Names and faces: Pope, Church leaders draw attention to victims of violence

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope Francis’ visit to Congo and his ecumenical pilgrimage to South Sudan put a face—actually, thousands of faces—on the horror of war.

But he also seemed energized by the enthusiasm of the crowds in Kinshasa, Congo, on Jan. 31-Feb. 3 and buoyed by traveling to Juba, South Sudan, on Feb. 3-5 with Anglican Archbishop Justin Welby of Canterbury and the Rev. Iain Greenshields, moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland.

Archbishop Welby, joining the pope and Rev. Greenshields for a news conference on the flight back to Rome, used the word “miracle” to describe the three churches pulling off a retreat for South Sudan’s squabbling leaders at the Vatican in 2019.

But none of the three seemed certain this time that their words and gestures changed anything for South Sudanese President Salva Kiir, a former warrior and still an imposing and commanding figure at age 71, or for the five vice presidents who are supposed to be sharing governance with him.

However, Kiir did announce during the trip that his government would return to the negotiating table with five groups that did not sign a 2018 peace agreement.

Kiir had withdrawn from the talks in November.

In the absence of peace and with little possibility of returning to their homes, some 2,000 internally displaced people living in camps that dot South Sudan had their own meeting with the three church leaders on Feb. 4. They were able to share their stories and their dreams and to do so in the presence of an international press corps.

On the return flight to Rome on Feb. 5, Archbishop Welby said with the

Pope saddened by ‘huge loss of life’ after earthquakes in Turkey and Syria

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope Francis expressed his “spiritual closeness” and “solidarity” with those affected by a pair of powerful earthquakes that struck Turkey and Syria on Feb. 6.

A 7.8 magnitude earthquake as measured by the U.S. Geological Survey hit southern Turkey before dawn on Feb. 6, wreaking havoc in large areas of neighboring Syria. It was followed by what the geological survey said was a separate 7.5 magnitude earthquake.

Earthquake survivors react while standing amid destroyed buildings in Hatay, Turkey on Feb. 7. (CNS photo/Unit Baskan, Reuters)
COVID-19 pandemic there was "a loss of momentum in the peace process," although the trip showed clearly that the people are desperate for peace after almost 10 years of violent conflict.

"What we now need is a serious change of heart from the leadership. They have to agree to a process that will lead to a peaceful transition of power. They've been told this publicly. We've said it to them," the archbishop said. "There has to be an end to corruption and gun smuggling and the amassing of huge quantities of weapons."

Pope Francis agreed, saying that the weapons trade "is the biggest plague in the world," provoking violent confrontations among people so that businesses can go in and exploit their land and their resources.

Meeting South Sudan's political leaders at the presidential palace in Juba on Feb. 3, Pope Francis got right to the point: "Many things are needed here, but surely not more instruments of death."

While the moderator and the archbishop did not join Pope Francis for the Congo portion of the trip, they and their churches know the challenges facing the Congolese, the destruction and corruption that accompany the extraction of its mineral wealth and the grotesque violence that continues in the country's eastern region.

In the most emotional part of his journey, Pope Francis came face to face with the results of that violence, blessing family members hacked to death—"in Congo and in South Sudan it was clear family members hacked to death—in the eastern region."

On Feb. 1—a priest whose finger was chopped off and boys who had seen their family members hacked to death—in Congo and in South Sudan it was clear that the violence, the poverty and the lack of education, health care and opportunity do not just weigh on the nations' women, but come close to crushing them.

In the presence of the Congolese victims, Pope Francis said, "I pray that women, every woman, may be respected, protected and esteemed. Violence against women and mothers is violence against God himself, who from a woman, from a mother, took on our human condition."

Three days later, at the meeting with people living in camps for the displaced, Pope Francis said that "mothers, women are the key to transforming the country. If they receive the proper opportunities, through their industriousness and their natural gift of protecting life, they will have the ability to change the face of South Sudan, to give it a peaceful and cohesive development.

"I ask you, I ask all the people of these lands, to ensure that women are protected, respected, valued and honored," he said. "Please, protect, respect, appreciate and honor every woman, every girl, young woman and mother, and indeed, if you are not able to do so, otherwise, there will be no future."

That evening, at an ecumenical prayer service with the pope and Rev. Greenshields, Archbishop Welby was even more forceful. He had a message for you young South Sudanese men: "You will value and honor women, never raping, never violent, never cruel, never using them as those there simply to satisfy desire."

"When we are one, we value and honor women," Archbishop Welby said.

The majority of the population in both Congo and South Sudan are under the age of 30 and, with the violence, they are trying to get an education and a decent job are out of reach for many of them. But for girls and women, it is even more difficult.

"Bright, good young minds deserve the opportunity to develop," Rev. Greenshields told reporters on the flight back to Rome. "Now, from my own experience in other parts of the world, bright young female minds deserve the right to the same opportunities exactly as any others in whatever country, but especially in the developing countries."

"That would be my plea: The rights of women, and young women in particular, have to be recognized as paramount," he said.†

ABOARD THE PAPAL FLIGHT FROM AFRICA (CNS)—At the end of six days in African countries bloodied by war and conflict, Pope Francis said that "the biggest plague" afflicting the world today is the weapons trade.

Tribalism with its ancient rivalries is a problem, he told reporters on Feb. 5, but it is also true that the violence is "provoked" by the ready supply of weapons and that making it easier for people to sell each other just to make money is "diabolical—I have no other word for it."

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The pope had visited Congo on Jan. 31-Feb. 3 before joining the other church leaders in South Sudan on Feb. 3-5 to press the government to implement peace agreements, to console victims of the conflict and to encourage the country's cohesive development.

During the course of almost one hour, the three made opening remarks and responded to questions on various topics. Pope Francis also asked if his job had become more difficult since the death on Dec. 3 of Pope Benedict XVI and the publication of various books and articles portraying the late pope as critical of Pope Francis.

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Pope Francis gives a rosary to Bijuox Mukamba Kalma, who was held by rebels and raped repeatedly. With her twin daughters and her friend Lega Kisa Catarina, she attended Pope Francis’ meeting with victims of violence from eastern Congo in the apostolic nunciature in Kinshasa on Feb. 1. (CNS photo/Valerie Macon)
New translation of sacrament of penance starts on Ash Wednesday

By Sean Gallagher

Lent, which begins this year on Ash Wednesday on Feb. 22, is a time when many Catholics experience God’s mercy through the sacrament of reconciliation. Those who will take part in this sacrament this year during Lent may hear slightly different words from the priest in the prayer of absolution than they’ve heard in the past.

That’s because the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops is beginning the implementation of a new translation of the Order of Penance, which priests may begin to use starting on Ash Wednesday. All priests must start using the new translation by April 16, the Second Sunday of Easter, also known as Divine Mercy Sunday.

“These new translations are a part of the revisions and updating of all the rites that has been in process since the release of the third edition of the Roman Missal in 2011,” explained Father Fr. Patrick Beidelman, executive director of the archdiocesan Secretariat for Worship and Evangelization. “This process of translation updates the rites to be consistent with the most recent wording of the prayers for the Mass. It also allows for some new adaptations and additions for the benefit of the faithful.”

