State champs
Providence and Cathedral earn titles in boys’ basketball, page 7.

Eucharistic revival to be launched with June 18 Mass, procession and holy hour
By Sean Gallagher

A three-year eucharistic revival in the archdiocese will begin with a 4 p.m. Mass on June 18 at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis, followed by a eucharistic procession through downtown streets and a holy hour and Benediction at historic St. John the Evangelist Church.

Catholics in other dioceses across the country will begin the revival on the same weekend on which this year is celebrated the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, traditionally known by its Latin title, Corpus Christi.

Father Patrick Beidelman, executive director of the archdiocesan secretariat for worship and evangelization, said that the revival, approved last fall by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, is happening at an important time in the life of the Church in this country.

“It get the sense that there’s a real hunger and need for us as a Church, given what we’ve been through these last two years and in what’s going on in the world today, to ponder the mystery of God’s presence in the Eucharist,” he said.

“To really rejoice in his closeness to us through the Eucharist will be for people a great source of comfort, consolation and encouragement.”

Archbishop Charles C. Thompson will be the principal celebrant at the Mass at the cathedral that will begin the revival. Afterward, a eucharistic procession from the cathedral to St. John is planned to take place once the necessary permits have been obtained.

The launch of the revival in the archdiocese will then conclude with a holy hour and Benediction at St. John.

See REVIVAL, page 2

Billboard, shrine and service spread the Divine Mercy message in archdiocese
( Editor’s note: Following is the first of two articles looking at how parishes and individuals in the archdiocese are spreading the Divine Mercy message, as revealed to St. Faustina Kowalska in visions of Christ in the 1930s. The second article will appear next week in advance of Divine Mercy Sunday, celebrated this year on April 24.)

By Natalie Hoefler

In pre-World War II Poland, in the early 1930s, a young nun dutifully kept a diary. In it, she recorded messages she received from Christ through numerous visions, locutions and revelations between 1931 and her death in 1938.

Those words are now enshrined in Divine Mercy in My Soul: The Diary of Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska. The message of Christ relayed through the journal is singular in purpose: “Tell the whole world about My inconceivable mercy. … Let no soul fear to draw near to Me, even though its sins be as scarlet. … Mankind will not have peace until it turns to the Fount of My Mercy” (Diary, 699).

Christ set the young nun to three particular tasks: to have a painting made of an image of himself as he appeared to her—known as the Divine Mercy image—and for the veneration of that image; to share the Divine Mercy chaplet prayers he gave Billboards, shrine and service spread the Divine Mercy message in archdiocese

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As a coach, priest gets a running start to help youths focus on a different finish line
( Editor’s note: This is the third in a series of stories about priests in the archdiocese who use their love of physical activity to connect with their community in the hope of drawing people closer to God.)

By John Shaughnessy

Father Jonathan Meyer had a defining choice to make when he first started coaching high school athletes in track and cross country 12 years ago.

The choice started with the way he dressed for the team photo at the beginning of his first season. Even more, the

See PRIEST, page 8

Father Jonathan Meyer, a track and cross country coach at East Central High School in St. Leon, offers advice to runners. (Submitted photo)

Rebecca Tling, center, lights a candle in the Divine Mercy shrine in St. Barnabas Church in Indianapolis. Praying in the shrine are Harrison Fey, left, Anthony Lewis, Addie Sheehan and Nora Taylor (obscured). The children are first-grade students at St. Barnabas School. (Submitted photo by Joe Sheehan)

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Father Jonathan Meyer, a track and cross country coach at East Central High School in St. Leon, offers advice to runners. (Submitted photo)
All events will be livestreamed. And Catholics across the archdiocese are invited to take part in as many events of the day as they wish.

“That’s the beauty of this plan,” Father Bredie said. “There are things of varying types, duration and ways of praying that people will be able to plug themselves into. People may choose to do one or more of those things.”

Overflow seating for both the cathedral and St. John are expected to be available. Shuttles between the cathedral and St. John are also being arranged.

Father Dustin Boehm, pastor of St. Gabriel Parish in Connersville and St. Brigid of Ireland Parish in Liberty, is a member of the planning team of archdiocesan leaders helping to organize the events on June 12.

He looks forward to the eucharistic procession in the heart of downtown Indianapolis in which representatives of many cultures present in the archdiocese and children who recently received their first Communion will take part.

“The Lord, his very body, blood, soul and divinity, will lead this procession,” said Father Boehm. “And look behind. It’s the faithful walking in union behind us in prayer and devotion. It’ll be awesome process our Lord through the streets of downtown Indianapolis.”

Father Boehm also expressed his hope for the moments of evangelization that may take place for the many people in downtown Indianapolis on that Saturday evening who might witness it.

“The power of those moments, though, depends on how much the Catholics taking part in it show their devotion to each other around them. “It’s up to us to make the Eucharist believable,” Father Boehm said. “Through our witness and invitation, it becomes a much more believable thing. It allows others to enter into it.”

It’s also important for us to trust in that invitation because of how we treat it and act around it. They’ll see that there’s someone here present in it who’s worthy of our veneration and devotion.”

Easter liturgies are set at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral and Saint Meinrad Archabbey.

Easter liturgies at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis and the Archch Abby of Our Lady of Einsiedeln in St. Meinrad are open to the public.

Archbishop Charles C. Thompson is scheduled to be the principal celebrant at the Easter Vigil Mass at St. Peter Cathedral, 325 N. New Jersey St., in Indianapolis, at 8:45 p.m. on April 16. He is also scheduled to be the principal celebrant at the 10 a.m. Mass at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, 1347 N. Meridian St., in Indianapolis, on Easter Sunday, April 17.

Starting times for all liturgies at the Archch Abby of Our Lady of Einsiedeln in St. Meinrad are Central Time.

Due to space constraints, The Criterion is only able to list these Easter liturgical services will be livestreamed at www.saintmeinrad.org/live. (These appointments are from the office of the Most Rev. Charles C. Thompson, Archbishop of Indianapolis.)

Do you have something exciting or newsworthy you want to be printed in The Criterion? E-mail us: criterion@archindy.org

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I am willing to do everything that must be done, and the Holy See, the diplomatic side, is doing everything. We cannot make public everything that we do, but we are doing all that can be done. While reiterating that a possible trip to Ukraine was “on the table,” the pope said it remained uncertain.

“I say with all sincerity I would like to go. The willingness is always there, there isn’t a ‘no,’” he said. “If it can be done, I must do it. This is all up in the air.”

However, Pope Francis told journalists that a meeting with Russian Orthodox Patriarch Kirill is in the works. “We are thinking of doing it in the Middle East,” the pope said.

Pope Francis also addressed concerns about his health. During his visit in Malta, the pope was seen walking slowly due to leg pain and often would remain seated while riding in his popemobile.

“My health is a bit capricious,” the pope said. “I have this problem with my knee, that creates problems in terms of walking. But it is getting better.”

The pope has suffered for several years from sciatica which, according to the Mayo Clinic, can cause sharp pain that radiates along the path of the sciatic nerve, which branches from the lower back through the hips and down each leg. In late December 2020, the pope did not preside over the traditional end-of-the-year prayer service or the New Year’s Mass in St. Peter’s Basilica due to sciatica.

“We’ll see if it [knee] goes back” to normal, he said. “But we don’t know how the game will end.”
Reflection

Ancient hymns keep the light of Christian culture shining

Though Venantius Fortunatus was part of a dying breed of classic Roman poets in the mid-sixth century, his work lives on today, especially during Holy Week. Schooled well in the works of classic Roman poets who lived 500 or more years before him as well as later Christian Roman poets, Fortunatus sought to carry on in his works the blending of the glory of Rome and the blessing of the Gospel.

Fortunatus, the bishop of Poitiers in what is now central France in the mid-500s, didn’t write his poems for the dwindling number of cultured Romans of his time. His audience were Frankish nobles, who had taken over the region after the collapse of the western Roman empire in the late fifth century and who had become Christian only about a century prior.

In 552, the Frankish queen Radegunda founded in Poitiers the Monastery of the Holy Cross for women. The Byzantine Emperor Justin II gave the monastery a relic of the true cross in 569. Fortunatus was then commissioned to write Latin poems for the arrival of the relic.

