



The Criterion

Serving the Church in Central and Southern Indiana Since 1960



Faith at Home

How to answer your children when prayers go unanswered, page 12.

CriterionOnline.com

August 20, 2021

Vol. LXI, No. 45 75¢

A ride to remember



Woman endures a life-changing journey to lift the lives of moms and unborn children

Ninth in an occasional series

(Editor's note: In this series, The Criterion is featuring young adults who have found a home in the Church and strive to live their faith in their everyday life.)

By John Shaughnessy

This is the way Emily Mastronicola dreamed it would be.

On the last day of a grueling, weeklong journey that tested people's hearts and spirits, the 26-year-old Catholic woman from Indianapolis took the lead of a team of cyclists from the eastern part of the United States—preparing to meet with the groups from the southern, northern and western sections of the country for a triumphant, last-mile ride together toward the "Celebration of Life" finish line in St. Louis.

Even the challenge of riding her bike up a 15-mile stretch of daunting hills couldn't sap the joy that Emily was feeling on July 17—the last day of the national ride of Biking for Babies, a pro-life organization with the mission of "renewing the culture of life, one pedal and one pregnancy resource center at a time."

With those 15 miles behind her—on a day when
See BIKING, page 9

Photo: Emily Mastronicola joined young adults from across the country for the national ride of Biking for Babies, a pro-life organization with the mission of "renewing the culture of life, one pedal and one pregnancy resource center at a time." (Submitted photo)

Indiana pro-lifers lament ruling, but say fight to save unborn undeterred

By Natalie Hoefler

A U.S. District Court judge placed a permanent injunction on Aug. 10 on several Indiana pro-life laws, including



Todd Rokita

those that required physicians to examine patients in person before performing abortions and that mandated that only physicians can administer first-trimester medication abortions.

An *Indianapolis Star* article said

several requirements in state law were deemed unconstitutional by Judge Sarah Evans Barker of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Indiana in a ruling in *Whole Health Alliance v. Rokita*.

Indiana Attorney General Todd Rokita, a pro-life Catholic, said in a statement that Barker's ruling "only strengthens our resolve to keep fighting for the lives of unborn children and the health of mothers. ... We will continue to fight to defend Indiana's commonsense abortion laws and to build a culture of life in Indiana."

Some provisions were upheld, including the requirements that only physicians can provide first-trimester aspiration, or suction, abortions and that ultrasounds must be performed before an abortion.

But the *Indianapolis Star* article said the judge blocked the state's ban on the use of telemedicine as it regards abortion—whereby doctors use an online platform to prescribe abortion-inducing mifepristone and misoprostol.

She also put a stop on a requirement that second-trimester abortions must be performed in a hospital or ambulatory outpatient surgical center as well as blocked requirements that abortion providers provide state-backed information to patients on fetal pain, the beginning of life and the mental health risks of abortion.

See ABORTION, page 8

Catholics called to help Haiti in wake of earthquake that killed 1,400 people, including a priest

LES CAYES, Haiti (CNS)—The magnitude 7.2 earthquake that struck Haiti, killing more than 1,400 people, also collapsed the bishop's residence in Les Cayes, killing one priest, leaving one missing and injuring Cardinal Chibly Langlois.

Father Emile Beldor died of his injuries after the Aug. 14 quake. Father Jean-Antoine Coulanges is reported missing. Cardinal Langlois sustained arm and leg injuries; Church sources say his life is not in danger.

Voice of America reported that 18 people,

See HAITI, page 11



The destroyed Immaculate Conception Church is pictured in Les Anglais, Haiti, on Aug. 14 after a magnitude 7.2 earthquake. At least 18 people were reported killed in the church. (CNS photo/courtesy AVSI)



A sign for Roncalli High School in Indianapolis is seen in this file photo. (File photo by Sean Gallagher)

Federal court affirms archdiocese's rights in school employment practices

By Sean Gallagher

In a significant religious liberty victory, a federal judge on Aug. 11 ruled that the Archdiocese of Indianapolis is free to provide an authentic Catholic education to students and families across central and southern Indiana.

It came in a summary judgment by Judge Richard L. Young of the U.S. District Court of the Southern District of Indiana in favor of the archdiocese in *Starkey v. Roncalli High School and Archdiocese of Indianapolis*.

In the case, Lynn Starkey, a former co-director of guidance at Roncalli High School in Indianapolis, claimed that she experienced illegal discrimination because of her sexual orientation when her employment contract was not renewed in 2018.

In a statement issued by Becket on behalf of the archdiocese, it was noted that "every administrator, teacher and guidance counselor" at Roncalli "signs an agreement to uphold the teachings of the Catholic Church in both their professional and private lives."

Because Starkey had signed such a contract, it was not renewed when she informed the school that she had entered into a civil same-sex marriage.

Roncalli and the archdiocese, represented in the case by Becket, a Washington-based religious liberty law firm, argued that federal anti-discrimination law did not apply in this case.

They maintained that the First Amendment's guarantee of religious freedom prohibits the government from compelling the Church to hire educators who reject its teachings for positions in

which they are responsible for passing on the faith.

In American religious liberty jurisprudence, this has become known as a "ministerial exception."

Judge Young agreed that "the ministerial exception covers Starkey's role as co-director of guidance."

"One may reasonably presume that a religious school would expect faith to play a role in that work," Judge Young wrote, "and Roncalli expressly entrusted Starkey with the responsibility of communicating the Catholic faith to students and fostering spiritual growth."

On these grounds, and based on a growing precedent in American law regarding religious liberty and the ministerial exception, Judge Young ruled in favor of the archdiocese in the Starkey case.

"Today's ruling is common sense: Religious groups have a constitutional right to hire people who agree with their religious beliefs and practices," said Luke Goodrich, vice president and senior counsel at Becket. "At all levels of the judiciary, courts have made clear that the government has no place interfering with a religious organization's decision about who can pass on the faith to the next generation.

"Many parents make sacrifices so their children can attend Catholic schools that uphold the dignity of every human person and teach the fullness of the Catholic faith," Goodrich added. "Today's decision ensures that religious schools can remain faithful to their religious mission."

The Aug. 11 ruling in the Starkey case follows the May 7 dismissal in Marion County Superior Court of a lawsuit brought against the archdiocese by



Public Schedule of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

August 21–31, 2021

August 21 – 5 p.m.
Confirmation Mass for youths of St. Luke the Evangelist Parish, Indianapolis, at St. Luke the Evangelist Church

August 22 – 9:30 a.m.
Mass to Celebrate Opening of School Year at Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary, Indianapolis

August 22-26
Region VII Bishops' Retreat at Joseph and Mary Retreat House, Mundelein, Ill.

August 28 – 5:30 p.m.
75th Anniversary Mass and Blessing at Holy Spirit Church, Indianapolis

August 29 – 2 p.m.
Archdiocesan Wedding Anniversary Mass at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, Indianapolis

August 31 – 1 p.m.
Council of Priests meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis

August 31 – 7 p.m.
Confirmation Mass for youths of St. Barnabas and Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary parishes, both in Indianapolis, at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral

Share your memories of 9/11—and how your faith and your life have been affected by that day

Memories of Sept. 11, 2001, fill the hearts and minds of people old enough to remember that tragic day 20 years ago. From shock in reaction to the terrorist attacks in the United States, to gratitude for the heroic actions of first responders, 9/11 is a day that continues to affect many Americans.

The Criterion would like to hear your stories, memories and thoughts of Sept. 11, 2001, including how your faith was a source of strength

and comfort on that challenging day, and how the events of that day have shaped your faith and your life since then.

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

How has your own faith been deepened by helping others grow in their faith?

When someone strives to help others learn about their faith and grow in their faith, it often has the added blessing of leading to a deeper faith for the person leading the instruction.

With that thought in mind, *The Criterion* is inviting instructors of the Catholic faith—whether in programs for children and youths, preparation for the sacraments, adult faith formation or Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults—to share their

stories of how their own faith has been deepened by helping others in their faith journeys.

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

Joshua Payne-Elliott, a former teacher at Cathedral High School in Indianapolis.

Payne-Elliott had claimed that the archdiocese had illegally interfered in his employment agreement with Cathedral when the high school in 2019 had chosen to separate from him after he had entered into a same-sex marriage.

Payne-Elliott is appealing the dismissal of his case by Judge Lance Hamner. According to *The Indianapolis Star*, Starkey is considering appealing the ruling in her case.

(For more information on the Starkey case, including links to court documents, visit cutt.ly/Starkey.) †



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Toll free: 1-800-382-9836, ext. 1570
Circulation: 317-236-1585
Toll free: 1-800-382-9836, ext. 1585

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

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

Web site: www.CriterionOnline.com

E-mail: criterion@archindy.org

Published weekly except the last week of December and the first week of January.
Mailing address: 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367. Periodical postage paid at Indianapolis, IN. Copyright © 2021 Criterion Press Inc. ISSN 0574-4350.

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

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

Periodical postage paid at Indianapolis, IN.
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Some Catholic hospitals now require employees to get COVID vaccine

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Mercy Sister Mary Haddad, president of the Catholic Health Association (CHA), is on a mission.



Sr. Mary Haddad, R.S.M.

She hopes to clarify some of the current confusion leading to both vaccine hesitancy and recent protests over vaccine mandates being put in place to curb the escalating spread of the Delta variant of COVID-19.

She is starting in her own backyard, so to speak, encouraging all health care workers to get vaccinated.

In a July 23 statement, she said vaccinated health care workers were doing their part to “protect themselves, their co-workers, their patients, their loved ones, and their neighbors.”

She also said the association which supports more than 2,200 Catholic hospitals, health care systems, nursing homes and long-term care facilities across the country, “strongly supports member health systems as they take necessary steps toward ensuring as many health care workers as possible receive the vaccines.”

She told Catholic News Service (CNS) on Aug. 11 that some Catholic health systems are now mandating that their employees be vaccinated for COVID-19, while others have said they are awaiting full approval of the vaccine from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Most systems, at the very least, are highly encouraging employees to get vaccinated and some are offering incentives for them to do so.

Catholic Health World, a CHA publication, reported in early August that six major Catholic health systems—including Ascension, Trinity, Mercy and SSM Health—are requiring employees to be vaccinated for COVID-19 with various start dates in effect from late August to early November.

The policy applies to workers and volunteers, and in some cases it also applies to vendors. The group of health care systems with COVID-19 vaccine policies in place involves more than 350,000 employees.

Other major health systems in the U.S., including Kaiser Permanente, Banner Health, Atrium Health and the Veterans Health Administration, have similarly announced mandatory COVID-19 vaccination policies.

These policies, as well as those for Catholic health systems, include exemptions for medical or religious reasons.

In a July 21 statement, the American Hospital Association said it “supports hospitals and health systems that adopt mandatory COVID-19 vaccination policies for health care personnel, with local factors and circumstances shaping whether and how these policies are implemented.”

As Sister Mary sees it, Catholic health workers “have to set the example” and should be vaccinated because they are “serving people at a vulnerable time of sickness; the thought that they could infect someone is

unconscionable,” she added.

She said she also feels strongly about Catholic health systems enforcing a vaccine mandate because by doing so they take the lead in helping others see the vaccines are “safe, effective and necessary.”

For health care systems hesitant to require employee-vaccine policies, she said she understands what they are facing but also sees the dire emergency of the current crisis and stressed: “We can’t wait; we need to move quickly.”

Some hospital CEOs have told her they fear losing staff members to other hospitals that aren’t mandating COVID-19 vaccines.

“It’s really a crisis,” she said, noting that health care workers are exhausted and nurses are angry because the current coronavirus surge—filling hospitals with primarily unvaccinated patients—“could have been prevented.”

The other issue she is coming up against is people “using religion as a choice for an exemption” to getting the COVID-19 vaccine.

She said CHA has been working hard to get the word out that the vaccines are morally acceptable, and there should be “no exemptions for Catholics other than medical” reasons.

Catholic bishops in Colorado and South Dakota have issued statements stressing the need to follow one’s conscience in getting the COVID-19 vaccine and have supported religious exemptions to vaccine mandates.

Sister Mary finds it “troublesome” that many are using **See HOSPITALS, page 10**

Catholic hospitals with Indiana ties set timelines for employees to be vaccinated

By John Shaughnessy

Two major Catholic health care systems with hospitals in the archdiocese and throughout Indiana are among a growing number of Catholic health care providers across the nation who are requiring their employees to be vaccinated against the COVID-19 virus and its new variants.

Both Ascension and Franciscan Alliance have issued statements this summer about vaccine requirements that impact its hospital employees and the people they serve.

Ascension has set a timeline of Nov. 21 for its employees to be vaccinated. Franciscan Alliance’s timeline for “all co-workers and medical staff members” to be vaccinated is Aug. 31.

In announcing its requirement, Ascension released a statement noting that its decision is “rooted in our mission commitment to leading with quality and safety. As a health care provider and as a Catholic ministry, ensuring we have a culture of safety for our associates, patients and communities is foundational to our work.”

The vaccine requirement extends to all employees, “whether or not they provide direct patient care, and whether they work in our sites of care or remotely,” the statement noted.

“This includes associates employed by subsidiaries and partners; physicians

and advanced practice providers, whether employed or independent; and volunteers and vendors entering Ascension facilities.

Ascension said the timing of its November 21 requirement aligns with its annual flu vaccination requirement.

“In those instances when someone may not be able to get vaccinated due to a medical condition or strongly held religious belief, Ascension will provide a process for requesting an exemption similar to the process we use for the annual influenza vaccine.”

Ascension emphasized that its COVID vaccine requirement is being made with one goal in mind.

“Together, we will put this pandemic behind us so that we can continue to focus on meeting the needs of those who come to us for care.”

That’s also the goal of Franciscan Alliance.

Its vaccine requirement is in response to how the Delta variant of COVID-19 has led to a dramatic surge in infections across the country, according to a statement from the health care provider.

“Franciscan Alliance’s leadership believes it is in the best interest of our patients, visitors and staff to take the next step to promote and facilitate health and safety.”

Toward that goal, the statement noted, “By August 31, all co-workers and medical staff members will be required to

submit a copy of their state-issued proof of vaccination or a Franciscan laboratory test result for a test performed in August affirming that they have a sufficient level of immunity to the COVID-19 virus.”

The leadership of Franciscan’s health care system also stated, “In the near future, we anticipate the need for all co-workers, medical staff members, volunteers, students and contracted workers to be vaccinated against the COVID-19 virus.”

The timing of that target date will be made once the Federal Drug Administration fully approves the

COVID-19 vaccine, the statement noted.

“We are convinced this decision aligns with our mission and is supported by overwhelming medical evidence.”

The statement concluded by thanking “our Franciscan family members who have made many personal sacrifices to provide safe, reliable and effective care during the pandemic.

“As we continue together on this most challenging journey, we have an obligation to those we are privileged to serve and protect them and ourselves from the spread of this debilitating and deadly disease.” †

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PIVOT

A school bus can mean so much more than just a simple mode of transportation. At St. Joseph’s parish in Shelbyville, Father Mike Keucher utilizes a bus for outreach, hope and connection. In times where we all yearn for more connection, Father Mike shows us how thinking outside the box, or “outside the bus,” can help enable ministry in new ways.

Scan to Watch

Pastor, St. Joseph’s Catholic Church. Additional Roles: Dean of the Batesville Deanery, Vocations Director for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis

I have not been here long, but I already can tell there is something special about this parish. There are good people. There is good, genuine faith. Each and every one of us is called by God to do our part to make this place even better than it is right now.