The new translation of the prayer of absolution is as follows:

“God, the Father of mercies, through the death and resurrection of his Son has reconciled the world to himself and poured out the Holy Spirit for the forgiveness of sins; through the ministry of the Church may God grant you pardon and peace. And I absolve you of your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”

The changes in the prayer are as follows:

- “Poured out the Holy Spirit for the forgiveness of sins” was previously translated as “sent the Holy Spirit among us for the forgiveness of sins.”
- “May God grant you pardon and peace” was previously translated as “may God give you pardon and peace.”
- The essential words of the prayer of absolution, “I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” remain unchanged.

Father Beidelman said that availability for use of the new translation of the Order of Penance can be an opportunity for Catholics of central and southern Indiana to reflect upon the meaning of the sacrament and to enter more deeply into it.

“I believe anytime that we highlight the gift of the sacrament of reconciliation in our lives, we are given the opportunity to open our hearts wider to the power of God’s mercy and grace at work in our lives,” he said. “It reminds us that we are not on our own in living as disciples of Jesus, but that through confession God gives us the ability to be released from our sins and empowered to strive for holiness and live faithfully in our daily lives.

“The gift of confession is expressed powerfully and beautifully in the words of the Order of Penance.”

Annual Indiana Catholic Women’s Conference is set for March 11 in Indy

Criticism staff report

The annual Indiana Catholic Women’s Conference will take place in the 500 Ballroom of the Indiana Convention Center, 100 S. Capital Ave., in Indianapolis, from 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. on March 11.

Sponsored by the Marian Center of Indianapolis, the theme of this year’s conference is “Treasuring Womanhood: Walking in Faith and Hope, Holding Her Hand.”

This year’s speakers include Father Ronan Murphy, a Deacon of the Diocese of Notre Dame in northern Indiana and in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, Ohio.

Father Ronan Murphy hails from Dungarvan, Ireland, and is a priest of the Camden, N.J. Diocese. Father Murphy has offered missions and conferences in many countries and served as chaplain for a Carmelite monastery in New York and for the Blue Army Marian Shrine in Absecon, N.J.

Dr. Casey L. Delcoco received her bachelor’s degree from the University of Notre Dame in northern Indiana and her medical degree from Tulane University School of Medicine in New Orleans, La., and completed a medical fellowship in the Creighton Model of FertilityCare and NaProTECHNOLOGY from the Pope Paul VI Institute in Omaha, Neb., in 2011. Since completing residency training, she started a faith-based family medicine practice, Magnificat Family Medicine, in Indianapolis to honor the Blessed Mother and to provide holistic care upholding the dignity of men, women and children. She is the co-founder and past president of the St. Raphael Catholic Medical Guild and helps take care of patients in crisis pregnancy alongside the Gabriel Project and Women’s Care Center in Indianapolis. She and her husband are members of St. John the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis.

Jennifer Waldyke is a graduate of the College of Veterinary Medicine at Oklahoma State University. She practiced small animal medicine as a veterinary emergency and critical care doctor for many years before “retiring” to homeschool her children. She and her daughter Kate host the YouTube Channel, “The Catholic Mom and Daughter Show.”

She has also served as a catechist at her parish in South Carolina.

Francesca LaRosa served as music director for four years at St. Barnabas Parish in Indianapolis before feeling called by God to pursue writing music more directly. Currently LaRosa is writing and self-publishing psalm settings, Mass settings and sacred music. She has also served as a catechist at her parish in South Carolina.

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For more information, to register online or to print a downloadable registration form, go to www.indianacatholics.com/womens-conference.

For those with no access to a computer, call 317-888-0873.

People and Parish Update

Father John Hall, pastor of St. Anne Parish in New Castle and St. Elizabeth of Hungary Parish in Cambridge City, celebrates the sacrament of penance on Nov. 22, 2019, with a participant in the National Catholic Youth Conference held at the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis.

(File photo by Sean Gallagher)
A young woman prays during eucharistic adoration following the opening Mass of the National Prayer Vigil for Life on Jan. 19 at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington. (CNS photo/Bob Roller)

In today’s chaotic world, we are called to imitate the love of God

We’re a month into 2023, and it seems an appropriate time to ask: Do you feel any different five-plus weeks into a new year? Many of us made new year’s resolutions. It may have been among the usual things we hear many others hoping to accomplish to better themselves: losing weight, working on a relationship or obligations, being more productive at work, spending less time on social media.

If you were focusing on your life of faith, it might have included: to spend more time in prayer, attend Mass beyond Sunday; or read more Scripture.

Maybe your goal was to make Christ more present in your everyday life and to point more people to him? Or to be more attentive to God in every situation that presents itself? And to recognize him in those people Jesus puts in your life?

How are you doing? Take a few minutes to reflect on 2023 thus far, and if you’re like the majority of humankind, there have probably been highs and lows, things that have brought a sense of satisfaction, or situations where you feel you failed others—maybe even Christ.

Because of our brokenness, we are sinners, and it is then that we especially need Jesus. And despite our failings, God never stops loving us.

When we fail, it is at those times that we need to remember we’ve been given the gift of faith and that we need to be attentive—especially when roadblocks or challenges deter us—and realize then is when we need to give our entire self to Christ. We need to slow down and call upon the Holy Spirit to guide us. And we need to make a concerted effort to become more Christ-centered, to allow the Spirit to lead us. When people encounter Jesus, they are not the same afterward. When our life is ordered, we flourish and that’s when the light of Christ shines.

As we forge ahead during this year, we need to remember Christ can relate to every human experience. He serves as a bridge between the human and the divine, between God and humanity. As his disciples, we must remember holiness consists in doing God’s will, not our own.

And as we travel on our pilgrimage of faith, let us never forget: no matter what situation we face—especially in today’s chaotic world—we are all called to imitate the love of God and are always given his help in this mission of a lifetime.

—Mike Krokos

Continued pray for ‘an immediate end’ to the ‘senseless war’ in Ukraine

We are approaching the one-year anniversary of Russia’s unjust invasion of Ukraine. Sadly, the war that began on Feb. 24, 2022, is no closer to coming to an end.

It is hard to fathom what both sides have lost in this war, not only in casualties but in the everyday life that is now a remnant of what it once was—especially in war-torn Ukraine. Destroyed neighborhoods and bombed-out buildings are commonplace in videos and photographs shared from parts of that country, and families separated by the war is another common occurrence.

Men from 18 to 60 are not allowed to leave Ukraine amid the war, and mothers and their children in many cases are forced to fend for themselves to survive. The longer this war continues, the more the heartbreak will escalate for innocent people caught in the crossfire of the chaos.

We must continue to storm the heavens with prayer for an end to this war, asking our Creator to somehow bring peace to a part of the world that desperately needs it.

We repeat the words that Pope Francis shared on Christmas. May God “enlighten the minds of those who have the power to silence the thunder of weapons and put an immediate end to this senseless war.”

—Mike Krokos

Be Our Guest

Sr. Constance Vei, L.S.P.

How can elderly help the young?

I attended SEER23, the annual conference of the Fellowship of Catholic University Students (FOCUS), in early January. Our sisters have attended this event for many years, and we have seen it evolve from a modest gathering of several hundred college students in a hotel to a huge, intergenerational event with 17,000 participants.

One of the first meetings I encountered was a young priest who had volunteered with our sisters as a seminarian and who continues to serve in a university parish in the Rocky Mountain region. I asked him about his ministry, thinking that a university parish must be a perfect combination of generations and backgrounds. I was surprised by his reply. He told me that it was actually quite challenging for him and his collaborators because various age groups have different needs and aspirations and they live more or less separate lives. Whenever the parish invests time or funds in one age cohort, he said, the others seem to resent it.