One of them, “Pange lingua gloriosi prodiessum corporis mysterium” (“Sing, my tongue, of the glorious struggle”) inspired St. Thomas Aquinas some 700 years later to compose “Pange lingua gloriosi corporis mysterium” (“Sing, my tongue, of the Savior’s glory”). St. Thomas’ hymn is often sung on Holy Thursday. Two verses of it are also traditionally sung in exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and in Benediction.

Another poem was “Vexilla regis prodeunt.” A beautiful English translation of it with the title “The Royal Banners Forward Go” was made by the 19th-century Anglican clergyman John Mason Neale. The Benedictine monks of Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad have recorded some verses of this hymn. It can be heard here: http://www.RoyalBanners. It is often sung with Neale’s translation or others in Holy Week and at the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross on Sept. 14.

In composing such beautiful poetry for worship, Fortunatus sought to keep the light of Christian civilization burning as a cultural darkness threatened to envelop the embers of the former western Roman Empire.

Thankfully, he, a handful of other similarly talented and well-read Benedictine monasteries in lands ruled then by newly converted Germanic tribes were able to keep them in their mission.

They helped these new Christians form cultures rooted in the Gospel. While they also had strands of classic Roman civilization in them, they developed their own distinct identities that helped fortify the cultural mosaic of Europe, which began to be brought to North America 1,000 years after Fortunatus.

His contributions continue to be experienced today by me, my four younger sons and their fellow students at Lumen Christi Catholic School in Indianapolis as well as other Massgoers church-goers. The Royal Banners Forward Go during daily Mass in the final two weeks of Lent at Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Church.

Making this spiritual patrimony a living part of the faith of Catholics today is a mission similar to that of Fortunatus 1,500 years ago.

The Christian cultures of Europe that Fortunatus helped to found are enduring stones for—and which have spread around the world—are threatened now with Putin’s Russia, of course.

The secularity of today is similar in some ways with ancient paganism—both Roman and Germanic. Both are marked by the ethic that might makes right and by a definition of what it means to be human that is changing for the convenience of the powerful.

The Gospel, which finds its culmination in Christ’s death on the cross and his resurrection, brought a mercy available to all to the center of culture and society.

Let us as Catholics do much to keep the light of this culture burning, including by using our ancient spiritual and liturgical treasures a living part of the Church today.

(Sean Gallagher is a reporter for The Criterion.)

Be Our guests

Susan Hines-Brigger

Reflecting on the ‘amazing grace’ of the Lenten season and beyond

Do you have a favorite song? You know, one to which you remember all the words, no matter how long ago you first heard it?

I thought about that the other day when I was scrolling through Facebook and came across a meme that a friend of mine had posted. It read, “Amazin Grace.” It is the word “grace” in particular that stood out to me. I’m not exactly sure why I was so captivated by it, but I immediately started laughing because the words were so true.

But then I also thought about the fact that while I may know all the lyrics, I might not have really listened to the words and fully grasped the overall concept or meaning of the song.

For some of them, I wish I had paid a little bit closer attention to the meaning of the song. But then there are others that had I truly heard them, they would have provided a needed lift.

The songs that we sing at church can fall prey to our lack of attention, sometimes, too. Each of them was written with a very specific meaning behind them and a message to convey.

But as with those popular hits of our generation, we have been singing them so often and for such a long time that perhaps we are just reciting the words and not taking in the overarching meaning of what we are singing.

I was recently reminded of that at Sunday Mass when we sang one of those songs near the end of the Lenten season. It was “Amazing Grace.” I have heard the song so many times—both in church and many other places, so I’m not exactly sure why I was so captivated by it, but it continued to stick with me for the next few days. Being as it was the season of Lent, it seemed a fitting song about grace in this context of those 40 days.

Maybe it was because I was disappointed in myself. I had let down my guard and was failing to fulfill my Lenten promises and was feeling very disappointed in myself. Yes, this wretch had failed to fulfill my Lenten promises.

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This song was a reminder that even in my darkest moments, I still have a chance to do better.

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Este domingo marca el inicio del tiempo de la Semana Santa, en el que los cristianos celebramos la Pasión del Señor, su muerte y resurrección. Este es un momento de reflexión sobre la vida y sacrificio de Jesús, quien nos dejó un legado de amor y perdón que nos invita a compartir su Pasión con los demás.

La Semana Santa comienza con el Domingo de Ramos, cuando los fieles reciben palmas significando la recepción de Jesús por la multitud quienes le aclamaron al entrar a Jerusalén. Este es un momento de inicio de la observancia de la semana más sagrada del año, la Semana Santa.

La Pasión de Cristo es un evento esencial en la vida de los cristianos, ya que nos muestra el amor y el sacrificio que Cristo fue capaz de hacer por nosotros. Sin embargo, no todo es dolor y sufrimiento, también tenemos la esperanza de la resurrección del Señor, que nos da la promesa de vida eterna.

En este tiempo de Semana Santa, es importante recordar el sacrificio de Cristo y compartir su mensaje de amor y perdón con los demás. Los cristianos celebran la Pasión de Cristo no solamente como un recuerdo del pasado, sino como una promesa de un futuro lleno de esperanza y alegría.

Celebremos la Pasión del Señor con dolor y alegría, recordando el sacrificio de Cristo y compartiendo su mensaje de amor y perdón con todos aquellos que lo necesitan. La Semana Santa nos invita a reflexionar sobre la vida de Cristo y a compartir su mensaje con los demás.

We celebrate the Passion of the Lord with both sorrow and joy

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April 12 Church of the Immaculate Conception, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods, Tai Sol at the Woods. 7 p.m., silent and spoken prayers, local music; open to all. Free. Information: saintmaryofthewoods.org or 812-825-2952.

April 13 Group Lector via Zoom, 7 p.m., second and fourth Wednesdays of each month. Bachelor Sister Jill Marie Reuber, facilitator, sponsored by Sisters of St. Benedict, Ferdinand. Information: vacatioun@thedome.org.


April 15 David Rodenberg is a potter and paper maker. Barbara Rodenberg is a paper maker. The couple was married on April 8, 2022. They have two children: Douglas and Kevin Ceci. The couple also has five grandchildren.

April 16 Our Lady of Peace Cemetery and Conference Center, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. Easter Bunch, seating times 9 a.m.-11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m., $34.99 adults, $33.99 seniors 62 and older, $17.50 children ages 5-11, $14.00 children 4 and younger, free purchaser, free tickets in advance, no walk-ins. Information and registration: 812-933-0376 or glanum@oldenburgacademy.org.

April 17 Our Lady of Peace Cemetery and Conference Center, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. Great Stories from the Bible. 9 a.m.-11 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. Information: 317-784-4439 or www.catholiccemeteries.cc.


April 19 Our Lady of Peace Cemetery and Conference Center, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. Rosary Catholic Church, 520 Haverstick Road, Indianapolis. Saturday: 8 a.m.-4 p.m., $35 per day, includes lunch and materials. Registration: saintmaryofthewoods.org/retreats or 317-545-7681.


April 21 St. Joseph Church, April 14, 3 Sisters, Bloomingdale, 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.


April 23 Our Lady of Peace Cemetery and Conference Center, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. Eucharistic adoration, 11:30 a.m.-11:30 p.m. Information: 317-923-8817.

April 24 Our Lady of Peace Cemetery and Conference Center, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. Eucharistic adoration, 11:30 a.m.-11:30 p.m. Information: 317-923-8817.

April 25 May 4 St. Anthony Dr. Mt. St. Francis. Pilgrimage: Creation, 9 a.m.-2 p.m., walking pilgrimage lead by Canon Franciscan Father Vincent Peterson, bring water bottle and lunch, rain or shine. $25. Information and registration: mountsfstfranciscan.org or 812-923-8817.


May 14 Mount St. Francis Center for Spirituality, 1 Sisters of Providence, St. Mary, 3 p.m. Information and registration: 317-545-7681 or franciscan@archindy.org.
Cathedral pursues a path of perseverance to become state champs

By John Shaughnessy

Less than 48 hours after guiding the boys’ basketball team of Cathedral High School in Indianapolis to a state championship, head coach Jason Delaney was in the midst of dealing with his own range of emotions.

