Never forget: Remembering 9/11

As our country marks the 20-year anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on America, The Criterion asked its readers, among them its shepherd Archbishop Charles C. Thompson, to reflect on that tragic day and how it has impacted their lives and faith then and now. In our special pull-out section on pages 7-14, also read how firefighters from the archdiocese reflect on their work at ground zero, how local Catholics and Muslims continue to nurture a friendship that was tested on 9/11, and how archdiocesan pilgrims, planning to travel overseas, responded in faith as they overlooked the horrifying scenes in New York City on 9/11.

Not all ‘eventualities’ considered in Afghanistan withdrawal, Pope Francis says during interview

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—The chaotic withdrawal of U.S. forces from Afghanistan was due in part to a lack of foreseeing all possible eventualities, Pope Francis said in a new interview.

“The way to negotiate a withdrawal, an exit, from what we see here it seems that—I don’t want to judge—not all the eventualities were taken into account,” the pope said in an excerpt of an interview with COPE, the radio network owned by the Spanish bishops’ conference, released on Aug. 31.

During the 90-minute interview, which was broadcast on Sept. 1, the pope addressed health concerns, the legalization of euthanasia in Spain, the question of Catalan independence as well as the situation in Afghanistan, COPE said.

When asked if the Vatican could use its diplomatic power to discourage the new regime from waging reprisals against the people, the pope said, “Yes, in fact, the secretary of state [Cardinal Pietro Parolin] is doing that.”

During his Sunday Angelus address on Aug. 29, the pope appealed to all Christians to fast and intensify their prayers for Afghanistan in the wake of increased violence in the country.

“I ask everyone to continue to help the needy and to pray that dialogue and solidarity may lead to the establishment of a peaceful and fraternal coexistence and offer hope for the country’s future,” he said, after prayer the Angelus with visitors in St. Peter’s Square on Aug. 29.

He said he had been following the news out of Afghanistan “with great concern.”

“I take part in the suffering of those who are grieving for the persons who lost their lives in the suicide attacks that happened last Thursday and of those who are seeking help and protection,” he said.

The pope was referring to the Aug. 26 attack when a suicide bomber detonated an explosion among the

See AFGHANISTAN page 19
WASHINGTON (CNS)—Catholic Charities in and around the areas of Louisiana and Mississippi affected by Hurricane Ida—one of the most powerful storms to hit the continental U.S. since Hurricane Katrina in 2005—are collecting donations as they prepare to help with the yet-unknown damage caused by the late August storm.

In a televised Aug. 30 meeting with President Joe Biden, Louisiana Governor John Bel Edwards said he estimated that close to 2 million are without electricity in the region, though news reports said about 1 million were affected.

Many remained without cellphone service and although just four deaths had been confirmed in the region by early Aug. 31, Edwards said the death toll likely will rise.

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Though the hurricane had torn through much of Louisiana as a Category 4 storm on Aug. 29, the following day it was heading as a downsized tropical storm with still life-threatening winds toward Mississippi and then Tennessee, where flooding was the main concern.

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Father Joseph Mader served in seminaries, archdiocesan parishes

By Sean Gallagher

Father Joseph Mader, a retired priest of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, died on Aug. 23 in Palm Beach, Fla. He was 81.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Sept. 1 at St. Peter Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis. Archbishop Charles C. Thompson was the principal celebrant of the liturgy. Retired Msgr. Mark Svarczkopf was the homilist.

But Father Mader followed in the priests’ circle at Calvary Cemetery in Indianapolis. He struggled with health challenges throughout his priestly life and ministry, was known primarily for the many years he spent in the formation of future priests in seminaries. He also ministered in archdiocesan parishes.

Father Michael O’Mara, pastor of Holy Spirit Parish in Indianapolis, received spiritual direction from Father Mader when he was a college seminarian at Saint Meinrad.

“He enjoyed guiding seminarians who were not only discerning priesthood and who they were, but also searching for God,” said Father O’Mara. “That including searching for God amid life’s tragedies, such as when a brother of Father O’Mara died in a car accident.”

“He was always joyful,” said Msgr. Svarczkopf. “He was in pain, and you knew it. But he never got depressed, mean or anything like that.”

Because of his health challenges, Father Mader received good care for many years through the help of many people. This, Msgr. Svarczkopf said, is part of his friend’s legacy that people can learn from.

“He experienced the tenderness and the care of the archbishops, the priests and the laity,” Msgr. Svarczkopf said. “The archdiocese as an organization takes really good care of its sick and retired priests. We need to take care of each other.”

Joseph Eugene Mader was born on May 27, 1940, in Indianapolis to the late Sylvester and Marie Mader. He was baptized at St. Philip Neri Parish in Indianapolis and later received the sacrament of confirmation at St. Thomas Aquinas Parish, also in Indianapolis.

Father Mader became an archdiocesan seminarian as a high school student, receiving priestly formation at the former Saint Meinrad High School in St. Meinrad.

Archbishop Broglio prays for dialogue, respect for human life after bombing

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio of the U.S. Archdiocese for the Military Services, called for prayers and respect for human life after the bombing as their bodies were returned with dignity on Aug. 29.

He also urged the faithful to “follow your grandmother’s advice. She understands,” said Father O’Mara.

Father Mader knew how to confront the challenges of life because he experienced health challenges from the start of his priestly ministry, recalled his longtime friend, retired Msgr. Mark Svarczkopf.

“Even when he was ordained, he really couldn’t preach at his first Mass because, just before his ordination, he was struck with Bell’s palsy and half of his face was paralyzed,” said Msgr. Svarczkopf. “So, even from the day he was ordained, there was always something wrong with Father Joe.”

Despite bearing the cross of poor health for so long, Father Mader did not let that get him down.

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9/11, its heroes remind us we are our brothers’ and sisters’ keepers

No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends” (Jn 15:13).

As we mark the 20th anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States in this week’s issue of The Criterion, the words above from the Gospel of John come to mind.

It is indeed true, we believe, that no American woke up on the morning of 9/11 knowing it would be one of the most tragic days in our country’s history.

Yet, the heroic acts of a group of terrorists turned a beautiful, sun-splashed morning on the East Coast into a day of infamy.

The fact that nearly 3,000 souls perished on 9/11 reminds us that we never know the time and place when God will call us home. It also teaches the hard truth that our lives on Earth may end through the evil acts of others. Many ask the question: “Where was God on this morning?” Or, “Why did God let this happen?”

The actions of that day remind us of the free will our Creator gives us. Sadly, it shows how some use it for evil means.

While there is continued sadness, we mark two decades since 9/11 occurred—and it is a sadness we believe will linger for generations—we are also reminded of the brave and courageous actions of so many of our brothers and sisters in Christ during the chaotic aftermath of hijacked planes hitting both towers of the World Trade Center in New York, and another airliner hitting the Pentagon just outside Washington.

The passengers aboard United Airlines Flight 93 will always be remembered for their heroism. Reports said their plane was headed toward the White House or U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C., were hijackers allegedly planned to crash it into one of those iconic buildings in our nation’s capital.

Learning of the other hijackings taking place through phone calls with loved ones, the Flight 93 passengers overtook the hijackers on their plane. The aircraft crashed in an open field near rural Shanksville, Pa., where all aboard died.

The heroic actions didn’t end there. There are stories of first responders—firefighters, police officers, emergency medical technicians and countless others—rushing into harm’s way to do all they could to assist their fellow man.

Sadly, many of them lost their lives as well, doing what they were called to do, no matter the price.

A poignant photo of Franciscan Father Mychal Judge, a New York Fire Department chaplain who died while ministering last rites to a firefighter at the scene of the World Trade Center attacks, will always be remembered.

