Young adult embraces his mission to lead others to Christ at state’s largest university

An IU graduate himself, the 29-year-old McHaffie knows to look beyond the crowds of the state’s largest university and focus on the reality that every student there has their own individual dreams, struggles, hopes, heartbreaks, joys and doubts.

He also believes that many of these young women and men are searching for someone or something that will be lasting and meaningful in their lives. And he’s made it his mission to help them discover what will fulfill that desire.

See UNIVERSITY page 8

Photo above: At Indiana University in Bloomington, five young adults work as a team to bring the joy of Jesus to the students on campus. The members of IU’s FOCUS team—Fellowship of Catholic University Students—are Brennan Skerjanec, left, Gabby Hancock, Lizzie Joslyn, Gabe McHaffie and Lizz White. (Submitted photo)

Holy Year 2025 should ‘fan flame of hope’ after pandemic, pope says

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—The Holy Year 2025 should focus on “restoring a climate of hope and trust” after the coronavirus pandemic and helping people repair their relationships with God, with each other and with the Earth, Pope Francis said.

“We must fan the flame of hope that has been given us and help everyone to gain new strength and certainty by Holy Year. page 8

Photo above: Pope Francis closes the Holy Door of St. Peter’s Basilica to mark the closing of the jubilee Year of Mercy at the Vatican in this Nov. 20, 2016, file photo. (CNS photo/Tiziana Fabi, pool via Reuters)
Pope restructures the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—As part of ongoing measures to reform the Roman Curia, Pope Francis has approved restructuring the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, the oldest of the congregations once comprised of a doctrinal office, a discipline office and a marriage office.

Once the section will also study any questions arising from personal ordinariates for Anglicans entering into full communion with the Catholic Church through the Apostolic Constitution, "Anglicanorum Coetibus."

The doctrinal section will absorb the duties covered by the congregation's marriage office, which deals with questions involving the validity of marriages when one of the spouses is not a baptized Christian.

The discipline section, through the currently existing discipline office, will handle those offenses and crimes reserved to the congregation—particularly clerical sexual-abuse cases—and its superior tribunal. It will prepare and elaborate procedures in accordance with canon law so as to "promote a correct administration of justice."

To that end, the discipline section will promote needed formation initiatives that the congregation can offer to bishops, dioceses and canon lawyers "to promote a correct understanding and application of canonical norms."

The congregation's archive will continue to preserve documents for consultation, including its historical archives.

The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith began in the 16th century as a tribunal for judging the faith. It became the Sacred Roman and Universal Inquisition, which served as a tribunal for judging suspected cases of heresy and schism.

Seeing a number of changes through the centuries, St. Paul VI changed its name from the Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office to the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and he changed its methods used for doctrinal examination. A more positive disposition of correcting errors, together with the protection, preservation and promotion of the faith prevailed over the more punitive tendency of condemning.

With changes to the Roman Curia by St. John Paul II, the congregation maintained its competence over all that in any way touches upon the doctrine of faith and morals and was explicitly given "prior judgment" over any other canonical documents that enter into its area of competence.

While for decades it also handled requests for dispensations from celibacy from priests seeking laicization, that responsibility later was given to the Congregation for Clergy.

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Father Douglas Hunter, Colts' chaplain, is featured in Columbia magazine

After you have more ice cream, share your story of your most meaningful Lent

With Ash Wednesday on March 2, The Criterion is advising our readers to savor all the ice cream. Girl Scouts cookies and other delicious treats you love until then. At the same time, we are inviting you to share the approaches, sacrifices and acts of joy that brought you closer to Christ and helped you deepen your faith during a previous Lent.

We hope to share your approaches, sacrifices and acts with all our readers in the hope of helping all of us have a more meaningful Lent, one that draws us closer to Christ in love.

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

Public Schedule of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

February 19–27, 2022

February 19 – 10 a.m.
Archdiocesan Pastoral Council meeting at St. Bartholomew Parish, Columbus

February 20 – 5:30 p.m.
Mass followed by dinner at St. Paul Catholic Center, Bloomington

February 22 – 11 a.m.
College of Deans meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis

February 23 – 7 p.m.
Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults meeting at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, Indianapolis

February 24 – 10 a.m.
Leadership Team meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center

February 25 – 6 p.m.
Legacy Gala Dinner in support of Catholic Charities, Catholic Schools and St. Joseph’s youth ministry at Seminary at JW Marriott, Indianapolis

February 26 – 10:30 a.m.
Confirmation Mass for youths of St. Michael Parish, Brookville; St. Nicasius Parish, Batesville; St. Peter Parish, Franklin County; and St. Charles Borromeo Parish, Milan, at St. Louis Church, Batesville

February 26 – 2 p.m.
Confirmation Mass for youths of St. Louis Parish, Batesville, and St. Anthony of Padua Parish, Morris, at St. Louis Church

February 27 – 2 p.m.
Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults meeting at St. Peter and Paul Cathedral, Indianapolis

After you have more ice cream, share your story of your most meaningful Lent
VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Caring for the sick means not only healing the wounds of the body but also those that afflict the soul, Pope Francis said.

“Care cannot be divided because the human being cannot be divided. We could—paradoxically—save the body and lose humanity,” the pope said in a video message on the eve of the 30th World Day of the Sick, which is celebrated on Feb. 11 each year.

“The saints who cared for the sick always followed the Master’s teaching: heal the wounds of body and soul; pray and act for physical and spiritual healing together,” he said.

The pope’s message, which was released by the Vatican on Feb. 10, was sent to participants of a webinar hosted by the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development.

In his message, the pope said that the current pandemic “is teaching us to view illness as a global and not a merely individual phenomenon,” and should motivate reflection on other types of “pathologies” that threaten humanity, including individualism and indifference.

These and other forms of selfishness, he said, generate inequalities, especially in the field of health care “where some enjoy so-called ‘excellence’ while many others ‘struggle to access basic health care.’

“To cure this ‘social’ virus, the antidote is the culture of fraternity, based on the awareness that we are all equal as human persons, all equal as children of one God,” he said.

“On this basis, it will be possible to have effective treatments for everyone. But if we are not convinced that we are all equal, this will not work.”

Cardinal Peter Turkson, former prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, echoed Pope Francis’ sentiments during his homily on Feb. 11 at a Mass in St. Peter’s Basilica with people who are sick and with their caregivers.

Reflecting on the divine consolation that God gives to his children, Cardinal Turkson said Christians are also called to pass on that consolation to those who suffer in body and soul.

“Consolation means to encourage, to exhort, to comfort or to give joy to a person or community that finds themselves in a situation of sadness, anguish and desolation,” he said.

Those who dedicate their lives to consoling others, the cardinal said, draw inspiration from God who throughout history “has been close to a wounded humanity in order to comfort, strengthen and heal it.”

The commemoration of the World Day of the Sick, he added, is a “celebration of God’s works of mercy,” especially through those who work tirelessly in the health care field.

“May your hands, which touch the suffering flesh of Christ, be a sign of the merciful hands of the Father,” Cardinal Turkson said before he and the concelebrating bishops administered the sacramental anointing of the sick to many people in the congregation. †
**Sight Unseen/Brandon A. Evans**

He already knows

Sometimes prayer becomes overwhelming for me, especially when it goes unanswered, or something weighs on my heart. It’s as though there’s a weight bearing down on my shoulders; a certainty that Jesus won’t understand my concerns unless I can find a way to explain them to him correctly. And the more I strain to do just that, the more I exhaust myself. My words leave my lips and bounce against a soundless wall, and the light of a living conversation dims into a maddening compulsion to quantify, to control. And ultimately, to distrust. To disbelieve. And disbelief tumbles into fit and barren places; to the honest realization that all too often I don’t really believe that Jesus knows or loves me. I look at the artwork of his somber face and see a distant king who loves but loves coldly. He is not the sort to be patient with anything but the right prayers and the right actions, both of which I stumble over endlessly. As for us, we are but mere subjects in his kingdom and plans are the final word, decreed without our consent.