Delaney believes that “God gives each and every one of us a platform” to make a difference. As a coach, he believes that his purpose includes helping young people “to display perseverance to achieve the best within themselves.”

Cathedral’s path to the state championship required that perseverance. The school’s boys’ basketball teams hadn’t won a sectional game since 2015, and this year’s team of mostly seniors and juniors knew the heartbreak of being part of talented teams that weren’t able to break that streak.

At the same time, Delaney felt a touch of sorrow as he walked through the team’s locker room earlier that day, knowing he wouldn’t again share that space with this team, especially its six seniors:

“Each team has its own unique story. This is such a special group. You’re sad to see the seniors go. You love them so much.”

The thread that connects the joy and the sadness for Delaney is the pride he has in this group of players. He shared a list of the qualities that defined the Cathedral teammates, starting with their selflessness, even though many of the games, including in the state championship, were considered a decided underdog in many of the games, including in the state championship.

“We really had to go through the gauntlet of the best teams in our state run,” Miller said. “Every year in the state and across the country, everyone is trying so hard to do this, to win a championship. And that’s why I feel so blessed.”

“There’s just an overwhelming sense of gratitude for everyone who helped make this most special journey possible.”

To prepare this year’s team even more, Delaney said, “we built an extremely difficult schedule to test ourselves. We wanted to face adversity.”

The defining moment of adversity came on the weekend of Feb. 18-19. On the first game of that weekend, Cathedral built a 9-point halftime lead against the team from Ben Davis High School, only to play poorly in the second half and lose, their coach recalled.

The next day, they traveled to Kentucky to face that state’s second-ranked team. When Cathedral won that game by a point in overtime, Delaney saw his team’s perseverance on full display.

“They continued to persevere in the same tough sectional that had ruined their dreams previously, winning three games. And all that perseverance turned to dominance in the state championship game.”

“The whole foundation of everything is to believe,” Delaney said. “You have to have patience and believe in what you’re doing. Things didn’t go our way the first few years with this group. But everybody stayed true to what we believe. They just continued to believe and took the actions to get where they wanted.”

That belief also included the understanding that the journey of a season is more than just about striving to win a state championship, Delaney said.

“It’s not just about basketball, it’s about building a relationship with God. We did Bible studies. We prayed before every practice, every game, every meal.”

The prayers were shared from every direction. Sometimes, they came from one of the six seniors: Tayshawn Comer, Jaxson Edwards, Jaiden Malichi, Gabe Rodriguez, Luke Hem and Jeren Conway. Sometimes a prayer came from the senior student manager, Thomas McDonnell. Sometimes, it came from the other players and assistant coaches.

One of the prayers that was answered was a state championship.

“To see them sacrifice for the greater good of the team, that’s amazing,” Delaney said. “They all had a bigger goal in mind. That’s not the norm of our society.”
choice was about his approach to coaching at a public high school. 

“Before I first started coaching, I had to make a decision,” he says. “Am I going to be a man who coaches who happens to be a priest? Or will I be a priest who happens to coach?” 

“I decided the latter. The first day we had team photos, I was wearing a Roman collar. The head coach said, ‘Are you going to wear that?’ I said, ‘I’m a priest. It’s who I am, isn’t it?’ He said, ‘Yes, Father.’” 

Beginning in 2010, Father Meyer coached for four years at Jimtown High School in North Vernon. For the past eight years, he has coached track and cross country at East Central High School in St. Leon. In southeastern Indiana. “It’s another commitment in a schedule already filled with them as he serves as the pastor, along with Father Daniel Mahan, of All Saints Parish in Delphi. It’s tough,” Larry opposition Parish in Lawrenceburg, St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception Parish in Aurora, and St. Teresa Benedetta of the Cross Parish in Bright. 

Yet coaching—like being a priest—is another commitment that brings him great joy. 

“I really see it as the ability to help people strive for greatness,” he says. “When I became a priest, I wanted to help people know Jesus, change their lives and become saints. I became a coach to help people change their lives, strive for greatness and oftentimes introduce them to the Gospel. 

“In the past few years, I’ve had athletes who have become baptized. I’ve had families of athletes come back to the faith. Every single day, I have the opportunity to be a witness to the Gospel—what it means to be a priest, a person of faith—at a public school. That’s powerful. Every day, I have the potential to impact people’s lives. It’s been a crazy, crazy journey.”

‘They want something more out of life’ 

At 45, Father Meyer not only coaches the boys’ and girls’ distance runners, he trains with them. On a six-mile run, he averages just seven minutes a mile. He also lines up with the high school athletes for a series of speed drills that includes runs of 100 meters, 200 meters, 300 meters, 400 meters, 300 meters, 200 meters and 100 meters. 

“All at race pace,” he says. 

Still, Father Meyer ultimately seeks to set an example—and with a focus on a different finish line. 

“The most influential people in a young person’s lives are their parents and their coaches,” he says. “There are really bad coaches who have made life miserable for kids. There are a lot of good coaches who challenge young people physically and mentally. I have the opportunity to also challenge them spiritually, to be a witness to the faith. 

“I’m blessed to have other young parishioners who are part of the team who do the same. Young people who don’t have someone to ask questions. They want to know what we have. They want faith, purpose, meaning. They want something more out of life.”

Travis Bender was one of the runners searching for more in his life when he first met Father Meyer. The 2019 graduate of East Central says he found it with the help of his coach. 

“What really stands out to me about Father Meyer as a man of faith is that he truly lives it,” Bender says. 

“Whenver Father walks into a room, he truly gets everyone’s attention. Father has built up a great deal of respect, and you can feel it. He does not shove his faith in your face, either. He would pray for us consistentp. 

And whether you are religious or not, you could feel his deep love for you as a person. This applied to all of his runners. 

“Father had and still has an immense impact on the way that I live my own faith. I was not born a Catholic, and not only recently, as of April 1, 2023, was I baptized and confirmed. Father Meyer played a humongous role in my conversion and helped to teach me in the ways of the Catholic Church. 

‘I’m a priest for everyone there’ 

The priest also makes a difference through his coaching style. 

“Father would always encourage you no matter what,” says Bender, a member of All Saints Parish. “He would take the time to get to know you personally as well. I distinctly remember walking with him at a cross country race one time, and he had asked me how I was doing as I planned on in the future. It meant a lot to me that we had talked at length about me. 

“Another great thing about him is that he runs the workouts/practices with the team. He is there side-by-side with you every step of the way, encouraging you to keep going. He would not just tell us what we had to do, he would come and experience it with us.”

For Father Meyer, it’s all part of being a priest who coaches. 

At meets, he wears his Roman collar. He plays with the runners who want that connection. He talks with parents and families who seek him out for a conversation. And he is open to sharing these outreachs with runners, parents and families from other high schools who compete in meets against East Central. 

“Even though I’m a coach for East Central, I’m a priest for everyone there,” he says. 

“For me, it’s all about spiritual fatherhood. At this point, I see coaching as an extension of my priesthood. I have the ability to be a father to the children I coach every day. It’s a tremendous blessing.”

Father Jonathan Meyer, shown here addressing the track team of East Central High School in St. Leon, says coaching track and cross country bring him great joy. 

‘Whether at practice or a meet, he can always be found wearing clerics because he is “a priest who happens to coach.” [Submitted photo]
her, and to establish the first Sunday after Easter as the feast of Divine Mercy. Pope John Paul II fulfilled the last of the tasks on April 30, 2000, the same day he canonized the Polish nun as a saint.

Before and especially since then, the message of Divine Mercy has found a responsive audience.

In the archdiocese, many parishes now hold Divine Mercy Sunday prayer services. Some parishes have permanent Divine Mercy shrines—one parish even shares the image on a leased billboard along a busy highway.

This article will tell the story of how St. Barnabas Parish in Indianapolis and individuals in Holy Trinity Parish in Edinburgh and St. Ambrose Parish in Seymour are promoting Christ’s message of Divine Mercy.

An image larger than life

“After a while, Jesus said to me, ‘Paint an image according to the pattern you see, with the signature: Jesus, I trust in You. I desire that this image be venerated … throughout the world.’” (Diary, 47)

Joanne Hollenbeck was learning about Divine Mercy through an adult faith formation group at her parish, Holy Trinity in Edinburgh.

