ICC backs bipartisan effort to limit ‘scourge’ of predatory lending

By Victoria Arthur

The Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC) is among the strongest voices in a chorus of support for legislation that would cap the exorbitant interest rates charged by the payday lending industry.

If the effort is successful, the Hoosier state would join half the nation in placing limits on the payday lending institutions that currently charge consumers an annual percentage rate (APR) of up to nearly 400% on the short-term loans that they offer. Senate Bill 253 and House Bill 1159 would restrict the APR on payday loans, also known as cash advances, to no more than 36%.

At a recent press conference introducing the bipartisan, bicameral legislation, lawmakers and allies alike said it is past time for Indiana to stand against predatory lending.

“With a 36% APR versus current Indiana law, borrowers could have saved $60 million per year, putting more money into the local economy and communities that typically lack resources but allow payday lending to thrive,” said Sen. Ron Alting (R-Lafayette), the author of Senate Bill 253. “We know that when borrowers take out a payday loan, they reborrow frequently, creating a cycle that they struggle to leave.”

Payday lenders are allowed direct access to a borrower’s checking account as security for a loan, and they know the date that a borrower will be paid. A person living paycheck to paycheck or relying on Social Security or disability payments can quickly become entrapped in an endless cycle of debt, lawmakers and advocates say.

“I will be asking my colleagues to make sure [this legislation] gets a hearing and full consideration this session so we can stop this debt trap in Indiana once and for all,” Alting said.

Rep. Carey Hamilton (D-Indianapolis), author of House Bill 1159, also spoke out against what she characterized as the payday lending ‘scourge’.

Linda Kile, president and director of Gabriel Project, smiles with joy as she holds the keys to the southwest side Indianapolis home recently purchased as the new site of the organization’s 1st Choice for Women pregnancy care center, which has been without headquarters since their offices were burned in a building fire in 2019. Pending rezoning the property for commercial use, she hopes the pregnancy care center will open in the summer. (Photo by Natalie Hofer)
Keep up with local Catholic topics with archdiocesan office, agency e-newsletters

Many archdiocesan offices and agencies offer regular newsletters via e-mail with news, going-ons and ways to become involved in a particular faith-based area of interest. Below is a list of archdiocesan offices and agencies that offer an e-newsletter and how to sign up to receive it.

Black Catholic Ministry: Weekly. To subscribe, e-mail criterion@archindy.org with subject “Subscribe to weekly email.”

Catholic Charities agencies throughout the archdiocese: Frequency varies. To subscribe, go to www.archindy.org, click on the ENews button on the right side of the screen, then select one or more of the following:

—Becky’s Place in Bedford
—Catholic Charities – Archdiocese of Indianapolis
—Catholic Charities Bloomington
—Catholic Charities Indianapolis
—Catholic Charities Terre Haute
St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities in New Albany
—Refugee and Immigrant Services
—Holy Family Shelter in Indianapolis
—Refugee and Immigrant Services St. Elizabeth (Coleman Pregnancy and Adoption Services in Indianapolis

Catholic Charities – Social Concerns: Monthly. Encompasses the following programs: Anti-Trafficking Ministry, Catholic Social Teaching and Reflective Experience (CARE), Catholic Campaign for Human Development, Catholic relief services, Catholic Charities Notre Dame Education, Consciences for Catholic Citizenship, Justice for Immigrants and Parish Social Ministry. To subscribe, go to g.Concerns (case sensitive) or e-mail tchamble@archindy.org

Catechesis: Weekly. Newsletter for catechists and those interested in catechetical resources and formation opportunities. To subscribe, e-mail criterion@archindy.org with the subject “The Big 3!”

Creation Care Ministry: Plus a few extra announcements during special times such as the Season of Creation. To subscribe, go to paracommunication@archindy.org and click on the “sheep” icon in the upper right.

Evangelization: Monthly. To subscribe, go to evangelizeindy.com/contact-us.

Human Life and Dignity: Monthly.
Encompasses the following areas: Birthright, Health, Parish Nurses, Respect Rachel, Respect Life Month, Solemn Roe v. Wade Observance and Substance Abstinence. To subscribe, go to www.archindy.org/humanlifeanddignity and click on the “sheep” icon in the upper right.

Indiana Catholic Conference (public policy voice for the Church in Indiana): Monthly. Subscribe for one or more of the following newsletters. If texting, follow the prompts to add name and e-mail address. If e-mailing, asked to be added to the e-mail distribution group.

—Bishop Simon Brunt College Seminary: Text “CCB” to 84576, or e-mail asgatto@archindy.org
—Catholic Community Foundation: text “CCF” to 84576, or e-mail ccf@archindy.org
—Mother Theodore Catholic Academies/ Notre Dame ACE Academies: Text “MTCA” to 84576, or e-mail mtca@archindy.org

—Stewardship text “Stewardship” (or “ArchLatinos” for Spanish) to 84576, or e-mail dston@archindy.org
—United Catholic Appeal: text “UCA” (or “ArchLatinos” for Spanish) to 84576, or send us an email to uca@archindy.org

The Criterion: Monthly. Preview of what’s in the latest issue as well as links to a selection of stories. To subscribe, go to www.archindy.org/newsletter

Young Adult and College Campus Ministry: Monthly. News and upcoming events for those age 18-39. Text “INDYCATH” to 84576 to subscribe.

Youth Ministry: Monthly, with periodic additional updates. To join, e-mail nshahanah@archindy.org

Vocations: Quarterly. To subscribe, go to bruceodonnell@archindy.org with subject “Vocations Newsletter.”

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

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

We all know people who live this passage—some in obvious ways, but many through seemingly small or behind-the-scenes actions.

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 welcome. Maybe you saw a child sit down to a lunch with a student eating alone. Maybe you know someone who started a charity, grandparents who adopted a grandchild; a couple

Vatican mandates COVID-19 vaccines or recovery for employees, most visitors

The Vatican will require all employees to be vaccinated against COVID-19 soon after the Vatican City government requires workers to be vaccinated against the virus. It will also require that employees of some religious orders and convents be vaccinated against the virus or prove they have recently recovered.

For our monthly column “Love’s Horizon,” we’re looking for stories just like this, stories about people who—obvious or quiet ways—live out love. For our monthly column “Love’s Horizon,” we’re looking for stories just like this, stories about people who—obvious or quiet ways—live out love.

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By Sean Gallagher

Archbishop Charles C. Thompson at St. Bartholomew Parish, 1306 27th St., in Columbus, for a meeting that is part of a synodal process launched last October in the archdiocese and in dioceses around the world.

The process is part of the preparation for a 2023 meeting of the world Synod of Bishops in the Vatican that will discuss the concept of synodality, which is a word to describe how all the faithful are called to contribute to the guiding of the life of the Church through prayerful listening and sharing their own thoughts. Archdiocesan Catholics have had the chance since last fall to fill out an online survey and share their thoughts with members of their parish councils.

All of this input and more will be prayerfully considered by a group of archdiocesan leaders in creating a 10-page draft report, which will be made available to those who take part in the March 5 meeting in Columbus. It will begin at 3 p.m. and conclude at 4:30 p.m. just before St. Bartholomew’s 5 p.m. Saturday evening Mass.

Ken Ogorék, archdiocesan director of catechesis, has coordinated the synodal process in the archdiocese.

He said the March 5 meeting will involve prayer, small-group discussions of different sections of the draft report and opportunities for individuals to share their thoughts with Archbishop Thompson and other participants.

“Prayer and listening will play major roles in the gathering,” Ogorék said. “I’m hopeful that participants will see the Holy Spirit’s presence and power to help us speak the truth in love as we experience the togetherness that makes us Church.”

Those who wish to take part in the March 5 meeting are asked to register in advance by calling 317-236-1550 or by sending an e-mail to catechesis@archindy.org.

Input offered at the March 5 meeting will be considered afterward by archdiocesan leaders as they finalize the report, which will then be submitted to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB).

After gathering reports from dioceses across the country, USCCB leaders will then send a report on synodality to the Vatican.