There are plenty of ways to get involved here. I believe there should rarely be an evening or a time throughout the day where there is nothing going on here. Our school adds a great deal of life to our parish, and so do all of our ministries.

What is our mission? To be the Church, which, as Scripture says, is the body of Christ.

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IN CONVERSATION

Behind the Bus

(1:28)

Dean of the Deanery

(1:47)

Pivoting During COVID

(6:06)

Simply “Preserving”

(3:28)



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson, *Publisher*
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Editorial

New flag is a symbol to protect the unborn

Life issues—especially concerning the unborn—continue to be front and center in some of the headlines affecting our nation, including here in Indiana.

We read about a \$3.5 trillion spending plan for the federal government's 2022 fiscal year passed on Aug. 10 with a pro-life amendment offered on the Senate floor by Sen. James Lankford, R-Okla. It was approved in a largely party-line vote of 50-49, with Sen. Joe Manchin, D-W.Va., joining Republicans to support it.

Known as the Lankford Amendment, it includes Hyde Amendment language to prohibit federal funding for abortions and Weldon Amendment language to provide conscience protections for health care providers and medical professionals who object to performing abortions.

Two other amendments that would have prohibited abortions after 20 weeks and protect unborn children with Down syndrome from being aborted failed.

Let us pray the Lankford Amendment is included in the final budget passed by Congress in the coming weeks.

On Aug. 10, we also witnessed Judge Sarah Evans Barker of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Indiana place a permanent injunction on several Indiana pro-life laws, including those that required physicians to examine patients in person before performing abortions and that said only physicians can administer first-trimester medication abortions.

Pro-life leaders across the state, including Right to Life of Indianapolis President Marc Tuttle, Indiana Right to Life Executive Director Mike Fichter, and Indiana Attorney General Todd Rokita, said they will continue to support an end to abortion and work to build a culture of life in Indiana.

These actions represent a few of the recent headlines. And if we're honest, we realize defending life from conception will continue to be a challenge as long as we have members of society—including politicians in powerful positions—who feel it is unnecessary and not politically expedient to stand up for the unborn. Several of them, sadly, are Catholic.

For those of us who do support protecting the child in the womb, we now have a new international resource that we can "fly high" outside our homes, at places of worship and at other venues we find appropriate to show our support for life.

Leaders in the pro-life community have created a new flag featuring a baby's feet being held in a mother's hands. Organizers hope it will serve as the universal symbol for protecting the lives of the unborn.

As reported in a recent story posted on Catholic News Service, the flag was selected in an online effort organized by the Pro-Life Flag Project, a grassroots effort involving more than 70 partners, including the March for Life Education and Defense Fund, Students for Life of America, New Wave Feminists, Democrats for Life,



Nanda Gasperini, a pro-life graphic artist in São Paulo, Brazil, designed this pro-life flag, seen in this undated photo. It was selected in an online vote in mid-July as the international symbol of the pro-life movement. (CNS photo/courtesy Pro-Life Flag Project)

Save the Storks, Maryland Right to Life and Focus on the Family.

James Chapman, spokesman for the Pro-Life Flag Project, said Will McFadden, the project's founder, developed the idea in 2017 while attending the March for Life in Washington, where he observed no unifying symbol.

Several thousand entries were received in the international design contest for the pro-life flag, Chapman noted, and the winner was selected through final online voting in mid-July.

The winning flag features two stripes that highlight the two distinct lives—mother and child—present in a pregnancy. It was designed by Nanda Gasperini, a pro-life graphic artist in São Paulo, Brazil.

It also includes a white background that symbolizes nonviolence in the womb as well as the innocence of the unborn child. A white heart between the baby's feet symbolizes the pro-life movement's love for both the mother and her child, according to the Pro-Life Flag Project's website.

The featured pink and blue colors are associated with baby boys and girls, but also re-emphasize the two lives of the mother and child. The stripes form an equal sign, which the Pro-Life Flag Project said emphasizes that the unborn child is "equally and fully human, and therefore deserving of equal human rights," while also representing the role of both the father and mother in creating and raising a child.

Although some social media commentators have criticized the initiative because it leaves out other pro-life concerns such as outlawing the death penalty and assisted suicide, Chapman said abortion was the "singular issue" the Pro-Life Flag Project sought to represent.

For more information on the initiative, go to www.prolifeflag.com.

Our faith teaches us that life begins at conception. The Pro-Life Flag Project offers a much-needed reminder for society that an unborn child in a mother's womb is a gift from God.

As we forge ahead in our mandate to build a culture of life, we pray this flag and other resources assist us in our efforts to convert hearts.

—Mike Krokos

Be Our Guest/Sr. Constance Veit, L.S.P.

I found the treasure in a field

In our mid-summer weekday Masses, we read a series of parables from the Gospel of St. Matthew. These stories were



perfect for summer with their portrayal of Jesus and his disciples by the sea, and their images of farmers laboring in their fields.

One of these parables really caught my attention this summer: "The

kingdom of heaven is like a treasure buried in a field, which a person finds and hides again and out of joy goes and sells all that he has and buys that field" (Mt 13:44).

As I meditated on these words, a flood of emotions arose in my heart. We had recently celebrated the first-ever World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly, and I had been so happy to see our residents and their families enjoying themselves during our celebrations.

Sitting quietly in the chapel, the joy welling up in my heart served as an affirmation of my vocation. Ever since my days as a teenage volunteer in a home of the Little Sisters of the Poor, the elderly have been for me the treasure buried in a field—a precious treasure uniquely worth leaving everything else for and devoting my life to.

Through 40 years after my first encounter with the frail, memory-impaired residents of a nursing home, the elderly and our mission of hospitality to them are still my greatest joy.

How I wish that more young people would discover the joy and fulfillment that can be found sharing life with the elderly, like I did! And so, I make this appeal to young people: As the number of older persons in our population continues to grow at an exponential rate, I urge you to consider pursuing a religious vocation or a career at the service of our most vulnerable seniors! They are worth your effort and hard work, and they deserve our attention.

As I reflected on the parable of the treasure buried in the field, I couldn't help dwelling on a specific detail—the treasure was hidden, perhaps even discarded. I think this also applies to the elderly, who all too often find themselves relegated to the margins of our frenetic lives.

In his homily on the World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly, Pope Francis asked, "When was the last time we visited or telephoned an elderly person in order to show our closeness and to

benefit from what they have to tell us?"

He continued, "I worry when I see a society full of people in constant motion too caught up in their own affairs to have time for a glance, a greeting or a hug. I worry about a society where individuals are simply part of a nameless crowd, where we can no longer look up and recognize one another. Our grandparents, who nourished our own lives, now hunger for our attention and our love; they long for our closeness. Let us lift up our eyes and see them, even as Jesus sees us."

Referring to the miracle of the feeding of the 5,000, the Gospel reading for that day, Pope Francis compared the elderly to the leftover fragments of bread. "No person is ever to be discarded. . . . Grandparents and the elderly are not leftovers from life, scraps to be discarded. They are precious pieces of bread left on the table of life that can still nourish us with a fragrance that we have lost, 'the fragrance of memory.'"

Our elders "protected us as we grew, and now it is up to us to protect their lives, to alleviate their difficulties, to attend to their needs and to ensure that they are helped in daily life," the pope said. "Let us protect them, so that nothing of their lives and dreams may be lost. . . . Let us covenant with them. Let us learn to approach them, listen to them and never discard them. Let us cherish them and spend time with them. We will be the better for it."

Recent demographic projections indicate that by 2030 roughly 31 million Americans will be older than 75, and we will be facing a shortage of crisis proportions in the number of geriatric-trained caregivers.

Surveys cite two reasons why so few young physicians choose to work with older adults—geriatrics is one of the least lucrative specialties in medicine, and it is also one of the least glamorous.

The same survey that produced these findings did, however, include one positive finding. Among 42 medical specialties, geriatricians reported the greatest level of job satisfaction!

So, if you want to make a difference in the world, if you want to do something truly countercultural and if you want to find fulfillment, cherish the elderly. May they be for you, as they have been for me, a pearl of great price!

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

Letter to the Editor

A much appreciated thank you for an explanation of the luminous mysteries

Plaudits to John F. "Jack" Fink! His reflection in the July 30 issue of *The Criterion* on the rationale for the institution by St. John Paul II of the luminous mysteries of the rosary was truly enlightening!

Until now, I had almost found this insertion into my traditional rosary prayers an unwelcome challenge. They seemed so difficult merely to remember.

However, once I read Fink's story on their development—and why—it all made

so much more sense to me!

Why wouldn't we want to meditate on who Jesus was during those three years of his public life? That proved a tremendous help to me personally for now being able to better recall the luminous events and to meditate on Jesus' last three years.

Thank you, Mr. Fink!

Mary Lou Kanach
Naples, FL

Letters Policy

Letters from readers are published in *The Criterion* as part of the newspaper's commitment to "the responsible exchange of freely-held and expressed opinion among the People of God" (*Communio 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, well-expressed and temperate in tone. They must reflect a basic sense of courtesy and respect.

Letters must be signed, 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 criterion@archindy.org. †



Christ the Cornerstone

Pray for the grace to make the right choice

“Master, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life” (Jn 6:68).

The Gospel reading for the Twenty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time (Jn 6:60-69) mentions the disciples who left Jesus because his teaching was too hard for them. More importantly, it quotes Peter speaking for those disciples who chose to remain with Jesus in spite of the sacrifices required of them.

We are living in a time when many Catholics are following in the footsteps of the disciples who said, “This saying is hard; who can accept it?” (Jn 6:60)

Many conclude that the way of life that Jesus demands of authentic missionary disciples is not for them. “As a result of this,” St. John says, “many of his disciples returned to their former way of life and no longer accompanied him” (Jn 6:66).

The way of life proposed by Jesus is definitely not the easier, softer way. It takes courage and commitment, and it requires a significant amount of self-sacrificing love for God and for our neighbor.

The sayings of Jesus are hard. For example, “Anyone who wants to be my

disciple must deny himself, take up his cross and follow me” (Mt 16:24). Or “Do not think that I have come to bring peace upon the Earth. I have come to bring not peace but the sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and one’s enemies will be those of his household” (Mt 10:34-36).

These and many other examples show that, as Pope Francis frequently reminds us, the Lord’s way is not the path of least resistance. It demands that we “get off our comfortable couches” and go out to proclaim the Gospel, to heal the sick and troubled, and to “drive out evil spirits” by being advocates for justice and peace in our troubled world.

“Does this shock you?” Jesus asks his disciples. “What if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? It is the spirit that gives life, while the flesh is of no avail. The words I have spoken to you are Spirit and life. But there are some of you who do not believe” (Jn 6:61-64).

Jesus’ words are Spirit and life. They both inspire and challenge us to repent, change our selfish, sinful ways, and

believe that the Holy Spirit will guide us in living the Gospel in our daily lives.

As we learn from the first reading for this Sunday’s Mass from the book of Joshua (Jos 24:1-2a, 15-17, 18b), this is not a new situation in the history of Judaism or Christianity. Every age is confronted with a choice: Will we serve God or follow another path?

“Joshua gathered together all the tribes of Israel at Shechem, summoning their elders, their leaders, their judges, and their officers. When they stood in ranks before God, Joshua addressed all the people: ‘If it does not please you to serve the Lord, decide today whom you will serve, the gods your fathers served beyond the River or the gods of the Amorites in whose country you are now dwelling. As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord’ ” (Jos 24:1-2a, 15).

Jesus asks the same question of his disciples: “Do you also want to leave?” We know Peter’s response, “Master, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and are convinced that you are the Holy One of God” (Jn 6:67-69).

Why do Peter and many other

disciples remain faithful? We can ask the same question of all the saints and martyrs throughout 2,000 years of Christian history. Why endure hardship, ridicule, fear, even death when there are easier paths to follow? Why deny yourself, take up your cross and follow Jesus?

The one word answer is “joy.” Jesus is the source of a deep and abiding joy. His path leads to the satisfaction of our hungry hearts. He nourishes us, comforts us and loves us unconditionally. Christ’s path is not the easy way, but as all the saints (including the everyday saints next door) testify, his yoke is easy, and his burden is light (Mt 11:30).

God’s grace makes the hardships imposed by the laws of love easy to bear. No, Jesus’ way is not the easiest way, but our Lord never asks us to take on a burden without helping us carry the load. We each have a choice to make: Will we live only for ourselves (which seems easy but ends up being very difficult)? Or will we serve the Lord and live for others?

Let’s pray for the grace to make the right choice—today and every day of our lives. †



Cristo, la piedra angular

Recemos por la gracia de hacer la elección correcta

“Señor, ¿a quién iremos? Tú tienes palabras de vida eterna” (Jn 6:68).

La lectura del Evangelio del domingo 21.º del tiempo ordinario (Jn 6:60-69) menciona a los discípulos que dejaron a Jesús porque su enseñanza era “demasiado difícil” para ellos. Y lo que es más importante: cita a Pedro hablando en nombre aquellos discípulos que eligieron permanecer con Jesús a pesar de los sacrificios que se les exigían.

Vivimos en una época en la que muchos católicos siguen los pasos de los discípulos que dijeron: “Esta enseñanza es muy difícil; ¿quién puede aceptarla?” (Jn 6:60).

Muchos llegan a la conclusión de que el modo de vida que Jesús exige a los auténticos discípulos misioneros no es para ellos. “Desde entonces—dice san Juan—muchos de sus discípulos le volvieron la espalda y ya no andaban con él” (Jn 6:66).

El camino de la vida propuesto por Jesús ciertamente no es el más fácil ni el más suave. Se necesita valor y compromiso, y requiere una cantidad significativa de amor abnegado por Dios y por nuestro prójimo.

Las enseñanzas de Jesús son difíciles. Por ejemplo, “Si alguien quiere ser mi discípulo, tiene que

negarse a sí mismo, tomar su cruz y seguirme” (Mt 16:24). O “No crean que he venido a traer paz a la tierra. No vine a traer paz, sino espada. Porque he venido a poner en conflicto al hombre contra su padre, a la hija contra su madre, a la nuera contra su suegra; los enemigos de cada cual serán los de su propia familia” (Mt 10:34-36).

Estos y muchos otros ejemplos demuestran que, como nos recuerda con frecuencia el Papa Francisco, el camino del Señor no es el de menor resistencia. Exige que “nos levantemos de la comodidad nuestros sofás” y salgamos a proclamar el Evangelio, a curar a los enfermos y a los atribulados, y a “expulsar a los espíritus malignos,” al ser defensores de la justicia y la paz en nuestro agitado mundo.

“¿Esto les causa tropiezo?” pregunta Jesús a sus discípulos. “¿Qué tal si vieran al Hijo del hombre subir adonde antes estaba? El Espíritu da vida; la carne no vale para nada. Las palabras que les he hablado son espíritu y son vida. Sin embargo, hay algunos de ustedes que no creen” (Jn 6:61-64).

Las palabras de Jesús son Espíritu y vida. Ambos nos inspiran y desafían a arrepentirnos, a cambiar nuestros hábitos egoístas y pecaminosos, y a creer que el

Espíritu Santo nos guiará para vivir el Evangelio en nuestra vida cotidiana.

Como se desprende de la primera lectura de la misa de este domingo, extraída del libro de Josué (Jos 24:1-2a, 15-17, 18b), esta situación no es nueva en la historia del judaísmo ni del cristianismo. Cada época se enfrenta a una elección: ¿Serviremos a Dios o seguiremos otro camino?

