Some of her creations are simple and delicious, like the tasty chocolate chip cookies she’s been making since she was 13. Others are more elaborate and decadent, like the wedding cakes she creates or the snickerdoodle cookies that she fills with caramel cream inside. And all of Lani Pascual’s creations are part of her recipe for adding extra helpings of joy, faith and love to the world—a generously-flavored approach to life that is known as “Bake It Forward.”

While Pascual didn’t create the concept of Bake It Forward, the 47-year-old mother of two has embraced it as a way of spreading and sharing God’s love with others through the gift of baked goods. That includes the 50 gingerbread house kits that she and two friends—Robbie Schneider and Rebecca Simpson—made last Christmas for families in need of some extra holiday cheer. Pascual has also donated earnings from her at-home bakery, The Stacked Cookie, to help a 13-year-old girl diagnosed with terminal cancer.

The girl used the money to buy supplies to make bracelets that she sold as a fundraiser for Riley Hospital for Children in Indianapolis. Pascual has also donated earnings from her school instead of paying her.

Archbishops implore U.S. House members to reject abortion funding in bill’s health care provisions

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Two Catholic archbishops on Sept. 17 objected to two House committees advancing portions of the $3.5 trillion budget bill, known as the Build Back Better Act, with language that funds abortions being added to wording they support to improve access to affordable health care for all.

The funding of abortion, “the deliberate destruction of our most vulnerable brothers and sisters—those in the womb—cannot be included,” said Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann of Kansas City, Kan., chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ (USCCB) Committee on Pro-Life Activities, and Archbishop Paul S. Coakley of Oklahoma City, chairman of the USCCB’s Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development.

“Congress can, and must, turn back from including taxpayer funding of abortion, in the Build Back Better Act,” they said.

“We urge all members of Congress and the administration to work in good faith to advance important and life-saving health care provisions without forcing Americans to pay for the deliberate destruction of unborn human life.”

Church needs to hear God speaking through those who are hurting, pope says

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—To listen to the Holy Spirit, members of the Church must listen to each other and especially to those who are marginalized, Pope Francis said, explaining how dioceses are to help the Church prepare for the Synod of Bishops.

This means that, for example, “the poor, the homeless, young people addicted to drugs, everyone that society rejects are part of the synod” because God says they are part of the Church,” he said.

“The pope spoke to members of his diocese, the Diocese of Rome, in the Paul VI audience room Sept. 18 as the global Church gets set to begin a “synodal journey” toward the 2023 assembly of the Synod of Bishops, discussing the theme, “For a synodal Church: communion, participation and mission.”

The pope apologized for speaking at great length, but he said that as the bishop it was important to explain how the synodal process should work and why.

Essentially, he said, it will be a period of mutual listening in which everyone—cardinals, bishops, priests, religious and laypeople—plays a leading role and “nobody can be considered a plain bit player.”

Bishops implore U.S. House members to reject abortion funding in bill’s health care provisions

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Biden administration reopens and expands immigration program for minors

WASHINGTON (CNS)—The Biden administration in mid-September reinstated and expanded an immigration program aimed at reuniting some children left behind in Central America.

The Department of State and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) announced on Sept. 13 that the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program is accepting new applications as part of the Central American Minors (CAM) program.

“The program allows some migrant parents—and now expanded to include legal guardians—to petition to bring children from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, even if some of the adults only have temporary permission or have cases pending that will later determine whether they can stay in the U.S.,” the news release from the State Department said.

Those who can petition include immigrants with lawful permanent residence, or “green card” holders, those with Temporary Protected Status, and residence, or “green card” holders, those with Temporary Protected Status, and others with a variety of cases pending in immigration court and filed before May 15, 2021, said a news release from the State Department.

“Days after the announcement, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) agents reported on and released a phone call from a 2-year-old girl and a baby in a car seat who had been abandoned among grasses in a riverbank near Eagle Pass, Texas.

Robert Garcia, CBP chief patrol agent for the Del Rio sector in Texas, tweeted on Sept. 14 a photo of the two children, siblings from Honduras, who seemed to be hidden among tall foliage, and an agent stepping in to extract the children. "The attention to detail our agents demonstrate while preforming their duties can be the difference between life and death,” Garcia tweeted. “It is heartbreaking and frustrating to know that there are children being abandoned without remorse or concern for their lives and well-being.”

In 2017, then-President Donald J. Trump ended the CAM program to petition for minors, which was started in 2014 by then-President Barack Obama to respond to a different surge of minors at the border. Since then, however, the number have increased.

Statistics from CBP showed that more than 76,000 minors entered the U.S. during fiscal year 2019, the year a record was set. But fiscal year 2020, which ended on Sept. 30, will surpass that;

By July 6, the latest figures available from CBP, show that entries of unaccompanied minors for fiscal year 2020 had surpassed 91,500.

The administration has been hit hard from all political sides, including its base, criticizing the crowded conditions and the continuing detention of children under immigration custody.

During an Aug. 12 visit to Brownsville, Texas, DHS Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas addressed some of the criticism and said conditions were improving and the administration was working to implement “orderly pathways for migrants to apply for relief under our laws, without having to take the perilous journey north.”

CBP agents have been reporting increasing incidents of smugglers abandoning minors at the border, including an Aug. 26 incident involving 20 children found walking alone near a levee. The agency also has documented smugglers throwing children over the wall from the Mexico side to the U.S.

“Transnational criminal organizations continue to exploit the most vulnerable population—children from foreign countries,” said CBP El Paso Sector Chief Gloria Chavez said in a statement. “They are responsible for placing the lives of thousands of unaccompanied children at risk by manipulating their parents and later abandoning their children at the border.”

What is that one thing in your life that brings you closer to God?

Maybe it happens for you while enjoying a special moment with your child. Or working in your garden. Or helping someone in need. Or sitting in silence during eucharistic adoration. Or while teaching, painting, running, playing music or taking a walk through nature.

Many of us have our special moments and situations when we feel closest to God, when we feel his presence more keenly, more deeply. For you, what is that one thing in your life that brings you closer to God—and why?

What is a favorite moment in your life when you knew God was there for you? The Criterion is inviting you to share your answers, thoughts and stories concerning these questions.

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

Pope’s prayer intentions for October

• Missionary Disciples—We pray that every baptized person may be engaged in evangelization, available to the mission, by being witnesses of a life that has the flavor of the Gospel.

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

The Criterion (ISSN 0574-1350) is published weekly except the last week of December and the first week of January.

The Criterion Press Inc.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: Criterion Press Inc., 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367.

Authorization to mail this publication at the reduced rate of postage is granted under Pub. L. 82-404.

The Criterion is available at the Sunday editions of the Indianapolis Star and The Indianapolis News, as well as at Archdiocese of Indianapolis parishes and The Criterion Press Inc., 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367.
Respect Life Sunday Mass, Life Chain events set for Oct. 3

Archbishop Charles C. Thompson will celebrate the archdiocesan annual Respect Life Sunday Mass at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, 1347 N. Meridian St., in Indianapolis, at 1 p.m. on Oct. 3.

During the Mass, the archdiocesan Office of Human Life and Dignity will present the Archbishop O’Meara Respect Life Award and the Our Lady of Guadalupe Pro-Life Youth Award.

The Archbishop O’Meara Respect Life Award honors an adult or married couple who demonstrates leadership in promoting the dignity and sanctity of human life in the parish community and in the archdiocese.

The Our Lady of Guadalupe Pro-Life Youth Award honors a high school student who demonstrates leadership in promoting the dignity and sanctity of human life in the parish community, school community and in the archdiocese.

Life Chain events will also take place throughout central and southern Indiana on Oct. 3.

Life Chain events are peaceful and prayerful public witnesses of individuals standing for 60-90 minutes praying for our nation and for an end to abortion. It is a visual statement of solidarity by the Christian community that human life is sacred from the moment of conception until natural death.

The following Life Chain events in central and southern Indiana are listed in alphabetical order by location:

• Bloomington: 2-3:30 p.m., neighborhood parking and signs available at 16 locations along E. Third Street from College Mall Road west to College Avenue, then south on College Avenue to Planned Parenthood. Information: Carole Canfield, 812-322-5114.