How sad! I am passionate about bringing young people and seniors together and assumed this type of parish would be the ideal place for generational relationships.

The young priest told me that he has succeeded in bringing teens to visit seniors in a local assisted living facility but it is more difficult to interest active seniors—those still living in their own homes—to get more involved in the parish where they could engage with families and young people.

We brainstormed about how he might motivate young people to perform acts of service for seniors living in the community—from shoveling snow and helping with home improvements, to helping seniors get up to speed with the internet and social media.

We also talked about how he might draw young and old together for social events in the parish as well as how the generations might join forces to serve the community.

Pro-life work, outreach to individuals dealing with poverty and groups living on the peripheries, ecological initiatives and fundraising efforts to support refugees are just a few examples of charitable efforts that could be undertaken by intergenerational parish teams.

Older people have a special calling—an authentic mission—to mentor the young and inspire hope by sharing their own life experiences, dreams and wisdom.

Finally, I shared my conviction that older people have a special calling—an authentic mission—to mentor the young and inspire hope in them by sharing their own life experiences, dreams and wisdom.

Even when they seem accomplished and self-sufficient, young people need guidance and some form of fulfillment. They need role models and wisdom figures who look on them with fresh eyes, discern their potential and accompany them on their journey.

In his 2019 apostolic exhortation on young people, Christus Vivit (“Alive in Christ”) Pope Francis wrote, “The community has an important role in the accompaniment of young people; it should feel collectively responsible for accepting, motivating, encouraging and challenging them. All should regard younger people with understanding, appreciation and affection, and avoid constantly judging them or demanding of them a perfection beyond their years” (#243).

Pope Francis’ words to older people shows his concern for them, but also shows his conviction that they have a serious responsibility to younger generations. As I feel myself aging, I sense this responsibility very personally.

In the book Sharing the Wisdom of Age, he wrote, “What do I ask of the elders among whom I count myself? I call us to be mentors … where prayers of supplication and songs of praise support the larger community that works and struggles in the field of life.”

He continued, “I also urge that we take action! As elders, we can thank the Lord for the many benefits we have received. … We can remind today’s young people, who have their own blend of challenges and insecurities, that a life without love is an arid life. We can tell fearful young people that anxiety about the future can be overcome.”

Clearly, the Church as a whole, and each local faith community, needs seniors who take their unique mission seriously.

If you have witnessed initiatives fostering the role of seniors as mentors or the effective partnering of young people and elders in your parish, I would love to hear from you! Please e-mail me at serenity@LittleSistersofthePoor.org.

—Little Sisters of the Poor

Letters Policy

Letters from readers are published in The Criterion as part of the newspaper’s commitment to “the responsible exchange of freely-held and expressed opinion among the People of God” (Communion and Communion, 116).

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. They must reflect a basic sense of courtesy and respect.

The editors reserve the right to select the letters that will be published and to edit letters from readers as necessary based on space limitations, pastoral sensitivity and content. All letters submitted become the property of the Criterion.

In order to encourage opinions from a variety of readers, frequent writers will ordinarily be limited to one letter every three months. Concise letters (usually less than 300 words) are more likely to be printed.

Letters must not be out of context. For serious reasons, names may be withheld.

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.
La intercesión de María es fuente de sanación y esperanza para todos sus hijos

Mañana, 11 de febrero, es el memorial de Nuestra Señora de Lourdes. No se trata de una de las principales fiestas marianas, pero cuando se observa adecuadamente este memorial opcional puede servir como un vívido recordatorio del papel de María en la historia de nuestra salvación, pasada, presente y futura.

La historia de la aparición de María a Bernadette Soubirous, una campesina de 14 años, es bien conocida. La Virgen rezó el rosario con la joven Bernadette y le dio instrucciones para buscar en el papel de María en la historia de nuestra salvación, pasada, presente y futura.

La intercesión de María es clave para entender la historia de la salvación, no es un tema que se limite al pasado, sino que está activa ahora. María se apareció por primera vez a santa Bernadette en 1858 en una grotto de Lourdes, la hermosa Santuario de la Virgen de Lourdes, un popular destino de peregrinación. El último milagro que sigue siendo un popular destino es la aparición de apariencia donde, en opinión de God, en la aparición de María en la historia de nuestra salvación, pasada, presente y futura.

Durante una de sus apariciones en la grotte de Lourdes, la bella Señora le dijo a Bernadette que ella es la Inmaculada Concepción, lo que significa que a diferencia del resto de la humanidad, nació sin pecado. Los católicos creemos que solamente María no heredó la mancha del pecado original ni la tendencia a tomar decisiones pecaminosas. Este gran milagro fue posible gracias a la gracia de Dios en el corazón de María.

En su libro, La Hijad de Sion, el cardenal Joseph Ratzinger escribió que María no se heredó la mancha del pecado, es libre de aceptar esta gran responsabilidad como Madre nuestra y Madre de la Iglesia. Su papel en la historia de la salvación no es apenas algo que ocurrió hace mucho tiempo, sino que está activa ahora que nosotros, que servimos como discípulos misioneros de su hijo Jesús, buscamos su intercesión y ayuda en la oración.

María es también la imagen del poverne, del Reino de Dios presente y futuro. El canto de alabanza de María, el Magnificat, que la Iglesia reza diariamente en la oración de la tarde, nos invita a meditar en la comprensión de lo que está activa ahora.

Finalmente, María prays with us. Using the rosary, we, the faithful, meditate on the mysteries of our salvation and walk with her, following in her Son’s footsteps on the Way of the Cross. Tomorrow, as we celebrate this simple and beautiful feast, let us remember that Mary our mother, in every way, has been by our side, offering healing and hope to all her children. †
February 14 Church of the Immaculate Conception, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. Tea Volunteer Opportunity. 9 a.m.-2 p.m., ages 12-18, assist with retreats and activities. Information, registration: 812-825-4642, ext. 1. motherofthepayments@smofw.org.

• March 18: Lenten Day of Reflection, 10:15 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Dr. Richard Rasinski, lsheehan@saintsimon.org. Includes private room for the day and lunch. Spiritual direction, limited to six participants, $30 must be scheduled in advance. March 10-12: No Greater Love: Living Fragrance from the Garden to the Resurrection, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., Benedictine Sister Heather Jean Foltz facilitating. $75 includes lunch.

• April 6-9: Triduum Retreat, 4:30 p.m.-Thu., 8 a.m.-Sun. Franciscans of the Immaculate Fathers Terrace Charter and MatthewSasko facilitating, $50 per adult, children free, includes lunch and dinner on Sat., overnight accommodations available for additional $30, call for details.

Mount St Francis Center for Spirituality, 101 St. Anthony Dr., Mt. St. Francis. Bluegrass Jam. 5 p.m., free. Information: 812-362-9349, gatelock@idcs.net.


February 21 St. Malachy Church, 933 E. CR 750 N., Brownsburg. Pipe Organ/Piano Duo Concert. 4 p.m., featuring organista HECTOR SANCHEZ and pianista LINDA FRANCISCO. Works by Paul Halley, Dennis Bécard, Camille Saint-Saëns and Joel Raspy. Ticket, free. Information: 317-852-3195 or info@tmhalachy.org.

Mount Saint Francis Center for Spirituality, Pumphouse Studio, 101 St. Anthony Dr. Mt. St. Francis. Bluegrass Jam. 5 p.m., free. Information: gatelock@yahoo.com.