While in the midst of the study, she was driving through southern Indiana when a sight surprised her.

“There was a billboard with the Divine Mercy image on it,” she recalled.

“I thought, ‘That’s too weird! Here I am studying about Divine Mercy, and there it is!’”

Shortly after the encounter, she noticed a blank billboard near U.S. 31 and State Route 252 East near Edinburgh.

She discussed with the faith formation group the idea of leasing the billboard for a Divine Mercy image.

“Hollenbeck said, ‘I got the design online.’ Hollenbeck explained. ‘I called the billboard company, and actually there were two billboards available together. So we added a pro-life one, too.’

Donations were gathered from individuals and through bulletin announcements, and enough was raised to lease the billboards for one year starting in March of 2021, and recently to renew the lease for another year.

Deacon Russell Woodard, parish life coordinator of Holy Trinity, worked on the project with Hollenbeck. He blessed the billboard once the image was in place.

“He was wondering how he was going to get water up that high, then it started to sprinkle—I God took care of that,” she said.

When the billboard was first displayed, “There’s no way to measure that,” she said. But she hopes the image on the billboard will bring “an awareness that God is in control and that we need to turn to him, especially during these tough times. I hope seeing him there will make people say, ‘I need to pray today’ or give thanks that he is there.”

Such is the effect the billboard has on Hollenbeck.

“I pass it multiple times a day,” she said. “It reminds me to offer little prayers at the bottom of the image, ‘Jesus, I trust in you.’

‘I have had many blessings’

“I desire that the Feast of Mercy be a refuge and shelter for all souls, and especially for poor sinners. On that day the very depths of tender mercy are open.” (Diary, 699)

Marisa Soto of St. Ambrose Parish recalls first learning about Divine Mercy just two years after St. Faustina was canonized and Divine Mercy Sunday was established.

“Back in 2002, I started to read the diary of St. Faustina,” she said, with her daughter Samantha Soto translating from Spanish. “That’s when my devotion started.”

Four or five years later, Soto felt called to encourage her parish to honor Divine Mercy Sunday and to pray the Divine Mercy novena that starts nine days prior to the feast day.

“I spoke with the pastor at the time, Father Todd [Goodson], and also spoke with our pastor now, Father Dan [Staublin], and continue to reserve this day to celebrate annually.”

To pray the novena nine days prior to the feast, Soto used to take a Divine Mercy image she owns to people’s homes.

“We do it all at the church at 3 p.m. starting on Good Friday,” she said.

Soto also organizes a bilingual service at St. Ambrose Church on the feast day with the image on display, songs, the praying of the Divine Mercy chaplet and a reception afterward.

“It is important to promote the message of the Divine Mercy because Jesus promised St. Faustina that whoever honors the image should not perish,” she said. Her statement reflects Christ’s words to the saint, as recorded in paragraph 48 of her diary: “I promise that the soul that venerates this image will not perish… I myself will defend it as my own glory.”

As for Soto, “Ever since I have prayed the chaplet of Divine Mercy and have celebrated [the feast day], I have had many blessings,” she said. “God willing, I plan [the novena and feast day celebration] every year to come.”

“We’re to be mercy for one another”

“I am giving you three ways of exercising mercy toward your neighbor: the first—by deed, the second—by word, the third—by prayer. In these three degrees is contained the fullness of mercy…” (Diary 742)

When Father Guy Roberts was assigned to St. Barnabas Parish in Indianapolis in 2021, he noticed an empty space in the sanctuary of the church.

He had a vision for that space, and the parish council approved: it would become a small Divine Mercy shrine.

“Father left it to me to shop around and see what images were out there and what other church furnishing would fit in that space,” said Joe Sheehan, director of faith formation at St. Barnabas.

Many versions of the Divine Mercy image exist. Sheehan chose one that depicts the original image commissioned by St. Faustina. Kneelers and votive candles complete the shrine.

The creation of the shrine has provided an opportunity for catechesis.

“When the image was first displayed, Father [Roberts] talked at all the school Masses in late January about the message of St. Faustina and the visions she received, what mercy is and how Divine Mercy Sunday holds the idea of mercy that we receive and are in turn called to share,” said Sheehan.

For myself in my position, I’ve been asked by teachers to give presentations in their classes about St. Faustina, the image, the novena, the Divine Mercy chaplet,” he said. The students were also given laminated prayer cards of the original Divine Mercy image.

The parish has included information in its bulletin and newsletter “that highlight diary passages appearing the red and white rays [emanating from Christ’s heart in the image], the chaplet and instructions on how to pray it,” said Sheehan.

“Father has talked at homilies about how [the shrine] highlights the importance of the message of mercy, how we’re to be mercy to one another and our own need for mercy as well.”

(For more information on the Divine Mercy message, image, feast, chaplet and novena, go to thedivinemercy.org)
Environmental justice activist will receive Laetare Medal

SOUTH BEND, Ind. (CNS)—Sharon Lavigne, an environmental justice activist, will receive the University of Notre Dame’s 2022 Laetare Medal, the oldest and most prestigious honor given to American Catholics. It will be presented at the university’s May 15 graduation ceremony.

Lavigne is the founder and director of Rise St. James—a faith-based grassroots organization fighting for environmental justice in St. James Civil Parish—the equivalent of a county—in Louisiana.

A retired special education teacher, she has always lived in St. James Parish and has watched the region transform from an idyllic farmland into an area plagued by industrial pollution.

“Forthertless activism, Lavigne has heeded God’s call to advocate for the health of her community and the planet—and to help put an end to environmental degradation which so often disproportionately victimizes communities of color,” said Holy Cross Father John Jenkins, president of Notre Dame.

“In awarding her the Laetare Medal, Notre Dame recognizes her leadership and her courage as a champion of theenvironment, a voice for the marginalized and a steadfast servant of our Creator.”

St. James Parish includes part of an area nicknamed “cancer alley,” an 85-mile stretch of land along the Mississippi River that has more than 150 petrochemical plants and refineries and where cancer rates are more than two times that of the rest of the United States.

Although Lavigne never envisioned herself as an activist, she was inspired to create Rise St. James in 2018 when a plastics corporation received the go-ahead to build another plant in her home. At the time, many in her community believed that fighting the proposed multimillion-dollar manufacturing facility was an uphill battle.

Lavigne and the members of Rise St. James successfully campaigned against the very construction of a plant proposed by Wanhua Chemical. They organized marches, spoke out at town hall and parish council meetings, partnered with other environmental justice organizations, and produced signs, ads and reports on the negative health and environmental impact of the industry’s pollutants.

In September 2019, Wanhua withdrew its land use application.

The group is currently working to stop construction of a $9.4 billion chemical plant proposed by Formosa Plastics.

For her efforts, Lavigne received the Goldman Environmental Prize in 2021 and has been named to the Forbes “50 over 50” impact list.

A lifelong member of St. James Parish, Lavigne said that her faith has buoyed her throughout her journey and that her advocacy work has brought her closer to God.

“I know he has me here for a reason, so I can’t not be here,” Lavigne said in a statement. “I want to do the work that he wants me to do. He put a fight in me that I can’t just walk away from. I’ve gotten closer to him. And I’m so glad I’m closer to him because now we can fight anything.”

Notre Dame announced that Archbishop Borys Gudziak, metropolitan archbishop for Ukrainian Greek Catholics in the U.S., will be the principal speaker and receive an honorary degree at the graduation ceremony.

The archbishop heads the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Archeparchy of Philadelphia. “I will use this opportunity to acknowledge the kindness, faculty and staff at Notre Dame who have demonstrated continued solidarity with Ukraine over this past month and I know that they will benefit and appreciate hearing the words of Archbishop Gudziak at our graduation celebration in May,” Father Jenkins said in a statement.

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**
- April 8, 9 a.m. at St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception, Aurora
- April 8, 6-7 p.m. at St. Nicholas, Ripley County
- April 9, 4-5 p.m. at St. Charles Borromeo, Milan
- April 13, 5-6 p.m. at St. Charles Borromeo, Milan

**Bloomington Deanery**
- April 13, 6-7 p.m. for St. Charles Borromeo, Milan
- April 9, 10 a.m. at Ss. Philomena and Cecilia, Oak Forest
- April 10, 11 a.m. at St. Anthony, Starlight

**Indianapolis West Deanery**
- April 10, 9 a.m. at St. Anthony
- April 10, 12-2 p.m. at St. Monica
- April 10, 12-2 p.m. at St. Mary, Queen of Peace, Danville
- April 10, 1-2 p.m. at St. Anthony
- April 13, 6-7 p.m. at Mary, Queen of Peace, Danville

**New Albany Deanery**
- April 10, 1 p.m. at St. John the Baptist, Starlight

**Terre Haute Deanery**
- April 7, 7-8 p.m. at St. Benedict

Pope apologizes for treatment of Indigenous in Canada, promises to visit

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Expressing “sorrow and shame” for the complicity of Catholics in abusing Indigenous children in Canada and helping in the attempt to erase their culture, Pope Francis pledged to address the issue more fully when he visits Canada.

“For the deplorable conduct of those members of the Catholic Church,” the pope told Indigenous representatives on April 1, “I ask for God’s forgiveness, and I want to say to you with all my heart: I am very sorry.”

Representatives of the Métis National Council, the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami and the Assembly of First Nations had asked Pope Francis for an apology for the Church’s role in running residential schools in Canada, but they asked that he apologize in Canada.

The pope responded to that request as well.

Saying he was impressed by their devotion to St. Anne, the grandmother of Jesus, the centerpiece of the popular Lacte Anne Pilgrimage, scheduled this year for July 25-28, Pope Francis told them, “This year, I would like to be with you in those days.”

The Shrine of St. Anne, on Lac Ste. Anne, is located in Alberta, not far from Edmonton.

Gathered in the frescoed Clementine Chapel of the Apostolic Palace, representatives of the Métis, Inuit and First Nations shared their prayers, music, dance and gifts with the pope.

The pope had held separate meetings on March 28 with representatives of the Métis and Inuit and met on March 31 with delegates from the Assembly of First Nations. They were accompanied by six Canadian bishops.

Addressing all the delegates and their supporters at the end of the week, Pope Francis recalled that several delegates compared their communities to branches, growing in different directions, buffeted by wind, but still living because they are attached to the trunk and the tree’s deep roots.

“You tree, which bears fruit, has suffered a tragedy, which you told me about me in these past few days: uprooting,” he said. The normal transmission of language, culture and spirituality from one generation to the next “was broken by colonialization, which, without respect, took many of them from their homeland and forced them to try to adopt other ways.”

Catholics could not use trying to evangelize the Indigenous as an excuse for running the schools because “the faith cannot be transmitted in a way contrary to the faith itself,” the pope said.

“The Gospel calls Christians “to welcome, love, serve and not judge,” he said, and it is “a frightening thing” when, in the name of that faith, Christians act the opposite.

“Through your voices,” he told the delegates, “I have been able to touch with my own hands and carry within me, with great sadness in my heart, the stories of suffering, deprivation, discriminatory treatment and various forms of abuse suffered by many of you, particularly in residential schools.”

Pope Francis said it is “chilling” to think of how much thought and effort went into designing and running a system aimed at “a sense of inferiority” in the students and the attempt “to make someone lose his or her cultural identity, to remove their roots, with all the personal and social consequences that this has entailed and continues to entail: unemployment, hopelessness, lack of educational opportunities, intergenerational traumas.

I feel shame—sorrow and shame—for the role that a number of Catholocks, particularly those with educational responsibilities, have had in all these things that wounded you, in the absence you suffered and in the lack of respect shown for your identity, your culture and even your spiritual values,” he said.

Archbishop Charles C. Thompson leads members of the Knights of Columbus in prayer on April 1 in front of the Planned Parenthood abortion center in Indianapolis. (CNS/Sean Rayford)
Hope is found in Christ forgiving Peter after he denied him

By Paul Senz

Every year on Palm Sunday, we hear the narrative of the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ. This year, we read from the Gospel of St. Luke. It is a story that is familiar to us. As Catholics, we surround ourselves with depictions of the passion and death of Jesus. We hang crucifixes on our walls and emblems around our necks; we put crucifixes in the sanctuaries of our churches and on our altars; we ring the bells of our cathedrals and our parish churches as a reminder of the passion and death of Jesus. We hang crucifixes on our walls with depictions of the passion and death of Jesus. We hang crucifixes on our walls with depictions of the passion and death of Jesus. We hang crucifixes on our walls with depictions of the passion and death of Jesus. We hang crucifixes on our walls with depictions of the passion and death of Jesus.

The story is well known to us: During the Last Supper, shortly after breaking bread together when Our Lord instituted the Eucharist, Peter tells Jesus, “I am prepared to go to prison and to die with you” (Lk 22:33-34).

As the night went on, Peter’s fidelity would be tested as Jesus was betrayed, arrested, severely beaten and put on trial. As Peter sat in the courtyard of the house of the high priest, gathered with others around a fire, three of those near him insisted that they recognized him as a follower of Jesus.

Fearing for his life after seeing what had happened to Jesus, Peter strenuously denied it each time.

And then we read one of the most gut-wrenching and heartbreaking passages in the Gospels: “And the Lord turned and looked at Peter, and Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said to him, ‘Before the cock crows today, you will deny me three times.’” He went out and began to weep bitterly.” (Lk 22:61-62)

As happens so often with us, Peter immediately knew he had done something horribly wrong, realized his weakness had caused him to deny even knowing our Lord and was overcome with remorse.

What a heart-rending thing: As Jesus is facing his trial and tremendous abuse, his closest and most trusted follower brazenly denies even knowing him.

Amid everything else going on, Jesus turns and looks at Peter, piercing his conscience with a simple gaze. How Peter’s heart must have broken! And how his guilt must have been even greater because of his brazenness earlier in the night, declaring his steadfastness and loyalty to Jesus.

Peter was never one to deny his unworthiness and his fallen nature. When Jesus first called him to be one of his Apostles after a miraculous catch of fish, Peter dropped to his knees at the feet of Jesus and said, “Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man” (Lk 5:8). We can almost hear Peter saying this again, wracked with guilt after denying Jesus.

There may be a temptation to read into Peter’s denial—his failure, his abandonment of Jesus—an implicit refutation of his importance and that of his successors. As Catholics, we recognize the primacy of Peter and his successors as an important part not only of the structure of our Church, but of the very mystical body of himself that the Church is that Christ left to safeguard and transmit the deposit of faith.

It has nothing to do with the holiness of the man—it is all about Jesus’ promise to his Church that Peter and his successors would be protected from teaching error, and his promise that the gates of hell will not prevail against it. Peter’s failure does not affect this promise. In fact, it can serve as a reminder to us of why this promise was necessary in the first place.

Our Lord is loving and forgiving (Ps 86:5). After his resurrection, Jesus gave Peter a threefold chance to make amends for his threefold denial. Three times, Our Lord asked him, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” to which Peter responded “Yes, Lord, you know I love you” (Jn 21:15-17).

Jesus tells Peter to feed his sheep, reinforcing the special privilege and responsibility that had been granted to Peter. God’s mercy is endless, and Jesus makes all things new. (Rv 21:5)

Salvation history is replete with examples of God making a covenant with his people, only for those people to break the covenant through sin and disobedience.

God always responds with mercy, forming a new covenantal bond. The covenant in the blood of Christ is a new and eternal covenant, one which we cannot definitively break. God’s mercy is on full display.

Today we know that we can approach God in the sacrament of penance and accept the forgiveness that he presents to us. In the same way, our Lord presented his forgiveness to Peter on the seashore, and Peter chose to accept it.

(Paul Senz is a freelance writer living in Oklahoma with his family.)
Joyful Witness/Kimberly Pohovey

Have you entreated angels on your earthly journey?

"Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares" (Heb 13:2).

I love this Scripture passage from the Letter of James (1:22). Not only does it remind us to welcome the presence of the divine, but it also acknowledges the existence of angels. Angels exist throughout Scripture. We understand Michael and Raphael to be our advocates in battle against the wickedness of the devil. Gabriel is the bearer of good news. And Raphael is the angel of healing, providing good mind, body and spiritual health.

St. John Chrysostom said that during the ascetic life, we can become so consumed by our own problems that the whole sanctuary is filled with angels honoring Christ, present in the Eucharist. He adds that we, though lowly, have been deemed worthy to join the powers of heaven in the worship of the Lord. In the Guardian Angel prayer, we are promised that our guardian angel provides light, guardianship and guidance. According to the prayer: "From its beginning until its end, human life is surrounded by their watchful care and intercession. Beside each believer stands an angel as protector and shepherd leading him to heaven."

While only three angels are mentioned by name in the Scriptures, according to some historians, there are several classes of angels—known as archangels, cherubim and seraphim—and we are taught that "myriads" of angels exist. In Greek translation, myriad can mean 10,000 or an indefinite amount, leading us to believe there are more angels than we can comprehend.

I don’t know about you, but there have been plenty of instances in my own life when I felt the presence of an angel. Whenever I have nearly been in an accident, I have felt a sense of presence or protective kindness. When searching for guidance through prayer, I have often found the answer through someone’s words or deeds. While these occurrences might not be classified as bonified angel encounters, I cannot help but think that God places angels on our path. I would like to think they sometimes take on the form of human beings or animals.

We understand Michael defends us in battle. Throughout the world, people are mistreated and many carry deep scars throughout life. Not everyone’s experiences are extreme, but even mild hurts can foster, affect and even change feelings and images. Something as common as betrayal or rejection by friends or family can lead to distrust and negative behaviors.

Unhealed hurts can lead to various symptoms, such as feelings of inferiority, fear of rejection, feelings of depression, and oversensitivity.

Some people cope by criticizing others in an attempt to make themselves feel better. Others interpret innocent comments as personal attacks. Hurt can also overflow as unpredictable anger because a person who’s been wounded is more likely to pick fights or feel rejected. At times, a distorted self-image becomes a problem because they’re concerned about others’ opinions of them.

Now and again, I wonder if we ever experience some of these feelings, but God doesn’t want us to be tricked by the hurt we’ve suffered. Nor does God want us to be so crushed by our experiences that we lose our depth and perspective. Those who know the Savior will find comfort, healing and trust in God’s love. Then, painful experiences can make us better and guide us to trust in the love of God even more.

In our works of charity, we are often placed in situations where we need to encourage someone to let them know that we care. We can’t always give to everyone or every situation, but John is one of the most positive people I know. He is always in a good mood and always has something encouraging to say. He was a manager at a restaurant. If his employee had a bad day, John always helped him to look at the positive side of a situation.

One morning, John left the restaurant’s back door open and was held up at gunpoint by three armed robbers. He tried to open the safe, but his hands shook due to nervousness and he slipped off the combination. So the robbers shot him. Fortunately, John was quickly found and taken to the nearest hospital. After many hours of surgery and long intensive care, he was released home.

I asked what his thoughts were during the robbery. John said he should have locked the back door. As he was lying on the floor, he said he remembered thinking he had a choice to live or die. He chose to live.

I asked if he was scared. John said that when they whirled him into the emergency room and he looked at the faces of the doctors, he got truly scared. He knew that he had to do something. He knew that he had to choose the right thing. And back at the door, John replied "yes." The doctors and nurses waited for his answer. John said he took a deep breath and yelled "bullshit!" and that he had to go. When he was released, he chose to live, treat me as I am alive, not dead. I trusted that God wasn’t going to leave me alone.

Now John is alive, owing it to the skills of its doctors; however, his amazing attitude played an important role, too. I learned from him that every day we choose to live fully no matter what. God will bring us comfort.

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

Guest Column/Richard Etienne

Show God you are with you, bring more light and love into the world

I recently heard in a homily “to have faith in God is to have faith in the idea of faith meaning that we acknowledge God is always with us in every situation in our earthly journey. For me, this is a wonderful way of looking at faith!”

The word “Emmanuel” is translated as “God with us.” This encapsulates the concept. The homilist went on to say that faith does not seek exemptions from troubled times and frustrations; rather, it bears them as an opportunity to come closer to Jesus through those experiences.

There is an old-dilemma in the question. Why do we do things happen to good people? There are many books dedicated to this query of how we can make ourselves feel better. Others misinterpret innocent comments as personal attacks. Hurt can also overflow as unpredictable anger because a person who’s been wounded is more likely to pick fights or feel rejected. At times, a distorted self-image becomes a problem because they’re concerned about others’ opinions of them.

I don’t know about you, but there have been plenty of instances in my life when I felt the presence of an angel. Whenever I have nearly been in an accident, I have felt a sense of presence or protective kindness. When searching for guidance through prayer, I have often found the answer through someone’s words or deeds. While these occurrences might not be classified as bonified angel encounters, I cannot help but think that God places angels on our path. I would like to think they sometimes take on the form of human beings or animals.

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I don’t know about you, but there have been plenty of instances in my life when I felt the presence of an angel. Whenever I have nearly been in an accident, I have felt a sense of presence or protective kindness. When searching for guidance through prayer, I have often found the answer through someone’s words or deeds. While these occurrences might not be classified as bonified angel encounters, I cannot help but think that God places angels on our path. I would like to think they sometimes take on the form of human beings or animals.

We understand Michael defends us in battle. Throughout the world, people are mistreated and many carry deep scars throughout life. Not everyone’s experiences are extreme, but even mild hurts can foster, affect and even change feelings and images. Something as common as betrayal or rejection by friends or family can lead to distrust and negative behaviors.

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**The Sunday Readings**

**Sunday, April 10, 2022**

- Isaiah 50:4-7

The Church this weekend leads us to the climax of Lent, the start of the observance of Holy Week, by offering the impressive liturgy of Palm Sunday. Recalling the triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, for Luke the últimatum of the entire ministry of the Lord since transfiguration, the crucifixion and resurrection occurred, these readings bring us to the heart of the Church’s teaching regarding salvation. Jesus is the eternal Lord and Savior. When the palms are blessed and the solemn procession forms (ideally of all in the congregation), the Church offers us a reading from St. Luke. This reading recalls the plans for the arrival of Jesus in the Holy City as well as the arrival itself. An element of blessed inevitability, of providence, surrounded the event. Jesus told Pharisees who objected to his reception in Jerusalem that, even if the disciples were silent, the very stones would proclaim the good news of salvation in him. God wills that we have everlasting life in Christ.

For the first reading in the Liturgy of the Word, the Church gives us the third of the four songs of the suffering servant from the third section of Isaiah. Scholars debate the identity of this servant. Was he a prophet? A collective symbol for the people of Israel? In any case, Christians have always seen in these songs the image of the innocent, constantly loyal servant of God, the Lord Jesus. The second reading is from St. Paul’s Epistle to the Philippians. These verses are thought to have been an ancient Christian hymn, used in early liturgies in the first decades of the Church, eloquent in declaring intense faith.

As its last reading, the Church dramatically offers St. Luke’s Passion narrative. The very rubrics provide for the celebration of the Lord’s passion. Each Gospel contains a highly detailed and lengthy account of the trial and execution of Jesus. Each evangelist was an individual person who had his own insights into what happened on the first Good Friday. In general, Luke’s Gospel sees Jesus as the embodiment of God’s mercy, literally God in human flesh, the son of Mary, a human, woman, not an angel or a goddess. Jesus bears eternal life. He makes all things right. He seeks out the wayward and the despoodent. He reconciles sinners with God. All this is completed in the Lord’s sacrificial death on Calvary. So, everything so far has been a prelude to these final days in Jerusalem.

Jesus had enemies. People are obnus, at times devious, even vicious. Still, the love of God will not be thwarted. Salvation will come. It is God’s plan for us.

**Reflection**

Few sections of the Scriptures, if any, are as powerful as the four Passion narratives presented to us in the succeeding Gospels. St. Luke’s Passion narrative is definitely among these narratives in teaching us and in calling us to Christ.

