School choice expansion among legislative successes for ICC in 2021

By Victoria Arthur

Social distancing did not deter lawmakers from joining together to pass an overwhelmingly bipartisan budget at the close of the 2021 General Assembly that included a historic expansion to school choice in Indiana. Only five of 150 legislators voted against the two-year, $37 billion budget that was boosted by $3 billion in federal COVID-19 relief funding. The budget saw major increases in funding for K-12 public education, along with sweeping changes to extend the reach and impact of the state’s school choice programs. That includes Indiana’s Choice Scholarship Program, more commonly known as the voucher program.

The Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC) and other advocates heralded the hard-fought success, which came exactly 10 years after they played a key role in the passage of the state’s original Choice Scholarship legislation that has become a model across the nation.

“Hoosier families won,” said John Elcesser, executive director of the Indiana Non-Public Education Association (INPEA), which represents the state’s more than 400 non-public schools, including Indiana’s 175 Catholic schools. “Most of the choice expansions lobbied for by the INPEA and the ICC will soon be a reality, and more families will now find non-public school options affordable. We thank the legislative leadership for their bold vision for funding Hoosier education.”

Black, Hispanic ministries keep the faith with communities hit hard by COVID-19

By John Shaughnessy

As they have strived to deepen people’s connection to God in the archdiocese, Pearlette Springer and Oscar Castellanos have paid close attention to news reports that Blacks and Hispanics have been disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 virus.

“The Black Catholic community in Indianapolis was hit pretty hard with COVID-19 cases,” says Springer, coordinator of Black Catholic Ministry in the archdiocese. “People were mourning and grieving, alone and isolated. Sadness and death filled the air.

“Even as the death numbers have decreased and the positive testing numbers are down, people are still grieving, mourning and scared. And we still have not been able to come together to mourn our losses. That is really devastating to a collective culture like Black Catholics.”

The impact on Hispanic Catholics has also been devastating.

‘Patients are ... dying in front of my eyes,’ says India hospital director

THRISUR, India (CNS)—Catholic hospital directors in India told Catholic News Service (CNS) they did not have enough facilities to treat patients as India set records for the number of COVID-19 deaths—numbers many people believe were underreported.

“The situation is very bad. No beds available anywhere in the hospital. Patients are on the corridors and many are dying because no beds, no oxygen.”

A health care worker wearing personal protective equipment pulls a patient suffering from COVID-19 on a stretcher outside Guru Teg Bahadur hospital in New Delhi on April 24. (CNS photo/Adnan Abidi, Reuters)
Several Catholic colleges will require COVID-19 vaccinations in fall

WASHINGTON (CNS)—As Catholic colleges grapple with how to reopen in the fall, many are already saying they will require their students to be vaccinated for COVID-19, and some schools are also mandating that staff members be vaccinated.

“Our goal is simple and twofold: to provide a COVID-safe environment in which our students, faculty and staff can pursue our mission; and to help promote the health and safety of the campus communities,” said Jesuit Father Joseph McShane, president of Fordham University in New York.

In a letter to the college community explaining the rationale for requiring vaccines, he wrote. He also said the university would be providing vaccinations on campus this spring and for international students when they arrive if they were not able to be vaccinated in their home countries.

Private colleges requiring COVID-19 vaccinations continue to grow, numbering about 75 on April 27 on a list updated by the Chronicle of Higher Education.

The Criteria checked with the three Catholic colleges in the area to get their perspective about their approach concerning required vaccinations for enrollment.

“As we learn more about the vaccine, we continue to make adjustments to our plans,” said Maggie Kiack, executive director of marketing and communications for Marian University in Indianapolis.

“As of today, we are not mandating the vaccine for anyone, but we are strongly encouraging vaccines for all students, staff and faculty. Additionally, we are regularly communicating important facts about the safety and benefits of getting the vaccine.”

The predominant Catholic college in St. Mary-of-the-Woods is taking a similar approach.

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“Fr. Joseph McShane, S.J.

Washing down the barriers of death, the upcoming Saint Mary-of-the-Woods confirms that the fall semester will now include a requirement for students to be vaccinated against the novel coronavirus before they are permitted to return to campus.

Only a handful of public universities initially said they would mandate the vaccine but by late April, this started to change at several big universities, following the decision of the University of California and California State University to require students to be vaccinated for the fall semester.

Other Catholic universities with fall COVID-19 vaccination requirements include Georgetown University in Washington, Assumption University and Holy Cross College in Worcester, Mass., Boston College, Chicago’s DePaul University and Loyola University Chicago, Seattle University, Saint Mary’s College of Notre Dame, Ind., as well as the University of Notre Dame, Trinity Washington University, the University of San Diego and Le Moyne College in Syracuse, N.Y.

St. Edward’s University in Austin, Texas, was one of the first colleges to announce in late March that it was requiring students and faculty to be vaccinated for COVID-19.

On its website, it says the school’s policy is “aligned with federal, state and local laws and committed to ensuring the health and safety of all students, faculty, staff, campus guests and the greater Central Texas community.”

It also said it will provide exemption for students and employees “related to religious beliefs, underlying medical conditions” and those with the vaccine’s emergency use authorization granted by the nation’s Food and Drug Administration before the vaccines are formally approved.

The school is following similar procedures for its students, as it does with the state law requiring students to show proof of their meningitis vaccination.

A message to the DePaul community from its president, A. Gabriel Esteban, said the university was waiting for its students to be vaccinated for COVID-19 this fall “in the spirit of caring for each other and for our surrounding community.” To that end, the school was providing a vaccination clinic on campus at the end of April.

The university had not yet decided if it will require employees to be vaccinated but noted that in a school survey in February, “the vast majority of our faculty and staff already have received or plan to receive a COVID-19 vaccine.”

The University of Notre Dame similarly issued a requirement for students to be vaccinated by the fall announced on April 15 that 90% of its students had received their first dose of the COVID-19 vaccinations, and as a result the school would be loosening some of its restrictions on gatherings and wearing masks outdoors.

Many schools and universities are still determining their vaccine policy for the fall.

At Marymount University in Arlington, Va., officials are hosting a vaccination clinic on April 21 in the campus gym, the university’s president, Irma Becerra, said school officials are “evaluating every day the issue of requiring vaccines or not.”

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Do you have something exciting or news worthy you want to be considered to be printed? E-mail us:

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Catholic Center, both in Indianapolis

May 4 – 7 p.m.

 Confirmation for youths of St. Susanna Parish in Plainfield and St. Joseph Parish in Indianapolis at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral

May 7 – noon

Anniversary Lunch for Bishop Gerald Gettelfinger at The Overlook Restaurant, Lebanon, Ind.

May 6 – 6:30 p.m.

Racquetball Mass at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral

May 8 – 2 p.m.

 Confirmation Mass for youths of Prince of Peace Parish in Madison at St. Theresa of the Child Jesus School Gymnasium, Madison

May 11 – 10:30 a.m.

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

May 4 – 11 a.m.

College of Deans meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis

May 4 – 7 p.m.

CVG Volunteer Awards Ceremony at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, followed by reception in Assembly Hall at Archbishop Theodore E. Hesburgh, C.C., Center, both in Indianapolis

May 5 – 7 p.m.

Confirmation for youths of St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) and St. Ann parishes in Indianapolis at St. Thomas More Parish in Mooresville and St. Thomas the Apostle Parish in Fortville, at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral

May 6 – 10 a.m.

