Papal pleas for peace: Even if unheeded, pope continues tradition

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope Francis knows his appeals for an end to the war in Ukraine carry little weight with Russian President Vladimir Putin, but he also knows he has an obligation to continue speaking out and rallying others to join him in praying for peace.

In April 2021—10 months before Russia invaded Ukraine—the pope expressed his concern about a buildup of Russian troops on the Ukrainian border and an escalation in the fighting between Ukrainian and Russian-backed separatists in eastern Ukraine.

He did the same in December, in January and repeatedly in February as it seemed Putin was serious about launching an offensive.

Emphasizing the seriousness of his concern, Pope Francis did not summon the Russian ambassador to the Holy See, but instead went in person to the embassy on Feb. 25.

One week before Putin launched the invasion, Pope Francis told members of the Congregation for Eastern Churches—including Eastern Catholic leaders from Ukraine, Iraq, Syria and Ethiopia—that too often “the warnings of both popes and men and women of goodwill are unheard.”

Humility, he said, seems to have “an attachment to war, and this is tragic.”

Still, Pope Francis noted, modern popes, beginning with Pope Benedict XV during World War I, have tried to appeal to consciences and to warn of the “useless slaughter” and the unforeseen consequences of going to war.

The pope also spoke of St. John Paul II’s pleas to avoid the war in Iraq. Those pleas in early 2003 involved much more than public appeals. He sent Cardinal Pio Laghi to Washington to meet Russian President Vladimir Putin, but he also knew his appeals for an end to the war in Iraq carry little weight with most people, he believes.

“Maybe you’re trying to grow in patience or to grow in taking something up and more about who do I need to be transformed.”

“Maybe Lent is a time to intentionally focus on it, but the idea is that it continues and you are different than you were going into it. Less about giving something up and more about who do I want to give up for Lent?”

By John Shaughnessy

Part two

Young adult asks a question that could help to transform Lent—and life—for people

(Editors’ note: The Criterion is inviting people 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 to have a more meaningful Lent this year.)

Meagan Morrisey

At 26, Meagan Morrisey offers a perspective that could lead to a better Lent—and a better life—for people of all ages. Morrisey maintains that our approach to Lent should go beyond the question of, “What do I want to give up for Lent?” to “What can I do to transform my life and my relationship with Christ during Lent?”

“I don’t remember which priest I knew who said this, but one of them once told me that most people think about giving up something for Lent, but the idea should be that you are different at the end of Lent,” says Morrisey, the associate director of the archdiocese’s Office of Young Adult and College Campus Ministry.

“It changed how I approached Lent because a lot of people think, ‘I’ll give up chocolate or alcohol.’ The idea isn’t that when Lent ends, you can suddenly be super gluttonous again. The idea is that you’ve actually been transformed by that experience. And so I started to think and pray about where do I need to be transformed.”

It’s a question that could make Lent more meaningful for most people, she believes.

“Maybe you’re trying to grow in patience or you’re trying to have a better relationship with a parent or a friend. Something that will continue beyond Lent,” she says. “Maybe Lent is a time to intentionally focus on it, but the idea is that it continues and you are different than you were going into it. Less about giving something up and more about who do I want to give up for Lent?”

By John Shaughnessy

Gala celebrates a beloved priest and three ministries that draw people to God

By John Shaughnessy

The nearly 800 people rose from their seats in unison, with many of them having tears in their eyes, reflecting the pure outpouring of love for a man who has touched the hearts and souls of so many.

The standing ovation for Msgr. Paul Koetter during the Archdiocese’s Legacy Gala in Indianapolis on Feb. 25 was in celebration of his 45 years as a priest, including the past three ministries that draw people to God with many of them having tears in their eyes, reflecting the pure outpouring of love for a man who has touched the hearts and souls of so many.

The ovation continued long and heartfelt for Msgr. Koetter on this evening which was also a celebration of the gifts of what is commonly known as Lou Gehrig’s disease, which has taken away his ability to speak and continues to progressively affect him physically.

The ovation continued long and heartfelt for Msgr. Koetter during the Archdiocese’s Legacy Gala in Indianapolis on Feb. 25. Msgr. Koetter received the Legacy Award in honor of his ministry to serve God and people across central and southern Indiana in his 45 years of priesthood. (Photo by Rob Benjamin)
Byzantine Catholic Parish in Indianapolis prays for Ukraine

By Natalie Hoefler

Father Bryan Eyman is not from Ukraine. Yet the Divine Liturgy and Prayer for the Deliverance of Ukraine on Feb. 27 held deep meaning for him.

“I traveled to Ukraine a number of times, beginning in the 1980s when it was a part of the Soviet Union, and I have many friends there,” said the pastor of St. Athanasius the Great Byzantine Catholic Church in Indianapolis.

During the Litany of Supplication, a part of the Divine Liturgy similar to the prayers of the faithful, petitions were offered “for peace and justice in Ukraine,” said Father Eyman.

“At the end of the Divine Liturgy, we had a special prayer that comes from the Book of Needs, which contains instructions for sacraments and various prayer services, including prayers for when a country is invaded by an outside power. We prayed especially for peace in Ukraine and that God be the one to bring justice about.”

Father Eyman noted that there are members of St. Athanasius who are Ukrainian immigrants or descendants of Ukrainian immigrants.

“I docursor for his own friends in the country, which was invaded by Russia on Feb 24.

“My friends in Lviv say ‘they’ve had numerous air raid sirens go off, and rockets hit targets near the city,” he said.”So far, Lviv, which is near the Polish border, has not been hit. It’s the center of Byzantine Catholic Church in Ukraine—the Greek Catholic Church in Ukraine.”

Father Eyman said he and the members of his parish are deciding where to send aid to help the people affected by the war. One organization they’re considering is the Knights of Columbus in Ukraine.

“I’m friends with Father Vladymyri Malchyn, the state chaplain for the Knights of Columbus in Ukraine,” he said. “I know firsthand that the very good work the Knights of Columbus do on the ground,” he said. “I’m sure they will appreciate any aid we can give and will immediately use the money to help in any way they can.”

As the members of St. Athanasius continue to pray for peace in Ukraine, Father Eyman encourages all Catholics to do the same.

“I would like to ask that all the faithful Catholics in the archdiocese to continue to pray that Ukraine is able to push back this invasion, and for the safety and protection of all the people there, especially Patriarch Sviatoslav (Shevchuk of Kyiv and All Ukraine), the hierarchs, priests, and bishops and many monastic people, nuns and monks who are staying in Ukraine, I know our patriarchy is staying in Kyiv, I know various bishops have asked their priests to stay and do whatever they can.

According to an Aug. 7, 2009, article by Radio Free Europe, the Byzantine Catholic Church suffered heavy oppression under Soviet rule.

Father Eyman is well-aware of that past, noting, “I would not be surprised if they don’t do that again if the Russians take over.”

Bishops’ chairmen relieved bill that would codify Roe v. Wade fails in Senate

The chairmen of two U.S. bishops’ committees said it was a “tremendous relief” that the U.S. Senate voted on Feb. 28 against advancement of an abortion-related bill that would have codified Roe v. Wade.

The Pro-Life Protection Act, H.R. 3755, would have imposed abortion on demand nationwide at any time during pregnancy through federal statute and would have eliminated pro-life laws at every level of government—including parental notification for minor girls, informed consent, and health or safety protections specific to abortion facilities. The vote was 48-48 with six senators not voting.

H.R. 3755 also would have compelled all Americans to support abortions here and abroad with their tax dollars and would have also likely forced health care providers and professionals to perform, assist in, and/or refer for abortion against their deeply-held beliefs, as well as forced employers and insurers to cover or pay for abortion.

“The failure to advance this extreme measure today is a tremendous relief. We must respect and support mothers, their unborn children, and the consciences of all Americans. Passing H.R. 3755 would have led to the loss of millions of unborn lives and left countless women to suffer from the physical and emotional trauma of abortion,” said Archbishop William E. Lori of Baltimore, chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Committee on Pro-Life Activities and Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan of New York, chairman of the Committee for Religious Liberty, in a joint statement.

“Rather than providing comprehensive material and social support for a challenging pregnancy, H.R. 3755 fails women and young girls in need by instead offering a free abortion as the ‘solution’ to their difficulty,” they continued. “Women deserve better than this. We implore Congress to promote policies that recognize the value and human dignity of both mother and child.”

Correction

In the article “New Albany Deanery PreCana retreats offer ‘huge benefit for any engaged couple’” in the Feb. 25 issue of The Criterion, the name of the St. John Paul II Parish director of religious education was misspelled. The correct spelling is Kristina Seipel.
Pro-life priorities top ICC agenda as session nears end

By Victoria Arthur

Promoting the dignity of life is at the heart of key legislation the Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC) continues to track in the pivotal final days of the 2022 General Assembly.