Images captured strangers helping strangers during the resulting chaos. Our Catholic faith, and many faith traditions, teach us: we are our brothers’ and sisters’ keepers.

While we will remember 9/11 as one of the most tragic days in America’s history, we must never forget as followers of God that we are a people who strive to bring peace to all corners of the globe. It is by no means, an easy task.

Let us always remember what the “Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi” instructs us:

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.
O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consol’d as to console, to be understood as to understand, to be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.
Amen.

If you’re a student of history, Sept. 11, 2001, will always be among the lessons you remember.

If you’re a person of faith, you must pray that another tragedy of epic proportions, where there is tremendous loss of life, will never again occur—anywhere.

Please, Lord, may it be so.
—Mike Krokos
Bishops, please remind us work must give people dignity

"We ask St. Joseph to help us fight for the dignity of work, so that there might be work for all and that it might be dignified work, not the work of a slave." (Pope Francis)

The publication date for this column is Friday, Sept. 3, the beginning of the long Labor Day weekend. Traditionally, Labor Day marks the end of the summer, and as a nation, we take this time to rest and unwind before returning to our daily labors.

Our Church teaches that work is a blessing, a participation in God’s creative activity. Properly understood and structured, work gives dignity to the women and men who undertake it—to express themselves, to support the women and men who undertake creative activity. Properly understood and structured, the work that we do is a way to make a living; it is a continuing way to make the world better for and with ourselves and others. Unfortunately, this vision of the meaning of human labor is not always realized in practice.

Some work is demeaning rather than dignifying, and all women and men who need, and desperately want, worthwhile work simply can’t find it.

In March 2015, the Catholic bishops of Indiana issued a pastoral letter “Poverty at the Crossroads:

The Church’s Response to Poverty in America.” The purpose of this letter was “to call attention to the poverty that exists right here within the state that we are blessed to call home.” As this letter points out:

"The economy must serve people, not the other way around.” Is a succinct paraphrase of a crucial statement by St. John Paul II in his encyclical, “Laborem Exercens”. “In the first place, work is for man and not man for work” (#6.6). Work is more than simply a way to make a living; it is a continuing participation in God’s creation. If the dignity of work is to be protected, then the basic rights of workers must be respected. These include the right to productive work, to decent and fair wages, to organize, to private property, and to economic initiative. … The human person is what is most important, not economic theory or social structures. The human person, the one who works, is not a means to an end, but the primary beneficiary of his or her own labor. Pope Francis strongly reinforces this teaching by repeatedly calling our attention to the idea that work contains the dignity of the person: a human person: mente, cuerpo y espíritu. Work is man’s first vocation. The human person is what is most important, not the theory of employment abstract that nothing exists. The human person is the one who works, not the man ‘en función del trabajo”.

Unfortunately, the Holy Father says, “I am afraid that too often people who are in transitional situations or suffer from incapacitating illness or injury”.

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September 5

Oldenburg Franciscan Center, 22143 Main St., Oldenburg. A Day of Quiet Renewal, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., $20, 570 with spiritual direction. Information and registration: 812-933-6437 or stewgardner@archindy.org.

September 6
St. Peter Parish, 1207 East Road, Brookville. 100th Labor Day Festival, 10 a.m.-10 p.m., $12 adults, $5 children. Information: 765-467-5462 or brookvilleparishes@gmail.com.

Brookville St. Anthony of Padua Parish, 5692 Central Avenue, Indianapolis. Festival, Fri. 5-11 p.m., prayer and exercise, $298 per couple. Registration: cutt.ly/TOTBRetrofiet or 317-545-7681. must also complete “Tobit Required Info Sheet” at cutt.ly/TOTBRiform and email to gburchard@archindy.org.

September 7
St. Patricks Church, 2100 S. 71st St., Indianapolis. Struttin’ Our Stuff. St. Vincent de Paul Indianapolis Council annual fund-raising, 6-10 p.m., registration required for individual, includes dart, free games, lunch and dinner. Information and registration: cutt.ly/saFugdWmmz or oldenburgfranciscancenter.org.

September 8

September 9
Prairie View Golf Club, 7000 Longest Dr. Carmel. Little Sisters of the Poor Swing For Seniors Golf Tournament, 10 a.m.-5 p.m., registration required, $220 for individual participant, includes cart, green fees, lunch and dinner. Information and registration: cutt.ly/swing4fmmz or oldenburgfranciscancenter.org.

September 10
Northside Events and Social Club 21000 71st St., Indianapolis. Struttin’ Our Stuff. St. Vincent de Paul Indianapolis Council annual fund-raising, 6-10 p.m., registration required for individual, includes dart, free games, lunch and dinner. Information and registration: cutt.ly/saFugdWmmz or oldenburgfranciscancenter.org.

September 12
St. Michael Parish, 512 N. Perkins Rd., Ruddville. Fall Festival, 10 a.m., fried chicken dinners, raffles, kids’ activities, home-cooking crafts, free admission. Information: 765-932-2588 or depotmr@stmarys.org.

September 14
Immaculate Heart of Mary Church, 5692 Central Avenue, Indianapolis. Parish Mission: “Welcome Home,” 7 p.m., Father Joe Donnelly facilitator, free. Information: 317-226-466 or peter@ohms.org.

September 15
St. Thomas Parish, 55 S. Child Jesus (Little Flower) Parish Center, St. Theresa Room, 2375 N. College Ave., Indianapolis. Social Club Rosary Workout, 6:30-7:15 p.m., prayer and exercise. Information: 317-727-1167 or juliet63200@yahoo.com or socialclubindy.com.

September 16
Church of the Immaculate Conception, 1 Sisters of Providence, St. Mary of the Woods, St. Mary of the Woods. “The Spirit Revitalizes” monthly Taize Prayer Service, 7-8 p.m., silent and spoken prayers, simple music, silence, virtual option available at cutt.ly/Tauze. Information: 812-535-2952 or progapri@praynet.org.

September 17
Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish, 1752 Schiller Ln., New Albany. Pandemic Mass of Consolation, 5:30 p.m., masks required, social distancing available. Information: 812-954-2374 or taize@oldhima.org.

September 18
St. Joseph Church, 1401 S. Mckeeley Ave., Indianapolis. Third Thursday Adoration, interceding for women experiencing crisis pregnancy, 11 a.m.-7 p.m., with Mass at 5:45 p.m. Information: Our Lady of Peace Parish and Cemetery, 9001 Haverick Road, Indianapolis. Monthly Mass, 2 p.m. Information: 317-589-8898 or catholicscemeterycercle@gmail.com.

September 19

September 20
St. Malachy Parish, 1983 E. County Road 750 N., Brownsburg. Country Fair and Hog Roast, 3-11 p.m., live entertainment, carnival rides, homemade food, youth games, adult beverage tent, raffle and casino. Free admission. Information: 317-852-3195 or jkiefer@archindy.org.

September 21
Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Indianapolis to St. Michael, Greenwood. Racer Information and registration: cmcsweeney@gmail.com, Sponsor a rider or donate: www.kofc437.com.†

Numerous events mark National Migration Week on Sept. 20-26

Three events in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis will mark the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ (USCCB) National Migration Week on Sept. 20-26.

The first is a bilingual Mass celebrated by Archbishop Charles C. Thompson at Our Lady of the Greenwood Church, 335 S. Meridian St., in Greenwood at 5:45 p.m. next Tuesday. Next is a virtual prayer service hosted by the archdiocese’s Catholic Charities social concerns office, from noon-12:45 p.m. on Sept. 22. To register to join this group service, go to cutt.ly/Migration (case sensitive).

