Florida continues rescue efforts after devastation of Hurricane Ian

WASHINGTON (CNS)—As authorities in Florida continued rescue efforts, Catholic parishes and dioceses in the U.S. moved rapidly to collect aid in the aftermath of Hurricane Ian, and U.S. President Joe Biden said it could take years to rebuild what was destroyed. Though Ian was downgraded to a tropical storm after wreaking swaths of Florida, it regained strength and regrouped as a hurricane before heading toward South Carolina.

Biden approved an emergency declaration to send federal help before it made landfall near Charleston, S.C., on Sept. 30. Residents of Florida and the Carolinas face a recovery estimated to cost tens of billions of dollars.

As of press time on Oct. 3, at least 101 people were confirmed dead, and more than 1,900 people had been rescued in parts of southwest and central Florida.

The Diocese of St. Petersburg, Fla., will hold a special collection at its parishes in October to help with the damage, including in the neighboring Diocese of Venice, and is asking for others to help at www.dosp.org/disasterrelief.

“Our hearts are moved with compassion for all those who have suffered damage and destruction due to Hurricane Ian, especially our brothers and sisters in the Diocese of Venice,” St. Petersburg’s Bishop Gregory L. Parkes said of the diocese that suffered the brunt of the damage.

Archbishop José H. Gomez of Los Angeles, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), called on Catholics and all people of goodwill to pray for those who lost their lives in the Caribbean and the southwest United States due to Hurricane Ian.

He urged prayers “for the comfort of their grieving families and communities.”
The president and first lady Jill Biden were visiting Puerto Rico on Oct. 3 to see the devastation wrought by Hurricane Fiona, which slammed into the island a week before Ian hit Florida. The Bishops planned to visit Florida on Oct. 5.

In the Diocese of Venice, Bishop Frank J. Dewane gave thanks via Twitter for those who prayed for people in the path of the Hurricane Ian.

“Damage is still being assessed, but it is clear that the devastation in the diocese is widespread,” he wrote. “There are several crews already at work throughout the diocese, and Catholic Charities is putting their local team into action. We are grateful for all those who have helped, and continue to help, during this difficult time.

Catholic Charities USA is collecting donations at cccusa.org/ian.

In Charleston, S.C., Bishop Jacques G. Fabre-Jeune offered Mass hours before the storm made landfall “for the protection of all people affected by Hurricane Ian and especially for our essential personnel working to keep us safe,” the diocese said on its Facebook page.

Ian hit close to 2:30 p.m. local time on Sept. 30 at as Category 1 hurricane, flooding historic Charleston, with maximum sustained winds of 85 mph. The storm was later downgraded to a tropical storm as it hit North Carolina.

As the storm went through the Carolinas, about 850,000 people had no electricity, but news reports said power was restored to more than half of them by the weekend.

Attorney general to appeal judge’s ruling on disposal of babies’ remains

Criterion staff report

A federal judge in Indiana has blocked a law that would require babies that have been aborted to be buried or cremated.

U.S. District Judge Richard Young for the Southern District of Indiana’s decision on Sept. 26 means that babies that have been aborted can be treated as medical waste.

Mike Fichter

Indiana’s last abortion clinic, Planned Parenthood SouthEast Indiana, planned to visit Florida on Oct. 5. The Bidens, who were visiting Puerto Rico on Oct. 3 to see the devastation wrought by Hurricane Fiona, which slammed into the island a week before Ian hit Florida. The Bishops planned to visit Florida on Oct. 5.

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La fe lleva a una familia nicaragüense a dejarlo todo por una nueva vida en Estados Unidos

Por Sean Gallagher

Félix y Paholla Navarrete estaban tristes, pero no sorprendidos, por las imágenes que llegaban de su país natal, Nicaragua, a principios de agosto, en las protestas que tomaron lugar en las calles de Managua, la capital de Nicaragua.

“Para el gobierno de Nicaragua, la Iglesia católica es una pandilla de asesinos” que, junto con el Papa Francisco han instaurado “una dictadura perfecta.” decía Ortega en un discurso reciente. “Que no iba a hacer nada de lo que esa gente me pedía. Ella pensaba igual.”

El secretario político intentaba atar a los empleados. Decían que, si querían mantener su trabajo, tenían que hacer lo que fuera necesario en las protestas contra el gobierno.

During the time of the protests, Félix and Paholla started to worry about their future. Paholla had the same position. "I was thinking what would be better," said Paholla. "To stay for a position with a salary, or to go where my children were established in Indianapolis. Felix found a job in accounting, and their children were established in Indianapolis. Félix and Paholla had the option to stay or leave it all behind. We were confident in what God wanted us to do."

At the end of the year, Félix and Paholla decided to leave Nicaragua and move to Indianapolis. Félix and Paholla were well known in the city and worked for the country’s apostolic nuncio and members of the Church. They had a close relationship with their parishioners. It was so close, they went to God in prayer.

Los esposos Félix y Paholla Navarrete se sienten en oración el 1 de septiembre en la Iglesia de Nuestra Señora del Santísimo Rosario en Indianapolis, (Fotografía de Sean Gallagher)

Félix y Paholla se enfrentaron a una decisión que les cambiaría la vida: ¿permanecer en Nicaragua donde tenían una vida estable o dejar todo sin vuelta atrás?

"Llegamos al punto de pensar en qué sería mejor," dice Félix. "Yo no permitiría que nadie me pedía que no iba a hacer nada de lo que esa gente me pedía. Ella pensaba igual."
The rosary and the power of prayer

Like Mary, October is a month where the Blessed Virgin Mary is at the center of our Church calendar.

In Catholic tradition, the entire month of October is dedicated to the holy rosary. This monthlong observance is largely due to the liturgical feast of Our Lady of the Rosary, which is celebrated on Oct. 7.

Initially known as Our Lady of Victory, the feast day marks a 16th-century naval victory which saved Europe against a Turkish invasion. Crew members on more than 200 ships of the Holy League—Genoa, Spain and the Papal States—prayed the rosary on Oct. 7, 1571, in preparation for the battle, as did Catholics throughout Europe, encouraged by Pope St. Pius V to gather in their churches to invoke the Virgin Mary against the Turkish forces.

The Christian victory over the Ottoman Empire at the Battle of Lepanto on that day is credited with saving Western Europe. The then-Holy Father said people of faith owed the victory to the Blessed Virgin, and the feast offers an example where our Blessed Mother interceded for God’s people.

There are many other examples of the Virgin Mary answering prayers for us. Popes throughout the Church’s history have displayed a strong devotion to the Blessed Mother.

In October of 2002, Pope St. John Paul II released his apostolic letter, “Rosarium Virginis Mariae” (“The Rosary of the Virgin Mary”). With the family and society in mind, its aim was to help the Church rediscover the beauty and power of the rosary, which the Holy Father hoped would lead to a greater practice of prayer, a closer walk with Christ and a more lasting peace in the world.

In the apostolic letter, St. John Paul also introduced the Luminous Mysteries of the rosary. The new set of mysteries focuses on Jesus’ public ministry between his baptism and Passion, and includes the Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan, the Wedding at Cana, the Transfiguration and the Institution of the Eucharist. The Luminous Mysteries are prayed on Thursdays.

“To recite the rosary is nothing other than to contemplate with Mary the face of Christ,” the pope wrote (#3). “The rosary, precisely because it starts with Mary’s own experience, is an exquisitely contemplative prayer.”