As the public policy voice of the Catholic Church in Indiana for more than a half century, the ICC supports or opposes proposed legislation at the Statehouse through the lens of the long, rich history of Catholic social teaching.

A prime example is the ICC’s stance on one of the most controversial issues at the Statehouse this session: House Bill 1077, which would repeal the law requiring a license to carry a handgun in Indiana.

Following its passage in the House, the so-called “lawful carry” or “Constitutional carry” bill—which the ICC has opposed from the beginning—was the subject of an intense, eight-hour debate in the Senate judiciary committee. Angela Espada, executive director of the ICC, was one among many who offered testimony at the Feb. 23 hearing that stretched well into the night.

“We look at this as a pro-life issue,” said Espada, an attorney and former deputy prosecutor in Marion County. “We know that in states where there isn’t a background check and a license to carry a handgun go up.”

While Espada acknowledged the importance of Second Amendment rights, she argued that current state law does not pose an undue burden on individuals. Moreover, she offers a comparison.

“Voting is a constitutional right, but states make rules and have procedures before people can vote,” Espada said.

But the primary author of the bill, Rep. Ben Smaltz (R-Auburn), and supporters of the legislation maintain that lawful individuals should not have to face what they consider unnecessary hurdles in obtaining handgun permits.

“House Bill 1077 gets us to a place where the law-abiding citizen is not required to go through a process of asking permission, submitting to a government investigation and supplying their fingerprints to enjoy a right that is constitutional at the federal level and at the state level,” Smaltz said in introducing his bill before the Senate judiciary committee, chaired by Sen. Liz Brown (R-Fort Wayne).

“This bill seeks to level the playing field for law-abiding Hoosiers to defend themselves in public like they would at home, because the criminals are not submitting themselves to these sorts of investigations.”

But Jennifer Haan, a Catholic mother and anti-gun-violence activist who also happens to be a licensed gun owner, offered a strong counterpoint. She was among a contingent of Indiana members of the national advocacy group Moms Demand Action present at the Feb. 23 hearing.

“I can attest that the process to apply for a license to carry [a handgun] is less cumbersome than filling out kindergarten registration forms,” said Haan, who leads the Indiana chapter of Moms Demand Action, a grassroots organization fighting for public safety measures to protect people from gun violence.

“We are doing more to vet the parents chaperoning field trips than the strangers who will be bringing guns to Mass with our kids. That doesn’t make sense to me.”

“The licensure process is not a burdensome process,” she added. “It is a burden to lose a child to gun violence.”

At press time, the fate of House Bill 1077—which would make Indiana the 22nd state to pass this type of legislation—still hung in the balance.

Near the conclusion of the lengthy Senate hearing, which included testimony from out-of-state lobbyists supporting the bill, a late amendment stripped the measure dramatically. By a 6-3 vote, the committee approved the amendment, proposed by Indiana State Police Superintendent Doug Carter, to provide individuals with a provisional permit to carry a handgun while awaiting their license.

From here, the bill could undergo further review in a conference committee—the mechanism for reconciling House and Senate versions of a bill—or it could be added to a different bill in the closing days of the legislative session.

A pro-life measure that the ICC hopes for will eventually reach Gov. Eric Holcomb’s desk is House Bill 1217, which would make it a felony in Indiana to coerce a woman into having an abortion.

The bill, authored by Rep. Joanna King (R-Middlebury), requires medical personnel to ask a pregnant woman seeking an abortion whether she has been forced by someone to do so. If she indicates that she has, the medical provider would be required to offer her information on services available, the use of a telephone and an alternative exit from the health care facility.

In addition, the bill mandates reporting of a coerced abortion to law enforcement. The measure, which passed the House on a 73-18 vote in January, and the Senate on a 38-10 vote on Feb. 22, now returns to the House with minor amendments.

“The provisions of this bill provide resources for vulnerable women and hold offenders accountable,” said Alexander Mingus, associate director of the ICC, during House committee testimony in January. “This reflects the Church’s priorities, and we lend our full support.”

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

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

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A Special Word to Those Who Have Had an Abortion ...

Do not give in to discouragement and do not lose hope....

If you have not already done so, give yourselves over with humility and trust to repentance. The Father of mercies is ready to give you his forgiveness and his peace ...—Saint John Paul II, The Gospel Life
Christ is the way to peace

"Emunity with God is the source of all that poisons man. Overcoming this enemy is the basic condition for peace in the world." (Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI)

We Catholics begin each year with an appeal to Mary, Queen of Peace; to watch over us and guide us on the way to peace. One of the prayers given to us by the Church for the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God on the first day of the new calendar year, expresses our hope in this way: “The virgin conceived and bore your Son who is called Wonderful God, Prince of Peace who was sent into the world to end the war in Ukraine. In times of trouble, we call on the tender mercy of God … to guide our feet to the way of peace. [Mt 5:9] May our prayers, joined with those of people around the world, help guide those waging war to end the meaningless suffering and restore peace. Our Lady, Queen of Peace, pray for us.”

"Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called sons of God” (Mt 5:9). We become children of God, through our blindness, selfishness and sin, peace disintegrates and violence begins. The Holy Father said, “There is no way to peace. Peace is the way.” Catholic teaching supports this insight—provided we understand that it is the Pax Christi, the Peace of Christ, that is “the way” to achieve lasting peace in our hearts and in our world. We seek this way of peace through the intercession of Mary, the Mother of God and our mother. When Archbishop José H. Gomez of Los Angeles, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, issued a statement on Ukraine, he said: “I echo the Holy Father’s call for prayer and fasting to end the war in Ukraine."

The editors reserve the right to select letters from readers as necessary based on order to encourage opinions from a variety of viewpoints. Letters from readers are welcome and for your beloved homeland.

Letters to the Editor, The Criterion, 1400 N. Meridian Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367. Readers with access to e-mail may send letters to criterion@archindy.org.

Reflection/Sean Gallagher

Martyrs of Ukraine, pray for us and for your beloved homeland.

The people of Ukraine are suffering grievously after Russian president Vladimir Putin ordered his country’s military forces on Feb. 23 to invade the eastern European country. Unfortunately, the people of this country, populated by millions of Orthodox and Catholic Christians, has endured similar suffering throughout much of its history.

This was especially the case after the Crimean crisis of 1854-56 when Russia established the Soviet Union about 100 years ago. In the decades that followed, scores of the faithful of the Greek Ukrainian Catholic Church died as martyrs during a merciless persecution carried out by communist authorities.

Many of these martyrs have been beatified since the establishment of European communism in the 1990s. Here are the stories of a handful of these martyrs of Ukraine, provided by catholicdujns.info, where information on more saints and blessed from Ukraine can be found.

- Blessed Mykola Charnetskyi—Born in 1884, he was ordained a priest in 1909 and joined the Redemptorist order in 1919. He later served as a bishop during a time of severe persecution, was arrested for his faith in 1945 and sent to do hard labor in Siberia. After his release, he ministered covertly, was subject to constant surveillance and occasional torture. He died in 1959 as a martyr.
- Blessed Zenon Kovalyk—Born in 1903 in Ukraine, he joined the Redemptorist order and was ordained a priest in 1937. He was arrested for his faith three years later while praying during a Mass on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. He died in 1941 by being crucified against a wall in Lviv, Ukraine.
- Blessed Symeon Lukach—Born in 1899, he exchanged a priest in 1919 and later served as a seminary professor. He may have been secretly ordained a bishop in 1936. During a period of severe persecution of the Church by Soviet authorities. Arrested for his faith in 1948, he was imprisoned until 1955. He ministered covertly after his release until he was imprisoned again in 1962. He died as a martyr in 1975.
- Blessed Ivan Sleziuk—Born in 1896 in Ukraine, he was ordained a priest in 1923 and appointed a bishop in 1945. Communist authorities imprisoned him because of his faith, and sentenced him to hard labor in Siberian prison camps for several occasions. He died in 1973 as a martyr.
- Blessed Klymenst Sheptytskyi—Born in 1869 in Ukraine, he became a monk in 1911 and an abbot in 1944. During World War II, he gave refuge to persecuted Jews. He was arrested for his faith in 1947 by Soviet authorities and was imprisoned in forced labor camps where he died as a martyr in 1954.

These are only a few of the long list of holy martyrs who have strengthened the Church in Ukraine. At any time, their stories should inspire us in our own times of trouble. At this time of intense suffering for the people of Ukraine, however, let us call on the intercession of these saints as we pray for peace.

Martyrs of Ukraine, pray for us and for your beloved homeland.

Be Our Guest/Ann Wolski

A glimpse of heaven and a few of my favorite things

In my desperation to sing old nursery rhymes and ditties for my granddaughter, I suddenly burst out with a beloved show tune from The Sound of Music: “My Favorite Things” describes a dog, a bite, a bee sting and feeling sad, but refrains with: “I simply remember my favorite things / and then I don’t feel so bad.”

