New Year's resolution
Focus on health of body, mind and soul in 2022, page 7.

Pope calls for ‘reality check’ against misinformation about vaccines

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—The COVID-19 pandemic calls for an urgent reality check against baseless information and for increased efforts so everyone has access to vaccines, medicines and diagnostic tools, Pope Francis told diplomats from around the world.

He urged individuals, governments and the international community to recognize the effectiveness and importance of immunizing as many people as possible as part of fighting the pandemic, which he called a “grave moment in the life of humanity.”

Vaccines are not a magical means of healing, yet surely they represent, in addition to other treatments that need to be developed, the most reasonable solution for the prevention of the disease,” the pope told ambassadors from the 183 countries that have diplomatic relations with the Vatican.

At his annual meeting with the diplomatic corps on Jan. 10, the pope also told them that facing today’s challenges “will require humanity to join together as one great family that, starting from different viewpoints, should prove capable of finding common solutions for the good of all.”

In his speech, the pope highlighted his hopes and concerns regarding the state of the world, ongoing wars and violence, the arms trade, today’s “cancel culture,” the treatment of migrants, the importance of increased funding for education and the need to step-up efforts for universal vaccinations for COVID-19.

Recalling the passing of Archbishop Aldo Giordano, a well-respected Vatican diplomat who died of COVID-19 in December, the pope told the ambassadors...
By Victoria Arthur

State lawmakers are again considering a measure that would allow individuals to carry a handgun without a license—a move opposed by the Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC), many in the law enforcement community and a coalition of other allies.

House Bill 1077, which passed the House public policy committee on Jan. 5 by a 7-3, vote and was supported by the full Indiana House of Representatives at press time, would repeal the license that requires a person to obtain a permit to carry a handgun in Indiana. So-called “lawful carry” or “Constitutional carry” measures, such as this, are aimed at removing the hurdles that lawful citizens face in obtaining handgun permits, according to Rep. Ben Smaltz (R-Auburn), the bill’s author.

Smaltz and other proponents, including the National Rifle Association, argue that law-abiding citizens should not have to face undue burdens to defend themselves or otherwise exercise a right that is guaranteed by the Second Amendment. The office of Indiana Attorney General Todd Rokita also supports the bill, which would make Indiana the 22nd state in the country to pass this type of legislation.

But the ICC—the public policy voice of the Catholic Church in Indiana—challenges the notion that the licensing process poses a heavy burden on individuals. Moreover, during the lengthy Jan. 5 committee hearing on the bill that included testimony from 41 individuals on both sides of the issue, ICC Executive Director Angela Espada stated that for the Church, protecting human life is always the overarching concern.

“The Catholic Church opposes this bill, because we respect the dignity of life,” Espada told lawmakers during the meeting of the House public policy committee. “That’s a word that is not passed around all the time, especially among lawmakers. In states that don’t have the combination of background checks with a license, firearm homicides and suicides go up.

Espada, an attorney and former deputy prosecutor in Marion County, pointed to the work of Indiana’s Religious Leadership Council for Gun Violence Prevention and Policy. According to the institute, after Missouri repealed its licensing law, the state saw a 25% increase in firearm homicide and a 16% increase in gun suicide. By contrast, when Missouri reinstated its licensing law, the state’s firearm homicide rate declined 40%.

Many in the law enforcement community consider the licensing process as a screening mechanism to keep guns out of the hands of those who should not have access. During the Jan. 5 hearing, the Indiana State Police was the last two years, more than 10,000
cases and 200 licenses being revoked due to a criminal incident, with the agency stated. The process poses a heavy burden on individuals. The bill that would make Indiana the 22nd state in the country to pass this type of legislation.

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Jennifer Haan, who leads the Indiana chapter of the national advocacy group Moms Demand Action and is practicing Catholic, brought a unique perspective to the committee hearing.

“I have a license to carry a handgun in the state of Indiana, and I oppose House Bill 1077,” Haan said. “Indiana has the bare minimum requirement to obtain a license to carry a handgun. It is an online form that takes less time to fill out than it did for me to enroll my child in kindergarten.”

When growing up on the east side of Indianapolis, Haan said that gun violence was always in the back of her mind.

After leaving a teaching career to become a stay-at-home mother, two national events led her to be involved with Moms Demand Action, a grassroots organization fighting for public safety measures to protect people from gun violence.

Hana vividly recalls icing the cake for her son’s first birthday on Dec. 14, 2012, when news broke about the mass shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Conn.—the deadliest school shooting in U.S. history. On Valentine’s Day 2018, Haan again watched in disbelief as a similar tragedy unfolded in Parkland, Fla.

“When I saw the kids from Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School begging the adults to step back and let them do what they can,” said Haan, a mother of two and a member of St. Thomas Aquinas Parish in West Lafayette, Ind., in the Diocese of Lafayette.

“For me, this is a pro-life issue,” Haan said. “We have to say no to our children.

The Catholic Church has long advocated for the prevention of gun violence and other causes in the United States to promote a culture of life. Leaders of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) have called for a new history of curt gun violence, including banning assault weapons and requiring universal background checks.

“More than ever, the Church and all people of good will must work together to confront the pervasive culture of violence,” the bishops wrote in a recent statement. “The Church has been a consistent voice for the promotion of peace at home and around the world and a strong advocate for the reasonable regulation of firearms. We have advocated that recourse to self-defense is legitimate, but also that guns are simply too easily accessible.

To follow priority legislation of the ICC, visit www.indianacc.org. This website includes access to ICAN, the Indiana Catholic Action Network, which offers the Church’s position on key issues. Those who sign up for ICAN receive alerts on legislation moving forward and ways to contact their elected representatives.

(Victoria Arthur, a member of St. Malachy Parish in Bloomington, is a correspondent for The Criterion.)

January 16 – 12 p.m. Mass for the Sunday in Ordinary Time, offered for deceased team members of the Indianapolis Society of St. Vincent de Paul at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, Indianapolis

January 16 – 1 p.m. Visit to confirm that class students of Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Parish, Indianapolis, at Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Church.

January 16 – 2:30 p.m. Preaching during the Extraordinary Form at Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Church, Indianapolis

“Love is patient, love is kind. It is not bountiful or arrogant or jealous or rude. It does not insist on its own way. It is not irritable or resentful. It does not rejoice in wrong-doing, but rejoices in the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things” (1 Cor 13:4-7).

Maybe there’s someone in your parish who quietly but constantly volunteers at church, cooks meals for others or has a knack for making others feel welcomed.

Maybe you saw a child sit down to lunch with a student eating alone.

Maybe you know someone who started a charity, grandparents who adopted a grandchild, a couple

or family who drives an elderly parishioner to Mass; a teacher who goes the extra mile; a priest or religious who always takes the time to listen.

For our monthly column “Love’s Littorina,” we’re looking for stories just like these, stories about people who—obvious or quiet ways—live out 1 Cor 13:4-7.

The goal is to show the many ways, grand or simple, that we can love one another and, by doing so, help bring about God’s kingdom.

Send your stories of people you know to haan@archindy.org or to the Rev. Fr. Michael Krokos, who exemplifies that Scripture passage to Mother Teresa at shepherd@archindy.org or call 317-236-1585 or 800-935-9365, x. 1486. Include your parish and a daytime phone number where you may be reached.