“Josué reunió a todas las tribus de Israel en Siquén. Allí convocó a todos los jefes, líderes, jueces y oficiales del pueblo. Todos se reunieron en presencia de Dios. Josué se dirigió a todo el pueblo, y le exhortó: ‘Pero, si a ustedes les parece mal servir al Señor, elijan ustedes mismos a quiénes van a servir: a los dioses que sirvieron sus antepasados al otro lado del río Éufrates, o a los dioses de los amorreos, en cuya tierra ustedes ahora habitan. Por mi parte, mi familia y yo serviremos al Señor’ ” (Jos 24:1-2, 15).

Jesús hace la misma pregunta a sus discípulos: “¿También ustedes quieren marcharse?” Conocemos la respuesta de Pedro: “Señor, ¿a quién iremos? Tú tienes palabras de vida eterna. Y nosotros hemos creído, y sabemos que tú eres el Santo de Dios” (Jn 6:67-69).

¿Por qué Pedro y muchos otros

discípulos permanecen fieles? Podemos hacer la misma pregunta a todos los santos y mártires a lo largo de los 2,000 años de historia cristiana. ¿Por qué soportar las dificultades, el ridículo, el miedo e incluso la muerte cuando hay caminos más fáciles de seguir? ¿Por qué negarse a sí mismo, tomar su cruz y seguir a Jesús?

La respuesta de una sola palabra es “alegría.” Jesús es la fuente de una alegría profunda y duradera. Su camino conduce a la satisfacción de nuestros corazones hambrientos. Nos alimenta, nos consuela y nos ama incondicionalmente. El sendero de Cristo no es sencillo, pero como atestiguan todos los santos (incluidos los santos de a pie), su yugo es fácil y su carga es ligera (Mt 11:30).

La gracia de Dios hace que las dificultades impuestas por las leyes del amor sean fáciles de soportar. No, el sendero de Jesús no es el más fácil, pero nuestro Señor nunca nos pide que asumamos una carga sin ayudarnos a llevarla. Todos debemos elegir: ¿Viviremos solamente para nosotros mismos (lo que parece fácil pero acaba siendo muy difícil)? ¿O vamos a servir al Señor y vivir para los demás?

Pidamos por la gracia de tomar la decisión correcta, hoy y todos los días de nuestra vida. †

Events Calendar

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

August 22

Jennings County Community Building, Jennings County Fairground, 4920 IN-3, North Vernon. **Don't Dis' My Ability**, 4 p.m., pro-life comedy show and dinner starring comedian Andy Imlay, free, T-shirts for sale at bit.ly/DontDis. Information: 812-350-4631, jenningscountyprolife@gmail.com.

August 22, 29

Benedictine Conversations via GroupMe, 4 p.m. Sundays, Benedictine Sister Jill Marie Reuber, facilitator, sponsored by Sisters of St. Benedict, Ferdinand, Ind. (Diocese of Evansville). Information: vocation@thedorm.org.

August 23, 30

St. Therese of the Child Jesus (Little Flower) Parish Center, St. Therese Room, 4720 E. 13th St., Indianapolis. **SoulCore Rosary Workout**, 6:30-7:15 p.m., prayer and exercise, free. Information: 317-727-1167, joane632003@yahoo.com or soulcore.com.

August 25

Group Lectio via Zoom, 7 p.m. Sundays, Benedictine Sister Jill Marie Reuber, facilitator, second and fourth Wednesdays of each month, sponsored by Sisters of St. Benedict, Ferdinand, Ind. (Diocese of Evansville). Information: vocation@thedorm.org.

August 26

St. Luke the Evangelist Parish, south gym, 7575 Holiday Dr., E., Indianapolis. **Moms in the Middle**, 6:30 p.m., Catholic movie producer of *Roe v. Wade* film

Chérie Ballinger speaking, wine, door prizes, hors d'oeuvres, free. Registration: cutt.ly/momscherie or Vicki Yamasaki, 317-313-0255, cup@corpuschristiforunityandpeace.org.

August 26-28

St. Ann Parish, 6350 S. Mooresville Rd., Indianapolis. **Summer Festival**, Thurs. 5-10 p.m., Fri. and Sat. 5-11 p.m., food, carnival rides, free admission. Information: 317-821-2909.

August 28

Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Church, 520 Stevens St., Indianapolis. **Faithful Citizens Rosary Walk**, 10:45-11:45 a.m., meet in front of church. Information: faithfulcitizens2016@gmail.com.

Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish, 335 S Meridian St., Greenwood. **Re-ENGAGE: Annual Celebrate Marriage Conference**, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., for married couples, featuring author, producer and former show host Chuck Neff, music, breakout sessions, \$60 per couple, includes lunch. Information and registration: celebratemarriageministry.com, OLGMarriageMinistry@gmail.com or 317-489-1557.

Virtual Dialogue on Intercultural Competency, via Zoom, sponsored by archdiocesan Black Catholic Ministry, 10 a.m., associate director for African American Affairs of USCCB Office of Cultural Diversity Donna Grimes speaking, freewill offering. Registration: cutt.ly/VDIC. Information: Pearllette

Springer, pspringer@archindy.org or 317-236-1474.

St. Mary Parish, 1331 East Hunter Robbins Way. Greensburg. **On Eagles Wings 5K Run/Walk and Kids Fun Run**, 8 a.m. registration, 9 a.m. race, \$20 adults, \$15 children (\$25/\$20 after Aug. 9). Registration: oneagleswings5k.com. Information: 812-663-8427.

Holy Spirit Parish, 7243 E. 10th St, Indianapolis. **75th Anniversary Celebration**, 5:30 p.m. Mass, Archbishop Charles C. Thompson celebrant, followed by reception in gym. Information: 317-353-9494, parishoffice@holyspirit.cc.

August 28-29

St. Mary Parish, 1331 E. Hunter Robbins Way. Greensburg. **Parish Festival**: Sat. 5:30-11 p.m., Adult Night: games, beer garden, live music by Nuttin' Fancy, pork burger, pork chop or pulled pork dinner, chips, cole slaw, applesauce, basket silent auction, concessions; Sun. 11 a.m.-3:30 p.m., Family Day: kids' games, live music by Keith Swinney Band, fried chicken and pulled pork dinner with cheese potatoes, green beans, cole slaw, dessert and drink, free admission both days. Information: 812-663-8427.

St. Elizabeth of Hungary Parish, 333 W. Maple St., Cambridge City. **Bruté Weekend**, all weekend Masses, Father Daniel Bedel, spiritual director of Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary, will celebrate

Mass and share how the seminary forms future priests. Information: Ellen Sanders, 317-236-1501 or esanders@archindy.org.

August 29

St. Anne Parish, 102 N. 19th St., New Castle. **Bruté Weekend**, all weekend Masses, Father Daniel Bedel, spiritual director of Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary, will celebrate Mass and share how the seminary forms future priests. Information: Ellen Sanders, 317-236-1501 or esanders@archindy.org.

September 1

MCL Cafeteria, 5520 Castleton 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.

Immaculate Heart of Mary, 5692 Central Avenue, Indianapolis. **Mary's Treasures**, 7 p.m., Catholic storyteller Sandra Hartlieb portrays Mary recalling the events of her and her Son's life, free. Information: ueble@ihmindy.org or 317-257-2266.

Holy Spirit Church, 7243 E. 10th St., Indianapolis. **World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation Ecumenical Prayer Service**, sponsored by Eastside Creation Care

Network, 7 p.m., bilingual, online option available, free. Information: 317-353-9494.

September 3

Women's Care Center, 4901 W. 86th St., Indianapolis. **First Friday Mass**, 5 p.m., Father Michael Keucher celebrant, optional tour of center to follow. Information: 317-829-6800, womenscarecenter.org.

Our Lady of the Greenwood Church, 335 S. Meridian St., Greenwood. **First Friday bilingual celebration of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus**, Mass, 5:45 p.m., exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, following Mass until 9 p.m., sacrament of reconciliation available. Information: 317-750-7309, msross1@hotmail.com. †

Retreats and Programs

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

Sept. 8-Dec. 15

Oldenburg Franciscan Center, 22143 Main St., Oldenburg. **Sign Language: The 3 C's**, Wednesdays, 1:30-3:30 p.m. (no session on Nov. 24), Louise Burns and Maryann Barth, presenters, \$70 for 14 sessions. Information and registration: 812-933-6437, www.oldenburgfranciscancenter.org.

September 10-12

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 100 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Spiritual Integration: Fitness, Health and Physical Well-being**, Benedictine Brother

Nathaniel Szidik presenting, \$255 single, \$425 double. Registration: saintmeinrad.org/retreats.

Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. **Healing from Sexual Abuse—A Retreat for Women Religious**, Fri. 8:30 p.m.-Sun. 9 p.m., Dr. Rachel Waltz presenting, limited to 15 participants, \$350, \$24 discount if register by July 31, includes lodging and meals. Information and registration: benedictinn.org/programs, 317-788-7581, benedictinn@benedictinn.org.

September 11

Mount Saint Francis Center for Spirituality, 101 St. Anthony Dr., Mt. St. Francis. **A Eucharist of Encountering: Crossing Thresholds, Becoming Transformed**, 9 a.m.-7 p.m., composer, theologian, author and Paulist Father Ricky Manalo presenting, includes Mass, lunch, presentation, reflection, painting class with Conventual Franciscan Father Vince Petersen, musical concert, \$100 includes meals, materials. Information and registration: mountsaintfrancis.org/fr-ricky-manalo or 812-923-8817. †

Indianapolis St. Vincent de Paul Society's Struttin' Our Stuff fundraiser set for Sept. 10

The Indianapolis council of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul will hold its annual Struttin' Our Stuff fundraiser at the Northside Events and Social Club, 2100 E. 71st St., in Indianapolis, from 6-10 p.m. on Sept. 10.

The event benefits the services and programs of the Indianapolis Society of St. Vincent de Paul, including its distribution warehouse, Mission 27 Resale stores, Changing Lives Forever program, food pantry and more.

The cost is \$75 per person, which includes dinner, complimentary cocktails, silent and live auctions and a fashion show featuring styles from Mission 27 Resale stores. Online bidding begins on Sept. 6 at svdypindy.org/fashion.

To purchase tickets or for more information, contact Jenny Matthews at jmattbogey@gmail.com or 317-289-3324, or Mary Ann Klein at klein.j@sbcglobal.net or 317-796-6325. †

Wedding Anniversaries

EBERT AND STELLA WILSON



Ebert and Stella (Singer) Wilson, members of St. Mark the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis, will celebrate their 65th wedding anniversary on Aug. 26.

The couple was married at the First Christian Church in Madison, on Aug. 26, 1956, and later had their marriage convalidated at St. Mark the Evangelist Church.

They have two children: Shari Wilson-Feldman and David Wilson.

The couple also has four grandchildren and one great-grandchild. †

MILLARD AND MARY BOSSERT



Millard and Mary (Schoettelkotte) Bossert, members of St. Louis Parish in Batesville, will celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary on Aug. 26.

The couple was married at St. Louis Church in Batesville on Aug. 26, 1961.

They have three children: Melinda Haujert, Mark and Michael Bossert.

The couple also has five grandchildren. †

GENE AND PATTY SIMON



Gene and Patty (Schwering) Simon, members of St. Maurice Parish in Napoleon, will celebrate their 55th wedding anniversary on Aug. 20.

The couple was married at Immaculate Conception Church in Millhousen on Aug. 20, 1966.

They have four children: Mary McCoy, Eva Volz, Nick and Scott Simon.

The couple also has 11 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. †

DONALD AND SUSAN SCHWEGMAN



Donald and Susan (Rodemberg) Schwegman, members of St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross Parish in Bright, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on Sept. 3.

The couple was married at St. Ann Church in Cincinnati on Sept. 3, 1971.

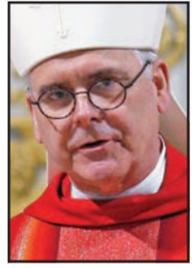
They have two children: Nicholas and Philip Schwegman.

The couple also has three grandchildren. †

Announcements for couples celebrating 50, 55, 60, 65, 70 or more years of marriage are accepted. Go to cutt.ly/anniversaries or call 317-236-1585.

Senate bill covers many needs, but must not allow abortion funding

WASHINGTON (CNS)—The \$1.2 trillion infrastructure bill passed by the Senate makes “historic investments” in transportation, climate change



Archbishop Paul S. Coakley

mitigation, job creation, expanded Internet access and other areas, but several issues still need attention, said the U.S. bishops’ domestic policy committee chairman.

Archbishop Paul S. Coakley of Oklahoma City said the Catholic bishops

“continue to be resolute in our insistence that no taxpayer funding go to abortion.”

The bishops also disagree with a provision in the bill that “would advance a false understanding of gender and sexuality,” he said, referring to a section that establishes grants to widen access to broadband.

To be eligible for these grants, the bill says organizations that apply for them must comply with the program’s anti-discrimination protections, including “sexual orientation” and “gender identity.”

Archbishop Coakley, chairman of the U.S. Conference of the Catholic Bishops’ (USCCB) Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development, issued the statement on Aug. 10, shortly after the Senate OK’d the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act in a 69-30 bipartisan vote.

The 2,702-page bill provides spending through a five-year period for roads and bridges, rail, transit, ports, airports, electric grids, water systems, broadband and other priorities. It includes \$550 billion in new spending.

The bill now moves to the U.S. House of Representatives. Members plan to end their summer break early and return to Washington on Aug. 23 to consider it.

“We are grateful for the bipartisan efforts of members of the Senate to pass the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act,” Archbishop Coakley said. “As the bishops wrote to all members of Congress in April, we are especially interested in how the package affects those on the margins of society and protects God’s creation.

“It is critical that any proposal to expand health care coverage avoid an expansion of taxpayer funding of abortion,” he said.

In the last week of July, the U.S. House passed about a dozen appropriations bills without the long-standing Hyde Amendment and other pro-life riders outlawing federal tax dollars from directly funding abortion except in cases of rape, incest or when the life of the woman would be endangered.

The U.S. bishops and several national pro-life organizations criticized this move and urged senators to include the pro-life language in the measures before them.

Regarding the broadband grant provision in the Senate’s infrastructure bill, the wording to which Archbishop Coakley referred says:

“No individual in the United States may, on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, or disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity that is funded in whole or in part with funds made available to carry out this [program].”

Archbishop Coakley said the bishops noted the provision “with disappointment,” and added: “We affirm that Catholic institutions must be free to serve everyone with respect and dignity in accordance with our beliefs.”

The provision also has raised concerns among other religious leaders, including the Religious Freedom Institute.

Institute officials told the Deseret News: “Rural faith-based colleges and universities, small faith-based businesses, and faith-based hospitals and medical clinics, sometimes the only health care services for miles, could be forced to violate their religious conscience or be denied participation in the program.”

The April 22 letter Archbishop Coakley referenced was sent by him and four other USCCB committee chairmen to all members of the Senate and the House. In it, the U.S. bishops offered “a moral framework and points of emphasis for your consideration”:

—Create jobs for the poor and marginalized.

—Ensure safe, “decent” and affordable housing, and strengthen families.

—Cultivate integral ecology.

—“Welcome, protect, promote and integrate migrants and refugees.”

—Respect the rights and dignity of every human life in health care.

—Preserve religious liberty.

—Expand broadband Internet access.

—Manage tax revenues and public spending in service of “development and solidarity.”

Besides Archbishop Coakley, the letter was signed by these committee chairs: Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan of New York, religious liberty; Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann of Kansas City, Kan., pro-life activities; Bishop Michael F. Burbidge of Arlington, Va., communications; and Auxiliary Bishop Mario E. Dorsonville of Washington, migration.