February 20 St. John Paul II Parish. St. Joe Hill campus, 206 St. Joe Hill. Lenten Fish Fry, 5-7 p.m., Fridays during Lent (March 3, 10, 17, 24), fried fish, shrimp or baked fish, fries, baked potato, baked beans, coleusin, mac and cheese, pizza, french fries, macaroni and cheese, green beans, potatoes, plus water, lemonade or tea, freewill donation. Information: 317-752-2829.

St. Anthony of Padua Parish, 5353 McFarland Rd., Indianapolis. Boy Scout Troop 51 Fish Fry Fundraiser. 4-7 p.m., dinners include fish filet, grilled cheese, French fries, macaroni and cheese, green beans, potatoes, plus water, lemonade or tea, freewill donation. Information: 317-528-6427.

St. John Paul II Parish. St. Joe Hill campus, 206 St. Joe Hill. Lenten Fish Fry, 5-7 p.m., Fridays during Lent (March 3, 10, 17, 24), fried fish, shrimp or baked fish, fries, baked potato, baked beans, coleusin, mac and cheese, pizza, french fries, macaroni and cheese, green beans, potatoes, plus water, lemonade or tea, freewill donation. Information: 317-752-2829.

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Marian University Alumni House 301 W. 46th Rd., Indianapolis. Sunday Rosary. 9 a.m. Information: 317-632-9349, benedictinn@archindy.org.
El rostro de la misericordia/Daniel Conway

Asumamos el papel que nos corresponde en la creación de un mundo más justo y pacífico.

Como en años anteriores, el papa Francisco comenzó este nuevo año haciendo un llamamiento urgente a la paz. Nuestro mundo no conoce la verdadera paz. Somos pueblos divididos internamente, así como también externamente entre las diversas naciones y culturas. Tal como predijo el Santo Padre en medio de la crisis económica, social y de salud que provocó la COVID-19, no hemos salido de la pandemia intactos.

En su mensaje para la 56.ª Jornada Mundial de la Paz el 1 de enero: "una conciencia más fuerte que invita a compartir nuestra esperanza, a estar dispuestos a escucharnos unos a otros, a resistir a todos los esfuerzos para reconciliar nuestras diferencias y construir una paz duradera". El papa Francisco sostiene que es posible lograr la paz auténtica si tenemos el corazón endurecido y la mentira cerrada. El resultado inevitable es la "amargura" y el desastre que hace perder la esperanza. Tal como expresa el Sumo Pontífice: "Rara vez los individuos y la sociedad avanzan en situaciones que generan tal solidaridad de que toda la humanidad, tanto en sociedades de paz, como en las de conflicto, seamos capaces de aprender de los errores que hemos cometido. Necesitamos un planeta que sea verdaderamente común. Como sostenía apasionadamente el Papa en su encíclica "Fratelli Tutti": Sobre la fraternidad y la amistad social. "La paz... es un bien necesario... y creemos las bases para un mundo más justo y pacífico".

De nuestra doctrines, y que es imprescindible para hacer frente al desafío, dejando de lado intereses particulares. Sólo la paz que nace del amor fraterno y desinteresado puede ayudarnos a superar las crisis personales, sociales y mundiales. No podemos seguir en este y en cada nuevo año son restaurar el sentido de hermandad y de fraternidad entre nosotros. Tal como nos enseñó el Santo Padre: "No podemos pensar sólo en preservar el espacio de nuestros intereses personales o nacionales, sino que debemos concienciarnos a la luz del bien común, con un sentido comunitario, es decir, como un "nosotros" abierto a la fraternidad universal. No podemos buscar sólo protegernos a nosotros mismos, es hora de que todos los comprometidos con la sanación de nuestra sociedad y nuestro planeta, creando las bases para un mundo más justo y pacífico, que se involucre con toda la humanidad".

El compromiso de cada uno de nosotros esencial. Nadie puede salvar solo, asegura el papa Francisco. Nos necesitan mutuamente para florecer y crecer como individuos y sociedades. Al comenzar este nuevo año, tenemos el compromiso de seguir los pasos del papa Francisco y creemos "las bases para un mundo más justo y pacífico".

Daniel Conway es un miembro de The Criterion's editorial committee.
assistance program for the poor is among three decades in the making. Meanwhile, students who face food insecurity.

Zyromski arranged with the Florida prison system to meet him. "His lawyers would tell me, 'Don't ever forget, he is not forgiving Stephen Booker. So I would go to Mass and when we got to the Our Father, I would say, 'And forgive them, as they have forgiven me.'"

She kept hearing God's voice as she read the Bible. "When I first came to the penitentiary in 1983, I had already been in prison for two and a half years. I wanted to offer forgiveness and comfort to someone who has personally caused them grief. The passage haunted her."

"I felt it was God on a monkey's back, and I felt it, and even though I was clinging to my life, it was so much easier. I said, 'God, give me grace.'" She resisted God's call at first. "To forgive Booker."

She shared details about Harman's life, what her great-aunt meant to her, and a few comments about herself. "I think he would say to me, 'Well done, good and faithful servant.'"

Father Edward Clere (R-New Albany), aim introduced in both chambers of the state legislature. For Davis of Catholic Charities Indianapolis, the help offered by this type of legislation cannot come quickly enough.

"Sometimes it's beyond what the world comprehends of what food insecurity is," said Davis, who also directs the

Proposed legislation would offer relief to Indiana families suffering from poverty, hunger

"I have all the clippings," she says, pointing to a newspaper clipping. "For some reason, the matter of rape was harder for me to face. I couldn't get over the fact that it was 94 years old and she was dead. I wonder if she thought she was fast tint. But I didn't die 100 pounds.

Evidently, she pulled her in when she came home. She was a happy lone. One of the things she did in her old age was she played bridge with every group in town. She kept telling me to play to keep her mind sharp. She won in the equation just what she did to me."

As humiliating as the killing of Harman was—she was stabbed 14 times with two knives—Zyromski was also struck by the humanity God called her to do. "To forgive Booker."

"I kept getting nagged by God!"

"I wanted to forgive Stephen Booker. To me, there was no forgiveness long ago. His first book of poetry, he signed over the royalties to the theater and the drama of it made her laugh. "Now they're the ones coming in and getting a meal, and I've got people coming 20 miles just for a meal."

Father Stephen Todd Booker, a Mass that Zyromski had during a conversation in her home a few days after. "I kept getting nagged by God!"

"When the Germans invaded the Soviet Union, they

"I think I would say to me, 'Well done, good and faithful servant.' But I don't think he would say this is anything special. I think this is what I did as an out of Catholic Church."

"I would say he never gives you one drop more or one minute sooner than you absolutely need this grace. You get right down to the wire and you're 'help,' and help comes in many ways."

She felt that God when she suffered through the loss of Harman, when she thought of others during the funeral, feeling their presence there, the feeling was in stark contrast to the sorrow and rage for Stephen Todd Booker."

She had a friend of your worst enemy?" she

When the Germans invaded the Soviet Union, they came up afterward and said, 'You have made a friend of me."

Finally, Zyromski relented, writing a letter that she said made him laugh. "He said, very seriously, he wanted me to use it for the heaven's sake. They're coming in and getting their meal, and I've got people coming 20 miles just for a meal."

"An Episcopal priest buried her," Zyromski recalls of Harman’s burial. "Somebody called her and said, 'Mrs. Booker's funeral. One thing she was, 'One day, at the eternal banquet, we and Stephen Booker and she"

A long sought-after update to a cash assistance program for the poor is among three decades in the making. Meanwhile, students who face food insecurity.