He later wrote, “If Jesus, the one Mediator, is the Way of our prayer, then Mary, his purity and most transparent reflection, shows us the Way. Beginning with Mary’s unique cooperation with the working of the Holy Spirit, the Churches developed their prayer to the Holy Mother of God, centering it on the person of Christ manifested in his mysteries” (#16).

In his book, Mother Mary: Inspiring Words from Pope Francis, our current Holy Father calls the rosary “a simple, contemplative prayer, accessible to all, great and small.”

“In the rosary, we turn to the Virgin Mary so that she may guide us to an ever-closer union with her Son, Jesus, to bring us into conformity with him, to have his sentiments and to behave like him,” Pope Francis wrote.

“Indeed, in the rosary while we repeat the Hail Mary we meditate on the mysteries, on the events of Christ’s life, so as to know and love him ever better. The rosary is an effective means for opening ourselves to God, for it helps us to overcome egotism and to bring peace to hearts, in the family, in society and in the world.”

Family, society and the world are always appropriate prayer intentions for the rosary. And as we continue to see the chaos and heartache that surround many—including inflation that is hurting Americans and others across the globe, Hurricane Ian that devastated parts of southwest and central Florida, and Russia’s unjust invasion of Ukraine—we must envelop our brothers and sisters in Christ in prayer.

Prayer is a universal language. May we use the rosary and other petitions this month and beyond to make sure the needs of our families, society and the world are never forgotten.

—Mike Krokos

Letters to the Editor

Column affirms convert’s belief in offering prayers for the dead

This is in response to Andrew Motyka’s column on the Perspectives page in the Sept. 16 issue of The Criterion.

Motyka’s column on the Perspectives page in the Sept. 30 issue of The Criterion about the Grotto and the log cabin overlooking St. Mary’s Lake at the University of Notre Dame.

Notre Dame reflection leads to fond memories for ‘father of the bride’

I just read John Shaughnessy’s reflection in the Sept. 30 issue of The Criterion about the Grotto and the log cabin overlooking St. Mary’s Lake at the University of Notre Dame.

Our oldest daughter was engaged at the Grotto; her fiancé’s roommates filled the place with flowers.

I choke up every time we visit, as most of us do I expect.

Thanks for the excellent work, as always.

Greg Cafuro

Indianapolis

Notre Dame Class of 1972

Newspaper’s terminology should reflect the lives of the unborn, reader says

Why not stop using the words “abortion ban” in headlines and start using “legal protection of unborn babies” blocked by a judge?”

We all know what ban means, and there is definitely a couple ban on abortions under the Indiana law passed after the Supreme Court handed the issue to the State Court.

Linda Ricker

Indianapolis

Letters to the Editor

Church’s larger view of life. Yes, there is an ending on one hand, but a continuation on the other: the person simply passes from one type of existence to another.

Scripture makes clear that people do not just continue on in theory or vanish into some kind of cloudlike existence: our friends and relatives are with Jesus in heaven, and giving thanks and praise to God continuously and praying for us back here on Earth.

Always be still in purgatory, we can pray for them.

Sonny Shanks

Corydon

Letters from readers are welcome and every effort will be made to include letters from as many people and representing as many viewpoints as possible. Letters should be informed, relevant, well-expressed and temperate in tone.

Send letters to: “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.
Los misterios del rosario iluminan los misterios de la vida

Dios te salve María, llena eres de gracia, el Señor es contigo. Bendita tú eres entre todas las mujeres y bendita es el fruto de tu vientre, Jesús. Santa María, Madre de Dios, ruego por nosotros pecadores, ahora y en la hora de nuestra muerte. Amén.

La fecha de publicación de esta columna es el viernes 7 de octubre, la celebración del memorial de Nuestra Señora del Rosario. A lo largo de todo el año se celebran fiestas marianas y, de hecho, todos los sábados ordinarios están dedicados a la Santísima Virgen María, pero los meses de octubre y mayo son momentos en los que nosotros, el pueblo de Dios, expresamos con especial intensidad nuestro amor y devoción a la Santísima Virgen María. En estos meses es especialmente oportuno rezar el rosario en casa, en familia.

Por eso, al comenzar el mes de octubre con el memorial que dedica la Iglesia a la Santísima Virgen María, y al prestar especial atención a su papel como Nuestra Señora del Rosario, es conveniente meditar en oración sobre el significado de esta devoción mariana tan popular.

En su forma actual, la devoción del rosario se remonta a la Baja Edad Media, cuando el Ave María se convirtió en una de las oraciones más comunes que los cristianos ofrecían en reconocimiento del singular papel de María como testigo de la vida de Cristo, su hijo, y como intercesora en favor de sus hijos. Hacia finales del siglo XVI, se popularizó en el pueblo cristiano la costumbre de rezar 150 avemarías mientras se meditaba sobre escenas del Nuevo Testamento (ahora conocidas como Misterios Gozosos, Dolorosos y Gloriosos).

En 2002, el Papa Juan Pablo II trató de renovar y fortalecer la piedad mariana reconduciendo que se adorarán a los 15 misterios tradicionales otros cinco, que denominó Misterios Luminosos o Misterios de Luz. Estos nuevos misterios reflejan sobre el ministerio público de Cristo, desde su bautismo hasta la institución de la Eucaristía, y nos recuerdan que el rosario, aunque se dirige a María, se refiere en realidad a Jesús, su hijo divino.

Al rezar el rosario, todos los misterios (los 15 originales y los cinco añadidos por San Juan Pablo II) nos invitan a vivir la vida de nuestro Señor Jesucristo a través de los ojos de la Virgen.

María fue la primera discípula cristiana, siguió los pasos de su hijo en todas las experiencias de su vida: alegres, dolorosas, gloriosas y luminosas. Existe mucho presente en que su hijo resucitó de entre los muertos, cuando ascendió al cielo y cuando envió al Espíritu Santo para iluminar las mentes y los corazones de los fieles. Fue testigo del nacimiento de la Iglesia en Pentecostés y acompañó a su hijo adoptivo, San Juan Evangelista, en su viaje a Éfeso (actual Turquía) donde, por la singular gracia de Dios, María fue asunta en cuerpo y alma al cielo.

Todos los papas recientes han coincidido en que hay muchas devociones a la Santísima Virgen María que nosotros, como discípulos misioneros de Jesús, debemos cultivar activamente.

Un modo excelente de lograr una renovación de la piedad mariana es retomar la devoción al rosario. Según el Papa emérito Benedicto XVI, “el rosario es una meditación sobre todos los momentos importantes de la historia de la salvación.” Después de varias décadas de abandono, tal como afirma el Papa Benedicto, el rosario está experimentando “un nuevo florecimiento.” Describe la renovación del rosario hoy en día como “uno de los signos más elocuentes del amor que las generaciones jóvenes alimentan hacia Jesús y su madre.”

El Papa Francisco también anima a individuos y familias a rezar el rosario diariamente para pedir la protección y el cuidado especial de nuestra Santa Madre. Esto fue especialmente cierto durante la pandemia, cuando la intercesión de María era necesaria para hacer frente a los graves problemas que sufrían las personas en todo el mundo. Pero ciertamente sigue siendo cierto ahora, teniendo en cuenta los urgentes desafíos económicos, sociales y políticos a los que nos enfrentamos hoy.