I began to recite all my favorite things, which my 2-year-old heartily agreed with and even added a few of her own—Cheetos, a good book, a dry diaper. Due to the lengthy tune from

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This Lent, embrace the greater goodness that God wants for us

Three fundamental themes are reflected in Pope Francis’ message for Lent 2022. These Lenten themes speak to the challenges and opportunities of our time.

The first theme is obedience. We ordinarily think of obedience in terms of “following orders” or obeying rules set down by a higher authority, but the fullest, spiritual meaning of this term suggests “obedience” or “docility.” When we freely set aside our own will, our desires, and even our perceived rights, we are being obedient. We do this out of love and respect for others, because we trust that those who are in positions of authority have the common good in mind when they establish the laws and regulations we are asked to obey.

Being obedient to God’s will requires openness, trust and love. We must surrender our selfish interests and embrace the greater good that God has in mind for us. This requires prayerful listening with a heart that is pure and uncluttered. “This brings us great joy,” Pope Francis says. “It summons us to become God’s co-workers with a heart pious and unobstructed. ‘This is what obedience means—to change our moods and hearts so that, as Pope Francis says, ‘life’s truth and beauty may be found not so much in possessing as in giving, not so much in accumulating as in sowing and sharing goodness.’”

The second theme is conversion. Pope Francis describes the obstacles we face this way: “Bitter disagreement at shattered dreams, deep concern for the challenges ahead, and discouragement at the poverty of our resources, can make us tempted to seek refuge in self-centeredness and indifference to the suffering of others.” To break out of the prison of selfishness that we have built for ourselves, we must open our eyes and ears, and we must change our hearts. This is what conversion means—to change our minds and hearts so that, as Pope Francis says, “life’s truth and beauty may be found not so much in possessing as in giving, not so much in accumulating as in sowing and sharing goodness.”

The third theme is charity. Pope Francis tells us: “To break free of the egoism we build for ourselves, we have the opportunity, the duty, the freedom to live as children of God and as missionary disciples of Jesus Christ. This call to be obedient daughters and sons of God, together in heaven, made possible by the power of the Holy Spirit, should not be seen as a burden, the pope says, “but a grace whereby the Creator wishes us to be actively united with his own bountiful goodness.”

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Lent calls us to repentance and renewal. It invites us to let the Holy Spirit bring about a true conversion in the way we think, feel and act. Conversion means a radical change in our attitude—from selfishness to generous service of others. The third theme is charity.

This message expands on this theme by adding: • Let us not grow tired of praying. • Let us not grow tired of uprooting evil from our lives. • Let us not grow tired of fighting concupiscence. • Let us not grow tired of doing good in active charity toward our neighbors. During Lent, fasting and abstinence are important because they are forms of spiritual discipline that prepare us for the foretaste of joy that we will experience at Easter when we celebrate Christ’s resurrection from the dead and our own liberation from sin and death. At the same time, “doing good” (active charity toward our neighbors) is also central to our observance of Lent.

The Benedictine monks of Saint Meinrad in southern Indiana have a time-honored Lenten tradition. Each monk writes down on a piece of paper the good works (bona opera in Latin) that he plans to do during the Lenten season. On Ash Wednesday, the abbot blesses all the good works that the monks have pledged to do during Lent. So, when we ask ourselves: “What should I give up for Lent this year?” perhaps we should ask: “What good things am I going to do for others this Lent?”

Of course, obedience, conversion, and doing good should always be an integral part of daily Christian living, but Lent is a time of heightened awareness.

This Lent, let’s use the readings, prayers and intentions offered to us by the Church. By doing so, we follow the Word of God, deny ourselves, and perform acts of Christian charity in Jesus’ name.

En esta Cuaresma acogemos el bien superior que Dios quiere para nosotros

El mensaje del Papa Francisco para la Cuaresma de 2022 refleja tres temas fundamentales que nos hablan con fuerza acerca de los retos y las oportunidades de nuestra época.

El primer tema es la obediencia. Normalmente pensamos en la obediencia en términos de “seguir órdenes” u obedecer reglas establecidas por una autoridad superior, pero el significado más completo y espiritual de este término sugiere “apertura” o “docilidad.” Somos obedientes cuando dejamos de lado libremente nuestra propia voluntad, nuestros deseos e incluso aquello que percibimos como un derecho y hacemos esto por amor y respeto a los demás, porque confiamos en que quienes ocupan puestos de autoridad tienen en mente el bien común al estipular las leyes y las normas que se nos pide que cumplamos. Ser obediente a la voluntad de Dios requiere apertura, confianza y amor. Debemos renunciar a nuestros intereses egoístas y acoger el bien superior que Dios nos ofrece, preparado, lo que a su vez requiere escuchar piadosamente en el tiempo de elevación.

Por eso, cuando nos enfrentamos a obstáculos a los que nos enfrentamos:

• “Frente a la amarga desilusión por tantos sufrimientos, frente a la preocupación por los retos que nos conciernen, frente al desaliento por la pobreza de nuestros medios, tenemos la tentación de encerrarnos en nuestro egoísmo individualista y refugiarnos en la indiferencia ante el sufrimiento de los demás.”
• “Por la prisión del egoísmo que nos hemos construido, debemos abrir los ojos y los oídos, y cambiar nuestros corazones.”

Esto es lo que significa la conversión: cambiar nuestros miedos y corazones para que, como dice el Papa Francisco, “la verdad y la belleza de nuestra vida no radiquen tanto en el poder cuantiosamente, no estar tanto en el acumular cuanto en sembrar el bien y compartir.”

La verdad y la belleza no se encuentran en comunidades cerradas rodeadas de muros y alambradas. Se encuentran en la apertura a “las fuerzas secretas del bien que se siembran” que, tal como nos enseña el Sumo Pontífice, “nos libera de las estrechas lógicas del beneficio personal y da a nuestras acciones el amplio alcance de la gratuidad, introduciéndonos en el maravilloso horizonte de los benevolos designios de Dios.”

La Cuaresma nos llama al arrepentimiento y a la renovación. Nos invita a dejar que el Espíritu Santo provoque una verdadera conversión en nuestra forma de pensar, sentir y actuar. La conversión implica un cambio radical en nuestra actitud: del egoísmo al servicio generoso a los demás. El tercer tema de la Cuaresma es hacer el bien. “No nos cansemos de hacer el bien,” dice san Pablo en su carta a los Gálatas, “porque a su debido tiempo cosecharemos el fruto de nuestros esfuerzos.”

El mensaje de Cuaresma de 2022 del Papa Francisco amplía este tema al añadir: • No nos cansemos de orar. • No nos cansemos de extinguir el mal de nuestra vida. • No nos cansemos de luchar contra la concupiscencia. • No nos cansemos de hacer el bien en la caridad activa hacia el próximo. Durante la Cuaresma, el ayuno y la abstinencia son importantes porque son formas de disciplina espiritual que nos preparan para el anticipo de la alegría que experimentaremos en la Pasión, cuando celebraremos la resurrección de Cristo y su decisiva victoria sobre el pecado y la muerte. Al mismo tiempo, “hacer el bien” (la caridad activa hacia el prójimo) también es fundamental para nuestra observancia de la Cuaresma.

Por supuesto, la obediencia, la conversión y el hacer el bien deben ser siempre una parte integral de la vida cristiana diaria, pero la Cuaresma es un tiempo para desarrollar aún más la concupiscencia.

La Cuaresma, aprovechamos las lecturas, las oraciones y las intenciones que nos ofrece la iglesia para escuchar atentamente la Palabra de Dios, negarnos a nos mismos y realzar actos de caridad cristiana en nombre de Jesús. †
March 21 & 22
St. Thomas More Catholic Woman’s Lenten Prayer Gathering, via Zoom, third Monday of each month. Sponsored by archdiocesan Black Catholic Ministry, 7 p.m. St. Sylvia Pray, meeting ID: 810 3567 0684 or dial-in at 317-586-5124, Peorraine Springer, peorraine@archindy.org or 317-236-1474. 

March 22
St. Simon the Apostle Parish, 1401 S. Mackey Ave., Indianapolis. Third Thursday Adoration, interceding for women experiencing crisis pregnancy, 11 a.m.-7 p.m., with Mass at 5:45 p.m. Information: 317-244-9002. 

Our Lady of Peace Cemetery and Mausoleum, 901 Haverstock Road, Indianapolis. Monthly Mass, 2 p.m. Information: 317-784-4998 or www.catholiccemeteries.cc. 

March 23
Northside Events and Social Club, 2100 E. 71st St., Indianapolis. Catholic Business Exchange. Joy's House Foundation Tina McIntosh presenting “Lessons Learned from People of All Ages,” rosary 6:35 a.m., Mass 7 a.m. buffet breakfast and program followed by 18 members, $24 members. Register by 4 p.m. on March 15. Information and registration: unit1@CFB-Indy.org. 