During an Oct. 17, 2021, Mass at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis that began the synodal process in the archdiocese, Archbishop Thompson described it as “a daunting task, but grace-filled, if we are Christ-centered. In the end, it’s all about glorifying the Holy Trinity—God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit—for the sake of our salvation, not merely as individuals, but as people of God.”

Ogorék emphasized that Archbishop Thompson has been involved in the synodal process since its beginning.

“His prioritization of this gathering on March 5,” said Ogorék, “speaks volumes about our chief shepherd’s desire to listen and be present to the faithful of our archdiocese.”

(See report for the online survey for the synodal process.)

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WASHINGTON (CNS)—The president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) urged all people of goodwill to observe King Jr. Day each year.

Today, 54 years after his death, “America faces many challenges,” Archbishop José H. Gomez said. Among them, he said, are “this ongoing pandemic, issues of economic inequality and racial discrimination, violence in our communities, the struggle to welcome immigrants and refugees.”

“In recent years, our nation has also become more polarized and our divisions angrier,” he added.

In looking to the future, “let us continue to draw from Rev. King’s wisdom, especially his commitment to the beatitudes of Jesus, and the principles of nonviolence and love for our enemies,” Archbishop Gomez urged.

He referenced Rev. King’s “Letter from a Birmingham Jail,” an open letter written on April 16, 1963, by the Baptist minister and activist while he was confined in a jail cell after he and other civil rights leaders were arrested for holding a nonviolent demonstration over the treatment of Blacks in Birmingham, Ala.

A court had ordered that Rev. King could not hold protests there. He spent eight days in jail before being released on bail.

In his letter, “Rev. King reminds us that we are brothers and sisters, part of a beautiful web of relationships of mutual care, each of us depending on others as others depend on us,” the archbishop said.

“We are one family, in God, called to share our gifts with one another.”

IF YOU HAVE NOT GIVEN TO THE UNITED CATHOLIC APPEAL, PLEASE PRAYERFULLY CONSIDER A GIFT TODAY.
The time is now for the Supreme Court to overturn Roe v. Wade

On Jan. 22, 1973, the U.S. Supreme Court legalized abortion nationwide with its historic Roe v. Wade decision.

As we look back 49 years later, we mourn the more than 62 million babies who were slain in America whose lives since then have been extinguished. And while they were yet in their mothers’ wombs. Even as we grieve, however, we pro-lifers can also hope. The U.S. Supreme Court could be on the verge of overturning that infamous decision that even many abortion proponents concede to be a poor example of jurisprudence.

Speaking last year to a group of fellow pro-lifers, I encouraged the crowd to keep persevering in the fight—and to take courage from the realization that our cause is noble and that we are endeavoring to save the lives of innocent children and protect the health of women.

Mother Teresa of Calcutta once said that “abortion is profoundly anti-women. Three quarters of its victims are women: half the babies and all the mothers.”

However, there are also basic doctrines that all Catholics are required to believe, and basic devotions that all Catholics are expected to follow. Most of those doctrines—but not all—are included in the Church’s two creeds, the Nicene Creed and the Apostles’ Creed.

Beyond the premise that all members of the Church are wide open to everyone, the word “catholic” itself means universal, or, as it has been described, “Here is everyone.” And, since everyone is a sinner, it is a Church composed of sinners.

From its earliest history, it has included people who disagree with one another. The first major controversy was whether or not Gentile converts had to observe the Jewish laws, including the Sabbath. The Church is wide open to everyone.

The never-ending challenge for us as Catholics is how to identify and manage these different kinds of diversities. As we cling to the hope that the Triumph of women over the lie that abortion is a positive that advances equality, I am proud to say that my office plays a part in that battle.

And as we cling to the hope that Roe v. Wade will be a relic of the past by its 50th anniversary, we shall continue to persevere in our work.

(Todd Rokita is the 44th attorney general of Indiana and a member of St. Malachy Parish in Brownsburg.)

Letters Policy

Letters from readers are published in The Criterion as part of the newspaper’s commitment to “the free and unhindered exchange of freely-held and expressed opinion among the People of God” (Communio et Progressio, 116).

Letters from readers are welcome and every effort will be made to include letters from as many people and representing as many viewpoints as possible. Letters should be informed, relevant, well-expressed and temperate in tone. They must reflect a basic sense of courtesy and respect.

The editors reserve the right to select the letters that will be published and to edit letters from readers as necessary based on space limitations, pastoral sensitivity and context (including names and pronouns). In order to encourage opinions from a variety of readers, frequent writers will ordinarily be limited to not more than two or three monthly. Concise letters (usually less than 300 words) are more likely to be printed.

Letters to the Editor may send letters to criterion@archindy.org.
La vida es un regalo de Dios que hay que valorar y defender

Mañana, sábado 22 de enero, se celebrará la Jornada de Oración por Unborn Children observada por todo Estados Unidos “como un día particular de oración por la plena restauración de la garantía jurídica del derecho a la vida y de penanza por los actos que atentan contra la dignidad de la persona humana cometidos mediante actos de aborto” (Leccionario: 516A). Estos dos objetivos, la restauración de la garantía jurídica del derecho a la vida y la penitencia por los actos que atentan contra la dignidad humana, emanan de una misma convicción. La vida es sagrada. Es un regalo de Dios que hay que valorar y defender. Respetándonos unos a otros, y trabajando para construir un mundo más justo, compasivo y digno, podemos contribuir a garantizar el derecho a la vida de todos los seres humanos.

A menudo se maltrata a los que se encuentran en los márgenes de la sociedad, como el respeto a la vida y a la dignidad humanas. (Véase el Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica, #2267). Por último, la historia demuestra que las personas que se encuentran en los márgenes de la sociedad son consideradas con demasiada facilidad como indignas de las garantías legales que hacen que la vida merezca la pena. A menudo se maltrata a los que se consideran diferentes de nosotros; se les niegan los derechos y las oportunidades que deberían estar garantizados por su dignidad humana fundamental como hijos de Dios, hermanos y hermanos de todos. La jornada de oración de mañana es también una llamada a la acción: la penitencia que se nos pide que hagamos (ayuno, abnegación, reparación de pecados), debe ayudar a crear conciencia sobre la gravedad de los problemas de la vida humana, y promover activamente cambios de mente y de corazón, así como cambios jurídicos y políticos en todos los niveles de nuestro gobierno.

Respeto a la vida y a la dignidad humana nos llama a amar a todos, a nuestro prójimo, sean de acuerdo con nosotros, o no, a nuestras leyes y por la forma en que nos tratamos unos a otros como ciudadanos y seres humanos. Recemos para lograr una conversión de corazón, y que Dios nos guíe hacia la convivencia de toda la humanidad.

Life is a gift from God to be cherished, defended

Tomorrow, Saturday, Jan. 22, is a Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children observed by virtually all the societies and religions of the world as a particular day of prayer for the full restoration of the legal guarantee of the right to life and of penance for violations to the dignity of the human person committed through acts of abortion” (Lectionary: 516A). These two objectives—restoration of the legal guarantee of the right to life and penance for acts violating human dignity—both spring from a single conviction: Life is sacred. It is a gift from God that must be cherished and defended.

Every human being is made in the image and likeness of God and, so, must be treated with the utmost dignity and respect. This is true from the moment of conception until the time of natural death. No one has the right to violate the sanctity of human life. No one is free to decide that an individual person’s life is unnecessary or that a group of people are inferior or subhuman and, therefore, expendable. The inviolability of the human life is a fundamental moral principle recognized by nearly all societies and religions, but sins against human life and dignity are as old as humanity itself. (See the story of Cain and Abel in Gen 4:1-16). Human sinfulness requires that we protect the dignity of human life by every means available to us, including the legal guarantee of the right to life. And when these legal guarantees are abrogated, as in the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision to make abortion legal, the law of God inscribed in human hearts must supersede civil laws and be observed regardless of the consequences. Life is sacred. No civil authority has the right to deprive or destroy human persons made in God’s image. The Day of Prayer we will observe tomorrow calls us to ask the Lord of Life, his Blessed Mother, and all the angels, saints and martyrs to join us in working to change existing laws that permit (even encourage) violations against human life and dignity.