A number of the issues the bishops emphasized are part of the infrastructure bill, but Archbishop Coakley said the Catholic leaders “urge Congress to continue working together to address” several others.

These include, he said, investing in housing and rental assistance; continuing expansion of the earned income tax credit;

making the child tax credit permanently refundable; expanding access to in-home care for family members; and supporting families through affordable child care options, paid sick leave and parental leave.

The bishops also are pushing for legalization and a path to citizenship for those covered by the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, Temporary Protected Status, Deferred Enforced Departure programs and for others in the country illegally.

“As work continues, we ask Congress to give consideration to these views and work together to promote the common good and the dignity of every human person,” Archbishop Coakley said.

Immigration reform and a host of other issues are addressed in the Senate Democrats’ \$3.5 trillion spending plan. Early on Aug. 11, the Democrats approved a blueprint for this plan in a party-line vote of 50-49.

News reports said the Democrats “plan to push the package through” during the next few months by using “budget reconciliation.” The process, created under the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, allows a simple majority to pass certain types of legislation.

The \$3.5 trillion spending plan did pass with a pro-life amendment offered on the Senate floor by Sen. James Lankford, R-Okla. It was approved in a largely party-line vote of 50-49, with Sen. Joe Manchin, D-W.Va., joining Republicans to support it.

The Lankford Amendment includes Hyde language to prohibit federal funding for abortions and Weldon Amendment language to provide conscience protections for health care providers and medical professionals who object to performing abortions.

Two other amendments that would have prohibited abortions after 20 weeks and protect unborn children with Down syndrome from being aborted failed. †

U.S. Cardinal Burke in hospital, on ventilator, due to COVID-19

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—U.S. Cardinal Raymond L. Burke has been hospitalized and put on a ventilator less than one week after telling people he tested positive for the virus that causes COVID-19.



Cardinal Raymond L. Burke

His official Twitter account @cardinalrlburke published a tweet on Aug. 14 saying: “Cardinal Burke has been admitted to the hospital with COVID-19 and is being assisted by a ventilator. Doctors are encouraged by his progress.”

The tweet said the cardinal had “faithfully prayed the rosary for those suffering from the virus. On this vigil of the Assumption, let us now pray the rosary for him.”

The cardinal had first tweeted on Aug. 10: “Praised be Jesus Christ! I wish to inform you that I have recently tested positive for the COVID-19 virus. Thanks be to God, I am resting comfortably and receiving excellent medical care. Please pray for me as I begin my recovery. Let us trust in divine Providence. God bless you.”

The cardinal has not made it public knowledge on whether he was vaccinated for the 2019 novel coronavirus.

The Vatican had started offering all Vatican residents, retirees and employees the vaccine developed by Pfizer and BioNTech mid-January 2021. The 73-year-old cardinal was eligible for the vaccine as a member of the College of Cardinals and a member of the Apostolic Signatura, which he led as prefect from 2008 until his resignation in 2014.

Pope Francis, who received the vaccine as soon as it was available along with retired Pope Benedict XVI, said people have a moral obligation to be vaccinated as soon as possible “because it is about your life but also the lives of others.”

Before the vaccines had been made available to the public, Cardinal Burke had voiced some concerns during a May 2020 talk to the Rome Life Forum about the impact of the international health crisis, particularly on people’s access to the sacraments.

His concerns included:

—The belief there was “a certain movement to insist that now everyone must be vaccinated against the coronavirus COVID-19 and even that a kind of microchip needs to be placed under the skin of every person, so that at any moment he or she can be controlled by the state regarding health and about other matters which we can only imagine.”

—That it is “never morally justified to develop a vaccine through the use of the cell lines of aborted fetuses. The thought of the introduction of such a vaccine into one’s body is rightly abhorrent.”

—“Vaccination itself cannot be imposed, in a totalitarian manner, on citizens.”

He said, “While the state can provide reasonable regulations for the safeguarding of health, it is not the ultimate provider of health. God is,” and it would be God who offers “the direction and strength to take whatever human measures are required to protect ourselves, according to the demands of right reason and of the moral law.”

The Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the

Faith published a note on Dec. 21, 2020, reiterating Church teaching that when alternative vaccines are not available, it is morally acceptable to receive vaccines developed or tested using cell lines originating from aborted fetuses, in this case, including COVID-19 vaccines.

However, “both pharmaceutical companies and governmental health agencies are therefore encouraged to produce, approve, distribute and offer ethically acceptable vaccines that do not create problems of conscience for either health care providers or the people to be vaccinated,” it added. The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines did not use abortion-derived cell lines in developing or producing their vaccines, but they did in lab testing.

In a March 21 post, “Combat against the Coronavirus, COVID-19,” on his website cardinalburke.com, the cardinal encouraged people to avoid close contact with others, particularly through group gatherings, disinfect surfaces and quarantine when testing positive.

The crisis was an opportunity for people to turn more deeply to their faith and the importance of the sacrament, he added.

The cardinal is a native of La Crosse, Wis., and served as bishop of that diocese from 1995 to 2004, as archbishop of St. Louis from 2004 to 2008, and as prefect of the Vatican Apostolic Signatura from 2008 to 2014.

While the cardinal often resides in Italy, he travels extensively and was in the United States at the time of sharing the news about contracting the virus. †

Mary shows humility, service are ‘secrets’ to heaven, Pope Francis says

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Mary’s assumption into heaven reminds people that they are also called by God to eternal life in heaven through humility and serving him, Pope Francis said.

After reciting the *Angelus* prayer on the feast of the Assumption on Aug. 15, Pope Francis also prayed that those enjoying the summer holiday would find “serenity and peace.”

“I cannot, however, forget those who cannot go on vacation, those who remain to serve the community and those who

find themselves in distressing conditions, aggravated by the intense heat and by the lack of certain services due to the holiday,” he said, especially the ill, the elderly, the incarcerated, the unemployed, refugees and “all those who are alone or in difficulty.”

“May Mary extend her maternal protection over each one of you,” he said, inviting people to “perform a beautiful gesture” by venerating her at a Marian shrine.

Mary’s secret is humility, the pope said before praying the *Angelus*.

“It is her humility that attracted God’s

gaze to her,” he said.

“God does not exalt us because of our gifts, our wealth or great skills, but because of humility. God loves humility. God lifts up the one who lowers him or herself, the one who serves,” the pope said.

The pope asked people to reflect and ask: “How am I doing with humility? Do I want to be recognized by others, to establish myself and to be praised, or do I think about serving? Do I know how to listen like Mary, or do I want only to talk and get attention? Do I know how to be silent like Mary, or am

I always chatting? Do I know how to take a step back, defuse quarrels and arguments, or do I always try to stand out?”

Humility is the beginning of having faith by knowing one needs God and needs to make room for him in their heart and lives, he said.

“Those who remain humble allow the Lord to accomplish great things,” he said.

Mary’s assumption into heaven is a message of hope as it shows “lowliness and service are the secrets for reaching the destination, for reaching heaven,” he said. †

Pope prays for peace in Afghanistan; Caritas, Jesuits suspend activities

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Hours before the Taliban took control of Afghanistan’s capital, Kabul, Pope Francis expressed his hope for the peace and safety of the country’s citizens.



Pope Francis

“I join in the unanimous concern for the situation in Afghanistan. I ask all of you to pray with me to the God of peace, so that the clamor of weapons might cease and solutions can be found at the table of dialogue,” the pope said on Aug. 15 during his *Angelus* address.

Only through dialogue, he added, “can the battered population of that country—men, women, elderly and children—return to their own homes, and live in peace and security, in total mutual respect.”

The Taliban, an extremist Islamic movement that ruled Afghanistan until ousted by a U.S.-led coalition nearly 20 years ago, began taking over large swaths of the country as U.S. forces withdrew.

According to The Associated Press, Taliban fighters entered the presidential palace after Afghan President Ashraf Ghani fled the country.

In February 2020, the Trump administration signed a peace agreement with the Taliban and agreed to withdraw its forces by May 2021 in exchange for the group’s promise to cut ties with al-Qaida and cease attacks on American troops.

In April, President Joe Biden announced a complete

withdrawal of U.S. troops in Afghanistan by Sept. 11—the 20th anniversary of the attacks on U.S. soil coordinated by al-Qaida’s Osama bin Laden, who received protection from the Taliban.

However, as Taliban fighters took control of the country, Biden announced on July 8 that the U.S. “military mission in Afghanistan will conclude on Aug. 31.”

The U.S. invaded Afghanistan in late 2001 in a bid to dismantle al-Qaida and force the Taliban from power. More than 2,300 U.S. soldiers have died in the 20-year conflict, the longest war in U.S. history, and thousands of Afghan civilians were killed and displaced as a result of the conflict, according to the U.N. Mission in Afghanistan.

Caritas Italy also announced the suspension of charitable activities in Afghanistan in the wake of the Taliban’s takeover of the country.

In a statement released on Aug. 15, Caritas said the “instability of the situation has led to the suspension of all activities” and has increased fears “of maintaining a presence in the future, as well as for the safety of the few Christian Afghans” in the country.

The Jesuits, who have been in Afghanistan since 2004, have also suspended their mission in the country “indefinitely.”

Speaking on the condition of anonymity, a Jesuit priest in New Delhi told ucanews.com on Aug. 17 that two Jesuit priests are among many Indian nationals in Afghanistan waiting for their government’s evacuation flights.

The Jesuit priests “are so far safe and are ready to fly to India” when flights resume, the unnamed priest said.

Four Missionaries of Charity nuns are also awaiting evacuation from the country. A representative for the religious congregation in Kolkata told ucanews.com the nuns are still in Afghanistan and that only one is an Indian national.

However, she declined to identify the nationalities of the other three nuns out of caution for their safety.

Caritas Italy, which has been present in the country since 1990, said that it ran several programs in Afghanistan that provided “emergency aid, rehabilitation and development.”

It also oversaw “the construction of four schools” in the central Ghor Province, as well as building 100 shelters for 483 refugee families in the Panjshir Valley, located 93 miles north of Kabul.

Prior to the Taliban’s takeover, the Catholic charitable organization was focused mainly on helping “vulnerable minors.”

However, the withdrawal of U.S. forces has left the country “in a tragic abyss” after 20 years “with incalculable human costs and billions of euros in expenditures,” it said.

“As always, it will be the weakest who pay the highest price,” Caritas said. “Already tens of thousands of people are fleeing from the combat zones while the Taliban are now in the capital, Kabul. Along with embassy personnel, even the very few priests, religious men and women who are in Kabul are preparing for their forced return.” †

ABORTION

continued from page 1

‘A lot of chaotic jurisprudence’

In an initial statement following the ruling, Rokita said he was grateful the district court “upheld Indiana’s eminently reasonable laws requiring ultrasounds, limiting surgical abortions to licensed physicians, ensuring pre-abortion counseling sessions are provided by physicians or advanced-practice clinicians, and imposing criminal penalties for violations of abortion laws.”

But he lamented the injunction placed on other provisions in the law, thus contradicting “binding precedent, including a 7th Circuit [appeals court] decision that upheld the very same in-person-counseling Indiana law that the district court invalidated today.”

In an interview with *The Criterion*, Rokita noted the recent ruling “underscores how real this fight is in legal terms, period. We have a real fight on our hands, and these recent rulings—not just Judge Barker’s ruling—point out how

chaotic these rulings are becoming. The precedent doesn’t jive across the country, so judges take liberty by applying facts that would have otherwise been decided against. That leads to a lot of chaotic jurisprudence.”

The attorney general’s filing with the U.S. 7th District Court of Appeals is for a stay against the permanent injunctions. But Rokita is willing to “go to the U.S. Supreme Court if we have to.”

“We’re going to hope that the 7th Circuit recognizes the right of society—a group of people, in this case Hoosiers—who elected representatives as their lawmakers, to respect the laws those representatives make. We don’t find anything Indiana has done as being unconstitutional.”

‘Judicial activism at its absolute worst’

Other pro-life leaders weighed in on the ruling and its impact on pro-life law in Indiana.

“It’s horrible,” Right to Life of Indianapolis President Marc Tuttle told *The Criterion*. “This is a broad-sweeping abuse of judicial power, no doubt about

it. Especially when you look at hospital admissions for abortion past the first trimester. A lot of those laws had been in place for 30 years. This is devastating.”



Marc Tuttle

He said the ruling “opens up abortion on demand without a doctor throughout the state well-past the gestation limits in place now. It also opens the door for abortion clinics to open in Fort Wayne

and Evansville—Planned Parenthood has made no bones about wanting to open in Evansville.”

Mike Fichter, executive director of Indiana Right to Life, agreed.



Mike Fichter

“This is a horrific ruling that will directly lead to a massive expansion of chemical and late-term abortions in Indiana,” he said in a statement.

“The sweeping blockage of these commonsense laws jeopardizes the health and safety of women, leaves women in the dark on issues of fetal pain and the development of human life, and places communities like Fort Wayne and Evansville clearly in the crosshairs for abortion business expansion,” he continued. “This is judicial activism at its absolute worst.”

Other provisions challenged in the case that Barker upheld were requirements that abortion providers maintain admitting privileges with a hospital or a written

agreement with a provider who has such privileges; that minors receive either parental consent or a judicial waiver to receive an abortion; and that patients delay their abortions for at least 18 hours after receiving state-mandated disclosures.

‘Making abortion ... unthinkable’

While Rokita is determined to fight the ruling in court, he noted that the battle is not just legal.

“I continue to believe that at the root of all this, the best solution is going to be not to rest or focus completely on the legal aspect of this fight,” he said. “It’s going to not just be about making abortion illegal or limited, but unthinkable.”

“That’s where the Church comes in. We’ve got to be changing hearts and minds . . . There’s a lot of evidence that elements of the culture are pro-life—we just need to make it the majority. That will bring along judges.”

“We have real opposition, whether it’s Hollywood or media or the nonparochial school system. But our work as a Church and as God-loving people means you don’t have to wait for the attorney general to be in court. The real fight is the hand-to-hand combat of changing hearts and minds.”

For this reason, said Tuttle, the recent decision—which “doesn’t have much in the way of a silver lining”—ultimately does not alter the mission of the pro-life movement.

“Our main mission is to make abortion unthinkable and illegal,” he said. “Abortion is becoming increasingly unpopular in public opinion, and fewer women choose abortion year after year.”

“For the pro-life movement, we need to continue to work to decrease the number of abortions regardless of what the law is.” †

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BIKING

continued from page 1

she rode 120 miles—Emily couldn't stop smiling as she lined up with the other 49 riders who had biked from either Ohio, Alabama, Colorado or Wisconsin for that final-mile trek together.

"Everyone was so tired but full of joy to be there and meet the other people," she recalls. "Riding in together was beautiful, really beautiful."

All her training since February, and all the setbacks along the way, faded in that moment of knowing that everyone had poured everything they had into raising money and awareness to help pregnancy resource centers provide free services to help young women and families in crisis—all with the goal of standing up for the dignity of human life.

At the same time, the pursuit of that goal has led Emily to a personal revelation that continues to guide her.

"Your goal is to transform the culture of life, but I feel like the ride really transforms you," she says. "I definitely came home a different person."

And that's where the full story—the highs, the setbacks, the bonds, the self-discovery—of Emily's life-changing journey begins.

'The ride itself is not easy, but neither is defending life'

Emily was the only cyclist from Indiana when the 600-mile journey to St. Louis began on July 11 in Columbus, Ohio. There, she joined the 15 other members of the eastern route contingent, all between the ages of 18 and 35.

The group included a priest from Virginia and other young adults from California, Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin—all strangers to her and all committed to the pro-life movement.