March 24-27
St. Gabriel Church, 435 W. St. Connerville, Bruté, Sunday, 5-10 p.m. Mass, Sun. 10:30 a.m. Mass celebrated by Bishop Simon Bruté College Ministry. spiritual director Father Daniel Bedel, talk on how the Eucharist forms future priests. Information: Ellen Sanders, 317-236-1503 or sandere@archindy.org. 

March 26-27
St. Bernard Catholic Church, 426 West S. 356th St., Brownsburg. Healing Friday, 6:30 p.m., adoration and healing service. Father Sean Danda presiding. Free. Information: 317-852-3195. †

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5535 S. 56th St, Indianapolis. Surrender All, 8:30 a.m. Rosary Catholic Church, 520 W. 86th St., Indianapolis. First Friday Mass, 5 p.m., optional Eucharist. Information: 317-829-6800 or www.womenscarecenter.org. 

March 26-27
St. Gabriel Church, 435 W. St. Connerville, Bruté. Saturday, 5-10 p.m. Mass, Sun. 10:30 a.m. Mass celebrated by Bishop Simon Bruté College Ministry. spiritual director Father Daniel Bedel, talk on how the Eucharist forms future priests. Information: Ellen Sanders, 317-236-1503 or sandere@archindy.org.
Gabriela Ross brings her gifts as a wife and a mother to her ministry as the director of the Office of Marriage and Family Life for the archdiocese. She also brings these gifts to helping married couples and families make the most of Lent—hoping to lead them to a deeper relationship with Christ, and to each other.

“Lent is a time when faith can really come alive in the home,” Ross says. “Whether it’s a couple in married life, empty nesters or raising kiddos, Lent offers all the sights, smells and sounds that point us to the holiness of the season. Family life is always holy—the Church calls the home a ‘domestic Church.’ But it’s also a great time to take it up a notch and embrace the gift of the season.”

Ross offers a three-pronged approach to making Lent more meaningful for all families, no matter how busy or small changes to the décor of your house, adapting works of mercy to family life, and planning mealtime menus together for Fridays during this season.

Get everyone involved in planning a mealless menu for

### Lent: A ‘time when faith can really come alive in the home’

By John Shaughnessy

Friday in Lent. Cheese pizza, tuna melts, lentils, macaroni, a parish fish fry, she says. “Whatever your family likes to eat, plan out a menu and post it on the fridge so everyone knows what’s on the plate for Lent this year.”

Her tips also turn to involving the church to the décor of the home, touching into the season of Lent. “You can try to include components of desert décor or visions of your home—such as a vase of flowers, Ross says. “Or go the route of simplifying and having more bare decor. Put extra throw pillows and blankets in storage for Lent.”

“Don’t forget to bring your home your blessed palms from Palm Sunday and place them behind a crucifix or holy picture on display in your home as you would in church. The creative touches also extend to adapting the corporal and spiritual works of mercy to everyday family life.”

“Lent is a great time to practice the works of mercy because family life provides many opportunities to offer up your time, love and service for the benefit of others.”

In married and family life, according to Ross, “Forgive all injuries” can be applied as, “Say ‘sorry’ and mean it. Say ‘I forgive you’ and mean it. Give more hugs.”

“Counsel the doubtful” becomes “Listen when someone has a problem.”

“Bear wrongs patiently” can be adapted as, “Don’t lose your cool, and love the person who is making you frustrated.”

“Shelter the homeless” takes on a different twist as “Bring Lent into your home. Invite friends over to pray and do something for others.”

“Pray for the living and the dead” takes a more concrete emphasis as “Learn the Divine Mercy Chaplet and pray it as an entire family.”

“Pray for the 3 p.m., the hour of mercy, and offer it for the souls in most need of God’s mercy.”

In married life, couples and families should also take their focus in Lent beyond the home.

“If a couple’s situation allows them to be active participants in prayer, they should definitely take advantage of the many book studies, prayer services and parish missions available during Lent. The Church gives us a whole season of intentional prayer to prepare our hearts and minds and souls for the coming of Christ at Easter.”

“However, if family obligations make it a challenge to plug into a variety of resources, the Church is encouraged to make the most of their domestic Church by adding some sights, smells and plenty of works of mercy to their everyday life. May this be a blessed and fruitful Lent for all our families.”

### Christian vocation is to build bridges north to south, Pope Francis says

**CHICAGO (CNS)—Reflecting on themes he has touched upon throughout his pontificate, Pope Francis participated on Feb. 24 in a webinar with university students from Catholic universities in Latin America and South America to discuss “building bridges” north to south.

“This is the Christian vocation, to build bridges, Christ came to be the bridge between the Father and humanity, between the God the Father and us. If a Christian does not build bridges, it means they forgot their own baptism, because to build bridges is part of our vocation,” the pope said in his closing remarks for the session.

In the encounter, the pope dialogued with 16 university students selected from groups of four, who made presentations on migration, the environment and nonviolence. Pope Francis responded to each group, and could be seen on the video taking copious notes as the students spoke.

Sponsored by Loyola University Chicago and the Pontifical Commission for Latin America, the March 2 webinar was translated into English, Spanish and Portuguese. The pope spoke in Italian.

Formally titled “Building Bridges North-South,” the session was organized by the Institute of Pastoral Studies, Hank Center for the Catholic Intellectual Heritage, and the Department of Theology at Jesuit-run Loyola University Chicago.

More than 130 students from 58 universities in 21 countries participated in the discussion, including representatives from four groups that were held during the past several weeks to prepare for the dialogue with Pope Francis.

The pope said that universities play an important role in solutions to the problems facing the world. Universities, with a range of disciplines and influence, nourish the minds of students with concepts and ideas.

However, he noted, “a man or woman who just fills their mind with concepts, eventually they become timid, they feel heartless, because they have this only in their mind. But university students must form their mind so they emerge their heart and their hands.”

The pope said he likes to talk to young people, to help them feel younger.

The program, scheduled to last an hour and a half, ran more than two hours and included presentations by groups of four students and scholars, including representatives from the South American nation of Paraguay. As is his habit, the pope, they presented their topics in about 90 seconds each.

One of the students asked the pope for his support or advice on how to move forward with their concept, including much more education, such as a dialogue with college students a new tradition for popes. He responded to them by name, referring to points they had made.

In his response to the first group, he noted that the students had several times used the word roots in their discussion about immigration in Chicago.

“Everyone takes their energy from the roots,” Pope Francis said, noting that his own family had immigrated from Italy when his father was in his 20s. He noted that those who did not learn the language of their new country did not do well.

“They have to learn the language without losing their roots,” he said, adding, “We cannot integrate the immigrant by making them forget about their roots.”

In his opening remarks, he said, “Migrants must be received, accommodated, protected, integrated.”

Referring to many nations, he said, “We are countries built by immigrants. My family is from Argentina, a cocktail of migrants.”

Another group talked to the pope about poverty and food insecurity, which often forces people to leave their homes, their land and their cultural roots. The students told the pope how they help people remain in place, creating “centers of permanence” which would act as research hubs for technologies and initiatives for sustainable development.

Another student noted that based on a study analysis, nonviolent direct action is committed to carbon neutrality and that bishops and priests don’t discuss climate change in the classroom.

Another student urged more centers to train people on nonviolent direct action to address the climate crisis.

The pope responded to these concerns by saying, “You propose a harmony with nature. Violence always destroys nature, never heals it. We must act on dialogue and respect. ... We must act in such a way that people don’t have a desire for violence.”

“They should be able to remain in a good life in harmony with nature. When there is violence, there is no life,” he said.

He recalled a Spanish proverb: “God forgives, always forgive, sometimes, nature never forgives.”

The pope added, “If we destroy nature, then we create a chain of violence.”

A third group of students brought to the pope the current douleur that does not bring close to their people; about collaboration and health care, especially in light of the pandemic; and noting the inhumane conditions of migration often exclude migrants from housing and health care. The pope encouraged the pope to continue to fight for those who are forgotten or without a voice and asked for advice on how better to help people to rethink public policy that exploits natural resources.

Pope Francis paused to think before responding and acknowledged that the students had said they wanted to empower the world “to imagine a world better than the one I am living in now?” the pope asked. To do so, “we must have hope,” he said.

(See video session with Pope Francis on YouTube in English, Spanish and Portuguese at https://www.youtube.com/user/LoyolaChicago/)
to become the next generation of priests.

It was an evening filled with touching stories about how lives have been changed by faith, compassion and generosity despite heartbreaking circumstances. (See related story on page 9.)

But mostly it became an evening to celebrate the life and faith of Msgr. Koetter—a gentle priest who always seemed to have a warm, welcoming smile for everyone, a joyful spirit who so often has found a way to fulfill the one main goal of his life: to draw people closer to God.