The first two readings brilliantly focus our minds upon the Redeemer, expected in third Isaiah, proclaimed in Philippians. On this Palm Sunday, the crown of the Liturgy of the Word is Luke’s “awesome proclamation of the Passion of Jesus. The Church takes us most movingly to the Lord’s entry into Jerusalem. He is destined to redeem the world. In divine Providence, salvation had to come. It was promised. Jesus is king. Some people responded: Others did not, burdened by ignorance, fear, sin or pride.

Finally, the Passion narrative reveals the depth of the Lord’s giving of self, majestic and life-giving despite the intrigue of the trial and the awful crucifixion. Figuratively, because of our sins, we stand with the enemies of Christ, shouting for crucifixion. God nevertheless loves us with a perfect, uncompromising, unending love. He will forgive us, offering us eternal salvation if simply we turn to the Lord with love.

**Daily Readings**

**Monday, April 11**
- Monday of Holy Week
- Isaiah 42:1-7
- Psalm 27:1-3, 13-14
- John 12:4-11

**Tuesday, April 12**
- Tuesday of Holy Week
- Isaiah 49:1-6a
- Psalm 71:1-4a, Sub-bb, 15, 17

**Wednesday, April 13**
- Wednesday of Holy Week
- Isaiah 53:11-12
- Psalm 69:8-10, 21-22, 31, 33-34
- Matthew 26:14-25

**Thursday, April 14**
- Holy Thursday
- Evening Mass of the Lord’s Supper
- Revelation 1:5-8
- Luke 4:16-21

**Friday, April 15**
- Good Friday
- Good Friday of the Passion of the Lord
- Matthew 17:1-13, 21-27
- Mark 14:28-29

**Saturday, April 16**
- Holy Saturday
- Holy Saturday Night—The Easter Vigil
- Genesis 1:1-2
- Genesis 1:1, 26-31a
- Psalm 104:1-2, 5-6, 10-12, 14-24, 35
- Psalm 33:4-7, 12-13, 20, 22
- Genesis 22:1-18
- Genesis 22:1-18
- Psalm 10:5, 8-11
- Exodus 15:1-10, 17-18
- Isaiah 54:5-14
- Psalm 10:2, 4, 6-11
- Isaiah 55:1-11
- (Response) Isaiah 12:2-3, 4-6
- (Response) Jeremiah 3:19, 5-6
- (Response) Psalm 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23

**Sunday, April 17**
- Easter Sunday of the Resurrection of the Lord
- Acts 10:34a, 37-43
- Psalm 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23
- Colossians 3:1-14
- 1 Corinthians 5:6-8
- John 20:1-9
- or at an afternoon or evening Mass, Luke 24:13-35

**Question Corner**

**By Benedictine Sister Susan Lindstrom**

We enter Jerusalem with Jesus overcome by the deafening shouts of, “ Hosanna!” seeing our teacher, mentor, friend esteemed, honored, recognized for who he is. Eagerly we anticipate the Passover unaware that just ahead lies days of agony, of loss, of pain, of love, of betrayal, of fear, of forgiveness, of suspicion, of sacrifice. But Jesus knows... these are the final moments, has last opportunity to teach his disciples, the end of a ministry that has attracted followers, alternated the law-keepers, filled some with awe and praise, others with anger and hatred. Now the acceptable time, soon to be the day of salvation. And so we walk the Jerusalem journey, to the cross, to the tomb, to eternal life!

**Holy Week Journey**

**By Benedictine Sister Susan Lindstrom**

I have often wondered about the difference between the disciples receiving the Holy Spirit immediately after the Resurrection “on the evening of that first day of the week” (In 20:19-23) and the coming of the Holy Spirit upon them at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4). Is it two different accounts of the same event, or did they receive the Holy Spirit in two different ways on two different occasions? (Louisiana)

In general, Scripture scholars read thus as two different events, with the gift of the Holy Spirit being offered for two different purposes. In the first account (In 20), the Spirit comes to the specific group of disciples gathered on the night of the first Easter Sunday, the Spirit confers on them the power to forgive sins. In the second account (Acts 2), the Spirit descends forcefully on the whole community of believers, empowering them to preach the Gospel boldly, even though Jesus will no longer be physically present with them. (Note that this Pentecost event, following the Ascension, enables the disciples to be understood in many languages and that Pentecost is commonly regarded as the “birthday of the Church.”) This interpretation seems to square best with John 7:37-39, which suggests that the Spirit will not be given in its fullness until Jesus has been glorified, and with Luke 24:24, where Jesus, immediately before the Ascension, instructs the disciples “stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high” (Lk 24:49).
and determined the priesthood was his true calling. But the priest, who grew up unbaptized, had a pursuit of whatever dream he was following at the time. were, in truth, pummeled, as Stuart Long was an amateur, said the real-life Montana priest is “having the correction (Tom Cathcart. Grandmother of three. Great-grandfather of two. †)


WASHINGTON (CNS)—Catholic actor Mark Wahlberg, who plays the title role in the upcoming movie Father Stu, said the real-life Montana priest is “having me continuing to carry on his message.”

Father Stu, in theaters starting on April 13, tells the story of Father Stuart Long, a priest who was ordained for only four years before he died from an incurable muscular disorder, and the lives he touched along the way before and after his untimely death.

In those days, pre-Father Stu was the kind of guy who had to go to extremes to play Stuart "Stu" Long as a boxer and as an infirm priest. "He told me, ‘I had just done an adventure racing movie. I had seen my 40 years of service,’ ” cited the priest’s “dedication and service to God.”

Wahlberg, also a producer of the movie, said if the real-life Father Stu was as best known, had seen his life on-screen, “I think he’d have a big smile on his face, probably saying he’s not as big or strong or as good a boxer. He’s a super-duper nice guy, and I feel ever get asked who would be one of the few people to have dinner with, dead or alive, he’d be right at the top of my list.”

The priest “had four years to complete his mission here and now he has eternity ... having me continuing to carry on his message,” Wahlberg said. “Who knows how long I’ll have?”

He said his Catholic faith means to Wahlberg, “Everything. Everything. There’s so many wonderful things that happened to me—the good, the bad and everything else in between. I’ve been able to appreciate and have gratitude because of my faith. After I’ve done my last interview, I’ll know how to articulate it.”

He added, “This message, this conversation and this commitment to service does not stop when the movie comes out. It’s only a start.”

Wahlberg said this film is different from his other projects because of "how this child [the movie] came into the world, and what it’s doing for people. How it’s touching people because of “how this child [the movie] came into the world, comes out. It’s only a start.”

commitment to service does not stop when the movie

Real-life Father Stu has Mark Wahlberg ‘continuing to carry on his message’
During visit to Malta, pope calls for welcoming migrants and ending wars

VALETTA AND HAL FAR, Malta (CNS)—Malta and its people must remember the country’s roots as the center of spirituality and count on God to guide them to those to most need, Pope Francis told leaders of the Mediterranean nation.

During his two-day visit on April 2-3, the pope spoke to government and civil leaders and the diplomatic corps, praising them for welcoming migrants—especially those arriving on their shores from places like Lebanon, Syria and Yemen.

Pope Francis also met with migrants who had fled their homelands in search of a better life in Malta. He also spoke about the influx of refugees in Europe in the wake of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and called for an end to war.

“In a speech at the presidential palace in Valletta, Malta, on April 2, Pope Francis said that while the issue of migrants in recent years has “nurtured a certain discouragement and frustration,” the issue of migration must “be situated within a broader context of time and space. “It brings with it the burden of past injustice, exploitation, climatic changes and tragic conflicts, whose effects are now making themselves felt,” he said. “From the poor and densely populated South, great numbers of people are moving in the opposite direction. This is a fact, and it cannot be ignored” by nations isolating themselves. The additional influx of refugees in Europe from Ukraine, he added, is not only further proof of the need for “a broad-based and shared response,” but Russia’s war in Ukraine has brought the long-forbidden prospect of war back into focus, the pope said.

“We had thought that invasions of other countries, savage street-fighting and atomic threats were grim memories of a distant past,” the pope said. “However, the icy winds of war, which bring only death, destruction and hatred in their wake, have swept downpowerfully upon the lives of many people and they affect us all.”

“But the solution to the crisis of each is care for those of all, since global problems require global solutions. Let us help one another to see people’s yearning for peace.”