To close the National Migration Week, prayer service for migrants will be held at St. Bartholomew Church, 1306 27th St. in Vincennes at 5:45 p.m. on Sept. 26. It will be led by Father Christopher Wadelson, pastor of St. Bartholomew Parish, and Sister Mary Teresa, IHM.

All are invited to join in each of these events. For more information on the USCCB’s National Migration Week, go to cutt.ly/MigrationWeek (case sensitive).†

Events and retreats can be submitted to The Criterion by logging on to www.archindy.org/events/submission, or by mailing at 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202, or e-mail, Dan Lewis, or by fax at 317-236-1594.
9/11: Faith and fear at forefront of a day that changed our world

(Archbishop Charles C. Thompson, then a priest of the Archdiocese of Louisville, offered a remembrance of Sept. 11, 2001, how he and others reacted to that day’s tragedies, and how people’s lives and faith have been affected since.)

I was traveling on a bus with senior citizens from St. Augustine Parish in Lebanon, Ky., to Saint Meinrad Archabbbey/Seminary in southern Indiana when we learned of the terrorist attacks that morning.

At first, we were stunned. It seemed unreal. Upon our returning to Lebanon that night, I learned that the two priests living with me had held a prayer service earlier in the evening.

My recollection is that, as is common with major crisis events, some people responded in faith while others reacted in fear.

The Church was quite full that following weekend. We were especially concerned about the children, being particularly present in the school. The response of faith was evident in people joining together in prayer, especially at Mass, in outreach and support. The reaction of fear was noticed in various forms of panic, suspicion and withdrawal.

Overall, it seems that the events of Sept. 11, 2001, caused people to re-evaluate what was most important in their lives; namely, God, family and friends. It also caused people to feel more vulnerable which, consequently, rapidly increased security measures in travel and a variety of ways. Our world was changed, and our way of living was altered.

The Church played a key role in helping people to overcome their fear, panic, anxiety, depression, sadness and uncertainties. Unfortunately, however, this was just months before the sex abuse of minors in the Church would become such a public scandal and reverberate throughout the world for decades to come.

The key to surviving any crisis, like 9/11, is not to lose hope. As people of faith, our hope is in God. Jesus Christ is our hope and salvation.

In many ways, practically every facet of religion and society has increasingly become polarized beyond any other time in history. Some might wonder if the events of 9/11 had a greater degree of impact than we might realize on this phenomenon. It should all remind us of the need to remain rooted in prayer, faith and mutual respect rather than to succumb to the destructive consequences of fear, suspicion and hate.

As Pope Francis exhorts us time and again, even when there is disagreement, we must never tire of accompaniment, dialogue, encounter and mercy.

For Catholics, that rootedness is ultimately realized and sustained in remaining steadfast in the word of God and the sacraments, particularly the Eucharist.

In essence, we are at our best when we strive to be Christ-centered rather than self-centered or agenda-driven. †

Never Forget:
Remembering 9/11

(Chris Sheridan)
Archdiocesan pilgrims found hope amid terror on Sept. 11, 2001

By Sean Gallagher

Around noon on Sept. 11, 2001, Father Patrick Beidelman celebrated Mass on the top floor of a hotel in New Jersey across the East River from Manhattan.

It was just a few hours after terrorist attacks took the lives of 2,606 people in the destruction of the twin towers of the World Trade Center.

As Father Beidelman led 35 pilgrims from the archdiocese in prayer who were supposed to have left the previous day for a pilgrimage to Austria and Germany, he looked out toward Manhattan and could see an enormous plume of smoke rising from the site of the World Trade Center, which has since become known as ground zero.

Then he sought to share in his homily a message of hope and meaning on a day of unimaginable terror.

“As we gather this day, we make a pilgrimage now into the heart. We ask God to touch our hearts and minds and to be with those who have died, those who are suffering, … those who are worried about family members and those who are grieving the loss of loved ones,” said Father Beidelman, as reported in the Sept. 21, 2001, issue of The Criterion.

“For a variety of reasons, we’ve all been led here, and we gather around this table—now an altar of the Lord—and the Lord invites us to make a pilgrimage into the heart, a pilgrimage of prayer, a pilgrimage of sadness and a pilgrimage that trusts in God’s salvation.”

Twenty years after that fateful day, Father Beidelman can only look to God for the reason why he was able to share such a reassuring message.

Throughout the week, pilgrims who were supposed to be anywhere because anything could happen, were amazed at the grace that I was given at that time to find the words to say something encouraging that connected faith to that moment,” said Father Beidelman in a recent interview with The Criterion. “It felt very chaotic and disorienting. I’m just remembering how much uncertainty there was in our minds during that time, that God gave me the grace to say something encouraging.”

What’s even more amazing is that Father Beidelman, in 2001 a priest for just three years, only learned on Sept. 8 that he was going to serve as the chaplain for the pilgrimage.

Msgr. Joseph Schaadeler, then archdiocesan vicar general, was supposed to have been the chaplain for the pilgrimage. But his father died in the week before it was to begin.

On the weekend before the pilgrimage, Msgr. William Stumpf, then a vicar for clergy, called Father Beidelman to see if he could fill in as chaplain. At the time, Father Beidelman was serving as pastor of St. Michael Parish in Brookville and the former Holy Guardian Angels Parish in Cedar Grove.

Father Beidelman looks back on the events of 20 years ago and is grateful that divine providence helped him “be available for how God needed me and all of us, really, to come to him in prayer and be connected to him, especially through the Mass.”

Carolyn Noone, archdiocesan special events coordinator at the time, had planned the pilgrimage to leave for Europe on Sept. 10. But bad weather and a construction fire at Newark Liberty International Airport in Newark, N.J., delayed the pilgrims’ departure from Indianapolis long enough that their flight for Europe took off before they arrived in New Jersey.

So, they found lodging late on Sept. 10 in a hotel across the East River from midtown Manhattan. When Noone woke up on Sept. 11 and saw on television the towers of the World Trade Center on fire, she said to her husband, “John, is this a movie that we have missed?”

Then they sat there and realized that it was all happening.

She and the rest of the pilgrims were shocked like much of the rest of the world, except that they were just a few miles from ground zero.

“We didn’t know what to do. We were just frozen. What was going to happen next? Should we be here? People were afraid to be anywhere because anything could happen.”

Art Berkemeier, a member of St. Mark the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis, said he and the rest of the pilgrims were in shock.

“We were kind of a premiere moment when I think God’s grace helped me to do that. Sometimes you need to set aside yourself, even in this circumstance.”

Berkemeier recalled enduring lessons they learned that day.

“Everything was kind of thrown together,” he recalled. “We didn’t even have a Mass kit. I had to go out to a nearby parish and see if they would loan me the things for Mass. I took a taxi. The parish loaned me the stuff, and I came back and had Mass for our group and another pilgrimage group from Buffalo [N.Y.]”

As Father Beidelman led the pilgrims in prayer, he experienced just how important it was that they come together for worship.

“The anchor of our ritual of prayer is the Eucharist,” he recalled. “We were not in charge. God is. Why would we be here? People needed to know that they were not alone.”

“We aren’t in charge. God is. Why would we be here? People needed to know that they were not alone.”

Although Noone was glad to return to Indianapolis with the other pilgrims, the shock of Sept. 11, 2001, and being so close to ground zero that day was difficult for her.

For weeks and weeks after that, I had horrible nightmares of being trapped in a hotel on a high floor and not being able to get out, Noone said. “I’d just wake up with tears. I needed my faith more than ever. All of us did.”