Emily's passion for that movement has increased since she started working for the archdiocese's Office of Youth Ministry in 2018. Yet while she enjoys endurance sports, she initially resisted the idea of signing up for the national ride of Biking for Babies.

"The more I resisted it, the more the Lord placed people in my life and affirmed that this was something I needed to do—to help me grow as a

person," she says. "I felt called to be a witness for my community.

"Post-ride, as I look back on that, I know preparing for the ride was not easy, and I know the ride itself was not easy, but neither is defending life."

Her use of the words "not easy"—and the reality of what she endured and overcame before the ride and during it—shows just how deep her commitment is.

A few weeks before the journey began, she hyperextended an ankle, and the injury was bad enough to sideline her training and make her worry that she wouldn't be able to ride.

And when she recovered to start the journey, a combination of dehydration, physical sickness and a touch of vertigo limited the miles

she was able to ride the first two days. Still, even as she continued to struggle, she got back on the bike for the ride from Dayton to Indianapolis, gutting out about 60 miles on that part of the trip.

"It was very important to me to be on the bike coming to Indianapolis," she says. "This was something I wanted to share with my friends and family. I pulled myself together to finish in Indianapolis."

Yet that stretch of the ride also took its physical and mental toll on her, making her do the last thing she wanted to do.

'There's a lot of humility and redemptive suffering'

As the other riders continued on to Terre Haute the next morning, Emily stayed behind in Indianapolis, focusing on regaining her strength and energy. She spent two days at home, catching up on sleep, pounding the fluids and fighting the doubts.

"I was expecting to be tired that week. I wasn't expecting to have as many issues as I had," she says. "So there were definitely times of just feeling really desolate."

In the midst of having those feelings, she received a message from one of her teammates on the eastern route. The teammate told her, "Emily, I know this was really hard for you to do, but I think this was so mature of you to step away."

She viewed it as a great compliment and another sign of the tremendous bond that the riders and the support group had formed in just a few days. She thought again about how her teammates had been there for her when she became ill.

"In those moments when you can't control anything, you go back to prayer and just seeing the face of Christ in others as they take care of you," she says. "To say, 'I need water, I need a break,' there's a lot of trust that goes into that. I think the Lord really protected our route during those moments.

"For me, going into the ride, I was very focused on the miles and accomplishing those. But that didn't happen. When you're not 100 percent yourself and you have to rely on people—especially people you've never met before—and they take care of you, that was something that was really, really beautiful."

She did her best to return the favor. As she recuperated at home, she prayed constantly for everyone on the ride and affirmed them with her messages. And when she had regained her strength, there was no doubt in her mind that she wanted and needed to return to the ride.

"There's a lot of



During a stop amid the national ride for Biking for Babies, Emily Mastronicola kneels in prayer at the Blessed Sacrament Chapel of SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis on July 13. (Submitted photo)

humility and redemptive suffering with that," she says. "Even Jesus fell three times and he was able to get back up. The important thing when you do fall is to get back up, not to stay down.

"What gets you back up on the bike after you fall is remembering who you are riding for. You're doing this crazy, massive thing to raise awareness. You're doing it for a place for families to go for counseling, for somebody to go for a pregnancy test. The ride is beautiful, but you're doing it for these pregnancy resource centers—to advocate for them and the services they offer."

'I just felt so loved'

When Emily rejoined her group near Springfield, Ill., all of them rushed to meet her, wrapping her in hugs. And their joy soared when she told them that she was there to ride with them on the final leg of the journey to St. Louis the next day.

The smiles continued the following morning when she gave each of them a pair of socks featuring the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe—the patroness of unborn children. Everyone put them on before they began the ride together.

"Being in Springfield with them, that was just beautiful," she says. "I got up that Saturday morning, didn't have any problems, and I couldn't stop smiling on the bike. I knew for a lot of that day I wanted to try to lead more in the front—to give them a break because they had been riding all that week, and they were very tired."

She rode 120 miles that day, including 15 up those daunting hills, all the miles leading to another defining moment when her eastern group met up

with the teams from the south, west and north.

Emily gets emotional as she shares that moment.

"When we were with the team from the northern route, I had several people that I had never met before come up and say, 'Emily, we have been praying for you. We know it has been so hard for you.'

"I'm the type of person who prays for other people, and just to have complete strangers come up to you and say they've been praying for you, I just felt so loved."

Wiping her eyes, she continues, "I talked about how I wanted to do this ride to be a witness to my community in Indianapolis. But honestly, I just became part of a whole new community as well, Biking for Babies. I'm truly blessed to be a part of the people I've met through it."

Now, she hopes her efforts—and the efforts of everyone who was a part of the national ride of Biking for Babies—will benefit many people she will likely never meet: the young women and families in crisis who benefit from pregnancy resource centers, the children whose parents choose life.

"Going forth, the ride is only the beginning," she says. "The mission continues as we restore a culture of life—within ourselves, our communities and the world."

(To support Emily's fundraising efforts for Biking for Babies, donations can be made online at cutt.ly/Bike4Babies. Checks may also be made payable to Biking for Babies, PO Box 644, St. Charles, MO, 63302. Please write "Emily Mastronicola" in the memo line. †

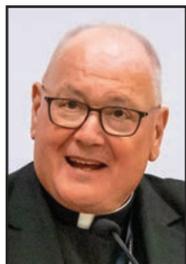


Emily Mastronicola shares a moment of joy with her parents, Deb and Norm Mastronicola, during a stop in Indianapolis on July 13 amid the national ride of Biking for Babies. (Submitted photo)

Justice Department drops conscience case; move called ‘dereliction’ of duty

WASHINGTON (CNS)—The chairmen of the U.S. bishops’ religious liberty and pro-life committees said on Aug. 12 that the U.S. Department of Justice “is acting in dereliction of its duty to enforce the plain meaning of federal law” by voluntarily dismissing a civil lawsuit against a hospital that forced nurses to assist in elective abortions against their religious beliefs.

“It is hard to imagine a more horrific civil rights violation than being forced to take an innocent human life,” said Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan of New York, chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Committee (USCCB) for Religious Liberty, and Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann of Kansas City, Kan., chairman of the USCCB’s Committee on Pro-Life Activities.



Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan

“This is not only deeply wrong, but a violation of federal law,” they said. “We call on the administration to stand up for the basic dignity of our nation’s health care workers

by reopening this case, and on Congress to pass the Conscience Protection Act so that doctors and nurses can defend their own rights in court.”

The Justice Department said it was dropping a case against the University of Vermont Medical Center that the department had brought in

December 2020, under the Trump administration, after the Office for Civil Rights in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) found that the medical center forced a nurse to participate in an elective abortion.



Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann

“Plaintiff United States notices dismissal of this action,” stated a filing submitted on July 30 by Jonathan Ophardt, the acting U.S. attorney for Vermont, and

Matthew Donnelly, an attorney with the Justice Department’s Washington-based Civil Rights Division.

The Justice Department’s lawsuit came in the wake of a notice of violation issued by the HHS Office for Civil Rights in August 2019 after “a thorough investigation and prolonged attempts to resolve the matter.”

In that notice, the HHS Office for Civil Rights asked the hospital to take corrective action to conform its policies with federal statutes or face legal action.

According to the complaint when the suit was filed, the University of Vermont Medical Center had scheduled approximately 10 nurses with registered conscience objections to assist with nearly 20 abortion procedures.

Lawyers for the plaintiff cited the Church Amendment to 1973’s Public Health Service Act, which declared



An American flag waves outside the Department of Justice Building in Washington on Dec. 2, 2020. (CNS photo/Tom Brenner, Reuters)

that hospitals or individuals’ receipt of federal funds in various health programs did not require them to participate in abortion and sterilization procedures, and forbade hospitals to make willingness or unwillingness to perform these procedures a condition of employment.

In the Vermont case, HHS found that the medical center “not only engages in such discrimination, but on one occasion even deliberately deceived and coerced a nurse into assisting in an abortion,” according to a USCCB news release.

In a letter to U.S. Attorney General Merrick Garland and HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra, 84 House members—led by three co-chairs of the House Congressional Pro-Life Caucus—called the suit’s dismissal “a profound miscarriage of justice.”

They expressed deep concern over the Biden administration’s “coordinated decision to seek a voluntary dismissal in the lawsuit against the University of Vermont Medical Center for knowingly, willfully and repeatedly

violating federal conscience-protection laws.”

The letter was written by Rep. Andy Harris, R-Md., a Catholic and a physician, and it was signed by fellow caucus chairs, who also are Catholic, Reps. Chris Smith, R-N.J., and Kat Cammack, R-Fla.

“Your handling of this case is ... a rejection of your commitment to enforce federal conscience laws for Americans of all religious beliefs and creeds—and especially for doctors, nurses and other health care professionals who object to abortion,” House members told Garland and Becerra.

The letter’s signatories also cited the Church Amendment and said: “Your actions signal to employers all around the country that they don’t need to comply with the law because your agencies will not enforce it.”

These actions “also signal that this administration would rather allow consciences to be violated at the behest of the abortion lobby rather than enforce the law and protect religious liberty,” they added. †

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HOSPITALS

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the argument that it is a personal choice not to get vaccinated.

That choice, she said, “puts others in harm’s way.”

The work that CHA members have been doing since the vaccines became available in the U.S. continues, that is letting people know about them and not only providing the vaccines but making sure people have transportation to get to

where they were offered.

But months since the vaccines have been available, there are still barriers to overcome.

A new one that the Mercy sister has seen she believes stems from increased isolation brought on by the pandemic.

She said people feel removed from others and have taken on the attitude of “this doesn’t impact me” about getting vaccinated or even following mandates for vaccines or masks.

But as she points out: “This is impacting all of us.” †

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Relief workers: Haiti earthquake complicated by economy, gangs, weather

MIAMI (CNS)—Relief workers in Haiti said the Aug. 14 earthquake might not be as catastrophic as the 2010 quake that was closer to the capital, but recovery will be complicated because the quake came on the heels of July's presidential assassination, of an economic and ongoing political crisis, the coronavirus pandemic and an active storm season now underway.

Fonie Pierre, a public health professional who heads operations in the region for the U.S.-based Catholic Relief Services (CRS), lives in Les Cayes, Haiti's third-largest city and one of the hardest hit by the earthquake magnitude 7.2 earthquake. She told Catholic News Service (CNS) she and her daughter fled their home during the earthquake and have joined neighbors in living outdoors for the foreseeable future.

CRS staffers are reporting widespread damage to buildings and homes as area hospitals have been overwhelmed by the disaster, pushing them to capacity and forcing them to turn away people in need. The major road connecting Les Cayes to Jérémie is impassable due to landslides and cracks on the road.

"My house is OK, but there are many cracks, and we cannot stay inside—we stayed the night outside with the neighbors and are living in solidarity as many households," Pierre told CNS by phone on Aug. 15.

The local hospital in Les Cayes, she said, does not have capacity to receive so many injured people, while other medical centers in the south are trying to offer help "but it is difficult for them to find materials, doctors, nurses and human resources to manage this situation," Pierre said.

Fear of aftershocks and further earthquakes mean that she and her neighbors are planning to live outdoors for as much as a month or so, even as tropical storms threaten the region. Tropical depression Grace was predicted to reach Haiti late on Aug. 16, bringing the potential for torrential rain, flooding and landslides.

While the full extent of the Aug. 14

earthquake is far from fully known, Pierre said history will probably record the 2010 earthquake in Port-au-Prince as far more tragic, with many more people living closely together in densely built urban neighborhoods in the nation's capital. More than 300,000 people were killed and another 1.3 million left without homes following the magnitude 7 earthquake in 2010.

The Haitian civil protection service reported on Aug. 17 that more than 1,400 people had been killed, more than 6,900 were injured and more than 30,250 families needed shelter.

CRS indicated it was sending teams to provide clean water, sanitation, shelter and emergency supplies to an area that was still recovering from the devastation caused by Hurricane Matthew in 2016, as well as drought and two subsequent tropical storms.

Pierre told CNS she understands at least one of her local CRS staff had lost a family member during the earthquake, and others sustained some injuries. Recovery operations were complicated further not only by roads blocked by earthquake damage but by a dangerous, gang-controlled route that connects the south of Haiti to Port-au-Prince.

"And we still have COVID and all the political and social situations," Pierre said.

Fiammetta Cappellini, Haiti-based country representative for the Milan-based AVSI, told CNS by phone on Aug. 14 that she traveled from Port-au-Prince to Les Cayes earlier that day. She estimated that some 30% of the buildings were severely impacted by the earthquake.

"All the people are on the street, and night is approaching, and people will be passing the night on the road in the streets; we have a lot of seismic [aftershocks], and so it is dangerous to enter buildings at this time," Cappellini said.

"The Catholic community here has experienced a lot of churches and Catholic schools in the area that went down—that worries us a lot, because education is maybe the only way out for this country, and now again we face



Members of a rescue and protection team clean debris from a house in Les Cayes, Haiti, on Aug. 15 following a magnitude 7.2 earthquake the previous day. (CNS photo/Ralph Tedy Erol, Reuters)

a closed-school situation impossible to manage," Cappellini said. "And so this is a very hard [situation] long term."

AVSI operates some five major projects with 50 to 60 staff in southern Haiti, she said. She told CNS that during staff meetings "we heard a lot of stories which were difficult to hear: They saw neighbors hit by the earthquake, and they told us about children dying in their houses in the arms of their mothers trying to rescue them. It is very hard to hear these kinds of stories."

AVSI, she said, will focus on providing materials for temporary housing and prioritize pregnant women with children and women with large families.

"Humanitarian activities could be badly impacted by wars among gangs in this area," she said, adding that she and at least one other relief agency were able to pass through the region on Aug. 14. "Absolutely, gang violence will absolutely negatively impact our ability to respond to this catastrophe."

Cappellini agrees with the assessment that the 2010 earthquake near Port-au-Prince will be remembered as far more

deadly and destructive, simply due to the miles and miles of housing clusters that collapsed onto each other at that time.

"The situation [today] is very difficult, but it seems absolutely not like the same scale of destruction we knew in 2010—absolutely not," she told CNS.

"This is a rural area around the cities of Les Cayes and Jérémie, and a lot of people were affected, but the rest of the region is rural areas with small houses not touching one to another," Cappellini said.

She worries that a lack of authority and governance in the country following the presidential assassination in July will negatively impact the ability of the government to respond to the earthquake.

"Also, there is a lack of everything, including food, in-kind items and so on, and we are expecting local and government authorities not to be so strong in their capacity to answer this emergency," Cappellini said. "It is difficult to predict the future, but probably we expect a very difficult period over the next months in responding to this new emergency." †

HAITI

continued from page 1

assembled for a baptism, were killed in Immaculate Conception Church of Les Anglais.

The Haitian civil protection service reported on Aug. 17 that nearly 1,400 people had been killed, more than 6,900 were injured and more than 30,250 families needed shelter. Those numbers were expected to rise as a tropical depression headed toward the island. The civil protection agency warned people to expect strong winds, landslides and flooding in addition to heavy rain and rough seas.

At the Vatican on Aug. 15, Pope Francis expressed his condolences and closeness to the Haitian people.

"While I lift up my prayer to the Lord for the victims, I extend my word of encouragement to the survivors, hoping that the interest of the international community to help might move toward them," the pope said during his *Angelus* address. Leading pilgrims in praying a "Hail Mary" for Haiti, the pope prayed that the "solidarity of all alleviate the consequences of the tragedy."