After Archbishop Charles C. Thompson presented him with the archdiocese's Legacy Award during the gala at the JW Marriott hotel, Msgr. Koetter shared his thoughts about the impact that being a priest has had on him—and the impact he has strived to make through his priesthood.

“I have been blessed”

Msgr. Koetter was able to “talk” to the gala’s audience through the use of a computer and special software that has stored previous recordings of him speaking.

“This year, I will celebrate my 45th anniversary as a priest,” he began. “Through those years, I have been incredibly blessed through the people I have come to know. My priesthood was a call to help people draw closer to God and his Son, Jesus Christ, primarily through two avenues—the sacraments and preaching.

“Many times, I received a late-night phone call to go and anoint someone who was getting close to death. I never was thrilled to receive those calls, but later, as I was leaving the home or the hospital, having shared in the anointing with the dying person, I always walked to my car so thankful that I was a priest.

“I remember the many conversations with a young, engaged couple about their life, and oftentimes there was a little hope to people who bear heavy burdens, realizing that in the midst of the struggles, God is still blessing us. I hope my legacy is that God is with us, God is good, and there is much love around us. And we need to say thank you.”

Archbishop Thompson returned the gratitude to Msgr. Koetter in his salute to the priest.

“Genuine love of God and people”

“We honor Msgr. Paul Koetter tonight with our Legacy Award not because of how bravely and gracefully he has carried on in the face of great personal health challenges. And he has done so, the archbishop said. “We honor him tonight for his legacy.”

Speaking directly to Msgr. Koetter, the archbishop continued, “You’ve been a great priest, assistant chancellor, vocations director, vicar for ministry personnel and a dean. I think you would agree that the many assignments and titles aren’t what you would want to be honored or remembered for. What’s more important is that you are a holy priest who has been there for others and brought them closer to God.”

Turning again to the people at the gala, the archbishop said, “We should all try to model our lives after Msgr. Koetter. He has lived a Christ-centered life. He continues to inspire us to see the world through the eyes of Jesus, and he gives us confidence that, no matter what comes our way, with Christ there is always peace and there is always hope.”

Besides the archbishop, about 35 of Msgr. Koetter’s brother priests from across the archdiocese attended the gala in his honor.

So did people from each of the parishes he has served in the archdiocese where he was regarded as a beloved priest and pastor—St. Agnes in Nashville, Our Lady of Perpetual Help in New Albany, and Holy Spirit, St. Anthony, St. Monica and St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower), all in Indianapolis.

Six of his eight siblings also were there to cheer and support their brother, including Benedicte Sister Mary Ann Koetter, who drove him to the gala.

She noted how proud their family is of him, and how grateful they are to the archdiocese that he was being honored.

Most of all, she expressed how much he means to their family, from his “fun-loving teasing” to “sharing in our joys and sorrows.”

“We, like many others, have witnessed Paul’s genuine love of God and people—and bringing the two together with his gifts and commitment,” said Sister Mary Ann, a member of Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove.

“He continues to do this with his witness of traveling this difficult journey of ALS with a love of life. He seeks the blessings that are present in his day, and we see the strength he receives from God who he has loved his whole life long.”

“A precious gift”

As part of a video tribute to Msgr. Koetter, Benedicte Sister Nicolette Etienne smiled as she shared the story of how he always gave her leeway with her carefree counting of her strokes when they played golf together. But mostly she talked about the gift of his friendship.

“It’s a precious gift to have a friend who is loyal and faithful,” she said. “I am forever grateful for God putting him into my life.”

In his closing remarks about the Legacy Gala, Archbishop Thompson was thankful that so many people attended after the past two years of dealing with the impact of COVID-19.

“Even though everything seems to be improving, we are still dealing with the effects of COVID,” the archbishop told the gala audience. “The pandemic has changed many aspects of how we live day to day, but one thing that hasn’t changed is our commitment to carrying out the mission of Jesus Christ.”

“We continue through the pandemic to minister every day to the people of central and southern Indiana. People are receiving the sacraments, our Catholic schools are educating and forming our children, our seminarians continue their formation to serve as priests, and our Catholic Charities agencies continue to provide help to thousands of people who need us more than ever.”

That continuing ministry echoed the approach that Msgr. Koetter has always brought to his priesthood—and that he shared during the gala.

“Many years ago, I told the story of a village in Africa that would greet each visitor with the words, ‘God is good,’ and the visitor would respond, ‘All of the time,’ ” Msgr. Koetter recalled. “Then they reverse roles with the visitor leading with, ‘All the time,’ with the response being, ‘God is good.’ This story has become a theme for my ministry. So I say to you, ‘God is good.’”

After sharing that belief, Msgr. Koetter soon turned from the stage and began to leave the gala in his motorized wheelchair, heading down the middle aisle of the ballroom in the same way that a priest leaves the altar during the recessional hymn of a Mass.

As he did, the 800 people stood in unison and saluted him one more time, singing the lyrics of “Holy God, We Praise Thy Name.”

Praying God. It’s the way Msgr. Koetter has always lived. It’s the way he continues to live every day. †
Three touching stories capture the theme of Legacy Gala: gratitude

By John Shaughnessy

A young mother who is losing her sight to glaucoma—and who once lived in Holy Family Shelter in Indianapolis—shares the story of how she is rebuilding her life with the help of Catholic Charities.

A young man who had to flee his homeland in Africa because of threats on his father’s life talks about his poignant journey to becoming a seminarian and placing his life in God’s hands.

A family devastated by the random killing of their 24-year-old son and brother embraces the joy of his life by creating a scholarship in his honor.

Three stories touched the heart of the Legacy Gala’s celebration that honored Msgr. Paul Koeter and served as a fundraiser for the archdiocese’s Catholic Charities, Catholic schools and the formation of seminarians.

Featuring during a video presentation, the three stories shared the common theme of the Legacy Gala: gratitude. Gratitude for the gift of life. Gratitude for the blessing of family, friends and even strangers who touch our lives with light, love and hope. Gratitude for the presence of God in our lives and in the world.

‘Be the light for other people’

The theme of gratitude and the connection with God and others was first expressed during the gala by Tricia Hervey, a young mother who has found a new home and made a new life with the help of Catholic Charities.

“I’m grateful for the first time in my life,” Hervey said. “I’m grateful.”

After Hervey shared her story, the executive director of Catholic Charities in the archdiocese talked about the difference that the agency makes to people in central and southern Indiana.

“Pope Francis says that among the darkness in our world right now, we need to be able to see the light in people, but also we need to be able to be the light for other people,” said David Bethuram. “And that’s what we do at Catholic Charities.”

“The men and women who serve—all volunteer and staff—are that light. We want to be that light for those who come to us in darkness, who have lost a job, who are unable to feel as if they are able to do it on their own, who are depressed, a senior who is lonely, a child that feels like they are unwanted. They’re all people that have light in them.”

Bethuram thanked everyone who contributes to Catholic Charities’ continuing effort to offer hope and dignity to people in need.

“It’s so important that you are able to share not only your treasures, but to share your gifts and talents with us at Catholic Charities. It’s a way of you shedding your light upon those who need to see the light in themselves.”

“It was God’s plan for me”

Seminarian Evrard Muhoza also shared his life story of transforming darkness into light.

He grew up in the East African country of Burundi in the midst of a civil war. When his father, a public official, received assassination threats, the family fled to the United States in 2010 after being granted asylum here. Muhoza’s personal journey eventually led him to Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary in Indianapolis, as a seminarian for the Louisville, Ky., Archdiocese.

“I’m very happy where God has taken me,” he said. “Ever since I came here, I think it was God’s plan for me. He decided to call me to become a seminarian. This place is very special in the way they help us to discern what God is calling us for. And I’m very grateful for that.”

As the rector of the college seminary, Father Joseph Moriarty also shared his thanks for everyone who provides financial contributions and prayers of support to help the archdiocese educate and form young men like Muhoza as priests.

“Evrard is a sign that vocations and the Church are possible,” Moriarty said. “We need to be people—men and women—who are able to see that beauty and who can help bring it about.”

Do good unto others, ditch digital addictions for Lent, pope says

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Christians must persevere in generously doing good in the world, bolstered by prayer and by fighting evil in their own lives, including an addiction to digital media, Pope Francis said.

“Let us be a propitious time to resist these temptations and to cultivate interiority in a more integral way that the human communication made up of ‘authentic encounters’—face-to-face and in person—is an occasion for Lent, which began on March 2 for Latin Rite Catholics.

“Let us not give to us the patient perseverance of the farmer and to persevere in doing good, one step at a time, and to know that ‘the soil is prepared by fasting, watering by prayer and enriched by charity,’ the pope wrote.

Relayed by the Vatican on Feb. 24, the pope’s Lenten message was titled: “Let us not grow tired of doing good, for in due time we shall reap our harvest.”