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

May 6 – 12:30 p.m.

Women’s Care Center Board Luncheon at Women’s Care Center, Indianapolis

Pope Francis proclaims sainthood of revered third order Dominican woman

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope Francis issued a decree declaring the sainthood of Blessed Margaret of Città di Castello, a much-loved Italian third order Dominican nun.

The decree is what the Vatican terms an “equivalent” or equivalent canonization; when there is evidence of strong devotion among the faithful to a holy man or woman, the pope can waive a lengthy formal canonical investigation and can authorize the person’s veneration as a saint.

The Vatican announcement on April 24 said the pope declared her a saint after the cardinals and bishops who are members of the Congregation for Saints’ Causes recommended doing so.

Born to noble parents around 1287, St. Margaret was blind and had a severe deformity in her right hand. Her parents, determined to keep her out of public view, kept her in seclusion in a walled room of a parish.

Taking her to a shrine known for miraculous cures in the Umbrian town of Città di Castello, St. Margaret’s parents abandoned her there when she was not healed.

Helped by the townspeople, she was given shelter in various homes and eventually diagnosed and cured by Dominican nuns.

Despite the hardship and rejection she endured, St. Margaret was known for her joyful disposition and was later accepted as a third order Dominican. Since her death in 1290, hundreds of miracles have been attributed to her intercessions.

Meeting with Cardinal Marcello Semerano, prefect of the Congregation for Saints’ Causes on April 24, Pope Francis also advanced the sainthood cause of Emigre Ernesto Shaw, signing a decree recognizing the heroic virtue of the businessman from the pope’s native Argentina.

Born in 1921, Shaw founded the Christian Association of Business Executives and was arrested during a wave of anti-Catholic sentiment under the administration of Argentine President Juan Peron.

After he was released, he continued advocating the application of Catholic social teaching in the workplace. He died in Buenos Aires in 1962 of cancer.

The pope also signed decrees recognizing:

Redemptorist Father Vicentio Niceno Renuncio Toribio, five other Redemptorist priests and six Redemptorist brothers who were “killed in hatred of the faith” between 1936 and 1939, during Spain’s Civil War; and

Italian Cardinal Pietro Marcellino Crespo, a wife and mother of 11 children, who was born in Valencia, Spain, in 1925 and died in Madrid in 1996; and

Anfrosina Berardi, an Italian girl who was born in 1920 and died in 1933. 

The Criterion • 04/30/21

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Father Herman Lutz served in archdiocesan parishes, tribunal

By Sean Gallagher

Father Herman Lutz, a retired priest of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, died on April 20 at the St. Paul Hermitage in Beech Grove. He was 88.

Lutz served in archdiocesan parishes, tribunal and minor courts for many years. He was a notary in the tribunal from 1959-84.

Herman John and Mary Catherine Lutz of Cincinnati, Ohio, had seven children: Alfred, John, Charles, Herman, Frederick, Robert and Mary. He is survived by a sister, JoAnn Traub.

Father Lutz returned to Rome in 1961 for graduate studies, earning a licentiate degree in canon law in 1963 at the Pontifical Lateran University.

From 1984-96, Father Lutz ministered as the pastor of St. Philip Neri Parish in Indianapolis. His last assignment in parish ministry was as pastor from 1999-2003 of St. Mary Parish in North Vernon.

After he retired from parish ministry in 2003, Father Lutz continued in pastoral ministry in the archdiocese. He ministered for many years in the archdiocesan metropolitan tribunal.

He served as pastor of St. Susanna Parish in Danville from 1971-73 and as co-pastor of the former St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Indianapolis from 1973-76.

Father Lutz was in residence in Indianapolis at the former St. Bernadette Parish from 1976-78 and at Holy Spirit Parish from 1978-84.

He then returned to Indianapolis at the St. Paul Hermitage, 501 N. 17th St., Beech Grove, IN 46107.†

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—In the wake of a deadly fire in a Baghdad hospital treating COVID-19 patients and more migrant deaths in the Mediterranean Sea, Pope Francis lamented not just the loss of life, but the lack of immediate rescue that has led to reports that all of the estimated 130 people on board a rubber dinghy drowned in rough waters.

European Union border protection agents alerted Italian, Maltese and Libyan government authorities of a vessel in distress on April 21, but it was up to nonprofit rescue groups and three merchant vessels to conduct an active search, finding in no survivors on April 22.

Father Lutz ministered for many years in the archdiocesan metropolitan tribunal. He, too, remembered how much his brother priest did for the Church.

Father Gilday, pastor of St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) Parish in Indianapolis was the homilist.

Treating COVID-19 patients and more of a deadly fire in a Baghdad hospital that killed at least 130 people on board a rubber dinghy has illuminated a “humanitarian and national disaster,” the Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi suspended the minister of health from his duties as an investigation was underway.

The leader also announced three days of national mourning and promised financial compensation for the families of the victims.

VITAL STATISTICS

Name: Herman John Lutz
Birth date: Aug. 12, 1933
Birthplace: Beech Grove, Ind.
Ordained to the priesthood: Dec. 20, 1958, by Archbishop Martin J. O’Connor, then rector of the North American College, in the seminary’s St. Marcellus Oratory and later celebrated his first Mass at St. Peter’s Basilica at the Vatican.
First pastoral assignment: associate pastor of Our Lady of the Assumption Parish, Beech Grove, Ind.
Later assignments: pastor of St. Philip Neri Parish in Indianapolis from 1973-76.

After returning from his graduate studies, Father Lutz served as associate pastor of St. Susanna Parish in Plainfield from 1963-68 and as pastor of the former St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Indianapolis from 1973-76.

The memorial contributions can be made to the St. Paul Hermitage, 501 N. 17th St., Beech Grove, IN 46107.

Pope calls for prayers after hospital disaster in Baghdad, migrant deaths

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Why Catholics are leaving

Welcome, new Catholics who were received into the full communion of the Church on Holy Saturday at the Easter Vigil. We’re glad that you have followed God’s call to join us in the Church. Sadly, many of our brothers and sisters in faith at this time have chosen instead to walk away from our family of faith.

The number of Catholics in the United States has continued to decline during recent years. For every convert who has been coming into the Church, about four are leaving. Besides that, the number of Catholics who are getting married in the Church fell from 352,458 in 1965 to 123,916 in 2016. And it keeps falling.

The number of priests has also fallen for the past six decades, mainly because older priests are retiring faster than new priests are being ordained. Many priests are coming from Asia and Africa to minister in the U.S., but our priests are still being overworked.

Fewer Catholics are attending Mass on weekends. According to Villanova University’s Center for Church Management, only about 21% of U.S. Catholics were attending Mass on Saturday evenings or on Sundays before the COVID-19 pandemic. We don’t know how many of them will return to their parishes when the pandemic ends.

Catholic schools have been severely affected. According to the National Catholic Education Association, U.S. Catholic school enrollment declined by 111,000 students last year, the largest decrease in 50 years. A total of 209 Catholic schools closed or consolidated last year as well.

With fewer Catholics going to Mass and fewer children attending our schools, is it any wonder that we are losing members? Paul Brady, author of The Future of the Catholic Church, says that former Catholics tend to leave the Church in their early teens, and the exodus continues as they get older and are more and more influenced by the secular values of our society.