Abortion is a particularly serious violation because the persons involved are totally vulnerable and dependent on others for their defense. The elderly and infirm (mentally and physically) are especially at risk. When persons are actively promoted—and defend—against the legal guarantee of the right to life. And when these legal guarantees are abrogated, as in the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision to make abortion legal, the law of God inscribed in human hearts must supersede civil laws and be observed regardless of the consequences. Life is sacred. No civil authority has the right to deprive or destroy human persons made in God’s image. The Day of Prayer we will observe tomorrow calls us to ask the Lord of Life, his Blessed Mother, and all the angels, saints and martyrs to join us in working to change existing laws that permit (even encourage) violations against human life and dignity.

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Saint Meinrad exhibit features woodblock and Syrofoam prints

An exhibit of woodblock and Syrofoam prints called “A Sense of Place” will be on display in the Saint Meinrad Archabbey Gallery, 200 Hill Dr., in St. Meinrad, through Feb. 20. The gallery will work with Kentucky artist Chris Plummer. This exhibit showcases both a series of landscapes inspired by the land near Plummer’s home in Niagara, Ky., and a series of black and white prints centered around the idea of home and family. Plummer has been enamored with print making since he made his first prints in 1995. In 1999, he earned a bachelor’s of fine arts degree at Northern Kentucky University.

Since then, he has participated in local and regional art fairs, winning many awards. In 2021, he won “best-in-show” in the Around the Loop Art Fair in Memphis, Tenn. In 2019, he won “best-in-show” at the Q-Fest Art Fair in Quincy, Ill., and the Around the Fountain Art Fair in Lafayette, Ind.

The exhibit is free and open to the public. Those wishing to view the exhibit may want to arrive at least 30 minutes before closing time. Due to the COVID situation, guests to Saint Meinrad are asked to wear masks.

For library hours, call 812-357-6401 or 800-987-7311 or visit the Archabbey Library’s website at www.saintmeinrad.edu/library/library-hours. ♦

Married couples welcome to Celebrate Romance event in Greenwood on Feb. 12

Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish’s Celebrate Marriage will offer a Celebrate Romantic Dinner and dance and its Life Center, 335 S. Meridian St., in Greenwood, from 7-10:30 p.m. on Feb. 12.

The purpose of the ministry is to provide opportunities for married couples to spend more time together, to find the romance in their marriage, to examine their lives together, to look for the fun in their marriages and to grow closer together.

The event is open to all married couples. The cost for the Celebrate Romantic Dinner and dance is $50 per couple or $25 for a table of four couples. Doors open at 6:30 p.m., and dinner will be served at 7 p.m. Beer and wine will be available with the purchase of a $5 bracelet, and drink prices will be reasonable.

For more information or to register, go to celebratemarriage.org. If paying by credit card, call the parish office at 317-888-2861. ♦
Pope outlines paths for building a lasting peace

“All can work together to build a more peaceful world, starting from the hearts of individuals and relationships in the family, then within society and with the greater segments of human society, but the pope’s message draws special attention to what he calls ‘dialogue among generations.’ The natural barriers that exist between older and younger people need to be removed, Pope Francis says. ‘Promoting segments of human society, but the pope’s agreement and walking together,’ the Holy Father says. Dialogue entails listening to one another, sharing different views, coming to agreement and walking together,’ the Holy Father says. Dialogue, education and labor are essential components in building a pathway to lasting peace. Since Pope Leo XIII first published ‘Rerum Novarum’ (‘Rights and Duties of Capital and Labor’) on May 15, 1891, all popes have emphasized the importance of work in the development of individuals and society as a whole. Pope St. John Paul II famously said, ‘Work for man is not for work.’ To this fundamental social and economic principle, Pope Francis adds: ‘Labor, in fact, is the foundation on which to build justice and solidarity in every community.

‘It is more urgent than ever to promote, throughout our world, decent and dignified working conditions, oriented to the common good and to the safeguarding of creation,’ the Holy Father says. ‘The freedom of entrepreneurial initiatives needs to be ensured and supported, at the same time, efforts must be made to encourage a renewed sense of social responsibility, so that profit will not be the sole guiding criterion.’

As we begin a new year, still conscious of the uncertainty and hostility of recent years, let’s join with Pope Francis in working for a peace that can last. As missionary disciples of Jesus Christ, our task is to bring his peace to our weary, war-torn world. Dialogue, education and labor are essential components in building the peace of Christ. (Daniel Conway is a member of The Criterion’s editorial committee.)”

“Jesús de Nazareth, by his words, his actions, and his entire person reveals the mercy of God.”
–Pope Francis, “Misericordiae Vultus” (“The Face of Mercy”)”

“El rostro de la misericordia”

Pope traza el camino para construir una paz duradera

“Todos pueden colaborar en la construcción de un mundo más pacífico: partiendo del propio corazón y de las relaciones en la familia, en la sociedad y con el medio ambiente, hasta las relaciones entre los pueblos y entre los Estados.” (Papa Francisco, mensaje para la celebración de la Jornada Mundial de la Paz de 2022)

En su mensaje para la Jornada Mundial de la Paz de 2022, el Papa Francisco esboza “tres caminos para construir una paz duradera,” a saber: el diálogo, la educación y el trabajo. Estos elementos presuponen un deseo compartido de paz entre individuos, familias y sociedades grandes y pequeñas. Todos requieren un cambio de mente, de corazón y de acciones para que “todos puedan colaborar en la construcción de un mundo más pacífico.”

“Dialogar significa escucharse, confrontarse, ponerse de acuerdo y caminar juntos,” afirma el Santo Padre. El diálogo es importante para todos los segmentos de la sociedad humana, pero el mensaje del Papa presta especial atención a lo que llama “el diálogo entre las generaciones.” El Santo Padre asegura que hay que eliminar las barreras naturales que existen entre los mayores y los jóvenes. “Ponernos todo esto entre las generaciones significa labrar la dura y estéril tierra del conflicto y la exclusión para cultivar allí las semillas de una paz duradera y compartida.” El diálogo entre generaciones, que todo padre sabe que es más fácil decirlo que hacerlo, debe ser reconocido “como base para la realización de proyectos compartidos,” afirma el Papa. El Sumo Pontífice nos enseña que “los grandes retos sociales y los procesos de construcción de la paz no pueden prescindir del diálogo entre los depositarios de la memoria los mayores y los continuadores de la historia los menores.”

El segundo camino hacia la paz propuesto por el Papa Francisco es “la educación, como factor de libertad, responsabilidad y desarrollo.” El Papa contrasta la cantidad de dinero que se gastan en educación con los fondos dedicados a la economía. “Es necesario y urgente que cuantos tienen responsabilidades de gobierno elaboren políticas económicas que prevean un cambio en la relación entre las inversiones públicas destinadas a la educación y los fondos reservados a los armamentos” afirma. “La búsqueda de un proceso real de desarme internacional no puede sino causar grandes beneficios al desarrollo de pueblos y naciones liberando recursos financieros que se empleen de manera más apropiada para la paz, la escuela, las infraestructuras y el cuidado del territorio, entre otros.”

El Papa Francisco espera que la inversión de nuestra sociedad en la educación vaya acompañada de “un compromiso más consistente orientado a mejorar la cultura del cuidado. Esta cultura, frente a las fracturas de la sociedad y a la incertidumbre de las instituciones, puede convertirse en el lenguaje común que rompa las barreras y construya puentes.”

Por ello, propone “un pacto que promueva la educación a la ecología integral según un modelo cultural de paz, de desarrollo y de sostenibilidad, centrado en la fraternidad y en la alianza entre el ser humano y su entorno.” Construir puentes, no muros, ha sido un tema constante del actual Papa quien considera que la educación, y no la ignorancia, es esencial para construir una sociedad pacífica.