Bishop Joseph Gontrand Décoste of Jérémie also

called on the international Catholic community for help to rebuild. The diocesan cathedral's roof was ripped off for the second time in less than five years.

"The population is desperate and beleaguered. They are sleeping outside under the trees, in open public spaces, to protect themselves from aftershocks arriving every few hours," Bishop Décoste told Vatican News a few hours after the earthquake struck, damaging road infrastructure and effectively cutting off the area from the rest of the country.

"We are in distress. We are counting on your solidarity, your proximity."

"On this day when we celebrate the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we ask her to sow hope in the heart of a people so harshly tried by this powerful earthquake," Bishop Décoste said.

Shortly after the news of the quake, Archbishop Jose H. Gomez of Los Angeles, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, urged people to help by contributing to Catholic Relief Services (CRS), the U.S. bishops' relief and development agency. CRS works in Haiti and partners with Caritas, the international umbrella organization for the Church's charitable agencies. He also offered prayers for those who had lost loved ones.

"We offer our prayers to Archbishop Launay Saturné, president of the bishops' conference of Haiti, and to all those who tirelessly serve the faith communities in Haiti. We stand in solidarity with the Church in Haiti," Archbishop Gomez said.

In just the Diocese of Jérémie, the Catholic charitable agency Caritas reported the total destruction of the parish church in Corail.

In Les Cayes, next door to the bishop's residence, a Catholic radio station was unharmed, but the Sacred Heart Parish Church, also in Les Cayes, was destroyed.

Further south, on the dusty road that leads toward the westernmost point of the island at Anse d'Hainault, a deep fissure in the road at Port-à-Piment cut off the remote region from the rest of the country. Other church structures were reported damaged, including Our Lady of the Rosary Church in Port-à-Piment and a dispensary in the neighboring town of Roche-à-Bateau.

In Cavaillon, northeast of Les Cayes, the parish church of Our Lady of Perpetual Help was destroyed, as were the town hall and the police station.

St. Anne's Church in Anse-à-Veau was also severely damaged, and St. Peter's Church in Barraderes collapsed. †



A member of the Cuban Medical Brigade treats an injured man in Jérémie, Haiti, on Aug. 15 after a magnitude 7.2 earthquake the previous day. (CNS photo/Cuban Medical Brigade via Reuters)

Here is where to donate to help agencies respond to the Haiti earthquake

Numerous organizations, including Catholic agencies, are accepting donations to assist with emergency response to the Haiti earthquake.

They include:

- Catholic Relief Services: online: crs.org; by phone: 877-435-7277 from 8 a.m. to 11 p.m. Eastern; by mail: P.O. Box 17090, Baltimore, Maryland, 21297-0303.
- Catholic Medical Mission Board: cutt.ly/CMMBHaiti (case sensitive).
- CAFOD, the Catholic aid

agency for England and Wales: cutt.ly/CAFODHaiti (case sensitive).

—Caritas Internationalis: cutt.ly/CaritasHaiti (case sensitive).

—AVSI, the Italian humanitarian relief and development organization: cutt.ly/AVSIHaiti (case sensitive).

—Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Miami: ccadm.org.

—Cross Catholic Outreach: www.crosscatholic.org.

—Food for the Poor: foodforthepeople.org. †

Worship and Evangelization Outreach/Ken Ogorek

Invite small group to discuss 'United in the Eucharist'

One factor that can hold folks back from joining a small group at their parish is concern about making a long-term commitment. A timely resource from the archdiocese, its recently launched "United in the Eucharist" initiative, can help address this concern—while encouraging consistent attendance at Mass.



United in the Eucharist

On the webpage archindy.org/UnitedInTheEucharist, you'll find six very brief videos with an eye toward helping folks appreciate what a privilege and gift it is to have access to holy Mass each weekend. Along with these 3- to 4-minute witness talks are a few questions for reflection and discussion.

In just three to six sessions, a small group of parishioners could have an opportunity for connecting, learning and sharing. No need to sign up for an indefinite stretch of time; this is an opportunity for saying yes to an experience with a definite expiration date.

Like, Comment, Share

Each of these brief videos is well-suited for sharing on social media. If your parish isn't already using these resources to encourage a greater desire for the Eucharist and holy Mass, you might

suggest that easy action step.

If you make use of social media, you could share these engaging, brief witness talks. The webpage also has Spanish-language resources, and each witness talk can be captioned in a variety of languages by using simple instructions on the webpage.

Prayerful Reflection, Interesting Discussion

Among the discussion questions on the "United in the Eucharist" page are:

"The song Sister quotes says 'No joy can be complete until at last I sit by your side.' How does attending Mass and receiving the Eucharist allow you to sit at the side of Jesus in a unique and irreplaceable way?"

Wondering who "Sister" is? Visit the webpage for the answer to this mystery.

Prayerful Gratitude

The webpage includes a brief prayer written for this effort to help inspire a deep desire for the holy Eucharist and attending Sunday Mass consistently. And because discussion questions often lead to additional questions about our faith, links related to various Mass- and Eucharist-related topics are included.

Oftentimes, folks are grateful for the experience of a small group that meets for a small number of sessions initially. Many of these participants express an openness to continuing in a small, faith-related group. Our archdiocesan evangelization office is a great source of guidance for

establishing and sustaining a discipleship group ministry at your parish.

So reach out to a small group of friends, neighbors and fellow parishioners, inviting them to plug into a few discussions based on these "United in the Eucharist" resources. This prayer will help your efforts be successful:

Heavenly Father,
You love us and desire our happiness.
You give us the privilege and gift of worshipping you at Holy Mass;
of experiencing the Holy Spirit in a unique and irreplaceable way;
of receiving Jesus in the Most Holy Eucharist.

As we return to the Eucharist with joy renew in us a deep appreciation of the privileged opportunity that each celebration of Mass presents for us all.

May the seeds of mercy, hope and salvation take root and flourish in our hearts and communities,
nourished by our Lord Jesus present to us in the Most Holy Eucharist.

Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

(Ken Ogorek is the director of the archdiocesan Office of Catechesis. E-mail him at kogorek@archindy.org.) †

Window Seat Wisdom/

Katie Prejean McGrady

Let the consumer beware

Within 24 hours of the opening ceremony of the Tokyo Olympics, my almost 4-year-old daughter asked me if she could take a gymnastics class. Then she wanted to begin swimming lessons (finally). Then she asked if we could buy a horse. And just the other morning, she wanted to put on her sneakers so she could go "run like the fast girls" in the driveway.



We had the television regularly tuned to the Olympic competitions, and since the games ended, I've found different replays and commentary available on Peacock that I'm sure we'll put on to watch again.

With every sport we watched, from speed climbing to fencing to artistic gymnastics to track and field events to my personal favorites, horse dressage and swimming, Rose sat riveted, asking all sorts of questions about the athletes, the game, and if she can try to do it herself.

I've got more videos than I can count of her attempting to do a cartwheel with Suni Lee's floor routine playing in the background. As we watched the closing ceremonies, Rose said, "I loved learning all these sports. I want to try them all."

There's a desire in little kids to imitate what they see, whether it's athletes competing at the Olympics, cartoon dogs from "Bluey" playing a game with their dad, or a song and dance routine from the latest Netflix show with kids who morph into ninjas to solve neighborhood problems.

They're sponges, taking in what they see, hear, watch and read, absorbing it all and then turning around and repeating it, sometimes correctly, sometimes amusingly, but always with scary accuracy that makes me more closely watch the shows we put on and the songs we play.

The other day, Rose dropped her cup of water, and as it splashed everywhere, she called herself a loser. I hurriedly told her she was of course not a loser, and then asked where she heard that word. When she said, "The mean bird in *Rio* called another bird that," I realized maybe we needed to take a break from that movie. It's not just kids who absorb, though. Young and impressionable, children take in sights and sounds and spit them back out, but adults do as well.

The company we keep, perhaps gossipy and mean-spirited, can influence our thoughts about others. The shows we watch, sometimes in stark contrast to what we believe as Catholics, can make us question if our faith is outdated or wrong.

The social media profiles we follow, sometimes making us jealous, forcing us to constantly compare ourselves to what so and so has or does, can drive us to a place of covetousness and lack of gratitude for our own blessings.

We have to be careful, making sure what we take in does not then, in turn, change the type of life we long to live or drag us further from our faith. Unless, of course, the things we take in—the things and people we allow to influence us—are leading us closer to holiness.

Then, by the grace of God, we want those things and people to help us become better, more prayerful, generous, virtuous people who can in turn positively influence others to pursue sanctity too.

As we are careful, watching closely what we absorb, we can be diligent in finding things that build us up, help grow our faith, and lead us to a vision of heaven as we live life on Earth.

Whether the Olympics (the Beijing Winter Games are just around the corner),

See MCGRADY, page 15

That All May Be One/Fr. Rick Ginther

Festival of Faiths, Week of Prayer are opportunities for unity

Remember when you were 9 years old? I do. It was a marker in my family. You not only learned how to ride a bicycle, but in my case I received a boy's bike, a 24-inch Schwinn! It was rapture for that boy back then.



Nine years is a long time for a child. For the interfaith community of greater Indianapolis, nine years is a milestone.

In 2013, the Center for Interfaith Cooperation offered the inaugural Festival of Faiths. It was a first-of-a-kind gathering of the many religions in greater Indianapolis.

The first gathering worked! From it sprung an annual gathering of booths, vendors and those clad in their ethnic or

religious garb. It is a colorful pageantry laid out in Veterans Plaza in Indianapolis. (One year we were in the Indiana War Memorial due to torrential rains, and last year we were virtual.)

Thematic focus helps to demonstrate the oneness of human and religious experience in our diversity. Those themes have included: Milestones; History of Religions in Indiana; Sacred Migrations, Sacred Journeys; Embracing Religious Diversity; and To Know Your Neighbor.

This year's theme is Sharing Gifts of Faith: Compassion, Resilience and Hope. It's a timely theme for this age of uncertainty and division.

Another article about the Festival of Faiths will be featured in *The Criterion* in early September. Until then, please save this time and date: 1-5 p.m. on Sunday, Sept. 26, at Veterans Memorial Plaza between North Meridian and North Pennsylvania streets, and Michigan and North streets.

In five months, January will be upon us. Each year, Jan. 18-25 is designated by the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Church's Faith and Order Commission as "The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity."

This past January, because of the pandemic, a virtual

prayer service was celebrated at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis. In 2022, the hope is to have once again the in-person celebration at a location yet to be determined with livestreaming.

Why is this annual prayer service so important? A quote from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) Office of Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs helps answer that question:

A divided Christianity is a scandal to the world and the movement of the Holy Spirit calls for the restoration of unity.

Underlying the Catholic Church's pursuit of ecumenism is the recognition that despite the separation, elements of the Church can exist outside the visible boundaries of the Catholic Church. Thus, it can even be said that the Church's pursuit of ecumenism is another way of expressing her radical catholicity or universality.

These elements are the imperfect realization of unity that already exists in Jesus Christ as part of the one Church of Christ. The unity of Christians is understood as the manifestation of their communion with God the Father through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit.

Gathering to pray is a means by which Christians acknowledge the imperfections of this moment in time. And together, we acknowledge our longing for full unity.

While "[e]cumenical dialogue, the search for full, visible unity is ... essential to the Christian life," theological dialogue is beyond all but a few. And so, witness of our longing for unity through our presence to one another in prayer is what we all can do.

Our presence at the Festival of Faiths and at the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity are both gifts of faith for ourselves and our world.

(Father Rick 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.) †

Faith at Home/Laura Kelly Fanucci

How to answer your children when prayers go unanswered

When I was 11 years old, wrestling with my brother's recent death, the new parish priest came bounding into our religion class one afternoon. He announced that he would take our questions (submitted anonymously) to answer in his next homily.

When the all-school Mass arrived and the priest approached the ambo to proclaim the

Gospel, my heart started beating wildly. Which questions would he pick? Did

anyone ask anything like mine?

To my shock, he pulled out a piece of paper and unfolded the loose-leaf on which I'd poured my questions: "Does God really hear us when we pray? Then why doesn't God answer our prayers?"

To this day, I cannot remember the particulars of the priest's response. What mattered to me most was that he heard my question and was willing to wonder about it alongside me.

He told me—and a church full of children—that doubting God or struggling with prayer was not a failure but held the heart of faith.

After writing about grief and loss, I often

receive questions from parents. How do I explain prayer to my child, they ask, when it looks like our prayers weren't answered?

No easy answers exist for the problem of suffering. Countless theologians have written about theodicy (why God permits evil), yet each believer stumbles into the same thorny questions: Why doesn't God intervene in the world in the ways we want? How could a good God let people suffer?

Scripture tells us that God will not give us bad things in response to our requests (Mt 7:9-11). Yet the gifts we are given and the fruits of our prayer are not always what we wanted. We asked for one thing

See FANUCCI, page 15

Twenty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time/Msgr. Owen F. Campion

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, August 22, 2021

- Joshua 24:1-2a, 15-17, 18b
- Ephesians 5:21-32
- John 6:60-69

The Book of Joshua, the source for the first reading for Mass this weekend, looks at the period in the history of God's people when Joshua led them after the death of Moses.

Even though these connections may seem to be clear, biblical scholars disagree about the exact date of this period as well as the time of this book's composition.

This much is clear: Hebrew history was not written as much to chronicle events and happenings as to chart the people's religious response to God's revelation.

In this reading, Joshua gathers all the people at Shechem, along with the leaders of the people, the senior members, the judges and the warriors. He puts before this assembly a blunt and fundamental question: Do they wish to follow God or not?

The people cry out that they wish to follow God. Although on occasion they rebelled, God brought them out of Egypt and protected them as they made their weary and dangerous way across the Sinai Peninsula.

For its second reading, this weekend's liturgy turns to St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians. Not uncommonly, this reading is cited as reinforcing the subjugation of women, once so prevalent, since wives are admonished to obey their husbands.

Knowing the context of this passage is essential to understanding it. Marriage among pagans in the Roman Empire was quite removed from modern ideals for marriage. Wives were little more than glorified slaves, virtually going to the highest bidder. They had no rights.

Understandably, many marriages were very troubled. Spouses often detested each other, and wives were abused.

This epistle, a classic Christian reflection on human living, calls for a different style of marriage. Using lofty examples to describe marriage, Paul speaks of the union between Christ and the Church.

At the time, these ideas were revolutionary. They established the dignity of women. Christ loves and redeems all people equally, male and female.

In the culture of the time, husbands were responsible for the well-being of families. Husbands ruled. Wives meekly followed. Paul taught that marriage was made up of the union and mutual cooperation, fidelity and respect of spouses. Husbands and wives should love their each other with the same unqualified self-sacrificing love with which Christ loves the Church.

St. John's Gospel furnishes the last reading.

In preceding verses, Jesus spoke about the "bread of life" (Jn 6:48). He is the bread of life. After Jesus spoke about himself in this way, many of his disciples walked away. People even today find this

Daily Readings

Monday, August 23

St. Rose of Lima, virgin
1 Thessalonians 1:1-5, 8b-10
Psalm 149:1b-6a, 9b
Matthew 23:13-22

Tuesday, August 24

St. Bartholomew, Apostle
Revelation 21:9b-14
Psalm 145:10-13, 17-18
John 1:45-51

Wednesday, August 25

St. Louis
St. Joseph Calasanz, priest
1 Thessalonians 2:9-13
Psalm 139:7-12b
Matthew 23:27-32

Thursday, August 26

1 Thessalonians 3:7-13
Psalm 90:3-5a, 12-14, 17
Matthew 24:42-51

Friday, August 27

St. Monica
1 Thessalonians 4:1-8
Psalm 97:1-2b, 5-6, 10-12
Matthew 25:1-13

Saturday, August 28

St. Augustine, bishop and doctor of the Church
1 Thessalonians 4:9-11
Psalm 98:1, 7-9
Matthew 25:14-30

Sunday, August 29

Twenty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time
Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-8
Psalm 15:2-5
James 1:17-18, 21b-22, 27
Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23



at least a puzzling statement.