La devoción a la Santísima Virgen María, madre de Dios y madre nuestra, nos distingue de quienes no comprenden ni aprecian la posición única de María en la historia de nuestra salvación, pasada, presente y futura. Esa es una de las razones por las que la Iglesia sigue exhortándonos a que consideremos en oración hacer de esta hermosa costumbre de rezar el rosario una parte integral de nuestra espiritualidad personal y familiar.

Que la Virgen del Rosario nos ayude a abrir nuestros corazones, como ella, a la gracia del Espíritu Santo en nuestras vidas. Que su intercesión nos facilite el camino de la fe y la esperanza. Que nos inspire a invocar al Espíritu Santo, cuyos dones de valor, sabiduría, paciencia y buen juicio son muy necesarios en estos tiempos difíciles.
Wedding Anniversaries

DONALD AND MARY ANNE (FRANZEN) HERMAN, members of Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ Parish in Indianapolis, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on Oct. 4.

They have six children: Cathleen Khairalla, Sharon Kuhn, Suzanne Landry, Cynthia Shields and the late Josephine and Michelle.
The couple also has 13 grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.

RICHARD AND LORETTA (GAITHER) UTTERBACK, members of Holy Name of Jesus Church in Indianapolis, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on Oct. 14.

They have five children: Greg, Rick and Tony Utterback and the late Debra Skaggs and Tim Utterback.
The couple also has four grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

MAURY AND CAROL (REGAN) LATHROP, members of Holy Spirit Parish at Geist, Fishers, Ind. (Lafayette Diocese), formerly members of Christ the King Parish in Indianapolis, will celebrate their 55th wedding anniversary on Oct. 7.

The couple was married in Holy Name of Jesus Church on Sept. 28, 1967.

They have five children: Greg, Rick and Tony Utterback and the late Debra Skaggs and Tim Utterback.
The couple also has four grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

KENNETH AND ROBIN (SHALOWSKI) FIRMAN, members of Holy Spirit Parish in Indianapolis, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on Oct. 14.

The couple was married in Holy Spirit Church in Indianapolis on Oct. 14, 1972.
They have two children: Nicole Firman and Michelle Stierwalt.
The couple also has three grandchildren.

BILLY AND MARY (POWERS) KENT, members of Annunciation Parish in Brazil, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on Oct. 14.

The couple was married in St. Paul Church in Tell City on Oct. 14, 1972.

They have two children: Eric and William Kent.
The couple also has two grandchildren, two step-grandchildren and one step-great-grandchild.

JOHN G. AND JEANETTE (BIRD) WRN, members of St. Mary-of-the-Woods Parish in St. Mary-of-the-Woods, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on Oct. 7.

They have three children: Jacqueline Franmer, Jamie Richey and John D. Wrn.
The couple also has 12 grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

RETREATS AND PROGRAMS

October 21-23
Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. Peace in the Market — A Christ-Centered Widow’s Retreat, 6:30 p.m. Fri.-1 p.m. Sun., Nancy Pinard, facilitator;青蛙 James Farrell and grief specialist Providence Sister Connie Kramer presenting. $275 includes accommodations, program and meals. Registration: 317-236-1501 or samenders@archindy.org.


Bread, Body and Blood: Praying the Eucharist, 11 a.m.-7 p.m., led by Benedictine Father J. Thomas Brown. For more information, register by Oct. 14. Prayer 10:45 a.m.-11:15 a.m.; Mass 11:30 a.m.; Supper at 5 p.m.; Eucharistic Adoration 7-9 p.m., via Zoom. Information: archindy.org.


Polidor Walk on Oct. 29 in Columbus benefits Haitian literacy program with twinning parish link

The Poloridor Walk/Run will be held at St. Bartholomew Parish, 1306 27th St., in Columbus, from 8:30-10:30 a.m. on Oct. 29.

The event benefits the Alfa literacy program in northern Haiti. The program began in 2002 in Lomotape, Haiti, with the support of the town’s St. Ann Parish, with which St. Bartholomew Parish has had a twinning relationship for 30 years.

The literacy program for market women and peasant farmers has expanded to include 10 sites and 14 facilitators throughout northern Haiti.

Registration costs from $15-$30 plus an online sign-up fee including transportation. For more information or to register, go to cuthaithanlit.org/PolidorWalk.

For specific questions, call 812-378-0697. 1

October 20
Mt. Gilead Church, 6019 E. 62nd St., Indianapolis. Right to Life of Johnson and Morgan Counties Annual Banquet, 6-9 p.m., Msgr. John D. Rettler, president. keynote speaker Father Gary Meyor speaking, $35, register by Oct. 15. Information: 317-697-2441 or rfidin@att.net.

October 21
Northwest Events and Social Club, 1719 E. 86th St., Indianapolis. Catholic Business Network Eco-Friendly Citizen’s Rosary Walk, 10:45-11:45 a.m., meet in front of church. Information: faithfulcitizens2016@gmail.com.

October 22
McGowan Hall, 1305 N. Delaware St., Indianapolis. McGowan Knights of Columbus Hall 100th Anniversary Gala, doors open 6-8 p.m., dinner 7:30 p.m., dress in 1920s-era attire, cocktails, nine-piece jazz orchestra, cash bar, raffles, dancing, silent and live charity benefit hall restoration, $50 entry on Oct. 21, 26 at the door. Information: www.mcgowanhall.org.

October 22-23
St. Paul Church, 814 Jefferson St., Tell City. Brute Weekend Masses Sat. 5 p.m. CT and Sun. 10 a.m. CT celebrated by Father Andrew Syberg, Bishop Joseph Mitty, Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary rector, talk on how the seminary forms future priests. Information: Ellen Sanders, fr.bbowen@dol-in.org or dol-in.org/retreats.

October 24-28

For a complete list of events as reported to The Criterion, log on to www.archindy.org/retreats.
Nicanor Catholic in Indianapolis shares story of generations of suffering

(Nota del editor: La mujer entrevistada en este artículo envió a Estados Unidos para escapar de la creciente represión política en Nicaragua. Para proteger su identidad y dado que su hijo fue asesinado en ese país, no quiere que su nombre se publique. En este artículo la llamaré Lucía.)

Lucía ha conocido la agitación y los disturbios en su país natal, Nicaragua, desde que era niña, a través de los años 70, cuando Daniel Ortega y el partido sandinista llegaron al poder. Su familia se opuso a ellos, y tres de sus hermanos mayores murieron consecutivo.

"En esos momentos, el gobierno nos habría considerado un 'bandido,' llegó a su fin en 1990, pero la entrevista que ofreció a The Criterion, fue publicada el 19 de agosto, en un redada realizada antes del amanecer, los agentes de policía detuvieron al obispo Álvarez y los sacerdotes, seminarios y lay Catholicos que vivían con él y los llevaron a Managua, capital de Nicaragua.

"He helps heal our hearts, and he gives us forgiving hearts," Lucia said, noting that she has forgiven the men who killed her son.

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the family,” he added, as a current lawsuit in Indiana lead to a temporary injunction on Senate Bill 1 (S.B. 1) on Sept. 22, thus again allowing abortions up to 22 weeks gestation to take place in the state until a decision on the lawsuit is reached. Per S.B. 1, all abortion except in cases of rape, incest and specific medical emergencies were banned as of Sept. 15.

Archbishop Thompson quoted from Pope Francis’ 2020 encyclical, “Fratelli Tutti: on Fraternity and Social Friendship.”