“Let us not grow tired of doing good in active charity toward our neighbors” and of giving joyfully, he wrote.

“Christians must resist ‘concupiscence,’ the tendency to sin, which is a weakness that leads to ‘selfishness and all evil, and finds in the course of history a variety of ways to lure men and women into sin,’” he wrote. One sign of such weakness, he said, is an addiction to “digital media, which impoverishes human relationships.” Lent is an opportune time to cultivate healthy communication and face-to-face encounters.

“Let us not grow tired of doing good in active charity toward our neighbors and of giving joyfully, he wrote.

“Lent is a favorable time to seek out—and not to avoid; those in need, to reach out—and not to ignore—those who need a sympathetic ear and a good word to visit; and not to abandon—those who are lonely,” he wrote.

“Let us put into practice our call to do good to all,” he wrote; “and take time to love the poor and needy, those abandoned and rejected, those discriminated against and marginalized.”

And, Pope Francis said, doing good with love, justice and solidarity are not achieved once and for all; they have to be realized each day and require patience, prayer and hope.

Salsean Sister Alessandra Smerilli, interim secretary of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, was among the speakers presenting the Lenten message at a Vatican news conference.

Around the world, she said, one sees the “winds of war, after decades of reckless rearmament,” a deadly pandemic, increasing inequalities and fundamental problems with economic and social systems.

But, she said, “God believes in the Earth and cares for it in the same way that a farmer does not abandon his farm.” In his message, Pope Francis is inviting people “to be that fertile soil that creates the conditions for the seeds to grow” and create something “different from the present.”

Italian Cardinal Francesco Montero, a decade-long member and retired archbishop of Agrigento, said bringing about these changes requires a different horizon of facing problems.

People must not turn their back and believe someone else will take care of things but must know “each one of us can do something” and must look for where there is need and see others as brothers and sisters, he said.

(The test of the pope’s message in English is online at: cutt.ly/LentEnglish. His message in Spanish is online at: cutt.ly/LentSpanish.)
World War II changed papal discourse about international conflicts and is one reason why the war in Ukraine has shocked so many people in Europe and beyond.

Leading prayers for peace on Feb. 24, the first day of the Russian offensive against Ukraine, Andrea Riccardi, a historians and founder of the Community of Sant’Egidio, said the conflict “seems to me the biggest war on European soil since 1945, at least for the size of the country it involves and for the fact that it involves a superpower.”

Put on Feb. 27 that he had put his nuclear forces onto a higher state of alert.

The most thorough papal examination of the folly of war to date is “Pacem in Terris,” an encyclical letter published in 1963 by St. John XXIII.

It was addressed to all people of good will and not just Catholics, and it tried to address people’s hopes and fears for the future. It helped lay the groundwork for the Cuban missile crisis. The pope called for international and interreligious cooperation in the promotion of world peace, emphasizing the importance of human rights and dignity.

In June, the Vatican publishing house released Peace on Earth: Fraternity is Possible, a collection of Pope Francis’ words and speeches on the importance of praying and working for peace.

In the papal letter written specifically for the book, he moved closer than any previous pope had done to adopting a stance of total nonviolence.

Already in “Fratelli Tutti: On Fraternity and Social Friendship,” he questioned whether in modern warfare any conflict could be judged a “just war” because proportionality and the protection of civilians seem to be difficult if not impossible to guarantee.

“Can we no longer think of war as a solution because its risks will probably always be greater than its supposed benefits,” one of the main criteria of just-war theory, he wrote in the document. “In view of this, it is very difficult nowadays to invoke the rational criteria elaborated in earlier centuries to speak of the possibility of a ‘just war.’ Never again war!” (§258).

And the time the Pope Francis wrote that nations and factions too easily turn to war, using “any kind of excuse,” including claiming they are attacking another as a humanitarian, defensive or preventive measure, “even resorting to the manipulation of information” to support their argument.

When Jesus was about to be arrested, Pope Francis wrote, he did not claim a right to self-defense and even told the disciple who drew a sword to defend him, “put your sword back into its sheath” (Mt 26:52).

“The words of Jesus resound clearly today, too,” he wrote. “Life and goodness cannot be defended with the ‘sword.’” 

Organizations accepting donations to help victims, refugees of war in Ukraine

Several Catholic relief organizations are accepting donations specifically to help victims and refugees of the war in Ukraine.

Per the Catholic Relief Services (CRS) website, there are already nearly 3 million people in need of assistance as result of Russia’s attacks. The site notes that there is “great risk of additional suffering both within Ukraine and for those who may flee to neighboring countries.”

Other Catholic relief organizations need immediate assistance to provide victims in Ukraine and those fleeing the country with safe shelter, hot meals, hygiene supplies, fuel to keep warm, transport to safe areas, counseling support and more.

Below is a list of those organizations and how to donate:

CRS: cutt.ly/CRS4Ukraine
Caritas: www.caritas.org.uk/ukraine
Ukrainian Catholic Archeparchy of Philadelphia: cutt.ly/CUarchfrp
Pontifical Catholic Near East Welfare Association: cutwva.org/campaigns/ukraine
UKRAINE Relief Fund: cutt.ly/KningsAidUkraine
Jesus Refugee Service: www.irisu.org

A mother gives water to her daughter at a temporary camp in Przemyśl, Poland, on March 28 as she flee the Russian invasion of Ukraine. (CRS photo/Steve Neavling, Reuters)
As we begin the season of Lent—knowing that this, of all liturgical seasons, entails a certain amount of time, energy and commitment that takes us out of our comfort zones—how many of us can say we are “filled with the Holy Spirit”? Yet, the Gospel reading for the First Sunday of Lent begins with exactly those words (Lk 4:1).

Jesus—having been baptized by his cousin John in the River Jordan, and with the words of God the Father, “You are my beloved Son” (Lk 3:22), ringing in his ears and pounding in his heart—embarks on 40 days of fasting and prayer in the desert, a zone in which few find comfort. Upon completion of his fasting, he is quickly accosted by the devil who offers a series of promises—food, power, everlasting life—if Jesus will but worship him. Who among us, exhausted and hungry, would not be sorely tempted, if not inclined, to accept at least one of these offers? Jesus, however, will have none of it. He resists each temptation, rebuking the devil at every turn with the word of God. The devil finally slinks away, in search of more lurking, God is ever-present, providing the hope and promise that should fuel our desire for a true comfort zone of all comfort zones.

True repentance involves a complete embrace of life in Christ

By Mike Nelson

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By Mike Nelson

As we begin the season of Lent—knowing that this, of all liturgical seasons, entails a certain amount of time, energy and commitment that takes us out of our comfort zones—how many of us can say we are “filled with the Holy Spirit”? Yet, the Gospel reading for the First Sunday of Lent begins with exactly those words (Lk 4:1).

Jesus—having been baptized by his cousin John in the River Jordan, and with the words of God the Father, “You are my beloved Son” (Lk 3:22), ringing in his ears and pounding in his heart—embarks on 40 days of fasting and prayer in the desert, a zone in which few find comfort. Upon completion of his fasting, he is quickly accosted by the devil who offers a series of promises—food, power, everlasting life—if Jesus will but worship him. Who among us, exhausted and hungry, would not be sorely tempted, if not inclined, to accept at least one of these offers? Jesus, however, will have none of it. He resists each temptation, rebuking the devil at every turn with the word of God. The devil finally slinks away, in search of more lurking, God is ever-present, providing the hope and promise that should fuel our desire for a true comfort zone of all comfort zones.
Several years ago, someone shared a resource page with me full of ideas for celebrating Lent in my “mommy-blogger” style, the website came with printable worksheets to plan out meatless meals, faith-based devotionals, and prayer, and even a music playlist that was perfect for Lent. I loved the opportunity to dive into Lent with my family and get the most out of this spiritual season which the Church gives us to grow in holiness.

I look fondly on seasons of life that included “sacrifice beans” in a jar. For every little sacrifice I made, a bean went into a jar. And on Easter Sunday, the sacrifice beans were replaced with jelly beans. Small sacrifices, because every sacrifice was transformed by the ultimate sacrifice of Christ, who took away our sins.

I remember watching YouTube videos from the Food Network, trying to figure out how long lamb chops needed to be cooked on a frying pan before they were done. We had lamb chops and fresh bread one year for Holy Thursday, because Jesus is the Lamb of God, and he broke bread with the disciples on Holy Thursday when he instituted the Eucharist.

I remember hopping on a bus with members of my parish and traveling on pilgrimage from church to church around Indianapolis. Lenten Holy Thursday and visiting the “altar of repose” at each parish, to adore the Lord on his Eve of the Passover.

I recently came across my old binder of Lenten resources, tucked away in the bottom of a bookshelf multiple times. I flipped through it. So much has changed in my life from the time I was put together to the Lenten season that I can’t even remember why so many of those activities, which were part of a particular season of life, are no longer present.