Wanted: Stories of people who show love for others in great and small ways

Pope Francis to install catechists, lecturers at Word of God celebration

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—At his celebration for the Sunday of the Word of God on Jan. 23, Pope Francis will formally install new catechists and lecturers—ministries open to women. The Pontifical Council for Promoting New Evangelization, which coordinates the annual celebrations, said the Mass celebrated by Pope Francis in St. Peter’s Basilica will include “the conferral of the ministry of lector and catechist.”

Pope Francis formally instituted the ministry of catechist in May 2021. It followed his decision in January to open the ministries of lector and acolyte to women. While in most dioceses women already serve as readers and altar servers at Mass, they were not formally instituted in those services on a stable basis. Pope Francis often has spoken of the importance of selecting, training and supporting catechists, who are called to be “a larger and deeper relationship” with Jesus, prepare them to receive the sacraments and educate them in the teachings of the Church.

The Sunday of the Word of God, instituted by Pope Francis in 2019, is meant to encourage among all Catholics interest in knowing the sacred Scriptures and their central role in the life of the Church and the Christian faith.

The theme for the 2022 celebration is “Blessed are those who hear the word of God,” a verse which comes from the Gospel of St. Luke.
Father Louis Manna served in several parishes in southern Indiana

By Sean Gallagher

Father Louis Manna, a retired priest of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, died on Dec. 23, 2021, in his home in Clarksville. He was 76.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Jan. 6 at St. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis. Archbishop Charles C. Thompson was the principal celebrant. Conventual Franciscan Father John Elmore was the homilist.

Burial will take place at St. Joseph Cemetery at St. Leon. Born in Louisville, Ky., in 1945, Father Manna first discerned a vocation to religious life as a member of the Conventual Franciscan Province of Our Lady of Consolation based in Mount St. Francis in southern Indiana.

He was ordained a priest as a Conventual Franciscan in 1973 and became a priest of the archdiocese in 1979 through a process called incardination. Pat Cornwell and her late husband John became friends with Father Manna when he was their pastor at St. Joseph Parish in Corydon from 2000-05.

She recalled how, with few close relatives of his own, Father Manna saw the parishioners he served as his family.

“When he knew someone was scheduled for surgery, he offered the blessing for the sick without being asked,” Cornwell said. “When someone was widowed, he followed up with phone calls of encouragement. He was basically a shy person, but kept in touch with friends long after he left each of his many parishes.”

Father John, who entered the Conventual Franciscans at the same time as Father Manna, recalled how his friend maintained close ties to the community at Mount St. Francis even after he became an archdiocesan priest—again because of his value of family.

“Even though he was no longer a member of our community, he would always come to different celebrations of the community—a birthday, an anniversary of profession or ordination, the visitation or funeral of a friar who had died,” Father John said. “He had a love for family. It goes back to his own family.”

Father Manna’s love for the Italian roots of his family led him to take several trips to Italy to meet distant relatives there.

Cornwell sees in her former pastor’s love for travel “a good metaphor for the way he accompanied individuals on their own path.”

“He cared about their lives and trials,” Cornwell said. “He kept track of people, like the Good Shepherd who went looking for a lost sheep. When my husband died, he called periodically to see how I was doing.”

Louise Michael Manna was born on Sept. 16, 1945, in Louisville, Ky., to the late Louis and Petronilla Manna.

After his elementary education at St. Francis of Assisi School in Louisville, he enrolled in 1959 at the former Saint Francis High School in Mount St. Francis. At the time, it was a high school seminary for the Conventual Franciscan Province of Our Lady of Consolation.

He graduated from the high school seminary in 1963 and entered the province’s novitiate, then located in Auburn, Ind.


In addition to the high school seminary, Father Manna received priestly formation at the former Our Lady of Carey Seminary in Carey, Ohio; the former Assumption Seminary in Chaska, Minn.; and at St. Louis University in St. Louis.

He was ordained a priest on July 28, 1973, at St. Anthony Church in Lorain, Ohio, by Bishop William M. Cosgrove, then an auxiliary bishop for the Diocese of Cleveland.

Father Manna’s first pastoral assignment was at the Franciscan Retreats and Spirituality Center in Prior Lake, Minn., where he served from 1973-75.

He then ministered for a year as associate pastor of Our Lady of Mercy Parish in Potomac, Md., and for a year as associate pastor of St. Anthony Parish in Grand Rapids, Mich.

From 1977-79, Father Manna served as associate pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Broken Bow, Neb., also minstering during that time at nearby mission churches.

He later returned to Broken Bow to serve as pastor from 1988-91.


In 1991, Father Manna began the process of becoming a priest of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, which is called incardination. It became finalized in 1995.

From 1993-2000, Father Manna ministered as pastor of the former St. Joseph Parish in St. Leon and the former St. John the Baptist Parish in Dover. The campuses of both those parishes are now part of All Saints Parish in Dearborn County.

Father Manna then served as pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Corydon, the former St. Peter Parish in Harrison County and the former Most Precious Blood Parish in New Middletown from 2000-05.

Father Manna next served as pastor of American Martyrs Parish in Scottsboro and St. Patrick Parish in Sacramento from 2005-16. He was granted permission to retire from active ministry in 2016.

Memorial contributions can be made to the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202.

Preserve Christian identity infants receive at baptism, Pope Francis says

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Before baptizing 16 babies in the Sistine Chapel, Pope Francis reminded parents and godparents of their responsibility to care for and preserve the Christian identity the infants received at baptism, Pope Francis says.

With the sounds of fussy children out, let them cry, let them cry out, because they have ‘bare souls’ to receive God’s comfort,” Pope Francis said.

“If they are hungry, breast feed them here, in front of the Lord, no problem,” he added. “And if they cry out, let them cry out, because they have a community spirit, let’s say a ‘band spirit,’ a spirit of ensemble, and all it takes is for one to start—because everyone is musical—and immediately the orchestra comes! Let them cry, let them feel free.”

United in the Eucharist

We were made to share HOPE.

There’s no greater hope than that which we find in the Eucharist.

Help us nourish others with the word of life and the bread from heaven.

United Catholic Appeal

Archdiocese of Indianapolis 2021 Accountability Report available online and in print by request

The archdiocese’s 2021 Accountability Report is available online, and in print for those who request a hard copy.

With text and graphics, the document reports on the archdiocese’s financial status. Sections include the Catholic Community Foundation, chancery fiscal year operating results, parish and archdiocesan stewardship income, insurance and retirement plan financial information, archdiocesan grants, and financial positions of the chancery and certain archdiocesan entities.

To view the report online, go to archindy.org or by phone at 317-236-1535 or 800-382-9836, ext. 1535.

Pope Francis baptizes a baby during a Mass marking the feast of the Baptism of the Lord in the Sistine Chapel at the Vatican on Jan. 9. The pope baptized 16 infants. (L’Osservatore Romano, Vatican Media)
Reflection/John Shaughnessy

A life-changing offer, including the best benefit package in the world

Spaced a few feet from each other, the four signs outside the restaurant reflect the economic reality of our times—the desperation, the pleading, the way the world has changed. One sign notes, “Now hiring! Servers.” Another one reads, “Now hiring! Hosts.” A third states, “Now hiring! Line Cooks.”

And the last one practically begs, “Now hiring! Everyone!”

They’re all signs of how the pandemic continues to impact so many parts of our lives, including leaving many employers and business owners wondering where all the workers have gone.

As another new year begins, faith leaders of all Christian denominations must have the same reaction—again—about welcoming and witnessing another blessed Christmas of their churches overflowing with people drawn together by the birth of Christ.