In December 2001, Noone led another archdiocesan pilgrimage group to New York City. In addition to the city’s historic churches, the pilgrims also visited one other holy place: ground zero.

Noone recalled how a police officer who escorted the group’s motorcoach to the site instructed the pilgrims before they left the bus.

“You got on the bus and told us, ‘Do not speak. This is a place of great reverence,’” Noone said. “We went to a viewing balcony. It was overwhelming. You could not help but cry. I don’t know what words could describe it. The sorrow we had for our brethren that we had lost.”
‘The ultimate calling’

Faith and service bound together for firefighters who served at ground zero

By Sean Gallagher

Sept. 11, 2001, started as an ordinary day for Charles Glesing, at the time a firefighter in Indianapolis. He was off duty and had dropped off his children at school when he heard news on his car radio about the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York. Returning home, Glesing watched coverage of the attacks on TV. When he saw the first of the twin towers collapse, he knew that he might no longer be a distant spectator of the history-making events of that day.

That was because he was a member of the Indiana Task Force 1, an elite unit of people from various fields of work specially trained in urban search and rescue. The task force can be deployed at a moment’s notice across the country by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

“A light bulb went off in my head,” recalled Glesing, a member of Christ the King Parish in Indianapolis. “I thought to myself, ‘What do I want to do?’ The phone rang and I was told that we were activating the task force and we’d be heading to New York. I got my stuff and gear ready to go. Traveling on a bus overnight to New York, Glesing and 64 other task force members approached Manhattan at dawn on Sept. 12, a plume of smoke still rising from the site of the World Trade Center, now commonly known as ground zero.

“It started to hit you more—the realization and severity,” Glesing said. “We knew we were at a big job here.”

Two other Catholic members of the task force at that time recently spoke with The Criterion about their experience of working at ground zero. Of the three, one is still a member of the Indianapolis Fire Department (IFD), while two have retired. For each of them, faith is interwoven with their work as first responders, which they experience as a kind of vocation. 

Seeing their service as firefighters through the eyes of faith helped them cope with the events of that day.

“Seeing their service as firefighters through the eyes of faith helped them cope with their work as first responders, which led them to find meaning with their service as firefighters in New York,” McKiernan said. “It gave a feeling of how immense it was,” he added. “And you were just in the pile [of rubble where the twin towers had stood].”

There were thousands of people from across the country working at the site, hoping to rescue survivors but increasingly resigned to the fact that the mission would be more of recovering the remains of those who had died.

“We didn’t rescue anyone,” said Baughman. “We went to the biggest [search and rescue] incident ever. We have to put up with that date in this country. But we didn’t rescue anyone. That was tough. It was tough.

When the task force returned to Indiana after about 10 days of work at ground zero, they received a hero’s welcome—something that didn’t sit well with Baughman. “I felt embarrassed,” he recalled. “We didn’t save any lives, but we were being celebrated.”

‘An immediate reverence’

Saying the lives of people in danger is at the heart of the mission of a firefighter. That mission takes on greater urgency when it’s the lives of other firefighters that are threatened.

On Sept. 11, 2001, 343 members of the Fire Department of the City of New York (FDNY) died after rushing to the World Trade Center when so many other were fleeing the famed twin towers.

Baughman recalled what happened at ground zero when the remains of a firefighter were found.

“Every time you would find a firefighter, work would stop and they would blow horns,” he said. “They’d call the firefighters to line up and bring the remains out on a stretcher. There was an immediate reverence that would take place. That happened several times while we were there.”

As it happened again and again, it led Dave Cook, a member of Indiana Task Force 1, to reflect on the meaning of sacrifice in his life and work.

“You begin to think, ‘What if this was me?’” said Cook, a member of St. Pius X Parish in Indianapolis now serving as an IFD battalion chief. “You think about their families and the children. Their dad went to work and that was the last time they saw him. It begins to affect you that way, because then I thought about my own family.

‘To this day, every time that [my family and I] see each other or say goodbye, we’re all hugging each other.”

The sacrifice of first responders on 9/11 has continued in the 20 years since the day of the attacks.

“Many of those who did search and rescue work at ground zero have developed illnesses related to exposure to various toxins in the atmosphere around the site. Some have died.”

That includes four members of Indiana Task Force 1, who were served at ground zero, according to Thomas Neal, the current coordinator for the task force. Some 40% of

Indy firefighter new on the job on 9/11 integrates works and faith

By Sean Gallagher

Thomas McKiernan was on his second day on the job as a firefighter in Indianapolis when the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, occurred.

On that day, 343 firefighters died in the attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City. Yet the enormous sacrifice and loss experienced by his brother firefighters in New York never led McKiernan to question the career he had just entered.

“It gave me the sense that this was absolutely what I wanted to do,” said McKiernan, 43, a member of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Indianapolis. “I had a sense of duty that I was going to carry on what they left at ground zero.”

This dedication to service and self-sacrifice was instilled in him as he grew up in Cincinnati as the son of a police officer and hospital nurse. “Firemen aren’t just made in the academy,” McKiernan said. “They’re made before ever getting hired. There’s a sense of service, duty and love for their fellow man, a desire to serve others—that’s how I was brought up. So, I was halfway a firefighter before I ever got hired. I couldn’t never walk away from it. No way.”

He also recalled sage advice from a retired Fire Department of the City of New York firefighter who taught at the University of Cincinnati, where McKiernan had majored in fire science. The instructor told him, “If I was going to lose one night and I met my guardian angel, and he said, ‘You’re going to die tonight,’ I would say, ‘OK, What’s for dinner?’” McKiernan said.

As a young man, he realized on 9/11, McKiernan has integrated more and more his Catholic faith with his work as a firefighter for the Indianapolis Fire Department, trying to see Christ in everyone he serves.

“We meet all sorts of people, but usually on the worst day of their lives,” McKiernan said. “It’s easy to find Christ in your work, in the moment whose car has caught on fire and now she doesn’t have any way to get to work. It’s harder to find Christ in, say, the guy who’s overdosed for the fourth time this month and won’t do anything about his addiction.

“You really have to delve into your faith to find Christ in everyone. And I strive very hard to treat everyone with the dignity that God demands that we treat all of his creation.”

At the same time, this interweaving of his faith and his work has helped him live out more fully his vocation as a husband, father of seven children and Benedictine oblate of Saint Meinrad Archabbey, dedicating himself to praying the Liturgy of the Hours and reading from the Rule of St. Benedict daily.

“I have learned to put a lot of trust in Christ,” McKiernan said. “The department trains us very well. But there have been times when I’m crawling down blind through a smoke-filled, incredibly hot hallway in a house, and I’m doing what I’ve been trained to do, but I’m also saying, ‘Jesus, I trust in you.’”

“If I can trust Jesus in that moment, I can trust Jesus when it comes to complications in a pregnancy with my wife, or dealing with my son’s latest attitude problem. My job has made me trust Christ all the more.”

Twenty years after he was a newly minted firefighter on Sept. 11, 2001, McKiernan keeps lessons he learned that day in his heart and mind. “No matter what, we can always come together,” he said. “We have a common factor in that we’re human. Whatever walk of life we have, we have the ability to console and support each other.”

“We’ve learned each other’s humanity a lot. But now we’re losing that again and we need to be reminded that all of us are human. All of us are hurt. All of us love. And we just need to listen. I try to listen to each other and realize the humanity in each person again.”