Yet Lent has not changed. It continues to be an opportunity to enter into prayer, fasting and almsgiving, and to evoke a conversion of heart. I think this last part is the measure by which we can measure our true progress in our faith.

While some seasons come with Lenten pilgrimages, and others come with Lenten popsicle stick crafts, every season of Lent and season of life comes with the question: Is this changing my heart and drawing me closer to Christ, right now? What is your season of life, and the stage you are in the process of faith growth?

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The Book of Deuteronomy provides the first reading for Mass on the first Sunday of Lent. Deuteronomy looks to the days when the Hebrews were fleeing from Egyptian slavery and making an uncertain way across the treacherous Sinai Peninsula.

Even so, Deuteronomy is not a story of doom and gloom. It is hopeful. All will be well for God’s people if they simply love God and follow his commandments. God already had proven to be merciful and protective. He would not change.

The decision to obey, however, and truly to be his faithful people rested solely with the people themselves. For its second reading this weekend, the Church provides us with a reading from St. Paul’s powerful Epistle to the Romans. The Apostle wrote this letter to the Christians living in Rome, the imperial capital and the center of the Mediterranean world in the first century. As was the case with the other communities to which Paul sent epistles, the Christian community of Rome was living in a culture that was utterly at odds with the letter and the spirit of the Gospel. Surely many of the Christian Romans had doubts. Surely many were afraid since order were against Christians.

Paul urged these people to be strong by focused faith and truly to be his faithful people. God already had proven to be merciful and protective. He would not change.

**Question Corner**

Fr. Kenneth Doyle

Four Catholic women murdered in El Salvador in 1980 may be martyrs

Recently, four women were beatified as martyrs in El Salvador. In 1980, Archbishop Oscar Romero was also beatified as a martyr. In 2018, he was declared a saint.

Is there any other effort underway to beatify Maryknoll Sister Ita Ford and the three other Catholic women who answered Archbishop Romero’s plea for help? They were brutally murdered also in 1980. Are they not martyrs as well? (Virginia)

A Sister Ita Ford was a Maryknoll Sister who grew up in Brooklyn. She served as a missionary in Bolivia, Chile and El Salvador, working primarily with the poor. On Dec. 2, 1980, she was beaten, raped and murdered by members of the El Salvador military along with three fellow missionaries—Maryknoll Sister Maura Clarke, Ursuline Sister Dorothy Kazel and lay missionary Jean Donovan.

In January 2022, a Mass was celebrated in El Salvador at the tomb of Sisters Maura Clarke and Ita Ford by retired Bishop Octavio Cisneros of Brooklyn, and Bishop Oscaralvo Escobar Aguilar of Chalatenango, El Salvador. Following the Mass, Bishop Aguilar released a note that Salvadoran bishops are working on a canonization cause that will include the four Catholic women murdered there.

Q If someone has left the Catholic Church for a different Christian community and is no longer a practicing Catholic, should he or she be allowed to receive Communion in the Catholic Church? For these people, after they heard the three other

A As a general rule, you are right: Those who are not Catholics should not receive Communion. There are certain exceptions: Orthodox Christians, for example, are welcome to receive; a Protestant spouse marrying a Catholic may be given permission to receive Communion at the wedding Mass. In any of those circumstances, the non-Catholic must share our faith in the meaning of the Eucharist, and he or she must lack normal access to a minister of their own faith tradition.

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


BROWN, Antoinette Brown, Jan. 28. Mother of Angel St. Lawrence, Indianapolis.


MOORE, Jack, 89, St. Peter, Franklin County, Feb. 4. Husband of Joan Moore.


STRATTMAN, William, 58, St. Lawrence, Indianapolis, Jan. 6.


TORMOHLEN, Kenneth, 85, St. Ambrose, Seymour, Feb. 3. Father of Kevin Tormohlen. Grandfather of four. Great-grandfather of eight.


GRACEY continued from page 12

century, taught early Americans a set of Calvinists values: purity, righteousness, honesty, industry. Horace Mann, the father of the common school movement, proposed bringing together students from a variety of backgrounds and teaching them principles of character appropriate for a free society. The Pledge of Allegiance that children recite today is designed to promote the value of patriotism. Selected, a public school teacher works for the government. When she is on the job, she can’t claim the same First Amendment freedom a private citizen has. She may be subject to the same rules the class around the 1619 Project or ask the library to purchase Melissa (an Alex Gino book about a transgender girl in fourth grade). Those may well be appropriate lessons for her students. But government speech is subject to democratic control. It is both natural and appropriate that the legislature should weigh in on how we teach about race and gender. And because the ultimate authority in a democracy lies with citizens, it is equally fitting that parents should speak to teachers, and if need be, to school boards, about what they want their children to learn.

Third, if we look at the problem from the other side of the classroom, we reach the same conclusion. Last fall, a group of students and educators sued Oklahoma to prohibit a law governing the teaching of race and gender in public schools. The law violated the First Amendment, they said, because it would “rob [them] of the freedom of speech.” But as I said above, when the government speaks, it necessarily takes a point of view. That’s how a democracy works.

It would turn the system upside down if we allowed court to order government employees to put forward a different and competing set of ideas. It would be particularly undemocratic to do this at the behest of a group who are not yet allowed to vote.

Mind you, I’ve said nothing about what we should be teaching. Only that this is a matter for the people to decide, not courts or bureaucrats or teachers. (John Garvey is president of The Catholic University of America in Washington. Follow him on Twitter @CatholicPRes. Catholic University’s website is to teachers, and if need be, to school boards, about what
USCCB offers novena for those on path to adoption

CLEVELAND (CNS)—An estimated 5.2 million children in 21 countries, including the United States, lost at least one parent, a custodial grandparent or a primary caregiver to COVID-19 during the first 20 months of the pandemic, social researchers and child-well-being advocates said in a new study.

The study defined orphanhood as the loss of a parent or caregiver. The goal is to support two more people.

Researchers estimated that the number of children orphaned because of the pandemic nearly doubled during the six-month period ending on Oct. 31, 2021, a period corresponding largely to the surge in the delta variant of the coronavirus.

The total number of orphaned children during the study period parallels the roughly 5 million COVID-19–caused deaths during the same time frame, the study said.

The study was published online on Feb. 24 by the British medical journal The Lancet.

The study defined orphanhood as the death of one or both parents, one or both custodial grandparents, or a primary caregiver.

Catholic Relief Services (CRS) representatives described the estimates as “eye-opening” and agreed with the researchers’ conclusion that “an evidence-based emergency response is becoming increasingly urgent” to meet the challenges faced by children pushed into orphanhood by the pandemic.

Joseph, CRS’s head of office in Chennai, India, said the agency and its partners have introduced broader mental health counseling and case management services to help children deal with the loss of a parent or caregiver. The goal is to help children avoid being sent to an orphanage or other group setting so they can maintain a connection to their community, she told Catholic News Service.

Researchers concluded that children who are in orphanages or other mass-residence settings face higher risks of acting violently, teenage pregnancy, mental illness, living a life in poverty and being trafficked for labor or sex.

“Just providing food and cash assistance to vulnerable children was not sufficient. Therefore, we shifted our approach to virtual monitoring and provision of food and cash, a cash-plus-care approach,” Joseph said.

She explained how one boy, 8, suddenly stopped interacting with his mother and others after his father died from COVID-19. The mother, who had no formal schooling and was unable to find work, turned to extended family for support. But the setup ended before long, because family members could not afford to support two more people.

“So we had to provide psychosocial counseling [for the boy] and set [government] support for the family,” Joseph said.

Researchers focused on 21 countries, including economically prosperous nations, such as the U.S. and Germany, as well as developing nations such as Zimbabwe and India.

The report also reviewed how the estimates of the number of orphaned children were arrived at through data obtained from various government agencies, such as the U.S. Census Bureau, and analytical practices widely used by social scientists.

The study used data from government and public health agencies on deaths that amounted to more than might be expected in the years before the start of the pandemic as well as fertility data to model increases in minimum estimates of COVID-19–associated orphanhood.

Statistically, the United States, with an estimated 148,300 orphaned children, ranked fourth in the world. India had the most orphaned children with more than 1.9 million, followed by Mexico with 192,500 and Brazil with 169,900.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, an estimated 2,400 German children were considered orphaned by COVID-19.

Since the World Health Organization declared a pandemic two years ago, the U.S. has had more deaths than any country—941,909 as of Feb. 24—according to the Coronavirus Resource Center at Johns Hopkins University.

St. Joseph Adoption Novena

March 10–18

Praying For All Who Travel Upon the Path of Adoption

respectlife.org/adoption-novena

Researchers estimate 5.2 million children orphaned during pandemic

Among St. Joseph’s many patronages are families, fathers and expectant mothers. In light of these patronages, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) created an online novena to St. Joseph for those on the path to adoption, available in English and Spanish.