Even those who remain Catholic frequently disagree with some of the Church’s teachings. Cohabitation instead of marriage, which until fairly recently was also frowned upon by society, is now considered acceptable by 65% of those who call themselves Catholic, according to a 2015 Pew Research Center study in 2019 reported that 60% of U.S. Catholics have been sufficiently open-minded broken vessels by filling the cracks with gold. Damage is not hidden but accentuated. According to Japanese tradition, when something has been broken it acquires a history and is thus transformed into something more beautiful and valuable. This philosophy is also applied to human experience.

According to the philosophy of kintsugi, which originated outside our Christian faith, it resonates with it. We ask not only through life’s ups and downs, God teaches us to look on traumatic events in a positive way, taking the opportunity to help us mend our inevitable cracks and scars as treasures that make us more beautiful in God’s eyes—and more aware of our need for him.

Old Testament prophets spoke of God as the potter forming us like clay in his hands. St. Paul reminded us that we carry our treasure in earthen vessels, “that the surpassing weight of glory beyond all comparison as we look not to what is seen but to what is unseen” (2 Cor 4:7).

Paul appealed to believers not to be discouraged by their brokenness. “Although our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this momentary light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison as we look not to what is seen but to what is unseen” (2 Cor 4:16-17).

St. Peter also saw value in trials. “For a little while you may have to suffer through various trials so that the genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold that is perishable even though tested by fire, may prove to be for praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 1:7).

We have not seen a case of the coronavirus among our residents for many months, but it is evident that the pandemic has taken a toll. Some residents seem less sure on their feet; for others, their vision, hearing or memory seem less clear.

Yet when we talked about the concept of kintsugi, our seniors agreed that they are proud of having survived this tough period, and like worn vessels repaired with gold, they look on their aches and limitations as precious scars that prove their inner strength and resilience.

(Little Sisters of the Poor Sister Constance Veit is director of communications for the Little Sisters of the Poor in the United States.)

Letters Policy

Letters to the Editor of The Criterion are invited for publication. The editors reserve the right to select letters to be published and to edit letters from readers as necessary based on space limitations, personal sensitivity and content. (Include wording and phone number.) In order to encourage opinions from a variety of readers, frequent writers will ordinarily be limited to one letter every three months. Concise letters (usually less than 300 words) are more likely to be printed.

Letters are welcomed, but for serious reasons, names may be withheld.

Send letters to: “Letters to the Editor,” The Criterion, 1400 N. Meridian Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367. Readers with access to e-mail may send letters to editor@criterionindy.org.
“Permanezcan unidos a mí, como yo lo estoy a ustedes. Ningún sarmiento puede producir fruto por sí mismo si no está unido a un vástago. Yo soy la vid; ustedes, los sarmientos. El que permanece unido a mí, como yo estoy unido a la vid, produce mucho fruto, porque se alimenta de mí. El que está desunido a mi, no produce frutos; en verdad, se seca y se muerde. Si quedan en mí, recibirán mi vida espiritual y producirán frutos; como se cortan, así se cortarán; como me dejan de crecer, así se dejan de crecer” (Jn 15:1-6).

La segunda lectura de este domingo (1 Cor 12:27-31) nos dice lo que se espera de nosotros como sarmientos unidos a la vida que es Cristo. Somos los discípulos de Cristo, porque, unidos a él, recibimos la vida eterna. "Porque todas las manos, todos los pies, todos los miembros del contexto de Cristo trabajan, pero todos juntos forman una sola comunidad" (1 Cor 12:12).

Por lo tanto, debemos estar unidos a Cristo no solo en palabras, sino en acciones. "Cristo es la vida y nosotros los sarmientos" (Hechos 20:20). Como miembros del cuerpo de Cristo, nos esforzamos por crecer en amor y servicio, como Cristo nos enseñó a hacerlo. "Cristo es la vida, y nosotros los sarmientos" (Hechos 20:20).
May 3, 10, 17, 24
St. Theresa of the Child Jesus Chapel, 201 South Indiana Avenue, Indianapolis. 3:30-5:30 p.m. Information: 317-272-1167, contact@v@yahoo.com or visit www.archindy.org/events.

May 5
MCL Cafeteria, 5520 Castleton Corner Lane, Indianapolis. Solo Seniors. 5:30 p.m. Catholic, educational, charitable and social—segregated, widowed or divorced—age 50 and older, new members welcome, also call about regular Friday night dinner events. Information: 317-786-8605 or 317-243-0777.

May 6, 13, 20
The Third Option virtual marriage crisis/encore class, 7-8 p.m., no registration needed. Free. Upcoming topics: May 6, “Feelings and the Hurt Spiral,” May 13, “Forgiveness and Repair,” May 20, “Rebuilding Trust.” Go to carmelthirdoption.com or click on link at top of page. Information: carmelthirdoption.com/web or Ksenia, kmohrm@archindy.org or 317-324-8446.


May 7
Women’s Care Center, 4901 W. 86th St., Indianapolis. First Friday Mass, 5 p.m., Fr. James Farrell, celebrant, optional tour of center to follow. Information: 317-829-6800 or www.womenscarecenter.org.

Our Lady of the Greenwood Church, 335 S. Meridian St., Greenwood. First Friday bilingial celebration of the Most Sacred Heart of Mary, 5 p.m. Information: 317-666-0666 or www.womenscarecenter.org.


May 8
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. with Mass with confession prior. Information: 812-246-3522.

St. Michael Church, 145 St. Michael Blvd., Brookville. First Saturday Marian Devotion Prayers Group, Devotional prayers, rosary, 8 a.m. Information: 765-647-5462.

St. Michael Parish, 519 Jefferson Blvd., Greenwood, Race for Vocations 5K and half marathon, post-race gathering to follow race, both events are free. Registration: raceforvocations.org/registration. Information: raceforvocations.org or race4vocations@gmail.com.

May 9-9
St. Margaret Mary Parish, 2805 S. 7th St., Terre Haute, and St. Patrick Parish, 1807 Poplar St., Terre Haute. Brûlé Weekend at St. Margaret Mary and St. Patrick churches, all weekend Masses, Father Andrew Seibert, formation dean of Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary, will celebrate Mass and share how the Eucharist forms future priests. Information: Ellen Sanders, 317-236-1501 or pandoraw@archindy.org.

May 9
Pre-Race for Vocations Mass and Pasta Dinner, Mass at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, 1347 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, 6:30 p.m., Archbishop Charles Thompson presiding, followed by pasta dinner at McGoogan Hall Knights of Columbus, 1305 N. Delaware St., Indianapolis, 7:30 p.m., $10 registration for dinner required: raceforvocations.org/pasta-dinner. Information: raceforvocations.org or race4vocations@gmail.com.

May 10

May 11
St. Mary Parish, 2805 S. 7th St., Terre Haute, and St. Patrick Parish, 1807 Poplar St., Terre Haute. Brûlé Weekend at St. Margaret Mary and St. Patrick churches, all weekend Masses, Father Andrew Seibert, formation dean of Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary, will celebrate Mass and share how the Eucharist forms future priests. Information: Ellen Sanders, 317-236-1501 or pandoraw@archindy.org.

May 12

May 16
Roncalli High School, 3300 Prague 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: katieshope.org. Information: 317-902-1979 or katie5kwalk@gmail.com.

John and Anita Brelage
The couple also has four grandchildren. They plan to celebrate with a family dinner.