• Brazil: 2-3 p.m., Highway 40 at Alabama Street. Information: Jeff Eilting, 812-230-6365.

• Brookville: 2-3 p.m., Main Street at Courthouse. Information: Jerry Mersch, 513-702-4949.

• Columbus: 2-3 p.m., Second Street at Washington Street. Information: Bartholomew County Right to Life: 812-350-2731.

• Greensburg: 2-3:30 p.m., Lincoln Street starting at Arthy’s. Information: Patricia Louagie, 812-614-2528.

• Central Indiana (Indianapolis): 2:30-3:30 p.m., Meridian Street from Michigan Street to 38th Street. Parking is available at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, 1347 N. Meridian St., or Knights of Columbus Mater Dei Council 437, 1305 N. Delaware St. Short-sleeve and long-sleeve T-shirts available on-site, see design, sizes and prices at centralindianalifechain.org.

• Lawrenceburg: 2-3 p.m., U.S. 50 between Walnut and Frinot streets. Information: Duane Meyer, 812-537-4853.

• Richmond: 2-3 p.m., S. A Street at S. 16th Street. Information: Debbie Sams, 765-969-0254.


• Terre Haute Area Life Chain: 2-3:30 p.m., 3rd Street at Wabash Avenue. Information: Contact Tom McBroom, 812-841-0060.

(For more information on how parishes, schools, families, ministries and individuals can share the Gospel of Life during Respect Life Month and throughout the year, go to www.respectlife.org/October.)

People give witness to the dignity of life along North Meridian Street in Indianapolis during the national LifeChain event on Oct. 7, 2015. (Criterion file photo by Nadine Hunter)
A Catholic scientist offers insight into morality of COVID-19 vaccines

I am writing in regard to a letter writer in the Sept. 10 issue of The Criterion who seeks all presently available COVID-19 vaccines despite perceived connections to abortion.

While I respect this reader’s intention to fight for the unborn, the letter contains very strong and broad condemnations of scientific research. As both a practicing pharmacological scientist and a practicing Catholic, I feel obligated to provide some additional information on this subject.

As has been covered previously in The Criterion, the controversy surrounding the currently available COVID vaccines from Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna stems from the use of the “human embryonic kidney-293” (commonly known as HEK-293) cell line in their initial development.

HEK-293 cells were originally derived from fetal tissue, purportedly from an elective abortion in the early 1970s. However, statements by Dr. Frank Graham, who discovered this cell line at the University of Leiden in 1973, reveal that the actual source of this fetal tissue is unclear even to the original researchers; and the original researchers were not directly involved in any abortion, if there ever was one.

What is known is that Graham created what is known as an “immortalized” cell line from the original fetal tissue; this means that these cells were modified to become capable of growing and dividing indefinitely.

Due to such useful properties, HEK-293 cells ultimately became ubiquitous in scientific research, especially research aimed to understand, treat, cure and prevent human diseases. Importantly, HEK-293 cells propagate themselves under laboratory conditions, so no actual fetal tissue is ever necessary in their use.

With this information in mind, I object to the assertion in the letter that any scientists involved in the development of COVID vaccines are actively promoting abortion. These vaccines have not required any abortion to be performed at any stage of their development or production, nor is there any reason to consider doing so.

There are fields of research that do in fact make use of some human fetal tissue, most prominently the deeply controversial field of embryonic stem-cell research, but to lump in vaccine development or scientific research generally with this specific practice is inaccurate.

As all Catholics should, I believe abortion is intrinsically immoral and must be opposed under all circumstances. I encourage the use of cell lines not derived from fetal tissue whenever possible, and I pray the COVID vaccine is soon available without any connection—no matter how remote—to the destruction of a human life.

However, I also view the scientific and medical advances resulting from the use of HEK-293 cells, including these COVID vaccines, as a sign of God’s infinite providence in bringing about much good from what may or may not have been an initial evil. I freely admit that I am no theologian or ethicist, so don’t take my word for it.

Take it from Pope Francis, who has consistently called the voluntary rejection of all COVID vaccine an act of charity.

I encourage anyone interested to read the article “Moral Guidance of Using COVID-19 Vaccine: An Act of Charity” developed with Human Fetal Cell Lines” by Dominican Father Nicanor Pier Giorgio Austraico of Princeton Theological Seminary, available at www.thepublicdomaincure.com/2020/05/03/5752/.

May God enlighten us and our culture.

Dr. Patrici Knerr is a member of St. Susanna Parish in Plainfield. 

Letters to the Editor

Say ‘no’ to culture of self, dedicate yourself to others

This is just to say “Amen!” or “right on!” to Richard Doerflinger’s guest commentary in the Sept. 3 issue of The Criterion about being trapped in a culture of self.

Somewhere in the past 40 or 50 years, America has not only become an “all about me” culture, we have attempted to put a “Jesus approved” stamp on it to boot.

Pop Christianity in the modern age has distilled and retranslated “love thy neighbor as thyself” to “love yourself more than your neighbor” and to even “block/block/marginalize your neighbor.”

Shortly before his untimely death, Thomas Merton was in dialogue with Buddhists. He commented that Buddhism perhaps expressed more clearly than Christianity the futility of trying to fulfill self. Buddhism says that the idea of “self” is a learned notion, is error, and attempts to be consumed with its fulfillment are non-starters from the outset.

We only realize our best life when we dedicate ourselves to others and when we, as St. Paul said, “Empty ourselves of self” and even “die to self.”

We should listen to St. Paul. We should listen to Merton. We should listen to Jesus.

Sonny Shanks

Corydon

Letters Policy

Letters from readers are welcome and should be informed, relevant, well-expressed, concise, temperate in tone, containing no profanity. The editors reserve the right to select and edit the letters based on space limitations, pastoral sensitivity and content.

Letters must be signed, but for serious content, names may be withheld. Letters must be informative, relevant, well-written, courteous and respectful.

The editors reserve the right to select and edit the letters based on space limitations, pastoral sensitivity and content.

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.
Et tu, manca te hace pecar, córtatela. Más te vale entrar en la vida eterna, que destruiras la carne que estás arrojado a los infiernos. (Mc 9:43)
Events Calendar

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

September 24-Oct. 30
Saint Meinrad Archabbey Library Gallery, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. "Holy Faces: Traditional Iconography. Our Lord, His Mother and the Saints" iconography exhibit. Free. Monday through Thursday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; Friday-Sunday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sunday, 1-2:30 p.m., offered by Library. Information: 812-356-7921 or margaret@archindy.org.

September 27, Oct. 4
St. Therese of the Child Jesus (Little Flower) Parish Center, St. Therese Room, 4720 E. 11th St., Indianapolis. SoulCore Rosary Workout: 6:30-7:15 p.m.; prayer and exercise, free. Information: 317-727-1167, jane@32903@yahoo.com or soulcore.com.

September 28
Indianapolis Marriott Downtown, 350 West Maryland Street, Indianapolis. Celebrate Life Dinner. 6 p.m., becoming Right to Life of Indianapolis, abortion survivor Gianna Jessen, speaker, $75 per person, tables of 10 are $750. Registration and information: www.rtlindy.org, or 317-582-1526.

Our Lady of Lourdes Church, 5333 E. Washington St., Indianapolis. Green Mass, 6 p.m.; Father Rick Ginther, celebrant. Information: Benedictine Sister Sheila Fitzpatrick, 317-788-7581, ext. 2.

September 30
St. Michael Parish, 519 Jefferson Blvd., Greenwood. The Parables of Jesus Bible Study, Thursdays, 1-2:30 p.m., offered by Guadalupe Guadalupe college graduates, bring Bible, online study available, free. Information and registration: lilaplane@gmail.com.

September 30-Oct. 2
Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, 5333 E. Washington St., Indianapolis. Fall Fest, Thurs. and Fri. 5-10 p.m., Sat. 2-10 p.m., food, carnival rides, kids’ games, live bands, silent auction, health booth, free admission. Information: 317-356-7281.

October 1

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, mssrsc@hotmail.com.

October 1-2
Holy Name of Jesus Parish, 89 N. 17th Ave., Beech Grove. Oktoberfest, 5 p.m.-midnight, live entertainment featuring The Wombleses and Trainwreck, German and American foods, beer garden, raffle, free admission. Information: 317-784-5454 or kkloeten86@gmail.com.

October 2
St. John Paul II Parish, 806 S. Broadlawn Dr., Bloomfield. First Saturday Marian Devotional Prayer Group, Mass, devotional prayers, rosary, 8 a.m. Information: 765-647-5462.

Clay County Courthouse lawn, 600 E. National Ave., Brazil, IN. USA Prayer Rally, noon, sponsored by Annunciation Parish Legion of Mary, prayers for the country. Information: tina.donnelly@forsure.com.

St. Roch Parish Center, 3620 S. Meridian St., Indianapolis. St. Roch Class of 1961 Class Reunion Dinner. 6 p.m., S40. Information: Dan Gandolf, 317-979-9300, dan.gandolf@gmail.com or Steve Taylor, 317-294-4007, taylor.stephen@att.net.

St. Joseph School, 512 Mulberry St., Corydon, St. John Paul II Parish, 2 p.m. Bike ride through south Harrison County, $20 with pre-registration or $30 on-site, $10 meal ticket. Information and registration: 812-596-4310 or aliahl897@gmail.com.

October 3
Holy Family Parish, 3027 Pearl St., Oldenburg. Annual Parish Festival, 11 a.m.-4 p.m., fried chicken and roast beef dinners, raffles, basket booth, crafts and more, free admission. Information: 317-934-3013 or holylfamilyehv1@gmail.com.

Fort Harrison State Park, Reddick Shelter, 6000 N. Post Rd., Indianapolis. St. Roch Class of 1961 Class Reunion Picnic, noon. Information: Dan Gandolf, 317-979-9300, dan.gandolf@gmail.com or Steve Taylor, 317-294-4007, taylor.stephen@att.net.


Third Street and Wabash Avenue, Terre Haute. Terre Haute Life Chain, 2-3 p.m., park behind the Vigo County Court House. Information: Tom McMee 812-841-0660 or mcmeen06@gmail.com.

St. John Paul II Parish, 2835 S. Campbell Ave., 2605 S. Joe Road W., Sellersburg. Drive Through Chicken Dinner and Raffles, 10:30 a.m.-3 p.m., Big Money Raffle, quilt raffle, 50/50, $500 gift certificate to Huber’s Preferred Meats, Yeti Cooler and an iPad, chicken dinners $12. Information: 812-246-2512.

October 5

October 6
MCL Cafeteria, 5520 West Maryland Street, Indianapolis. Solo Seniors, 5:30 p.m., Catholic, educational, charitable and single societies—separately, widowed or divorced—age 50 and older, new members welcome, also call about regular Friday night dinner events. Information: 317-796-8805 or 317-243-0777.

Retreats and Programs

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

Abbey Caskets to host open house, offer workshop tours on Oct. 3

Abbey Caskets, a division of Saint Meinrad Archabbey, 200 Hill Dr., in St. Meinrad, will host a public open house and workshop tours at 9:30 a.m. on Central Time, on Oct. 3. The workshop is located along Indiana 545, just north of the Archabbey Gift Shop.

Tours of the workshop will be given, casts and urns will be on display, and refreshments will be available. The public is also welcome to join the monks of the Mass at the Archabbey at 9:30 a.m. Central Time, at the Archabbey Gift Shop and attend the nearby pilgrimage at nearby Monte Cassino Shrine at 2 p.m. Central Time. Abbey Caskets was started in 1999 to offer handmade wooden caskets and cremation urns directly to consumers. The revenue from the business supports the work of Saint Meinrad Archabbey. For more information, call Jenny Keller at 800-987-7707.

Events and retreats can be submitted to The Criterion by logging on to www.archindy.org/events/submission, or by mailing us at 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202, ATTN: Ann Lewis, or by fax at 317-236-1595.

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

Announcements for couples celebrating 50, 55, 60, 65, 70 or more years of marriage are accepted. Go to castlertoncornerlane.com or call 317-236-1585.
By Mike Krokos

Writing has been how Dr. Christine Montross has always made sense of the world. From a young age, the Indianapolis native enjoyed writing, which led to earning a Master of Fine Arts degree in Poetry from the University of Michigan, where her parents, maternal grandparents and great-grandparents also attended. During graduate school, the alumna of North Central High School in Indianapolis wrote poems about madness and about the ways in which the mind can fail. She then taught high school English and “worked with kids who were dealing with significant psychosocial stressors.” It was there she realized that her interest in mental health was something she should pursue more formally.

After taking night classes in chemistry, Montross enrolled in medical school at Brown University in Providence, R.I., where she pursued a degree in psychiatry. “That’s how my career in medicine began—I really went to medical school knowing that I wanted to be a psychiatrist,” she said. “That didn’t change when I went. … If anything, when I entered the anatomy lab on the first day of medical school and saw a room full of dead bodies on tables, I knew I would need writing to shepherd me through that experience.”

“The eventual result was my first book, Body of Work: Meditations on Mortality from the Human Anatomy Lab. And writing and medicine have been my dual careers ever since.” Montross will be the keynote speaker during the fifth annual Corrections Ministry Conference, which will be held from 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. on Oct. 9 at Roncalli High School, 3300 Prague Road, in Indianapolis. Hamilton County Superior Court Judge William J. Hughes will also give a talk on the criminal justice system. The event will also be livestreamed. (See a related column on page 12.) Montross’ book, Waiting for an Angelus’ book, Waiting for an Plane.”

Greatness is measured by service, Pope Francis says during Angelus

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—In God’s view, human greatness is measured by how one serves or helps someone who cannot offer anything in exchange, Pope Francis said.

“If we want to follow Jesus, we must follow the path he himself traced out, the path of service. Our fidelity to the Lord depends on our willingness to serve,” the pope said before reciting the Angelus prayer on Sept. 19 with visitors gathered in St. Peter’s Square.

The day’s reading from the Gospel of Mark recounted how the disciples were arguing over which of them was the greatest. Jesus admonished them and insisted, “If anyone wishes to be first, he shall be the last of all and the servant of all” (Mk 9:35).

“If you want to be first, you need to stand in line, be last and serve everyone,” the pope said. Jesus’ teaching ran counter to what the disciples and most other people then and today think, he said. “The value of a person no longer depends on the role they have, the work they do, the money they have in the bank. No, no, not so. It does not depend on this. Greatness and success in God’s eyes are measured differently: They are measured by service. Not on what someone has, but on what someone gives.

“Do you want to be first?” the pope asked. “Serve. This is the way.” While serving another has a cost, “as our care and availability toward others grows, we become freer inside, more like Jesus,” he said. “The more we serve, the more we are aware of God’s presence, especially when we serve those who cannot give anything in return—the poor—embracing their difficulties and needs with tender compassion.”

After reciting the Angelus, Pope Francis offered prayers for the people in Mexico’s Hidalgo state, which experienced severe flooding from heavy rains in early September. He particularly remembered the 17 patients at a hospital in Tula who died when the flooding led to power outages, shutting down oxygen supplies.
As an afterthought, she adds with a smile, “it’s fun writing about what I know.”

After all, her original plan was to try to help and heal people as a doctor, not as a baker.

Stirring up a long-simmering passion: As a little girl, Pascual had the kind of intelligence that gave a certain hope to her mother who is a native of the Philippines and her father who is a farmer from a family whose roots are in that country. “I was like every kid who’s good at math and science coming from an Asian family—you should become a doctor,” she recalls with a smile.

But Pascual’s reverence for her Catholic faith led her to become a pre-med student atCreighton University in Omaha, Neb.—a pre-med study during which she could bake chocolate chip cookies and share them with her professors.

In fact, one of her professors saw how much joy Pascual had in making and sharing her cookies that she encouraged her to consider baking as a career.

Pascual also began to have doubts about her future as a doctor when she began to fill out her medical school applications, and all she could write about her reason for pursuing that profession was: “I like to help people.” “I didn’t have anything else,” she recalls.

Instead, she earned a master’s degree in public health at the University of Michigan. There, she spent her free time writing recipes in a journal that she had been given as a college graduation gift—a gift from the professor who encouraged her to become a baker. She also did a lot of baking, including making fresh wheat bread to save money. The enticing smell of the homemade bread was just one of the reasons that attracted a fellow student named Andrew Rissnak, living in the same dorm, to her.

The ingredients and directions for a new loaf followed. The couple married in 2002. Pascual was a research scientist and a student atIndiana University Purdue University Indianapolis while Rissnak started working as a research scientist at Eli Lilly & Co. First the two children, then was born in 2009—a birthing that also stirred up Pascual’s long-simmering passion.

“Joaquin is autistic,” she says. “I decided that if the kids we were teaching, it should be him. I decided I needed to leave my teaching career. I felt God was calling me to do something else. I’d always done baking, and I thought I could do that.”

Her new plan blended in a surprisingly sweet way with part of her family’s history.

A story to see, a blessing to cherish: It’s the story of her grandmother on her father’s side of her family—Ambrosia Delosantos.

“Her name means ‘food of the God, of the saints,’” says Pascual, whose own name translates to “Heavenly Easter.”

“My grandmother was a teacher first, too, in the Philippines.” My grandfather was a farmer who was recruited to leave the Philippines and come to Hawaii in 1946 to work in the pineapple and sugar cane fields. In Hawaii, my grandmother helped support the family with a bakery in her neighborhood. She was known for a lot of service with her bakery. She was helping families in need. When you start cooking, you learn there’s a lot of people in need.

Pascual loves that connection with her grandmother. She loves that they share the approach of Bake It Forward.

“Then there is the one special ingredient passed down through the generations of her family that brings together everything for Pascual, the one ingredient that flavors her life in such a rich, satisfying way that she becomes emotional talking about it. She has already shared the ingredient with their sons—12-year-old Joaquin and 8-year-old Samuel.

“There’s something very beautiful about the Catholic faith,” she says as tears fill her eyes. “It’s the tradition of love that was given to me by my grandparents and my parents, and I want to give it to my kids. I love that my kids are in Catholic school and they want to help me with what I do.”

She then shares another story of the influence of family in her life.

BAKING

U.S. bishops’ long-standing support and advocacy for proposals “at both the federal and state level that ensure all people will have access to affordable care, including Medicaid expansion proposals.”

“We are encouraged by several health care provisions in the Build Back Better Act that will improve health care coverage for those in need,” the prelates said on Sept. 15. These include “enhanced postpartum coverage and other investments to address the high rates of preventable maternal deaths in the United States, expanded access to in-home care, support for the Children’s Health Insurance Program [CHIP], and pre-release Medicaid coverage for returning citizens,” they said.

The USCCB “insists that health care proposals in this budget measure, and now they are filling in Washington, Committee on Migration.”

Committee for Religious Liberty; Bishop Michael

“Job creation should focus on just wages, include over 1.5 million undocumented migrant and refugee children, and include a variety of educational opportunities, including programs provided by the faith-based community.”

They also said that Congress must preserve religious liberty by ensuring “the benefits of this legislation [are] available to all.”

“To that end, Congress must avoid saddling programs and funding partnerships with obligations that exclude people and organizations who hold certain religious beliefs,” they said. “For example, recipients of funding under the bill should not be required to assent to a false understanding of gender and sexuality.”

“The full text of the bishops’ letter to House members and Senate Democrats hope to pass the bill using the process of reconciliation—meaning it could be passed with a simple majority, not the 60 votes usually needed. Other priories the bishops outlined included creating jobs that pay “just wages”; strengthening families by making the child care tax credit permanent; ensuring “safe, decent and affordable housing”; expanding access to early childhood education; addressing greenhouse gas emissions especially as they affect poor and vulnerable communities; ensuring clean drinking water, “a universal human right”; and preserving religious liberty for all to benefit from the bill’s provisions.

Another of the bishops’ priorities—meeting the needs of migrants and refugees—was addressed on Sept. 12 in a vote by the House Judiciary Committee to approve language that would provide a pathway to U.S. citizenship for beneficiaries of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, known as “Dreamers.”

The citizenship provision also would cover Temporary Protected Status holders, Deferred Enforced Departure beneficiaries, and agricultural workers and other essential workers who might be without legal permission.

“Undoubtedly, Catholic social teaching will be implicated by many aspects of this budget reconciliation bill, but this is a welcome milestone for many families and the common good,” Bishop Dorsonville said in a Sept. 15 statement.

In urging a pathway to legalization and citizenship for migrants and refugees, the committee chairman in their Sept. 7 letter noted their “descent for family unity and the obstacles facing many noncitizen families.”

Regarding jobs for the poor and vulnerable, the bishops said: “We have long held that work is fundamental to human dignity and consistently call for the creation of decent work at decent wages as the most effective way to build a just economy.”

They urged the expanded child tax credit be made permanent and called for increasing access to in-home care for family members, strengthening child nutrition programs, ensuring quality and affordable child care options, paid sick leave, parental leave “and other forms of support for working families.”

Congress could support affordable housing, the bishops said, through “increased funding for the national Housing Trust Fund and the low-income housing tax credit” and by “significantly expanding rental assistance so it is available to more households in need.”

The legislators also should preserve public housing by addressing the $70 billion repair backlog, addressing the eviction crisis, “and encouraging equal housing opportunities for all including by addressing racial disparities in homeownership,” they said.

The bishops called for expanding access to early childhood education and said this “must take into consideration the desires of parents, the unique needs of their children, and include a variety of educational opportunities, including programs provided by the faith-based community.”

They also said that Congress must preserve religious liberty by ensuring “the benefits of this legislation [are] available to all.”

Recent events have made clear that the “desire for the common good is required in a time of climate change should receive priority for investments in clean energy infrastructure and climate resilience,” they said.

Special attention must be paid to jobs and the needs of coal and fossil fuel industry workers and their families, whose livelihoods face the uncertainties of energy transitions.”

The bishops outlined provisions they said are needed to strengthen families. “We have long taught that economic and social policies as well as the organization of the work world should be continually evaluated in light of the social and moral dimension of human life.”

“The long-range future of this nation is intimately linked with the well-being of families, for the family is the most basic form of human community.”

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(For the full text of the bishops’ letter to House members and Senators, there is a copy of this letter.)
Bridge over troubled waters: Papal trip tests limits of being a ‘pontifex’

\[\text{By John Shaughnessy}\]

At Immaculate Heart of Mary School in Indianapolis on Sept. 2, “This is so special and out of the ordinary,” said Ute Eble, the parish’s director of religious education. “It’s a great time to pray for one another and draw upon the rich heritage of the Church.”

Second-grade students draw near to the relics. “We’ve read a lot about the saints and the things they might see today,” said Hagan, a teacher’s assistant in the first grade. “This is a great opportunity. I think it will have a huge impact on their faith. I think this is a day they’ll remember forever.”

\[\text{third- grades Harold Mores, front, and Cara Sanders examine one of the 150 relics that were on display at Immaculate Heart of Mary School in Indianapolis on Sept. 2. (Photo by John Shaughnessy)}\]

Father Carlos Marín, left, and Daniele, mainly of the holiness of the saint remains part of the holiness of the saint, said Hagan, a teacher’s assistant in the kindergarten.

\[\text{CATHOLIC CHURCH has not been able to expand its missionary outreach because “marriage is a sacrament” and “the Church does not have the power to change the sacraments as the Lord instituted them.”}\]

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\[\text{Pope Francis attends a meeting with the Hungarian leadership, including the prime minister, on Sept. 15, the pope also said he spoke mainly about COVID-19 vaccinations.}\]

\[\text{VATICAN CITY (CNS)—On paper, Pope Francis’ apostolic visit to Hungary and Slovakia was pretty standard as papal trips go: outdoor Masses, meeting with dignitaries, visits to parishes and museums.}\]

\[\text{However, while media reports leading up to the papal visit focused on the highly divisive issue of COVID-19 vaccinations.}\]

\[\text{While expressing consternation about arguments opposed to it due to humanity’s “history of friendship with vaccines,” the pope tried to understand why there are doubts, positing that the uncertainty of the pandemic, the broad selection of vaccines and even “the reputation of some vaccines that are not suitable or are a little more than distilled water” as the cause of skepticism.}\]

\[\text{Nevertheless, the pope said so-called vaccine “deniers” should not be met with hostility over their views. Instead, he emphasized the need “to clarify; clarify and talk serenely about this.”}\]

\[\text{While divisive issues continue to shake both the unity of the world and of the universal Church, Pope Francis’ visits to Hungary and Slovakia aimed to show that a bridge is only as good as the chain that holds it together.}\]

\[\text{“The bridge has yet another lesson to teach us,” the pope told members of the ecumenical council. “It is supported by great chains made up of many rings.”}\]

\[\text{They are our brothers and sisters; we have to accompany them,” the pope said. “Many, many people of homosexual orientation approach the sacrament of Penance and approach to ask for advice from priests, and the Church helps them to move forward in their lives.”}\]

\[\text{“The bridge does not fuse those two parts together, but rather holds them together. That is how it should be with us,” the pope told the ecumenical gathering on Sept. 12. “And we need to remind us of this concept, so fundamental in Scripture, of covenant. The God of the covenant asks us not to yield to separatism or partisan interests. He does not want us to ally ourselves with some at the expense of others. Rather, he wants individuals and communities to be bridges of fellowship with all,” he added.}\]

\[\text{He doubled down on the metaphor when speaking to the country’s bishops, urging the Church in Hungary to “be a builder of bridges and an advocate of dialogue.”}\]

\[\text{The word “pontifex” means pontiff, but it also means “bridge-builder” and, throughout his visit, Pope Francis tried to put his words into practice in the hopes of showing that differences of opinions on hot-button issues do not preclude dialogue and engagement.}\]

\[\text{Among the many issues that put his skills to the test was Hungary’s relationship with the Holy See, including the appointment of a new ambassador.}\]

\[\text{During his meeting with Hungary’s Ecumenical Council of Churches, the pope used the country’s famed Széchenyi Chain Bridge, which links the eastern and western sides of Budapest along the Danube River, as a metaphor for how the Church should maneuver in an increasingly divided world.}\]

\[\text{The Catholic Church has not been spared the effects of the increased polarization of issues playing out around the world, a reality Pope Francis showed he was keenly aware of in his first two speeches in Budapest. During his meeting with Hungary’s Ecumenical Council of Churches, the pope used the country’s famed Széchenyi Chain Bridge, which links the eastern and western sides of Budapest along the Danube River, as a metaphor for how the Church should maneuver in an increasingly divided world.}\]

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POPE

Pope Francis shared his view on Communion debate; calls abortion ‘murder’

ABOARD THE PAPAL FLIGHT FROM SLOVAKIA (CNS)—The debate about denying Communion to politicians who support abortion must be handled in a pastoral way, not by public condemnations that seek to “communicate” Catholics who are not in line with Church teaching, Pope Francis said.

During his return flight from Bratislava, Slovakia, on Sept. 15, the pope said that while there is no question that “abortion is homicide,” bishops must look take a pastoral approach rather than wage into the political sphere.

“If we look at the history of the Church, we can see that every time the bishops did not act like shepherds when dealing with a problem, they aligned themselves with political life, on political problems,” he said.

The pope told journalists that when defending a principle, some bishops act in a way “that is not pastoral” and “enter the political sphere.”

“And what should a shepherd do? Be a shepherd. Not going around condemning,” the pope added. “They must be a shepherd, in God’s style, which is closeness, compassion and tenderness.

“A shepherd that doesn’t know how to act in God’s style slips and enters into many things that are not of a shepherd.”

The pope said that he preferred not to comment directly on the issue of denying Communion in the United States “because I do not know the details. I am speaking of the principle” of the matter.

During their virtual spring general assembly in June, 75% of U.S. bishops approved the drafting of a document, addressed to all Catholic faithful, on eucharistic coherence. During long discussions on the document before the vote, several bishops specifically pointed to President Joe Biden and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., who are Catholic, for not actively seeking to end legal abortion, and they said such politicians should be denied Communion.

When asked if he had ever publicly denied Communion to someone, Pope Francis emphatically said, “No, I have never denied the Eucharist to anyone; to speak of the principle” of the matter.

When asked if he had ever publicly denied Communion to someone, Pope Francis emphatically said, “No, I have never denied the Eucharist to anyone; to anyone! I don’t know if someone came to me under these conditions, but I have never refused them the Eucharist, since the time I was a priest.”

But, he added, “I was never aware of anyone in front of me under those conditions that you mentioned.” Recalling his apostolic exhortation, “Evangelii Gaudium,” the pope said that “Communion is not a prize for the perfect,” but rather “a gift, the presence of Jesus in His Church and in the community. That is the theology.”

However, Pope Francis also said he understood why the Church takes a hard stance because accepting abortion “is a bit as if daily murder was accepted.”

“Whoever commits an abortion, murders,” he said. “Take any book on embryology, those books on medicine. At the third week of conception, many times before a mother even realizes it, all the organs are there. All of them, even their DNA.

It is a human life. Period,” the pope added.

“And this human life must be respected. This principle is very clear.”

Pope Francis said that those “who don’t understand” this principle must ask themselves whether it is “right to kill a human life to solve a problem.”

He also recalled the reaction to his apostolic exhortation “Amoris Laetitia,” and the debates surrounding giving Communion to divorced or remarried Catholics.

Some called it, “heresy, but thank God for Cardinal [Christopher] Schönborn, a great theologian, who cleared a bit the chaos,” he said.

Nevertheless, “there was always this condemnation,” the pope said. “These are poor people who are temporarily outside, but they are children of God and need our pastoral action.”

The pope was also asked about his recent public service announcement in August encouraging people to receive the COVID-19 vaccine and whether his statement that “vaccinations are an act of love” would alienate Catholics who are skeptical about taking the vaccine.

There are more than 62 million Catholics who are skeptical about taking the vaccine. As of Sept. 15, the pope said he found “a little bit strange because ‘humanity has a history of friendship with vaccines.’

He also said that doubts about the vaccines may be a consequence of “the uncertainty of the pandemic, of the vaccine itself,” or the notoriety of some vaccines in the past that were practically “distilled water.”

“Even in the College of Cardinals there are some deniers. One of these, the poor guy, recently recovered from the virus,” the pope said, alluding to American Cardinal Raymond L. Burke.

In Slovakia, recent legislation requiring vaccinations sparked protests in the country, causing divisions and tensions, including within the Catholic Church.

Although the government initially mandated all participants of papal events to be vaccinated, authorities relaxed their initial regulations and allowed participants who presented a negative COVID-19 test or proof of recovery from coronavirus.

The purpose is not to collect everyone’s individual opinions, he said, but rather to hear what the Holy Spirit is saying—perhaps surprisingly—saying through them.

This will require that everyone dialogue in a way that is “familial,” wherever everyone understands common humanity, reconciles differences and reaches out in order to encounter and engage with others, he said.

“One of the evils of the Church, rather, a perversion, is this clericalism that separates the priest, the bishop from the people. A bishop and priest disconnected from the people is an administrator, not a shepherd,” the pope said.

The synodal journey will require discussing viewpoints and expectations that are different and seeking out people who have been alienated “to hear not what they say but what they feel, even the insults,” he said.

“Allow yourselves to meet [others] and be questioned [by them], let their questions be your questions, allow yourselves to walk together. The Spirit will lead you,” the pope told them. “Do not be afraid to enter into dialogue and allow yourselves to be shocked by the dialogue. It is the dialogue of salvation.

“The Holy Spirit in his freedom knows no boundaries, nor does he allow himself to be limited by affiliations,” he said. “If the parish is not to be an exclusive club, then I suggest you leave doors and windows open” so everyone can be welcomed.

No one should be afraid, impatient or “rigid” in interpreting whatever difficulties emerge, he added, as long as people remain open and docile to the Spirit.

“God is not in a hurry,” and he can see beyond present circumstances and contrasts, he said. People need to “acknowledge the freedom of God’s action and [make sure] that there are no obstacles that could keep him from reaching people’s hearts.”

After Christ’s death and resurrection, God’s Spirit was not left behind a “vacuum” that has to be filled by people insisting on taking his place or demanding the Church be modeled on their cultural or historical beliefs-leading the Church to become like a country with “armed borders, guilt-mongering customs, barriers,” he said.