“El trabajo humano es un componente necesario para construir un camino hacia la paz duradera.” (Pope Juan Pablo II) El Papa León XIII publicó por primera vez “Rerum Novarum” (“Derechos y deberes del capital y del trabajo”) el 15 de mayo de 1891, todos los papeles han destacado la importancia del trabajo en el desarrollo de los individuos y de la sociedad en su conjunto. El papa Juan Pablo II dijo la famosa frase “el trabajo está en función del hombre y no el hombre en función del trabajo” que resulta un principio social y económico fundamental, al cual el Papa Francisco añade: “El trabajo, en efecto, es la base sobre la cual se construyen en toda comunidad la justicia y la solidaridad.”

“Es más urgente que nunca que se promuevan en todo el mundo condiciones laborales decentes y dignas, orientadas al bien común y al cuidado de la creación,” dice el Santo Padre. “Es necesario asegurar y sostener la libertad de las iniciativas empresariales y, al mismo tiempo, impulsar una responsabilidad social renovada, para que el beneficio no sea el único principio rector.”

Al comenzar un nuevo año, aún conscientes de la incertidumbre y la hostilidad de los últimos años, unamos al Papa Francisco para trabajar por una paz duradera. Como discípulos misioneros de Jesucristo, nuestra tarea es llevar su paz a nuestro mundo cansado y desgarrado por la guerra. El diálogo, la educación y el trabajo son componentes esenciales para construir la paz de Cristo. (Daniel Conway es integrante del comité editorial de The Criterion)”
A family and a school bound tightly together for seven decades.

Creating a legacy

“My parents had 11 children who all attended Providence,” says Norman Krueger, the sixth of the 11 children and a 1963 graduate of the school. “They also had 34 grand-grandchildren who all attended Providence. There have been 19 great-grandchildren who have gotten in or are now going to Providence through the 2023-24 school year.”

Norman’s part in this legacy comes from his four years at Providence.

“Your parents had 11 children in school as far as I know. They did a lot for their children. They are now going to Providence through the 2023-24 school year.”

“Norman’s part in that legacy is an interesting story in itself.”

An e-mail address says it all

Scholarship students during his four years at Providence.

Norman wasn’t involved in any sports or activities at the school because as soon as his classes ended, he had to return home to help with the chores on the farm. Still, he considers those four years as the greatest influence of his life because of the faith-filled education he received, including a career-shaping class in bookkeeping.

“That got me interested in accounting, and that led me to go to college at Bellarmine, a Catholic college, where I majored in accounting,” says Norman, who retired in 2018 as the chief financial officer of a construction company.

Providence also had an impact on his life romantically, as he married Kathy Howell, a 1965 graduate of the school that has the nickname “Pioneers.” In fact, Providence is so much at the heart of their relationship that their e-mail address begins, “pioneer6365.”

And when their only child, Brad, was born it was already determined where he would go to high school. “If you talked to all my brothers and sisters, there wasn’t any doubt where our kids would go to high school,” Norman says. “Kathy and I look at high school as an investment for the future. We always thought Providence was a good investment because of the teaching, the culture and the faith.”

Brad, a 1993 graduate, and his wife Kim had the same belief in Providence for their three sons. Landon graduated in 2021 and now is at the U.S. Naval Academy. Luke is a sophomore at Providence. And Lincoln will be a freshman there in the fall.

The connection between the Krueger family and Providence also led to a memorable celebration last spring. Landon and Luke played together on the school’s baseball team that won the Class 2A state championship of the Indiana High School Athletic Association.

“Oh, my God, it was awesome,” Norman says. “It was fun not only for watching our grandsons play but the whole team. The coaches put together a great team that all got along.”

“It felt like home”

There are five descendants of Ambrose and Mary Rose who are currently students at the school: Luke and fellow sophomore Nina Krueger, plus three seniors, Peyton Krueger, Eli Krussow and Grant Williams.

“Providence means a lot to me,” Luke says. “Ever since I shadowed here when I was in the eighth grade, it felt like home. Actually, being here at school now is even better. I’m appreciative of all that it offers—great athletics, great academics, great faith.”

Similar to Luke, Peyton embraces the family’s 70-year connection to Providence. Her grandfather, Merle Krueger, is a 1959 grad and her father, Merle John, Jr., is a 1990 grad. And her sister Madison is a 2019 graduate.

“I honestly feels like an honor being part of a family that’s so passionate about this school,” Peyton says. “I’m glad I’ve had the opportunity as well. I really like the environment here. Everyone is nice, there’s a positive energy, and everyone is close to one another. It makes a difference.”

She especially focuses on the difference that Providence has made in her faith life, with weekly Masses and opportunities for eucharistic adoration. “It brings me closer to God,” she says. “It also brings me closer to my classmates.”

Norman Krueger knows that such praise from their great-grandchildren would touch the hearts of Ambrose and Mary Rose.

That feeling flows through him as he considers the legacy of his parents, a legacy that includes other branches of the family tree besides the Kruegers—families named Book, Costelle, Holden, Krussow, Lilly, McPhillips, Nest, Schellenberger and Williams.

“I think my parents would be surprised that it has continued,” Norman says. “It was never on their mind that they were starting a legacy. Still, they’d be proud of their part in something that’s been done. And they’d be proud and appreciative of Providence for all it’s done for us.”

“Our whole family is proud of this legacy.”

The seeds of two parents’ faith continue to grow in a wonderful way.†

The lawmakers highlighted their proposed legislation at a Jan. 11 press conference sponsored by Hoosiers for Responsible Lending, a coalition of veterans’ organizations, social service agencies, consumer advocacy groups and faith-based communities, including the Catholic Church.

Speaking on behalf of the five Catholic bishops of Indiana, ICC leader Angela Espada called predatory lending tactics “evil and exploitative” and amounting to usury, which she noted is condemned by the Catholic Church and all major religions.

“You don’t have to be Catholic to know that predatory lending is wrong,” said Espada, executive director of the ICC, the public policy voice of the Catholic Church in Indiana. “We should respect the dignity of all people. Put another way, we should love our neighbors, and if we love our neighbors, we don’t take advantage of them or exploit them.”

Espada cited remarks made by Pope Francis in 2014, when he called usury—the lending of money with an exorbitant rate of interest—a “dramatic social ill” and a “scourge on our society.” She added that in 2015, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops joined with other Christian denominations to form Faith for Just Lending, which calls for limits on predatory lending nationwide.

Legislative efforts to restrict the payday lending industry in Indiana have hit roadblocks in recent years. Advocates are hopeful that 2022 will be different, with companion bills in both the House and the Senate championed by lawmakers representing the two major parties.

“We have more momentum [this year] because of this bicameral and bipartisan effort,” said Andy Nielsen, senior policy analyst for the Indiana Community Action Poverty Institute, formerly the Indiana Institute for Working Families. “Both chambers have interest in this issue, and it isn’t divided over political ideology. Moreover, this is also a popular issue with Hoosier voters.”

Nielsen, whose organization is part of the Hoosiers for Responsible Lending coalition, cited data indicating that 88% of Indiana voters approve a rate cap on payday loans.

“Time is the time for the General Assembly to take action on these bills,” Nielsen said.

Senate Bill 253 and House Bill 1159 have been assigned to committees, but hearings are not yet scheduled. Espada called on the Catholic faithful to learn more about the proposed legislation and to make their voices heard with their lawmakers.

“We need your help to stop this scourge in Indiana,” Espada said.

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

(Victoria Arthur, a member of St. Malachi Parish in Brownsburg, is a correspondent for The Criterion. †

Ambrose Krueger, seated right, and his 11 children pose together in this undated photo. When the photo was taken, Mary Rose Krueger, Ambrose’s wife and the children’s mother, had passed away. The couple made sure all their children attended Our Lady of Providence High School in Clarksville.

(Submitted photo)
Father Robert Sims has enjoyed journeying in faith with others for 50 years

By Sean Gallagher

Father Robert Sims has journeyed through life and ministry as a priest for 50 years in parishes and archdiocesan ministries across central and southern Indiana.