Proposed legislation would offer relief to Indiana families suffering from poverty, hunger

"It's a reality that Zyromski knows well. She also knows that, for her forgiving someone doesn't mean forgiving what someone has done, especially when it has caused tremendous suffering. While she forgives Booker long ago, she has not forgotten the horror of his crime toward a learner of the beloved dead.

It's a distinction she arrived at with great help from one Catholic priest. She also felt that grace in the days and weeks following the funeral Mass for Booker. "I wanted to give him a good sendoff. He had very little in life that was dignified. Catholics do funeral services in a way that we don't do it."

"To forgive Booker."

"I kept getting nagged by God!"

"I wanted to forgive Stephen Booker. To me, there was no forgiveness long ago. His first book of poetry, he signed over the royalties to the theater and the drama of it made her laugh. "Now they're the ones coming in and getting a meal, and I've got people coming 20 miles just for a meal."

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Amid ongoing civil war, Syrians face mass casualties from quake

AMMAN, Jordan (OSV News)—Catholic and other humanitarian agencies are calling Monday’s 7.8 magnitude earthquake and a second tremor striking southeastern Turkey and northern Syria “tragical” and are appealing for aid.

They are assisting Syrians in the north of the country—people affected by more than a decade of civil war. “The situation in Aleppo is dangerous. Many buildings have fallen and digging continues relentlessly throughout the rubble. So far, we have lost 40 buildings which have collapsed in the earthquake,” Andrea Avveduto, communications chief for Pro Terra Sancta, told OSV News.

As The Criterion went to press on Feb. 7, the total number of casualties in Turkey and Syria was 6,200 and rising.

“We don’t yet have the entire situation clear because communication lines have been badly affected. Buildings are still falling down. They are already damaged by the war and so every time there are tremors, buildings collapse,” Avveduto said.

Pro Terra Sancta, based in Jerusalem and Milan, supports the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land. Since the start of the conflict, it has aided the ministry of Franciscans in Syria by opening emergency centers in Damascus, Latakia, Aleppo, Knayeh and Yacobib, the latter places of which are found in northwest Syria.

In the region surrounding the northwestern city of Aleppo, “a lot of people fled their homes fearing more aftershocks and went to the Franciscan convent in Aleppo to shelter. They fear returning home,” Avveduto explained.

“We have more than 200 people in our Terra Sancta College. We are helping them providing them food and everything that they need. Now, it is very cold. They don’t have gas or electricity.”

Rescue and recovery efforts are a huge hit to cities in counties, including Aleppo, Edlib, Homs, Hama and Latakia, and also affected internally displaced people across Syria.

The earthquake hit as a winter storm is expected to engulf the region as temperatures plummet and snow is present making rescue efforts even more complicated.

More than 45 countries have offered to assist Turkey in rescue and recovery, including the United States, Britain, France, Italy, Germany, Korea, Egypt, and others fear that Syria under international sanctions due to the civil war, may see some tremors.

The collapse of buildings, such as at the Syriac Orthodox Cathedral of St. George in Aleppo and the Franciscan church in Latakia, and minor damage to the ACN-supported Hope Center, also in Aleppo, ACN confirmed.

“The Church in Syria is shocked. It is a catastrophe. Even as far away as Beirut, people went down to the streets, worried that another explosion was about to happen in their country. For now, the Church is checking on its people and families. All ACN staff in Aleppo, Homs and Damascus are doing fine,” said Regina Lynch, director of projects for ACN International, who also called for prayers for all those who were killed, wounded or otherwise affected by the natural disaster.

The archbishop of Homs, Jean Abdob Arbach, said that the 30 seconds the earthquake lasted “completely changed the lives of thousands of people.

“We hope the earthquake shakes open the hearts of the international communities and of all world leaders, so that they help Syria and do not forget the people who are suffering,” he underlined.

The population in is a state of absolute despair and anguish. There are people wandering through the streets, not knowing where to go, and desperately searching for family and friends. Many people have died or are missing,” Archbishop Arbach, who is also the director of the Syrian branch of Caritas, told ACM.

The International Rescue Committee (IRC) expressed its concerns for those in Turkey and Syria.

“Freezing temperatures have left thousands exposed to extreme cold, and now many are without shelter. With buildings collapsing as people sleep, there are fears that hundreds still remain trapped in rubble across southern Turkey and inside war-torn Syria. Search and rescue operations are ongoing,” a press statement said.

EARTHQUAKE

1. Before the earthquake, less than 12 hours later some 60 miles apart.

2. By mid-afternoon local time on Feb. 7, the Associated Press reported the combined official death toll from Turkey and Syria had surpassed 6,200 and that as rescue efforts turn into recovery efforts and temperatures in the region drop, the number of victims was expected to continue rising.

3. The Catholic charity Aid to the Church in Need said a Catholic priest was among the dead in Syria. Father Imad Daher died in the cathedral of the residence of retired Melkite Archbishop Jean-Clement Jeanbart of Aleppo, who was injured and hospitalized, the charity said.

4. Pope Francis was “deeply saddened” to learn of the “huge loss of life” caused by the disaster and offered his “heartfelt condolences” to those mourning losses, wrote Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state, in telegrams to the Vatican’s nuncios in Turkey and Syria.

5. “The popes also prayed that emergency personnel would be “sustained in their care of the sick and the wounded in the ongoing relief efforts by the divine gifts of fortitude and perseverance.”

According to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the earthquake is the largest disaster to hit the country since 1999. At 7.8 magnitude, the earthquake killed more than 32,000 people and injured more than 100,000. Approximately half of the homes damaged and wounded from the Feb. 6 earthquake will reach, he added.

The Turkish president said that more than 45 countries have offered to support Turkey in relief efforts in addition to NATO and the European Union.

The Middle East Council of Churches, representing Orthodox, Evangelical and Catholic churches, issued a statement calling on the international community to provide emergency aid to the region, and to lift sanctions against Syria “so sanctions may not turn into a crime against humanity.”

Just a few hours after the quake, the Knights of Malta announced that Malteser International, their relief agency, was sending an emergency response team.

“Our local partners have an urgent need of support, especially in areas of northern Syria where hundreds of thousands of people live in simple refuges and now, with the earthquakes, are even more defenseless,” said Olivier Hochepied, head of the Malteser International emergency response department.

“In the hospitals run by our partner organizations, the number of injured arriving increases hour by hour. We must provide help rapidly.”

Cardinal Bishop Carlo Maria Agostino Afghan of Aleppo told Vatican News on Feb. 6 that he had never seen such destruction in war-torn Syria. “There was never a strong earthquake, the walls are in the street, and under the rain,” he said. “There is damage everywhere, even in the cathedral.”

The libraries are destroyed, the houses crumbled. It’s an apocalyptic situation.

Caritas Internationalis, the umbrella organization of Catholic charitable organizations, immediately began a fundraising campaign for relief efforts in Turkey and Syria. The charity has been active in Turkey since 1991 and in Syria since 2011, primarily providing aid for refugees.

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Safe Haven Baby Boxes gives moms a safe way to choose life for newborns

Walking with Moms is a monthly feature highlighting organizations that help—and need support in helping—mothers in need in central and southern Indiana.

Safe Haven Baby Boxes provide a safe, anonymous way to surrender infants for adoption.