Robert and Mary Frances Mohr
Robert and Mary Frances (Konover) Mohr, members of St. Malachy Parish in Brownsburg, will celebrate their 65th wedding anniversary on May 5. They were married in the former Holy Trinity Church in Indianapolis on May 5, 1956. They have six children: Mary Ann Cox, Barbara Friesenhahn, Jennifer Norris, Rosemarie Pell, Andrew and Robert Mohr, Jr. The couple also has 11 grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren. They plan to celebrate with a family dinner.

Randy and Sue Broderick
The couple has four grandchildren and one great-grandchild.
‘We need to be more mission-driven’
Pastors learn lessons in pandemic for future of parish ministry

By Sean Gallagher

Easter this year was quite different from the great feast of Christ’s resurrection a year ago. In 2020, churches across the archdiocese were closed on Easter at the start of the coronavirus pandemic. They were open for worshippers this year, even if the size of the indoor congregations was limited due to ongoing COVID-19 protocols.

All Saints Parish in Dearborn County wanted to welcome as many worshippers as possible during Holy Week and Easter, and celebrated all of its liturgies outdoors.

Nearly 1,900 people attended its four Easter Masses, more than any year dating back to 2015. Some 750 attended its 9:30 a.m. Mass.

“I literally began crying as I started to make the sign of the cross,” said Father Jonathan Meyer, All Saints Parish’s pastor, as he recalled the Mass. “It was so powerful to see my people respond. I was a proud father seeing my people just do what they’re called to do as disciples.”

Some 180 miles to the west of All Saints Parish, Benedictine Father Luke Waugh had a similar experience at St. Isidore the Farmer Parish in Perry County, where he serves as administrator.

There, the congregation for its Easter Sunday Mass was at pre-pandemic levels, with some staying in their cars in the parking lot outside the church and listening to a radio broadcast of the liturgy through the parish’s low-wattage FM transmitter.

“It was absolutely wonderful to see people who were eager to come back, eager to be present for the sacraments, eager to worship the risen Lord,” said Father Luke. “It was absolutely phenomenal!”

Father Meyer, Father Luke and other parish leaders across central and southern Indiana have learned a lot about parish ministry during the past year of the pandemic.

Even as some parishes see their members coming back in larger numbers to hold on to as we’ve come out of pre-COVID.

‘A two-fold encounter’
While some parishes attracted more worshippers for Easter, many parishioners acknowledged that some of their parishioners who were active in their faith communities before the pandemic have not yet come back.

The priests note that ongoing health concerns keep some away. Others, though, have simply gotten out of the habit of attending Mass each Sunday.

“A lot of people in the last 2 months have changed their habits,” Father Meyer said. “So, they’ll have to re-establish the habit of Sunday Mass and the habit of the Church being at the center of their lives. That’s hard.”

“I’m in a little concerned about the people who were kind of going through the motions before the pandemic,” said Father Michael Keucher, pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Shelbyville. “Then when the churches were closed, religion completely fell off the radar.”

Dominican Father Patrick Hyde, pastor of St. Paul Catholic Center in Bloomington, ministers to many young adults who are students at Indiana University. Many people in that age group had distanced themselves from the Church even before the pandemic.

But Father Patrick has seen a 20% growth in the past year of the number of young adults participating in small-group Bible studies organized at St. Paul by missionaries of the Fellowship of Catholic University Students that meet in a variety of ways: online only, hybrid and in-person only.

“There’s a desperate desire and need to have relationships and be known,” Father Patrick said. “One of things that we’re seeing, more than anything, is how people feel isolated and not known and loved.”

Knowing of this desire, Father Patrick and the staff at St. Paul now prioritize a “two-fold encounter.”

“The personal encounter we have with the people who are near to us, but also a personal encounter with Christ,” Father Patrick said. “The people who have had both of those things through the pandemic … have certainly grown. Whereas, the people who have struggled in one or both of those seem to really feel disconnected from the community in many ways.”

Young adults, he said, desire not just community, but also connection.

“They must have a connection point, a person that they know and trust who invites them, they’re not coming [to St. Paul],” Father Patrick said.

This reality has determined the direction of ministry at St. Paul to its young adult community. It has led Father Patrick and his staff to “focus almost exclusively on that inefficient, awkward personal ministry so that people know that, no matter what, we know and love them” he said.

‘Strengthening the domestic Church’

Father Keucher has seen a similar experience in parishioners of other age groups at St. Joseph.

Since the parish re-opened in mid-May 2020, it has seen a growth in small prayer groups, most of them initiated by parishioners.

“A hunger for God has grown in people’s hearts during this COVID time,” Father Keucher said. “So now that we’re able to come back, it’s like, ‘Let’s do some things that are new in safe ways.’”

This is a positive change for Father Keucher, who made a great effort during the pandemic to keep St. Joseph’s ministry going through livestreaming and posting videos on a daily basis.

“Discipleship is often one-on-one. It’s community,” he said. “It’s face-to-face.”

In the last year, we did the best we could do with the online outreach. But, there’s no substitute for being together face-to-face. Especially as disciples of Jesus, we need community.”

Father Keucher said the key to keeping alive the spark of life he has seen since last May at St. Joseph is “strengthening the domestic Church.”

He and his staff, and other parish leaders across the archdiocese, did much to help families practice their faith at home during the shutdown.

They livestreamed Masses; posted catechetical videos; shared via e-mail faith activities based on Sunday Mass readings that could be done at home; and encouraged families to build in their homes makeshift altars where they could gather for prayer.

Seeing the families of his parish respond to those efforts during the shutdown was encouraging to Father Keucher. But he knows that the life of faith in the home needs to continue to grow.

“We have to keep feeding and encouraging the way the faith has grown in the home,” Father Keucher said. “If it’s in the home, then the spark will stay alive.”

‘We need to be more mission-driven’
A year later, Father Keucher is, in a way, thankful for the shutdown at the start of the pandemic, and thankful for the change in perspective on parish ministry that it helped bring about.

“There’s been a reawakening in a lot of us priests and parish leaders that we need to [focus on] mission,” he said.

“It’s not enough just to keep what we have. We need to be going out, to be evangelizing and building relationships with the faith. We need to be more mission-driven.”

In the county west of St. Joseph, Father Todd Goodson had a similar experience.

“It sort of lit a fire in me internally for evangelization,” said the pastor of Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish in Greenwood. “It forced me to see as a priest to stop looking at how I can get people in [to the parish], but how I can go out.”

That’s something I’ve been trying to hold on to as we’ve come out of COVID, to keep that mentality of how I’m reaching out to people, not just managing what’s going on here.”

That’s a challenge for Father Goodson, because enough members of his parish are coming back and seeking pastoral ministry that he is now finding himself working 12- to 14-hour days.

“It’s encouraging,” he said. “We’re not out of the woods, and we’ve got a long way to go. But there’s a lot more energy and excitement here at the parish and for me as a minister. You start to see all the possibilities and things we can do. We’re kind of starting from ground zero again. There are all sorts of possibilities of where ministry can go.”

(For the first part of this two-part package, which appeared in the April 23 issue of The Criterion, can be found online at www.CriterionOnline.com)
for the voucher program and a sizable increase in the scholarship amount that voucher students receive. The current eligibility for vouchers stands, in most cases, at a maximum family income of 150% of the federal Free and Reduced Lunch program. Under the new guidance, that threshold would jump to 150% the next year, helping middle and upper-middle class families still struggling to pay for private school tuition, Elcesser explained.