“Father Robert Sims has journeyed through life and ministry as a priest for 50 years in parishes and archdiocesan ministries across central and southern Indiana. But he hasn’t taken that journey alone. Since being ordained a priest on Dec. 17, 1971, in St. Peter’s Basilica at the Vatican, Father Sims has followed a winding path toward the fullness of God’s kingdom with many archdiocesan Catholics—laid, brother priests and men discerning a possible call to ordained ministry. It has taken as a guiding principle during his five decades of ministry a saying by the French poet Charles Péguy, who died in battle at the start of World War I, “We cannot go to God alone; else he would ask ‘Where are the others?’”

“It’s a really good reminder that, while certainly being a prayerful person is an essential dimension of the priesthood,” said Father Sims, “it has to be—especially for a diocesan priest—in the context of journeying with people and ministering to people.”

Born in 1946 in Terre Haute, Father Sims grew up in St. Patrick Parish in the western Indiana city. As a teenager in the early 1960s, he was impressed by the noble call to service of President John F. Kennedy in his 1961 inaugural address, “Ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country.”

It was the lofty principles of those times that led Father Sims to discern a call to the priesthood. “I grew up in an era of a lot of idealism in the country and the Church,” he said. “It was a time of real optimism and hope. And I thought there was a vision that came through faith that made a significant difference as well. I think that was a critical factor.”

Father Sims received priestly formation at the former St. Mary College Seminary in St. Mary, Ky., and at the Pontifical North American College in Rome, the latter happening in the years immediately following the Second Vatican Council.

“It was a time where we asked, ‘What’s this all going to mean?’” Father Sims recalled. “Nobody was really certain. But it was an exciting time to be in Rome.”

Although the first years of the implementation of the reforms of Vatican II were turbulent at times, Father Sims said being a seminarian in Rome helped him stay grounded in his faith.

“One of the benefits of studying in Rome is that you see the continuity of Catholic tradition,” he said. “You recognize, frankly, that the Church has not only survived, but has grown through a great deal. An advantage of that is that you see that the Church is enriched by diversity.”

Since returning to the archdiocese for ministry in 1972, Father Sims has ministered in parishes in Indianapolis and Bloomington, as an instructor at Bishop Bruté Latin School, the archdiocese’s former high school seminary in Indianapolis, as archdiocesan vocations director and as director of the archdiocese’s office of ministry to priests.

Since 1999, Father Sims has served as pastor in two Indianapolis faith communities: St. Simon the Apostle Parish and, since 2007, Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish. In these and other parishes where he has served, he’s known lovingly as “Father Bob.”

Sheila McNelis has appreciated his ministry at Immaculate Heart of Mary.

“He’s a great person to talk with about the good things in your life that are happening, the hard things in your life that are happening, the small things, the big things,” she said. “He’s been a good support to our family as we’ve lost several of our older family members.”

When Father Sims arrived at Immaculate Heart of Mary, four of McNelis’ five children were students in the parish’s school.

Through the years, she saw the positive influence her pastor had on her children’s faith into what is now their young adult years.

“They love to go to church when they are home at Immaculate Heart, because of him, his homilies, his stories, just how friendly and welcoming he is,” McNelis said. “It always feels like he’s right on that journey with you. During his homilies, he always will say, ‘This is what we all need to do, including me.’”

Father Sims noted that he most feels like a priest when he celebrates Mass with a congregation.

His appreciation of this worship at the heart of the life of the Church grew during the early days of the coronavirus pandemic when public celebration of the liturgy was suspended.

“There were a number of times when I celebrated Mass by myself,” Father Sims said. “Quite honestly, I found that to be a unique experience and, in some ways, a prayerful experience. It reminded me that, even though there was not a community there, I was connected to the broader community of the Church and the broader world.”

So, in the late spring and summer of 2020 when churches began to re-open, Father Sims was glad to welcome his parishioners back to Mass.

“When we returned and people could take their masks off and I could see them, it made a significant difference,” he said. “The first time that I looked out and saw people not wearing masks, I thought, ‘This is wonderful. I can see people’s faces.’

During the past 50 years, Father Sims has seen many challenging times in the Church, but he has never lost his hope in the future.

“I don’t get pessimistic,” he said. “I’m optimistic about the future of the Church. We’ve grappled with a lot. And we’ve grown a lot.”

Likewise, Father Sims has a great love for the priestly ministry that he embraced 50 years ago.

“Frankly, I can say very honestly that I’ve been happy as a priest,” he said. “I’ve enjoyed doing what I do.”

This is a message he wants men of today discerning a possible call to the priesthood to remember.

“It’s enjoyable and fun,” said Father Sims of the priesthood. “The Church isn’t supposed to make people miserable. It ultimately offers good news.”

(For more information on a vocation to the priesthood in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, visit HearGod’sCall.com.)

Bishop James A. Hickey, then rector of the Pontifical North American College in Rome, ritually lays hands on transitional Deacon Robert Sims on Dec. 17, 1971, during a priesthood ordination Mass in St. Peter’s Basilica at the Vatican. (Submitted photo)

Father Robert Sims, pastor of Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Indianapolis, prays the eucharistic prayer during a school Mass on Dec. 17, 2021, in his parish’s church. The day was the 50th anniversary of his ordination as a priest. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)
was declared a loss. But she also noted that the organization’s board had already “been pondering if it’s time to move. This fire perhaps has opened up a possibility for us, or perhaps made a decision easier for us to make. We’re still not sure.”

Yet Kile spoke of having “a huge sense of peace and comfort” as she clutched her rosary and walked through the damaged suites. It was a feeling that gave way to frustration after more than two years of searching for a new site.

But that sense of ease returned on Jan. 10. “I feel excited, and I feel at peace,” said Kile as she stood outside the home Gabriel Project had just purchased on Kentucky Avenue on the city’s southwest side as 1st Choice for Women’s new headquarters.

It was a long journey between the fire and finding the home. And the journey continues as the organization pursues rezoning the property from residential to commercial use. But Kile is confident that the new site — where the next closest pregnancy care center is miles away in Mooresville — is part of God’s plan to bring a pro-life presence to the city’s southwest side.

‘Nothing felt right’

Once it was clear that 1st Choice for Women’s offices were a loss, Kile knew where she wanted to look for new space. “I was thinking that we have three abortion centers in Indianapolis,” she said. “Two have pregnancy centers really close and abortion centers in Indianapolis.”

She even gained experience by serving on 16th Street looking for available properties, said Kile. “Most weren’t suitable and needed a lot of repair. But I really felt like that’s where we were supposed to be. I kept trying, but nothing felt right.”

Her search continued for two years. She experienced a sense of abandonment by God, saying, “I would sit and look at heaven and say, ‘God, why aren’t you talking to me?’ Help me out! Tell me what you want!”

‘I know that this is God’s timing’

Shortly after Thanksgiving in 2021, Kile’s contractor texted her about a three-bedroom home for sale on Kentucky Avenue in Decatur Township not far from the Indianapolis International Airport. With some work, he said, the space would suit 1st Choice for Women’s services of offering free pregnancy tests, ultrasounds and peer counseling.

Kile looked at the property. The more she saw, the more she liked. There was a detached garage that, in time, would be able to serve as the resource center for Gabriel Project, where clothes and baby items for mothers in need could be sorted, stored and distributed.

Since the fire, Kile’s home has served in that role. Her place has also been home to the organization’s mobile ultrasound RV since the fire. So Kile was “very excited” that the house had a large back yard where a large garage could be built to store the RV. With some work, she said, the Gabriel Project board met on Dec. 21 and approved Kile’s request to make a bid on the property. By Dec. 23, that bid of $65,000 below the asking price was accepted. “As fast as everything happened and for the place, I know that this is God’s timing,” she said.

‘I’ve learned so much’

There is still the matter of having the property rezoned for commercial use. But there, too, Kile feels God will provide.

After deciding in early December last year that the home would fit 1st Choice for Women’s needs, she began investigating the possibility of rezoning. One helpful factor is that the property to the north of the home is zoned commercial, she noted.