The novena begins on March 10 and ends on March 18, on the path to adoption, available in English and Spanish.

The site also includes a link to parish resources, such as graphics and bulletin announcements about the novena.

For those who would like to pray the novena but do not have access to the Internet, the daily intentions are as follows:

• Day 1: For mothers who place their children for adoption.
• Day 2: For fathers who place their children for adoption.
• Day 3: For family members of children placed for adoption.
• Day 4: For children awaiting adoption.
• Day 5: For married couples pursuing adoption.
• Day 6: For adopted children.
• Day 7: For adoptive mothers.
• Day 8: For adoptive fathers.
• Day 9: For family members welcoming children through adoption.

The USCCB offers novena for those on path to adoption

 Criterion staff report

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Principal - St. Michael Catholic School, Muncie, Indiana

St. Michael Catholic School located in Muncie, Indiana is seeking a leader to serve as Principal beginning July 1, 2022. Areas of responsibility include the Spiritual Leadership, Educational Leadership, and Professional Leadership for preschool through 8th grade. As the administrative lead, the principal has responsibility for the effective operation of the school following the policies and guidelines established by the office of Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Lafayette in Indiana. Applicants must be an active practicing Catholic committed to the educational mission of the Church.

St. Michael Catholic School is dedicated to providing a Catholic, Christ-centered, academically excellent education that empowers children to know, love, and serve God. Please send letter of interest and resume by March 30, 2022 to:

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Interim Superintendent
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Cathedral wrestler’s state title is just one of his defining moments

By John Shaughnessy

With graduation less than three months away, Zeke Seltzer is like most high school seniors—focusing on the close friendships he has, looking forward to the good times still to come, and savoring the memories that have already been made.

One memory that will last a lifetime for Zeke occurred on Feb. 19 when the senior at Cathedral High School in Indianapolis became a state champion in wrestling for the third straight year.

In earning the title in the 132-pound weight class, the member of St. Simon the Apostle Parish in Indianapolis also completed his high school wrestling career with a record of 161 wins and just three losses. As remarkable as that record is, the scene that followed his latest championship was just as touching.

After winning his match 10-5, Zeke headed toward his father Brian—the head assistant wrestling coach at Cathedral. The son and father hugged, holding onto each other in an emotional embrace.

“Zeke, I’m so happy to share this with you,” Zeke says. “He’s been my coach since I started wrestling. The bond between him and me is insane. He’s always been there for me, and he will always be there for me.”

As for his third straight championship, Zeke says, “It was such an awesome way to finish my senior year.”

Two other memories from his senior year of wrestling are just as telling about Zeke—including a challenge he made that reveals just what kind of competitor he is.

The moment happened in early January at the Team Duals of the Indiana High School Wrestling Coaches Association. In the semifinals of the team competition being held at Cathedral, the wrestlers from Crown Point High School—the team of one of Zeke’s friends, Jesse Mendoza, the Became friends through being on national teams together as they are both among the top high school wrestlers in the country. While Zeke has won three state championships in his weight class, Jesse has won four.

As Zeke wrestled in the 132-pound weight class this year, Jesse competed in the 138-pound class. Yet on that day in January, Zeke agreed to wrestle against Jesse in a 138-pound match to help his team.

Zeke Seltzer, left, of Cathedral High School in Indianapolis, earned a state championship in wrestling for the third straight year on Feb. 19. (Submitted photo)

Cathedral’s head coach Sean McGinley describes it as the match that everyone involved in Indiana high school wrestling wanted to see. McGinley also says that Zeke’s willingness to take that challenge defines him.

“He wanted to wrestle the best,” McGinley says. “That’s what makes a guy great. People stopped their matches to watch that one. It was big for Indiana wrestling.”

The intense, hard-fought match between them kept everyone’s attention, going down to its final seconds, with Jesse winning 6-4, and the respect for each other reaching another level. It was the only match Zeke lost in his senior season, as he won the other 43.

“It was just fun,” Zeke says. “We’re friends. Everyone in the state of Indiana wanted to see him and me wrestle. I wanted to do it for the sport.”

That leads to the third memory that defines Zeke. At the level that he wrestles, the temptation is there to just focus on an individual pursuit of greatness. But excellence can be found in many layers, and one of them includes being a leader, a mentor and a good friend to teammates.

Zeke checks all those boxes, says his head coach.

“He can’t say enough about how much he is as a team player and a role model,” McGinley says. “He’s basically a coach on the team, showing them moves.

“He also knows how to have fun. Wrestling can be a grueling sport. To have a little fun before practice makes it good for all the guys. Zeke set up a ‘spike ball’ tournament, getting everyone involved.

“I really enjoy this team. I really like this team from top to bottom. We are competitive, and they have to like having fun and they like each other. Zeke spearheaded that. It makes it fun for everyone—teammates and coaches.”

Zeke says he’s just following the example of the seniors who came before him, who were his role models in his younger years. Then has thoughts turn to his year’s team.

“This team is so close. We do everything together. I love these guys. And there’s so much potential for the younger kids. I want the best for them. I cheer them on the sidelines when I’m not wrestling. If I can help them with something, I will.”

It’s all part of an amazing four years for Zeke.

“When I look back, I take time to remember all the memories along the way—and bonding with everyone. These guys mean everything to me. They will be my lifelong friends.”

Lenten penance services are scheduled at archdiocesan parishes

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

Batesville Deanery
• March 8, 7 p.m. at St. Mary, Greensburg
• March 9, 6:30 p.m. at St. Vincent de Paul, Shelby County
• March 15, 7 p.m. at St. Catherine of Siena, St. Maurice Campus, Decatur County
• March 18, 9 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, 1-3 p.m. and 2-6 p.m. at St. Louis, Batesville
• March 29, 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 5, 7-9 a.m. and 1-3 p.m. at St. Louis, Batesville
• April 9, 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 5-6 p.m. at St. Charles Borromeo, Milan
- Fridays 6-7 p.m. at St. Nicholas, Ripley County
- Saturdays 4-5 p.m. at St. Charles Borromeo, Milan
- Sundays 8-9 a.m. Mass at St. Andrew, Ellettsville
- April 13, 6:30 p.m. at St. Louis, Batesville
- April 15, 6:30 a.m. at St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception, Aurora

Bloomington Deanery
• April 5, 7 p.m. at St. Mary, Mitchell, and St. Vincent de Paul, Bedford, at St. Vincent de Paul
• April 7, 6-9 p.m. at St. Mark’s, Martinsville
• April 13, 6:30 p.m. at St. Charles Borromeo, St. John the Apostle and St. Paul Catholic Center, Bloomington, St. Agnes, Nashville, and St. Jude the Apostle, Spencer, at St. Paul Catholic Center

Connecitcuty Deany
• 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
• March 16, 7 p.m. for Our Lady of Lourdes and St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) at St. Joseph of the Little Flower
• March 31, 7 p.m. at Holy Spirit

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

Indianapolis South Deanery
• March 24, 8:30 p.m. at Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Indianapolis
• March 23, 7 p.m. for St. Jude and Mark the Evangelist at St. Jude
• April 2, 8:30 a.m. at SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi, Greenwood
• April 5, 7 p.m. for St. Ann and St. Thomas Moore, 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 More, Mooresville, and St. Ann (Indianapolis South Deanery) at St. Ann

Additionally, recurring opportunities for reconciliation in the West Deanery are as follows:
- Tuesdays 7-8 p.m. at St. Malachi, Brownsburg (March 15, 22 and 29), and 6-7 p.m. at St. Mary, St. Martin
- Wednesdays after 9 a.m. Mass at St. Anthony, 6-7 p.m. at Mary, Queen of Peace, Danville (March 9-April 13), and 6-7 p.m. at St. Monica
- Thursdays after 9 a.m. Mass at St. Anthony, and 6-7 p.m. at St. Monica

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, Navilleton
• 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

New Castle Deanery
• March 23, 3-4 p.m. at St. Joseph, New Castle
• March 30, 1-2 p.m. at St. John the Baptist, New Castle

New Savannah Deanery
• March 23, 1-2 p.m. at St. John the Baptist, New Castle

Seymour Deanery
• March 31, 6-8 p.m. at Most Sorrowsful Mother of God, Evansville, and Prince of Peace, Madison, at Prince of Peace
• April 6, 4:45-6:30 p.m. at St. Patrick, Salem
• April 6, 6-8 p.m. at St. Ambrose, Seymour
• April 7, 7-9 p.m. at St. Rose of Lima, Franklin
• April 7, 6:45-8 p.m. at American Martyrs, Scottsburg

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

Terre Haute Deanery
• March 25, 7 p.m. at St. Joseph University, Terre Haute
• 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:
- Wednesdays 7-8 p.m. at St. Benedict, Terre Haute