 

Question Corner

Fr. Kenneth Doyle

Help is available for Catholic returning to sacraments after many years away

Q: I am considering coming back to the Church after 50-plus years. In the meantime, I was married, divorced and remarried years later in a non-Catholic ceremony to a divorced man. Am I even eligible to receive the sacraments? (New York)

A: Before answering, I would need to know more about your situation. Was your first marriage performed with the Catholic Church’s approval, and is your first husband still alive? Next, are you at the present time living with your second husband? Depending on your answers, the solution could be fairly easy, requiring that you simply go to confession. Or it could be a bit more complicated, involving some annulment paperwork and the Church’s condemnation of your present marriage. Why not meet with a priest whom you know or have been recommended to you and talk over your situation? I am pleased that you are thinking about coming back to the sacraments, and please know that I will pray for you as you do so. This is not an unfamiliar story. I’ve known others who had drifted away from the Church but who, in their later years, missed deeply the strength and peace that come from the sacraments.

I am an 85-year-old cradle Catholic, but the Mass doesn’t speak to me now. The verbiage keeps changing — what the heck is “consubstantial”? I have belonged to my parish since its inception many years ago, but if I died the priest would not know me now and has made no effort to do so, and I know only about eight people in the entire parish. I miss the Latin Mass more than ever, when I could go anywhere and hear the same words, it was so comforting. (location withheld)

Your question reflects a familiar ailment from Catholics in your age group (which, by the way, is my own age group as well). Let me separate your concerns in order to respond. First, I agree with you on the word “consubstantial,” which is technical, heavily philosophical and puzzling to many Catholics. This is what happened: When the current English text came into use (in 2011), the language of the Nicene Creed—which formerly had said “one in being with the Father”—was changed to “consubstantial” with the Father. This was thought by many theologians as well as the Vatican to be a more literal and accurate translation of the language of the Council of Nicaea in A.D. 325, which had defined that doctrine. You might be interested to know that the word “consubstantial” is also rooted in the Latin word “coniunctus,” which is part of the Nicene Creed in the Latin Mass for which you seem to retain an affinity.

Next, on the matter of priests knowing their parishioners, the recent history of the Church, especially in the United States, has been marked by necessary parish mergers and consolidations. Regrettably, a natural consequence is that priests are not as able to know as many of their parishioners personally as they once were. You might consider someday dropping by your parish’s rectory and simply saying hello to your parish priest, telling him that you miss the “old days” when priests had more chances to meet and get to know their parishioners. As to the language of the Mass, I grew up in the days when it was comforting to be able to go anywhere in the world and hear the familiar sounds of the Latin Mass. But on that, I much prefer the present, when the Mass is said in the vernacular and everyone can understand what the priest is saying.

(Queries may be sent to Father Kenneth Doyle at askfatherdoyle@gmail.com and 30 Columbus Circle Dr, Albany, New York 12203.)
FDA criticized for lifting in-person requirement to receive abortion drug

WASHINGTON (CNS)—The decision by the acting commissioner of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to suspend enforcement of the agency’s in-person prescribing requirement for the abortion drug mifepristone endangers women’s health and possibly their lives, pro-life leaders said.

On April 12, Dr. Janet Woodcock said the FDA will “exercise enforcement discretion” regarding its own medical practice because it ensures that every woman acknowledges risks associated with the drug before they could receive it in person.

FDA regulations also required patients to sign a form acknowledging risks with the drug before they could receive it in person.

Wanda Johnson, a member of the pro-life group 40 Days for Life, told the Monitor she believes Woodcock’s decision reflects a lack of accountability on the part of the FDA.

The archdiocese of Indianapolis has partnered with the University of Notre Dame to offer for-not-for-credit online theology classes.

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

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WASHINGTON (CN)—A novel fundraising approach to restore one of the most iconic monuments in the world, Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris, entices donors to choose a piece of history.

On April 15, Friends of Notre-Dame de Paris launched an interactive website, restaurnotre dame.org—that allows people to donate by adopting or sponsoring pieces of precious art and artifacts that were damaged in a 2019 fire. Donors can engage with the objects of their choosing and see which they’d like to help restore, whether it is a painting or statue. Funds can also go toward the cathedral’s renovation as a whole if the person prefers.

The organization was established in 2017 to help cover the cost of repairing damage caused by the fire. The collection of works of art and the use of inferior stone used in construction of the 12th-century Gothic landmark. The cathedral had not faced any major repairs since the mid-1800s, so the group launched an international campaign to raise the $135 million needed for those essential renovations—augmented by a $45 million budget from the French government.