Safe Haven Baby Boxes
P.O. Box 185
Woodburn, IN 46797
888-742-2133 (business)
Emergency hotline: 866-998-BABY
(866-992-2291)
shbb@SafeHavenBabyBoxes.com
SafeHavenBabyBoxes.com

Baby Box locations: shbb.org/locations (66 in Archdiocese of Indianapolis, 92 in Indiana, 134 nationwide)

Current statistics: 8,000 women helped nationwide via the hotline; 500 women referred to a crisis pregnancy center; seven abortion referrals; more than 100 safe infant surrenders.

Services: offers 24-hour hotline counseling and referrals for mothers in crisis (866-998BABY, or 866-992-2291); installs exterior-access heated baby boxes at fire stations, emergency medical service stations and hospitals for safe surrender of infants up to 30 days old as a last resort option for women unable to care for their baby who want to maintain complete anonymity; provides mother’s care package in baby boxes; trains first responders on Safe Haven Law; promotes awareness of Safe Haven Law through public speaking.

Items needed: can’t/SHBBNeededitems
Volunteer need: shbb.org/resources (scroll down to Volunteer Needs)
Financial donations: Donate online at shbb.org/donate or make checks payable to Safe Haven Baby Boxes and send to address above.
No matter how good, every parish can find ways to improve

By Lorene Hanley Duquin

Today, Catholics are expected to feel a true sense of ownership in their parish. That means looking at your parish as more than just a place where you go to Mass. A parish can be a sacred place where the human and the divine meet, where people of all ages grow in the knowledge and understanding of what it means to be a follower of Jesus Christ.

It can be a place where people receive spiritual nourishment, guidance, inspiration and strength—not just from the priests but from other members of the parish as well. It can be a spiritual home where people share in each other’s joys, support each other in times of sorrow, offer encouragement to those who are struggling and help to heal anyone who feels battered or broken by life’s trials and tragedies.

It can also be a social place where people make new friends, reach out to those less fortunate and invite others to become part of a faith community who try with God’s help to live the Gospel message.

Maybe your parish is already all of this and more, but even the best parishes can become even better when parishioners take an active interest in making the parish grow and prosper. Here are six ways to do just that.

—Think of yourself as part of a parish family.

Family members share a common heritage and history. They are grounded in the same beliefs, values and traditions. They embrace new members of the family with a spirit of love and acceptance. Family members don’t always agree, but they do feel a strong commitment to one another and to the family as a whole.

—Be welcoming.

When you come together on the weekend for Mass, think of it as a large family reunion—with people you know well, know slightly and don’t know at all. Introduce yourself to people you don’t know, especially if they are sitting alone in church or standing by themselves at the coffee-and-donut hour.

If they’re new to the parish, offer to give them a tour, introduce them to other parishioners or simply tell them why you love the parish. Enthusiasm is contagious! Watch your nonverbal communication, too. If you’re sitting on the end of a pew, for example, don’t make others crawl over you to get to middle seats.

Remember to smile: take the time to compliment the people sitting around you on everything from their singing ability to the cuteness of their kids.

—Use your gifts and talents for the good of the parish.

God has given each person unique gifts and talents that are intended to be shared. Like public speaking? You might get involved as a lector. If you’re friendly and outgoing, you could be an usher or a greeter. You can share your deep devotion to the Eucharist by becoming an extraordinary minister of holy Communion or an adult altar server. If you play an instrument or sing, the music ministry might be the place for you.

Maybe you’re a teacher and could help in religious education; if you love children, you could assist in the babysitting room. Any expertise—business, finance, public relations, photography, grant writing, engineering, carpentry, building maintenance or even such skills as cooking, baking, cleaning or gardening—can find a place in the parish.

—Be generous.

If you can help, offer. Perhaps you could offer the use of your home or have a skill that could help the parish. Make yourself available.

—Attend parish events.

Whether it’s a mission, a lecture or a spaghetti dinner, your attendance helps to increase spirituality and build community as well. Whether it’s a mission, a lecture or a spaghetti dinner, take advantage of opportunities to meet new people, feel more connected and affirm your fellow parishioners who work hard to plan and execute these events.

—Support your parish financially.

You know how expensive it is to run your own home. Parishes face even more connected and affirm your fellow parishioners who work hard to plan and execute these events.

—Pray for your parish.

Keep your pastor, parish staff and fellow parishioners in your daily prayers. Praying a rosary, spending time in eucharistic adoration, fasting or offering up any suffering, annoyance or inconvenience you experience for the well-being of your parish will bring rewards not just for the parish but for you personally.

You will begin to see yourself as spiritual support for all the good work being done in and through your parish. Pray also for the return of Catholics who have strayed from the practice of the faith, people raised with no faith and people searching for meaning and purpose in life.

No parish is perfect, and even the best parishes can improve. Imagine what would happen if every person in your parish did one little thing to make the parish better!

(Lorene Hanley Duquin is the author of Catholic books, pamphlets and articles on a variety of evangelization and ministry topics. She has conducted workshops in parishes and at diocesan conferences in the United States and Canada.)
When I was young, I often swiped up in the emotion of whatever movie I watched or book I read for days afterward. I would imagine myself as one of the characters and ask myself what they experienced. It sounds a little daunting today, but not quite. I would literally get overcome by emotion and identify with the characters felt. I never shared this with anyone at the time, assuming it was unusual.

As I grew up, I translated this same feeling to listening to reading the news. It felt as if I absorbed the pain and joy of others. It wasn't until later in my professional career when my employers used evaluative testing like Myers-Briggs, Enneagram, Strength Finders that I began to understand my own personality traits and those of my co-workers. What surfaced as almost every test I took was a high aptitude for empathy. Learning more about empathy is what led to understanding that I am open to and easily absorbed the emotions of others.

I've always been interested in having studied journalism in college, but there are times I have to withdraw from the news and world events because it drains me emotionally. However, the truth is, I wouldn't wish the characters away because it places me mentally and emotionally in other's shoes, enabling me to better connect with others.

The First Letter of Peter has one of the most well-known Bible verses about empathy: “Be like-minded, be sympathetic, love another, be compassionate and humble” (1 P 3:8). I believe God calls each of us as Christians to show empathy for our fellow man.

Listening to the daily news, I can’t help but think that most of these events are caused by a lack of empathy. When we feel so disconnected from others and the events we hear of, it can become desensitized to violence and loss of life. Hardly a day goes by when we don’t hear about school shootings. It's a strange reality. The most recent school shooting was in Uvalde, Texas.

Fortunately, days when flags are lowered fly the American flag as a way to show solidarity and support.

Students who witnessed the shooting at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas, experienced empathy for those who were affected by the shooting.

Faith at Home
Laura Kelly Fanucci

Parents, here is the simplest way to share our faith with children

As an image bearer of Christ, make acts of kindness

Random Act of Kindness Day is being celebrated on Feb. 17 as a way to spread positivity by showing goodwill toward others. But don't be thrown off by the word “random” because these acts of kindness can be very intentional, very biblical, and a perfect opportunity to live like Jesus.

“Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you” (Eph 4:32).

“So whenever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them” (Mt 7:12).

“Be therefore, one another and build one another up, just as Christ builds up the body, the church” (Eph 4:12).

In the Bible, we read a lot of stories about Jesus' ministry. He healed the sick and performed miracles. But what we often fail to see are the lessons he is trying to teach us through those acts.

Let’s not forget that Jesus is a teacher—one of the greatest teachers of all time. They choose their words carefully—teaching us about the “for sure” part, the expectation for certainty. Understanding those forces becomes the first step.