Critical to the story is the fact that the Twelve Apostles did not desert Jesus. The Lord asked them to look deeply into their hearts. Would they walk away with the others?

St. Peter responds for the Apostles with a magnificent expression of faith. Saluting Jesus as "God's holy one," the Messiah, in itself a powerful testimony, Peter says, "Lord, you have the words of eternal life" (Jn 6:68-69).

Reflection

The Church for weeks has called us to realize our limitations as human beings, and it also has reassured us that God's mercy, love and power lavishly assists

humans. We will not be left helplessly to face our needs.

For instance, we risk starvation, spiritually as well as physically. We cannot produce food on our own. God comes to us with the bread of everlasting life. Jesus is the bread of life.

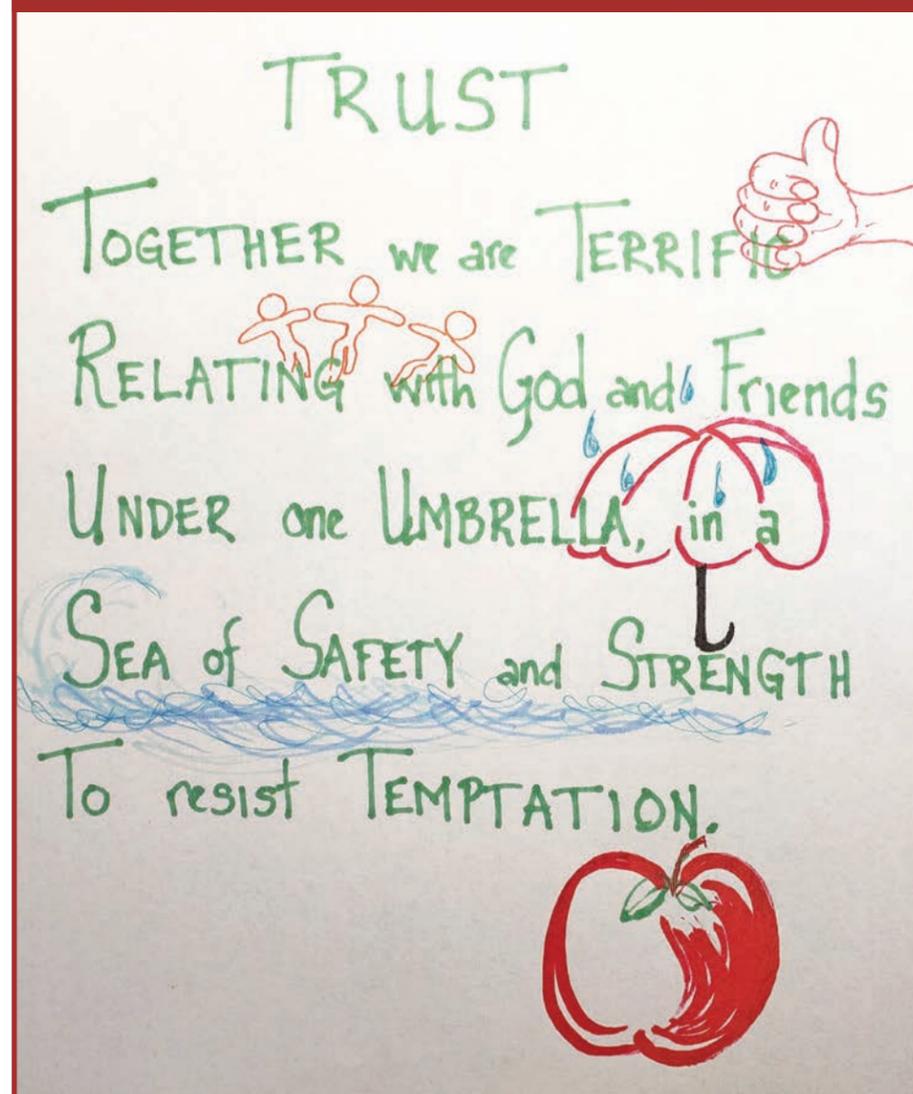
We must decide ourselves either to accept this bread or to reject it. Many rejected Jesus in the Gospel stories and later.

Fully realizing their need for the Lord, the solitary source of genuine life, the Apostles are examples to follow.

As Peter declared for them, Jesus alone has the words of eternal life.

The Lord redeems us all, equal in God's love and in God's plan for salvation, if we ask for eternal life. †

My Journey to God



(This poem was written communally by a group of Catholics who attended the 2021 Special Religious Development [SPRED] retreat at the Benedict Inn & Conference Center in Beech Grove on Aug. 7-8. As a retreat activity, four separate groups of retreatants and volunteers each created an acrostic poem by thinking of words that started with the letters of a primary word. Benedictine Sister Cathy Anne Lepore then copied and decorated each poem. The additional poems will run in future editions of The Criterion. This poem was created by Theresa Chamblee, Ruth Dean, Michael Hoffman, Joseph Lorenz, Steve Mailloux, Patty Ochoa, Linda Palmer and Jessica Reed.)

Question Corner/Fr. Kenneth Doyle

The Church does not forbid priests from growing beards or long hair

QA few years ago, our pastor who was in his 70s retired and was replaced by a priest in his 30s. At the time our new priest



was clean-cut, with short hair and no beard.

Shortly after arriving, though, he appeared to quit grooming and let his hair and beard grow, and they've been growing ever since.

Now his hair is way over his ears and down his back, and his beard is to his waist.

We all assumed that this was some kind of anti-COVID-19 measure, but COVID-19 has vanished from our parish and things are back to normal.

Could this be some sort of vow of poverty? The priest avoids questions about his grooming, but it has become a distraction at Mass. (Location withheld)

As to your question whether this priest's long hair represents a vow of poverty, I doubt that this is the case—but the only sure route is to ask the priest himself.

You probably know that there is no present Church disciplinary regulation that forbids priests from having beards or long hair, so your priest is on a safe canonical path.

The former *Code of Canon Law* (in 1917) did require clerics to have a simple hairstyle but did not specifically forbid beards; the current code (issued in 1983) specifies that clerics are to wear suitable ecclesiastical garb, but makes no mention of hair or beards.

During the 16th and 17th centuries, popes were frequently bearded, but since that time there has been no bearded pope. Some notable saints wore beards, including Ignatius of Loyola, Francis de Sales and Philip Neri.

I guess my advice to you would be to set

aside your own preference as to this priest's appearance and just be grateful, especially during the current shortage of priests, that there is one to serve your parish.

QFor the past year, I have been striving for a stronger Catholic faith. Before, I guess I would say that I was a lukewarm Catholic. I was married in a Methodist church and divorced 30 years ago through no fault of my own.

I have always received holy Communion. Is this wrong? I have been reading different Catholic opinions. (Ohio)

AFor the purpose of this answer, I am going to assume that you never received the Catholic Church's permission to marry in a Methodist church.

The possibility does exist, of course, that you might have received the necessary dispensation to be married in a Methodist ceremony, especially if you were marrying a Methodist, but since you did not mention that, I am going to assume that your marriage took place without Catholic permission.

If that is the case, that marriage would have violated Catholic teaching and would therefore have required either that you had the marriage convalidated in the Catholic Church or that you receive absolution in the sacrament of penance once that marriage had broken up.

If you did in fact confess this, then you have been correct in receiving holy Communion in the Catholic Church.

If, instead, you never confessed this, all you would need to do now is to make a worthy confession; then, going forward, you would be eligible to take Communion in the Catholic Church.

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

Rest in peace

Please submit in writing to our office by 10 a.m. Thursday before the week of publication; be sure to state date of death. Obituaries of archdiocesan priests serving our archdiocese are listed elsewhere in *The Criterion*. Order priests and religious sisters and brothers are included here, unless they are natives of the archdiocese or have other connections to it; those are separate obituaries on this page.

ALVA, Cathleen R., 57, Holy Spirit, Indianapolis, July 15. Wife of Richard Alva. Mother of Angelina Bautista, Alisa Thomas, Ariana, Ali and Giovanni Alva. Sister of Cindy Miller. Grandmother of eight.

BANSCHBACH, John F., 95, St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception, Aurora, Aug. 6. Husband of Margaret Banschbach. Father of Diane Christian, Debbie Jackson, Milissa Wallace, Fred, Greg, Jeffrey, John and Rick Banschbach. Brother of Rita Leone and Mary Mitchell. Grandfather of 13. Great-grandfather of 14.

CLAPPER, Richard L., 62, St. Roch, Indianapolis, Dec. 26, 2020. Son of Richard and Marsha Clapper. Brother of David and Mark Clapper. Uncle of several.

CLAPPER, Richard L., 84, St. Roch, Indianapolis, July 1. Husband of Marsha Clapper. Father of David and Mark Clapper. Grandfather of three.

DAY, Eileen J., 79, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, New Albany, July 30. Wife of Raymond Day. Mother of Jennifer Martin. Sister of Denise Coons. Grandmother of two.

DRUMMOND, James, 91, Christ the King, Indianapolis, July 29. Husband of Diane Drummond. Father of David,

Hugh and Thomas Drummond. Grandfather of five. Great-grandfather of seven.

FESSEL, Jerome, 89, St. Joseph, Corydon, Aug. 4. Husband of Cheryl Fessel. Father of Deborah Moore, Judith Reed, Allen Fessel and Neil and Rick McClure. Brother of Carolyn and Mary Catherine Schueler and Margaret Smith. Grandfather of nine. Great-grandfather of 17.

HILTS, Richard A., 92, Christ the King, Indianapolis, Aug. 5. Father of Anne Queisser and Richard Hilt. Grandfather of seven. Great-grandfather of nine.

HUMMELL, Virginia R., 92, Holy Family, Oldenburg, Aug. 8. Mother of Gloria Cowin and Mark Hummell. Sister of Melvin Paul. Grandmother of eight. Great-grandmother of 25. Great-great-grandmother of 12.

JACKSON, Hilda, 64, Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Indianapolis, July 22. Wife of Frank Jackson. Mother of Jennifer, Shannon and William. Grandmother of several.

JOHNSON, Kyle R., 36, St. Roch, Indianapolis, Aug. 1. Father of Kyle Johnson and Robbie Phelps. Son of Bradley and Mary Beth Johnson. Brother of Elizabeth Loy, Erica McHugh, Alex Johnson and Patrick Kelly. Uncle of several.

JONES, Jennifer A., 77, St. Mark the Evangelist, Indianapolis, Aug. 7. Sister of Wilma Cross. Aunt and great-aunt of several.

OEFFINGER, Richard G., 91, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, New Albany, Aug. 4. Husband of Brenda Oeffinger. Father of Kristin Hinshaw and Richard Oeffinger, Jr. Grandfather of four.

POWERS, James T., 65, Holy Spirit, Indianapolis, July 26. Husband of Diane Powers. Brother of Elaine, Kathleen, Bill and Jack Powers. Uncle and great-uncle of several.

QUILL, Rosalyn L. (Schmidlin), 92, Our Lady of the Greenwood, Greenwood, Aug. 2. Mother of Beth DeConte, James and Thomas

African wildlife



A young wildebeest walks amid flamingos in Kenya's Amboseli National Park on Aug. 10. (CNS photo/Baz Ratner, Reuters)

Quill. Sister of Franciscan Sister Mary, Ed and Joe Schmidlin. Grandmother of four.

RICHMER, Marcia K., 59, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, New Albany, July 30. Wife of Pete Wines. Mother of Brittany Wines and Shawn Richmer. Stepmother of Christopher Wines. Sister of Anthony and Edward Richmer. Grandmother of three.

ROBERTS, Marjory L., 76, St. Paul, Tell City, Aug. 2. Mother of Robyn Kennedy

and Molly Williams. Sister of Marilyn Mogan, Carolyn Schmidt, Bill, Carl, John, Mark, Paul and Steve Biever. Grandmother of four. Great-grandmother of one.

ROGIER, Sue, 76, St. Augustine, Leopold, July 26. Mother of Tonya Harpenau, Neil and Rick Rogier. Sister of Danny, Jay, Rodger and Virgil Brown. Grandmother of 14. Great-grandmother of three.

ROOS, James P., 91, St. Paul, Tell City, Aug. 2. Husband of Betty Roos. Father of Tina

Root, Pat Swiz, Michael and Scott Roos. Brother of Beatrice Deitchman and Dorothy Walters. Grandfather of eight. Great-grandfather of seven.

SHAEFFER, Sr., Patrick, 95, St. Matthew the Apostle, Indianapolis, Aug. 7. Father of Elizabeth Wissler, Charlene, James and Patrick Shaeffer, Jr. Grandfather of 10. Great-grandfather of 12.

SLAUGHTER, Tammy, 58, St. Michael the Archangel, Indianapolis, Aug. 4. Wife

of Don Slaughter. Mother of Clare, Mary and Joseph Slaughter. Sister of Terri Dillion and Toni Mormance.

STONEFIELD, Sheryl, 53, St. Peter, Franklin County, Aug. 9. Mother of Dee Kleier and Spencer Powell. Daughter of Donald and Diane Stonefield. Sister of Christie Andres, Dennis and Don Stonefield. Grandmother of one.

WARD, Glenna, 81, St. John the Baptist, Osgood, Aug. 3. Sister of Shirley Culp. Aunt of several. †

Australian outback school named for teen on way to sainthood

SYDNEY (CNS)—An Australian outback diocese has announced what is believed to be the world's first K-12 "college" school to be named after a teenage computer programmer beatified by Pope Francis last year.

Blessed Carlo Acutis College will have a liberal arts focus, and Bishop Columba Macbeth-Green of the

Diocese of Wilcannia-Forbes hopes to build it in Moama, a fast-growing Riverina town in the southern part of his vast sprawling New South Wales diocese.

"It is an honor to name our school after such an inspiring young person who showed that children and teenagers can live lives devoted to God and to caring for those around them," Bishop Macbeth-Green said of the new college designed by ClarkeHopkinsClarke Architects.

"All the students will be proud of their school name knowing that they, too, can live inspiring lives for others." He said he knows of only one other school named after the young saint-in-the-making, an online school based in Canada.

Anthony Gordon, diocesan director of Catholic education, said the college would serve the community of Moama and surrounding areas, beginning as a small school with highly personalized pastoral care and tuition for students in state-of-the-art facilities.

"Our demographic research suggests that Blessed Carlo will grow to a medium size college over the next 20 years, capable of maintaining this level of personalized approach," he told *The Catholic Weekly*, newspaper of the Archdiocese of Sydney.

"The learning will have a 'liberal arts' feel about it due to the choice of texts and content, which will immerse our students into the beauty of Catholic life and culture."

COVID-19 outbreaks in New South Wales and Victoria had postponed face-to-face consultations planned with Catholic families in Moama and surrounding areas, so feedback from these communities is being sought online.

The college will be the only systemic Catholic senior education offering in the Diocese of Wilcannia-Forbes, which covers more than 160,000 square miles with 19 parishes.

The diocese is also served by Red Bend Catholic College, a year 7-12 school in Forbes established by the Marist Brothers; it is more than five hours by car from the newly planned school.

In a letter announcing the college, Bishop Macbeth-Green said he hoped that since Blessed Carlo was known for using technology to spread the Gospel, he would show today's young people how media can be used for the good of society.