“Are there not-less than a few-who have heard about the Holy Spirit that blasphemes the gravity of God’s engaging action,” Pope Francis said.

Instead, Jesus sent the Holy Spirit, who provides the “drive,” strength and ability to be witnesses in words and deeds of God’s unconditional love and his immense hospitality that knows no bounds or borders, the pope said.

This is the Church’s path, and a synodal Church moves in the world knowing the Holy Spirit “will be with us,” he said.

“There will always be debates, thanks be to God,” he said, “but the solutions must be sought by giving God the freedom to work and the voices of those among us: praying and opening our eyes to everything around us; living a life faithful to the Gospel; and examining Revelation according to a hermeneutic of pilgrimage” that began in the “Acts of the Apostles” and continues today.

Reading through Acts can “help us, showing us that communion does not suppress differences. It is the surprise of Pentecost when different languages are not an obstacle,” he said.

It will be thanks to the Holy Spirit that people will be able to “feel at home, different, but supportive along the journey,” he said.

Rather than “erecting hierarchical monuments,” he said, the Church must make certain everyone feels “part of one great people, recipients of divine promises, open to a future where everyone can take part in a feast prepared by God.”

During this pandemic, the pope said, the Lord is encouraging the Church’s mission to be a “sacrament of care. The world has lifted up its cry, shown its vulnerability—the world needs care.”

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Faith

Faith studies at Southern Illinois University (SIU) in Carbondale, is a poet, writer, educator and apologist for Catholic spirituality, and apologist for faith means for Black Catholics.

By Mike Mastromatteo

Faith's poetry explores the faith experience of Black Catholics

Jesuit Father Joseph Brown wields a lot of influence in a creative medium he regards as a form of play.

Father Brown, professor of Africana studies at Southern Illinois University, said that the poems that have been written since age 12 when his father first inspired him to continue with his creative outlets.

He also developed an eager interest in literature, and in a foreshadowing of his teaching career, he helped his classmates in East St. Louis, Ill., elementary schools appreciate the beauty of the great books.

One of the most remarkable aspects of the priest's poetry is their informal punctuation style, the poem reads in part:

“No I cry and no I whisper
and no one cares that I am
become the Pietà without a child
even then
And I hum “Oh, Mary,
Don’t You Weep” and she is now
here with me
saying No you will must
heart
to the others come and the others
will

I am
the one who whispers each
child’s name if I cannot hold
them to my breast I will
hold them with my song”

Violence against the innocent serves as inspiration for his work from injustice in all its forms. And in a sobering commentary on the times, elegies for the victims of racism and violence have become the focus of much of his recent work.

A week before the police killing of George Floyd in May 2020 in Minneapolis, Father Brown posted a poem, “My Arms Empty,” lamenting the Feb. 23, 2020, shooting of Ahmaud Arbery in Brunswick, Ga. This poem calls up the image of Michelangelo’s Pietà, but with the dead Christ missing from Mary’s mourning arms. Written in Father Brown’s unique un-punctuated style, the poem reads in part:

“The Pietà by Michelangelo sits inside St. Peter’s Basilica at the Vatican. Jesuit Father Joseph Brown’s poem, “My Arms Empty,” laments the Feb. 23, 2020, shooting of Ahmaud Arbery in Brunswick, Ga. This poem calls up the image of Michelangelo’s Pietà, but with the dead Christ missing from Mary’s mourning arms. (CNS photo/Dustin Chambers, Reuters)

Father Brown wields a lot of influence in a creative medium he regards as a form of play. He has been writing poems since age 12 when his father first inspired him to continue with his creative outlets.

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Faith's poetry explores the faith experience of Black Catholics.
Incarceration is topic of Oct. 9 corrections conference

I highly recommend that those interested in prison and jail ministry read Waiting for an Echo: The Madness of American Incarceration, written by Dr. Christine Montross. She is a professor of psychiatry and human behavior at Harvard Medical School, and she graduated, Montross is also a practicing in-patient psychiatrist who has done forensic psychiatric examinations to determine if an inmate has the comprehension to stand trial. She gives a professional and a logical answer to the court of whether a defendant has a sufficient ability to consult with his or her lawyer with a significant degree of rational understanding, and can appreciate and understand the charges pending and has a rational as well as a factual understanding of the proceedings.

The book gives an in-depth look at inmates who suffer from a mental illness and have incarcerated those who would be better served in a therapeutic setting.

The conclusion Montross reaches is that “our methods of incarceration take away not only freedom, but also selfhood and sources of security and fines and a nation whose support mechanism that we had relied upon.

But the first time we step into a prison and hear the prison door slam behind us, and we experience firsthand its bleak surroundings, its smells and loud noises, only then can we begin to appreciate the stress, loneliness and loss of freedom that a prisoner is resigned to live with.

The Indiana Department of Correction (IDOC) defines recidivism as a return to incarceration within three years of release. Of almost 15,000 Indiana inmates in 2020, approximately 34.7% returned to IDOC because they committed a new crime, and approximately 65.3% resumed a technical rule violation of post-release supervision.

With the 50th annual Corrections Ministry Conference scheduled for 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. on Oct. 9 at the Roncalli High School Auditorium, 3300 Prague Road, Indianapolis, Montross is our keynote speaker, and admission is free. The conference will also be livestreamed. Registration is required at www.archindy.org/ Corrections.

Deacon Marcis Kellams is the Coordinator of Corrections Ministry for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. He can be reached at nhoefer@archindy.org or call 317-592- 4023.

Faith and Family/Sean Gallagher

God’s grace empowers marriages to persevere through life’s storms

Marriages that endure through decades, like Steve and Edie Lecher, celebrate the 50th anniversary of the day on which they exchanged their vows of marriage.

That took place on Sept, 25, 1971, at the former St. Ann Church in downtown southeastern Indiana.

After their wedding, they lived just a few miles southwest of the church. On April 3, 1974, Edie was at home with her two children at the time of a tornado over her house. When she released her at the end of the day, the bishop announced that she was no longer the superior or a Sister of Providence and forbade her from communicating with any of the sisters.

What was the saint’s response? Out of respect for the bishop’s authority, even though he was wrong, Mother Theodore humbly fell to her knees and asked for his blessing. (Read more at cath.ly/Sisters.)

“Christ died rather than seek revenge”

One day in school, one boy insulted another boy. The two youths, both friends of St. Dominick Savio, agreed to fight.

After school, Dominick stood between his two friends as they faced each other angrily, each with a pile of rocks at his feet. Dominick raised over his head a small crucifix he wore around his neck.

He told the boys they could fight, but on the condition that each must first look at the crucifix then throw a stone at Dominick. Both boys declined, Dominick chided them, saying, “You want to commit this sin over a stupid remark made at school. Christ, who was innocent, died only to prevent such revenge from those who hated him.” (Read more at cath.ly/DominickSavio)

These three saints met anger with love. But there are plenty of saints who struggled with anger themselves—well-known ones like St. Jerome, St. Catherine of Siena, St. Francis de Sales and more. Read how they learned to overcome this fault at cath.ly/AnxietySisters.

I’ll turn to St. Thérèse of Lisieux for this parting advice: “When you are angry with someone, the way to find peace is to pray for that person and ask God to reward him or her for making you suffer.”

{Send your stories of people you know who live out love as described by St. Paul in 1 Cor 13:4-7 to Natalie Hoefner at nhoefer@archindy.org or call 317-226-1486 or 800-932-9836, ext. 1450. Include your parish and a daytime phone number where you may be reached.)

The dangers of power, the challenges of responsibility

To be ineffective to the growing uses of power is to invite tyranny. One definition of “power” is an energy, a force capable of changing reality. Its ability to accomplish requires utmost respect in us. It needs to create specific goals directing it. How that gift meant to maintain God’s creation. It requires responsibility because there is no such thing as power that is not answered for. Where there is a loss of power be applied?

Four top concerns should include the serious dangers of power arises from information overload, rapid communication and transportation. As the power of speed increases, we are losing the restorative power of calmness, focus and contemplation. Albert Einstein once said he believed in a God who “reveals himself in the lawful adaptations of the world.” Have we left religion out of the picture when it comes to appreciating and harnessing power?