Where have all these people suddenly gone in the new year?

If the past year has taught us anything, it is that the mindset of questioning, I imagined another set of signs that could be placed outside churches—signs that would reflect hope instead of desperation, future promise instead of current reality, and an invitation focused on how the world can be changed instead of how the world has changed.

Needed! People who welcome strangers, who see the common ground with others whose viewpoints differ from theirs, and who are willing to build bridges with people who differ from theirs, and who are willing to build bridges with people of different races, cultures and economic backgrounds.

Needed! People willing to listen, take time and forgive, including seeking forgiveness for themselves.

Needed! People who have the courage to live their faith—and the compassion to use their faith to uplift the lives of other people.

Needed! Everyone! A life-changing offer: We want you with us. We know we are better when we are united, and that is most importantly, God wants you with us. And you know you will be better with him in your life. Always, the Church is not perfect. Neither are people. But God’s love is.

On Christmas, you welcomed the Christ child, as he was born. He longs for you to stay near him now. He longs to walk through this life with you.

Be ourselves! We say this humbly, but it is the best benefit package that you will ever be offered in this life. And we’re certainly not talking about a life of coffee and donuts on an occasional Sunday morning, although admittedly it’s a nice way to begin a Sunday and meet some good people.

The one who founded our Church offers life-giving sustenance in the Eucharist. He’s big—downright huge—on mercy and forgiveness, so whatever mistakes you make they would die to give life to someone they love? He’s proven to be that person for everyone, whether you love him or not.

Still, here’s the best part of this best-ever benefit package: Once you join him, you’ll never let you go. And even if you leave for something that sounds better or more exciting to you, he’ll wait for you, and welcome you back when that time comes. He wants you to be with him forever.

And he never views you as an employee. He sees you as a friend. You know how some people say they would die to give life to someone they love? He’s proven to be that person for everyone, whether you love him or not.

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La lectura del Evangelio del segundo domingo del tiempo ordinario narra la historia de la concepción y el nacimiento de Jesús. La historia de la concepción y el nacimiento de Jesús es también la historia de una maternidad bendecida por Dios en las circunstancias más extraordinarias. En esa historia, fue el Ángel Gabriel quien, en efecto, dijo a María, y luego a José, “Hagáis lo que [Dios] te ordene.” Y puesto que María y José fueron obedientes y cumplieron instrucciones que no necesariamente tenían sentido para ellos, se llevó a cabo la salvación que se nos prometió desde la desobediencia original de nuestros primeros padres.

María tiene el respeto de su hijo adulto porque sabe lo que ella ha sacrificado para que el matrimonio de Dios benedecido por él sea posible. María y José se dieron cuenta de que el matrimonio de Dios benedecido por ellos no solo es una bendición, sino que es también un milagro (o señal) de nuestra salvación.

Ninguno de los milagros de Jesús, o “signos,” como los llaman san Juan, tiene por objeto mostrar su poder, sino que apuntan a algo mucho más profundo. El milagro de los panes y los peces ilustra la capacidad de Dios de satisfacer nuestras necesidades, especialmente a través de su presencia real en la Eucaristía. El milagro de la resurrección de Lázaro es un poderoso recordatorio de que solamente Dios tiene autoridad sobre la vida y la muerte. Y el milagro que hizo Jesús en las bodas de Caná demuestra que si seguimos la voluntad de Dios, tanto en lo pequeño como en lo grande, todo marcará bien.

“Hagáis lo que [Dios] te ordene” es algo más que un buen consejo de nuestra Santa Madre María; es el principio por el que se logró toda la vida. Saber por experiencia propia que este tiempo es el único modo de vivir si queremos crecer en santidad y convertimos a fieles discípulos misioneros de Jesús. Si hacemos lo que nos ordena, todo irá bien.

El proceso sinodal que el Papa Francisco inauguró el pasado otoño nos invita a encontrarnos con Jesús, a escuchar en oración la Palabra de Dios y a los demás, y a discernir la voluntad de Dios para nosotros. Nuestros deseos nos orientan a escuchar en oración la Palabra de Dios y a los demás, y a discernir la voluntad de Dios para nosotros. Nuestros deseos nos orientan a escuchar en oración la Palabra de Dios y a los demás, y a discernir la voluntad de Dios para nosotros. Nuestros deseos nos orientan a escuchar en oración la Palabra de Dios y a los demás, y a discernir la voluntad de Dios para nosotros. Nuestros deseos nos orientan a escuchar en oración la Palabra de Dios y a los demás, y a discernir la voluntad de Dios para nosotros. Nuestros deseos nos orientan a escuchar en oración la Palabra de Dios y a los demás, y a discernir la voluntad de Dios para nosotros. Nuestros deseos nos orientan a escuchar en oración la Palabra de Dios y a los demás, y a discernir la voluntad de Dios para nosotros. Nuestros deseos nos orientan a escuchar en oración la Palabra de Dios y a los demás, y a discernir la voluntad de Dios para nosotros. Nuestros deseos nos orientan a escuchar en oración la Palabra de Dios y a los demás, y a discernir la voluntad de Dios para nosotros. Nuestros deseos nos orientan a escuchar en oración la Palabra de Dios y a los demás, y a discernir la voluntad de Dios para nosotros.
Retreats and Programs

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

Weekly on Mondays
Mount St. Anthony Center for Spirituality, 101 St. Anthony Dr., Mt. St. Francis. “Brother Bob’s Bible Study.” Mondays 10:30 a.m.-6:30 p.m. Contacted by Andrew Hennessey, free. Information and registration: mountstanthonycatholic.org/bible-study or 812-923-8817.

February 7
Mount St. Anthony Center for Spirituality, 101 St. Anthony Dr. Mt. St. Francis. Keeping a Spiritual Journal. 9 a.m.-4 p.m., includes lunch, $75. Information and registration: mountstanthonycatholic.org/journal or 812-923-8817.

February 9, 3 March 9
Benedict Inn Retreat & Conference Center, 1402 South Avenue, Beech Grove. Personal Day of Retreat. 9 a.m.-4 p.m., $40, includes a private room for the day and lunch, spiritual direction is available for an additional $30, must be scheduled in advance. Information and registration: benedictinn@benedictinn.org, 317-788-7581, benedictinn@benedictinn.org.

February 11-13, March 11-13

Sistine Chapel art exhibit available near Dayton, Ohio, from Jan. 14-Feb. 13
An exhibit called Michelangelo’s Sistine Chapel: The Exhibition allows visitors to experience this famous art from an up-close, life-sized and never-before-seen perspective. With special expertise and care, the ceiling paintings from the Sistine Chapel have been reproduced in a truly unique way using licensed high-definition photos. Brought to life using a special printing technique that emulates the look and feel of the original paintings, visitors are given a chance to engage with the artwork at their own pace in ways that were never-before possible: seeing every detail, every brushstroke and every color of the artist’s 344 figures. Each image is accompanied by informative signage, and audio guides are available to rent in English and Spanish for in-depth experience. Time slots are available on Wed.-Sat. between 10 a.m.-6 p.m. and on Sundays between 11 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Ticket prices range from $12-$20.75. For more information or to order tickets go to chapelssistine.com/exhibits/dayton.
Focus on improving body, mind, and soul in 2022

By Natalie Hoefer

Do you like crowds? Try heading to your local gym any day of the week and see how many people made New Year’s resolutions to get physically fit to try to make good on their resolutions! But God gave us more than a body. He gave us a mind and soul too, and those can’t be left out of shape and need tending to as well. St. Ignatius of Loyola said it well: “Let each man guard the soul along with body; be healthy if the mind is healthy in a healthy body, all will be healthy and much better prepared to give God greater service.” The health of one component can affect the health of the others. For example, the National Center for Biotechnology notes that “exercise improves mental health by reducing anxiety, depression, and negative mood and by improving self-esteem and cognitive function.”