“Goodness, together with love, justice and solidarity, are not achieved once and for all,” the archbishop read from the document. “They have to be realized each day. It is not possible to settle for what one has achieved in the past and complacently rejoice as if you could somehow resist the fact that many of our brothers and sisters still endure situations that cry out for our attention.”

He expounded on the quote, stating, “In contrast to a throw-away mentality, we must embrace the inter-relatedness of our relationship with God, with others, self and all creation.

“In doing so, we must realize that our integrity in defending the unborn is closely related to our defense of the poor, the elderly, the sick, the lonely, the dying, the immigrant and refugee, the incarcerated, marriage and family and the environment, all persons regardless of race, gender and economics. … Each and every person created in the image of God possesses innate dignity and sanctity.”

Archbishop Thompson reminded those present that the Eucharist is the source and summit of the faith where the body, blood, soul and divinity of Jesus Christ become present.

“There’s a way to give this celebration all that matters, every life from the moment of conception to natural death. We bring to the Lord not just those we love and with whom we get along, but all humanity, including those who disagree with us and even those who wish us harm. Sacramental grace has the power to transform, to heal, to reconcile.”

While there is reason to celebrate in the recent overturning of Roe v. Wade, the archbishop said, “We have just as much reason to remain vigilant.

“That we may be effective witnesses to respecting life, let us take nothing of God’s grace for granted. In both celebration and vigilance—keeping before us the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ—we indeed have reason to rejoice, and to rejoice in hope.”

(See related articles on page 9 about Dr. Michael Padilla, who received the Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Respect Life Award, and Eric Dessauer, who received the Our Lady of Guadalupe Pro-Life Youth Award.)
Founder of Franciscan FertilityCare receives archdiocese’s Respect Life award

By Natalie Hofer

In a moment of deja vu, Dr. Michael Padilla walked up the steps of the sanctuary of St. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis on Oct. 2 to receive an archdiocese’s pro-life award from the archbishop.

The same scene took place 15 years prior. Except then he was in high school, the prelate was Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein and the honor was the archdiocese’s Our Lady of Guadalupe Pro-Life Youth Award.

This time, Padilla received the Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Respect Life Award from Archbishop Charles C. Thompson.

Padilla said he received his first award in 2007 “for being active in 40 Days for Life and for speaking to my school that picked apart Planned Parenthood.” This year, his list of accomplishments earning him an award is much longer.

Foremost is founding the Franciscan FertilityCare Center, part of the Franciscan Health network in Indianapolis, a year ago. He also serves as medical director for the center.

As she introduced Padilla, Bri Anne Varick noted that he “worked for years to start” the Franciscan FertilityCare Center, which is “one of the only hospital-based Creighton fertility clinics in the country.” Varick is director of the archdiocesan Office of Human Life and Dignity, which sponsors the pro-life awards.

By using the Creighton Method of Natural Family Planning and Napoteknology, she said, Padilla “works with couples who are struggling with infertility and provides alternatives to in vitro fertilization, giving hope to couples as well as respecting God’s design for fertility and creating life.”

The accomplishments don’t stop there for Padilla, who, with his wife and two children, is a member of St. John the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis. He has also been trained in the abortion pill reversal method and serves as the medical director for the Gabriel Project’s mobile ultrasound unit.

Padilla also serves as president of the Catholic Medical Association’s St. Raphael Guild of Indianapolis.

In this role, said Varick, “he takes on the formation of Catholic doctors so these physicians are able to truly respect and uphold the dignity of all their patients.”

Padilla has also testified at the Indiana State House regarding abortion-related legislation, spoken at pro-life events and, with his wife Dana, presented at marriage retreats on fertility issues and birth to life.

“Being a pro-life physician, in every way, is rare these days,” she wrote. “We are blessed to have Dr. Mikey Padilla at our parish and in our archdiocese. . . . But,” she added, “I might be biased!”

Pro-life youth award winner felt called to be ‘voice of the pro-life movement’

By Natalie Hofer

High school junior Eric Dessauer got involved with pro-life activities during his sophomore year at Bishop Chatard High School in Indianapolis.

His efforts in just one year led to Eric receiving the archdiocese’s Our Lady of Guadalupe Pro-Life Youth Award at St. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis on Oct. 2.

“My parents were always pro-life,” said Eric, 17. “For me, it really started when my dad ran for a state office in 2010. I got into politics like my dad. As that grew, my conservative views grew, and one of those is the pro-life stance.”

When he experienced some opposition to those views his freshman year, Eric did not lose heart.

Instead, he said, he felt “inspired, because I saw [the pro-life stance] needed to be studied more. The opposite information influenced my generation with social media.”

Eric felt called to be “the voice of the pro-life movement while others supported abortion or just said nothing.”

He said due to the effects of COVID-19 in 2020, the school’s pro-life club had for the most part become inactive.

While attending the Right to Life of Indianapolis Celebrate Life dinner last October, Eric met Mary Carmen Zakrajsek, the Great Lakes regional coordinator for Students for Life of America.

Later, he and a friend “reached out to her and expressed an interest in starting a [pro-life] club, because she helps grow clubs all over Indiana,” Eric recalled. They soon became co-presidents of Chatard’s pro-life student group.

During the school’s pro-life week in January, the club focused on raising awareness of the effects of abortion “because it’s killing generations,” said Eric. They invited Zakrajsek to speak on the topic to the student body, filled the school lawn with crosses representing the nearly 65 million lives lost to abortion between 1973-2021 (according to the National Right to Life Educational Foundation), offered a pro-life apologetics training and participated in the Mass and Indiana March for Life and Rally in Indianapolis on Jan. 24.

Eric was also inspired by participating in his first National March for Life in Washington in January.

“It helped me see just how much the pro-life movement had grown,” he said. “At a conference the next day, there were a lot of teens who shared my views and the struggles of having to deal with being the minority in our views.”

“It really inspired me. It helped me realize my voice and the impact I can make, that my voice can influence five, 10 or even just one person, and that person can influence another.”

He said he also realized his power “as a person with dwarfism, having a voice for the disabled and speaking out and saying, ‘We’re not OK with the discrimination. We’re an image of God and his creativity.’ ”

Zakrajsek was one of those who nominated Eric for the pro-life youth award.

He is amazing, dedicated, resilient and humble,” she wrote.

She recounted how, in May, Eric attended a pro-life rally in Indianapolis and posted about the event on social media.

“One poor student drew over 2,000 comments, mostly from pro-abortion activists,” she noted. “He was severely bullied, harassed and even threatened for his pro-life beliefs, but remained strong!”

While Eric is registered with his family at Christ the King Parish in Indianapolis, he often worships at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish in Carmel, Ind., in the Lafayette Diocese. The church is near Guérin Catholic High School in Noblesville, Ind. (also in the Lafayette Diocese), where he started as a junior this semester.

Only a student for a few months at Guerin Catholic, Eric is already co-president of the school’s pro-life club.

“It’s an honor” to receive the Our Lady of Guadalupe Pro-Life Youth Award, he said. “I never thought I’d get an award like this. It’s humbling to know that people appreciate my work.”

But Eric also noted that he is not active in the pro-life movement “for anyone’s appreciation. I’m doing it because I believe it’s an extremely important cause.”
NEW YORK (CNS)—Catholic hospitals and their workers “must not be coerced by the government to violate their consciences” by being forced to perform “gender transition procedures” against their religious beliefs, said two U.S. cardinals writing in America magazine.