In addition, eligible families will see increases in the dollar amounts of the vouchers their students receive. Currently, they are provided vouchers with students receiving vouchers of 50, 70 or 90% of state tuition support based on family income. Going forward, all eligible students will receive a 90% voucher, representing 90% of the state’s tuition support for their child if they attended their local public school.

A significant pro-life bill that had strong support from the ICC was headed to Gov. Eric Holcomb’s desk for a signature at press time. House Bill 1577, authored by Rep. Peggy Mayfield (R-Martinsville), would require abortion providers to inform the woman about an option that could potentially save the unborn child—taking the hormone progesterone after the abortion is performed to prevent a miscarriage. The legislation would require that at least 48 hours prior to the procedure, the abortion providers inform the woman about an option that could potentially save the unborn child—taking the hormone progesterone after the abortion is performed. House Bill 1009, which originally would have eliminated legal safeguards for up to 90% of Indiana’s wetlands, was later amended to reduce some protections rather than abolish them entirely.

“While the amended version of the bill is not as harmful as the original, the ICC is still opposed to this legislation and would like to see the governor veto it,” said Alexander Mingus, associate director of the ICC. “The Church’s rich tradition of environmental stewardship and care for creation form the basis of our opposition to the amendment.”

Mingus and Espada, who just completed their first legislative session together at the helm of the ICC, have plans for keeping the Catholic faith engaged on important issues like this in future sessions, “off-season.” One example is delving deeply into the environment throughout the legislative session and strongly opposes one bill awaiting the governor’s signature, even in modified form. Senate Bill 389, which originally would have eliminated legal safeguards for up to 90% of Indiana’s wetlands, was later amended to reduce some protections rather than abolish them entirely.

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“Many of the communities we serve experienced increased loneliness due to not knowing how to manage the COVID disease. Others, due to lack of medical attention, experienced hopelessness,” says Castellanos, director of Intercultural Ministries for the archdiocese.

“Without a doubt, the lack of psychological support and counseling in their parishes and communities are big challenges to their parishes. They have noticed how the people who are immigrants who lost love ones due to COVID-19 were unable to say goodbye to their native countries to say goodbye to them. Others who lost their jobs and sources of income have expressed how difficult it has been to support their families.”

In the midst of this crisis, the leaders of the Black and Hispanic ministries for Catholics in central and southern Indiana have had to adapt their efforts to keep—and deepen—people’s connection to God and their faith. While the past 13 months of the pandemic have created unprecedented challenges in these ministries, they’ve also created opportunities going forward.

“People needed to connect with each other. Beyond the formidable health risks of COVID-19, the particular challenges for Black Catholics in central and southern Indiana involved their faith emerging quickly at the onset of the pandemic,” Springer notes.

“COVID-19 has taught us the power of a collectivist culture. In other words, we think, live and breathe community,” she adds. “In-person, verbal communication has always been the best form of communication. That method COVID-19 restrictions have almost eliminated that form of communication. Gatherings, for example, where much small of a group, became super-spreaders of the virus.

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Minnesota Catholics continue prayers after Chauvin verdict

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Following the Derek Chauvin verdict, the chairmen of two U.S. bishops' committees prayed God “strengthen us to cleanse our community and to listen, and to speak up to speak out.” She also sees people to take part in the Church in the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis with justice and racial injustice.

“We have to be aware, and we need to be heard,” saidwentlaff, 42, a member of the St. Peter Claver Parish in St. Paul who helped organize the prayer service. “We need to be heard by the church in the archdiocese to join him in prayers for peace and justice.”

On the weekend before the trial began, the archbishop prayed with other faith leaders in front of the Government Center. As closing arguments were scheduled to begin, the archbishop held a special Mass “For the Preservation of Peace and Justice” at the Cathedral of St. Paul in St. Paul, and he urged all priests of the archdiocese to celebrate that special Mass on the same day. At the April 19 Mass, the archbishop in his homily noted that the issues of racism, peace and justice were larger than one person can solve, but that did not mean people should do nothing.

“We can’t single-handedly force healing to those who feel the wounds of racism in our land,” the archbishop said. “We can’t bring George Floyd back to life, or Daunte Wright back to life. Does that mean we do nothing? Absolutely not.” His reference to Wright was about the 20-year-old Black man fatally shot by a police officer on April 14 in the Minneapolis suburb of Brooklyn Center during a traffic stop.

The day after Wright’s death, Father Paul Shovelmon, pastor of St. John the Baptist Parish in New Brighton, got on his church roof and prayed a rosary he livestreamed on Facebook as he gazed at the homes and businesses, churches and schools of Brooklyn Center, only miles away, one hour after a citywide 7 p.m. curfew went into effect.

At St. Thomas More Parish in St. Paul, members of an anti-racism task force organized two hours of prayer every weekday afternoon during the Chauvin trial.

The church was open from 3-5 p.m. to offer “a peaceful presence,” for people to quietly reflect and pray for peace. A similar prayer opportunity was held at St. Peter Claver Church in St. Paul on Wednesday evenings.

On April 17, Father Paul Jarvis, pastor of St. Bridget Parish in north Minneapolis, and several parishioners walked a neighborhood in an ecumenical group called Come Together, praying for all victims of violence.

Dean Rademacher, parish director at St. Joseph Parish in New Hope, said parishioners recently formed a Peace and Justice Commission. Its first project is a book club meeting via Zoom to discuss a book titled A Good Time for the Truth: Race in Minnesota, a 2016 compilation of 16 essays by people of color from the Minnesota Historical Society.

Discussions are impactful, and they mark a step in the direction of greater understanding, Rademacher said. “We are starting to find a greater social teaching,” he added. “There is a wisdom that’s been around a long time.”

Catholics urged to join in efforts needed to address racism, right wrongs

ST PAUL, Minn. (CNS)—As the Twin Cities and the nation continue to absorb events that led to the April 20 guilty verdict of former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin in the death of George Floyd, Minnesota’s Catholic leaders are praying a way forward: Christ’s example of forgiveness, compassion and thirst for justice.

“We wish to hold up before all peoples the image of the Crucified Christ,” the bishops of Minnesota said in a statement shortly before the jury announced its verdict in the Chauvin trial. “Jesus Christ gave his life to bring eternal justice, peace and the Kingdom of God. We believe that he would call for a system of justice that is adequate—will be respected. Let us never turn a blind eye to racism and the real work of restorative justice.” Bishop Fabre and Archbishop Coakley said.

“As we have seen so plainly this past year, social injustices still exist in our country, and the nation remains deeply divided on how to right those wrongs.”

The events following Floyd’s death—which included protests and riots across the Twin Cities, the nation and parts of the world—“also highlighted the urgent need for racial healing and reconciliation,” Bishop Fabre and Archbishop Coakley said.

“As we have seen so plainly this past year, social injustices still exist in our country, and the nation remains deeply divided on how to right those wrongs.”

The USCCB committee chairmen urged Catholics “to join in the hard work of peacefully rebuilding what hatred and frustration has torn down. “This is the true call of a disciple and the real work of restorative justice,” Bishop Fabre and Archbishop Coakley said. “Let us not lose the opportunity to pray that the Holy Spirit falls like a flood on our land again, as at Pentecost, providing us with spiritual, emotional and physical healing, as well as new ways to teach, preach, and model the Gospel message in how we treat each other.”

Their statement included a link to resources for prayer prepared by the Ad Hoc Committee Against Racism and posted on the USCCB website at bit.ly/3E9X0DC.