Body? Check. Mind? Check. Add prayer to your exercise and you’ve managed a body, mind, and soul trifecta! (It actually is possible, as you’ll see later in this article.)

While it’s not necessary to address all three areas at once, it is necessary to address all three. So make 2022 the year you improve body, mind, and soul—one, two or all three at a time.

Soul—getting more out of Scripture and the Mass

As Catholics, we know that grace abounds through the liturgy of the Holy Mass as taught by the Church in the Eucharist. But be honest—are you fully engaged during Mass or has it become a habit? One way to get more out of Mass is to read and reflect on the Sunday Scripture readings in your daily liturgy planner.

It takes just a quick Google search on “Mass reading reflections” to find numerous online sources that provides.exceptions to the Sunday and daily Scripture readings and meditations. For those who eschew the screen for the solid printed page, try a subscription to Our Daily Bread or Magnificat, these small periodicals provide daily Mass readings, reflections, information on saints and more. To view their online resources or to order a subscription, go to odb.org or call 616-974-2210 for Our Daily Bread, or go to us.magnificat.net or call 866-273-5215 for Magnificat.

A hands-on person myself, I was excited to receive a new tool this Christmas that helped prepare me for the Sunday Mass called Every Sacred Sunday by Kassie Manning and Christie Peters. It’s a self-published journal with the Sunday readings based on the liturgical year. It includes advice on how to read and meditate on Scripture, space each reading for the week, and includes advice on prayer intentions and a weekly meditation. The book is less than 270 pages. Personally, it proved eye-opening and helpful for me in understanding my nature and allowing God’s grace to perfect it.

Mind, body, soul—when to seek help

As St. Thomas Aquinas noted, God’s grace perfects our nature to draw us closer to Him on Earth for eternal life. Part of our nature includes our mental health. Be honest—how is your mental health now? Do you answer “Maybe not the best,” you’re not alone. A 2019 National Institute of Health report showed that one in five adults in the U.S. adults reported symptoms of anxiety. Mental health can affect not just our spiritual life and relationships with others but our physical life as well—even to the point of death by illness or suicide. If you think—or know—you’re suffering from mental health issues, don’t wait to seek help. The archdiocese is a good place to start.

Catholic Charities Bloomington has mental health professionals in offices throughout the city who can address numerous mental health, relationship and family issues. For more information, go to www.ccbf.org/services or call 812-332-1362. Catholic Charities of Indianapolis also offers individual, couple and family counseling. For more information, go to cutthk/MentalHealth/counseling (case sensitive) or call 317-327-7110.

The archdiocesan Office of Human Life and Dignity’s Mental Health Ministry website lists Catholic therapists in Indianapolis and Clarksville, as well as crisis hotlines. For more information, go to cutthk/MentalHealthMinistry or call Brte Anne Varick at 317-236-1543.

One source I’ve found informative about mental health is from the perspective of St. Dymphna’s Perspective: A Catholic Guide to Finding Mental and Emotional Help by Tommie Tighe (Ave Maria Press, 2021). It addresses forms of depression, anxiety, trauma, relationships and grief that cause mental health issues.

Each of the 20 short chapters briefly describes the condition, offers basic advice to promote further action, then looks at what the Bible and the saints say regarding that health issue.

Body, mind, soul—the trifecta

Here it is—the short chapter’s suggestions on how to incorporate exercise and prayer to boost your body, mind and soul!

Honestly, it can be as simple as praying the rosary, the Divine Mercy chaplet or any standard or spontaneous prayer while walking, jogging or riding a bike. Some people are even talented enough to read spiritual material while on a treadmill or stationary bike. (I am not one of those people.)

If you need a little more structure, try SoulCore, started two years in the

Lafayette, Ind., Diocese. They developed workouts incorporating core-strengthening moves with the praying of the rosary, holding a pose or stretch through each prayer while meditating on the mysteries.

The program had just started when The Criterion published an article about it in 2020, which included the inspirational story that led to the formation of SoulCore (cutthk/SoulCoreArticle—case sensitive). Not only offer workout DVD’s (including sets for those who need the assistance of a chair), digital downloads and a streaming subscription. Plus SoulCore-trained instructors offer in-person classes in 39 states, including three sites internationally!). For more information, go to soulcore.com

“Sound and blameless”

The above resources and ideas hardly scratch the surface of improving body, mind and soul. Maybe these suggestions will help, or at least start the process of considering how you might focus on these three intricately tied components this year and going forward.

Meanwhile, in the words of St. Paul: “May the God of peace himself make you perfectly holy and may you entirely, spirit, soul and body, be preserved blameless for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thes 5:23).
granddaughter and moving to a new part of the state in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic proved only to strengthen Jones’ faith and her calling.

Her journey actually began decades before, when she realized she had a gift for creating art.

‘Something clicked, and it made sense’

Jones discovered her artistic talent at a young age. “I began pursuing art and especially portraiture in seventh grade when my art teacher told my parents I had some ability for it,” she said. “I was 12 when I began doing portraits.”

It was in an art class where she met her husband, Christopher. “I was 15 when we started dating,” she said. “We were together 36 years and married for 32.” Together they had five children.

Christopher was Catholic. Jones, who was baptized and raised in a fundamentalist Christian church, was with him at Mass in Mishawaka, Ind., one Sunday in the early 1990s when she heard the priest ask from the pulpit, “Are you looking for a new church home?”

Those classes and the time Jones spent studying under internationally acclaimed Viennese artist, Alice Schlesinger, helped her hone her skills.

In 2002, she started traveling to art and craft shows north of Indianapolis. “I probably did up to 1,000 heads a year during that time,” she said. “I really believe that if you are hurt and in pain, if you lose a loved one suddenly, unexpectedly or tragically can do something for somebody else, it helps take your mind off your own pain.”

Through her loss and through prayer, Jones found the cause she was looking for to create a non-profit. And in the process, her own heart healed.

“God let me experience all this [suffering] so I can have empathy for other people,” said Jones. “And I want to help.”

“I had no one else to turn to”

By 2011, Jones was getting burned out from working the weekend craft show circuit. That’s when she started considering how she could use her gift in a non-profit capacity.

That November, her closest sister, Lisa, was diagnosed with a brain tumor. “We had raised our kids together on the township,” Jones recalled. “We’d talk a couple of times a day.”

Lisa died on March 17, 2012. It was too great a loss for their mother to handle. “It was a miracle,” said Jones. “She had pancreatic cancer for 22 years. Originally, they thought she’d live five years.

The last two years she was an amazing woman, who was out of skilled care, assisted living, the hospital. When my sister Lisa died, she was done and just wanted to go. Seven weeks later, my mom died. We buried her the day before Mother’s Day.”

But Jones still found cause for joy. One of her and Christopher’s children would be married just seven days later on May 19.

That morning of the wedding, my husband didn’t wake,” said Jones. “He was totally fine the night before. We went to bed, told each other we loved each other, and I found him dead at 7 in the morning.”