In a Sept. 26 article in the national weekly Jesuit publication based in New York, Cardinal Blase J. Cupich of Chicago and Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan of New York addressed a proposed revision to the Affordable Health Care law drafted by the civil rights office of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

The HHS proposal, or “proposed rule” as it is called, would apply to implementation of an Affordable Care Act (ACA) provision, Section 1557, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability or sex—including pregnancy, sexual orientation and gender identity—in covered health programs or activities.

This provision “rightfully prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in health care. We wholeheartedly support all efforts to ensure that everyone, without exception, receives the best health care that is their due,” Cardinals Cupich and Dolan wrote.

“Catholic hospitals do not discriminate against anyone and to do so would be offensive to the embracing and expansive healing ministry of Jesus Christ,” they said, noting that one of every seven Americans in need of hospital care will receive it in a Catholic facility.

“All people who come to us” are treated with dignity, “no matter their age, sex, race or ethnic background or religion. It is also true for people who identify as transgender. They will receive the same treatment as any other patient,” the prelates said.

“However, if health care facilities are to be places where the twin pillars of faith and science stand together, then these facilities and their workers must not be coerced by the government to violate their consciences,” they said.

Besides forcing health care workers to perform gender transition procedures, the revisions would require health insurance plans to cover the costs of such procedures.

The HHS proposal will likely apply to all health care providers, clinics, nursing homes, hospitals, group health insurers and third-party administrators of self-funded plans.

The full proposal, published under the heading “Nondiscrimination in Health Programs and Activities,” can be found on the Federal Register’s website at bit.ly/3d0wwkJ. The site includes a link to submit comments and provides other ways to submit comments.

It was published on Aug. 4 by the Federal Register, opening a 60-day period for public comment. The last day for submissions was on Oct. 3.

“Under this new proposed rule, it would be considered discrimination for a health care facility or worker to object to performing gender transition procedures, regardless of whether that objection is a matter of sincerely held religious belief or clinical judgment,” Cardinals Cupich and Dolan said. “This is government coercion that intrudes on the religious freedom of faith-based health care facilities.”

They urged HHS “to reconsider its misguided mandate.”

“Such a mandate threatens the conscience rights of all health care providers and workers who have discerned that participating in, or facilitating, gender transition procedures is contrary to their own beliefs,” they added.

The cardinals said that “people of many faiths, or of no faith yet with deep personal convictions, may find these procedures profoundly troubling, and their constitutional rights deserve to be respected.

“In a society that protects the free exercise of religion, religious health care providers cannot be expected to violate the teachings of their religion as a condition of continuing their care, and religious health care workers cannot be expected to violate their consciences as a condition of employment,” they said.

Cardinals Cupich and Dolan asked the question: “Does objecting to performing gender transition procedures— but welcoming patients who identify as transgender—constitute discrimination?”

“Of course not,” they wrote. “The focus of such an objection is completely on the procedure, not the patient.”

“Prohibiting the removal of a healthy, functioning organ is not discrimination, provided that the same determination would be made for anyone of any sex or gender, which is true at Catholic hospitals,” they continued.

The cardinals confirmed what other critics of the HHS proposal said when they first became aware of it back in July, that it would not include federal conscience protection for those in health care who object to performing these procedures.

“The proposed regulation does not codify the rights of faith-based providers to declines procedures based on conscience, as other federal laws do,” the prelates said. “Rather, it holds that HHS reserves the right to decide whether, despite those existing conscience protections, it can force faith-based providers to violate their beliefs.

“Considering that the government is currently fighting court rulings that held that it violated religious freedom laws the last time it tried to impose a mandate like this, it is reasonable to lack confidence in the department’s commitment to construing these laws to provide appropriately robust conscience protections,” they said.

One such court ruling was handed down on Aug. 26 by the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans.

In a unanimous decision, the court blocked an HHS transgender mandate in a case that dates back to the Obama administration.

The ruling came in the case Franciscan Alliance v. Becerra. The lawsuit was first filed in 2016 by Franciscan Alliance, a Catholic health care network, and a group of nearly 19,000 health care professionals.

That year, the Obama administration began implementing a mandate requiring doctors to perform gender transition procedures on any patient, including children, and required private insurance companies—except plans run by Medicare and Medicaid—and many employers to cover gender reassignment therapy or face severe penalties and legal action. 1
In the past few years, the term “visio divina” has gained traction in the Catholic lexicon. Like “lectio divina,” which is an ancient way to pray with Scripture, visio divina translates to “divine seeing” and is a way to pray with art or other visual media alongside Scripture.

I first encountered visio divina in June 2021 at the GIVEN Forum, a conference dedicated to helping young women activate their gifts for the good of the Church and the world. One of the projects inspired by the 2016 forum was Katie Weiss’ Behold, a ministry that, according to its website, uses visio divina to help women to “encounter the beauty of God and themselves, and go forth into the world sharing this beauty.”

During the forum, Weiss led the participants through a time of visio divina. She showed us an image of 19th-century French artist James Tissot’s painting, “The Ointment of the Magdalene.” Then she took us through the following steps (which are also found on her website).

These steps also largely follow the same pattern in lectio divina:
— Visto: We were asked to spend time looking at the image and “praying how it speaks to [our] heart.”
— Meditation: Weiss then read us an accompanying Scripture passage (Jn 12:1-10) and invited us to ponder the painting more deeply with the guidance of reflection questions. As one would experience during lectio divina, we were asked: “What strikes you about this image and Scripture?”
— Action: The final question of our meditation was: “Does anything hold you back from receiving your gifts?” This question was: “Does anything hold you back from receiving your gifts?” This question was: “Does anything hold you back from receiving your gifts?” This question was: “Does anything hold you back from receiving your gifts?” This question was: “Does anything hold you back from receiving your gifts?”
— Prayer: We were then invited to enter into dialogue with the Lord about what was speaking to us from the Scripture and painting.
— Contemplation: Weiss describes this step as “simply resting in God” and a time of divine intimacy.”

Praying with this painting was powerful. I was struck by Mary Magdalene’s utter abandonment before the Lord, as well as the shocked and somewhat disapproving faces of the people around Jesus. Jesus, however, reaches a hand toward her, perhaps pointing out to those assembled her example of humility: He is not at all embarrassed by the fact that her hair is draped over his feet. In this moment of abandonment, Mary has given all her worldly and spiritual goods to the Lord. The sweetness of the ointment fills the room.

During the meditation, one of Weiss’s questions was: “Does anything hold you back from receiving your gifts?” This led me to ponder areas of fear and lack of trust in my own life, to bring these to prayer and to discern the action of finding a spiritual director so I could more freely empty my alabaster jar over Jesus’ feet.

In June, I got a chance to sit down with Weiss to discuss more deeply her own experiences of praying with art. Before founding Behold, she spent time with a religious order discerning her vocation. Though struggling to pray with Scripture alone, she found prayer came more easily before Fra Angelico’s “Annunciation.”

“It gave me permission to feel what I was feeling,” Weiss shared. “I was feeling I wasn’t called to the religious community I was with, but I was afraid to see that.” Praying before this painting gave her permission to acknowledge hard feelings—like fear and suffering and, in this instance, the courage to discern out of the religious community.

More recently, art has helped her process the profound grief of a miscarriage she experienced. An artist herself, she felt called to paint in the weeks following this loss. “I painted this image of Mary holding our baby, Lucy. It was really healing to acknowledge a loss and to express what I was feeling inside.”