This feeling, this sense of dread and the continued effort to overcome it by my own strength, would persevere a lifetime if not for grace. At least, the grace to ask the question: how could I really think all that of God, the giver of life and redeemer of the world? The one who watched over long ages of creation waiting for us, longing for our attention, preparing life eternal for us? Jesus Christ is not some man who ascended to heaven only to barely take notice of our cries. Jesus nothing. He has counted each grain of sand from shore to ocean’s depth; heard every peal of thunder against the天花 коронавируса и помогает людям восстановить их отношения с Богом, с каждым и с миром. Приходя к концу года, он заметил, что «объединившийся юбилей станет способом восстановить климат мира и доверия и обеспечить благословение для следующего поколения.»

Папа Римский также надеется, что «пилигримы» и «надежда» представляют собой ключевые темы Папы Римского Франциска, как было написано Архиепископом Фисиелла. В свете эпидемии COVID-19, которая затронула все уголки мира, Господь, по словам папы, «необходимо подготовиться к преодолению агонии и прежде всего к восстановлению мира, потому что все мы нуждаемся в нем». С его слов мы можем предположить, что примирение с Богом — это путь к восстановлению мира, который может привести к освобождению от обмана и иллюзий, чтобы все мы смогли обрести истину.

**Letter to the Editor**

Reader: All Catholics—even politicians—must follow teaching on human life

Did the leader of the universal Catholic Church, the Pope, tell President Joe Biden, “You are good Catholic,” and invite him to “continue to receive Communion” as the president publicly stated after his audience at the Vatican? To date, no comment has come from the Vatican Press Office and probably never will. This leaves us to believe that Biden was telling the truth.

It is extremely disappointing that Pope Francis has granted audiences with the likes of abortion supporters Rep. Nancy Pelosi and the president. If he spoke these words to Biden, it goes beyond the belief of many Catholics.

It is suggested Catholics in the U.S. are divided over the question of pro-abortion supporters being permitted to receive Communion. It is also reported that as many as 30% of Catholics in the U.S. think it is unacceptable.

The Catholic Church teaches that human life begins at conception. The president is not living up to the Catholic Church’s teachings.

I understand the last summer 60 Catholic Democrats in the U.S. House of Representatives urged the Church not to deny elected officials Communion because they would be sent to the sound of an immovable map of our life, cold and lifeless, designed to steal our individuality. It is not a map that Jesus made to steer our life, but a soundless wall, and the light of a living conversation dims into a maddening compulsion to quantify, to control. And ultimately, to distrust. To disbelieve. And disbelief tumbles into fit and barren places; to the honest realization that all too often I don’t really believe that Jesus knows or loves me. I look at the artwork of his somber face and see a distant king who loves but loves coldly. He is not the sort to be patient with anything but the right prayers and the right actions, both of which I stumble over endlessly. As for us, we are but mere subjects in his kingdom and plans are the final word, decreed without our consent.

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Be open to God’s grace so we can offer mercy

The Gospel reading for the Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time (Lk 6:27-38) calls our attention to God’s mercy. It reminds us that we are called to extend mercy to others and, instead, to be merciful as our Father in heaven is merciful.

In fact, the Lord tells us, we should love and forgive even our enemies. “Love your enemies,” Jesus says, “and do good to them, and lend expecting nothing back; then your reward will be great and you will be children of the Most High, for he himself is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful” (Lk 6:35-36).

This is not something that we want to hear. We want mercy for ourselves and for those who are close to us (our own kind), but not for those who have done us harm, our enemies. For those who have sinned against us, we want justice, not mercy. We want them to be punished, to experience the kind of pain and rejection that we think they deserve.

This kind of reaction is understandable, especially for those who have experienced serious harm at the hands of enemies during wartime or violent crimes who have committed rape, murder or other brutal offenses against them. We are strongly tempted to wish for some sort of punishment. And if those who have committed such offenses receive the maximum punishment available.

Jesus demands something that seems impossible, even contrary to justice: “To you who hear I say, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. To the person who strikes you on one cheek, offer the other one as well, and from the person who takes your cloak, do not withhold even your tunic. Give to everyone who asks of you, and from the one who takes your cloak, do you what is yours do not demand it back. Do to others as you would have them to do you” (Lk 6:27-31).

“Turning the other cheek” seems like weakness or appeasement. Everything in us cries out for vengeance. We want to fight back and to see our enemies defeated and humiliated. We don’t want to forgive, or to pray for, our enemies.

We want justice (as we understand it), and we want to be vindicated publicly, to be seen as people who have righted the wrongs that others have done to us.

This is not Jesus’ way. Our Lord knows that from God’s perspective there is no divide between justice and mercy. In fact, those two words are united. They are united by God’s unqualified, unconditional love, and by the grace that he extends to us, which if we can accept it, allows us to forgive our enemies just as God has forgiven us.

“Stop judging and you will not be judged,” Jesus says. “Stop condemning and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven” (Lk 6:37). God loves and forgives us unconditionally, but in order for us to experience his mercy, we must first love and forgive others. As long as our hearts are filled with anger, resentment and the desire for revenge, we cut ourselves off from the healing power of God’s grace.

We affirm this truth every time we pray in the Lord’s Prayer: “Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.” We seek God’s mercy, but we acknowledge that we cannot fully receive it without first being merciful ourselves. “For the measure with which you measure will in return be measured out to you” (Lk 6:38).

It’s impossible for us to fully understand how or why God is able to be just and merciful at the same time. Everything else doesn’t make sense to us—or feels absolutely wrong—we need to love our enemies and pray for those who have sinned against us.

We have to let go of our desires for vengeance, and embrace the kind of peaceful, nonviolent acceptance that Jesus demonstrated on the cross when he prayed: “Father, forgive them for they know not what they do” (Lk 23:34).

Jesus holds us, his missionary disciples, to a higher standard. He tells us to: “Do to others as you would have them to do to you. For if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you?” (Lk 6:31-33).

We are to give without expecting any return, to love the unlovable, and to forgive the unforgivable.

Let’s pray that we will be open to God’s grace, so we can be merciful, just as our heavenly Father is merciful.

La lectura del Evangelio del séptimo domingo del Tiempo Ordinario (Lc 6:27-38) nos habla acerca de la misericordia de Dios y nos recuerda que Jesús nos ha exhortado a que dejemos de lado nuestra tendencia a juzgar a los demás y, en vez de ello, que seamos misericordiosos como nuestro Padre que está en el cielo.

De hecho, el Señor nos dice que debemos amar y perdonar incluso a nuestros enemigos. “Amen a sus enemigos—nos dice Jesús—háganles bien y denles prestado sin esperar nada a cambio. Así tendrán una gran recompensa y serán hijos del Altísimo, porque él es bondadoso con los ingratos y malvados. Sean compasivos, así como su Padre es compasco” (Lc 6:35-36).

Esto no es lo que queremos oír. Queremos misericordia para nosotros mismos y para los que están cerca de nosotros (los nuestros), pero no para los que nos han hecho daño, nuestros enemigos. Para los que han pecado contra nosotros queremos justicia, no misericordia. Queremos que los castiguen, que sientan el dolor y el rechazo que creemos que merecen.

Este tipo de reacción es comprensible, especialmente para quienes han sufrido graves daños a manos de enemigos en tiempos de guerra o de delincuentes violentos que han cometido violaciones, asesinatos u otras ofensas brutales contra ellos. Nos sentimos fuertemente tentados a buscar la venganza, y a exigir que esos delincuentes reciban el máximo castigo.

Jesús exige algo que parece imposible, incluso contrario a la justicia: “A ustedes que me escuchan les digo: Amén a sus enemigos, hagan bien a quienes los odian, bendigan a quienes los maltratan, oren por quienes los maltratan. Si alguien te pega en una mejilla, vuelvete también la otra. Si alguien te quita la ropa, no le impidan que se lleve también la capa. Dale a todo el que te pida, y si alguien se lleva lo que te es tuyo, no se lo reclamen. Traten a los demás tal y como quieren que ellos los traten a ustedes” (Lc 6:27-31).

“Poner la otra mejilla” parecería una debilidad o una inacción. Todo en nuestra vida llama venganza; queremos luchar y ver a nuestros enemigos derrotados y humillados; no queremos que nos perdonen ni ríe por nuestros errores. Queremos justicia (tal y como la entendemos), y queremos que se nos reivindique públicamente, que se nos vea como personas que han corregido las ofensas que otros nos han hecho.

Este no es el camino de Jesús. Nuestro Señor sabe que desde la perspectiva de Dios no hay división entre la justicia y la misericordia. En Dios, estas dos cualidades son una sola. Están unidas por el amor irrefrangible e incondicional de Dios, y por la gracia que nos extiende, que si somos capaces de aceptarla nos permitirá perdonar a nuestros enemigos como Dios nos ha perdonado a nosotros.

“No juzguen, y no se les juzgará” dice Jesús. “No condenen, y no se les condenará. Perdonen, y se les perdonará” (Lc 6:37). Dios nos ama y nos perdonó incondicionalmente, pero para que podamos experimentar su misericordia, primero debemos amar y perdonar a los demás.

Mientras nuestros corazones estén llenos de ira, resentimiento y deseo de venganza, nos asaltamos del poder sanador de la gracia de Dios. Afrírmamos esta verdad cada vez que rezamos en el Padre nuestro: “perdona nuestras ofensas como también nosotros perdonamos a los que nos ofenden.” Buscamos la misericordia de Dios, pero reconocemos que no podemos recibir plenamente sin ser primero misericordiosos nosotros mismos.

“Porque con la vara que mides será medido” (Lc 6:38).

Es imposible entender plenamente cómo o por qué Dios es capaz de ser justo y misericordioso al mismo tiempo. Aunque no tenga sentido para nosotros (o incluso si tenemos un error debemos amar a nuestros enemigos y rezar por quienes han pecado contra nosotros. Tenemos que dejar de lado nuestros deseos de venganza y recibir con los brazos abiertos el tipo de aceptación pacífica y no violenta que Jesús demostró en la cruz cuando imploró: “Padre, perdonalos porque no saben lo que hacen” (Lc 23:34).

Jesús nos exige a nosotros, sus discípulos misioneros, un estándar más elevado y nos dice que: “Traten a los demás tal y como quieren que ellos los traten a ustedes. ¿Qué mérito tienen ustedes al amar a quienes los aman? Aun los pecadores lo hacen así. ¿Y qué mérito tienen ustedes al hacer bien a quienes les hacen daño?” (Lc 6:31-33).

Debemos dar sin esperar nada a cambio, amar a los que no son amables y perdonar lo imperdonable.

Recemos para que estemos abiertos a la gracia de Dios, para que podamos ser misericordiosos, al igual que nuestro Padre celestial. †
Indy Life Conference for high school students will be on March 5

The Indy Life Conference will take place at Guerin High School, 15300 Gray Road, in Noblesville, Ind. (Lori Geertze Dancer, from 8:45 a.m. to 4 p.m. on March 5, with check-in from 8:30 a.m. to 8:50 a.m.) The conference is an opportunity for pro-life high school and college students in Indiana to come together for a day of activism development and fellowship with other pro-life students, and to hear from inspiring speakers in the pro-life community. Speakers for the event will be Autumn Haghis, spokesperson for Students for Life America; Sthb Graber, spokesperson for Life Training Institute; and Kaitlyn Ruch, candidate for the House of Representatives for Montana’s 8th District. Opportunity during the day include Mass in the Guerin High School chapel at 7:30 a.m. and a life chain on the campus from 4-5 p.m. The event also includes breakfast and lunch. Advance general admission tickets are $5. All-access tickets are $15 and include better seats, first-in-line positions to ask questions, an opportunity to meet some speakers, and more. Advance tickets must be purchased by March 4. Walk-in general admission tickets on the day of the event are $10. For more information, contact Mike DeCesare at mdecesare@archindy.org.

For more information and updates on the event, follow @indy_life_conference on Instagram. For more info, visit info.lifeconference@gmail.com.

Wedding Anniversaries

Robert and Judith (Koop) O’Callaghan

Robert and Judith (Koop) O’Callaghan, members of the St. Paul Catholic Center in Bloomington, celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on Feb. 17. The couple was married in St. Henry Church in Elsmere, Ky., on Feb. 17, 1962. They have three children: Teresa Heinkamp, Janet and Daniel O’Callaghan. The couple also has six grandchildren.

Victor and Christy (Shelton) Beeler

Victor and Christy (Shelton) Beeler, members of the St. Anthony of Padua Parish in Clarksville, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on Feb. 18. The couple was married in St. Augustine Church in Jeffersonville on Feb. 18, 1973. They have two children: Meredith Lucas and Victor Beeler. The couple also has seven grandchildren.

Announcements for couples celebrating 50, 55, 60, 65, 70 or more years of marriage are accepted. Go to cutt.ly/anniversary or call 317-236-1585.
“Very often nowadays, we need silence. Silence is important.”
—Pope Francis at his weekly general audience on Dec. 15, 2021

The Year of St. Joseph, which our Church celebrated in 2021, concluded quietly in the midst of the noise and confusion of a world inundated by health concerns, economic crises and political intrigue. Of course, this is precisely why we need St. Joseph—to be a silent but rock-solid anchor in the “perfect storms” of life.

In his general audience remarks on Dec. 15, 2021, Pope Francis offered a catechesis on the silence of St. Joseph. The pope said, “Joseph’s silence is not mutism, he is not taciturn; it is a silence full of listening, an industrious silence, a silence that brings out his great interiority.”

“Joseph’s silence is not passive or disengaged. It is an industrious silence. And the great interiority that Pope Francis attributes to St. Joseph is his holiness or spirituality. It is what allows him to be calm in times of trouble and always attentive to God’s will for him and for his family.

“Ours is not a reflective or contemplative age. We are surrounded—and overstimulated—from morning until night by words, music and images. Rarely do we stop long enough to embrace what Pope Francis calls a “silence full of listening.”

“St. Joseph is the only major character in the New Testament who never speaks. “The Gospels do not contain a single word uttered by Joseph of Nazareth: nothing, he never spoke,” the pope says. “This does not mean that he was taciturn, no: there is a deeper reason why the Gospels do not say a word. With his silence, Joseph confirms what St. Augustine writes. To the extent that the Word—that is, the Word made man—grows in us, words diminish. To the extent that Jesus grows in us, spiritual life grows, words diminish.”

Joseph was given the absolutely unique assignment to be the guardian of our Redeemer. Initially, he was troubled by what he didn’t understand, but after receiving the message from God brought to him by an angel in a dream, he accepted this awesome responsibility with courage, wisdom and peace.

“To the extent that Jesus grows in us, our own words must diminish. The Holy Father says that our often inconsequential speech—what we can describe as parenting, speaking to our children—should become unnecessary. “This means that God must speak, and I must be silent.”

“Through his silence, Joseph invites us to leave room for the presence of the Word made flesh, for Jesus.”

Joseph grew up in a household that treasured both the word of God, sacred Scripture, and the silence of God, contemplative prayer. So, Pope Francis tells us, “It is not surprising that he himself sought spaces of silence in his days [Mt 14:23] and invited his disciples to have such an experience by example: “Come away by yourselves to a lonely place, and rest a while” [Mt 14:23].”

But we all know from experience that it is not easy: silence frightens us a little, because it asks us to delve into ourselves and to confront the part of us that is true.”

“Many people are afraid of silence, they have to speak, and speak, or listen to radio or television … but they cannot accept silence because they are afraid,” the Holy Father teaches. “The philosopher Pascal observed that all the unhappiness of men arises from one single fact, that they cannot stay quietly in their own chamber.”

Being quiet can be uncomfortable, but it is essential to our mental and spiritual health. Let’s ask St. Joseph to inspire us with his silent eloquence.

(Daniel Conway is a member of The Criterion’s editorial committee.)

Let St. Joseph inspire you with his eloquent silence

“The rostro de la misericordia/El rostro de la misericordia/Daniel Conway

Dejamos que sean José nos inspire con su elocuente silencio

“Muchas veces hoy es necesario el silencio. El silencio es importante.”
—Papa Francisco, en su audiencia general semanal del 15 de diciembre de 2021

El niño de san José que nuestra Iglesia celebra en 2021 finalizó calladamente, en medio del ruido y la confusión de un mundo inundado de preocupaciones de salud, crisis económicas e intrincadas políticas. Por supuesto, esto es precisamente la razón por la que necesitamos a san José para que sea un ancla silenciosa, pero sólida como una roca, en las “tormentas perfectas” que la vida nos presenta.

En su discurso de la audiencia general del 15 de diciembre de 2021, el Papa Francisco ofreció una catequesis sobre el silencio de san José. El Papa señaló que “El silencio de José no es mutismo; es un silencio lleno de escucha, un silencio trabajador, un silencio que hace emerger su gran interioridad.”

El silencio de José no es pasivo ni desprendido sino un silencio laborioso, trabajador. Y la gran interioridad que el Papa Francisco atribuye a san José es su santidad o espiritualidad. Es la razón por la cual puede estar tranquilo en los momentos difíciles y siempre atento a la voluntad de Dios para él y para su familia.

“El rostro de la misericordia/Daniel Conway

“Muchas veces hoy es necesario el silencio,” dice el Santo Padre. “El silencio es importante, a mí me conviene un versículo del Libro de la Sabiduría que fue leído pensando en la Navidad y dice: Cuando la noche estaba en el silencio más profundo, ahí tu palabra bajó a la tierra” [Sb 18:14-15]. En el momento de más silencio Dios se manifiesta. Es importante pensar en el silencio en esta época en la que parece no tener tanto valor.”

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El rostro de la misericordia/Daniel Conway

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“I can’t think of any place I’d rather be,” McHaffie says. “It’s empowering to see men and women who are choosing to go where they will be for the rest of their lives. So, there really isn’t anywhere else to be. There’s no place to be to bring people closer to Christ.”

In pursuit of that goal, McHaffie has spent the past five years as the US campus team leader for FOCUS—Fellowship of Catholic University Students—a national organization that invites college students into a relationship with Christ and the Church. “I’ve been around the change,” he says. “Souls in distress have come to know peace and love. It’s amazing to see a godly love in people’s lives, time and again.”

He has also seen young people struggle to embrace and lose their faith, including the story of a friend who rejected his Catholic faith for a life of partying. “It’s the story of the moment that changed everything for me that always guides him in his mission at IU,” McHaffie says.

“I’m going to take care of you”

McHaffie’s life-changing moment occurred when he was a freshman in high school and a member of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish in Carmel, Ind., in the Lafayette Diocese. It was a time when he was struggling with his faith because of what was happening to his beloved maternal grandmother, “Mimi.”

McHaffie’s grandmother, whom he was the one encouraged and inspired McHaffie’s own artistic efforts as a painter, even transformed his bedroom into an art studio where they worked together. Their closeness made it all the more painful for him when she was diagnosed with an aggressive form of lung cancer. “No one outside the family knew of my grandmother’s illness,” he says. “When we went on a Catholic youth retreat, and he didn’t tell anybody there about it. Kneeling before the Blessed Sacrament he prayed, ‘Jesus, if you’re really there and you are who they say you are, and they are who you say they are, then you take care of my children, I want you to heal my Mimi.’ ”

Later that evening, when everyone was sharing their nighttime thoughts, McHaffie was on the verge of walking away from that gathering when a young minister sitting across from him turned to him and said something that stunned him.

“She actually said she had been praying for me, and she said she had a message from God if I’d like to hear it,” he recalls. “I was dealing with some anger and a lot of sadness, but I said, ‘Sure.’ She told me, ‘God says it’s OK to let go of your grandma and he takes care of his children.’ ”

It penetrated my heart that I not only heard the words that I had used in my prayer, but God was talking to me. ‘I’m going to take care of you.’ In that moment, I met God in a really tangible, personal way. That’s when I became a disciple because of Christ. I actually saw ways to welcome him into my life and orient my life to him.”

Finding a Home.

“A call to go beyond”

By the time his grandmother died, McHaffie had embraced a faith that believes God had also taken care of her in the best way he saw fit. That’s the starting point for all Catholics—embracing the faith and seeking a relationship with God. McHaffie also knows that “it calls people to go beyond that point—to share the faith, to help bring others into a life-sustaining bond with Jesus.”

McHaffie knows that “call can be a challenge for Catholics in any setting, and it can be immense for those more drawn to a state university filled with people from many different backgrounds and beliefs.”

“Pius XII, who had this approach with IU students is often to connect with people one on one, to just offer them an invitation. It’s the same approach that Christ frequently used in his ministry on Earth, he figures, so there’s no reason for me to be different.”

“We go into their lives, to the places they are—they like going to the gym or whatever they eat or do insignificant things. He says, ‘Not only going into their life but inviting them into your life—sharing your life story and also who you love, which is Christ.’ ”

“It’s about being able to show somebody who he is every day.”

“Both new and old Catholics will find hope and comfort in this book. I want people to hear and see what God had done in my life—how it affected me and deepened my faith. It’s like to be a missionary for Christ,” McHaffie says. “It was eating at him. He hit a rock bottom experience, and he realized that when he was the happiest he had Jesus at the center of his life. He reached out to me and other friends who wouldn’t give up on him. Now, he’s one of the strongest Catholics I know.”

That experience with his friend took McHaffie back to a defining moment in his own life.

“McHaffie approached Martin after his talk, introduced himself, and told him that one day he would work as a FOCUS missionary.”

“Having an intensive faith call can be a challenge for Catholics in any setting, and it can be immense for those more drawn to a state university filled with people from many different backgrounds and beliefs.”

“In the realization that all of us are disoriented,” he said, “we need to be a people of hope, to find that we can be strengthened, and that the world will be overcome, and that the world will connect with people one on one, to just offer them an invitation. It’s the same approach that Christ frequently used in his ministry on Earth, he figures, so there’s no reason for me to be different.”