She learned heavily on her faith after the loss of three loved ones in just eight weeks.

“I don’t know how anyone gets through the loss of anyone’s major loved one,” Jones said. “It’s like all the people I was closest to were taken. I had no one else to turn to but the Lord.”

Through her portrait projects, she also published a book that year. Called Balm of Grief: A Portrait of Love, Loss, and Renewal, it is described on Amazon.com as “telling how God used [Jones’] losses to draw her closer to himself and to enter into a more intimate relationship with him.”

Jones’ non-profit work has even touched those overseas. In 2016, she and Zuelke, who is now vice-president of Face to Face Art’s board of directors, went to the Holy Land.

“Gus had the idea to go and do a peace retreat in the West Bank,” said Jones. “I made 18 portraits for Israelis and Palestinians who had lost someone in the conflict there. That was the highlight of my life. And it was 2016, [which Pope Francis proclaimed] the Year of Mercy.”

A source of healing and joy

In 2019, tragedy again struck. Jones’ daughter, Leah, died unexpectedly, leaving behind an 11-year-old daughter, Emma. Jones became her legal guardian.

In addition to seeking healing through her portrait projects, she also published a book that year. Called Balm of Grief: A Portrait of Love, Loss, and Renewal, it is described on Amazon.com as “telling how God used [Jones’] losses to draw her closer to himself and to enter into a more intimate relationship with him.”

Jones, who had been living in northern Indiana, looked for housing in Zionsville so Emma could remain in her school. She moved there in February 2020.

Then the pandemic struck.

“It was in a new town, isolated, not knowing anyone,” said Jones.

Once again, her faith and her devotion to her non-profit cause got her through. She took a part-time job for a while, but recently said she “isn’t home for Emma,” said Jones. “And I feel like I’m supposed to put my resources and energy into Face to Face.”

She said she finds “a lot of joy in helping other people through these portraits,” and prays over each one asking that “God will make them a source of healing and joy”.

Face to Face Art was created from pain. But from that pain has come hope and heart-mending for Jones and others.

“God let me experience all this [suffering] so I can have empathy for other people,” said Jones. “And I want to help.”

New monthly feature will use travel twist to highlight parishes

By Natalie Hoefer

The Archdiocese of Indianapolis is vast. It reaches from the scenic Ohio River to the skyline of Indianapolis, to the borders of Illinois and Ohio. It includes parishes from rural to urban, farmland to suburbs, and everything in between. A police officer stands in front of a portrait of Officer Perry Renn of the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department painted by B. Anne Jones through her non-profit, Face to Face Fine Art. Officer Renn was shot and killed in the line of duty on July 5, 2014. (Photo courtesy of Face to Face Fine Art)
DEDICATION (continued from page 1)

the pews of the new church that seats nearly 800 people, Archbishop Thompson reflected in his homily that “the profound beauty of this sacred space pales in comparison to the profound beauty of you, the people, the temples of the Holy Spirit, gathering in faith and prayer.”

As hard as Father Thomas Clegg, St. John Paul II’s pastor, and his parishioners have worked since launching a capital campaign in 2018 to fund the building of the church, his focus, too, was on the people who filled the pews—and their mission to share the Gospel in the growing Sellersburg community.

In an interview with The Criterion, Father Clegg noted that if he and his parishioners don’t rededicate themselves to “growing as missionary disciples at the same time that we dedicate this church, we’re simply changing the address and rearranging the furniture.”

“If this is not the completion of anything. It’s a beginning,” Father Clegg said. “We have to be willing to not sit back at this point, but to really move forward with all the evangelization tools resources.” He said. “If God sends you on a mission, he’s going to provide you with the resources to do it. That proved to be true in this particular case.”

As parish council president, Janelle Lewis has been very involved in many aspects of the building project. Taking part in the dedication Mass with her family was “extremely emotional.”

“I wasn’t expecting the overwhelming feelings I had,” Lewis said. “So many years of meetings, decisions, stress, worry, excitement and anxiety culminated into an immense feeling of joy.

Some of these emotions were spurred by prayerfully watching the unique rituals that happen during a church dedication Mass. Lewis was in particular impressed by how Archbishop Thompson spread chrism oil over the new church’s large marble altar, “making sure he covered every square inch.”

“There really felt like I saw Christ at the altar,” Lewis said.

In his homily, Archbishop Thompson emphasized to his listeners that the dedication of their new parish church should lead them to a closer encounter with Christ.

“In this sacred action, we celebrate and prepare to receive more than a thing,” he said. “Through his passion, death and resurrection, Jesus has given us the real presence of himself in the form of bread and wine.

“It is his body and blood that has sustained St. Paul Parish, St. Joseph Parish and now St. John Paul II Parish. Through him, with him and him, in union with the Blessed Virgin Mary, may our souls proclaim the goodness of the Lord and our spirits rejoice in God our Savior, for he has indeed done good things for us.”

Lewis hopes that this encounter with Christ in the new parish church will lead her, Father Clegg and fellow parishioners to share the Gospel in a Sellersburg community that continues to grow with new residents who commute to work in nearby Louisville, Ky.

“I believe that we will be a light for the community, a place of welcoming, a place of sharing God’s love, a place to be fed with both word and Eucharist,” Lewis said. “The parish can be a place to bring others to Christ and make disciples, a place where people want to be, a place that permeates joy in Christ.

“I believe that when our parish family comes in with joy, then we will be able to go out with Christ to make disciples.”

(For more photos of the dedication Mass for St. John Paul II Church in Sellersburg, read this story at www.CriterionOnline.com)

POPE (continued from page 1)

the fight against the pandemic still calls for “significant effort” by everyone—on a personal, political and international level.

Effective vaccination campaigns have decreased the risk of the “severe repercussions of the disease,” he said. “It is therefore important to continue the effort to immunize the general population as much as possible.”

Individuals have a duty to care for themselves and their health, which includes “respect for the health of those around us,” he said. But “sadly we are finding increasing that we live in a world of strong ideological colonization” that “leaves no room for freedom of thought or conscience”.

When social or governmental agencies make important resolutions or decisions “without a genuine process of consultation,” they “are an inadequate and inappropriate means of responding to security threats” and “are an inadequate and inappropriate means of responding to security threats” and “are an inadequate and inappropriate means of responding to security threats”.

He told the diplomatic corps, these conflicts are worsened by the abundance and ready availability of weapons. “We deceive ourselves into thinking that these weapons serve to dissuade potential aggressors.”

The pope also called for increased funding of education, which is critical for young people’s spiritual, moral and social growth.

The pope also thanked those who work to ensure that migrants “are welcomed and protected, and to support their human promotion and integration in the countries that have received them.”
Pope offers condolences to victims of Bronx fire that killed 17

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Pope Francis offered condolences to families of those killed in a Jan. 9 apartment building blaze in the Bronx that killed 17 people, including eight children.

Initially, city officials said the death toll was 19 people and nine children, but they revised this figure on the afternoon of Jan. 10.

In a Jan. 10 telegram to Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan of New York, the archdiocese where the apartment building is located, Vatican Secretary of State Cardinal Pietro Parolin said: “His Holiness Pope Francis was saddened to learn of the recent devastating fire in the Bronx in which a number of children lost their lives.

“In offering heartfelt condolences and the assurance of his spiritual closeness to those affected by this tragedy, he entrusts the victims and their families to the merciful love of almighty God and invokes upon all consolation and strength in the Lord,” the telegram said.