He said the college would "have at its heart" a daily life of prayer and devotion to the Eucharist, and all students would have the opportunity to build a deep friendship with Jesus.

"I couldn't think of a more uplifting or relevant model for the young people of Moama," the bishop said.

Blessed Carlo Acutis was only 15 when he died of leukemia in 2006.

The boy from Milan has been called the first millennial saint and "God's influencer." He was devoted to the Eucharist from the day of his first Communion and used his gifts to promote the world's eucharistic miracles and the Catholic faith.

Well-liked among his peers, he enjoyed computer games and sports, especially soccer. He was devoted to daily Mass and the praying of the rosary, encouraged his mother to return to the practice of her faith, and said he was happy to die "because I lived my life without wasting even a minute of it on anything displeasing to God." †



Blessed Carlo Acutis

Online Lay Ministry Formation

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

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

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



REPORT SEXUAL MISCONDUCT NOW

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

- 1 Ethics Point**
Confidential, Online Reporting
www.archdioceseofindianapolis.ethicspoint.com or 888-393-6810
- 2** Carla Hill, Archdiocese of Indianapolis, Victim Assistance Coordinator
P.O. Box 1410, Indianapolis, IN 46206-1410
317-236-1548 or 800-382-9836, ext. 1548
carlahill@archindy.org

Catholic agency helps resettle Afghan translators who aided U.S. forces

ARLINGTON, Va. (CNS)—When U.S. service members were in a foreign land, unsure of the way and unable to speak the language, brave locals came to their assistance.

Now, the Afghans who served as interpreters and guides for the U.S. military need help adjusting to a new country.

For decades, the U.S. military has been in Afghanistan and is now in the process of withdrawing troops. The Taliban, an extremist Islamic movement that ruled Afghanistan until ousted by a U.S.-led coalition, is taking advantage of the withdrawal to gain control in the region, making it especially dangerous for those who assisted U.S. forces.

Operation Allies Refuge, which began on July 30, brought planeloads of Afghans to Dulles International Airport in Virginia outside of Washington and they were then taken to Fort Lee, near Petersburg, Va. The families were pre-vetted and able to complete the immigration process safely stateside.

Federal, military and nongovernmental agencies all have come together on this project, said Jessica Estrada, director of newcomer services for Catholic Charities of the Arlington Diocese.

“In some circumstances, we wouldn’t all be working together this well, but because this was such a unique situation, everybody’s top priority was the individuals arriving,” she said. “It was quite amazing to see.”

Six diocesan Catholic Charities staffers have been working with the new arrivals at Fort Lee, including Hekmatullah Latifi, who came to the United States with his wife and children on a special immigrant visa in 2016.

In Afghanistan, Latifi worked for the U.S. Embassy and U.S. Agency for International Development. When he felt his family was being threatened, he decided to bring

them to the United States.

Since 2008, the U.S. has welcomed 70,000 Afghans who assisted Americans overseas through the Special Immigrant Visa program, according to the U.S. State Department. Usually the application process is completed in Afghanistan. But because of the country’s current volatile situation, immigrants needed to leave the country quickly.

“I had to wait two years in a normal situation in Afghanistan to get processed,” Latifi told the *Arlington Catholic Herald*, the diocesan newspaper. “But [at Fort Lee], the whole chain of people who are involved in this process were on the same floor, in the same building sitting in each room.

“It’s a very expedited system. In my life, I haven’t seen such a great welcoming event for refugees [of] such a large scope.”

Life has been extremely difficult in Afghanistan for those who worked for the United States, said Latifi.

“It’s a [horrible] situation for everyone right now,” he said. “For those directly involved in the U.S. mission in Afghanistan, some people told me they locked themselves down in their homes, they were not going outside, they were not letting their kids go outside because they thought they might be targeted.”

Latifi said he felt proud to help the newcomers.

“Those families were picked up from the middle of a fire and brought to safety. It’s so emotional, so touching,” he said. “Every single family was thankful for the services they received, for the warm welcoming they received. A lot of families said to us, ‘We don’t feel like we’re on a military base, we feel like we have reached our homes.’”

Some of the incoming families will settle within the



Sayed Abdul Wase Majidi hugs his nephew Sayed Mustafa Miri, 38, after Majidi arrives from Fort Lee, Va., at the Sacramento International Airport in Sacramento, Calif., on Aug. 5. He is one of a couple of hundred Afghan interpreters and translators brought to the United States to be resettled. (CNS photo/Brittany Hosea-Small, Reuters)

Arlington Diocese and many have connections with friends or family in the area, said Estrada. For up to five years after their arrival, Catholic Charities will help them enroll their children in school, get health care, and find employment and a place to live.

Stephen Carattini, president and CEO of diocesan Catholic Charities, said he is grateful his team was able to pitch in.

“The ministry of Catholic Charities is to serve the poor, protect the vulnerable and welcome the newcomer. That comes to us from Scripture and Catholic social teaching. That is what we strive to do every day,” he said.

“People come with nothing and are starting over. These are folks who helped our government in good faith, and now we have an opportunity to return that favor,” he added. †

FANUCCI

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but received something else. We sought one outcome and found another.

How do we reckon with these realities, let alone explain them to our children?

As caregivers, we are not meant to put children in a bubble to protect them from life’s bruises or faith’s struggles. We are called to help them grow in their relationship with God, which means praying through the same challenges that centuries of believers have faced.

Prayer is not a mathematical formula where input produces output. It is not a magical wand to wave over any situation to transform it instantly.

Prayer draws us closer to God and to each other. Prayer invites us into humble surrender, remembering that our

ways are not God’s ways. Prayer pulls us out of ourselves and toward Christ, a conversation of conversion.

Prayer is the language of love, and love is complex.

When Catholics profess the deepest truths of our faith, we call them mysteries. We remember this at every Mass, in the heart of the Eucharist when the priest proclaims, “The mystery of faith,” and we respond with words of Christ’s death and resurrection.

We do not call this statement the “certainty” of faith, although we believe it to be true. Neither do we call these truths the “answers” of faith, although they respond to the biggest questions we ask.

But we humble ourselves before the vastness of God’s ways, knowing there is so much we cannot know.

I have prayed for good things that did not happen. I have prayed for my children

to be healed, but they were not. Even harder, I have watched my own children pray for their siblings—and even that purest of prayers was not answered as we hoped.

But I have still found God’s presence amid deepest suffering. The mystery of prayer holds this, too.

What a gift—strange though it may seem—to welcome such questions from a

child. We need not fear that faith will be shaken, but we may find that we enter deeper into the mystery as we walk alongside them toward God’s love.

(Laura Kelly Fanucci is a writer, speaker, and author of several books, including *Everyday Sacrament: The Messy Grace of Parenting*. Her work can be found at laurakellyfanucci.com.) †

MCGRADY

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a favorite sitcom, a documentary, a Spotify playlist or the radio show that’s always on when we go pick up the kids from school, take stock of what you consume, pay attention to what it’s doing

in your life and remember you are a sponge that will put out in the world what you’ve taken in yourself.

(Katie Prejean McGrady is an award-winning author and host of “The Katie McGrady Show” on Sirius XM’s *The Catholic Channel*. She lives in Louisiana with her husband and daughters.) †

Employment



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- Practicing Catholic in good standing
- Strong organizational, verbal and written communication skills
- Ability to work effectively with all levels of employees and volunteers
- Able to honor and maintain confidentiality
- Possess respect for and ability to uphold Catholic Church teaching
- Able to pass and maintain Diocesan child safety protocols

Interested and qualified candidates should submit their resume to Brian Freyberger at: bfreyberger@sldmfishers.org

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(Laura Kelly Fanucci is a writer, speaker, and author of several books, including *Everyday Sacrament: The Messy Grace of Parenting*. Her work can be found at laurakellyfanucci.com.) †

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kpohovey@archindy.org.

Court rejects challenge to Indiana University's vaccine mandate

WASHINGTON (CNS)—The Supreme Court announced on Aug. 12 that it will not hear an appeal from a group of students at Indiana University who are opposed to the university's COVID-19 vaccine mandate.

The students' challenge was directed to Amy Coney Barrett, the justice who receives emergency petitions from that region of the country.

She denied the appeal and there were no noted dissents from other justices. The court did not issue a separate order or provide any explanation but simply indicated that Barrett denied the appeal.

The group of eight students was seeking an emergency order against the university's vaccine policy, saying the risks associated with the vaccines outweighed the benefits for their age group.

"Protection of others does not relieve our society from the central canon of medical ethics requiring voluntary and informed consent," the students' petition said.

The case, *Klaassen v. Trustees of Indiana University*, is the first involving COVID-19 vaccine requirements to come before the Supreme Court.

Indiana University announced in May that it was requiring all faculty, students and staff to be vaccinated for the fall semester unless they qualified for a medical or religious exemption.

The student group challenged the constitutionality of this mandate in federal court.

In July, a federal District Court judge in Indiana rejected the students' request to block the school's vaccine mandate, saying the school had the right to seek "a reasonable and due process of vaccination in the legitimate interest of public health for its students, faculty and staff."

The judge also said students have other options such as applying for vaccine exemptions, taking the semester off, taking classes online or going to another school.

On Aug. 2, the 7th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, based in Chicago, agreed with the opinion of the District Court judge and refused to bar the university's vaccine mandate, saying it did not violate a constitutional right.

Circuit Judge Frank Easterbrook brought up a Supreme Court ruling in 1905 which said that states could enforce vaccination mandates during a smallpox epidemic. That mandate at the time was even more strict, he pointed out, because it did not include a religious exemption.

Other student lawsuits against university vaccine mandates are currently pending in federal courts challenging public universities in Connecticut, Massachusetts and California.

Although most plaintiffs in these cases are students, *The Wall Street Journal* pointed out that a George Mason University law professor is suing his school over its policy of denying merit pay increases to unvaccinated faculty members.

Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, said on MSNBC's "Morning Joe" on Aug. 10 that he supports schools and colleges requiring COVID-19 vaccines as the school year begins amid a surge in coronavirus cases.

"I know that people must like to have their individual



Fourth-year medical student Anna Roesler administers the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine at Indiana University Health Methodist Hospital in Indianapolis on Dec. 16, 2020. The Supreme Court announced on Aug. 12 that Indiana University can require students to be vaccinated against the coronavirus disease. (CNS photo/Bryan Woolston, Reuters)

freedom and not be told to do something, but I think we're in such a serious situation now that I think in certain circumstances, mandates should be done," he said.

A list frequently updated by *The Chronicle of Higher Education* shows that as of Aug. 10, 681 college campuses have a COVID-19 vaccine requirement in place for students or students and employees.

Several Catholic colleges and universities, particularly large universities, have vaccine mandates in place.

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. It said it would provide an exemption for students and employees "related to religious beliefs, underlying medical conditions."

Other colleges that were quick to join this list were: Georgetown University in Washington, Holy Cross College in Worcester, Mass., Loyola University Chicago and Seattle University, to name a few.

Students at The Catholic University of America in Washington will not be required to be vaccinated, but instead have been "strongly encouraged" to get the vaccine.

Similarly, Barry University, a Catholic college in Miami, is not requiring but strongly encouraging its school community to be vaccinated. Those who are not vaccinated need to wear face masks and do a daily symptom self-check, the school's website says. North Carolina's Belmont Abbey College also is not requiring students to get COVID-19 vaccinations and it will not require face masks or social distancing.

Some college officials have said they will impose a vaccination requirement once the vaccines gain full approval from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) since the vaccines currently have only emergency-use authorization.

Fauci said on the MSNBC program that there is no doubt the vaccines will get full FDA approval.

"When that occurs, which I hope will be really quite soon," he said, "I think you're going to see that local institutions, local enterprises are going to feel empowered—and appropriately so, they're not worried about getting sued or anything—that they're going to be saying that if you want to go to this university or you want to go to this college, you've got to be vaccinated." †

Ruling blocking HHS 'transgender mandate' called 'victory for conscience'

WASHINGTON (CNS)—A U.S. District Court judge's ruling on Aug. 9 to block the Biden administration's mandate that doctors and hospitals perform gender-transition procedures despite their own moral or medical objections is "a victory for common sense, conscience and sound medicine."

That is the view of Luke Goodrich, vice president and senior counsel at the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, based in Washington. He is the lead counsel for the plaintiffs in the case.

"Today's ruling protects patients, aligns with current medical research, and ensures doctors aren't forced to violate their religious beliefs and medical judgment," he said about the ruling in *Franciscan Alliance v. Becerra*.

Franciscan Alliance, based in Mishawaka, Ind., is a Catholic health care system now known as Franciscan Health that operates hospitals serving Indiana

and one hospital in Illinois and employs more than 18,000 full- and part-time employees. The network includes two hospitals in the archdiocese: Franciscan Health Indianapolis and Franciscan Health Mooresville.

The defendant is Secretary Xavier Becerra of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

On Aug. 9, Judge Reed O'Connor of the District Court for the Northern District of Texas in Wichita Falls blocked the HHS regulation—in its current form as proscribed by the Biden administration. It requires doctors to perform gender-transition procedures in children and adults or be held liable for discrimination.

The regulation, Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), was first issued in 2016 by HHS under the Obama administration.

In 2020, the Trump administration

put in place a final rule that eliminated the general prohibition on discrimination based on gender identity and also adopted abortion and religious freedom exemptions for health care providers. But the courts blocked this rule change.

In 2021, shortly after he was inaugurated, President Joe Biden issued an executive order declaring his administration would apply in all areas—including the ACA—the ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court in *Bostock v. Clayton County* in 2020 that discrimination based on sex outlawed Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 covers people who are gay or transgender.

"The Christian plaintiffs contend that violation of their statutory rights under RFRA [Religious Freedom Restoration Act] is an irreparable harm," O'Connor said in his ruling.

"The court agrees," he said, "and concludes that enforcement of the 2021 interpretation [of Section 1557] forces Christian plaintiffs to face civil penalties or to perform gender-transition procedures and abortions contrary to their religious beliefs—a quintessential irreparable injury.

"The court grants plaintiffs' request for a permanent injunction and permanently enjoins" HHS, Becerra and all HHS-related divisions, agencies and employees "from interpreting or enforcing Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act."

"Today's decision rightly says the mandate violates federal law," said

Goodrich in a string of tweets. He noted "this is now the second federal court to block the mandate."

He was referring to a Jan. 19 ruling by the U.S. District Court for the District of North Dakota in Fargo in a lawsuit filed on behalf of Franciscan Alliance/Franciscan Health, and the Christian Medical and Dental Associations. The states of Texas, Kansas, Kentucky, Nebraska and Wisconsin also joined in the suit.

The Biden administration filed an appeal in the North Dakota case on April 20 with the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 8th Circuit, based in St. Louis.

Goodrich tweeted that Franciscan Alliance/Franciscan Health's hospitals and health care professionals "gladly serve all patients regardless of their sex or gender identity, yet were threatened with multimillion dollar penalties by a controversial HHS regulation if they refused to perform gender-transition procedures.

"These religious doctors and hospitals joyfully serve all patients and routinely provide top-notch care to transgender patients. There is ample evidence, however, that some gender transition procedures can harm patients," Goodrich said.

"Several federal circuits—including the 5th and 1st—have all reached the same conclusion: 'There is no medical consensus that sex reassignment surgery is a necessary or even effective treatment for gender dysphoria.'" †



'Today's ruling protects patients, aligns with current medical research, and ensures doctors aren't forced to violate their religious beliefs and medical judgment.'

—Luke Goodrich, vice president and senior counsel at the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty