Prayer, fasting, almsgiving
Find moments of silence this Lent, connect pillars of season, page 9A.

The synodal process and the Eucharist: A reflection
By Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

Pope Francis has announced that the next Synod of Bishops in 2023 will focus on the synodal process itself. Thus, it has been aptly deemed as “The Synod on Synodality: Communion, Participation and Mission.”

Many in the Church, including the Holy Father, consider the path of synodality as essential to the Church’s credibility and relevance for the 21st century.

Coinciding with this announcement for the universal Church, the bishops of the United States have announced the undertaking of a three-year eucharistic revival.

While neither announcement was made with the other in mind, these two themes—namely, synodality and the Eucharist—are not mutually exclusive of one another. In fact, as I mentioned in an initial interview about Indianapolis being selected as host for the National Eucharistic Congress slated for July 2024, an intentional focus on the linking of these two primary focuses on what it means to be Catholic could provide us a tremendous opportunity of grace.

Referencing the Second Vatican Council’s “Lumen Gentium” (“The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church”), the Catechism of the Catholic Church reaffirms the Eucharist as the “source and summit of the Christian life” in and through which all ministries and services are bound up and oriented toward.

“In brief,” the catechism states, “the Eucharist is the sum and summary of our faith” (#1327). In essence, our communion, participation and mission as Catholics is rooted in our eucharistic identity.

The proper disposition for engaging in an authentic synodal process involves a willingness to remain open and intentional about accompaniment, dialogue and reflection.

Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

From the heart: Couple rooted in faith and love celebrates 70 years of marriage
By Sean Gallagher

Faith and the mutual love that God poured into the hearts of Carl and Patty Lentz have been the driving force behind their 70 years of marriage.

The couple, both now 91, experienced the depth of their commitment days after their wedding on Feb. 9, 1952, at St. Mary Church in Anderson, Ind. in the Lafayette Diocese.

Carl, who was in the U.S. Air Force at the time, had to report back to Lackland Air Force Base near San Antonio less than a week after the wedding.

But the prospect of moving far away from all their family and friends didn’t daunt the newlyweds. “It didn’t make any difference, because I was with him,” Patty said. “It was OK. We were married, and that was it.”

“Likewise,” added Carl. “It was easy.”

Resident for 13 years of the St. Augustine Home for the Aged in Indianapolis, Carl and Patty met on a blind date on New Year’s Eve in 1950.

Patty, who grew up in Anderson, was a nursing student at the time at St. Vincent Hospital, then located on Fall Creek.

From the heart: Couple rooted in faith and love celebrates 70 years of marriage
See ANNIVERSARY, page 8A

An uplifting sacrifice and a joyful bond lead people closer to God during Lent
By John Shaughnessy

Considering all the reactions that Catholics get when ashes are emblazoned on their foreheads on Ash Wednesday, the response that Pat Babcock received from a non-Catholic friend may be the most unusual and uplifting.

The moment happened on an Ash Wednesday more than 20 years when Babcock was working as a registered nurse in the office of Dr. Sanjiv Aggarwal.

See LENT, page 8A

Part one

An uplifting sacrifice and a joyful bond lead people closer to God during Lent
(Editors’ note: The Criterion is inviting our readers to share the approaches, sacrifices and acts of joy and love that have brought them closer to God during a Lenten season. We are offering their responses as a way of helping all of us have a more meaningful Lent this year.)

Part one

By John Shaughnessy

The moment happened on an Ash Wednesday more than 20 years when Babcock was working as a registered nurse in the office of Dr. Sanjiv Aggarwal.

See LENT, page 8A
Archbishop Charles C. Thompson preaches a homily during an Oct. 27, 2021, Mass at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis. The archdiocese’s participation in the preparation for an April 18-20 2023 meeting at the Vatican of the Synod of Bishops on synodality began in the Catholic Center in the Church, (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

News of the Synod

SYNOD
continued from page 1A

encounter. Such commitment for Catholics must be grounded in the word of God, the grace of sacraments and the outreach of service. Prayer, both individual and communal, as well as Catholic teaching are essential to such commitment and process. Accompaniment involves meeting persons where they are, healing wounds and warming hearts, but not merely leaving them where they are found. The word implies being intentional about bringing others along in the journey of faith, striving for healing, growth, reconciliation and conversion for each and every person.

Authentic dialogue is predicated on a willingness to actively listen, trust, respect and respond rather than react to one another. Any tendency toward name-calling, yelling or threatening undermines true dialogue. What does it mean to encounter one another? First and foremost, for Christians, it means that we are open to an experience of one another in a spirit of integrity, compassion, courage and an understanding of objectivity.

In light of its Greek root, meaning “to give thanks,” Eucharist is an “action of thanksgiving to God.” As others have noted, grateful persons are often the happiest among us. An age of extreme polarization in practically every facet of life, feeding and being fed by the radical individualism that glorifies a sense of subjective truth while casting aside moral truth, it is easy for us to focus on all that divides us as persons, Americans and Catholics.

Yet, as Christians, our first focus and act should be one of gratitude to God for the gifts and blessings bestowed upon us, especially that of mercy. God seeks to unite while Satan seeks to divide.

Centering our lives and relationships on the Eucharist, we must strive with grateful hearts and minds to embrace unity within diversity rather than allow the evil one to drive us apart. Even in matters of disagreement, we must not succumb to hatred, deception, disrespect, abuse and violence. In fidelity to our eucharistic identity and mission as Catholics, we must always seek the path of synodality by means of accompaniment, dialogue and encounter.

Synodal meeting with Archbishop Thompson

Catholic across central and southern Indiana will have the chance on March 5 to gather with 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 meeting of the world Synod of Bishops at 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 of their own thoughts. “The Synod on Synodality: Communion, Participation and Mission” will take place in October 2023.

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 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.

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 canonchurch@archindy.org.

Input offered at the 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.

In order to counter the detrimental effects of polarization in practically every facet of society and religion today, there must be a willingness and ability for grace in ways of thinking, engaging and relating to one another. We simply cannot reduce everyone and everything to the measure of being either with or against us.

There is far too much at stake to readily “write off” one another as persons to be canceled or condemned, divided or demonized. As the saying goes, “every saint has a past while every sinner has a future.”

We do well to keep in mind that Jesus ate and drank with sinners, meeting them as they were but not leaving them as he found them. With each encounter, if the sinner was open to receiving God’s grace, a transformation took place. Such transformation was possible because of the respect, understanding and mercy that marked a process of conversion. To put it another way, it takes a bit of nuance to grasp what it means to love the sinner but hate the sin. Jesus sought to save people while condemning sin, particularly that of hypocrisy.

Our fruitful engagement in the synodal process of listening and discerning, especially as enhanced by our identity as a community of believers, necessarily demands that we be Christ-centered in our willingness to encounter one another in a spirit of humility and generosity. Catholic presence, identity and mission are rooted in the belief and lived experience of the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist.

As we journey together in preparation for “The Synod on Synodality: Communion, Participation and Mission” in October 2023, let’s ask the Holy Spirit to open our hearts to prayerful listening, genuine encounter with Christ (especially in the Eucharist), and discernment of God’s will for us.

Next week we will discuss Mother Mary and all the angels and saints walk with us, reminding us to respect one another in spite of our weaknesses and disagreement. In all things, let us give thanks and praise to the Holy Trinity—God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit—who love and mercy are everlasting.

Effective February 1, 2022

Rev. Steven Schaffelte, pastor of St. Rose of Lima Parish in Franklin, granted retirement from active priestly duties. (These appointments are from the office of the Most Rev. Charles C. Thompson, Archbishop of Indianapolis.)

The Criterion
February 26–March 6, 2022

March 3 – 8:30 a.m.
Mass for students of St. Simon the Apostle School, Indianapolis, at St. Simon the Apostle Church.

March 3 – 10 a.m.
Leadership Team meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis.

March 3 – 3:30 p.m.
Catholic Community Foundation pre-board meeting, at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center

March 5 – 10:30 a.m.
Rite of Election at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church, New Albany

March 5 – 3 p.m.
Review and discussion of Synod Report Draft at St. Bartholomew Parish, Columbus

March 6 – 2 p.m.
Rite of Election at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral

March 6 – 6 p.m.
Rite of Election at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral

March 6 – 8 p.m.
Rite of Election at Sts. Peter and Paul Cathedral

February 26 – 10:30 a.m.
Confirmation Mass for youths of St. Michael Parish, Brookville; St. Nicholas Parish, Ripley County; 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 Election at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, Indianapolis

March 1 – 7 p.m.
Confirmation Mass for youths of St. Ann and St. Joseph parishes, both in Jennings County; St. Mary Parish, North Vernon; and St. Christopher Parish, Indianapolis, at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral.

March 2 – noon
Ash Wednesday Mass at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral

Official Appointments

Effective January 15, 2022


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Catholic apostolate of the Synod of Bishops on synodality in the Church, (Photo by Sean Gallagher)
‘The Calm Down Teacher’ is honored for her care, support of children

By John Shaughnessy

There’s no doubt that Patrice Uminski is honored and touched by the award she has received from the Indiana School Social Work Association. But it’s still not as cool as the nickname that one of her students has given her.

Describing being chosen by the organization as Indiana’s 2021 School Social Worker of the Year, Uminski says, “To be recognized by colleagues that I know are doing amazing work in their schools is truly humbling.

“I could not be successful in this role without the support from my school community, my community at Catholic Charities Indianapolis, and the gifts God has given me to be effective with helping children learn and grow socially, emotionally, physically and intellectually.”

Still, the greatest honors—plus that special nickname—come from the Catholic school children she has been helping for 17 years, including in her current roles as a social worker at St. Malachy School in Brownsburg and as the co-director of the archdiocese’s school social worker program for Catholic Charities Indianapolis.

“It’s really the little moments that stand out, like when you are working with a student on managing emotions, and you see him or her using the skills learned in a situation. Or when one of your students refers to you as ‘The Calm Down Teacher,’” she says.

“I had a moment when I ran into a previous student at the store—who was now in college—remembering me coming to their class to read a book about friendships or controlling anger.

“There are also the students who need another person to care and listen as they deal with a stressful situation at home or the death of a loved one.

“My approach is to recognize and build on the students’ strengths as well as to get a whole picture of what is happening in their daily lives and how that may be affecting them in the school setting.”

With co-director Sharmila John, Uminski also helps lead the 26 licensed social workers and counselors who serve 29 Catholic schools in the Indianapolis area. The staff provides counseling, crisis intervention, consultation and referral services, and programs that help students and teachers in the classroom.

“It’s working together as a team with your school staff to make school the best environment for all students,” she says.

“While being a school social worker can be challenging at times, it is so rewarding when you see students making progress on their goals or when you’re in the classroom and a student remembers a strategy you taught them about positive emotions.

“Uminski knows the gift and the importance of having the support of others in life.

“My family is always there for me, and they are the biggest blessing in my life. The support of my parents and siblings has always helped me have the confidence to do my work even in the tough times,” says Uminski, a member of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish in Carmel, Ind., in the Lafayette Diocese. “I am also thankful for a strong parish family.”

“The Calm Down Teacher also draws strength and direction for her efforts with children from two of her favorite Bible verses, starting with 1 Cor 12:20, ‘As it is, there are many parts yet one body.’ Then there is 1 Cor 12:26, ‘If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it; if one part is honored, all the parts share its joy.

“We are one school body which means we provide support for those parts that are in need,” she says. “My faith has always been an important part of my life and gives me the strength to help others.”

Social worker Patrice Uminski leads pre-school students at St. Malachy School in Brownsburg in practicing taking “mountain breaths” to help them calm down when they struggle with their emotions. (Submitted photo)
On Jan. 21, Pope Francis did something that no other pope had ever done. He named a saint who lived prior to the Council of Nicaea as a Doctor of the Church.

St. Irenaeus lived during the second century. If anyone asks you how long it takes to be named a doctor of the Church, you can answer, “Sometimes almost 2,000 years.”

The reason why some Catholics aren’t much interested in the doctors of the Church today is that the turn of the century I spent a lot of time researching and writing two books about them: one about those who lived before the 16th century and the other about those who lived during the 16th century and since. When those books were published in 2000, there were 33 doctors. With the addition of St. Irenaeus, there are now 37. That is the role of Pope Francis as architect of the Church’s title “doctor of unity” for his efforts to unite the Church, which was competing against the heresy of Gnosticism. Gnosticism taught that the world was created and ruled by a lesser divinity, the demiurge, and that Christ was an emanation of the remote supreme divine being, esoteric knowledge (gnosis) of whom enabled the redemption of the human spirit.

Other doctors have also received titles. St. Thomas Aquinas, for example, is known as “the angelic doctor” and St. Bonaventure as the “seraphic doctor.” St. Teresa of Avila as “the doctor of prayer,” and St. Francis de Sales as “the doctor of marriage.”

In naming St. Irenaeus a doctor of the Church, Pope Francis accepted an appeal from the French bishops. Before making the appeal, the bishops obtained agreement from other episcopal conferences, including that of the U.S. bishops. St. Irenaeus might also be the first doctor of the Church to die as a martyr. He is honored in the liturgy as bishop and martyr, and there is some doubt whether or not he was a martyr. He was born around the year 130, probably in Smyrna in what is now Turkey. This was the home of St. Polycarp, who was a disciple of St. John the Evangelist and Irenaeus became a disciple of St. Polycarp while he was still young.

Irenaeus studied in Rome and then Polycarp. Irenaeus was a missionary to Ludugunum, now known as Lyons, France. He served as a presbyter, or priest, there for a time before he became highly esteemed by the people of Lyons.

In 177, Lyons’ bishop, Pothinus, sent Irenaeus to Rome with two letters asking Pope Eleutherus to have mercy and tolerance toward adherents of the Montanists, an evangelistic group in Asia Minor. The trip probably saved his life because he was in Rome when a severe persecution broke out in Lyons. Bishop Pothinus and many other Christians were put to death.

After his return to Lyons the following year, Irenaeus was chosen as the bishop there, the position he held until his death around 200 or 202.

St. Irenaeus is known mainly for his clear and systematic teaching of the Christian faith because he considered the role of a bishop primarily as a teacher. He was particularly interested in apostolic succession, and he produced one of the earliest lists of the first bishops, going back to the time of the Apostles.

He is most known, though, for his treatments Against All Heresies, written sometime around the year 180. Most of these heresies, as already mentioned, were from Gnosticism. He clearly understood the need to articulate the orthodox faith taught by the Apostles and against those who promoted other ideas that threatened the Apostolic Tradition. His book remained in print for more than 100 years prior to the Council of Nicaea, which began to codify Christian dogma.

Many believe that Irenaeus’ battle was with Marcion, a prominent gnostic who erroneously taught that the God of the New Testament was the same as the God of the Old Testament. Although he has just now been named a doctor of the Church, St. Irenaeus has always been known as a brilliant and orthodox teacher of the faith. The documents of the Second Vatican Council cite 14 references to his work, and the Catechism of the Catholic Church cites him 29 times.

Letters to the Editor

Pray this Lent for Supreme Court justices to decide for life, reader says

Recently, I heard a great homily by Father John Paul Mary Zel, a Franciscan Missionaries of the Eternal Word priest, and the chaplain of EWTN. It was about the rights of the unborn.

He had a suggestion. Lent will be starting soon. Why don’t we all make sacrifices, pray more, and make it a great Lent?

Father John Paul said there is a great chance that Roe v. Wade could be overturned. Let’s pray for the justices on the U.S. Supreme Court that they will have the courage to decide in its Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization opinion—a Mississippi law that banned most abortions after 15 weeks—for life.

During Lent, let’s make sacrifices and pray more.

Therefore, hopefully our prayers will be answered.

Marcella Smith
New Palestine

This is never more clear than in her statement: “Abortion is a life saving, life preserving procedure that benefits and strengthens families and children.”

What is most striking is that nowhere in Roe’s reasoning is mention made of the human infant in the womb who is eliminated by the “life-preserving” procedure described above.

With all due respect to her strongly held beliefs, her arguments are indefensible unless one holds that the infant in the womb at any stage of development has no more value than a stomach tumor readily removable by elective surgery!

David A. Nealy
Greenfield
“A good person out of the store of goodness in his heart produces good, but an evil person out of a store of evil produces evil because "what is in the heart speaks” (Lk 6:45)."
March 2
St. Louis School, 17 E. Indiana St., Greenfield.
Kindergarten Roundup, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.; registration event for kindergarten for children reaching age 5 by Aug. 1; bring birth certificate, baptism certificate (if applicable) and immunization records. Information and registration: cutt.ly/SKr2zzap or 812-934-3310.

March 4
Women's Center of Care, 4901 W. 86th St., Indianapolis. First Friday Mass, 5 p.m., Father John McCaslin celebrating. Options for women, children and families. Information: 317-236-1501 or esanders@archindy.org.

March 4-12
Planning Parenthood, 5904 Georgetown Rd., Indianapolis, 8 a.m.-8 p.m., Monday-Saturday. Pregnancy resources and information. Information: 317-227-8020.

March 12
Mount Simon Franciscan Center for Spirituality, 101 W. Main St., St. Francis. Pilgrimage: Re-Noise. 9 a.m.-noon, sponsored by the Franciscan Father Kevin Petersen, bring water bottle and lunch, rain or shine. $25. Information and registration: mountsimonfranciscans.org, cutt.ly/35f-6851 or bburger@archindy.org.

March 12
Mount Simon Franciscan Center for Spirituality, 101 W. Main St., St. Francis. Pilgrimage: A Journey of Discovery, 1:30-3 p.m., sponsored by the Mount Simon Franciscans. Sisters Jan Craven and Pam Damiano facilitating, online option available. $25 per session. Information and registration: 812-535-2952, center@mountsimonfranciscans.org or cutt.ly/mountfranciscan.

March 14, 21, 28
Mount Simon Franciscan Center for Spirituality, 101 W. Main St., St. Francis. “Brother Bob’s Bible Study.” Mondays, 6-7:30 p.m., $65 includes all materials, Fri. 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., $30. Information: mountsimonfranciscans.org/biblitudy or 812-923-8817.

March 15, 22, 29 April 5
Mount Simon Franciscan Center for Spirituality, 101 W. Main St., St. Francis. Weekend of Peace Retreat, 7 p.m.-Sun. 6 a.m., sponsored by Father Daniel Bedel and Sr. Thea Pray, meeting ID: 810 3567 0684 or dial-in at 301-715-8592. Information: Pearlette Springer, pspasmus@archindy.org or 317-236-1474.

March 26
Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Catholic Church, 520 Stevens St., Indianapolis. Faithful Citizens Walk, 10 a.m.-11:45 a.m., meet in front of church. Information: faithfulcitizens2016@gmail.com.

March 26-27
St. Gabriel Church, 232 W. 9th St., Connersville. Brunch Weekend, Sat. 5:30 p.m., Mass 10:30 a.m. sponsored by Bishop Simon Bruté. Information and registration: 812-535-2952 or jburger@archindy.org.

March 27
St. Theobald Convent, 404 E. Vine St., Liberty. Brunch Weekend, 8 a.m. Mass celebrated by Bishop Simon Bruté. Information and registration: 812-535-2952 or jburger@archindy.org.

March 28-20
Mount Simon Franciscan Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad, IN 47578. “Brother Bob’s Bible Study.” Saturdays, 8:30 a.m.-6:30 p.m., $30 per couple, $150 for individual. Information: mountsimonfranciscans.org/biblestudy or 812-923-8817.

March 11
Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5333 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. Lenten Women’s Weekend Retreat, 4 p.m. Friday to 2 p.m. Sunday. Information and registration: 812-535-2952 or jburger@archindy.org.

March 14
Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5333 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. Lenten Weekend Retreat with Father James Farrell, Fri. 6:30 p.m.-Sun. 1 p.m., sponsored by Father Mark Lewis, or by fax at 317-236-1593. Information: cutt.ly/lds-05671 or oldenburgfranciscancenter.org.

March 15
Answering the Call: Called to Love: Miracles of the Sacred Heart. 8 p.m., cutt.ly/CBE-Reg. Information and registration: 317-236-1501 or esanders@archindy.org.

March 16
Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5333 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. Surrender All: Alcohol Inks, 2 p.m.-5 p.m. Information and registration: 317-236-1501 or esanders@archindy.org.

March 17
Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5333 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. Miracles of Healing, The Power of the Sacraments—Day of Reflection, 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m., sponsored by Father Keith Hosey. Information and registration: cutt.ly/fatimaretreats or jburger@archindy.org.

March 19
Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5333 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. Miracles of Healing, The Power of the Sacraments—Day of Retreat, 8 a.m.-6 p.m., sponsored by Father Keith Hosey. Information and registration: cutt.ly/Fatimaretreats or jburger@archindy.org.

March 20
Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5333 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. Miracles of Healing, The Power of the Sacraments—Day of Renewal, 8 a.m.-11 a.m., sponsored by Sisters of St. Benedict, Sr. Thea Pray, meeting ID: 317-236-1501 or esanders@archindy.org.

March 21
Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5333 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. Miracles of Healing, The Power of the Sacraments—Day of Prayer and program following, 1:30 p.m.-5:30 p.m., sponsored by Sister Thea Pray. Information: cutt.ly/Fatimaretreats or jburger@archindy.org.

March 22
Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5333 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. Miracles of Healing, The Power of the Sacraments—Day of Prayer, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m., sponsored by Sisters of St. Benedict, Sr. Thea Pray, meeting ID: 317-236-1501 or esanders@archindy.org.

March 23
Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5333 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. Miracles of Healing, The Power of the Sacraments—Day of Reflection and program following, 8 a.m.-6 p.m., sponsored by Father Keith Hosey. Information and registration: cutt.ly/Fatimaretreats or jburger@archindy.org.

March 24
Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5333 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. Miracles of Healing, The Power of the Sacraments—Day of Renewal, 8 a.m.-11 a.m., sponsored by Sisters of St. Benedict, Sr. Thea Pray, meeting ID: 317-236-1501 or esanders@archindy.org.

March 25
Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5333 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. Miracles of Healing, The Power of the Sacraments—Day of Prayer, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m., sponsored by Sisters of St. Benedict, Sr. Thea Pray, meeting ID: 317-236-1501 or esanders@archindy.org.

March 26
Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5333 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. Miracles of Healing, The Power of the Sacraments—Day of Prayer, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m., sponsored by Sisters of St. Benedict, Sr. Thea Pray, meeting ID: 317-236-1501 or esanders@archindy.org.

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March 28
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March 29
Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5333 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. Miracles of Healing, The Power of the Sacraments—Day of Renewal, 8 a.m.-11 a.m., sponsored by Sisters of St. Benedict, Sr. Thea Pray, meeting ID: 317-236-1501 or esanders@archindy.org.

March 30
Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5333 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. Miracles of Healing, The Power of the Sacraments—Day of Prayer, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m., sponsored by Sisters of St. Benedict, Sr. Thea Pray, meeting ID: 317-236-1501 or esanders@archindy.org.

March 31
Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5333 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. Miracles of Healing, The Power of the Sacraments—Day of Renewal, 8 a.m.-11 a.m., sponsored by Sisters of St. Benedict, Sr. Thea Pray, meeting ID: 317-236-1501 or esanders@archindy.org.
Environmental advocates find unfavorable climate at Statehouse

By Victoria Arthur

After key legislation on climate change and renewable energy failed at the Statehouse, Catholics concerned about the environment are renewing their efforts to shine a light on these issues. A bipartisan bill to create a statewide climate and environmental justice task force was among those backed by the Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC) and a cross-section of environmental groups. Senate Bill 255, authored by Sen. Ron Alting (R-Lafayette), would have established a 17-member committee to devise an action plan for Indiana to “systematically mitigate climate change.”

But that bill never received a committee hearing, despite both proposed measures to protect Indiana’s waterways from coal ash, or to provide financial protections for low-income individuals, companies and religious institutions seeking to transition to solar energy.

Supporters of the proposed legislation are experiencing a “sense of frustration as well as hope” amid these setbacks, according to Alexander Mingus, associate director of the ICC, the public policy voice of the Catholic Church in Indiana.

“Catholics and other faith-based groups submitted a multi-parish and school energy Day event at the Statehouse on Jan. 12. Mingus had pointed to the number of Catholic churches, schools and religious communities statewide that had already installed solar panels or were considering it as a means of moving toward renewable energy sources.

“Part of a growing movement in the Catholic Church recognizes that going solar can actually be part of our moral responsibility,” Mingus stated during the press conference held in conjunction with the event. “We know that if we don’t have the right political environment in Indiana for solar to be economically feasible, the parishes and schools that don’t have a lot of wiggle room in their budget won’t be able to do it.”

Mingus explained that the Catholic Church views these issues in light of “Laudato Si’ On Care for Our Common Home,” the groundbreaking 2015 encyclical on the environment by Pope Francis. In its pivotal document, Pope Francis calls for dialogue and swift action worldwide to protect the environment, curb irresponsible development and respect God’s creation.

During his remarks at the Statehouse, Mingus spoke of the pope’s many references to the “throwaway culture” that permeates so much of society and the responsibility that all people have to combat it.

“When we look at issues of energy, if we’re using our natural resources that are finite and not renewable, that is a participation in that throwaway culture,” Mingus said. “Pope Francis calls to encourage and awaken the moral imagination of Catholics in our state in seeking to protect our environment. Renewable energy can be part of stepping away from a throwaway culture and into a culture of life that we try to promote.”

For Caroline Nells of Evansville, a Catholic and longtime environmental advocate, climate change is particularly a “critical respect-for-life issue.”

“Climate change has the ‘ability to totally impact the lives of every human being on this planet—not just in our time but in future generations,’” said Nells, founder of the interfaith organization Tri-State Creation Care, which operates in the greater Evansville metropolitan area.

Nells, a member of St. Boniface Parish in Evansville, points not only to “Laudato Si’” but to more recent pleas from Pope Francis to act now on important environmental priorities.

In a May 2021 letter marking the launch of the United Nations’ Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, the pope called on all people “to become ever more responsible, climate change creators, to restore the nature that we have been damaging and exploiting for too long.”

“Otherwise, what we do has very little basis on which we depend?” Pope Francis continued. “We risk floods, and hunger, and severe consequences for ourselves and for future generations. This is what many scientists tell us. ‘We need to take care of each other and of the weakest among us. Continuing down this path of exploitation and destruction of one of the foundations of our nature— is unjust and unwise. This is what a responsible conscience would tell us.’

Nells and others are heartened by what they deem a growing grassroots movement across the state to educate and advocate for environmental issues. For example, they point to a groundswell of support for Alting’s bill by high schoolers in his district who gathered 20,000 signatures on a petition and secured backing from dozens of organizations.

At the same time, they are lamenting the fact that key environmental legislation has once again been blocked in the General Assembly.

“I am very sorry that these bills never even had a committee hearing,” said Joe Sherrill, a member of the Creation Care Commission of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, senatorial aide and, for example, by Sen. Alting would have established a climate and environmental justice task force. Young people in Sen. Alting’s area helped write this bill and were very supportive. This, I feel, shows the priority that young people have around the state give to climate-related concerns.”

Georgetown panel discusses ‘faith, politics and the Latino community’

WASHINGTON (CNS)—The stereotype of the 32 million Latinos in the United States as they are monocentric, focused only on immigration issues, are predictably Democratic and Catholic—has a stubborn life of its own, said a Pew Research Center expert.

And politicians are certainly aware of this public realization.

The conclusion of an online panel discussing the future of Latinos in political discourse, sponsored by Georgetown University’s Initiative on Catholic Social Thought and Public Life on Feb. 17. Part of the misperception comes from poor voter turnout, said Ana Gonzalez-Barrera, a researcher at the Pew Research Center.

“In 2020, we projected that a record number of 32 million Latinos were going to be able to vote in 2020. And this, for the first time, made them the largest minority group in the U.S., surpassing Black Americans for the first time in the voting population,” she said. “However, historically, Latinos had not gotten out and voted ... They are eligible to vote, many of them, but less than half end up casting a ballot.”

As for why Latinos are not a predictable voting bloc, one reason is “because they’re so young,” Gonzalez-Barrera said.

“Young people tend to be less engaged in politics and the other thing is where we found ... the biggest populations of Latinos and where they have the most importance are states like New Mexico, she said. Just two states, Florida and Arizona, received the most attention to Latinos during the 2020 presidential election.

Another stereotype-buster: “Less than half of Latinos are Catholic, and Catholics tend to be—or align themselves more—with the Democratic Party. But those who are Protestant, particularly evangelical, are more likely to align themselves with the Republican Party,” Gonzalez-Barrera said.

Maria de Lourdes Valencia, associate director of the Office of Culture and Life in the Diocese of San Antonio, thinks it’s characteristic of Catholic Latinos to vote with their conscience.

“So if they have a good conscience, which requires a lifelong formation, they will consider the principles of human life and dignity, solidarity and the common good when they vote,” she said. “They will select candidates and policies that are consistent with that.”

Luis Fraga, a political scientist at the University of Notre Dame, pointed out that the baseline support for Republican candidates among Latino voters hasn’t changed that much.

“If you average out Republican support in presidential elections back to 1972, 28.4% of Latinos vote for a Republican presidential candidate,” he said. “It’s not a monotonic vote and never has been,” he observed.

If exit polling showed that President Donald Trump received 32% of Latino votes can be trusted, “that’s just a few percentage points above what you would normally expect,” he added.

Sandra Sabrina, a reporter for Politico, said she’d noticed that Trump was able to make inroads among Latino women just on the issue of abortion because they made a very conscious effort to focus on them. Even in south Texas ... I recently did a story about Hispanic GOP women trying to get people on board, and one of the issues they’re focused on is the issue of abortion because they know there are many people who care about that.”

Gabby Trejo, executive director of Sacramento Area Congregations Together, which is an affiliate of Faith in Action, known as that an organizer mostly of Latino immigrants, “of all the issues we have identified as a community is really this fight for freedom of being recognized as children of God, to be recognized ... with our full dignity. And that takes us on this pathway to fight for housing.”

“When the pandemic started in the summer of 2020, we started doing what we called in community organizing a listening campaign and talked to [more than] 300 Latino opinion leaders, and then that women that they made a very conscientious effort to focus on them.”

And housing. “The No. 1 issue, the anxiety of not knowing if they’re going to be able to get a home, and then housing.”

“Our folks decided that we weren’t going to wait for the city or the county or the state to save us [and] decided to take it upon ourselves to raise money and help undocumented immigrants in our region to ensure that we can help them pay for their rent.”

She concluded, “And so I would say all the issues we’ve taken on ... have been very much driven by this appetite to claim the identity of who God created them to be.”

“The other adage is that politicians must address in appearing before what she called “low- propensity voters.”

Panelists in a Feb. 15 online dialogue about Latino voters are shown clockwise from top left: Luis Fraga, director of the Institute for Latino Studies, University of Notre Dame; Anna Gordon, project manager of Georgetown University’s Initiative on Catholic Social Thought and Public Life; Ana Gonzalez-Barrera of the Pew Research Center; Maria de Lourdes Valencia, associate director of the San Diego Diocese’s Culture of Life Office; Sabrina Rodriguez de Porto; and Gabby Trejo of Sacramento Area Congregations Together. (CNS screen grab courtesy Georgetown University)
After receiving ashes that day, Babcock arrived at work where Aggarawal asked her about the telltale sign of the cross on her forehead.

“Is he there?” Aggarawal asked.

“You bet,” Babcock said.

“Dad would go on the floor of the nursing home and talk to people,” Babcock added. “He was always there and could help you.”

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“Lenten retreats are very meaningful,” Sister Marie Cecilia said. “It’s like a communion of prayer and action. Pray together, as a community. They contribute a lot to the family spirit of the home. Everybody helps one another when there’s a need.”

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“The retreats give people more time for reflection at a much more relaxed pace. That resonates with them. They want time to pray. They want time to reflect. They want time to discuss. Lent is a time of conversation—to reflect on our life, our blessings, our graces, on our relationship with God.” Moore says. “It’s like a communion of all of us together. You just feel your heart growing bigger.”

(If you would like to share an approach, sacrifice and/or act of joy that has brought you closer to God during Lent, The Criterion would still like to hear from you. Send your submission—and your story of how you were drawn closer to Christ—to 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.)
Church provides resources to grow and strengthen marriages

By Gabriela Ross

“...in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health, I will love you and honor you...”

These wedding vows are put to the test for every couple during the course of their married life. You might say that a greater percentage of us have been faced with sickness and health concerns over the past year-and-counting.

Whether your family has experienced physical illness (perhaps more than once) or the mental strain of coping with constantly changing dynamics and wrestling with the unknowns for so long, it would be few who could say their marriage has been left unscathed by life’s experiences of late.

While we might be tempted to put our heads down and try to outlast the storm, we are invited to lean on Christ in the midst of the chaos and make him our stronghold: “The Lord is good, a stronghold in a day of trouble; he protects those who take refuge in him” (Na 1:7).

Communicating with God through prayer, individually and as a couple, is sure to keep us grounded in the love that is the source of our married love. The sacraments play an important role in maintaining that communion of grace with God. The Eucharist renews our union with God and reminds us of our call to live Christ’s presence. We are called to love and reminds us that we are being formed in Christ’s love that is the source of our married love. The marriage itself as a sacrament comes with the graces to live the married vocation. When we encounter times of trouble, we can ask God in prayer to stir up those graces we received on our wedding day and renew our commitment to our wedding vows.

These are some of the spiritual supports available for married couples going through difficult times. There are also pastoral and professional resources available that couples are encouraged to take advantage of, as needed. (See page 4B for a list.)

Because God has created us a union of mind, body and spirit, we do well to tend to all aspects of the human person when challenges arise.

Parish and pastoral resources include local and virtual marriage retreats, both for couples looking to nurture their vocation and for couples experiencing the strains of life on their relationship.

Resources are available for parishes that wish to start a faith-focused marriage small group. And workshops are available for couples who need more tools to help in areas like improving communication, conflict resolution and building trust.

Thankfully, couples do not have to do this alone. In addition to spiritual anchors and support from clergy and pastoral leaders, there are Catholic therapists in the archdiocese who are ready to offer their professional support to couples who are seeking forgiveness and healing, or to reconnect after a challenging or traumatic experience. (Yes, this past year qualifies as a challenging experience.)

I hope this supplement of The Criterion inspires you with stories of married couples who are not perfect but inspire you with stories of those who take refuge in him” (Na 1:7). TheCriterion offers us a reason not to give up but to lean on the Lord as our stronghold in the midst of chaos.

As a resource for the New Albany Deanery, The Criterion provides resources to grow and strengthen marriages with God’s help through faith, prayer and reading the Bible. We pray that this supplement will encourage you to lean on God as our stronghold in the midst of chaos.

New Albany Deanery PreCana retreats offer ‘huge benefit for any engaged couple’

By Natalie Hoefler

When Kristina Siepel and her husband David were married four and a half years ago at St. John Paul II, that fact bothered her. She discussed the issue with a group of local, empathetic DREs and parish leaders.

“We wanted to give engaged couples as much support as possible [so] to go close to home, in their archdiocese with other local couples from local parishes.”

In October 2020, the deanery held its first semi-annual PreCana engaged couples retreat.

“This is a huge stuff, important stuff,” Siepel said of the content. “It’s not just theological [material], but also practical.”

“Starting points for conversation”

One of the retreat’s goals is to give engaged couples “tools so they have starting points for conversation,” said Siepel.

Couples from various New Albany Deanery parishes were selected to present the program’s eight topics, then received training from the PreCana organizing team.

“We helped them pick out an activity that goes with their topic,” said Siepel. “We go through the talk material with them, make sure they’re giving good examples, help with public speaking and finding a balance of both of them speaking. We try to help them make it engaging and practical, using their own examples and examples from the [resource] book and the Bible.”

Couples are encouraged to discuss the PreCana retreats with engaged couples in their parishes. The Schilmillers then discuss the role of virtue in marriage and designing a marriage mission, “a vision of what you want your marriage to be,” said Tom. “If you do that well, it helps shape the next generation to do things right—that’s our message to them.”

“We tell them you have to agree on things before you get married,” Jamie added. “It’d be hard to say ‘let’s get married’ but not talked about religion or if you want kids

Marriage is a sacrament and grace that is given to those who “wish to start a faith-focused marriage small group. And workshops are available for couples who need more tools to help in areas like improving communication, conflict resolution and building trust.

“Thankfully, couples do not have to do this alone. In addition to spiritual anchors and support from clergy and pastoral leaders, there are Catholic therapists in the archdiocese who are ready to offer their professional support to couples who are seeking forgiveness and healing, or to reconnect after a challenging or traumatic experience. (Yes, this past year qualifies as a challenging experience.)

I hope this supplement of The Criterion inspires you with stories of married couples who are not perfect but seeking holiness. I hope you are better informed of the resources available to help you or a loved one through difficult times. And I ask that you join me in praying for all married couples to be renewed in the grace of their sacrament so that they may lean on the Lord as their stronghold in the day of trouble and take refuge in him. (Gabriela Ross is the director of the archdiocesan Office of Marriage and Family Life. She may be reached at gRoss@archindy.org or 317-392-4007.)

New Albany Deanery PreCana retreats offer ‘huge benefit for any engaged couple’

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“No need to recreate the wheel”

The decision to implement a marriage preparation retreat “came organically at a meeting of parish DREs, pastoral associates and youth ministers,” said Michelle Fessel, associate director of communications and parish initiatives for Catalyst Catholic. The organization serves as a resource center for the New Albany Deanery.

Once the need was identified, Fessel contacted Gabriela Ross, director of the archdiocesan Office of Marriage and Family Life.

“Only made sense to make sure what we offered in the southern part of the state was in line with and exactly replicated off of the archdiocesan model,” said Fessel.

“There was no need to re-create the wheel. We just needed to utilize the resources available to us.”

Ross met with the group and shared about the archdiocese’s one-day retreat model based on Ascension Press’s “Joy-Filled Marriage” resource.

They discerned that it was exactly what they were looking for, and work began to form a team from all the interested parishes in the deanery,” she said.

The marriage preparation resource “has [couple] topics that they might not have looked at before,” said Siepel. “There are some real practical ones, like conflict resolution and money [management].”

“For theology, it helps people to understand that God needs to be kept in the center of marriage from day one, and he has a plan for what marriage looks like.”

Couples from various New Albany Deanery parishes were selected to present the program’s eight topics, then received training from the PreCana organizing team.

“We helped them pick out an activity that goes with their topic,” said Siepel. “We go through the talk material with them, make sure they’re giving good examples, help with public speaking and finding a balance of both of them speaking. We try to help them make it engaging and practical, using their own examples and examples from the [resource] book and the Bible.”

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Eifrid–Mills

Anna Nancy Eifrid Brankin will be married on Sept. 7 at St. Roch Church in Indianapolis. The bride is the daughter of Richard and Joanne Schielk.

Hanson–Ronnebaum

Betina Maria Hanson-Ronnebaum and Raymond Los Ronnebaum were married on Oct. 10, 2021, at St. Gabriel Church in Greenwood. The bride is the daughter of Anthony and Lise Ronnebaum. The groom is the son of Tom and Donna Mills.

Kinner–Wilson

Sarah Elizabeth Gillaspie and Ryan Philip McCauley were married on Sept. 23, 2021, at St. Catherine of Siena Church in Indianapolis. The bride is the daughter of Stephen and Elizabeth Gillaspie. The groom is the son of Philip and Mary McCauley.

Lawrence–McIntosh

Vanessa Marie Lawrence and Bryan McIntosh were married on July 24, 2021, at St. Mary Church in Indianapolis. The bride is the daughter of Thomas and Michelle Haggard. The groom is the son of Charlie and Dianna McIntosh.

Mascari–Holtz

Laura Elizabeth Mascari and Joseph Anthony Holtz will be married on Sept. 25 at St. Paul the Apostle Church in Greenwood. The bride is the daughter of James and Lisa Mascari. The groom is the son of Richard and Gina Holtz.

Naville–Zoeller

Rachel Renee Naville and Nicholas Edward Zoeller were married on May 28 at St. Mary Church in Greenwood. The bride is the daughter of John and Monica Naville. The groom is the son of John and孔

Pre-Cana, Tobit Weekend and One in Christ program prepare engaged couples for marriage

Catholic staff reporter

Three marriage preparation programs offered in the archdiocese—the Pre-Cana Conference, Tobit Weekend and One in Christ—help prepare engaged couples for the sacrament of marriage as well as the challenges of married life.

Early registration is recommended for all programs, as each fills up quickly.

For more information about the programs, including dates, times and locations, contact Cheryl McSweeney at cmcsweeney@archindy.org or 317-545-7681, Ext. 106.

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Rwandan martyrs Cyprien and Daphrose Rugamba are role models for peace, prayer and trust in God's mercy

(Originally published in Black Catholic Messenger on Oct. 21, 2021. Reprinted with permission of the editor and author.)

By Nancy Sangwa Saro

“The blood of martyrs is the seed of the Church.”

These words of Tertullian, an early Church Father, stand behind the witness of Servants of God Cyprien and Daphrose Rugamba and six of their 10 children.

The night before they were killed, on the first of the 100 days of the Rwandan Genocide in 1994, the family had spent the night in adoration in their home, where they had special permission to have the Blessed Sacrament reserved in the tabernacle of their home chapel.

One of their sons present that terrible morning survived, having played dead during the attack, and his family’s bodies were discovered with eucharistic hosts scattered all over them and the tabernacle shot into by the assailants.

A devoted family prayer life was not always the reality of the family. After his time in seminary during the 1950s, Cyprien was a staunch atheist—even after he married Daphrose, who was known to be a devout Catholic. Her prayer life carried her through the dark times of their marriage, and he began to wonder about her faith and his heart began to transform, restoring their marriage. Cyprien had a miraculous recovery on his way to get medical treatment in Europe and his conversion was solidified.

The whole family began to live a life committed to prayer and charity, with Daphrose having special compassion for children who lived on the street, and Cyprien began to compose numerous beautiful songs praising God. Many of the songs he wrote are still sung in Catholic Churches all over Rwanda.

One written not long before his death considers the joy of entering heaven: “Naachu Yerusalem Nshiyi” (which translates to “I will enter the most pure Jerusalem”). My own family sang it when we laid my grandmother to rest in Texas.

When political tensions arose between Hutus and Tutsis during the late 1980s and early 1990s in Rwanda, Cyprien spoke our boldly for peace, which put him and his family on a list of those to be killed. Even with the opportunity to escape the country to escape, the couple chose to stay and trust in God’s mercy.

Before they were taken up to heaven, Cyprien and Daphrose laid the groundwork for the faith of many to be strengthened and restored during a time of deep uncertainty after the genocide of the Tutsis. By establishing the Emmanuel Community in Rwanda, a public association of the faithful of pontifical right, they created a community that many would call home and find refuge in.

“The Rugambas’ martyrdom gave life to the faith of their brothers and sisters, which allowed them to welcome in many who were seeking—including my own parents. Some of my earliest memories were created at the children’s center Emmanuel started, where the Emmanuel Community still takes in homeless children to this day.

On his visit to the U.S. in 1990, four years before the genocide, Pope St. John Paul II said: “I believe that holiness exists among the people that are here among you, in the people of Rwanda, in your marriages, in your families. I am convinced of this. One of my fondest desires is to be able to be before you a canonize a couple as soon as possible. There is a great need. So all that I should wish for you is that this canonized couple come from Rwanda.”

Prayer for the beatification of the Servants of God Cyprien and Daphrose Rugamba

Holy Father,

We pray for the beatification of the Servants of God Cyprien and Daphrose.

Give us to always have, like them, an unconditional love for you and an active trust in your grace of (express your intention).

Lord, grant us peace and the grace that we ask in faith.

(Archbishop Paul II said: “I believe that holiness exists among the people that are here among you, in the people of Rwanda, in your marriages, in your families. I am convinced of this. One of my fondest desires is to be able to beatify or canonize a couple as soon as possible. There is a great need. So all that I should wish for you is that this canonized couple come from Rwanda.”)

The benefits speak volumes

The New Albany Deeney PreCana retreats are held at Mount St. Francis Center for Spirituality in Mt. St. Francis and are open to all engaged couples regardless of denomination.

Fessell calls the program “a great example of parishes in the New Albany Deanery working together toward a common goal of preparing couples for what lies beyond their wedding day.

So often, we tend to focus on the events of the wedding day—the dress, the itinerary, the reception—when we should plan for the rest of the marriage,” she said.

PreCana engaged couples’ workshop certainly pokes and prods couples to think about some tough topics in hopes that they can unite behind some common goals for their newly forming families.

Many couples who have participated in the retreat agree, according to post-retreat surveys.

“I’ve been on a lot of retreats, but this one may have made the biggest impact,” said one person.

The individual “loved” that couples sat at individual tables, “sharing an intimate discussion. I was so afraid to wait walking into a room where we would have to share our souls and personal details with a bunch of strangers.”

One couple noted that they “had been together for a long time, but we found things we hadn’t discussed. They also ‘loved’ the [Schilmiller’s] newlywed game.”

Even those who have celebrated the sacrament of marriage before found the retreat valuable: “Excellent retreat. I didn’t know what to expect as an older couple marrying for the second time. It was worth our time.”

“I am very proud of our parish leaders and the team at Catalyst Catholic for working with the archdiocese to produce an excellent marriage preparation retreat,” said Ross.

“The presenters and team are so dedicated, and the talks are so rich and hands-on. It will be a huge benefit for any engaged couple that attends.”

“We highly recommend it,” added Tom. “It may be uncomfortable for someone to say ‘yes’ to go, but the benefits at the end of the day speak volumes.”

(For more information on PreCana retreats in New Albany, go to catalyticatholic.org/precana or call 812-925-8355.)

Resources for married couples in challenging times

Following is a list of resources provided by the archdiocesan Office of Marriage and Family Life to help married couples facing challenging times in their marriage:

• Witness to Love Virtual Date Night Series (witnesstolove.eventbrite.com)—for married couples, military couples, hospital workers and first responders.

• Your Marriage: Your Treasure—hosted by the U.S. Catholic bishops, library of helpful blog posts for every stage of marriage life.

• The Third Option (carmehlthoption. org/web)—series of free, virtual workshops for couples considering divorce who want to give their marriage a chance. Upcoming dates and topics:

- Mar. 3, Understanding Expectations
- March 10, Re-Defining Power Struggles
- March 17, Control Issues; March 24, Listening Beyond the Words; March 31, Personality Differences.

• Retreat@Home (www. helloomarriage. org) weekend retreat and follow up sessions for couples struggling or separated needing support to avoid divorce, often conducted in New Albany and neighboring dioceses.

Upcoming retreats: March 4 (deadline to register is Feb. 28) and Aug. 12 in Indianapolis; April 1 and Sept. 9 in Cincinnati.

• Red Bird Ministries (redbird. love)—Catholic apostolate for spouses experiencing the death of a child, from miscarriage to adulthood; free support groups available online, paid additional resources available.

• CRYIVE (www.cryive.com) and BLOOM for Women (www.bloomsforcatholicwomen.com)/for couples negatively impacted by pornography use in their marriage.

• Infertility: select “Natural Family Planning” from left-hand menu at www. archindy.org/marriageandfamily for resources and contact information for Catholic doctors and certified instructors.

• Catholic Therapist Directory: select “Therapists” from left-hand menu at www. archindy.org/marriageandfamily, most in the Indianapolis area, some offer online counseling. Catholic therapists wishing to be added to the directory can contact Office of Marriage and Family Life.

To access these and many other resources, go to www.archindy.org/marriageandfamily and select “Marriage Resources” from the left-hand menu.†
Lenten penance services are scheduled at archdiocesan parishes

Parishes throughout the archdiocese have scheduled communal penance services for Lent. The following is a list of services that have been reported to The Criterion.

Batesville Deanery
• March 7, 6-7 p.m. at All Saints Parish, St. Martin Campus, Dearborn County
• March 8, 7 p.m. at St. Mary, Greensburg
• March 8, 6:30 p.m. at St. Vincent de Paul, Shelby County
• March 15, 7 p.m. at St. Catherine of Siena, St. Maurice Campus, in Decatur County
• March 19, 8 a.m.-9 p.m. at St. Joseph, Shelbyville
• March 18, 9 a.m.-9 p.m. at St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception, Aurora
• March 25, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. and 2:6 p.m. at St. Louis, Batesville
• March 25, 7 p.m. at Holy Family, Oldenburg
• March 31, 5-8 p.m. at St. John the Baptist, Osgood
• April 1, 9 a.m.-9 p.m. at All Saints Parish, St. Martin Campus, Dearborn County
• April 1, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. and 2:6 p.m. at St. Anthony of Padua, Morris
• April 1, 7-9 a.m. at St. John the Baptist, Osgood
• April 5, 7 p.m. at St. Michael, Brookville
• April 6, 6:30 p.m. at St. Peter, Franklin County
• April 7, 7 p.m. at St. Louis, Batesville
• April 8, 9 a.m.-9 p.m. at St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception, Aurora

Additionally, recurring opportunities for reconciliation in the Batesville Deanery are as follows:
• Wednesdays 5:30-6 p.m. and Saturdays 4-5 p.m. at St. Charles Borromeo, Milan
• Before and after weekend Masses at St. Maurice, Napoleon
• Before weekend Masses at SS. Philippena and St. Mary of the Assumption, Oskaloosa
• Fridays 6:7 p.m. at St. Nicholas, Ripley County

Bloomington Deanery
• April 5, 7 p.m., for St. Mary, Mitchell, and St. Vincent de Paul, Bedford, at St. Vincent de Paul

Bloomington Deanery
• April 5, 6-7 p.m. at St. Martin of Tours, Martinsville
• April 13, 6-9 p.m. for St. Charles Borromeo, St. John the Baptist and St. Paul Catholic Center, Bloomington, St. Agnes, Nashville; and St. Jude the Apostle, Spencer, at St. Paul Catholic Center

Connorsville Deanery
• March 16, 6:30 p.m. at St. Bridget of Ireland, Liberty
• March 18, 1-3 p.m. at St. Anne, New Castle
• March 27, 1-3 p.m. at St. Elizabeth of Hungary, Cambridge City
• March 31, 6:30 p.m. at St. Mary, Rushville
• April 5, 6 p.m. at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Holy Family Campus, Richmond

Indianapolis East Deanery

Indianapolis East Deanery

Indianapolis North Deanery
• March 26, 2 p.m. at St. Luke the Evangelist, Indianapolis
• March 7, 7 p.m. at St. Simon the Apostle, Indianapolis
• March 8, 7 p.m. at St. Pius X, Indianapolis

Indianapolis South Deanery
• March 23, 7 a.m.-7 p.m. at Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Bloomington
• March 23, 7 p.m. for St. Jude and St. Mark the Evangelist at St. Jude
• April 2, 8:30 a.m. to SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi, Greenwood
• April 5, 6:30 p.m. for St. Ann and St. Thomas
• More, Mooresville (Indianapolis West Deanery), at St. Ann
• April 7, 6:30 p.m. for Holy Name of Jesus, Beech Grove, and Good Shepherd at Holy Name of Jesus

Indianapolis West Deanery
April 5, 6:30 p.m. for St. Thomas Moore, Mooresville, and St. Ann (Indianapolis South Deanery) at St. Ann

New Albany Deanery
• March 10, 6:30 p.m. at St. John Paul II, Sellersburg
• March 15, 6:30 p.m. at St. Michael, Bradford
• March 16, 7 p.m. at St. Mary-of-the-Knobs, Floyd County
• March 30, 7 p.m. at Our Lady of Perpetual Help, New Albany
• March 31, 7 p.m. at St. Mary, Navileton
• April 5, 6:30 p.m. at St. Anthony of Padua, Clarksville
• April 6, 7 p.m. at St. Mary, Lanesville
• April 7, 7 p.m. in English and Spanish at St. Mary, New Albany
• April 10, 1 p.m. at St. John the Baptist, Starlight

Seymour Deany
• March 10, 6:30 p.m. for Most Sorrowful Mother of God, Vevay, and Prince of Peace, Madison, at Prince of Peace
• April 6, 4-6:30 p.m. at St. Patrick, Salem
• April 6, 6-8 p.m. at St. Ambrose, Seymour
• April 7, 7 p.m. at St. Rose of Lima, Franklin
• April 7, 6-8 p.m. at American Martyrs, Shubskov

Tell City Deanery
• March 20, 3 p.m. at St. Boniface, Felda
• March 27, 3 p.m. at St. Paul, Tell City

Terre Haute Diocese
• April 8, 9 a.m.-9 p.m. for St. Patrick and St. Margaret Mary, Terre Haute, at St. Margaret Mary

• Additionally, recurring opportunities for reconciliation in the Terre Haute Deanery are as follows:
  • Wednesday 7-8 p.m. at St. Benedic, Terre Haute

Authors: Find moments of silence this Lent, connect pillars of season

WASHINGTON (CNS)—How can Catholics and Christians approach Lent this year in a fresh way? In interviews with Catholic News Service (CNS), two authors provided perspectives on how to make Lent meaningful in 2022—especially since this is the third Lent the Church will observe during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Rev. Paul Jarzembowski, author of the 2022 book Hope from the Ashes: Insights and Resources for Welcoming Lenten Visitors, said that “Lent affords us some time to really be quiet. If that’s what you’re looking for in 2022, maybe this is the Lent for you.” Jarzembowski, associate director for the laity in the Secretariat of Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, said that Lenten disciplines, including fasting, almsgiving and prayer, are practices the Church has been promoting for centuries. “That’s the nature of what Lent is. The nature of what Lent is and the season of Lent is about is not to be super active. It’s about being quiet,” he said. “Lent’s a kind of a reminder that we need a little more free to talk with our friends and our family about what’s going on in our lives.” For Jarzembowski, the best way to do that is “to approach Lent with a fresh perspective, try to find that quiet space. That’s the nature of what Lent is.”

Jarzembowski compared Lent to baseball’s spring training in that both are practice seasons.

“In spring training, you practice on the fundamentals of the game,” he said. “You might find yourself practicing really, really hard, to the point where you’re being tested before so that when it’s time for the regular season, what we would call after Easter, you’ve had this time to practice. During Lent, [practicing] moments to just shut it down” to gift yourself with moments of silence, pause and reflection, he added.

But while it’s fine to find moments of quiet, it’s also important to connect with others.

“Lent is often about that inner journey, it is often about our personal walks on our path,” he said. “Maybe it’s having a commitment, but we sometimes too go far in personal and privatize Lent.” Jarzembowski said. “More people are observing Lent than we realize, he added.”

This year, “ask the Lord for the gift of boldness to be open to the question of ‘What do you want to offer to do toward local food situations? ... Focus some of your prayer on fasting, ‘is there some sort of giving you can do toward the good Lent provides in our lives, Oxenreider said. Together with your prayer and your giving,” she said. “Maybe someone you didn’t expect, maybe a local food situation? ... Focus some of your prayer on fasting, ‘is there some sort of giving you can do toward the good Lent provides in our lives, Oxenreider said. Together with your prayer and your giving,” she said. “Maybe someone you didn’t expect, maybe a local food situation? ... Focus some of your prayer on fasting, ‘is there some sort of giving you can do toward the good Lent provides in our lives, Oxenreider said. Together with your prayer and your giving,” she said. “Maybe someone you didn’t expect, maybe a local food situation? ... Focus some of your prayer on fasting, ‘is there some sort of giving you can do toward the good Lent provides in our lives, Oxenreider said. Together with your prayer and your giving,” she said. “Maybe someone you didn’t expect, maybe a local food situation? ... Focus some of your prayer on fasting, ‘is there some sort of giving you can do toward the good Lent provides in our lives, Oxenreider said. Together with your prayer and your giving,” she said. “Maybe someone you didn’t expect, maybe a local food situation? ... Focus some of your prayer on fasting, ‘is there some sort of giving you can do toward the good Lent provides in our lives, Oxenreider said. Together with your prayer and your giving,” she said. “Maybe someon...
Strength to respond to evil with good comes from God, pope says

“Not everyone is blessed with a loving, caring, nurturing father. The words Dad or Father for some folks don’t evoke good feelings. Religious textbooks in the 1970s and 1980s tended to shy away from masculine references to the first person of the Trinity. Unintended consequences followed.

Spiritual being

There was a time long, long ago when the only person, place or thing that existed was the Creator of everyone, place and thing. The Creator is a spiritual being. Our Creator reveals himself primarily—not exclusively—as Father. Jesus goes so far as to use words like Abba (Dad) in encouraging us to relate to God as the kindest, most loving father we can imagine. Downplaying the Trinity

In using gender-neutral words to name the first person of the Holy Trinity, catechetical authors contributed to confusion about who Jesus is and proved deficient in presenting the Trinity as the central mystery of Christian faith.

As a result, many adult Catholics are unclear on the significance of God revealing himself—due to his great love for us—as three persons while remaining One: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. While it’s beyond the scope of a brief column to flesh out why the Trinity is so important, here are a few thoughts:

• Most folks can figure out, using basic human reason, that a Creator exists. God loves you so much that he wants you to know him in a way only possible via his loving self-disclosure.

• The Most Holy Trinity is a communion—a small community—of love. Not only are we called to participate in this divine communion of love, the Trinity reveals to us who we are: beloved children of God called to live not only in loving communion with him, but also in community with our neighbor.

• The fact that God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit helps make several additional doctrinal and moral teachings of his holy Catholic Church make sense. For example, we baptize in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit precisely because Jesus commands us to do so—Jesus refers to his Father and Son at the Last Supper (John 14:6) and Holy Spirit (John 16:13).

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Jesus’ call for Christians to respond to hostility with love requires a strength that comes from above. While many are “accustomed to revenge,” Christians are called to follow Jesus’ example of turning the other cheek, the pope told pilgrims gathered at St. Peter’s Square on Feb. 20 for his Sunday Angelus address.

“This is what Christians do,” he said. But “how sad it is, when people and populations proud to be Christians see others as enemies and think to wage war against each other? It is very sad.” The pope reflected on the Sunday Gospel reading from St. Luke, in which Christ tells his disciples, “love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you” (Lk 6:27-28).

Jesus seems like he is “asking the impossible” or “even unjust things of us,” the pope said. But Christ, who was slapped by a guard when interrogated by the high priest, showed that “turning the other cheek does not mean suffering in silence or giving in to injustice.”

Jesus responds to the gardener’s action against him “without anger, without violence” but with kindness, the pope said.

“Turning the other cheek means defeating evil with the goodness that opens up a breach in the heart of the enemy, unmasking the absurdity of his hatred,” he said. “And this attitude, this turning the other cheek, is dictated not by calculation or by hatred, but by love.”

Pope Francis said that while loving one’s enemies would be impossible “if it depended only on us,” Christians should be mindful that “when the Lord asks for something, he wishes to give it.”

“The Lord never asks for something he has not already given us first. When he tells me to love my enemies, he wants me to give the capacity to do so. Without that ability, we would not be capable, but he tells you to ‘love your enemy’” (Lk 6:35) and gives you the capacity to love,” the pope said.

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Lent is a time to leave sinfulness behind, return to God’s mercy

By Paul Senz

One of the challenges we Catholics face is the way in which our liturgical calendar almost becomes like white noise in the background. There is such consistency in our liturgical year that we often don’t give much thought to the changing of the seasons, the feasts, the memorials and the solemnities as they come.

But the seasons are there to help us mark the time, to help us consciously reflect on the mysteries in the life of Christ and in the life of the Church. Ash Wednesday kicks off the season of Lent, during which we prepare for the paschal mystery—the salvific suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus.

The 40-day period of prayer, fasting and almsgiving brings to mind and unites us with the Israelites’ 40 years in the desert, Noah’s 40 days in the ark and Christ’s 40 days in the desert before commencing his public ministry.

We are fallen and we all stray from the path to God. But we know God is forgiving, that his mercy endures forever. During this holy and penitential season, we are called in a special way to face our sins, to get back on the right path and return to God.

As Pope Francis pointed out in his homily for Ash Wednesday in 2021, “Lent is a journey of return to God.” In this light, the readings for Ash Wednesday are fitting; as they direct us toward the Lord and orient our minds to return to God.

In the first reading for Mass on Ash Wednesday, which is from the prophet Joel, the Lord through his prophet exhort us to return to him with our whole heart, with fasting, weeping and mourning. We are told that the Lord is gracious and merciful, a refrain we hear again in the responsorial psalm: “Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned.”

God’s mercy is everlasting and perfect. All we need to do is accept the forgiveness he offers. Of course, this brings to mind the parable of the prodigal son (Lk 15:11-32). God wants nothing more than to lovingly welcome us back into his embrace.

In the life of the Church, and indeed the life of every Catholic, one of the most profound expressions of our journey of return to God is the sacrament of penance. During the season of Lent, this sacrament receives special attention, as Catholics around the world seek the sacrament of penance. (CNS photo/Michael Alexander, The Georgia Bulletin)

As Catholics around the world seek the sacrament receives special attention, as Catholics around the world seek the sacrament of penance. (CNS photo/Michael Alexander, The Georgia Bulletin)

Lent is a time to leave sinfulness behind, return to God’s mercy

Throughout salvation history, we hear again and again about humanity’s failings, God’s mercy and our return to him. The story is the same every time: God makes a covenant with his people; the people break the covenant; and God forgives a new covenant with them.

The story changes for good at the coming of Christ and his death and resurrection. We are now united to God in a new and eternal covenant in the blood of Jesus. We can still individually mess up our relationship with God, but the sacrament of penance has been given to us to right those wrongs. Like the prodigal son, we need only to acknowledge our sins and accept the forgiveness that is already and always being offered to us.

It is never too early to seek and accept the forgiveness of God. In fact, the time is now.

In his Ash Wednesday homily last year, Pope Francis emphasized the urgency of returning to God. “In this life, we will always have things to do and excuses to offer, but right now, brothers and sisters, right now is the time to return to God,” he said.

We can see this in the second reading, as well, wherein St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, “Behold, now is a very acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (2 Cor 6:2). The only reason we can find to delay seeking God’s mercy is our selfishness, our own attachment to sin.

In his Confessions, St. Augustine recounts that he would often pray asking God to make him chaste, “but not yet.” How many of us can relate to this prayer? It is easy for us to talk about a return to God—and easy for us to say that we want to! But sometimes in practice it is not so easy. We don’t always want what is best for us.

The Israelites’ 40-year journey in the desert was certainly no easy task, and at times they even yearned for the days of their enslavement in Egypt.

Pope Francis makes reference to this in the same Ash Wednesday homily: “How difficult it was to leave Egypt! It was more difficult for God’s people to leave the Egypt of the heart, that Egypt they carried with them, than to leave the land of Egypt. It is hard to leave Egypt behind. During their journey, there was an ever-present temptation to yearn for leeks, to turn back, to cling to memories of the past or to this or that idol.

“So it is with us: Our journey back to God is blocked by our unhealthy attachments, held back by the seductive snares of our sins, by the false security of money and appearances, by the paralysis of our discontents.”

Ash Wednesday is our annual reminder that we are dust, and unto dust we shall return. So, the time is now to return to God, to turn away from sin and accept his mercy.

We look at the ashes and see the fleeting nature of a physical thing—“sic transit gloria mundi” (“Thus passes the glory of the world”—) and remember the eternal, unchanging God who wants to welcome us home.

(Paul Senz, a freelance writer living in Oklahoma with his family.)

Father Dominic Tran sprinkles ashes over the head of a parishioner during Ash Wednesday Mass at Holy Vietnamese Martyrs Church in Norcross, Ga., on Feb. 17, 2021. Ash Wednesday this year is on March 2. It is the start of the season of Lent when Catholics are invited to leave their sinfulness behind and return to God and his mercy. (CNS photo/Michael Alexander, The Georgia Bulletin)

People attend Ash Wednesday Mass at St. Aloysius Church in Detroit on Feb. 17, 2021, amid the coronavirus pandemic. On Ash Wednesday, as we receive that blackened cross on our foreheads, we hear: “Remember you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” (CNS photo/Valaurian Waller, Detroit Catholic)
Inequity is at heart of overcrowding of Indiana’s jails

The Indiana Constitution provides in Article 1, Section 16: Excessive bail shall not be required.

In Section 17: Offenses, other than murder, shall be bailable by sufficient sureties. Murder shall not be bailable, when the proof is evident, or the presumption strong.

The application of this provision has varied widely from county to county.

When probable cause is found that a person has committed a crime, the court can either issue a summons for the person to voluntarily appear or issue a warrant for the person to be brought into court, normally in either surety, cash or both.

A surety bond requires an arrestee to engage a bonding agent and pay 10% of the bond amount to the agent. In return, the agent guarantees the court that the person will appear as ordered.

When probable cause is found that a person has committed a criminal offense, Article 1, Section 16: Excessive bail shall not be required.

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A surety bond requires an arrestee to engage a bonding agent and pay 10% of the bond amount to the agent. In return, the agent guarantees the court that the person will appear as ordered. Each county handles bail differently. Amounts of bail vary widely. Many have standard bail schedules so that a person who is arrested can immediately post the bond established for the most serious offenses. Otherwise, they are arraigned.

In some counties, the person must wait in jail and be brought before a judge on the seriousness of the charge and the hearing where the bail amount is set.

The jails are overcrowded. Most inmates are in their awaiting trial or sentencing. Some are serving sentences. If a person is arrested and has money, they can usually post bail. If they have insufficient funds to post their bail, they sit and wait for their case to be processed.

It is this inherent inequality that has kept poor people in jail while awaiting disposition. They do not have the resources to bond out. In Indiana, we’ll discuss what Indiana is doing to address this issue.

(Deacon Marc Kellams is the Coordinator of Corrections Ministry for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. He can be reached at deaconmarc@archindy.org or call 317-592-4012.)

Faith and Family/Sean Gallagher

Don’t be afraid of failing in Lenten resolutions

If something is worth doing, it’s worth doing poorly.

So wrote the great English Catholic writer G.K. Chesterton about 100 years ago. In writing them, he wasn’t putting forward a formula for mediocrity or worse.

No, it is part of Chesterton’s subtle case that the most important reason why individuals in life are not to be in the exclusive hands of experts or professionals. Everyone is important because we are all individuals, despite their best efforts may carry them out poorly.

So, fasting and almsgiving—are the three pillars of Catholic spiritual practices in Lent—are among these important tasks.

Fasting is a discipline that helps us become detached from what is superfluous in life, free from everyday (TV shows, digital devices) and focus our hearts instead on what is of true importance.

This practice dovetails well with almsgiving. For when our hearts and minds are focused on the good of others, on our own whims and desires, we can give of ourselves more effectively to those who need our help.

Almsgiving isn’t just a nice add-on we can do if we like. For, unlike some worldliness distraction (or a desire for human fulfillment in self-assertion, the Church proposes that humility sees its epitome in Christ, as He perfectly describes God to man, but also man to himself).

Christ’s life on this Earth was defined by His constant delight in the humanization in His dying and rising to reconcile all humanity with God.

So, yes, prayer, fasting and almsgiving are important. And maybe you’re like me and can remember times when you’ve fallen in your Lenten resolutions.

But don’t let the importance of these practices and any past failures lead you to wonder what the point is in making resolutions this year?

Maybe you can find encouragement in these tips to help you lead to experience the joy of Easter more fully.

My family has tried ways to help each other in our Lenten practices. We will wake up at dinner time near the start of Lent about what each person is going to do and what we’ll do as a family.

Then we’ll post those resolutions on a piece of paper on our refrigerator. We also have kept jars for almsgiving. We will put in them any they put in jars for almsgiving for sacrifices they make during Lent.

Even with all of these and other ways to encourage each other in our Lenten practices, I can say from experience that I still at times you might have, too.

But God is merciful and always offers us grace. So we encourage you to take up any of these important tasks that draw us closer to him and to each other.

For God knows that if something is worth doing—and prayer, fasting and almsgiving are surely worth doing—then they’re worth doing badly.
Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time/ Msgr. Owen F. Campion

The Sunday Readings
Sunday, February 27, 2022

• Strach 27:4-7
• 1 Corinthians 15:54-58
• Luke 6:39-45

This weekend, the Church observes the Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time. The first reading for Mass this weekend is from the Book of Strach. The passage mentions guilt and tribulation. Bad things come upon good people, and everyone knows it. Most people, even the devout and well-intentioned, have experienced this difficult reality.

Sirach goes farther. People may be the victims of forces beyond their control—storms, diseases, violence and the wickedness of others. In other cases, they may bring distress upon themselves. Whether the case is foolishness, the deliberate creation of trouble in our lives or the consequences of helplessness, humans must cope. Sirach reminds us of potters. We mold the vessels of our souls. St. Paul’s First Epistle to the Corinthians furnishes the next reading. The reading speaks of death, a fact inevitable for every living creature, but always avoided and feared.

Try as we may, as human minds have attempted since time began, death may be delayed, but it never ceases to be the eventual termination of every earthly life. Instead of admitting death in despondency or fatalism, St. Paul directs our minds to the overall, basic reality. Life is changed by death, but not ended. Life endures in eternity. Persons may prepare for it and be assured that it can be a blessing for themselves if they are steadfast and fully devoted to the work of the Lord. St. Luke’s Gospel is the source of the last reading. As is the custom of this Gospel, the message is straightforward and fully devoted to the work of the Lord. The examples employed by Luke leave no room for confusion or mixed message. No one wonders what blindness means.

Gospel, the message is straightforward and the last reading. As is the custom of this and fully devoted to the work of the Lord. Blessing for themselves if they are steadfast and avoid and feared.

Pure, simple and always, it means the loss of vision. No one discounts the presence of a splinter or any foreign object in an eye. In this day of efficient ophthalmology, the intrusion of a foreign object into an eye is not dismissed as nothing of concern.

The passage’s basic assertion is that, to an extent, all humans are blind, but not doomed to struggling in everlasting darkness to find a way forward. Obviously, Luke was implying that the Lord is our guide in all blindness, narrow vision, blurred vision and shortsightedness. The Gospel hints another nail on the head. Before we can follow the Lord, we must admit to ourselves that we need the guidance of Jesus. This admission is not always quick and easy. Some may have not just splinters, but wooden beams in their eyes, distorting their vision.

Reflection
Lent will begin in a few days. Ash Wednesday is just ahead of us. In providing these readings on this last Sunday of Ordinary Time before Lent begins, the Church calls us to fundamental facts.

At some time in the future, without exception, every person will die. During life, most people will have to deal with problems, doubts, heartaches, weaknesses, rejection and everything in the long catalog of human misfortunes.

This is simply the way it is. But in these readings, the Church is telling us we can open our eyes and see what matters. We aren’t helpless before whatever may assail us, even death.

The sight of what truly is important matters. We aren’t helpless before whatever may assail us, even death. The Lord is our guide in all blindness, narrow vision, blurred vision and shortsightedness.

Give faith a try. This process starts with realizing that we are blind, that we too often wander onto detours and that we make our own beds.

We need Jesus. Period. Lent will be the opportunity, time-tested through the many long centuries, to face these facts, to allow the Lord to perfect our vision, remove the wooden beams from our eyes and to look to him, the light of the world.

My Journey to God
God Break the Chains That Bind Me
By Thomas J. Rillo

God breaks the chains that bind me
Keeping me from being close to you
Chains such as greed and envy
Links such as self-ego and pride
Chain-like links of bigotry and hatred
Of prejudgment and superiority
God breaks the chains that bind me.

God breaks the chains that bind me
Set me free from unwarranted bondage
Let me be free in the ecstasy of your love
Unchain me so that I can begin my journey
Free my legs from the shackles of sin
Allow my legs to move in union with your Son
Do not let the chain of doubt hinder my journey
God breaks the chains that bind me.

God breaks the chains that bind me
Break the chain of self-indulgence
Let selfishness not bind and immobilize me
Break the bondage of unrestrained speech
Let isolation and indifference break apart
Break the chain link of materialism
Allow not the weight of chains to restrain me
Free me so that I can convey your word
Free to evangelize anywhere and everywhere
God breaks the chains that bind me.

(Tom J. Rillo is a deceased member of St. Charles Borromae Parish in Blomington. Photos: An actor playing St. Paul holds chains during a musical dramatization of the life of St. Paul before a procession of the World Youth Day Cross and icon in Zamora, Spain, on Nov. 13, 2010.) (CNS photo/Phil Neriing)

Daily Readings

Monday, February 28
1 Peter 1:5-9
Psalm 111:1-12, 5-6, 9, 10c
Mark 10:17-27

Tuesday, March 1
1 Peter 1:10-16
Psalm 98:1-4
Mark 10:28-31

Wednesday, March 2
Joel 2:1-28
Psalm 51:3-6b, 12-14, 17
2 Corinthians 5:20-6:2
Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18

Thursday, March 3
St. Katharine Drexel, virgin
Deuteronomy 30:15-20
1 Peter 1:3-6
Luke 9:2-25

Question Corner/ Fr. Kenneth Doyle
Church teaches that God does not lead people into temptation to sin

When we pray the Lord’s Prayer at Mass, we say, “Lead us not into temptation.” Why would God lead us into temptation? To know that God allows temptation to occur, but the word “lead” is an active verb that implies God may be actively involved in our being tempted.

Would you please clarify the Church’s teaching on God’s role in temptation? (Pennsylvania)

A
I agree with your concern over the phrase “lead us not into temptation.” So also, it would seem, does Pope Francis. In an interview in 2017 with Italian television, Pope Francis said, “That is not a good translation.” He suggested as a possible alternative, “Do not let us fall into temptation. Abandon us to God’s rule in temptation”.

Q
A new priest came to our church recently and started a practice many of us think is disrespectful and distasteful. When the ushers take up the collection, they put it in a covered basket and march it up the aisle behind the gifts of bread and wine. Then the priest accepts the gifts, places the basket on the floor of the sanctuary, and the Mass continues with the basket in front of the altar. Is there anything in Catholic doctrine that indicates whether we should or should not do this? (Georgia)

A
The “General Instruction of the Roman Missal” sets forth the Church’s norms for the celebration of the Eucharist. Here is what it has to say about the offertory procession: “The offerings are then brought forward. It is a praiseworthy practice for the bread and wine to be presented by the faithful.”

Even though the faithful no longer bring from their own possessions the bread and wine intended for the liturgy as was once the case, nevertheless the rite of carrying up the offerings still keeps its spiritual efficacy and significance (§73).

That same section of the instruction addresses your concern over the particular placing of monetary gifts: “Money or other gifts for the poor or for the Church, brought by the faithful or collected in the church, are acceptable; given their purpose, they are to be put in a suitable place away from the eucharistic table.”

From the wording of the instruction, it seems clear that the position of the collection basket should not take the focus away from the Mass.

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

But I couldn’t get her motivating words out of my mind, even hours after the class was done. I had reasons for doing this—for putting on absurd boxing shoes and sitting on a too small bike seat and pedaling as hard as I could to raise my heart rate and burn some calories and earn a spot on the leaderboard. We have exercises every day, don’t we? There’s a reason I drink coffee each morning: It wakes me up. There’s a reason I call my mom after I drop off my kids at school. I’m alone, then I will become holy and know Jesus more. And I serve others, if I look to live not for this world, but for Christ. We’re motivated because of him. I serve others, if I look to live not for this world, but for Christ. We’re motivated because of him. I serve others, if I look to live not for this world, but for Christ. We’re motivated because of him. I serve others, if I look to live not for this world, but for Christ. We’re motivated because of him. 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Investing with Faith/Kimberly Pohoyce

How qualified charitable distributions benefit donors and recipients

Let’s say you just turned 72—Happy Birthday! You know that you are now required to begin withdrawing funds from your individual retirement account (IRA), or face a stiff financial penalty if you don’t. You’re not planning to take out more than the minimum, and you won’t need the whole amount as income. So, you’ve decided to share your blessings with others and keep giving—as you have for years—to your parish, the United Catholic Appeal, and the local Catholic Charities Homeless shelter. Great! But before you get out your wallet or checkbook, there’s an alternative way to give that’s worth considering. That’s because a qualified charitable distribution from your IRA might benefit you as well as the good works that are close to your heart.

What is a QCD?

Through a qualified charitable distribution, you can make your gift directly to a charity. Your donation can be annual or one-time, and you can designate one or several recipients. All you need is a custodian (a bank or financial institution) to make a gift to a qualified charity. No new accounts. No complicated paperwork. No fees. It’s simple!

So what’s the advantage? There are two key advantages to giving through a QCD:

• First, the amount you give is considered part of your required minimum distribution. As some people have observed, “I have to take the money from my IRA,” but QCD helps you to meet that obligation and avoid penalties. In the meantime, you’re able to support the efforts that make a difference for so many.

• Second, the amount you give through a QCD is not counted as taxable income. Because you are making a direct gift to charity, these funds are tax free and not reported as income. For some, giving through a QCD could lower the Social Security benefit tax and/or the Medicare premium tax. Talk to your tax and/or financial advisor on your specific tax advantages.

That’s why QCDs are becoming more and more popular way to support the agencies and institutions that do good work where it’s needed most—through non-profits like Catholic Charities. In the Huntington county parish and the Catholic school your grandchildren attend. That’s why you should consider a QCD.

But there are even more reasons to consider a QCD. You may have noticed that the recent increase in the standard deduction means many individuals can no longer benefit from itemizing charitable gifts. A QCD still provides you a way to give with tax benefits. And if you’re already planning to title or donate, QCDs offer a way to give more to the recipients you’ve chosen. That’s because what you give is tax free, and 100% of the amount you choose will go to the qualified charitable endeavors you choose. In other words, a QCD means that you’ll be giving less to the government and more to those in need.

Our staff at the archdiocese Office of Stewardship and Development is here to help you consider how giving through a QCD could lower the Social Security benefit tax and/or the Medicare premium tax. But this is a great opportunity to talk to your tax and/or financial advisor on your specific tax advantages.

What is the deeper meaning of how (abortion) isn’t pro-women—it’s profoundly anti-women. That’s one of the biggest points that I really want to drive home.

While her great-grandmother first introduced her to the pro-life cause, Erica has embraced it as her own.

“It’s just not because the Catholic Church says so,” she said. “They’re not blindly telling people what to do here. They’re not making people think it’s only one way. It’s just that the Church says so,” she said. “They’re not making people think it’s only one way. It’s just that the Church says so.”

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NASHVILLE, Tenn. (CNS)—From partaking in the sacrament of reconciliation to fasting to giving up something to give up, Lent is full of traditions that Catholics around the world take part in as they prepare to celebrate Christ’s passion, death and resurrection. But there’s another sacred tradition that dates back to the early days of the Crusades, one that allows them to “walk” the Via Dolorosa with Christ: the Stations of the Cross.

The Stations of the Cross are a mini-pilgrimage, taking believers through the steps taken by Jesus on Calvary, from his condemnation to his burial. The stations are “a way of prayerfully uniting oneself to the sacrifice of the Lord and his love for us,” said Father Eric Fowlkes, pastor of the Cathedral of the Incarnation in Nashville.

And each year of those steps, the Via Dolorosa, which is the path that Christ took to Calvary, and there were certain spots along that path where things were said to have happened,” he told the Tennessee Register, the newspaper of the Diocese of Nashville.

‘That’s where the devotion began.’

The devotion was further popularized by St. Francis of Assisi, Father Price said. And his version is just one of many that can be used for meditation today. Since its origins, several versions of the Stations of the Cross have been developed, and while in communal celebrations each church designates which version is used, believers have options for which version to use when praying them alone.

One of the most famous and widely known versions is the Stations of the Cross by St. Alphonso Liguori. Another version follows the Way of the Cross through the eyes of Mother Mary. Still other versions include those of St. John Henry Newman, the Way of the Cross for Children and the Stations of the Cross with St. John Paul II.

“It’s a matter of preference and there are a variety of wonderful resources with different options for the Stations of the Cross,” Father Fowlkes said. “It’s about discovering the one that speaks to you the most.” Each, at their core, has the potential for deep reflection and lessons from the life and death of Jesus, providing a great inspiration for everyday life to connect personally with a particular person. The priests agreed there are many lessons to be learned from the stations. They are similar “to the rosary in so far as you are saying the prayers, but you’re also supposed to be meditating on the mysteries. In the same way, we also meditate on the mysteries of the Stations of the Cross, and each one of them has a lesson for us,” Father Price said.

“St. Veronica for instance would be a lesson for us to meditate on compassion, to suffer with, which is what the word compassion means,” he said. “Do we suffer with Christ when we encounter our own difficult things?”

Veronica also provides insight into how we interact with others, said Father John O’Neill, who is pastor of three Tennessee parishes—Holy Trinity in Hohenwald, Christ the Redeemer in Centerville and St. Cecilia in Waynesboro.

“We must be kind, we must be responsive and ready to receive and to give,” Father O’Neill said. It’s also one reminder that “God will always send somebody in the middle of the crowd that you never saw before,” he added.

The stations also provide a great lesson of the perfect example of Christ and the depth of his love. “Myself, I always wonder, Why did he fall three times?” That’s a meditation because whenever numbers come up in the Catholic Church, they mean something,” Father Price said. “Three is a number which means perfection, so I think what it’s trying to say is Christ is the perfect person, the perfect model of penance in those three falls.”

“I love that Jesus falls three times,” Father O’Neill added. With each, “he falls for us.”

Father Fowlkes said there is always something new to be revealed in our personal faith journey each time we participate in the stations.

“As different points in our lives, if we are spiritually attentive, we are going to connect to different parts of the message of the stations,” he continued, pointing to the Fifth Station: Simon helps Jesus carry the cross.

“There will be times in life when we are grateful that someone is helping us carry our crosses, and there are other times when we have the opportunity to help people bear the burdens of their cross in life,” Father Fowlkes said.

“The Cross becomes more than just something about history, but it becomes something that is alive in our faith.”

USCCB, OSV Institute co-sponsor religious liberty essay contest

WASHINGTON (CNS)—March 11 is the entry deadline for a religious freedom essay contest for high school juniors and seniors co-sponsored by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ (USCCB) Committee for Religious Liberty, the USCCB Secretariat for Catholic Education and Our Sunday Visitor Institute.

The first-place essay will be published in Our Sunday Visitor, a national Catholic newswEEKLY based in Huntington, Ind., and the author will receive a $2,000 scholarship. Second place will receive a $1,000 scholarship, and third place will receive a $500 scholarship. All three winning essays will be published on the USCCB website, www.usccb.org.

The theme of the essay is “Witnesses to Freedom.” Contest entrants should share the story of a witness to freedom, choosing one person—or group, such as an organization or community—important in the story of freedom.

Questions the essay should address include whether there was a key moment in the person’s life that bears witness to freedom—or was it the life as a whole: whether the person articulated important concepts for religious freedom, and if so, the arguments made by that person; why this person is a witness to religious freedom, and what lessons can be learned from this person’s witness.

Religious freedom is a fundamental right,” says a release about the contest. “But the truth of religious freedom has needed, and continues to need, witnesses. Philosophers and statesmen have articulated key principles and ideas.”

“Advocates have stood up for the freedom of others. Saints have suffered persecution and even martyrdom. These witnesses to freedom show us what it means to promote religious freedom and what it means to be truly free.”

Essays should be no longer than 1,100 words and should include a bibliography. Any reference style is acceptable as long as it is consistent throughout the document.

A consent form must be included with the essay submission. It can be found at cng الشباب.org/USCCBEssay. Contestants age 18 or older are asked to fill out the form themselves; for those younger than 18, a parent or legal guardian must fill out the form for the contestant.

Completed essays with the consent form should be e-mailed to religiouslibertyEssay@usccb.org.

Contest rules can be found at www.usccb.org/religious- liberty-essay-contest-rules-2022.†