“Rejecting civilization itself risks foundering because of apathy and selfishness, Pope Francis insisted that migrants and refugees must be treated with care and kindness and recognized as brothers and sisters. In the shipwrecks that lead to thousands of migrants drowning in the Mediterranean each year, “we see another kind of shipwreck taking place: the shipwreck of civilization, which threatens not only migrants but us all,” the pope said on April 3 at a meeting with about 200 migrants at the John XXIII Peace Lab in Hal Far.

“Imagine,” he said, “that those same people we see on crowded boats or adrift in the sea, on our televisions or in the newspapers, could be any one of us, or our sons or daughters.”

Perhaps at this very moment, while

shortcomings and stumbles.

That is exactly what that timeworn and beautiful song reminds me of. It reminds me that, because of Jesus’ loving sacrifice, we will celebrate at the end of this Lenten season. I am a beloved child of God—sin and all. For that, I should offer myself the sweet sound of amazing grace.

(Susan Hines-Brigger is a mother of four. She is also an executive editor of St. Anthony Messenger. )

we are here, there are boats heading northward across the sea,” he said. “Let us pray for these brothers and sisters of ours who risk their lives at sea in search of hope.”

The day before the meeting, the pope said, there was the report of a rescue of four migrants off the coast of Libya. More than 90 people were reportedly on the boat; only four did not drown.

The pope said after listening to Daniel Jube Okegkale and Siriman Coulibaly describe in harrowing detail how they finally made it to Malta.

“When you run away from a situation of war, conflict and extreme poverty,” Coulibaly said, “you have nothing for your determination to live a better life and a lot of courage and resilience to face all the challenges you encounter.”

Unfortunately, he said, too many individuals and governments seem to think a migrant crisis is coming when he or she leaves home.

At the end of the meeting, Pope Francis prayed that God would lead “free us from fear and prejudice, enable us to share in their sufferings and to combat injustice together, for the growth of a world in which each person is respected in his or her inviolable dignity, the dignity that You, Father, have granted us and Your Son has consecrated forever.”

Located between the Italian island of Sicily and the North African coast, Malta—a tiny nation with fewer than 500,000 residents—has been the first port of call for thousands of migrants and refugees crossing the sea from North Africa in search of a better life in Europe.

Current European Union policies have left Malta and other frontline countries such as Italy, Spain and Greece, on their own to rescue, shelter, verify and try to integrate the migrants.

In his talk at the center, Pope Francis asked, “How can we save ourselves from this shipwreck which risks sinking the ship of our civilization?”

The answer, he said, is “by conducting ourselves with kindness and humanity” and by regarding people not as statistics but as “what they really are: people, men and women, brothers and sisters, each with or her own life story.”

Getting their stories.

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NEW ORLEANS (CNS)—Among the Mount Tabor experiences of his 57 years as a priest, Msgr. William Bilinsky, now 82, remembers the lock cutters.

The Ukrainian Greek Catholic priest, born in Brooklyn, N.Y., in 1939 not long after the Nazi invasion of Poland, was back in his parents’ homeland for the first time in his life in 1991, emotionally overwhelmed by the scene unfolding in the dark of night in Mykolaiv, a tiny village 10 miles south of Liviv in western Ukraine.

Msgr. Bilinsky was in Ukraine as a volunteer translator for retired New Orleans Archbishop Philip M. Hannan, the peripatetic founder of Focus TV who was interviewing Catholics behind the Iron Curtain about how they had struggled to keep the flame of faith alive during a half-century of religious oppression.

At the end of a long day of interviews, a young man found out that Msgr. Bilinsky was not only a Ukrainian Catholic priest, but also a Catholic priest from the U.S.

It was near 10 p.m., and the man gathered enough courage to ask Msgr. Bilinsky if he would come with him in his car.

“As I was in the car, I was thinking to myself, ‘Are you crazy going with some stranger, God knows where? Where is he taking me?’ ” Msgr. Bilinsky recalled.

“Then, as soon as we got to the entrance of the village, he stopped and gave a signal to somebody, and they started ringing the bells of the church.”

Within minutes of the bells pealing from the steeple of Holy Trinity Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, hundreds of villagers walked up the hill to the town square for the first liturgy outside the church since 1946.

“There was a lock on the door, and they took lock cutters and broke it open,” Msgr. Bilinsky told the Clarion Herald, New Orleans’ archdiocesan newspaper.

“It was dusty. The vestments were not in the best shape.

“The and other problem was all of the liturgical books were written in the Church’s Slavonic language, which is the old language we used to use prior to the Second Vatican Council.”

The church was a time capsule. Five hundred people, standing, could squeeze inside the church. There were no pews.

Before the liturgy, an elderly sacristan asked what the priest needed.

“Our wine is no good, but we have very good vodka,” the man said initially, before asking a few friends to find something suitable.

And he brought the priest leavened bread, which is what Eastern-rite Catholics use for Holy Communion.

As Msgr. Bilinsky began the liturgy, he noticed two elderly men walk into the sanctuary wearing vestments.

“They were old priests who had been in the underground Church,” he said.

After proclaiming the Gospel, Msgr. Bilinsky climbed the steps of the elevated ambo.

“It was one of those old European pulpits where you walk way up, and I preached, but I didn’t preach too long,” he said. “As I finished and I was walking down the steps, the sacristan came up to me and said, ‘Too short Preach some more!’ So I went back up there and preached some more.”

At the end of the liturgy, Msgr. Bilinsky walked outside into the square, where there were hundreds more Catholics who couldn’t get inside the church. He hopped into a pickup truck that had a battery-operated megaphone and preached another sermon.

Earlier in the day, Msgr. Bilinsky had been translating for the local archbishop in Liviv during his interview with Archbishop Hannan.

The Ukrainian archbishop held out his hands.

“He had no fingernails,” Msgr. Bilinsky said. “He had been in prison, and they pulled his nails out.”

When the archbishop found out Msgr. Bilinsky was going to Mykolaiv, he gave him chasubla along with a special mission to baptize and confirm anyone who asked.

Eastern Catholic Churches confer confirmation at the same time as baptism.

“When you run into people, they may ask you to baptize their children, so don’t worry about the paperwork,” the archbishop told him. “I know how you Americans are with paperwork. You just baptize and confirm, and we’ll worry about it later.”

After the liturgy and throughout the predawn hours, Msgr. Bilinsky went from house to house, baptizing and confirming.

“I would say, ‘What is the child’s name?’ And they would say, ‘What’s your name?’ So I told them my name was ‘Wasyl’ for Basil, because I was baptized on the feast of St. Basil the Great,’” Msgr. Bilinsky said. “If it was a girl, they went with ‘Wasylina.’ I’ve got more kids named after me in that town than you could imagine.”

When Msgr. Bilinsky returned to Liviv, he walked into the Cathedral of St. George, the mother church for Ukrainian Greek Catholics that had just been taken back from the Russian Orthodox Church, which had ties to the Soviet Union.

“I fell to my knees at the sanctuary and just cried,” he said.

Inside the cathedral, a few Redemptorist brothers dressed in their vestments. He said Mary Queen of Peace Parish Seminary College had welcomed them in Mandeville, La., and St. Joseph Seminary College had welcomed them as they studied and did a few odd jobs to earn money for their families.

Now, the three priests and their respective communities are under siege.

Msgr. Bilinsky also has a cousin on his father’s side in western Ukraine in her 70s who has a grandson and daughter-in-law, both physicians. The grandson was in Poland but went back into Ukraine to help provide medical care.

Msgr. Bilinsky is praying for a peaceful resolution, but he knows that will take a miracle.

“There is going to be a bloody end to this, more bloody than it has been,” he said. “The Ukrainians are not going to go back [to subjugation].” 

Men carry crucifixes and banners during the funeral for soldier Vasyl Velikul in Slobnyk, Ukraine, on March 30. He was killed during shelling by Russian troops. (CNS photo/Viacheslav Ratynskyi, Reuters)

Firefighters work at a residential building destroyed during the Russian war in the self-proclaimed People’s Republic of Donetsk on March 30. Nearly 3,000 civilians have been killed or injured in Ukraine and more than 10 million displaced since Russia launched its invasion more than a month ago, the United Nations said on March 28. (CNS photo/Alexander Ermochenko, Reuters)