Never Forget: Remembering 9/11

Indianapolis Fire Department firefighter Thomas McKiernan sits on Aug. 25 at a fire engine in Station 25 in Indianapolis. McKiernan can sit on his second day on the job as a firefighter on Sept. 11, 2001. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)
We were no longer strangers, we were all children of God who came together

Sept. 11, 2001: A time of terror, faith, heartbeat and the unity we once knew in the United States

(Reader’s note: Readers of The Criterion have shared their thoughts and memories of Sept. 11, 2001, creating an emotional perspective of how that tragic day in American history touched their lives and their faith—then and today—to influence their lives for faith and love.)

By John Shaughnessy

Judy Davis-Fuller

TheCriterion Friday, September 3, 2021

Judy Davis-Fuller screamed in horror on the morning of Sept. 11, 2001. As she readied herself for Mass in the basement of Holy Spirit Church in Indianapolis, the retired Indianapolis firefighter shares his memories of that emotionally overwhelming day,

Evidently there were many who were moved to the same idea, she recalls. “Perfect strangers gathered together on the beach to share thoughts, share comfort,” she says. “We were no longer strangers, we were all children of God who came together to discuss the event and to pray together.”

By the end of that emotionally overwhelming day, the feeling of devastation was still strong. “The fear of a terroristic attack was constantly on the minds of everyone,” Davis-Fuller says.

As Davis-Fuller reflects on the events of that morning, she says she remembers the devastation, the pain and the heartbreak. “The United States of America was forever changed,” she says.

As the United States was forever changed, so was Davis-Fuller. “I no longer take anything for granted. I thank God for my life every day,” she says.

“Under the ashes, there is no race. Under the ashes, there are no differences. Under the ashes, we see life as the fragility of life.”

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Later that morning, he and his classmates were taking the 1-Step exam when the news started to spread through the school that a terrorist attack had occurred.

Suddenly, Sept. 11, 2001—a day he remembers as being “clear, mild and non-humid”—also became a day he could never forget due to the impact it has continued to have on his faith.

“I have so many memories of 9/11 and the days and weeks that followed,” Fay says. “So much can be said with the memories of the days that followed the attack. I truly miss that one." Fay says of President George W. Bush and our nation’s rallying response to the attacks. I truly miss that one. Another terrorist attack, however, so much more can be said with how our faith community responded.”

He remembers how then-pastor Father Jeffrey Goddard invited the students into the parish church and “provided words of comfort and strength.” And he recalls that day having a new experience for parishioners in a Mass that evening.

“I didn’t know it at the time, but 20 years later I recognize that my Catholic faith is always there and always a rock,” Fay says. “When I am fueled with anger or emotion, or whenever I consider political issues and form an opinion, my faith keeps me in check, and I always consider what the Church teaches. It is a balancing mechanism for me.”

“On that day and the months that followed, while I was upset and became stronger in patriotism, my faith kept me balanced. I didn’t know at the time how it would help me in the future.”

Now, he does.

“Today, when I consider issues such as immigration, abortion, poverty and health care, for example, the Catholic faith keeps me in check with my opinions and beliefs. Sometimes it is a gut punch, but it is with tough experiences that I have grown in my faith.”

“Sept. 11 taught me not only to turn to faith during those times of tragedy and sadness, but to keep the faith during all times.”

‘We were turning to God’

Jeff Ferland always played “America, the Beautiful” on this past July 4 at St. Christopher Church in Indianapolis, his tears flowing.

In fact, Ferland says that he has cried every time he has played that song in the past 20 years, because it takes him back to some unforgettable moments on Sept. 11, 2001.

That was the day he rushed to phone his sister, who lived in New Jersey, and my husband who was working in Manhattan at 36th street by Macy’s. When I reached my apartment, I sat in front of my TV like many Americans while I cried and prayed for those who were returning from ground zero.

But voice wasn’t my primary focus. I am, and always will be, a writer. In the end, I left the position at DC Comics to work in Internet content and website development, taking positions at several companies in lower Manhattan, the last of which I left two weeks prior to 9/11.

That job was in a building on Trinity Place, only a block away from the South Tower of the World Trade Center. I would have taken the subway to that very station and would have been in the building at 9 that morning but I had not been laid off like so many of my peers in the web industry.

I was singing the funeral Mass from above in the choir loft, and I had to look down. If I didn’t, I’d cry, and crying is not conducive to singing. But I felt desolate, aching for those little boys who would grow up without a father.

It wasn’t the first funeral Mass I’d sung after 9/11, nor certainly the last. One could say I found my vocation as a singer through the days that followed the attack on the twin towers.

By the time of the attacks, I’d lived in New York City for eight years. A native of Michigan, I’d relocated there in 1993 to take what I believed was my dream job of working at DC Comics. I also discovered not long after that I could sing.

Of course, having made this discovery, I knew I had to cultivate the gift that God had given me. But I was at a loss as to how to use it since most singers my age would have already begun a career singing for opera and theater companies. Nevertheless, I found a good voice teacher in Manhattan and managed to pay for lessons.

But voice wasn’t my primary focus. I am, and always will be, a writer.

I had the honor of singing in the chorus of the 9/11, I’ve made singing for the Church the focus of my vocal work. While I’ve had the honor of singing in the chorus of the Indianapolis Opera, my greatest joy has been offering my voice at the parishes of Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary in Indianapolis, Holy Name of Jesus in Beech Grove, and St. Mary and the Cathedral of SS. Peter and Paul, both in Indianapolis.

I no longer worry that my voice isn’t used for something ‘grander’ as my voice teachers might have liked. I know it’s being used where God and his people need it, and there’s nothing better than that.

(Ann Margaret Lewis is executive assistant in the archdiocesan Office of Communications and the author of several books. Email her at alexw@archindy.org)
Solidarity shared on 9/11 by Catholics, Muslims in Indy continues

By Sean Gallagher

In the days following the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, many American Muslims experienced an angry and sometimes violent backlash from their fellow Americans because the men who hijacked the airliners that day had been Muslim extremists.

The Nur-Allah Islamic Center in Indianapolis had multiple bombing threats made against it in the days after 9/11. So, when the Muslims of the center gathered for prayer on the Friday after the attacks, they knew that they could become the victims of an attack themselves.

But they weren’t alone. Joining them that day were some of their Catholic friends who were members of Focolare, an international lay ecclesial movement in the Church that, among other things, promotes greater unity in the broader human family.

“It was a very emotionally moving experience,” said Nur-Allah member Dave Shaheed, who has also served as a Marion County judge since 1996. “They felt connected to us. They felt that we were friends and neighbors. They put their lives at risk to be with us at such a historically tumultuous and scary time.”

John Mundell, a member of St. Pius X Parish on 9/11, was part of the Focolare group that came to Nur-Allah on Sept. 14, 2001.

“That experience was probably one of the most sacred moments of my life,” he said. “When we walked in as a group and they saw us, you could tell by the look on their faces that they realized what we had established was real. There was nothing fake or superficial about it.”

The Focolare members knew that choosing to stand with their friends at Nur-Allah after bombing threats had been made against their center potentially put their lives in danger. But their mutual relationship was important enough to them that they accepted that risk.

“Our Catholic faith called us to be with them,” said Mundell, now a member of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Indianapolis. “It was where the rubber met the road. In your gut, you know what the right thing to do is, but you then have to say, ‘Yes, we’re doing it.’

Thankfully, nothing happened on that day. But some members of Nur-Allah so appreciated the solidarity shown to them by their Catholic friends that they joined Mundell for Mass two days later at St. Pius X Church.

“It was reciprocal love,” said Mundell. “You reached out in love and they received this kind of wave [of love] back. It was a sacred feeling. Somehow there was the presence of God in this relationship we had established.”

That relationship had started in 1997 and followed the example of Chura Lobuch, the Italian foundress of Focolare, who had reached out to W.D. Muhammad, the leader of a branch of Islam in the United States made up primarily of Black Americans.

In the years that followed the start of the relationship in Indianapolis, the members of Focolare and Nur-Allah hosted meetings of Catholics and Muslims that drew people from across the Midwest. One had taken place in Indianapolis less than two months before 9/11.

But the events of that day quickly deepened their relationship in ways that they could not have imagined.

“There are times when God calls us to unity through pain,” said Michael Saahir, the resident imam of Nur-Allah. “That, for him, is an enduring lesson of 9/11. one that he is concerned is being forgotten in the years pass.

“Too often, when the pain subsides, we forget,” Saahir said. “We tend to forget too easily. Or we don’t even take time to study the lessons that come from it. And the oneness of the human family is the main one.”

In recent years, members of Focolare in Indianapolis have become more aware of the pain experienced by the Muslims and Black Muslims friends because of their race.

“We’re not perfect as Americans,” said Mundell, “as Catholics in understanding the nature of universal brotherhood and sisterhood.”

Mundell said, “We have a long way to go. There’s a racial aspect that we need to continue to work on and listen to.”

Focolare and Nur-Allah members are making efforts so that the lessons of 9/11 and other lessons are remembered. In the months and years that have followed that day, people from both faith communities have been invited to parishes across and beyond the archdiocese and to universities to speak about their interreligious experience and relationship.

When Mundell started receiving these invitations, he began to recognize a significance to the simple personal bonds that had been created with his Muslim friends in 1997.

“It made us realize the uniqueness of that relationship and that it was no longer meant for just us,” he said. “It was meant to be shared with everyone.”

“People need to see a model or example,” said Saahir. “I’m grateful that our relationship with Focolare is a model, not just for Muslims and Catholics, but for anyone to see that this is doable and has longevity.”

Mundell and Saahir hope that the longevity of the relationship between their two communities will continue into the next generation.

“It’s like passing on your faith,” Mundell said. “The next generation has to take it on as their own. They have to have their own experience.

“This is something that we’ll be doing for the rest of our lives. The relationships have to be continually renewed and rebuilt.”

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Michael Saahir, left, and John Mundell stand on Aug. 26 by the sign of the Nur-Allah Islamic Center in Indianapolis. The pair and other Muslims and Catholics in Indianapolis have had a close relationship since 1997 that was tested in the days following the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

A group of Catholic and Muslim youths gather in 2006 at Martin University in Indianapolis around W.D. Mohammed, then the leader of a branch of Islam in the United States made up primarily of Black Americans. (Submitted photo)
WASHINGTON (CNS)—Frank Siller still goes to the same Catholic church he has gone to since he was a little kid, Blessed Sacrament, on southern Staten Island. He always sits in his family’s same pew for Mass. This is one illustration of the strong place the Catholic faith has in the lives of Siller, 68, and his siblings as they do the work of the Tunnel to Towers Foundation. They began the foundation to honor the sacrifice of Stephen, their baby brother, a firefighter with the New York Fire Department of the City of New York (FDNY) who gave his life, like so many others did, trying to save lives on 9/11—the worst terrorist attack on U.S. soil. The foundation helps the spouses and children of firefighters and police officers killed in the line of duty, and for many of these families pays off their remaining mortgage. Its Gold Star program provides mortgage-free homes to Gold Star families with young children of military members who have died while serving their country. It also assists military members who return home from war with catastrophic injuries by providing these warriors and their families new mortgage-free, specially adapted homes up to $500,000 and counting. And it plans to build a community of these mortgage-free smart homes called “Let Us Do Good Village” in Florida. “Catholic faith drives all we do,” said Siller, the foundation’s CEO and chairman. His late parents, George and Mae, were secular Franciscans who taught their seven children to follow the example of St. Francis of Assisi, who made Christ the center of his life in serving others. St. Francis, the former seminary director of the Archdiocese and faith leader, serves as a patron saint for the Tunnel to Towers Foundation. The Siller family eventually worked to become more of a spiritual journey, “has a supporting cast of family that are unbelievable in their goodness and faith and their kindness,” added Msgr. Finn, a former director of communications for the New York Archdiocese and a former seminary rector. Frank Siller’s commitment to the foundation “is almost apostolic,” the priest said. “He’s a tough guy, a good guy and he’d work himself down to the bone to make sure this [effort] continues.” The foundation gets its funding from “the masses,” Siller noted, adding with a laugh, “I don’t say that because of Catholic Mass.” Grassroots donors who commit $11 a month support the foundation, not corporate donors. Everybody should do something for our military that did for us, the cops and firefighters,” he said. Those who give $11 a month see what the foundation does and can say “my $11 a month did that,” he added. The “Tunnel” in the foundation’s name is the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel. Stephen Siller, 34, ran through the two-mile tunnel to the site of the World Trade Center. He was off duty that day but heard the emergency calls and suited up and carried his 60 pounds of FDNY gear on his back through the tunnel. He left behind his wife, Sarah, and their five children. His brother running through the tunnel that day also serves as a metaphor for how the Siller family eventually worked through the grief his death brought—they moved through the “tunnel of despair to find hope” and turned tragedy into service, and they work to help others through the same tunnel. “Everything we do is focused on doing good,” Siller said, and helping those who “lose loved ones with no notice [and] have to continue living with this unbelievable sadness and try to bring joy into their life.” “You can survive it,” Siller said. “Mae and George wouldn’t let us complain about a thing,” and would always tell their children to “do something for someone else.” He said he told his own children the same thing when they were growing up. He has three children and six grandchildren. Siller misses Stephen every day. They were the closest in age of all their siblings, and he had a role in helping raise his little brother. By the time, Stephen was 10, their mom and dad had died. The oldest Siller, Russ, and Russ’s wife, Lucky, took in Stephen and raised him with the help of Frank and the others. Russ died on Nov. 8, 2019, at age 77. The first thing Siller does every morning is look at his photos of Stephen, Russ, and his mom and dad, and tells them, “Good morning.” Family, faith, God and “most certainly our country” are top of mind for him every day, he said. And his mission has been the same since 9/11: Never forget.

Frank Siller, chairman and CEO of the Tunnel to Towers Foundation, waves his hat outside of a fire station in Arlington, Va., on Aug. 1 as he and other participants start the “Never Forget Walk” in memory of the nearly 3,000 lives lost during the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the U.S. The 500-mile-plus walk began near the Pentagon, then was headed to Shanksville, Pa., and was to end in New York City at ground zero, site of the former World Trade Center’s twin towers. The walk was to end close to Sept. 11, the 20th anniversary of 9/11. (CNS photos/courtesy Tunnel to Towers Foundation)

Frank, Siller, Tunnel to Towers Foundation’s CEO and chairman

Never Forget: Remembering 9/11

The U.S. Marine Corps Band plays outside of a fire station in Arlington, Va., on Aug 1 as participants in the “Never Forget Walk” honor the victims of the 9/11 attack in New York, in Shanksville, Pa., and at the Pentagon in Virginia. The walk of a full journey over 500 miles through five states ended up at “ground zero” in New York City close to the 20th anniversary of 9/11, the worst terrorist attacks on the U.S. in its history. (CNS photos/courtesy Tunnel to Towers Foundation)

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Catholic Medical Association joins lawsuit over HHS ‘transgender mandate’

PHILADELPHIA (CNS)—The Philadelphia-based Catholic Medical Association (CMA) on Aug. 26 joined in a lawsuit challenging the Biden administration’s mandate that doctors and hospitals perform gender-transition procedures on any patient despite any moral or medical objections of the doctor or health care facility.

“Biological identity must remain the basis for treating patients,” said Dr. Michael Parker, president of the association, a national, physician-led community of more than 2,300 health care professionals in 114 local guilds.

The suit was filed on Aug. 26 in U.S. District Court by Alliance Defending Freedom, a national faith-based nonprofit in Arizona that focuses on legal advocacy.

Other joining the suit are Dr. Jeanne Dassow, a Tennessee OB-GYN doctor who specializes in caring for adolescents, and the American College of Pediatricians, made up of more than 600 physicians and other health care professionals in 47 states who treat children.

A news release said the association and the college joined the suit on behalf of their members. It was filed in U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Tennessee in Chattanooga.

The suit over what its opponents call a “transgender mandate” names as defendants Secretary Xavier Becerra, head of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and Robin Sue Frohboese, acting director and principal deputy of the HHS Office for Civil Rights.

On Aug. 9, a U.S. District Court judge ruled to block the so-called “transgender mandate” in its current form as proscribed by the Biden administration.

Judge Reed O’Conner of the District Court for the Northern District of Texas in Wichita Falls ruled 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 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.

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 U.S. Supreme Court’s ruling in Bostock in 2020 that discrimination based on sex outlawed Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 covers people who are gay or transgender.

O’Connor’s ruling is “a victory for common sense, conscience and sound medicine,” said 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 Franciscan Alliance case.

On Jan. 19, the U.S. District Court for the District of North Dakota in Fargo blocked the mandate in ruling 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 of that ruling on April 20 with the U.S Court of Appeals for the 8th Circuit, based in St. Louis. ♦

Gianna Jessen has overcome unspeakable challenges but her grit, determination, and joy has resonated around the world. She is living the impossible as she was intended to be one of the 1.2 million abortions that happen each year. Instead, she survived and was provided the gift of cerebral palsy, as she calls it as “it allows me to really depend on Jesus for everything”.

For a voice that was never intended to speak, she has testified before the Australian Parliament, British House of Commons and US Congress. A life that was never meant to be has been used to inspire-even save-others.
My delight in earning a graduate degree in theology this spring has given way a desire to downsize. I'm not sure who could do what needed to be done. Yet another will take items, but only if I drive them to the drop-off. I have assured everyone I’ve talked with that I am fully vaccinated, that items and the items in good condition. But too numerous, and in some cases, heavy for me to move myself—a perfectly good reason to be vaccinated. With that I am fully vaccinated, there will be a presence in our streets. The trucks with charities’ names on them are evidence of spreading illness—these and other awareness of charities doing such work is needed. Perhaps the inability of larger organizations to operate normally can be compensated for by smaller, localized efforts—an intriguing possibility that could mark the start of new ways to fill these needs.

The trucks with charities’ names on them were a presence in our streets that could encourage us to give. With the curtailment of pick-ups, awareness of charities doing such work is needed. Bag by bag, I hope that one day soon, we will be able to give freely again—goods, works and all—and what we will share will not only bring help, but healing in days and years to come.

(Maureen Pratt writes for Catholic News Service. Her website is www.maureenpratt.com)
Daily Readings

Monday, September 6
Colossians 1:24-2:3
Psalm 62:6-7, 9
Luke 6:6-11

Tuesday, September 7
Colossians 2:6-15
Psalm 145:1b-2, 8-11
Luke 6:12-19

Wednesday, September 8
The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Miccab 5:1-4a
or Romans 8:28-30
Psalm 13:6abc
Matthew 1:16-18, 23-24
or Matthew 1:18-23

Thursday, September 9
St. Peter Claver, priest
Colossians 1:12-17
Psalm 150:10-11b

Friday, September 10
1 Timothy 1:1-2, 12-14
Psalm 115:1-5, 7-8, 11

Saturday, September 11
1 Timothy 1:15-17
Psalm 113:6-7
Luke 6:43-45

Sunday, September 12
Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Isaiah 30:4-9a
Jeremiah 1:5-19
James 2:14-18
Mark 6:28-37

Question Corner

Care is needed when Catholics consider dating someone who is divorced

Q

I have a question regarding dating people who are divorced (Catholic or non-Catholic). At my age (42) it seems like the majority of those in the dating pool are, in fact, divorced. And, when you select potential dates, the knowledge that you are severing a declaration of malnourishment of a previous marriage (commonly known as an annulment) can cause some concern. How can one approach this knowing that this process can be quite painful, and that it can bring about some emotional issues?

A

Certainly before entering any kind of serious romantic relationship, a Catholic should know whether the person they are dating is free to marry in the Catholic Church. And it is good to consider how quickly—especially at the age of 42—a dating relationship can become serious. In terms of knowing whether someone’s previous marriage was valid in the Church’s eyes, it is safest to presume that it was. Certainly, two things. First, if Catholics have no responsibility to get the Catholic Church’s approval before marrying, and the assumption is that the couple was in good faith and that their decision must be honored. In understanding—especially with the advent of online matches—that you wouldn’t want to “grill” a potential date at the very outset on the circumstances of their first marriage, but fairly early in the relationship you would want to know that, should you decide to marry, the two of you would be free to marry in the Church. Since a couple forming a new partnership need not enter into a previously nullified marriage, they can freely make a new declaration of nullity of a previous marriage (commonly known as an annulment), which can take a long time. This process can take quite some time, and can bring about some emotional issues. The whole process can be quite painful, and that it can bring about some emotional issues.

Q

I am a cradle Catholic, born 90 years ago. I am troubled by the lack of reverence given to the name of Jesus. From childhood, that name has always prompted me to bow my head in reverence, but I never see that done anymore. I, as a party of one, am asking people to restore this simple gesture of respect. (Georgia)

A

The custom of bowing at the name of Jesus has a long history in the Church. It takes its origin from St. Paul’s letter to the Philippians, in which he wrote: “God greatly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend ... and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord” (Phil 2:9-10).

To kneel or genuflect at every mention of Jesus might distract from the flow of prayer, and so in the 13th century Pope Gregory X found a reasonable accommodation. In 1274, he wrote this to the Dominican friars: “Recently, during the council held at Lyons, ... we have also judged it proper to persuade the faithful to demonstrate more reverence for that Name above all names, the only Name to which we claim salvation—the Name of Jesus Christ, who has redeemed us from the bondage of sin. Consequently, in obedience to that apostolic precept. ‘In the Name of Jesus let every knee be bent,’ we wish that at the pronouncing of that Name, chiefly at the Holy Sacrifice, everyone would bow his head in token that internally he bends the knee of his heart. I can see no harm in this, and it would hold and become part of the Church’s regular practice. So, you are correct in bowing your head when you mention the name or hear the name of Jesus. Although there is no absolute rule, it is a worthy custom that deserves to endure, reminding us that there are lofty realities that transcend and protect us.

(Natalie Hoefner is a member of St. Monica Parish in Indianapolis and is a reporter and columnist for The Criterion. Photo: One of two beams from the twin towers that are part of a 9/11 memorial along the canal in Indianapolis boasts an eagle facing east toward New York. In the spirit of seeking God in the chaos, the inset shows a rosary hanging high above the ground from the second beam [not pictured] at the 9/11 memorial.) (File photos by Natalie Hoefner)

My Journey to God

Seek and See God in the Chaos

By Natalie Hoefner

In tragedy, in trial seek God in the chaos. In sickness and poor health, see God in doctors and nurses. In natural disasters, see God in neighbor helping neighbor. In hunger, see God in food pantry volunteers. In prison, see God in prison ministers. In emotional distress, see God in concerned family and friends. In the death of loved ones, see God in the help of the parish. In the death of sin, see God in the mercy of confession. And in 9/11 see God in a cross of beams, in ecumenical outreach, in the prayers of the Church and in every first responder who searched for life, who gave their life, who lived to serve again.

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Please submit in writing to our office by 10 a.m. Thursday before the week of publication; to state sure 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 connection to it, so those are separate obituaries on this page.


BYRNE, Margaret, 93. Christ the King, Indianapolis, Aug. 20. Mother of Daniel, Jim, Tom and Steve Catoon. Aunt and great-aunt of several.


Dyck. Grandmother of four.


ROTH, Anna L. 86, St. Louis, Batesville, Aug. 22. Aunt of two.


Hemrick

VATICAN CITY (CNS)— Pope Francis held a private audience with Nadia Murad, a Nobel Peace Prize laureate and survivor of the Islamic State group’s genocide against the Yazidis in Iraq in 2014, the militants kidnapped her, and she escaped captivity after three months. In an Aug. 16 tweet commenting on recent events in Afghanistan, she wrote: “My heart breaks for the next generation of girls [and] women whose nation has been overtaken by the Taliban. Kabul fell on the same day my village fell to ISIS 7 years ago. The international community must address the repercussions before tragedy is repeated.”

Murdad has been leading efforts to raise awareness about the plight of the Yazidis, people, the need to hold ISIS accountable and to advocate for women in areas of conflict and survivors of sexual violence. She is the U.N. goodwill ambassador for the dignity of survivors of human trafficking.

She founded Nadia’s Initiative and seeks to meet with world leaders to convince “governments and international organizations to support sustainable development of the Yazidi homeland,” according to the initiative’s website.

Pope Francis told reporters flying back to Rome from Iraq on March 8 that one of the reasons he became convinced he had to visit the nation was after reading Murad’s memoir, Last Girl: My Story of Captivity and My Fight Against the Islamic State. A reporter had given him a copy of the book, he said, and “that book affected me.”

He said when he met Murad, she told him “terrible” things and “then, with the book, all these things together, led to the decision, thinking about all of them, all those problems. "At certain points, since it is biographical, it might seem rather depressing, but for me this was the real reason behind my decision," he said. †
crowds of people desperate to leave the country at the gate of the Hamid Karzai International Airport. The blast killed at least 170 civilians and 13 U.S. service members, who withdrew from the country on Aug. 30. Thousands of Afghans were seeking to be evacuated as well. The Islamic State claimed responsibility.

“United with Jesus Christ, priest and victim, I offer it all that I suffer for the Church and for the world,” he went on.

The cardinal’s official Twitter account on Aug. 14 indicated the 73-year-old prelate had been admitted to the hospital with COVID-19 and was “being assisted by a ventilator.” He first tweeted on Aug. 7, 10:46 a.m., “We do not make our health public knowledge when we have not been forced to do so for the 2019 coronavirus.

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

As Christians, this situation obligates us,” he said, launching an appeal to everyone “to intensify your prayer and practice fasting. Prayer and fasting, prayer and penance. This is the moment to do so. I am speaking seriously: intensify your prayer and practice fasting, asking the Lord for mercy and forgiveness.” †

Catholic Philanthropic Advisor

The Archdiocese of Indianapolis is seeking a full-time Catholic Philanthropic Advisor at their office in downtown Indianapolis.

The Catholic Philanthropic Advisor is responsible for securing major and planned gifts to support ministries of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. The individual will work closely with the Director of Major Gifts and Planned Giving and the Prospect Research Analyst to identify, cultivate, solicit and steward major gifts and planned gifts. The Catholic Philanthropic Advisor will assist Catholics to grow in their understanding of giving through their personal giving and through the giving of their families.

The Catholic Philanthropic Advisor will work closely with United Catholic Appeal donors and Legacy Society donors to advance giving through the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. The Catholic Philanthropic Advisor will participate in staff meetings and serve as a member of the Office of Stewardship and Development and Catholic Community Foundation events.

Bachelor’s degree required. Advanced degree or certificate desired but not required. Three years of experience in field is preferred, including fundraising and/or estate or charitable planning.

Employment

To apply, send cover letter, resume and three references to bparish@archindy.org.
Post-quake Haiti: Funerals and a daily quest for food, water, shelter

LES CAYES, Haiti (CNS)—Two weeks after Haiti’s Aug. 14 earthquake, the country’s southwest peninsula is still marked by funerals, aftershocks and a daily search for clean water, food and shelter.

“Of the things that really struck me two weeks out is the number of funerals—everywhere you go there are funerals, as people are burying their loved ones, and it brings a sense of overwhelming grief when that many people pass away; it is very striking,” said Beth Carroll, head of programs for Catholic Relief Services (CRS) in Haiti. She spoke with Catholic News Service (CNS) by phone from Haiti on Aug. 28, the same day that several funerals were scheduled for family members of at least two CRS staff in the Les Cayes region.

Carroll said that while visiting Les Cayes on Aug. 25, an aftershock sent her running out of a building and triggered many others in the area to “reflexively scream and run out of their homes.”

“People were already stressed about the situation in Haiti, and this [earthquake] has caused added stress for people,” she said, referring to the difficult political, economic and social crises that have been making life in Haiti almost unbearable for the past two years.

The magnitude 7.2 quake killed more than 2,200 and injured more than 12,000 others. About 130,000 homes were damaged, including 50,000 which were completely destroyed, according to Haiti government estimates.

“It is very visible in the affected communities, where 90% of homes, schools and churches were flattened in the hot spots,” said Carroll. “There is also significant damage which is less visible: a lot of water systems are damaged and no longer functioning, or the water is dirty and not usable.”

Staffers of CRS, the U.S. bishops’ international relief and development agency, are operating under tarps at a parking lot near their operations center in Les Cayes following damage to their offices.

Dioceses around the country have held special collections for Haiti at the behest of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Following the tragedy, CRS has been focused on distributing emergency shelter and hygiene kits in concert with the Haiti government’s thrust to help Haitians rebuild their lives at home and discourage them from relocating to tent cities or sleeping in the streets.

CRS maintains a stockpile of emergency supplies in-country and has embellished its earthquake response resources with goods from the U.S. military along with the U.S. Agency for International Development, the United Nations and World Vision, which works in Haiti but had no presence in the Les Cayes region.

Les Cayes is Haiti’s third-largest city. Carroll said local hospitals and health clinics have done the best they can to treat the injured with their available resources and are moving toward normalcy following the crisis. They also moved many patients to other hospitals in the southern region or to Port-au-Prince.

A major concern in the Les Cayes region is damage to schools and the potential fallout for children, who already have lost significant time in the classroom due to the COVID-19 pandemic and Haiti’s dysfunctional political situation and widespread food insecurity.

“We would really like to see how we can prevent a late start to the school year, and many schools aren’t going to be able to accept children,” Carroll said. “They really can’t afford to miss further class time.”

CRS is also working closely with the local Catholic diocese in Les Cayes as well as the regional office for Caritas Internationalis, which Carroll said recently lost its regional director to COVID-19.

Caritas has “started a very rapid response program, and we are supporting them and doing training with them despite the upheaval of a new [Caritas regional] director, an earthquake and a recent tropical storm [Grace]—and yet they are still out there doing their project,” Carroll said.

She said there is only speculation as to why Haiti has been spared so far from more cases of COVID-19.

“There are a lot of theories, including that the Haitian population is so young, and that people spent a lot of time outdoors in fresh air rather than indoors with recirculated air,” she said.

(Donations for Haiti relief are still being accepted by Catholic Relief Services. Go to 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.)

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