Art has been a catalyst for helping Weiss grow in intimacy with the Lord, and her ministry is guided by the belief that it can do the same for others. Behold has served post-abortive women and has also offered small group opportunities to pray through the mysteries of the rosary with art and to use hand lettering to pray with a Scripture verse. Weiss describes these experiences of creating or engaging more of the senses while praying with art as incarnational. It is also very much a part of the Catholic tradition—while researching for Behold, she found a book on Eastern Catholicism that mentioned the practice of praying with icons and Scripture.

Stained glass, Weiss says, is another visual way to engage with Scripture, and in the early days of its use would have helped a largely illiterate population engage more deeply with faith.

Since Behold’s launch in 2016, Weiss has seen the term “visio divina” explode. She believes that the Holy Spirit is using this way of praying to touch souls.

The beautiful thing about our Church is that it holds a rich treasury of ways in which we can draw close to our Lord. Visio divina, I’ve found, vibrantly brings the Scriptures to life and invites the viewer to rest in the visual poetry of an artist’s inspiration.

Visit www.beholdvisiodivina.com to learn more.

(Lindsey Weishar is a poet and freelance writer.)
Each October, the Church in the United States celebrates Respect Life Month. As Catholics we are called to cherish, defend and protect those who are most vulnerable in this temporary and messy conception to natural death.

During the month of October, the Church asks us to reflect more deeply about the dignity of every human life and to build a culture that protects it. To assist us and dive more deeply into the dignity of every human life, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) gives the Church in the United States a theme. This year, it is “Called to Serve Moms in Need.”

I believe it is a better understanding of what it looks like to be “Called to Serve Moms in Need,” we should look to our Blessed Mother Mary.

In the Gospel of Luke, we hear the story of the announcement where the angel Gabriel shares the good news that Mary will be the mother of God. The angel Gabriel also shares that Mary’s cousin Elizabeth is pregnant. Mary not only gives her “yes” and surrenders to God’s will, but with Jesus dwelling within her, makes haste to serve Elizabeth in her unexpected pregnancy.

Our Blessed Mother shows us how to respond to receiving the gift of life from God with generosity and love. Mary received the most wonderful gift; God was allowing her to bring Christ into the world. She did not demand to be served or seek affirmation in this amazing gift, but in humility and “in silence” (Lk 1:44) offered herself in service. She went to accompany a mom in need.

She not only offers herself, but she brings Jesus with her! We too are called to receive Jesus and bring Jesus to serve moms in need.

As Catholics, we have the gift of the sacrament of the Eucharist that allows us to receive the body, soul and divinity of Jesus. Mary received the Word made flesh and Jesus dwelled within her.

As Catholics, we receive the true presence of Jesus. We receive his body, soul, and divinity when we go to Mass and receive Communion. Jesus dwells within us. This, the Eucharist, is the source and summit of our faith.

When we surrender to the grace that allows us to believe and know that it is Jesus that we truly receive, we will come to understand that we are not alone. It is through the Eucharist where our strength, compassion, patience, peace and comfort are found.

Mary received Jesus and responded immediately to the call to serve, to reveal the truth of God’s love and we are not alone. It is also our call to serve the vulnerable and share Jesus with them. It is our call to respond to a mom in need so that too they may come to know the reality that Jesus abides in us and dwells in us. I pray that we may respond in the same loving and tender way to serve moms in need.

In the Gospel of Luke, “We do not worry about your life, what you will eat, or about your body and what you will wear. For life is more than food and the body more than clothing” (Lk 12:28).

Guest Column

Richard Etienne

Trust that our merciful God will provide for you each day

Not long ago, I was given this quote by my spiritual director: “God never promises to take away your problems, but He promises to take care of you through them.”

My prayer is that you are not alone. In these hard times, I challenge you to seek God’s will and to receive Jesus with open arms. The world can be hard and sometimes confusing. The promises of God are a beacon of hope and light for us all.

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The Second Book of Kings furnishes the first reading at Mass this weekend. Once the two books of Kings were a single volume, but as time passed, editors divided the volume into two parts. They are among the Old Testament’s historical writings. While they are interesting in the careers of the early kings of Israel, as the name implies, none of the Old Testament is primarily about history in and of itself.

Instead, the Old Testament books all are concerned with religion, and more precisely with the relationship between God and the Hebrew people. In the view of the ancients, the most important question in life was how to live in faithfulness to God. Nothing else ultimately mattered.

So, while the kings are prominent in these books, religious figures also are much in evidence. This weekend’s reading is an example.

The central personality is not a king, but Naaman. Two strikes are against Naaman. He is a Gentile and a leper. It was much more than a coincidence of birth, religious choice or bad health. Each circumstance smacked of estrangement from God.

Leprosy was seen, for instance, as God’s chosen people. Jews thought that Samaritans were irredeemable sinners shunned by God in leprosy. Somehow, somewhere, the leper had disobeyed God.

Fearing contagion, communities forced lepers to live apart. Isolated and spurned, lepers were forced to live lives of want to the point of starvation.

This reading also has an ethnic component. Jews scorned Samaritans since Samaritans long ago tolerated pagan invaders and intermarried with them, producing offspring not purely Hebrew, thereby blurring the identity of the chosen people. Jews thought that Samaritans were the worst of the worst, incapable of anything good.

Amid this, Jesus healed and forgave.

His actions were works of the merciful God. He was God.

Reflection

It is impossible today to imagine the amazement of people when they heard Jesus speak kindly of lepers or of Samaritans, who, in popular opinion, were irredeemable sinners shunned by God. This is critical for understanding the readings.

Presumably Jews, nine of the lepers cried in this story from St. Luke’s Gospel saw themselves as being entitled to God’s mercy and forgiveness.

The 10th leper was different. An unworthy Samaritan, he nevertheless realized that God’s mercy had come to him. He gave thanks to Jesus, whom the leper understood to be the bearer of divine mercy.

By giving, we all have garnered God’s love. We are all lepers and Samaritans. We deserve nothing, yet with unending love, God cures us of the weakening effects of our sin, restores us to life and welcomes us into the fold of those loyal to God.

The key is our own humility and recognition of our need for God.

Question Corner/Fr. Kenneth Doyle

Following teachings of Christ, the Church is the only sure means of salvation

This weekend’s readings are a challenge and a reassurance to Timothy, a Christian, and a bishop. Anyone who truly dies with Christ by dying to sin receives everlasting life with God. St. Luke’s Gospel provides the last reading. Leprosy is mentioned throughout the Scriptures. What was it in today’s clinical sense? It was chronic and then without any known cure. Modern medicine has an answer. Then, it was a fearful fate. Unaware of most of the workings of disease, ancient Jews saw a curse from God in leprosy. Somehow, somewhere, the leper had disobeyed God.

Fearing contagion, communities forced lepers to live apart. Isolated and spurned, lepers were forced to live lives of want to the point of starvation.

This reading also has an ethnic component. Jews scorned Samaritans since Samaritans long ago tolerated pagan invaders and intermarried with them, producing offspring not purely Hebrew, thereby blurring the identity of the chosen people. Jews thought that Samaritans were the worst of the worst, incapable of anything good.

Amid this, Jesus healed and forgave.

His actions were works of the merciful God. He was God.

Reflection

It is impossible today to imagine the amazement of people when they heard Jesus speak kindly of lepers or of Samaritans, who, in popular opinion, were irredeemable sinners shunned by God. This is critical for understanding the readings.

Presumably Jews, nine of the lepers cried in this story from St. Luke’s Gospel saw themselves as being entitled to God’s mercy and forgiveness.