But Kile especially sees the hand of God playing a role in the rezoning issue as much as five years ago, when she joined Decatur Township’s civic council. She even gained experience by overseeing rezoning — never with the thought that her knowledge would one day come in handy.

“I feel excited, and I feel at peace,” she said. “I’ve learned so much about this [rezoning] process,” she said.

First, the request will be presented to the land use committee of the Decatur Township civic council. If it approves the request, it will go to the greater council for a vote.

If the council votes in support of rezoning, the request will move to the Indianapolis Board of Zoning Appeals. “There’s a lady I know who’s worked with the downtown zoning board for 20 years,” said Kile. “She’s been helpful with giving suggestions.”

One suggestion she followed was to submit an inquiry to the city’s zoning board on their potential response to the rezoning request.

“I told them about the purpose of operating a pregnancy care center, that the services will be free, that I live in the township and I want to help the people in the township,” said Kile.

She received a promising response before the Dec. 23 Gabriel Project board meeting.

“There wasn’t any suggestion to purchase our board if I didn’t feel confident that our rezoning request would be approved,” said Kile.

She suspects the process will be completed and a decision made in the next few months.

“My hope is that we’ll be able to open 1st Choice for Women sometime in the summer,” she said.

“I’m ecstatic, so crazy happy”

With hope and confidence in a positive outcome, “The future is going to be crazy busy,” said Kile.

A contractor will be doing the technical work. But much of the manual labor — tearing up carpeting, removing cabinets, cleaning — will be up to her “and lots and lots of volunteer help,” she said.

Still, she said her overall mood is one of excitement.

“For whatever reason, we had to go through a more than 2-year waiting period” to find 1st Choice for Women a new home after the 2019 fire, she said.

“For God to say this is the time and this is the place — I’m ecstatic, so crazy happy, I can’t wait to get in there and get started.”

(1st Choice for Women is in need of volunteers to ready its new home for business. Tasks include manual labor, tearing out carpets and cabinets, cleaning and more. A volunteer is also needed to create a website and promote the services and mission of Gabriel Project and 1st Choice for Women on social media. For more information or to volunteer, contact Linda Kile at 317-213-4778 or linda@goangels.org. To donate, go to www.archindy.org/engagements.)
When mourning, develop an ‘attitude of beatitude’ toward loss

By Fr. Richard R. Andre, C.S.P.

Five million people across the world are dead from a pandemic. Millions more have suffered economic devastation. Social systems that seemed stable now feel precarious.

This is a worldwide collective experience of sorrow, combined with billions of families experiencing a sharper, more personal grief. How do we cope with such loss?

We can learn about Jesus’ beatitudes, including how he calls blessed those who mourn, by looking at the first 11 verses of Isaiah 61.

There, we read about “those who mourn in Zion” after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonian Empire in the early sixth century BC (Is 61:3).

But surely we can apply this particular beatitude more broadly.

I still remember the Rev. Greg Osterberg preaching on a winter day nearly 30 years ago. “A beatitude is an attitude about how to be.” It initially sounds a bit silly, but there’s great wisdom there.

In this second beatitude, “Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted.” Jesus may be speaking about the spiritual practices or attitudes that we can employ when facing the inevitable losses in our lives (Mt 5:4).

From the mourning in my own life, plus from journeying with others through the grieving process, I offer the following advice on developing an “attitude of beatitude” toward loss.

— Feel what you feel. If we embrace the grieving process, we will eventually find comfort. If we ignore it or short-circuit it, we will not. We may have days of overwhelming sadness when we think we should feel better, or other days, we may feel OK and think that we should feel worse.

Often, the conscious parts of our brains care about such trivial events in our life—our dad’s or mom’s dental filling replaced. After my father’s death, I suddenly recognized how actively we cultivate a spirit of sadness when we think we should feel

— Feel what you feel. If we embrace the grieving process, we will eventually find comfort. If we ignore it or short-circuit it, we will not. We may have days of overwhelming sadness when we think we should feel better; on other days, we may feel OK and think that we should feel worse.

— Assist others who grieve. There are many ways to help even the most private people in their mourning. If a neighbor loses a loved one, perhaps we can offer to house sit during the visitation hours at the funeral home, and perhaps we can do some light housekeeping while we’re there.

Perhaps we can serve as a greeter at our parishes.

— Welcome the gift of hindsight. It was a worldwide collective experience of sorrow, combined with billions of families experiencing a sharper, more personal grief. How do we cope with such loss?

— Cling to hope. There is no need to punish ourselves or an extraordinary minister of holy Communion at the funerals that take place at our parishes.

When a parishioner suffers a loss of some kind, I often offer to grab coffee or tea with them a month afterward and check in on how they’re doing.

— Pray with them. There is a phrase that we use a lot in the funeral prayers of the Church: “the sure and certain hope.” No matter the loss we have experienced, life for us and our loved ones has not ended; it has merely changed.

If we ever question the existence of life after death, perhaps recalling our connection with a loved one who has died will reassure us that death cannot be the end of the relationship.

If I ever feel that my emotions are limiting my ability to hope, I take those emotions to prayer with Psalm 139: “You understand my thoughts from afar. From your presence, where can I flee?... My very self you know.”

The Lutheran theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote: “There is nothing that can replace the absence of someone dear to us, and one should not even attempt to do so. One must simply hold out and endure it. At first that sounds very hard, but at the same time it is also a great comfort. For to the extent the emptiness truly remains unfilled one remains connected to the other person through it. It is wrong to say that God fills the emptiness. God in no way fills it but much more leaves it precisely unfilled and thus helps us preserve—even in pain—the authentic relationship. Furthermore, the more beautiful the recollection, the more difficult the separation. But gratitude transforms the torment of memory into silent joy. One bears what was lovely in the past not as a thorn but as a precious gift deep within, a hidden treasure of which one can always be certain.

We can only speculate on what forms of comfort we will receive in heaven in accordance with Jesus’ promise in Mt 5:4.

However, we can only hold on to the sure and certain hope that when God destroys “the veil that veils all people” and “wipes[] away the tears from all faces” (Is 25:7-8), it will be a comfort beyond our imagining.

(Paulist Father Richard R. Andre is an associate pastor at St. Austin Parish in Austin, Texas. His homilies can be found at bit.ly/RichThoughts.)
Do you know a college student who loves Mary?

"Totus tuus ego sum, et omnia mea sunt. Accipio te in mea omnia. Praebe me, ut mea omnia tua sunt."

This phrase was written by St. Louis de Montfort in 1712 in his book, True Devotion to Mary. The phrase in English means, "I am all yours, and you shall have everything in me. Give me your heart." The more well-known, or summarized phrase, is "Totus Tuus or All Yours!"

"Totus Tuus" was the epithet motto of Pope John Paul II who was known for his devotion to Mary. He believed, as St. Louis de Montfort taught, that as he gave his life to Mary he was truly giving his life to God. By giving himself to Mary, he was able to love Jesus, her Son, as did he. He would be holding her hand and laying all of his burdens at her feet.

As the Holy Father promoted this way of life for us, the Church started to also give themselves to Mary in order to live a saintly life. This included Bernard Gorges, a seminarist for the Diocese of Wichita in Kansas who spent the summer of 1987 leading a class where he taught the faith to elementary school students in a parish. For the next several summers, Gorges did the same thing, at 15 parishes and with the aid of college students.

In 1993, this program expanded to the Diocese of Dodge, Kan., and with it, the need for four or five teams of college students. With this expansion the summer catechetical program became known as Totus Tuus.

More than 30 years later, Totus Tuus is active in as many as 50 dioceses and archdioceses across North America and reaches upwards of 100,000 young people a year. It is still a summer program where teams of college students are sent to different parishes each week with a diocese to put on authentically Catholic vacation Bible schools.

Totus Tuus missionaries receive excellent training focused on prayer, the sacraments and the truths of the Church. We have been blessed in the archdiocese to have Totus Tuus teams in 2019 and 2021 and we are recruiting our summer 2022 team right now.