“Together with all our brothers and sisters, we are Christ’s missionaries to help others to a life-sustaining encounter with him and how they care to see people’s lives change. And you see how it changes their faith, too.”

“I want to give him more”

More than anything, McHaffie sees how the road he has chosen has touched his life. “I have seen my friends—friends that I met in college, they say that he is my best friend. With friends, there’s always something more. There’s a way to learn about them. I want to learn more about him to journey with him. I want to give him more.”

“With friends, there’s always something more. I want to learn more about him to journey with him. I want to give him more.”

“I want to give him more”

The Holy Year

Holding a bagel, Gabe McHaffie, right, shares a moment of joy with Indiana University students publicly praying at a morning Mass on the day earlier this school year at St. Paul Catholic Center in Bloomington. (photograph)
ICC opposes bill that would place limits on charitable bail funds

By Victoria Arthur

The Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC) is opposing a bill recently passed by the Indiana Senate that would restrict the ability of charitable groups to cover bail costs for people awaiting trial who cannot afford to pay them themselves.

Senate Bill 8 was introduced early in the 2022 legislative session as part of a package of bills aimed at fighting crime in Marion County and elsewhere in the state. The proposal would regulate charitable bail organizations by requiring that they register with the state Department of Insurance, as bail bonds organizations. As currently written, the proposal would limit a group to posting bond just twice in a 10-year period and for bail amounts not to exceed $1,000.

Those restrictions, the ICC and other opponents argue, would widen the gap in a criminal justice system that already places those who have money have the advantage in the justice system should work—that only the criminal justice system that already places those who have money have the advantage in the justice system.

“By Victoria Arthur (a member of St. Malachy Catholic Perspective on Crime and Criminal Justice)" Smaller, 2022. In this, we seek justice, not vengeance. We believe that punishment must have clear purposes: protection, deterrence, and rehabilitation for those who violate the law." Espada said in her letter. "The ICC believes that placing bail restrictions on charitable bail funds in Senate Bill 8 would not further the protection of society and the just rehabilitation of those who have been affected since Russia annexed Ukrainian territory in Crimea in 2014.

Freeman also questions the leverage that such organizations have when they come to the primary purpose of bail: ensuring that the accused shows up in court. “If they have a financial interest in keeping that defendant back and making sure they appear in front of a judge—and a charitable bail organization that may or may not be in Indiana and may or may not have any ties to the community,” said Freeman, a former Marion County deputy prosecutor, during a Senate hearing on SB 8. “What incentive do they have to make sure that person appears in court?”

But Smith, who has served as a police officer in several states, argues otherwise.

“I can tell you that in my experience, people are so grateful that a stranger would want to have their case resolved. They want to get on with their lives.”

In her letter to legislators, Espada noted that “in parts of Indiana, the service provided by charitable bail funds is perhaps the sole intervention available for pretrial detention. It does not have the ability to provide bail.”

Similarly, according to Michigan’s Vera Institute of Justice, a national non-profit organization that advocates for the Vera Institute of Justice.

“Smaller, 2022. This will be a consolation and an empowerment of those who are under pressure,” Bishop Hanchon said. In solidarity with the Ukrainian-American community.

“Let us not think that Russia can wage any war that Putin wants. We want peace, because we don’t want to fight?” asked Rocky Raczkowski, chairman of the Oakland County Republican Party.

“Russia has a kind of identity crisis without Ukraine,” Father Schaiicoski said. “Really, Russia is a younger brother to Ukraine. Christianity, civilization came to Kiev well before it came to Moscow. Moscow actually is a branch out from Kiev, from Ukraine.”

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WASHINGTON (CNS)—Republicans introduce an immigration bill, but GOP divided over it.

Republican lawmakers have introduced legislation to address immigration issues, but the party remains divided on the proposals. Members of the House of Representatives have introduced bills that would provide a pathway to citizenship for some undocumented immigrants and strengthen border security. However, partisan disagreements continue to complicate the legislative process.

Groups file suit to get information on Catholic agencies helping migrants

Catholic organizations and their advocates are fighting for transparency in the government's response to immigration issues. In a suit filed by FOIA (Freedom of Information Act) lawsuit against the Biden administration, the plaintiffs, including Catholic Charities and Missionaries of Jesus, are seeking information about the role of Catholic agencies in facilitating immigration. The suit seeks records of communications between the administration and Catholic Charities, as well as details about the Dignity Act and a proposed bill to address immigration reform.

Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo, president of the USCCB, said in a statement, "We will do whatever is necessary to uncover the truth." He added, "The Church provides programs throughout the world to welcome and accompany those who are forced to leave their homelands. It's a position historically backed by the work of U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) as well as Catholic groups in the U.S. and around the world."

CatholicVote also said it was seeking "all communications" between the U.S. Customs and Border Patrol and the USCCB as they pertain to Sister Norma, a respite center and the Catholic Charities agency with which she is affiliated. Sister Norma has received praise, including from Pope Francis, for her work with migrants under the auspices of the Diocese of Brownsville, Texas. Thesuit seeks information about her work and the role of Catholic Charities in facilitating immigration.

Catholic Vote president Brian Burch said in a statement, "In collaboration with every administration since our founding a century ago, the group said, "we are on the ground doing what they can't—caring for those who are homeless, hungry, disaster-stricken, out-of-work and suffering. Our work is humanitarian, not political, and we proudly serve both citizens and migrants in our country."

WASHINGTON (CNS)—CatholicVote, a political advocacy group, has filed a lawsuit against the Biden administration seeking information about how the government and Church-affiliated groups, mainly in the Diocese of Brownsville, Texas, have gone about facilitating a record surge in illegal immigration. The lawsuit was filed under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) on Feb. 4 with Judicial Watch.

The suit said the organizations want records of communication between administration officials and the Diocese of Brownsville: Bishop Daniel E. Flores, who heads the diocese; Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley; Missionaries of Jesus Sister Norma Pimentel, in her capacity as the executive director of the local Catholic Charities; and the Humanitarian Respite Center in McAllen, Texas, which Sister Norma is known for administrating.

A Feb. 9 e-mail said CatholicVote was “demanding transparency from the federal government and to know whether and how it has funded and coordinated with Catholic-affiliated charities in facilitating a record surge in illegal immigration.”

A news release issued the same day by the Wisconsin-based group said the administration has refused to provide information on its communication with the Catholic-affiliated border charities mentioned in the suit. Judicial Watch is a Washington-based activist group that files FOIA lawsuits to investigate government officials' conduct.

“American Catholics deserve to know the full extent of the U.S. government’s role in funding and coordinating with Catholic Church-affiliated agencies at the border, and what role these agencies played in the record surge of illegal immigrants over the past year,” Brian Burch, president of CatholicVote, said in a statement.

“We will do whatever is necessary to uncover the truth,” he said.

The Church provides programs throughout the world to welcome and accompany those who are forced to leave their homelands. It’s a position historically backed by the work of U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) as well as Catholic groups in the U.S. and around the world.

Sister Norma Pimentel, a member of the Missionaries of Jesus and the director of Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley in Texas, speaks with a young resident of a tent camp in Matamoros, Mexico, in this 2020 file photo. (CNS photo/David Agren)
Faith

Sacraments restore spiritual vision so we can see God every day

By Fr. Cassidy Stinson

“Blessed are the clean of heart, for they will see God” (Mt 5:8).

I, like many of my more distractible friends, have often had the experience of looking for something—a pen, perhaps, or a pair of sunglasses—that I was certain I’d misplaced, only to discover that the object in question was actually in my hand, on my head or sitting right in front of my face.