The 10th leper was different. An unworthy Samaritan, he nevertheless realized that God’s mercy had come to him. He gave thanks to Jesus, whom the leper understood to be the bearer of divine mercy.

By giving, we all have garnered God’s love. We are all lepers and Samaritans. We deserve nothing, yet with unending love, God cures us of the weakening effects of our sin, restores us to life and welcomes us into the fold of those loyal to God.

The key is our own humility and recognition of our need for God.

Q

Was a given prayer folder that tells me that by offering special prayers, I shall suffer no purgatory and be taken directly to heaven when I die, provided that I say certain prayers daily for 12 years. (Missed days can be made up.) I am about ready to start the third year, but I fear Catholic friends has just told me that this promise is not true.

The prayers are called “The Seven Sorrows of Mary, as given to St. Bridget and The Twelve-Year Prayers of St. Bridget on the Passion of Jesus.” I have read that these prayers were confirmed by Pope Clement XII and Pope Innocent X. I don’t really mind doing the prayers, but I would like to know if I can guarantee my salvation. (Arkansas)

A

No prayer—not even one said every day for 12 years—can “guarantee salvation.” Even a plenary indulgence, which remits all of the temporal punishment due to sin, covers only those sins committed up to the time the indulgence is gained; it is not “prospective.”

The surest way to eternal happiness is, with the help of God’s grace, to live out the teachings of Jesus Christ as learned from the Gospels and the teachings of the Church. I quote as my witness Jesus himself, who explained in the Gospel of Matthew that “not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven” (Mt 7:21).

It strikes me as a bit like magic to think of the mere recitation of certain words could by itself win joy that is eternal. After all, a plenary indulgence

requires, in addition to the particular prayer or action, the reception of the sacraments of penance and the Eucharist, prayers for the pope’s intentions and a complete detachment from all sin.

Having said this, I would still encourage you to continue the recitation of the prayers you mentioned. Most often, the effect of prayer—as well as comforting me—is to bring one closer to Jesus in thought and action, which is the goal of our lives and the safest path to salvation.

Q

I am getting married in Cancun, Mexico, and my Christian priest has made the judgment that for the sake of non-Catholic friends, my marriage should be civil. As a married Catholic couple, my brother-in-law should feel that he cannot attend (but not officiate) at our wedding on the beach in Cancun. He says that he is not allowed to attend since it is a Catholic wedding in a church, and that he can only come to the dinner afterward at the resort restaurant.

I recently talked to a Catholic friend who says that this can’t possibly be a rule for Catholic priests. (Pennsylvania)

A

I take it from your question that you are not a Catholic, since your church would seem by its name to be a non-denominational Christian one. I do not know whether your husband-to-be is Catholic, and my answer hinges on whether he is.

If he is not, I don’t see why your brother-in-law should feel that he cannot attend the wedding. If, however, the man you are marrying is a Catholic, his responsibility is either to be married by a Catholic priest in a Catholic church or to receive the necessary permissions for the marriage to be performed by someone other than a priest and in a setting other than a Catholic church.

My guess is that the groom is in fact a Catholic and has not received the needed permissions—in which case I cannot understand your brother-in-law’s reluctance to attend.

Especially as a priest, he is required to avoid giving scandal, and he has evidently decided that his presence at the wedding would create the impression that the ceremony was approved by the Catholic Church.

I would guess, further that he has made the judgment that for the sake of family harmony—and with the hope that later you might decide to have your marriage blessed by the Catholic Church in what is called a “convalidation”—it would be better that he be present at the reception.
Federal judge sides with Catholic school over guidance counselor’s firing

WASHINGTON (CNS)—A federal judge in Indiana, acting with the Archdiocese of Indianapolis and one of its Catholic high schools in a lawsuit filed by a former guidance counselor who said her contract was not renewed because of her same-sex union.

The Sept. 30 ruling in Fitzgerald v. Roncalli High School and the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, relied upon previous Supreme Court rulings that have emphasized a ministerial exception protecting a religious school’s employment practices from government intrusion.

The recent decision echoes a nearly identical ruling from a year ago based on a lawsuit filed against the same school and archdiocese whose contract was similarly not extended due to her same-sex union.

The decisions in both cases were issued by U.S. District Judge Richard Young for the Southern District of Indiana.

Young said the Indianapolis Archdiocese and its schools can select, retain or dismiss faculty according to their religious standards, something he also stressed a year ago.

The current case involved Shelly Fitzgerald, former co-director of guidance at Roncalli High School in Indianapolis for 15 years. Her employment was terminated in 2018 after she confirmed to the school that she was in a same-sex union and the school declined to renew her contract for the following year.

School officials said her conduct was prohibited by the agreement she signed with the school.

Fitzgerald filed a discrimination lawsuit in 2019 against the school and the archdiocese.

On Sept. 29, the court dismissed the lawsuit, noting that “Roncalli entrusted Fitzgerald to teach the Catholic faith and carry out” its religious mission.

The contract described school employees as ministers of faith. It also contained a clause stipulating that employees would forfeit their positions if they engaged in conduct that did not adhere to “the moral or religious teachings of the Roman Catholic Church.”

The ruling on the similar case last year also involved a 2019 complaint filed by Lynn Starkey, another former guidance counselor at Roncalli.

After that ruling, Starkey appealed her case to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 7th Circuit in Chicago, which in late July of this year determined that the Catholic school and its archdiocese have a constitutional right to hire staff who will uphold their core religious teachings.

In court documents in Fitzgerald’s case, the judge pointed out that the role of a guidance counselor is “predominately secular” and that although it could seem “a stretch” to describe a guidance counselor as a minister, the role falls under that umbrella because the school spells out in its faculty handbook and employment agreement that it “entrusted counselors like Fitzgerald to convey the Church’s message in addition to their secular duties.”

The judge granted summary judgment and resolved all of the claims at issue in the case.

Luke Goodrich, vice president and senior counsel at Becket Law, which represented the defendants, said the case echoes the Supreme Court’s stance that “religious organizations have a constitutional right to hire individuals who believe in their faith’s ideals and are committed to their religious mission.”

“This is a commonsense ruling: Catholic schools exist to pass on the Catholic faith to their students; to do that, they need freedom to ask Catholic educators to uphold Catholic values,” he said in a statement.

Luke Goodrich
Novena and trust in God lead business owner along new path

By Jennifer Lindberg

COLUMBUS—Perhaps it’s the stylized pillow with the word “Blessings” embroidered across it that best describes the answer Tina Sherman received after praying a novena to St. Thérèse of Lisieux earlier this year.

A French Carmelite saint of the 19th century, St. Thérèse is known to send showers of roses down upon her devotees when a novena is answered.

Sherman received her roses, and a little something else: The Ark Book and Gift Store in Columbus, which she became owner of in May.

The business wasn’t quite what Sherman was expecting when praying about whether to close her toy store, Little Frogs and Fairies, in Greensburg.

Since the building she rented to be sold and the retail economy was shaky, Sherman thought it might be time to end her business career.

“I wasn’t expecting to open another store,” said Sherman, a member of St. Mary Parish in North Vernon. “I’m only here because this is what God wants of me.”

A mother of six, Sherman earned a bachelor’s degree in science at Marian University in Indianapolis. She never intended to be an entrepreneur in the retail business.

She felt the call to the business world as a way to support her family and still be with her kids. Her littlest ones grew up at the toy store, watching her tag merchandise and getting the first look at all the new Christmas toys on the market.