Each year, we seek two men and two women in college, or recently graduated from college, who are willing to serve as Totus Tuus missionaries during the summer. Do you know any college students or recent graduates interested in serving God and his Church? Please tell him or her about Totus Tuus.

This opportunity would allow them to have a daily prayer life, receive their formation to teach their faith, and be an instrument of God’s grace to young people in six of our parishes.

The commitment is paid from June 2 to July 31 with a week off during July 4. To learn more about the program or to apply, visit: Kentuckymc.brief-visions.org.

(Sam Raup serves as archdiocesan Evangelization and Catechetical coordinator. For resources that help create a culture of evangelization in your parish, contact him at sr@archkb.org)
The Book of Nehemiah furnishes the first reading for Mass this weekend. Although some Old Testament books tell the history of the people of Israel, mentioning many aspects of life, such as famine, plenty, disease, and war, all are chiefly concerned with inspiring God’s people to be faithful to their God in their religious practice. In this reading, Ezra, who was a priest, called together men, women and children old enough to comprehend precisely to this end. He admonished this gathering to listen carefully to the Scriptures.

After hearing the reading of the Scriptures, the people in this audience affirmed their faith. Ezra continued by interpreting what he had read.

Ezra and Nehemiah called the people to rejoice because God had spoken to them and was guiding them.

For the next reading, St. Paul’s Day brings a passage from St. Paul’s First Epistle to the Corinthians. The Christian community in Corinth especially challenged Paul. Corinth was an important commercial center, one of the major markets and distribution centers in the Roman empire. It was a center of wealth and, moreover, greed. In the very immoral culture of the time, it was regarded as the utter capital of lust and sexual excess. Corinthians had the reputation of being exceedingly licentious.

Troubling for Paul was not that Corinth was large and rich, or that its size and wealth produced an atmosphere in which vice and selfishness reigned supreme. The evils in this atmosphere were contagious, enticing many Christians. The everlasting temptation to see all in terms of material gain, or of physical satisfaction was bad enough. But Corinthian Christians didn’t just take part in the activities within the Church, quarreling with and scheming against each other. They gossiped about each other and toyed with pagan practices and customs.

Paul constantly called the Christian Corinthians away from the pagan environment pressing upon them. In particular, he scorned the competitiveness among the Christians. In this reading, Paul insisted that the baptized are part of Christ’s mystical body. However, the body has many members. Each is unique, a gift from God.

The Gospel for this Sunday continues the message. We belong to God. Each of us has a personal vocation, a title or description, since “Theophilus” in Greek means “friend of God.” Regardless, the person apparently enjoyed some prestige, hence the use of the term, “most excellent.”

Jesus appeared in the synagogue of Nazareth to explain his mission of salvation, speaking in some detail.

Reflection

The Church has celebrated Christmas, the feast of the birth of Jesus, as well as the feasts of the Epiphany of the Lord and the Baptism of the Lord. In the lessons of these great liturgical events, the Church introduced us to Jesus. It identified him. He is the Son of Mary, so Jesus was a human. He is the Son of the loving God. He is the redeemer.

Now the Church begins to tell us about salvation and about how we personally should respond to it.

First Corinthians sets the stage. Luke continues the message. We belong to God. Each of us has a personal vocation, although we may consider this term too lofty or too suggestive of a religious life.

Despite different occupations or circumstances, our vocation is to follow Christ and to reflect him to others.

God provides for us in this effort, assisting and strengthening us. He never forsakes us, but we are free. We personally must decide to be loyal.  

My Journey to God

Peace Will Rule

By Gayle Schrank

We hold on to what we know
And then miss out on so much
That part of us that desires and wants
Will find rest with God’s divine touch

Jesus came to free our world
From the forces that divide
We must wake up and cooperate
If we want to be unified

God has revealed Himself
Yet He still remains hidden
His life in its provides and sustains
And gives grace when we do as He’s bidden

Through the power of love crucified
God has promised a greater good
We must reach for which is better
Let’s persevere and do as we should

Look within and do what is right
Through God’s love given to humanity
Peace will rule our world and our lives

Daily Readings

Monday, January 24
St. Francis de Sales, bishop and doctor of the Church
Psalm 89:1-2, 25-26
Mark 3:22-30

Tuesday, January 25
The Conversion of St. Paul
Acts 22:3-16
or Acts 9:1-22
Psalm 117:1-8a
Mark 16:15-18

Wednesday, January 26
St. Timothy, bishop
St. Titus, bishop
2 Timothy 1:1-8
or Titus 1:1-5
Psalm 96:1-5, 7-8a, 10
Mark 4:1-20

Thursday, January 27
St. Angela Merici, virgin
Psalm 132:1-5, 11-14
Mark 4:21-25

Friday, January 28
St. Thomas Aquinas, priest and doctor of the Church
2 Samuel 11:1-4a, 5-10a, 13-17
Psalm 51:3-7, 10-11
Mark 4:26-34

Saturday, January 29
St. John Chrysostom, bishop
Psalm 51:12-17
Mark 4:35-41

Sunday, January 30
St. Francis de Sales, bishop
St. Francis Xavier, bishop
Psalm 89:21-22, 25-26
2 Timothy 1:1-8
Luke 4:16-20

Question Corner

Fr. Kenneth Doyle

Jesus’ death ended sin and its ultimate power over humanity

Q Throughout the year—but especially during the Christmas season—we hear from many sources (homilies, meditation guides, etc.) that Christ came “to free us from sin and death.” Generally, that notion is just presented without any explanation of its meaning. This is confusing—since in reality we do sin, and we do die. Could you help me understand? (New Jersey)

A Perhaps the best answer to your question is found in the New American Bible, in a footnote to the early verses of Chapter 8 of St. Paul’s Letter to the Romans. There we read: “Through the redemptive work of Christ, Christians have been liberated from the terrible forces of sin and death. At the cross, God broke the power of sin and pronounced sentence on it... The same Spirit who enlivens Christians for holiness will also resurrect their bodies at the last day.”

So, you are right. We do sin, and we do die. And there is a reason why Christ’s death ended sin and its ultimate power over humanity. If we are sorry for our sins and seek forgiveness from God through the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we are assured of joy and life that are eternal.

Years ago—when I was a member of a Protestant church—it seemed as though the preacher and the congregation were almost always doing fundraising for various building projects. During one of these drives, a member of our congregation won the state lottery for $20 million and donated a million of it to the church.

Though having preached for years against this vice as being spiritually evil, the preacher and congregation accepted it. What would be the Catholic view of such winnings donated by a Catholic to a local parish? Accept it or not? (Indiana)

Various religions have various positions on the morality of gambling. In the Catholic Church’s view, gambling is not intrinsically evil. As stated in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, “Games of chance [card games, dice, roulette etc.] are not in themselves contrary to justice. They become morally unacceptable when they deprive someone of what is necessary to provide for his needs and those of others” (#2413).

Notice the caution, though, in that statement: a person’s gambling must not prevent him from meeting other obligations, including supporting himself and his family and paying his debts.

To your question—as to what a Catholic parish might do if offered a donation from gambling winnings—I can tell you, as a recently retired pastor of a large suburban parish, I would gratefully accept it, if after inquiring into the circumstances of the person who won the amount, was assured that the wager made did not put him or others for whom he was responsible into danger.

In fact, there’s a precedent: In 2016, someone who had won $100,000 in the Massachusetts state lottery donated those winnings anonymously to St. Anthony’s Shrine, which is operated by the Franciscans in downtown Boston.

That shrine provides a variety of social services, and the pastor announced that the money would be used for purchasing Christmas gifts for needy children, food donations for families, and a large Christmas dinner for several hundred veterans.

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

Peace Will Rule

(Gayle Schrank is a member of St. Mary Parish in Navillot, Photo: A lantern containing a flame transferred from the International Peace Light is presented during a welcoming ceremony following the Peace Light’s arrival at John F. Kennedy International Airport in Jamaica, N.Y., from Vienna on Dec. 11, 2021.) (CNS photo/Gregory A. Shemitz)
ANTONIO, ANTONIETTA

BAKER, Jack, 91, Christ the Indianapolis, Nov. 16.