As a Catholic writer, the answers to these questions matter to me. Again and again, they landed on the same volumes. Think about school struggles, an adult who has a terrible job, and I just don’t know. I know everything for sure." a 74-year-old woman said. "The older you get, the more I read the notes from past conversations, the more I’m drawn to lifestyle questions of faith, love, and family. I read the notes from past conversations, the more I’m drawn to lifestyle questions of faith, love, and family. I love to discuss creativity. Do you believe everyone is creative? What sparks your creativity? How do creativity and faith relate?"

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What’s the most important influence on a child’s faith, according to numerous sociologists Christian Smith and Amy Adamczyk, in their recent book, *Handing Down the Faith: How Parents Pass Their Religion on to the Next Generation*, socialization is a primary mechanism of faith transmission. It’s a natural, normal part of life speaks volumes. Think about school struggles, sports seasons, friendship dynamics, political debates, health concerns, news headlines or family milestones. Any

In their book *Handing Down the Faith: How Parents Pass Their Religion on to the Next Generation*, sociologists Christian Smith and Amy Adamczyk report that not only do parents have the biggest influence on their children’s future faith lives, but the most powerful factor is how parents speak with their kids about religion and God. They say, “It turns out, ordinary conversations matter more than anything else.”

These surprising findings need not undermine what we believe as Catholics. We know our celebration of the sacraments—especially Eucharist—is intentional, very biblical, and a perfect opportunity to live like Jesus. They can be a blessing to the recipient, an opportunity to live like Jesus.

I firmly believe that Jesus is a teacher—one of the greatest teachers of all time. They choose their words carefully—teaching us about the “for sure” part, the expectation for certainty. Understanding those forces becomes the first step.

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The Sunday Readings

Sunday, February 12, 2023

Matthew 5:17-37

great love, God therefore has revealed to us in his Word, which is the New Testament, transformed and refined in the Church’s teaching. This process reveals two important factors. The first is that God’s law is permanent and unchanging. This is a principle that is fundamental to the Church’s teaching on the sacraments and the moral life. The second factor is that God’s law is interpreted by the Church in light of the New Testament. This interpretation is necessary because the Church is not only the successor to the apostles but also the faithful who live between the times of the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Church is the people of God who live in the present and look forward to the eschaton, the final revelation of the Lord. The Church is the body of Christ, the community of believers who share in the life and mission of Christ. The Church is the living body of Christ, the source of our salvation.

Secondly, the Lord speaks with authority. He defines and explains the law of Moses. Jews did not regard the law of Moses as merely a set of principles personally composed by Moses. Rather, Moses was the medium through which God revealed the divine law to humanity. God is the author of the divine law. He is the author of the commandments. He is the lawgiver.

By defining and making more precise this law, the Lord acts as God. It is an important revelation of the identity of Jesus.

Reflection

The war in Ukraine continues to rage with little progress. The war is having a devastating impact on the people of the region. Many innocent civilians are suffering as a result of the conflict. The war is also having a negative impact on the economy of the region. The war is a reminder of the importance of peace and security.

Throughout the Easter season, it is kept in a prominent place in the church sanctuary and is lit during Mass and other liturgies from Easter until Pentecost. The paschal candle represents the light of Christ, especially Christ risen from the dead. As we hear at the conclusion of the “Exsultet”—the ancient and beautiful chant of the paschal candle. The paschal candle is processed into the worship space during the vigil Mass.

The paschal candle also has a close association with baptism, not only because it is used during the Easter Vigil but more foundationally because baptism is our personal sharing in Christ’s death and resurrection. As St. Paul writes in his Letter to the Romans: “We were indeed buried with him through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live in newness of life ([Rom 6:4]).” Thus, outside of the Easter season the paschal candle is kept near the baptismal font, and it is lit whenever baptism is celebrated.

The paschal candle is also lit during funeral Masses as a reminder of the rite of passage, and as an expression of our Christian hope in the resurrection of the dead.

Church norms on the paschal candle focus more on when to light the candle, as opposed to reasons why the candle is not lit the rest of the time. But making an educated inference, I suspect that by reserving it for those times and occasions that are specifically focused on Christ’s resurrection, we preserve the candle’s value as a symbol.

I The Church has many customs and symbols that are limited to sacred times and particular seasons. For example, we only receive ashes on Ash Wednesday, even though of course we are supposed to repent from our sins every day of the year. The paschal candle is meant to be an especially striking reminder of Christ’s resurrection, which is why we only see it lighted at those times when we are invited to recall this mystery in a special way.

Can I leave Mass after the blessing, or must I wait for the recessional hymn to be sung? (New York)

The final blessing is the actual conclusion of the Mass, so—in that sense—one of the final blessings is mass. Mass is over and you may leave without it in the strictest sense of the word, missing any of the Mass. However, as the “General Instruction of the Roman Missal” says: “The Christian faithful who come together as one in expectation of the Lord’s coming are instructed by the Apostle Paul to sing together Psalms, hymns and spiritual canticles [cf. Col 3:16]” (#39). As such, the popular expression (sometimes attributed to St. Augustine) goes, “He who sings prays twice.” So, if you’re at Mass and have to leave, you might consider staying for the blessing, or must I wait for the recessional hymn to be sung? (New York)

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Batliner, Agnes Ernstberger, Monica Lewis, Mary Purcell, ERNSTBERGER, Mary, grandmother of 11. Grandmother of 14. Great-Kurt and Mark Enneking, Susan, Dale, Gary, John, Pfeiffer, Barbara, Karen, Nov. 11. Mother of Kathy DICKEY, Mary C.

eight. Great-grandmother of 88, DEZELAN, Julia V.

of several.

of two.

of several.

Aunt of several.

of Kathleen Bigelow, Kerry and Michael Huth II. Sister of Barbara Glass, Diane Fischer. Sister of Dorothy Jan. 22. Mother of Greg, Kevin and Tony Lannan. Sister of John Wieseka. John. Great-grandmother of seven. PROVIDENCE Sister Maureen Abbots, a member of the Sisters of Providence of Saint-Mary-of-the-Woods in Saint-Mary-of-the-Woods, died on Jan. 26 at Providence Health Care on the campus her religious community’s motherhouse. She was 81. The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Feb. 3 at the Church of the Immaculate Conception at the motherhouse in Saint-Mary-of-the-Woods. Burial followed at the sisters’ cemetery. Providence Sister Maureen Abbots was born on Jan. 23, 1939, in Buffalo, N.Y. She entered the Sisters of Providence on July 22, 1956, and professed final vows on Aug. 15, 1961. Providence Sister Maureen Abbots earned a bachelor’s degree at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College and master’s degree at the University of Washington in Seattle and the University of Notre Dame in northern Indiana. During her 66 years as a member of the Sisters of Providence, Providence Sister Maureen was named to 28 schools in California, Illinois, Indiana and Texas. She also oversaw pastoral ministries and the education office of the Diocese of Corpus Christi, Texas, served in the metropolitan tribunal of the Archdiocese of Portland, Ore., and held provincial leadership positions in her community. Sister Maureen also wrote a four-volume history of the Sisters of Providence. New Lights from Old Traditions: Living the Sign of the Times, which covered the years 1926-66. After retiring as provincial delegate to the motherhouse where she served as the community’s historian and in its archives. In the archdiocese, in addition to ministering at the motherhouse, Sister Maureen served at the former St. Andrew the Apostle School in Indianapolis and at St. Mary’s Parish in Avon. Sister Maureen is survived by five sisters and one brother: Patricia Ann of Anahiem Hills, Calif.; Lisa of East Peoria, Ill.; Karen, Texas; Kathy Oxford of Lemoore, Calif.; Christine Wissam of Corpus Christi; Jean Wood of Concord, Mass.; and John Abbott of Leesburg, Va. Memorial gifts may be sent to the Sisters of Providence, 1 Sisters of Providence Rd., Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods, IN 47876. Providence Sister Maureen Abbots served as an educator, community historian, and administrator. She taught at the former St. Andrew the Apostle School in Indianapolis and at St. Mary’s Parish in Avon. Sister Maureen is survived by five sisters and one brother: Patricia Ann of Anahiem Hills, Calif.; Lisa of East Peoria, Ill.; Karen, Texas; Kathy Oxford of Lemoore, Calif.; Christine Wissam of Corpus Christi; Jean Wood of Concord, Mass.; and John Abbott of Leesburg, Va. Memorial gifts may be sent to the Sisters of Providence, 1 Sisters of Providence Rd., Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods, IN 47876.