The Ark represents a shower of blessings for Sherman and a leap of faith into some unchartered territory of entrepreneurship—the 40-year-old business has largely existed as a book and gift store catering to non-denominational Christians and selling Protestant Bibles.

“I do a lot of listening to people,” Sherman said. “I get to see where they are in their faith life and a lot of them are not Catholic.”

The Bible remains the store’s best seller, said Sherman. She’s learned there are hundreds of Protestant translations—which only contain 66 books—compared to the few approved Catholic versions, which include the entire canon of Scripture with 73 books.

As Sherman brings more Catholic elements into The Ark, she is having to sharpen her own knowledge about the Catholic faith.

“I have to explain Mary a lot,” she said. “Usually [customers] say that they didn’t realize [a certain aspect] about Mary because they had been taught differently. I try to never correct them unless they say something that isn’t what the Catholic faith teaches. I want this store to be for everyone.”

Sherman’s motto is to simply follow St. Paul’s words “to be all things to all people” (1 Cor 9:22). The store provides quality religious items and gifts, and Sherman tries to quietly witness to their faith and proclaim it when necessary.

Sherman’s answered novena has deepened her trust in God, she noted.

She wanted a clear response about closing the toy store, “so I asked for white roses” from St. Thérèse, Sherman said. She knew the stories of how St. Thérèse favored requests with roses, and Sherman wanted a specific color to know whether the saint heard her prayer or not.

At the end of the novena, Sherman received no white roses directly. But when she walked into an ALDI grocery store, all that was in front of her were white roses, she recalled.

“Now, I’ve been to ALDI a lot, and they usually have various colors of roses,” she said. “But all that was in the store that day were white roses.”

That could have been the end of the story. However, Sherman hit the pause button on this sign because it seemed so final. White roses meant closing the store.

So Sherman prayed another nine-day novena to St. Thérèse. This time she didn’t get any roses or even massive sightings of them. However, she did get a “feeling of deep peace,” and a phone call. A friend told her Angela Burton, a member of St. Bartholomew Parish in Columbus, wanted to close The Ark. But Sherman wasn’t the first in line for the store. And if she became the new owner of The Ark, it meant closing the toy store and taking over The Ark’s retail business simultaneously.

“There was no rest,” said Sherman. “But it just felt right.”

“I enjoy all the people I meet,” she added. “I even got to keep some of my toy store inventory,” she said. “People are really liking it, too.”

Eventually, Sherman plans to put a large St. Thérèse statue in the store.

“I just keep thanking St. Thérèse,” she said with a smile as she stuffed the pillow with the word “Blessings” onto a shelf.

(Jennifer Lindberg is a freelance writer and a member of St. Mary Parish in North Vernon.)

Resettlement agencies applaud U.S. goal to welcome 125,000 refugees

WASHINGTON (CNS)—A White House goal to welcome up to 125,000 refugees in fiscal year 2023 received support from two agencies working to resettle newcomers in the United States.

Auxiliary Bishop Mario E. Dorsonville of Washington, chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ (USCCB) Committee on Migration, and Joan Rosenhauer, executive director of Jesuit Relief Service/USA, welcomed the Biden administration announcement in separate statements on Sept 28.

“This is an ambitious and worthwhile goal for our nation, which has benefited from many blessings brought to our history including the generations of refugees who have already enriched American communities,” Bishop Dorsonville said.

He added that the U.S. bishops remain committed to the Catholic Church’s long tradition of welcoming people who are fleeing war, violence, natural disasters, political instability and persecution.

The USCBC’s Migration and Refugee Services department is one of the largest agencies working to resettle refugees in the U.S.

Rosenhauer said the White House announcement comes at a time when “the world is witnessing the highest levels of global displacement on record with more than 100 million people forced to flee their homes.”

In June, the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees released a report enumerating the number of refugees around the world who are leaving their homelands, citing food insecurity, climate change, wars and lack of safety as leading causes.

The White House announced the goal of resettling 125,000 refugees on Sept. 28 as the Biden administration rebuilds the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program following declining refugee quotas and cutbacks in services in recent years.

Since the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program was established in 1980, it has settled about 3.5 million refugees.

Bishop Dorsonville said that as the number of refugees admitted returns to higher levels, the USCCB will continue to “embrace this ministry given to us by Jesus,” adding that “we look to the president and Congress for their continued support of a robust resettlement program, consistent with our national values.”

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Pope Francis tells Russian President Putin: Stop the war

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—With “rivers of blood and tears” still flowing in Ukraine and with the increasing threat of the use of nuclear weapons, Pope Francis begged Russian President Vladimir Putin: “Stop this spiral of violence and death.

With the situation being “so serious, devastating and threatening,” the pope did not offer his customary commentary on the day’s Gospel reading before reciting the Angelus prayer on Oct. 2. Instead, he focused on the war and the “terrible and inconceivable wound” it is inflicting on humanity.

While constantly calling for peace and offering prayers for the victims since the war began in late February, the pope drew attention in his talk to “the serious situation that has arisen in recent days with further actions contrary to the principles of international law,” a clear reference to Putin’s announcement on Sept. 30 that Russia was annexing four occupied territories in Ukraine.

The decision, the pope told people in St. Peter’s Square, “increases the risk of nuclear escalation to the point of fears of uncontrollable and catastrophic consequences worldwide.

“My appeal is addressed first of all to the president of the Russian Federation, begging him to stop this spiral of violence and death, also for the sake of his people,” the pope said.

But “saddened by the immense suffering of the Ukrainian people as a result of the aggression suffered,” Pope Francis also appealed to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy “to be open” to any “serious peace proposals.”

The pope also asked world leaders “to do everything in their power to put an end to the ongoing war, without allowing themselves to be drawn into dangerous escalations, and to promote and support initiatives for dialogue.”

While remembering Ukraine’s “thousands of victims,” including children, the destruction and the displacement of millions of people, Pope Francis also spoke of specifics.

“Some actions can never be justified. Never!” the pope said.

“It’s distressing that the world is learning the geography of Ukraine through names like Bucha, Irpin, Maripol, Izium, Zaporizhzhia and other towns that have become places of suffering and indescribable fear,” the pope said, referring to cities previously occupied by Russian troops and where mass graves were found once the areas were liberated.

“And what about the fact that humanity is once again faced with the atomic threat?” the pope asked. “It is absurd. How much blood still must flow before we understand that war is never a solution, only destruction?”

The pope asked thousands of people gathered in the square for the midday prayer, “In the name of God and in the name of the sense of humanity that dwells in every heart,” he said, “I renew my call for an immediate ceasefire.”

Pope Francis prayed for a negotiated settlement of the conflict, one that is “not imposed by force, but agreed, just and stable.”

A just solution, he said, must be “based on respect for the sacred value of human life, as well as the sovereignty and territorial integrity of each country, and the rights of minorities and legitimate concerns.”

The Indiana portion of the annual Biking for Babies took place on Sept. 9-11. A prayer rally took place at Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Indianapolis on Sept. 10, with several speakers highlighting the value of all human life. This year, 24 riders participated in the local ride, in which they rode for 18 miles, pedaling for life. Approximately $30,000 was raised through the local campaign. Next year’s event will be held on Sept. 8-10, 2023, with the local ride and prayer rally being held on Sept. 9, 2023. For more information on Biking for Babies, go to bikingforbabies.com.