The two prelates also noted the USCCB’s president, Los Angeles Jose H. Gomez, as well as several USCCB committee chairmen and other U.S. bishops and archbishops issued statements last year after Floyd’s death. Links to those statements also are posted online at bit.ly/3D7HRB3.

A woman in Minnesota places flowers at the George Floyd memorial during an Earth Day celebration moved to April 24 because of the Derek Chauvin trial. The former Minneapolis police officer was found guilty by a jury of second-degree murder, third-degree murder and second-degree manslaughter in the death of Floyd. (CNS photo/Octavio Jones, Reuters)
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Hospital chaplains faced challenges at start of pandemic

By Maureen Pratt

Among the many heroes that have emerged from hospitals and other care facilities during the pandemic, Catholic hospital chaplains are especially inspirational.

Whether virtually or in person, they have persevered to bring spiritual care and sacramental support to critically ill and dying COVID-19 patients, say hospital chaplains.

“A patient who was in danger of death from COVID to receive the anointing of the sick,” says Father O’Donnell, “that’s definitely a thing parishes can do something about.”

“Here in the hospital, where people’s spiritual needs are intertwined with their health needs, particularly with COVID, there’s a level of frustration in trying to meet their needs,” says Father Peter.

(CNS photo/Gregory A. Shemitz)
For the Journey/Effie Caldarola
Acknowledging our nation’s history as we move forward

In 1919, a mob of several thousand people dragged a black man named Will Brown from an Omaha courthouse. He had been accused of raping a white woman, but never had a trial. He was beaten, hanged, and burned before a jeering crowd, contributing to the genesis of the history of race in this country.

Recently, we watched the trial of George Floyd’s accused killer. Floyd died while Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin knelt on Floyd’s neck for more than nine minutes as the handcuffed man lay in the backseat of a police car. His death was captured for history as well.

Floyd’s death, one of a string of Black deaths during encounters with law enforcement, left the question of guilt in the hands of jurors. After a three-week trial, Chauvin was found guilty on April 20 on counts of second-degree unintentional murder, third-degree murder and second-degree manslaughter. Brown and Floyd remind us that Jesus’ own brutal death was performed at the hands of the authorities both civil and religious, but a mob also played a role in demanding his execution.

The end of the Civil War brought emancipation, but brief years of hope and freedom ended in the brutality of Jim Crow and American homegrown terrorism. Voter suppression, economic domination, housing segregation—these last well into the 1960s and in some ways plagues us today.

Brown was on trial for more than 4,000 Black Americans, men and women, to be lynched in our history. We must ask ourselves, how is this generational trauma in the lives of our Black neighbors today? How willing are we to teach our history? How much would we prefer to forget?

The Jesus’ have unveiled plans for a reign and reconversion, one in partnership with descendants of people once enslaved by their order, pledging to raise $100 million within five years with a goal of reaching $1 billion in pursuit of racial justice and racial healing. It’s the largest financial pledge from a U.S. religious institution seeking to make amends.

How will this work? Stay tuned. But it is an honest and positive beginning.

Often, when horrible events happen, we say, “This is not who we are.” But we must acknowledge our history. This is part of who we are. We learn the greatness of American history, but we also must know our sins.

(Effie Caldarola writes for Catholic News Service.)

Intellect and Virtue/John Garvey
Electronic memories no substitute for truly living the moment

I saw an ad on television recently that encouraged the observer to start “making memories” with the device being offered, probably a phone of some kind.

My mind immediately went to Photos icon, a Memories section that undertakes to do this for me. It mashes random pictures together and likely plays some music.

This is a strange idea, “making memories.” But it exactly describes the way many of us live our lives.

When Pope Francis visited Washington in 2015, I attended an event for him at the munico’s residence. On the way, he stopped to shake some hands, including that of a teenage girl standing next to me. Instead of shaking her hand, she did what many young people would do: She turned her back on him, held up her phone and took a selfie of herself and the Holy Father. When the Pope got into his car, he started the miraculous comeback against the Atlanta Falcons in Super Bowl LI. Fox TV showed a similar incident. The Patriots’ then-backup quarterback, Tom Brady, is famous for a famous model, Gisele Bündchen, and she naturally had a luxury box.

When her husband engineered the crucial touchdown, the television camera focused on her. She was holding up her cellphone, shaking her hair and recording herself cheering into the phone. There was something out of order about this.

When I was just the age of the girl at the nunciature, my family had an audience with Pope Paul VI. It was in St. Peter’s in Rome, and there I saw a large crowd. I managed to get away from my parents and up to the wooden barrier where the pope was standing. This was before the age of cellphones, so I did the old-fashioned thing: I shook the pope’s hand.

I have a memory of that incident, more precise now than he has been canonized. It’s still vivid, not one bit dimmed over 50’s it lost some of the surrounding detail. I imagine I can still feel the touch of his hand and look in his eye.

Fifty years from now, I will have the advantage of me; her picture and Pope Francis will be still-sharp, unless, of course, it gets lost in the cloud or the technology changes or yields with floppy disk.

On the other hand, I actually met the pope. She acted a part in a play about meeting the pope. Her audience was the people who would view her Instagram account. Her emotions acted as not those of a teenager meeting the pope. They were a version staged for the cellphone camera of someone who might look like who we are.

So too with Gisele. She wasn’t transported with delight at Tom’s victory. She was posing for the camera and her followers, playing the part of someone who was transported.

In this preoccupation with recording electronic memories, we are missing out on the very experiences we want to share. We may be so sharply focused on the collection, though, to be honest, it leaves out smells and touches. But it can never compare with just living through the moment—you the thing you miss when you’re too busy putting yourself on the other side of the camera.

In De Rerum Natura, Lucretius observes critically, “Some people sacrifice life itself for the sake of status and title.” We make the same mistake in trying to immortalize ourselves on the internet.

(Father Eugene Hennrich writes for Catholic News Service.)

Easter Vigils to remember

I was 17 when I experienced an Easter Vigil for the first time. It was a moment in my life that I’ll never forget.

In the spring of 1988, we went on a spring break trip to Italy sponsored by the Latin Club of St. Joseph’s High School, where I was a student. The trip happened during Holy Week. Several high schools from across the country participated in the trip, which was organized by a Catholic high school in Philadelphia.

We arrived in Rome on Good Friday. On Holy Saturday morning, the Philadelphia group announced that it had received at the last minute several tickets to the Easter Vigil to be celebrated at St. Peter’s Basilica. They offered them to anyone who wanted them. I immediately accepted one, even though I didn’t know much about the significance and liturgical richness of the Easter Vigil.

I came powerful to worship with Pope John Paul II (whom I shook my hand while processing out of the basilica after the liturgy) and thousands of worshippers from around the world. Some 33 years later, my memories of that moment remain sharp.

But my recollection of a more modest Easter Vigil celebrated earlier this month at Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Parish in Indianapolis will surpass those 1988 memories in my heart and mind.

This Vigil was the first one I attended for my 16-year-old son Raphael. On Palm Sunday evening, he asked me, “Mom, are we going to the Easter Vigil?” I gave my approval right away. Raphael ended up assisting as an altar server.

As a father who deeply loves the Catholic faith and lives (however imperfectly) to make it the center of my life, Raphael’s request made me happier than I can say.

We are among him assist at this holy mass of liturgies in a crossword and survice in the sanctuary and lighting tapers of prayer in the congregation was beautiful.