The five-alarm fire on Jan. 9 injured more than 60 others, with dozens going to hospitals in critical condition. More than 200 firefighters responded to the blaze in the 19-story building.

Cardinal Dolan planned to visit the site on Jan. 10 and tweeted: “It doesn’t get worse than what we witnessed in New York yesterday at that tragic fire in the Bronx. I’m visiting the scene with the fire companies that responded so that I might see how the Church can assist. Thank God for the @FDNY.”

St. Simon Stock-St. Joseph Parish, which serves the Bronx neighborhood where the apartment building is located, celebrated a special Mass on the evening of Jan. 10 for the deceased and all affected by the tragedy.

Carmelite Father Michael Kissane, parish pastor, reported the church is located one block from the apartment building. The apartment complex was home to a large number of Gambian immigrants, many of whom are Muslims. Only one registered family from the parish lived in the building—and that family was displaced because of the fire.

An early indication was that a space heater may have set off the fire in the 120-unit building. New York City Fire Commissioner Louis Nigro said victims were found “on every floor, in stairways.”

It was the second U.S. apartment fire in less than a week that claimed double-digit casualties. A dozen fatalities were reported from a Philadelphia apartment fire on Jan. 5, eight of them children.

Chicago cardinal says unborn children could soon get legal protection

CHICAGO (CNS)—There is hope that legal protections for unborn children “which we have advocated for decades will soon become a reality,” Cardinal Blase J. Cupich of Chicago told a pro-life rally.

Addressing the annual March for Life Chicago on Jan. 8, Cardinal Cupich expressed the hopes of the pro-life community without directly naming the abortion case the Supreme Court heard in December.

The case, Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization, involves Mississippi’s appeal of a lower court’s injunction on its law banning most abortions after the 15th week of pregnancy.

The cardinal’s comment was met with a few cheers that was followed by a few boos and heckles from the crowd.

Carmelite Father Michael Kissane, parish pastor, reported the church is located one block from the apartment building. The apartment complex was home to a large number of Gambian immigrants, many of whom are Muslims.

Only one registered family from the parish lived in the building—and that family was displaced because of the fire. An early indication was that a space heater may have set off the fire in the 120-unit building. New York City Fire Commissioner Louis Nigro said victims were found “on every floor, in stairways.”

It was the second U.S. apartment fire in less than a week that claimed double-digit casualties. A dozen fatalities were reported from a Philadelphia apartment fire on Jan. 5, eight of them children.

In response, Cardinal Cupich said: “Now I know there’s some people in this crowd who don’t respect the unborn and that’s too bad. But let me speak, let me speak.”

The cardinal described the importance that pro-life efforts must also embrace caring for immigrants, people on death row, the elderly and victims of poverty, war and famine.

The heckles then picked up, continuing throughout the rest of Cardinal Cupich’s speech and lasting about five minutes. It was unclear what was being shouted based on a review of the recorded livestream of the rally on Facebook.

“People won’t let me speak because they’re not here to respect the unborn. They’re not here to respect you,” he said, calling on the audience to continue to advocate for “the human right to life at all stages.”

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Life of Father Walter Ciszek a dramatic example of being poor in spirit

By Fr. Richard G. Malloy, S.J.

Father Ciszek was a tough kid growing up in the rugged coal country of Shenandoah, Pa., in the first decades of the 20th century. In the mysterious ways of God, he entered the Jesuit novitiate in 1928 and, as a novice, offered to be a missionary in the Soviet Union.

In 1938, he was sent as a newly ordained priest to eastern Poland. His dream of serving in Russia was only delayed however. After the Soviet Union invaded Poland at the start of World War II, he secretly accompanied workers who were heading to logging camps in Russia’s Ural Mountains, hoping to minister there as a priest. He was arrested on a bogus charge of being a Vatican spy in 1941.

Father Ciszek co-wrote this book and With God in Russia, after he was returned to the U.S. in a spy swap in 1963. He died in 1984.

After having prayed for strength, prayed to be an instrument of God's grace for the Russian people, the tough guy from Pennsylvania coal country had been beaten. Father Ciszek went back to his cell feeling horrible. He had given in. He felt he had failed the Jesuit order, the Church and God. But he eventually learned the lessons of poverty of spirit.

In the mysterious ways of God, he entered the Jesuit novitiate in 1928 and, as a novice, offered to be a missionary to the Soviet Union. He joined the Jesuit Father Walter J. Ciszek, a Pennsylvania-born missionary to the Soviet Union, is pictured in an undated file photo. Father Ciszek survived 23 years in Russia, 15 of those years at hard labor in horrific Siberian labor camps. His cause for beatification and canonization is now underway. (CNS photo/Cristo Rey High School in Baltimore.)

Faith

He Leadeth Me

Jesuit Father J. Ciszek, a Pennsylvania-born missionary to the Soviet Union, is pictured in an undated file photo. Father Ciszek survived 23 years in Russia, 15 of those years at hard labor in horrific Siberian labor camps. His cause for beatification and canonization is now underway. (CNS photo/Cristo Rey High School in Baltimore.)
Joyful Witness/Kimberly Pohovey

Combine spiritual resolutions, personal goals to succeed in life

And so, another year begins, and many of us follow the age-old tradition of setting new year’s resolutions. Have you ever set a resolution or two at the beginning of the theological year, finding that you let yourself down by February? People’s resolutions—include weight loss, increased exercise or other superfluous goals that may or may not work, but will never fill the God-sized hole within us.

So this year, I’m going to concentrate on spiritual goals. And I’m going to make them attainable. I managed to cut my loss 40 pounds by that year by praying the rosary while I worked out. Maybe God rewards a goal when we are inspired to use His grace and配套设施, then to focus on a new goal. Honestly, sometimes I just plain forget over time.

As I said, my past resolutions have been dereliced. This year, however, I am trying to allow myself to pray more and screw up, and then encourage myself to pick back up where I left off and try again. I’m guessing God would prefer I try again over and over than to just surrender.

The 24th year, how might you combine spiritual resolutions with your personal goals to help yourself stay on track and deepen your spiritual life?

(Kimberly Pohovey is a member of St. Luke Parish in Indianapolis. She is the director of major and planned gifts for the archdiocese.)

Our Works of Charity/ David Bethuram

January is Poverty Awareness Month, focused on hunger and malnutrition, limited access to education and other basic services, social discrimination and exclusion, disabilities and rehabilitation. Therefore offering spiritual resolutions is important for Catholics to understand and embrace the virtue of charity.

Although many world religions uphold charitable works, it is especially emphasized in the Christian faith and is a central message in the Gospels. In St. Paul’s Letter to the Colossians, we are instructed to love our neighbors because they are the children of God. (Col 3:11). We are all part of the same human family and share the same nature, needs and dignity. Because of our kinship and unity as God’s people, we must have compassion and understanding for one another. Charity teaches us to have a Christ-like love for our neighbors. This kind of love is unconditional, and by it we are able to reach out to our brothers and sisters and help relieve any physical, moral, mental or spiritual needs they may have. The simplest way we can express charity is to speak, act and think with love. We can show love in several ways. We can keep in mind the charity is all about love. As Scripture says, “Love is patient, love is kind. It is not jealous, [love] is not pompous, it is not inflated, it is not rude, it does not seek its own advantage, it is not quick-tempered, it does not brood over injury, it does not rejoice over wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth” (1 Cor 13:4-7).