On April 15, 2019, a fire broke out in the attic and completely consumed the timber roof and spire. The burning debris and flaming embers fell from a five-story tall spire on to a stone vault below. Most sections of the cathedral remained intact due to the rigidity of its stone, and the stone altarpiece and religious relics were saved, including what is believed to be Jesus’ crown of thorns and a piece of the cross from his crucifixion, the Tunic of St. Louis and the 14th-century Virgin of the Pillar statue.

After the fire, the mission of the Friends of Notre-Dame was to help launch its own fundraising effort. It helped reveal the location of some of those that were not in the cathedral collection.

“I was called by an American family that owned the model of the Crucifixion of St. Peter. They told me on the phone on the brink of auctioning the painting, but they gave it to Notre Dame when they found they couldn’t exceed the example of the love for Notre Dame by the American people,” Picaud said.

“It was a massive gift, in the safety phase, which should last until the summer of 2022. Picaud said. It includes painting a Virgin Mary of the Annunciation of Jesus, and a piece of the cross from his crucifixion, the Tunic of St. Louis and the 14th-century Virgin of the Pillar statue. It noted the lower court found “a likelihood of infringing on women’s ‘unfettered right to choose whether to terminate, or continue, a pregnancy previability’ and therefore enjoined the defendants from implementing or enforcing” the law, also known as H.B. 214.

“As a legal proposition, that claim contains three flaws,” said Circuit Judge Alice Batchelder, who wrote the majority opinion. “One, the right to an abortion, even before viability, is not absolute. Two, viability is not germane to this analysis or decision. And three, the ‘right’ actually implicated or affected here is not the woman’s right merely to obtain an abortion. The plaintiffs cannot succeed on a claim framed in this way,”

Batchelder wrote that even though H.B. 214 “does prohibit Down syndrome-selective abortions and might send a resounding message condemning the practice of selective abortions.”

Circuit Judge Richard Griffin, who voted with the majority, wrote that “many think that eugenics ended with the horrors of the Holocaust. Unfortunately, it did not. The philosophy and the pure evil that motivated Hitler and Nazi Germany to murder millions of innocent lives continues today,” he said.

After Gov. John Kasich signed H.B. 214 into law, a federal judge blocked it in March 2018 and the case had been in the federal courts since. The full 16-member 6th Circuit heard an appeal of the injunctions on the law in March 2020.

Among those who challenged H.B. 214 were Preterm-Cleveland, Planned Parenthood SouthEast Ohio Region, Dr. Roslyn Kade, Women’s Med and Planned Parenthood of Greater Ohio. H.B. 214 has been the subject of litigation in two federal cases, he said.

The French government has set a target date to reopen the cathedral to the public in 2024, but Picaud said there is no way of knowing the exact time this will happen.

Appeals court says Ohio can enforce Down syndrome abortion law

CINCINNATI (CN)—A federal appeals court on April 13 upheld a 2017 Ohio law that prohibits doctors from knowingly participating in Down syndrome abortions because of a prenatal diagnosis of Down syndrome.

In a 9-7 decision, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 6th Circuit, based in Cincinnati, overturned an injunction against the state’s Down Syndrome Non- Discrimination Act, saying the law “does not create a substantial obstacle to a woman’s ability to choose or obtain an abortion,” as its opponents contended.

Ohio “has legitimate interests in enacting such a law,” it said.

The 6th Circuit said these interests are threefold: “protecting the Down syndrome community from the stigma it suffers from the practice of Down syndrome-selective abortions; protecting women whose fetuses have Down syndrome from being aborted; and protecting doctors who espouse and advocate the abortion of all such fetuses; and protecting the integrity and ethics of the medical profession by preventing doctors from enacting such targeted abortions.”

It noted the lower court found “a likelihood of infringing on women’s ‘unfettered right to choose whether to terminate, or continue, a pregnancy previability’ and therefore enjoined the defendants from implementing or enforcing” the law, also known as H.B. 214.

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Batchelder wrote that even though H.B. 214 “does prohibit Down syndrome-selective abortions and might not actually reduce the incidence of such abortions, by prohibiting doctors from participating in this practice, it sends a resounding message condemning the practice of selective abortions.”

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Workers are pictured near a stained-glass window after the vaults at the reconstruction site of the Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris on April 15, 2019. (CNS photo/Lionel Lan Tel de Reuters)

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If you were not able to tune in on Friday evening but would still like to watch the event, it’s not too late! Simply scan the QR code below to watch the full program.

And if you would still like to donate to support these vital ministries, there’s still time to do that as well! Scan the QR code below to make your cash donation. Thank you for your support!