It was a small fulfillment of dreams that my son wanted to see the Pope. Nobody had baptized him. The Pope had baptized me an infant. Later he was, a growing young man asking wholly on his own to take part in and assist with a liturgy replete with beauty, but also one that the Church does not believe the faithful to attend.

When Raphael was baptized, Cindy and I freely took on the sacred task of forming him up.

Speaking for myself, I know that I often fail in this duty in one way or another pretty much on a daily basis. But the dreams of our—son and his four brothers—freely embracing the faith is a natural extension of the grace of God, which is the source of any good that comes from my life as a family.

As much as I already cherish the memory of Raphael taking part in the Easter Vigil, I know that Raphael will never have a moment, that he certainly isn’t at the end of his journey of faith. He continues to need the support of Cindy and of other faithful others to help him get where God is calling him to be.

All his parents have dreams for their children that they hold in their hearts from the time they are infants. There’s no guarantee that they will come true. Religious parents than to see our children fully embrace the faith that will lead them to be with God forever in heaven.

Rejoice with the joy of the risen Christ when you catch a glimpse of such a glorious moment.

This weekend’s first reading is about St. Paul and St. Barnabas. In the story, Paul, who was converted on the road to Damascus and then spent much time learning about Jesus, attempts to join the Christian community in Jerusalem. The community fears him—and not without cause. After all, Paul had been a strident opponent of the Gospel and had persecuted Jerusalem’s Christians.

Undoubtedly, these same Christians must have wondered what dark purpose lay beneath Paul’s wish to enter their community. Was he looking for ways to entrap Christians or to gather evidence to bring to the authorities in order to attack them? Barnabas, already part of the community, spoke for Paul, urging Paul’s admission into the community. Eventually Paul was accepted.

Paul remained in Jerusalem, speaking boldly about Jesus wherever he went. Such fervor was not always appreciated. Some tried to kill him, but the Christians rescued him by taking him to Caesarea, north of modern Tel Aviv. There they put Paul on a ship bound for Tarsus.

Meanwhile, as Acts says, the Church in Palestine was growing, and its faith was deepening.

Also, once more this season, the First Epistle of St. John supplies the second reading. As was the case in the readings for the past weekends, this passage is moving and compelling in its eloquence. It refers to its readers as “children” (1 Jn 3:18).

This form of address is highly expressive. Believers, as all humans, are vulnerable, weak and limited. The “children” — but God’s children. God will protect them from peril. Sin endangers them.

St. John’s glorious Gospel supplies the last reading.

Last weekend, the Lord gave us the beautiful image of the Good Shepherd. He is our leader. He guides us away from danger.

This weekend, the image is no less telling and descriptive. Jesus is the vine. We believers are the branches. This image was as immediate in its message to the first hearers of these words as was the story of the Good Shepherd. The society in which Jesus lived was agrarian. Viniculture was popular. Everyone knew about vines, and knew what vine growers did for a living.

Reflection

In last weekend’s Gospel, Jesus appeared as our guide and protector. In this weekend’s reading, the link between believers and Jesus is revealed. His life is within believers. He is bonded with believers. Without Christ, believers cannot accomplish anything. In Christ, they can live forever.

The key to this wonderful relationship is our grace-inspired willingness to love the Lord with the love that he first gave us, a love that is uncompromising, constant and complete.

Our love requires absolute trust and commitment.

Achieving this supreme level of love means recognizing the Lord and setting nothing above our desire to be disciples. Paul is a good model. After desiring Jesus, he changed his heart completely and totally with the necessary help of God’s grace.

The image of the vine is useful. Branches die if cut from the vine. Christians die spiritually if cut from the vine, which is Christ. The tragedy in this case is that some willingly cut themselves away from the vine. The blade is sin.

To look again to Paul as a model, he indeed was converted. The process was not instantaneous. Elsewhere, Acts speaks of his intense study and reflection as he sought to learn about Jesus. For him, discipleship was no solitary experience.

Eventually Paul was accepted. Paul and his companions were accepted.

Reflection

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This form of address is highly expressive. Believers, as all humans, are vulnerable, weak and limited. The “children” — but God’s children. God will protect them from peril. Sin endangers them.

St. John’s glorious Gospel supplies the last reading.

Last weekend, the Lord gave us the beautiful image of the Good Shepherd. He is our leader. He guides us away from danger.

This weekend, the image is no less telling and descriptive. Jesus is the vine. We believers are the branches. This image was as immediate in its message to the first hearers of these words as was the story of the Good Shepherd. The society in which Jesus lived was agrarian. Viniculture was popular. Everyone knew about vines, and knew what vine growers did for a living.

Reflection

In last weekend’s Gospel, Jesus appeared as our guide and protector. In this weekend’s reading, the link between believers and Jesus is revealed. His life is within believers. He is bonded with believers. Without Christ, believers cannot accomplish anything. In Christ, they can live forever.

The key to this wonderful relationship is our grace-inspired willingness to love the Lord with the love that he first gave us, a love that is uncompromising, constant and complete.

Our love requires absolute trust and commitment.

Achieving this supreme level of love means recognizing the Lord and setting nothing above our desire to be disciples. Paul is a good model. After desiring Jesus, he changed his heart completely and totally with the necessary help of God’s grace.

The image of the vine is useful. Branches die if cut from the vine. Christians die spiritually if cut from the vine, which is Christ. The tragedy in this case is that some willingly cut themselves away from the vine. The blade is sin.

To look again to Paul as a model, he indeed was converted. The process was not instantaneous. Elsewhere, Acts speaks of his intense study and reflection as he sought to learn about Jesus. For him, discipleship was no solitary experience.

Eventually Paul was accepted. Paul and his companions were accepted.

Reflection

Some tried to kill him, but the Christians rescued him by taking him to Caesarea, north of modern Tel Aviv. There they put Paul on a ship bound for Tarsus.

Meanwhile, as Acts says, the Church in Palestine was growing, and its faith was deepening.

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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 invited to submit obituaries even if they are natives of the archdiocese or have other connections to it; those are separate obituaries on this page.

BACK, Lawrence E., 97, St. Mary, Greenwood, April 12. Father of Bradley, Michael, Steve and John. Great-grandfather of seven.


Have you thought of leaving a planned gift to a charity near to your heart, especially in the area of helping those who were sexually abused by Catholic priests? This article explores the benefits of beneficiary designations and how they can be used to support the work of the Catholic Church in responding to the crisis of abuse within the Church.

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Beneficiary designations provide easy way to benefit charity of choice

Jefferson City, Mo. (CNS)—Teresa Pitt Green, who as a child was sexually abused by Catholic priests, said she is convinced there is a lot more hope than people dare to feel.

“If I can turn all the suffering and darkness of my life into something that, even in that place, Jesus was there and Jesus heals me, then that’s not such a bad way to use having been abused,” she said.

Pitt Green is co-founder of Spirit Fire, a Christian restorative justice initiative and fellowship of survivors of abuse in the Church.

People associated with Spirit Fire find healing in connecting with others who have been abused and with their efforts to grow in their relationship with God. They share wisdom, experience and faith with others seeking healing, growth and reconciliation.

They work with Church leaders to deepen pastoral care for survivors, their family members and all Catholics, including priests, deacons, consecrated and religious persons.

“There is simply no darkness where you’re not going to find light,” Pitt Green told Catholic News Service, newspaper of the Diocese of Jefferson City. “Not because there’s a lamp, but because of Jesus.”