We now move faster than ever before. Thanks to technology, we enjoy a restorative power of calmness, focus and contemplation. Where do we focus to avoid the dangers of power? Who gets the blame? It is us! To accomplish this, ascension can develop what is needed to proceed completely.

(Father Eugene Henrick writes for Catholic News Service.)

Love’s Litmus/Natalie Hoefner

Sant’s examples teach us to answer anger with love

Three cars turn left in front of me after my light turns green. I honk my horn in anger.

I hold the door for a family walking into a store. When no one opens it for me, I say out loud, “You’re welcome!” with a saccharine sweet tone.

Incidents arise that can lead to an angry response. I’m a person full of flaws, so I invite you to learn from me how not to act in such situations.

For better or to the saints, who so often gave Christ-like examples of responding not with anger but with patience and kindness, as called for in 1 Cor 13.

Myriad examples exist, but this column will focus on three: St. Teresa of Calcutta, St. Theodora Guérin and St. Dominick Savio.

“I accept this for me”

There is a story about Mother Teresa found abundantly on the Internet that I recall hearing before there even was an Internet. It goes like this:

“She fell on her knees and begged for his blessing.”

Dominick raised over his head a small crucifix he wore around his neck.

He told the boys they could fight, but on the condition that each must first look at the crucifix then throw a stone at Dominick.

Both boys declined, Dominick chided them, saying, “You want to commit this sin over a stupid remark made at school. Christ, who was innocent, died only to prevent such revenge from those who hated him.” (Read more at cath.ly/DominickSavio)

These three saints met anger with love. But there are plenty of saints who struggled with anger themselves—well-known ones like St. Jerome, St. Catherine of Siena, St. Francis de Sales and more. Read how they learned to overcome this fault at cath.ly/AnxietySisters.

I’ll turn to St. Thérèse of Lisieux for this parting advice: “When you are angry with someone, the way to find peace is to pray for that person and ask God to reward him or her for making you suffer.”

{Send your stories of people you know who live out love as described by St. Paul in 1 Cor 13:4-7 to Natalie Hoefner at nhoefer@archindy.org or call 317-226-1486 or 800-932-9836, ext. 1450. Include your parish and a daytime phone number where you may be reached.)

And yet we must be concerned that our level of wisdom dramatically or subtly be reduced over time to be like a strong and tall oak, its roots and branches dig in the ground in all times and places in our world. The increasing trends toward individualism and secularism in our society have only intensified the storms faced by spouses.

Nonetheless, when a marriage remains deep and committed, grace and challenges over time to be like a strong and tall oak, it can have the flexibility to bend with the winds that life’s storms blow.

That is what I have been blessed to witness in the marriage of Steve and Edie, which I first met at the time of their wedding. Steve was privileged to be a son-in-law of since 1991 and is a son-in-law of the Sisters of Providence.

That is because marriages, while a sacramental relationship of Christ and the Church, live and endure in this broken world in which we live.

Husbands and wives who persevere in the sacrament of marriage with the help of God’s grace, bear the storms and stress of life through many decades. They give all of us hope that we, too, can endure in the vacuum of loneliness and absence.

I’ve been blessed to witness such fidelity in marriage in my own parents, who marked their 50th anniversary less than a year before my mother passed away in 2015.

There is a story about Mother Teresa found abundantly on the Internet that I recall hearing before there even was an Internet. It goes like this:

“She fell on her knees and begged for his blessing.”

She fell on her knees and begged for his blessing:

The relationship between Bishop Céléstine de la Hailandière of Marseilles (France) and St. Thérèse of Lisieux is one of love and respect of it and the effects that it has on us. St. Theodora St. Jerome, St. Catherine of Siena, St. Francis de Sales and more. Read how they learned to overcome this fault at cath.ly/AnxietySisters.

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The Human Side/Fr. Eugene Henrick

The dangers of power, the challenges of responsibility

To be ineffective to the growing uses of power is to invite tyranny. One definition of “power” is an energy, a force capable of changing reality. Its ability to accomplish requires utmost respect in us. It needs to create specific goals directing it. How that gift meant to maintain God’s creation. It requires responsibility because there is no such thing as power that is not answered for. Where there is a loss of power be applied?

Four top concerns should include the serious dangers of power arises from information overload, rapid communication and transportation. As the power of speed increases, we are losing the restorative power of calmness, focus and contemplation. Albert Einstein once said he believed in a God who “reveals himself in the lawful adaptations of the world.” Have we left religion out of the picture when it comes to appreciating and harnessing power?

We now move faster than ever before. Thanks to technology, we enjoy a restorative power of calmness, focus and contemplation. Where do we focus to avoid the dangers of power? Who gets the blame? It is us! To accomplish this, ascension can develop what is needed to proceed completely.

(Father Eugene Henrick writes for Catholic News Service.)

Perspectives
The Book of Numbers, the source of the first reading for Mass this weekend, is one of the first five books of the Bible. The ancient Hebrews and Jews today attribute these five books, collectively called the Pentateuch, to Moses. Jews see Moses, however, as only the human instrument through whom God spoke to the people.

Thus, these five books in the Jewish theological mine are the very words of God. For this reason, the Pentateuch, or the Torah, is the basis of all Jewish belief and religious practice. Even historical events, such as that mentioned in this weekend’s reading, are interpreted in a religious sense.

The message in this reading is that God’s inspiration does not necessarily follow the route that humans may suppose or prefer. Additionally, mere humans cannot judge whether or not a person possesses God’s grace. Moses made this clear. The men discussed in the reading did not appear to be worthy messengers of God. Moses warns his contemporaries that they should not judge these men. God does not operate according to any human timetable or set of requirements.

For its second reading, the Church this weekend presents a passage from the Epistle of St. James.

All the epistles are interesting since they reveal the circumstances of Christian life several generations after Jesus. They were written years after the times remembered in the four Gospels.

The Christians living in the last third of the first century had to face the fact that some people, even as a minority in the population, were wealthy. This circumstance produced for the rich not only ease but a certain sense of security. It was easy for Christians, therefore, to assume that God especially blessed people of wealth.

The epistle corrects this thinking. Wealth is impermanent. It guarantees no ultimate security. Furthermore, it so often is a temptation. If nothing else, it distracts us from what truly matters in life, namely being with God and building storehouses of spiritual treasures.

St. Mark’s Gospel furnishes the last reading. Here, wealth is not the point. Instead, St. John is troubled by the fact that a man uses the name of Jesus to drive away demons. How can this be? John does not know this man. The man is not within the circle of disciples. Therefore, the man cannot be authentic.

The Lord replies that obviously no enemy of the Lord would, or could, invoke the name of Jesus to accomplish anything good. The Lord states that all those of honest faith are of God.

The reading has a second part. It reminds us that the benefits and, indeed, the needs of this world may be fleeting when eternity and things of the spirit are considered.

Reflection

The story is told that when Cardinal Thomas Wolsey, Archbishop of York in the time immediately prior to King Henry VIII’s break with the Church and chancellor or prime minister of England for many years, was dying, he said that if he had served God as diligently as he had served the king, he would not be afraid to die.

This worldly cardinal was hardly alone among humans in looking back upon life with regret. For that matter, Cardinal Wolsey was hardly the only human approaching death to realize that he squandered time on Earth by running after material rainbows. He finally saw that only the spiritual endures.

The Church calls us all to realize that earthly achievements and gains one day will count for nothing. Only our nearness to God in this life will matter as we face our entries into the next life.

The readings also remind us that we are humans. We can be tempted. Temptations can be strong. We are limited. Our judgments are flawed. We need God. ♦

My Journey to God

I wonder about Jesus being a “sacrifice” for the expiation of sins. Why did God the Father “require” that Christ be a “sacrifice” for the forgiveness of the sins of mankind? (Kentucky)

A I don’t believe that God the Father required that Jesus die such a gruesome death to redeem us from our sins. But your question reflects a theological debate that has gone on for centuries.

On one side is the 11th-century thinker St. Anselm, who championed what was known as “satisfaction” theology. Anselm believed that Christ’s sacrificial death was necessary to free humanity from sin and that the blood of Jesus was “payment” for that sin.