It’s a common mistake, but no less embarrassing for however many times it’s happened to me over the years. I’ve found, however, that the awkwardness of misplacing a household object is really quite trivial compared to the loss felt in missing out on the presence of God himself when he acts right in the middle of my everyday life.

Although the sixth beatitude promises us that the pure of heart will have the privilege of seeing God, we might be surprised to learn that not everyone has always found this idea attractive.

In the Old Testament, tradition held that to gaze on the face of the Lord was tantamount to a death sentence; despite his intimate friendship with God, Moses himself was forced to hide in the cleft of a rock and see only the Lord’s back as he passed by.

In the Gospels, however, Jesus turns this fear on its head by offering himself as a perfect and merciful mediator, a new means to see and know the Lord. He promises the Apostles, “Whoever has seen me has seen the Father” (Jn 14:9). To see the Son is to see the Father who dwells in him, and to be friends with one is to be friends with the other.

Our own journey with the Lord comes with its share of moments of both fear and intimacy, beginning with the fundamental task of noticing how he’s even active in our lives in the first place.

There are plenty of ordinary distractions and obstacles to perceiving God’s presence, but to use the image of the beatitude, nothing contaminates the purity of our hearts or leaves us blinded quite like sin.

Sin, the Catechism of the Catholic Church warns us, inevitably clouds our judgment and distorts our ability to perceive the good. Sin, more than any other outside influence, makes it difficult to see God in our lives firsthand. Of all the places we might differ, it’s in recognizing God’s love.

I found this to be especially true in the first years of my own journey with God. One of the earliest experiences I can remember of directly recognizing the Lord’s voice and action in my life occurred in my early college years on a weekend student retreat.

Among the significant graces I received during that time, the one moment that truly opened my eyes, so to speak, was making one of the first good confessions of my life with one of our parish chaplains. Returning to prayer after receiving the graces of the sacrament felt like finding my sunglasses sitting on top of my head, a bit of embarrassment for having missed the truth for so long, but far overshadowed by the joy of actually recognizing God’s love.

That singular grace of seeing the Lord act in my life would become the foundation for my future life of prayer and my later discernment of my vocation to the priesthood.

The particular details of our encounters may differ, but as Catholics, we all have the privilege of seeing God moving in our lives firsthand. Of all the places we could look for his presence, nothing can compare to the power of Jesus Christ present in the sacraments of his Church.

He speaks to our hearts in his real presence in the celebration of the Mass and in the silence of eucharistic adoration. (CHT photo/Gregory A. Shemitz, Long Island Catholic)

Father Brian Barr presides at eucharistic adoration during a prayer service for vocations at Immaculate Conception Seminary in Huntington, N.Y., in 2012.

Jesus speaks to our hearts in his real presence in the celebration of the Mass and in the silence of eucharistic adoration.

It’s not uncommon for our spiritual lives to go through phases and periods of great enthusiasm, alternating with times of dryness or temptation to indifference. Among the most difficult to endure, however, can be those times when we realize we have drifted away from our relationship with God and allowed sin to lead us far from the path on which he was leading us.

Turning our eyes back to him reality can be as simple and as humbling as turning back to these founts of grace that the Church has given us in the sacraments.

Still, it can be all too tempting to give in to the fear that if and when we return to stand before the Lord, we’ll be the ones struck dead, if not by his wrath, then by the monumental shame of our failure. The reality is quite the opposite: When we allow Jesus to remove the clouds from our vision and restore us to purity of heart, the only thing we will see before our eyes is the gaze of his mercy, waiting right where he has always been—right in front of us.

(TheCriterion Friday, February 18, 2022 Page 11)


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Faith Alive!

Faith John Hall, pastor of St. Anne Parish in New Castle and St. Elizabeth of Hungary Parish in Cambridge City, gives sacramental absolution to a young woman in the sacrament of penance on Nov. 22, 2019, during the National Catholic Youth Conference at the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis. Jesus speaks words of forgiveness to open the eyes of our souls in the sacraments of the Church. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)
Worship and Evangelization Outreach/Jim Wood
Ask your pastor about new baptism prep guidelines

“It gives our pastors and parish leaders evangelization for parents and godparents. It gives our pastors and parish leaders the ability to apply best practices when preparing parents for baptism of their infant children. The 12-page document, available in both English and Spanish, not only helps parish leaders prepare folks for baptism initially, but also offers steps with the ongoing opportunity of mystagogy and as accompaniment. As we prepare parents and godparents for baptism, we also offer them the opportunity to reflect on the baptism of their child so they can remain faithful to the Church by raising their child in the Catholic faith. This guideline helps parents center around the experience of the celebration, helping them understand the different parts and how a parent and understanding what God’s purpose is for celebrating the sacrament. As parents and parish leaders, we want to accompany these families by engaging them after baptism. Baptism opens the door for evangelization to bring families back to the Church if they haven’t been back for a while. We want them to feel safe when asking for baptism for their children. We want them to come to our parishes; we want them to accept the sacramental preparation; and we want to stay to live a life with their children that is filled with faith, hope and love through Jesus Christ. We want our parents to prepare well for baptism, and we want to give them the means for discipleship. As noted in the document, “the parental sense of discipleship—lived in full communion with the mystical body of Christ, the Church—helps equip parents to live their call as primary educators of their children.”

We need to do this well, a parent must strive to live a Catholic life that will be an example to their child. Therefore, parents must take a priority to continue learning about their faith throughout their life—so they may better witness to the faith in their family and understand family, the next generation of Catholic disciples of Jesus Christ.”

Jim Wood is coordinator of catechetical renewal and a doctoral candidate for the archdiocese. He can be reached at jwood@archindy.org.

That All May Be One/Fr. Rick Ginter
This Lent, be more conscious of what faith traditions share

Lent is a Christian season. For older Catholics, this may be a time of preparation through prayer, fasting and almsgiving (Mt 6:1). The preparation is of the person for the celebration of Easter Conversion of life is stressed. The forms of fasting vary among Catholics, Anglicans and Episcopalians have days of periods of fasting and/or abstience (Ash Wednesday, Fridays in Lent, Good Friday). For others, fasting encompasses every day of Lent (e.g., Moravians, Reformed Churches).

The Byzantine Church, such as St. Athanasius the Great Parish in Indy, celebrates the “Great 40 Days.” The Eastern Orthodox observe the “Great Fast.” There are distinct periods of fasting among them. In most Eastern Orthodox Churches in communion with Rome and those not, the “Great Lent/Fast” is broken only after the celebration of the Easter Divine Liturgy.

I recall the joy of my Melkite classmates at the University of Notre Dame who described the “feast” which broke the “fast.” The Oriental Orthodox have varied traditions. But among those who use the Alexandrian Rite (Coptic Catholic, Coptic Orthodox, Ethiopian Catholic, Ethiopian Orthodox, Armenian Catholic and Oriental and Eastern Orthodox Churches), eight continuous weeks of fasting are observed. Abstinence from foods (meat and meat products) varies greatly across the Christian spectrum.

Roman Catholics in the United States abstain on Ash Wednesday and the Fridays of Lent. In contrast, Lenten abstinence from all animal products (i.e., eggs, fish, fowl and milk from cows, goats) is prevalent in some Orthodox and Eastern Catholic Churches and Eastern Lutheran churches.

Lent may be a four-letter word, but it is more than filled with deep personal and communal spiritual meaning and a breadth of observance. As we Christians enter Lent this year, let us be more conscious of what we share in our diversity of expression. And more conscious of one another in prayer.