With this Bible verse in mind, let us remember to always treat others with compassion. When we have love in our hearts and minds, it is easy for us to put the needs of others first. We act without self-interest and always with the goal of helping others.

(David Bethuram is executive director of the archdiocesan Secretariat for Catholic Charities. You can contact him at dbethuram@archindy.org.)

Guest Column/Richard Etienne

Build the kingdom by using your talents to serve God and others

Have you consciously taken an inventory of the knowledge, skills and strengths that God has given you to use? And if so, how are you using them to advance God’s kingdom? I grew up in a home where parents actively sought to further their education in faith as adults. And at the critical time I was growing from a child into a young adult, this approach was clearly focused on the newly released insights of the Second Vatican Council. As I developed, one strong message that always stayed with me was that I could do and be anything in life. I only had to use those talents that God gave me to use.

In my young mind, this was one of the key messages from Vaticna II. No big deal, a person might think. But this single thought has shaped my personality over time. My knowledge and skills are not just for me. These gifts are to be used in the service of God—to bring glory to God’s name. (No big burden there.) Be whatever you want—as long as you are using your gifts to serve God and others.

We read the Parable of the Talents in the Gospel of St. Matthew (Mt 25:14-30), where a talent represents coins. In this passage, we see one servant bury their talents while the other two people in the story invest their talents wisely and are rewarded by their master.

The servant who buried his talent is described as “wicked and lazy” (Mt 25:26) and has his single talent taken from him. The message is clear to see.

In my young mind, this was one of the key messages from Vaticna II. No big deal, a person might think. But this single thought has shaped my personality over time. My knowledge and skills are not just for me. These gifts are to be used in the service of God—to bring glory to God’s name. (No big burden there.) Be whatever you want—as long as you are using your gifts to serve God and others.

These are questions worth pondering during the quiet moments you carve out for yourself. Do you have time now to cease busy tasks and sit quietly with the one who sent his first disciples into the world to use their talents? If your answer is “no,” why not make time to discern how the Lord is calling you to use your talents. The thrifting Catholic: giving new life to old things

Emily Hannah was surprised by the children’s clothes she saw at big-box stores and popular websites when she became a mom. And not in a good way. Obnoxious graphics, offensive messages, neon colors. It fell short of her long-held beliefs as a Catholic and her powerful new emotions as a mother. It didn’t suit her newborn son with his peach fuzz and bright eyes.

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Emily and Sean Hannon are pictured with their children: Jack, 4, Peter, 3, and Lucy, 10 months. (Submitted photo)
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The Book of Isaiah furnishes the first reading for Mass this weekend. When this third section of Isaiah was written, the Hebrew people had just emerged from a terrible period in their history. Their homeland, divided into two kingdoms after the death of King Solomon, had been overrun by the mighty Babylonian Empire, centered in today’s Iraq. Many were killed in the conquest. Others were taken to Babylon, the imperial capital where they and their descendants languished for four generations until political fortunes changed when the more powerful Persians conquered Babylon itself. As a result, the exiles were allowed to return to their homeland. The prophets did not see the sequence of events leading to this happy release as merely coincidental or the result of human decision-making. Rather, God provided for it. God had promised to protect the people.

The people upbeat the arrangement by sinning. Despite their sinfulness, however, God was constant. He provided. For its second reading this weekend, the Church presents a passage from St. Paul’s First Epistle to the Corinthians. Leading the Corinthian Christians genuine fulfillment was a considerable challenge for Paul. In reaction to rivalries and arguments in Corinth, Paul wrote what has become a blueprint for Christian judgment of people.

Each human being, a child of God, is precious. Each has special gifts and opportunities. Such diversity was welcome since it meant that there were so many occasions for individual believers to bring the sweetness of the Gospel into the world. Paul even listed different skills and talents to make his point. St. John’s Gospel supplies the third reading. Unique to John, the miracle at Cana in Galilee was the first recorded of the Lord’s miracles. It marked the beginning of his public ministry. The emphasis usually lies upon the marvel of the changing of the water into wine. This indeed was remarkable, but the story has other powerful lessons. A great lesson is about Mary. John’s Gospel never names her. It always simply biological brothers or sisters, but could apply to other relatives such as stepbrothers or stepsisters.

There is one tradition that says that Joseph was a widower who married the Virgin Mary later in life after having a family with his first wife. One is free to believe that, but this is why I would have my doubts. From the cross, Jesus entrusted Mary’s care to the Apostle John. If Jesus had had surviving siblings, that would most likely not have happened. Normal Jewish practice would have Jesus’ siblings at the cross, and the eldest surviving sibling would be entrusted with the care of his mother.

While I know that only confession will reconcile me with God, I am confused about the terminology used in my parish. We are a rural parish and have very few opportunities for confession, but there is always the chance to make a personal appointment for confession. Any scheduled confessions are now announced as reconciliation, and I am not sure what to expect when I go. Sometimes, there is a reconciliation service followed by confessions; other times there is a separate schedule for confessions. Does the Church no longer recognize a difference between the reconciliation service (which was to prepare us for confession) and the sacrament of confession (which is private). In other words, is there still a sacrament of confession? Or is it now called the sacrament of reconciliation? (Virginia)

Generally, the sacrament of penance can be called confession or reconciliation, and the three terms are used interchangeably. In fact, the Catechism of the Catholic Church (1832:124) lists several names by which the same sacrament can be designated. These include: the sacrament of conversion, the sacrament of penance, the sacrament of confession, the sacrament of forgiveness and the sacrament of reconciliation. The catechism notes that “the disclosure or confession of sins to a priest is an essential element of this sacrament” (1842). Sometimes, parishes offer reconciliation services that include prayers and scriptural readings on forgiveness, as well as a homily on the same topic. It would be good for a local church to mention in advance what the format will be for the sacrament—in particular so that parishioners know how much time to allow.

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

The Sunday Readings

• Isaiah 62:1-5
• 1 Corinthians 12:4-11
• John 2:1-11

The Sunday Readings Sunday, January 16, 2022

Monday, January 17
St. Anthony, abbot
1 Samuel 15:1-2, 16-23
Psalm 50:8-9, 16-17, 21, 23
Mark 2:18-22

Tuesday, January 18
1 Samuel 16:1-11
Psalm 89:20-27, 28
Mark 2:23-28

Wednesday, January 19
1 Samuel 17:32-33, 37, 40, 41
Psalm 144:1b, 2, 9-10
Mark 3:1-6

Thursday, January 20
St. Fabian, pope and martyr
St. Sebastian, martyr
1 Samuel 18:6-9; 19:1-7
Psalm 56:2-3, 6-13
Mark 3:7-12

Question Corner Fr. Kenneth Doyle

The perpetual virginity of Mary is one of the Church’s oldest dogmas

When I was an evangelical Christian, the standard take on Mary’s virginity was that she remained a virgin until the birth of Jesus, but afterward went on to have normal marital relations with Joseph, which produced up to nine store grandchildren. These ideas were based on passages like Matthew 13:55 (“He had no relations with her until she bore a son, and he named him Jesus”). Now, as a Catholic, I am told that Joseph was significantly older than Mary, a widower with adult children from his first marriage and that Jesus “brothers and sisters” were more like stepbrothers and stepsisters.

Could not Mary still have attained “Queen of Heaven and Earth” status without being a perpetual virgin? (Indiana)

As to your specific question, whether Mary could have been a perpetual virgin of heaven and earth without having been a perpetual virgin, the answer of course is yes. But that is not the issue here.