Australian Archbishop Anthony C. Fisher of Sydney, passes over the casket of American Cardinal George Pell during his funeral Mass at St. Mary’s Cathedral in Sydney on Feb. 2. Cardinal Pell, former archbishop of Melbourne, died last year after being convicted of sexual abuse in Melbourne. Over decades, he repeatedly abused boys in Australia and the Vatican, according to a new report from the Vatican’s sex abuse commission. Pell was the most powerful church official to fall from grace as the world grapples with the abuse crisis. (Victor Malaqui Azurduy/Pool Photo via AP)
Catholic schools in the late 19th and early 20th centuries were a source of hope for families, a source of learning and foundations of their Catholic faith. Don’t lose sight of our dignity, our identity and unity in Christ, in our lives,” he said. “So always have hope, that’s why we’re here. That’s why we exist.”

Closing his homily, he encouraged the students to remember the main lessons and foundations of their Catholic education.

Don’t ever lose sight of God’s love, of God’s power to transform any situation in our lives,” he said. “So always have faith. Don’t lose sight of our dignity created in the image of God. The love of Jesus Christ in an encounter with him transforms us. It makes an incredible difference. That’s why we’re here. That’s why we exist.”

After the Mass, Archbishop Thompson returned to the steps leading up to the altar of the cathedral, welcoming each school group that wanted to meet him and have their photo taken with him. School after school took advantage of the opportunity, including students from St. Patrick School in Terre Haute, St. Rose of Lima School in Franklin and St. Ambrose School in Seymour.

The Mass and the photo with Archbishop Thompson were part of a whirlwind day for the eighth-grade students of St. Ambrose, who came to the cathedral with their teacher, Julia Lemminger, and their principal, Michelle Neibert-Levine.

After leaving the cathedral, the St. Ambrose group visited the Ronald McDonald House in Indianapolis, a home-away-from-home for families of sick and injured children being treated in Indianapolis hospitals. The students at St. Ambrose School do fundraising efforts for the Ronald McDonald House. Later, the group also toured the Bishop Simon Brutté College Seminary in Indianapolis.

All in all, the trip touched upon the essence of what a Catholic education offers children—“faith, learning, leadership and service”—their principal said.

“It was a great day,” Neibert-Levine said. “One couple of our students had been in the cathedral, as we’re about an hour away. They thought it was beautiful. And five of our students were involved in the liturgy—one as a server, one [proclaimed] the first reading, and three of our students read petitions. So that made it a special experience for them as well. “It was a wonderful, spiritual day.”

Employment

Food Services Manager Needed

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House is seeking a full time Food Services Manager to be responsible for all aspects of the daily food service operational needs at Fatima Retreat House. This position involves maintaining food cost and labor cost budgets; menu planning and ordering; inventory control; supervising, training and scheduling of kitchen staff; and cooking. With a team of part-time cooks, the Food Services Manager presents Fatima meals and refreshments attractively and in a spirit of hospitality. The successful candidate must be available for a flexible schedule of at least 40 hours per week. Days may vary throughout the week, Monday through Sunday, depending on the Retreat House schedule. The successful applicant must have institutional foodservice experience, supervisory and management experience, have good time management and communication skills and be attentive to detail. Also, they must have a heart for ministry and the mission of Fatima Retreat House.

Compensation is commensurate with experience. Benefits include:

- Comprehensive medical plan
- Employer contributed HSA for medical plan participants
- Dental Insurance
- Paid Vacation, Sick, and Personal Days
- Life and Disability Insurance and 401(k) matching.

Persons may send a letter or email of interest to:
Georgene Beiriger, Director
Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House
5353 East 56th Street
Indianapolis, IN 46226
gebeiriger@archindy.org

Archbishop Charles C. Thompson follows the Catholic Schools Week Mass at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis on Feb. 1. (Photo by John Shaughnessy)
Religious Liberty, said the proposal of Catholic Bishops’ Committee for M. Dolan, who heads the U.S. Conference health plans. Providing contraceptive coverage in their employers more ability to opt out of and aims to end Trump-era rules giving and the Department of the Treasury, Services (HHS), the Department of Labor and the Department of the Treasury, and robust protections for the exercise of moral convictions of. Act’s contraceptive mandate eliminate new rules on the Affordable Care. Cardinal Dolan: new rules on contraceptive mandate are ‘disheartening’

WASHINGTON (OSV News)—The U.S. bishops’ religious liberty chairman called it “disheartening” that proposed new rules on the Affordable Care Act’s contraceptive mandate eliminate “protections for moral convictions” of employers who object to being forced to cover contraceptives in their employee health plans.

The proposal was issued by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the Department of Labor and the Department of the Treasury, and aims to end Trump-era rules giving employers more ability to opt out of providing contraceptive coverage in their health plans.

New York Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan, who heads the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Committee for Religious Liberty, said the proposal appears “to retain the bulk of the existing religious exemption” but noted that if the proposed rules become permanent, allowing an exemption on moral grounds alone will end. “It has been over a decade since the federal government first announced the HHS contraceptive mandate,” Cardinal Dolan said in a recent statement. “The version of regulations that was issued in 2018 provided appropriately clear and robust protections for the exercise of religious beliefs and moral convictions, free from government punishment, and has been upheld by the Supreme Court.” But now HHS is “proposing to amend them yet again. It is past time for HHS to leave well enough alone in this regard,” the cardinal said in a statement released by the USCCB on Jan. 30. On Feb. 2, HHS and the Labor and Treasury departments published their proposed rule in the Federal Register, www.federalregister.gov.

Publication of the proposal opened a 60-day comment period for the public to weigh in. (The direct link for submitting a comment is: https://bit.ly/3x4DtYE.) These proposed rules would amend regulations regarding coverage of certain preventive services under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act,” which in general requires group or individual health insurance plans “to cover certain contraceptive services without cost sharing,” HHS said in its summary on the proposed changes. “Current regulations include exemptions and optional accommodations for entities and individuals with religious or moral objections to coverage of contraceptive services,” it said, adding that under the proposed rules, “the moral exemption” is rescinded.

The Biden administration said the new rules are necessary to make sure women have access to “contraceptive services” in the aftermath of the U.S. Supreme Court’s June 2022 ruling in Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization. The ruling overturned the court’s 1973 Roe v. Wade decision that legalized abortion nationwide. With Dobbs, the abortion issue returns to the states. “We regret that it is necessary to revisit this matter and will file more thorough comments with HHS at the appropriate time,” Cardinal Dolan said.

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