(Father Rick Ginter is director of the archdiocesan Office of Ecumenism and Interreligious Affairs. He is also the pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Indianapolis.)

Faith at Home/Laura Kelly Fanucci
Family-friendly parishes remind us Jesus welcomes children

Who doesn’t want the Church to grow or the next generation of Catholics to be more conscious of what faith traditions share? As we prepare parents and godparents for baptism of their infant children, the ability to apply best practices when preparing parents for baptism of their infant children. The 12-page document, available in both English and Spanish, not only helps parish leaders prepare folks for baptism initially, but also offers steps with the ongoing opportunity of mystagogy and as accompaniment. As we prepare parents and godparents for baptism, we also offer them the opportunity to reflect on the baptism of their child so they can remain faithful to the Church by raising their child in the Catholic faith. This guideline helps parents center around the experience of the celebration, helping them understand the different parts and how a parent and understanding what God’s purpose is for celebrating the sacrament. As parents and parish leaders, we want to accompany these families by engaging them after baptism. Baptism opens the door for evangelization to bring families back to the Church if they haven’t been back for a while. We want them to feel safe when asking for baptism for their children. We want them to come to our parishes; we want them to accept the sacramental preparation; and we want to stay to live a life with their children that is filled with faith, hope and love through Jesus Christ. We want our parents to prepare well for baptism, and we want to give them the means for discipleship. As noted in the document, “the parental sense of discipleship—lived in full communion with the mystical body of Christ, the Church—helps equip parents to live their call as primary educators of their children.”

We need to do this well, a parent must strive to live a Catholic life that will be an example to their child. Therefore, parents must take a priority to continue learning about their faith throughout their life—so they may better witness to the faith in their family and understand family, the next generation of Catholic disciples of Jesus Christ.”

Jim Wood is coordinator of catechetical renewal and a doctoral candidate for the archdiocese. He can be reached at jwood@archindy.org.

For the Journey/Effie Caldera
Fish stories of faith, family, friendship

Best fishing story of January: A small group of fishermen and an Irish fishing association stopped out one night to avoid high winds from flagging fishing conditions off Ireland’s coast.

The little band of Irish fishermen agreed that they would continue to stay up to 60 minutes, but instead of going into the waters during the military maneuvers to protect the fishery, they continued to watch the Russians warning them of danger. The fishermen met with the Russian ambassador, and eventually the Russians agreed to go somewhere else.

Score one for David against Putin’s Goliath. Wouldn’t have been great to be in an Irish pub the evening the Cells won that skirrskirmish?

Fishing stories are always great. And the New Testament is full of them.

Some of my favorite Scripture takes place on a lakeshore, that meant the Sea of Galilee, also known as Lake Tiberias. At 64 square miles, it’s the largest freshwater lake in Israel.

Jesus walked along the lake when he called Peter and Andrew. Later, James and John left their boats and nets, followed Zebedee and his hired men, to follow Jesus. They were going to fish for people, Jesus told them, and somehow how he was persuasive enough to them put down their nets.

The Sea of Galilee, most likely, is where Jesus walked on the beach. It was a lovely place, a comfortable house two blocks from the ocean. But we didn’t know anyone there, and the continuing pandemic kept us out of most shops and restaurants. Sometimes it is tricky to fish out of the ocean.

But people along the beach would always wave and smile. And at high tide, there were plenty of fish jumping to come back to land. Here is the Lord who has conquered death, yet he waits in the Gardner’s Creek for us to come back to morning to treat his friends fishing.

My own fishing story came during the windswept winter nights of each year in suburban Philadelphia. After 10 minutes, I would say I was starting to get a bite. One day, I approached a couple of them and asked what they might be catching.

A couple of fishermen had learned about striped bass and their migration from the north. They said they might see sand sharks or eel, something my husband’s Italian grandmother used to cook. They laughed and joked.

I told them where we house hunting, they told me they were from suburban Philadelphia. After 10 minutes, I wouldn’t be surprised if the lake reminded washer of me how much I need community and friendship.

Jesus, I believe, was not just calling helpers or co-workers when he singled out the women and men who would become his disciples and form a family for a community. He was recruiting friends who would share their lives with him, and sometimes times we fail him.

He wanted people who could start a revolution of the heart, but also people who were reflecting. And my fishermen I know may not be the best fish, but they are the most reflective. This year, I recommend River Runs Through It by Norman Maclean, and then I reread the movie. You might say the book was the movie before the movie. In Montana, and of course you’d be right. But fishing stories always go so much deeper, and I would say the means for discipleship. As noted in the document, “the parental sense of discipleship—lived in full communion with the mystical body of Christ, the Church—helps equip parents to live their call as primary educators of their children.”


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The Sunday Readings
Sunday, February 20, 2022

- 1 Samuel 26:2-7, 9-13, 22-23
- 1 Corinthians 15:45-49

The First Book of Samuel is the source of the first reading for Mass this weekend. Ancient in origin, scholars trace its beginnings to six centuries before Christ. This reading focuses on David, whom the Hebrews regarded as the divinely commissioned and protected leader of the people of Israel. Also revealed is the development of the people and of the kingdom of Israel. It was not all a story of sweetness and light. Plentiful are accounts of struggle, intrigue and perplexity. Through it all, though, God guided the people. Relying upon this guidance, the people survived and flourished. And David, God’s representative, survived. For the second reading, the Church presents a passage from Paul’s First Epistle to the Corinthians. It is a story of development, not of a nation such as the kingdom of Israel, but of human hearts. Tarry not with the earthly but aspire to spiritual good. Paul advises. The Apostle is remembered justifiably as the great evangelizer of early Christianity, who took the message of Jesus far and wide.

Early Christianity, who took the message of Jesus far and wide.

Tarry not with the earthly but aspire to the kingdom of Israel, but of human hearts.

Reflecting on today’s First Reading, St. Luke’s Gospel supplies the last reading. This Gospel is a favorite biblical source for Catholics committed to the Petrine doctrine that the church is the body of Christ because it is blunt and uncompromising as it calls for total conversion to Christ, as conversion means taking every step to redeem the world by bringing the mercy and justice of the Lord to real life. Luke’s idea of conversion was revolutionary because it demanded not only absolute dedication, but also an acuteness in perception and a subjection of instinct. Love your enemies! Offer the other cheek! Give to everyone who asks of you! Do unto others as you would have them do to you! These words are hard. They were as hard for Luke’s first audience as they always have been for humans, including people today. Many say that they do not make sense. They certainly are not the way of the world. The bottom line is that genuine Christianity very often runs against the current, pursuing the spiritual treasure of the Gospel rather than the presumptions of earthly life.

How Great is Your Dwelling Place
By Natalie Hoefner

How great is your dwelling place, Lord, mighty God! In heaven, whose beauty the mind cannot fathom; In cathedrals grand and in chapels humble; In Your chosen priest who serve in persona Christi; In vowed religious who bring the Word to life; In ordained deacons who help serve Your people; In families and homes who make You the center; In the poor, the sick, the prisoner whom You make strong in weakness; In all of Your people who submit to Your holy will; And perhaps greatest of all in the small and simple, unadorned, unassuming, all-loving, life-giving Christ-living Eucharist.