The teaching of Mary’s perpetual virginity is one of the longest defined dogmas of the Church. It was taught by the earliest Church fathers, including Tertullian, St. Ambrose and St. Augustine, and was declared a dogma at the Fifth ecumenical council at Constantinople in 553. As to the scriptural passages to which you refer, I would make two points. First, the footnote in the New American Bible explains Matthew 1:25: “The Greek word translated ‘until’ does not imply normal marital conduct after Jesus’ birth; nor does it exclude it.”

As to your other scriptural reference, the words in their original language do not mean simply biological brothers or sisters, but could apply to other relatives such as stepbrothers or stepsisters or cousins.

There is one tradition that says that Joseph was a widower who married the Virgin Mary later in life after having a family with his first wife. One is free to believe that, but this is why I would have my doubts. From the cross, Jesus entrusted Mary’s care to the Apostle John. If Jesus had had surviving siblings, that would most likely not have happened. Normal Jewish practice would have Jesus’ siblings at the cross, and the eldest surviving sibling would be entrusted with the care of his mother.

The miracle at Cana was Mary’s first recorded miracle. Many were killed in the conquest. Others were taken to Babylon, the imperial capital where they and their descendants languished for four generations until political fortunes changed when the more powerful Persians conquered Babylon itself. As a result, the exiles were allowed to return to their homeland. The prophets did not see the sequence of events leading to this happy release as merely coincidental or the result of human decision-making. Rather, God provided for it. God had promised to protect the people.

The people upbeat the arrangement by sinning. Despite their sinfulness, however, God was constant. He provided. For its second reading this weekend, the Church presents a passage from St. Paul’s First Epistle to the Corinthians. Leading the Corinthian Christians genuine fulfillment was a considerable challenge for Paul. In reaction to rivalries and arguments in Corinth, Paul wrote what has become a blueprint for Christian judgment of people.

Each human being, a child of God, is precious. Each has special gifts and opportunities. Such diversity was welcome since it meant that there were so many occasions for individual believers to bring the sweetness of the Gospel into the world. Paul even listed different skills and talents to make his point. St. John’s Gospel supplies the third reading. Unique to John, the miracle at Cana in Galilee was the first recorded of the Lord’s miracles. It marked the beginning of his public ministry. The emphasis usually lies upon the marvel of the changing of the water into wine. This indeed was remarkable, but the story has other powerful lessons. A great lesson is about Mary. John’s Gospel never names her. It always simply biological brothers or sisters, but could apply to other relatives such as stepbrothers or stepsisters or cousins.

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While I know that only confession will reconcile me with God, I am confused about the terminology used in my parish. We are a rural parish and have very few opportunities for confession, but there is always the chance to make a personal appointment for confession. Any scheduled confessions are now announced as reconciliation, and I am not sure what to expect when I go. Sometimes, there is a reconciliation service followed by confessions; other times there is a separate schedule for confessions. Does the Church no longer recognize a difference between the reconciliation service (which was to prepare us for confession) and the sacrament of confession (which is private). In other words, is there still a sacrament of confession? Or is it now called the sacrament of reconciliation? (Virginia)

Generally, the sacrament of penance can be called confession or reconciliation, and the three terms are used interchangeably. In fact, the Catechism of the Catholic Church (1832:124) lists several names by which the same sacrament can be designated. These include: the sacrament of conversion, the sacrament of penance, the sacrament of confession, the sacrament of forgiveness and the sacrament of reconciliation. The catechism notes that “the disclosure or confession of sins to a priest is an essential element of this sacrament” (1842). Sometimes, parishes offer reconciliation services that include prayers and scriptural readings on forgiveness, as well as a homily on the same topic. It would be good for a local church to mention in advance what the format will be for the sacrament—in particular so that parishioners know how much time to allow.

(Questions may be sent to Father Kenneth Doyle at askfatherkennedy@gmail.com and 30 Columbia Circle Dr., Albany, New York 12203.)
St. Joseph teaches fatherly love in ‘ orphaned’ world, pope says

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—As the foster father of Jesus, St. Joseph is an example of the need for fatherhood and motherhood, especially by those who already have children, they want to share their love with others, the pope said.

“Make sure that no one lacks a home, a bond, a person to take care of him or her,” he prayed. “And heal the selfishness of those who close themselves off from life, because they will be the ones who will close your eyes [at death], who will care for you in the future.”

Speaking off the cuff, the pope said that the example of fatherhood and motherhood was an important value to think about because “our civilization is something of an orphanhood.”

Pope Francis encouraged couples, especially newlyweds to “think about having children, giving life, because they will be the ones who will open your eyes [at death], who will care for you in the future.”

“If you cannot have children, think about adoption. It is a risk, yes, having a child is always a risk, either naturally or by adoption, but it is riskier to not have them,” he said. “And it is riskier to deny motherhood, be it real or spiritual,” the pope said on Jan. 5 during his weekly general audience.

There are “many couples do not have children because they do not want to, or they have just one, but they have two dogs, two cats. Yes, dogs and cats take the place of children,” the pope said, eliciting laughter. “Yes, it’s funny, I understand, but it is the reality.”

“By this way, civilization becomes aged and without humanity because it loses the richness of fatherhood and motherhood. And our homelands suffer because they do not have children,” he added.

In his main talk, Pope Francis continued his series on St. Joseph, reflecting on his role as Jesus’ foster father.

In recognizing Jesus as his son, St. Joseph showed that “a man does not become a father simply by bringing a child into the world, but by taking up the responsibility to care for that child.”

St. Joseph, he continued, also teaches the value of fatherhood and motherhood, especially by those who “welcome life by way of adoption,” and “shows us that this type of bond is not secondary, it is not an afterthought.”

“This kind of choice is among the highest forms of love, and of fatherhood and motherhood,” the pope said. “How many children in the world are waiting for someone to take care of them? And how many spouses wish to be fathers and mothers but are unable to do so for biological reasons, or, although they already have children, they want to share their family’s affection with those who have been left without family?”

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As he has been doing since beginning his series on St. Joseph, Pope Francis read a prayer he had written.

He asked St. Joseph to “be close to the many children who have no family and who long for a daddy and mommy,” and to “support couples who are unable to have children.”

“Make sure that no one lacks a home, a bond, a person to take care of him or her,” he prayed. “And heal the selfishness of those who close themselves off from life, that they may open their hearts to love.”


Emily couldn’t keep her thrifted finds to herself—notdid she need them all. Four months ago, she opened an online shop to sell her secondhand purchases: vintage children’s clothing, heirloom toys and antique homewares. She named it The Simple Daisy, a nod to the St. Therese quote about the “simple charms” of a daisy, and secured the domain simplesimpledaisyshop.com.

To her surprise, the shop has been a huge hit. She has already sold hundreds of pieces. Thanks to savvy marketing on social media, sharing glimpses of what’s to come, many pieces sell three to five minutes after a “drop,” or online release. Emily is excited to grow the shop in 2022. Stepping into a new year surrounded by old clothing feels like a hug from the past. It harkens back to simpler times and warms the future with well-worn history.

“I love that each piece tells a story,” Emily said. “I sometimes imagine other children who are now fully grown playing with the toys my children play with. It makes me feel connected to others, even those I’ll never meet, like we’re all part of something bigger.”

(Christina Capechci is a freelance writer from Inver Grove Heights, Minn.)
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