But isn’t God all-powerful and couldn’t he have done anything he wanted to? He could certainly have acted, as the father of the prodigal son did in the Gospel, by simply forgiving humanity outright and restoring us to his good graces.

In contrast to Anselm, I prefer to side with St. Thomas Aquinas. Thomas said that while any manner God chose would have sufficed for our salvation, the passion of Christ was the perfect means because “man knows thereby how much God loves him and is thereby stirred to love him in return” (Summa Theologica III, 46, 3). So, to my way of thinking, we are in no way compelled to believe that God deliberately willed the suffering of his Son.

Questions may be sent to Father Kenneth Doyle at askfatherkennethdoyle@gmail.com and 30 Columbus Circle Dr., Albany, New York 12203. ♦

Submit prose or poetry for faith column

The Criterion invites readers to submit original prose or poetry relating to faith or experiences of prayer for possible publication in the “My Journey to God” column. Submitted pieces should not exceed 30 80-character lines or 60-40 character lines.

E-mail submissions for consideration—including name, address, parish and a telephone number—to nhoefer@archindy.org.

Poems may also be mailed to “My Journey to God,” The Criterion, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367. Please note, however, that mailed submissions will not receive a reply unless the piece is selected for publication. ♦
Franciscan Sister Bernetta Stuhrenberg

Franciscan Sister Bernetta Stuhrenberg served in parishes, Catholic schools

During her 67 years as a member of the Sisters of St. Francis, Sister Bernetta ministered in Catholic education for 20 years in Indiana and Ohio. Beginning in 1976, she began service in Cincinnati in parishes, to the homebound and in bereavement. In 1999, Sister Bernetta returned to the motherhouse where she volunteered in the development office and to sisters in St. Clare Hall. In the archdiocese, she served at St. Louis School in Batesville from 1956-57, at Holy Name School in Beech Grove from 1957-60 and at St. Lawrence School in Lawrenceburg from 1961-66. Sister Bernetta is survived by a sister, Rosemary Machinio of Hayden, Ind. Memorial gifts may be sent to the Sisters of St. Francis, P.O. Box 100, Oldenburg, IN 47036-0100.


LOWE, Ming Lee, 87, St. Simon the Apostle, Indianapolis, Sept. 4. Mother of Blake and Claudia Lowe. Son of Majica Lowe and Carl Lowe. Brother of Coryn Lowe, Leslie Reynolds, Bryn, and a great-grandson. Memorial gifts may be sent to the Sisters of St. Francis, P.O. Box 100, Oldenburg, IN 47036-0100.


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GARDERING, Rosemary, 90, St. Lawrence, Lawrenceburg, Sept. 17. Aum, great-aunt and great-great aunt of several.


KINNETT and Carl Ringwall.


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Classified Directory

Investing with Faith/Jim Maslar

Gift in will ‘tells’ a story, creates legacy at Greencastle parish

Gwendoline “Gwen” Long’s life story reads like a novel. She was born in London, England, in the 1920s, survived the London blitz bombings of World War II, met and fell in love with a U.S. Army Air Corps officer during his service in the European Theater, married his newfound “love of her life,” George, in 1944 and moved to his hometown of Greencastle; spent the rest of her life in this Putnam County city where they operated a small business for more than 30 years; became an integral member of her parish and local community; and left lasting impressions on all those she met.

Through some very thoughtful and generous planning years ago, however, Gwen’s story will now live on in a special way. A longtime member of St. Paul the Apostle Parish in Greencastle, Gwen passed away in July of 2020 at 97 and was laid to rest next to her beloved husband.

“Those who knew Gwen will remember and miss her because of her British accent, her hearty laugh and sense of humor, her World War II stories, and her independent spirit,” her obituary read. “Gwen lived a full life” and was known for her hospitality to all and her passion for serving the poor, particularly through her parish’s St. Vincent de Paul Society.

Earlier this year, the parish learned that it had been named in Gwen’s last will and testament to receive a very generous bequest gift from her estate. A charitable bequest is simply a gift provision included in a will or trust to benefit a charity, such as a Catholic parish, school or agency. It is most often included as a percentage of the estate’s value, but can also be a specific dollar amount, a specific piece of property, or even a full or partial residuary amount at the end of the estate’s processing. Gwen utilized this giving strategy, and it has truly made a lasting impact.

“It cannot have come at a better time for St. Paul’s. . . We were very surprised and grateful,” Father John Hollowell, pastor of St. Paul the Apostle Parish, recalled in a recent conversation. The parish, which also serves the Catholic students at DePauw University in Greencastle, was in the midst of a capital expansion and renovation project. “We were right at the point where we were going to have to start making some tough decisions about what to cut from the project,” Father Hollowell shared.

Through Gwen’s bequest gift “we were able to complete the project and also set up two different endowments, the first being a general parish endowment and the second being the ‘Gwendoline Long Poverty Outreach Endowment,’ which will be used to support our St. Vincent de Paul Society and various other poverty outreach efforts of St. Paul’s,” Father Hollowell said.

“We try to remind our parishioners on a regular basis that they can, in their estate planning, make a gift for almost anything they are passionate about,” the priest continued, “and that making the parish a part of their planned giving will make a considerable difference in the lives of the parishioners of the next generations.”

For Gwendoline, her love of her faith and parish community, her deep care for those in need, and her signature hospitality will continue on in a special way through the updated parish building, its outreach program serving the poor, and the ongoing operational support of St. Paul year after year through the parish endowment. What a great and fitting ending to the novel of Gwen’s life!

(Jim Maslar is a Catholic philanthropic advisor for the archdiocese’s Catholic Community Foundation [CCF]. Tax or legal information provided herein is not intended as tax or legal advice. Always consult with your legal, tax or financial advisors before implementing any gift plan. If you would like to learn more about including your parish in your estate plans, please contact us any time. We exist to exclusively serve you and your parish in planned giving. For more information on the CCF, visit e-mail ccf@archindy.org or call 317-236-4452.)

High School Youth Ministry Coordinator

St. Louis de Montfort (Fishers, IN) is seeking a full-time director/coordinator of religious education to implement and oversee parish faith formation programs at all levels beginning immediately. Applicant should have a love for the Catholic faith, knowledge of and commitment to the Archdiocesan Faith Formation Guidelines and Faith-Formation Curriculum and the ability to work together with catechists, youth ministers, RYDA team, school personnel and pastoral staff. Experience in parish formation programs preferred. Masters in Theology or related field preferred. Canon law requires that the person in this position be a baptized Catholic and, if married, be validly married according to the laws and teachings of the Catholic Church.

To apply, please email a cover letter, resume, and list of references, in confidence, to: Ken Ogorek
Director of Catechesis
1400 N Meridian St.
Indianapolis, IN 46202
Equal Opportunity Employer
E-mail: kogorek@archindy.org

Director/Coordinator of Religious Education

St. Margaret Mary and St. Patrick Parishes of Terre Haute, Indiana are seeking a fulltime director/coordinator of religious education to implement and oversee parish faith formation programs at all levels beginning immediately. Applicant should have a love for the Catholic faith, knowledge of and commitment to the Archdiocesan Faith Formation Guidelines and Faith-Formation Curriculum and the ability to work together with catechists, youth ministers, RYDA team, school personnel and pastoral staff. Experience in parish formation programs preferred. Masters in Theology or related field preferred.

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YOU’RE INVITED!
Friday, February 25, 2022 | 6:30 pm
JW Marriott Indianapolis
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Join us for our second annual Legacy Gala on February 25, 2022! This will be an evening of celebration and support of three vital ministries in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis: CATHOLIC CHARITIES, CATHOLIC SCHOOLS AND BISHOP SIMON BRUTÉ COLLEGE SEMINARY.

We will also be honoring MSGR. PAUL KOETTER, Pastor Emeritus at Holy Spirit Catholic Church on the East side of Indianapolis. We hope you can join us in honoring him for his many years of faithful service to communities all throughout our archdiocese.

Music by The Doo | Amazing Auction Items | Honoring Msgr. Paul Koetter
The Best Emcee - Rafael Sanchez (WRTV6) | Hear from Archbishop Thompson
Hear Impactful Ministry Stories | And Much, Much More!

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