My Journey to God

Reflection

In less than two weeks, the Church will observe Ash Wednesday at the start of Lent. Lent is much more than giving up candy. It is about achieving an absolute transformation in almost every aspect of one’s life, in assessing reality, making judgments and in behavior. This transformation was not easy or quick for the Hebrews of Samuel’s time, for the Corinthians to whom St. Paul wrote, or the Christians who first read the Gospel of St. Luke. Simply stated, honest discipleship is hard. It calls for a revolution of heart, mind and action, revolving from selfishness and earthly assumptions, indeed even instincts to uniting with the Lord in every respect, in every thought, every word, and every deed. The Church offers Lent as a process to accomplish this transformation, this revolution in heart and soul with the necessary help of God’s grace.

By using Lent as a tool, an incentive and an aid, the Church urges us to this absolute commitment to and union with Christ. It appeals to us to follow the Lord, to allow him to redeem us with his grace and, in the process, to work with him to redeem the world around us. As we approach Lent, we should ask ourselves what is its purpose and what does it mean, truly, profoundly, personally? Ash Wednesday is coming.

Church allows for the practice of cremation under specific conditions

My mother and I have been discussing how some of the rules in the Catholic Church have changed. One example is cremation. Why is it OK now, but it wasn’t some years ago? Who gets to make the rules, and how do we know that they are truly acceptable to God? (Kansas)

A Vatican instruction from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith issued in 2016 underlines the theological thinking behind the change. It explains that “cremation of the deceased’s body does not affect his or her soul, nor does it prevent God, in his omnipotence, from raising up the deceased’s body to new life.”

However, that same instruction remains: scattering them, dividing cremated remains (e.g., among family members) or keeping them in a home. Instead, the Church directs that cremated remains should be respectfully incinerated.

As for your final questions, the Vatican establishes practices in the Church, as to their acceptability to God, the Church decides after prayer and reflection—after it has done here—based on its teachings and on what seems reasonable under specific circumstances.

My dad told me about a new member of his parish who bows to the priest as he processes out at the end of Mass. My dad thinks that this is horrible and borders on worshiping the priest. I could see it, though, as not being so offensive in some contexts or cultures, especially if we believe that the priest is acting “in persona Christi” (“in the person of Christ”). Could you help give me some insight? (Virginia)

Although not prescribed in any of the Church’s liturgical norms, I see no harm with a member of the congregation’s bowing to the priest as the priest exits following Mass. I would interpret it as you do—as simply a sign of courtesy and respect (and also, I would think, of gratitude for the blessings of the Mass). As a priest for more than 50 years, it has never occurred to me that parishioners were “worshiping” me when they have bowed in my direction.

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

Daily Readings

Monday, February 21
St. Peter Damian, bishop and doctor of the Church
James 3:13-18
Psalm 19:8-10, 15
Mark 9:14-29

Tuesday, February 22
The Chair of St. Peter the Apostle
1 Peter 5:1-4
Psalm 23:1-6
Matthew 16:13-19

Wednesday, February 23
St. Polycarp,ishop and martyr
James 4:13-17
Psalm 49:2-3, 6-11
Mark 9:35-46

Thursday, February 24
James 5:1-6
Psalm 49:14-20
Mark 9:41-50

Friday, February 25
James 5:9-12
Psalm 103:1-4, 8-9, 11-12
Mark 10:1-12

Saturday, February 26
James 5:13-20
Psalm 141:1-3, 8
Mark 10:13-16

Sunday, February 27
Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Sirach 27:4-7
Psalm 92:2-3, 13-16
1 Corinthians 15:34-58

My Journey to God

How Great is Your Dwelling Place

By Natalie Hoefner

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(Natalie Hoefner is a member of St. Monica Parish in Indianapolis and is a reporter for The Criterion. Photo: Newly-ordained Father Timothy DeCrane looks on as Archbishop Charles C. Thompson elevates the Eucharist during the ordination Mass on June 1, 2019. File photo by Natalie Hoefner)


VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope Francis is dedicating the 2022 World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly to the importance of inviting older people to contribute to building a better world.

The pope has chosen “They shall bear fruit even in old age” from the Book of Psalms (Ps 92:15) as the theme for the second world day, being celebrated on July 24, 2022.

The theme “intends to emphasize how grandparents and the elderly are a value and a gift both for society and for ecclesial communities,” said a Feb. 15 communique from the Dicastery for Laity, the Family and Life, which promotes the world day.

“The invitation to listen to the wisdom of the years is also an invitation to reconsider and value grandparents and the elderly who are too often kept on the margins of families, civil and ecclesial communities. Their experience of life and faith can contribute, in fact, to building societies that are aware of their roots and capable of dreaming of a future based on greater solidarity,” the dicastery said.

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Priest, 79, makes pilgrimage of prayer for Ukraine by bike

WARREN, R.I. (CNS)—As Ukraine faces a fierce challenge to its young democracy from more than 120,000 Russian forces massed on its borders, poised to invade at any time, a Rhode Island priest is prayerfully seeking with the plight of the people of the overwhelmingly Orthodox and Catholic nation.

“Russia is surrounding the Ukraine with troops. What else can I do but pray?” said Father Thomas O’Neill, 79, a senior priest of the Diocese of Providence.

Father O’Neill embarked on a pilgrimage of prayer on a morning when the mercury hovered at 15 degrees as he rode his bicycle from his home in Middletown to St. Patrick Church in Providence in late January.

He stopped at churches along the way to offer prayers for peace in the region. A well-read student of history who spent 20 years of his ministry serving outside the United States, Father O’Neill fears what will happen to the Ukrainian people if Russian President Vladimir Putin directs the vast array of forces he has amassed on three sides of Europe’s second largest nation by area to invade Ukraine.

During a stop at St. Mary of the Bay Parish in Warren, Father O’Neill recounted how, during the era of Soviet leader Josef Stalin, millions of Ukrainians starved to death.

The brutal dictator caused a famine by ordering Ukraine’s small farms to operate as a collective, usurping their harvests to feed those living in Russia. Stalin’s goal was also to punish Ukrainians whose dreams for independence would threaten his total authority.

“During the Stalin era, they were starved to death because they took all the food out of the Ukraine that was grown on the collective farms and the peasants all starved, millions and millions of them. Why would Ukraine want to have anything to do with Russia now?” the priest asked.

“They’ve got a lot of reasons not to want to be hanged,” he added in an interview with the Rhode Island Catholic, Providence’s diocesan newspaper.

Ukraine gained its independence in 1991 following the collapse of the Berlin Wall and the ensuing dissolution of the former Soviet Union. It has been operating as a democracy since then.

In recent weeks, Putin has been deploying tens of thousands of well-armed troops to Ukraine’s borders, threatening the East European nation of 41 million as he publicly lamented its desire to join the West’s NATO security alliance.

“Putin cut his teeth on the KBG. All he knows how to do is smile, be friendly, lie, murder and torture,” Father O’Neill said of the Russian leader who now has his sights set on convincing both the people and the European Union’s remaining leaders to join his war.

In February 2014, during the Winter Olympics, which were held in Sochi, in southern Russia, Putin invaded Ukraine’s Crimean Peninsula after the nation’s Parliament ousted its pro-Russian leader, Viktor Yanukovych. They have held that piece of Ukraine ever since.

Father O’Neill said he has been astounded to see some American television hosts actually make the case that the U.S. should be supporting Russia over Ukraine on this issue.

Given that Russia has more to offer this country, given its resources, than Ukraine does, Father O’Neill added in an interview with the Croatian Catholic weekly Glas Koncila, historian Teresa Wontor-Cichy.

FATHER Thomas O’Neill stops at St. Mary of the Bay Church in Warren, R.I., on Jan. 28, the midpoint of his 30-mile bicycle pilgrimage from Middletown to Providence. (CNS photo/Rick Scibba, Rhode Island Catholic)