BANCSCHICH, Margaret

BARHORST, Suzanne, 75, St. Peter, Franklin County, Dec. 27. Wife of Charles Barhorst. Mother of Erin Jausle, Aunt of several.


CHESNEAN, Barbara, 97, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Richmond, Jan. 1. Mother of Mary Berrie. Grandfather of six. Great-grandfather of four.

FLOREANCIG, Theodore, 90, St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception, Indianapolis, Jan. 5. Husband of Rosemarie Rightor and Belch, Providence Benedict, Margaret Alexander, Mary Lou Belch and Edward Behne. Great-grandfather of six.

HAY, Joyce K., 82, St. Mary, South Bend, Dec. 20. Widow of Joseph Baltz. Stepmother of Judi Delk, Mary Mayer, Ruth White and John Miller. Aunt of several.


HAINES, Give S., 82, St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception, Indianapolis, Jan. 4. Husband of Rosemarie Rightor and Belch, Providence Benedict, Margaret Alexander, Mary Lou Belch and Edward Behne. Great-grandfather of six.


PARSONS, Anna M., 90, St. John the Baptist, Aurora, Dec. 15. Father of Mary Branston. Grandfather of six. Great-grandfather of four.


STRZYSZKO, Richard C., 73, St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception, Aurora, Dec. 15. Father of Adam, Jeremy and Matthew Strzyszko. Brother of Lynn and Barbara Strzyszko. Great-grandfather of eight.


YOUNG, Beverley A., 64, Good Shepherd, Indianapolis, Dec. 26. Sister of Michelle, Robert and Walker Young. §

Online Lay Ministry Formation
The Archdiocese of Indianapolis has partnered with the University of Notre Dame and Catholic District University (CDU) to offer not-for-credit online theology classes:
• Earn certificates in Lay Ministry
• Complete 12 courses online with NDST program
• CDU offers classes on Catechism of the Catholic Church
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If you are a victim of sexual misconduct or a person reporting on behalf of someone who is aware of anyone who has been a victim of such misconduct, please contact the archdiocesan victim assistance coordinator. There are two ways to make a report:

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  www.archindy.org/ethicspoint.com or 888-395-6810

• Caldarola
  Archdiocese of Indianapolis, Victim Assistance Coordinator
  731-913 14th Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204-1410

317-236-1548 or 800-382-9836, ext. 1548
calarh@archindy.org

Figueroa
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direction and control—we learn at a young age our parents plan out our early years and, thankfully, for many of us, their plan includes baptizing and raising us in the Catholic faith. How did they do this so far? What is the most important part of this planning would be to encourage our belief and faith in God. They had to share moments, times to guide us, to explain to us, and teach us what it is to be Christian and Catholic.

They provided “direction”—a key word—during our walk of faith. They taught us to trust and to be humble. They explained that one of the best ways to get to know God. They explained the importance of the sacraments. They provided examples of how important it is for families to be united through faith. Finally, control is the last pillar. This concept includes our parents continuing to strive to help us be better Catholics. They ask: why do we have such an attitude about something? Or why do we use language that hurts them or others? The principles we learn and our faith will, God willing, help us to not repeat our failures. We must also learn generosity and humility should be keystones of our lives, not arrogance and selfishness. We must develop a faith we believe in, a faith to do good, to love others, not arrogance and selfishness.

We should always fear those who want to cover it up. If God is central to our lives, we will have principles we follow in our lives—be it at home, at our jobs and in all we say and do.

If Jesus Figueroa is a member of SS. Peter and Paul Catholic Parish in Indianapolis. §

Caldarola
continued from page 12

Yes, history is complex, and to study it helps us examine our own blind spots. The Jesus have launched a History, Story of Catholicism, one of the most important ways to study is to examine the stories of those who have been a part of our faith story. The Jesus have launched a History, Story of Catholicism, one of the most important ways to study is to examine the stories of those who have been a part of our faith story. They have provided examples of how important it is for Rest in peace

Wildlife in England

The wildlife in England, as seen in Tatton Park in Knutsford, Cheshire, on Jan. 12. (CNS photo/Carin Fredriksen, Reuters)
Vatican announces ‘Pilgrims of Hope’ as motto for Holy Year 2025

The papal motto aims to give a concise sense of the full meaning of the jubilee journey, Archbishop Rino Fisichella told Vatican News on Jan. 13. The words “pilgrims” and “hope” also represent key themes of Pope Francis’ pontificate, said the archbishop, president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting New Evangelization, which is in charge of the Holy Year planning efforts.

The archbishop said the pope approved the motto on Jan. 3 and that he is awaiting further instructions from the pope. In the meantime, the council already is working with Vatican and Italian authorities on the best way to welcome a large number of visitors during the year.

Traditionally for holy years, the current one begins with the pope opening the Holy Door of St. Peter’s Basilica on Christmas Eve and ends with the sealing of the door one year later. The holy doors of St. John Lateran, St. Paul Outside the Walls and St. Mary Major are opened for the year, too.

A holy year or jubilee is a time of pilgrimage, prayer, repentance and acts of mercy, based on the Old Testament tradition of a jubilee year of rest, forgiveness and renewal. Holy years also are a time when Catholics visit designated churches and shrines, recite special prayers, go to confession and receive Communion to receive a plenary indulgence, which is a remission of the temporal punishment due for one’s sins.

Pope Boniface VIII proclaimed the first Holy Year in 1300 and decreed that they would be celebrated every 100 years. But just 50 years later, a more biblical cadence, Pope Clement VI proclaimed another holy year. Pope Urban VI thought holy years should be celebrated every 33 years as a reminder of the time Jesus lived.

Finally, in 1470, Pope Paul II established the celebrations every 25 years, which has been the practice ever since. However, special anniversaries have called for special holy years, for instance, in 1933 to mark the 1,900th anniversary of Jesus’ death and resurrection and in 1993 to mark the 1,500th anniversary of Pope Francis. Seeing a need to emphasize God’s mercy and to encourage Catholics to return to the sacrament of reconciliation, declared an extraordinary Year of Mercy, which ran in 2015-16.

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New Jersey Catholic bishops decry passage of expansive new abortion law

TRENTON, N.J. (CNS)—In a joint statement on Jan. 11, New Jersey’s Catholic bishops said they condemned the Freedom of Reproductive Choice Act, an expansive abortion bill that passed the General Assembly, the state’s lower house, on Jan. 6.

The rule for employees, at businesses with more than 100 employees, was issued last fall by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), which estimated the requirement would affect about 80 million workers. OSHA also said the rule would have saved thousands of lives and prevented hundreds of thousands of hospitalizations.

In an unsigned opinion, the justices said what many had expressed in oral arguments on Jan. 7 was their “profound disappointment and deep concern about the passage of [the bill], which codifies into state law an individual’s right to an abortion, including late-term abortions. This law deprives from the fundamental Catholic teaching that all life is sacred from conception to natural death.

Even more distressing is that the legal and ethical calculus that underlies this new legislation, absolutely and forthrightly exterminates the human and moral identity of the unborn child,” the bishops’ statement continued. “Perhaps the legislators who rushed through this act in the waning moments of their terms did not want citizens to understand fully its inhuman and lethal consequences.”

In the case of Roe v. Wade, the Supreme Court was lifting a stay on the regulation, a three-judge panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 6th Circuit had blocked an OSHA rule that required businesses to mandate the wearing of masks while on the job.

“The three justices disputing the court’s ruling for businesses said that ‘in the face of still-raging pandemic, this law, making any proposed law to limit reproductive choice and that does not conform with the provisions and the express or implied purposes of this act, shall be deemed invalid and shall have no force or effect,” the bill states.

In their letter, the bishops expressed their “profound disappointment and deep concern about the passage of [the bill], which codifies into state law an individual’s right to an abortion, including late-term abortions. This law deprives from the fundamental Catholic teaching that all life is sacred from conception to natural death.

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