She and the other Spirit Fire survivors are committed to holding the entire Church—priestly, clergy and laity—accountable for protecting its most vulnerable people, and for tragic failures to do so in the past.

They also are helping all Catholics—priests, laypeople, victims and bystanders—find healing and reconciliation.

“Even after his resurrection, Jesus still has wounds,” Pitt Green noted. “We also still have our wounds, but they are different—transformed by the new life that he offers us after his own suffering.”

Pitt Green grew up in a devout, Irish Catholic family in the Northeast. Her mother started working in the parish rectory when Teresa was 1, and her father drove 40 miles each day so she could attend a Catholic school.

The family regularly entertained priests as guests in their home. Her parents had no idea the priests they knew and trusted were abusing their daughter.

She wasn’t abused every day, she said, “but once you’re under the spell of being intimidated and dominated, you are abusing their daughter.

Benevolent victims in the Catholic family in the Northeast. Her family had no idea the priests they knew and trusted could attend a Catholic school.

The Catholic Church’s past failures to protect its most vulnerable members from abuse have shaken people’s faith to their family members, the Church and eventually reconciled with her family.

They worked to create new relationships, she said, “and our lives are now so much richer for our having done that.”

A survivor’s journey is never easy, and there’s no set timetable for healing. She said, “Healing itself hurts... I’ve accepted I will always feel the pain I feel. I just have to manage it.”

The Catholic Church’s past failures to protect its most vulnerable members from abuse have shaken people’s faith to their family members, the Church and eventually reconciled with her family.

She feels the Church has made remarkable progress in how it protects children from abuse and how it helps victim-survivors.

“I can talk to you about ways the Church failed it, but it is really important that people realize that this isn’t just the Church. It’s everywhere,” she said.

As chairwoman of the Northern Virginia Human Trafficking Task Force, she said this is a dangerous time in general for children and young people, because they are being lured by technology into abuse and exploitation.

“The threats are much bigger now,” she said. “People need to become aware of child abuse and the signs of it.”

There are ways to empower young people without scaring them and ways to empower adults to help protect them.

People associated with Spirit Fire find healing in connecting with others who have been abused and with their efforts to grow in their relationship with God. They share wisdom, experience and faith with others seeking healing, growth and reconciliation.

They work with Church leaders to deepen pastoral care for survivors, their family members and all Catholics, including priests, deacons, consecrated and religious persons.

“Jesus heals me, then that’s not such a bad way to use having been abused,” she said. Perhaps the most compelling reason to consider a charitable beneficiary designation is that gifting retirement assets to a parish, school or ministry occurs tax free. However, if you leave retirement assets to your heirs, they will be taxed.

According to the Stepped-Up Basis tax provision, donors may transfer other appreciated assets to heirs, such as stocks, bonds, mutual funds, businesses, equipment and real estate, and avoid capital gains tax. However, IRAs, 401(k)s, pensions and annuities are not eligible under this provision.

Therefore, it may prove more tax-savvy for you to leave other appreciated assets to heirs and retirement accounts to a charitable organization.

In my role at the archdiocese, I am one of a team of development officers whose responsibility it is to walk donors through the planned giving options that best suit their needs, marrying their passions with their giving goals. If you have questions regarding beneficiary designations or other planned giving options, we would be honored to assist you. Contact cc@archindy.org.

Kimberly Pohovey is the director of major and planned gifts for the archdiocese. Tax or legal information provided herein is not intended as tax or legal advice. Always consult with your legal, tax or financial advisors before implementing any gift plan.”
At 108, Dominican sister says God ‘just wants me to hang around’

EAST WILLOSTON, N.Y. (CNS)—To put Sister Francis Dominici Piscatella’s extraordinarily long life into historical perspective, consider that Pope St. Pius X was pontiff and Woodrow Wilson was U.S. president when she was born in 1913.

Nine popes and 18 presidents later, Sister Francis, a member of the Sisters of St. Dominic of Amityville, N.Y., is defying the aging process while living independently in a condominium apartment she shares with another religious sister at a Long Island village.

Sister Francis celebrated her 108th birthday on April 20. Data collected by the Gerontology Research Group, an organization that tracks centenarians globally, said Sister Francis is the second-oldest woman religious in the United States. Only Sister Vincent de Paul Hutton, a Sister Francis Dominici Piscatella’s extraordinarily long life At 108, Dominican sister says God ‘just wants me to hang around’

Remarkably, Sister Francis manages to get around without the use of a wheelchair, walker or cane.

Born and raised in Central Islip, N.Y., she has proven to be strikingly resilient, having lived through two World Wars, the Great Depression, the Spanish flu and COVID-19 pandemics, among other challenges. At age 2, Sister Francis’ left forearm was amputated after she was burned in a freak accident.

In 1931, she joined the Dominican order and was assigned to teach in the Diocese of Brooklyn, N.Y., and subsequently at Dominican Commercial High School in a neighborhood of the New York City borough of Queens, and Dominican-run Molloy College in Rockville Centre, N.Y., where she worked for 52 years before retiring at age 84.

Sister Francis Daniel has recorded 156 years of religious life. Following in Sister Francis’ footsteps, Sister Francis Daniel became a religious sister and a teacher, serving in dioceses before reuniting with her as a fellow professor at Molloy. Between the two of them, Sisters Francis and Francis Daniel have recorded 156 years of religious life.

Remarkably, Sister Francis manages to get around without the use of a wheelchair, walker or cane. Born and raised in Central Islip, N.Y., she has proven to be strikingly resilient, having lived through two World Wars, the Great Depression, the Spanish flu and COVID-19 pandemics, among other challenges. At age 2, Sister Francis’ left forearm was amputated after she was burned in a freak accident.

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Sister Francis Daniel was one of the thousands of students inspired by the beloved nun. She was taught by Sister Francis at Dominican Commercial and later asked her to sponsor her when she applied to enter the order.

In Gujarat state, Syro-Malabar Father Thomas Nadacalakan, director of Christ Hospital in Rajkot, told CNS on April 26, “We have to turn away around 600 cases every day. We are struggling to get oxygen in our hospitals struggling to get adequate oxygen production and supply system in preparation for a second surge. The oxygen shortage has become the scourge of the nation, with hundreds of hospitals, Cardinal Gracias said. "When a traffic signal fails and there are no policemen at the crossroads, there will be chaos. "The nation has to fight against this pandemic on war footing. We have already opened ... centers and [are] ready to extend all our support with our personnel and institutions in this fight," Cardinal Gracias said.

"The government has to increase oxygen supply and set up strict monitoring to ensure each hospital gets enough oxygen so that people do not die in hospitals,” he added.

"We have lost a dozen members of our community here in the P.T. Church. They have been treating coronavirus patients. They have found sanctuary in their home and leave the apartment only when necessary. Sister Francis Prayers and a positive attitude have helped the two women religious navigate life during the coronavirus pandemic. They have found sanctuary in their home and leave the apartment only when necessary. Sister Francis Prayers and a positive attitude have helped the two women religious navigate life during the coronavirus pandemic. They have found sanctuary in their home and leave the apartment only when necessary. Sister Francis Prayers and a positive attitude have helped the two women religious navigate life during the coronavirus pandemic. They have found sanctuary in their home and leave the apartment only when necessary. Sister Francis Prayers and a positive attitude have helped the two women religious navigate life during the coronavirus pandemic. 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