Families open their hearts and homes to unaccompanied children crossing the border

By John Shaughnessy

Like many people, Sara Fichtner struggles to overcome her introverted nature when she first meets someone new. In these moments, she’s learned to take a deep breath, to whisper a short prayer and to always remember this thought: “Imagine all the people in your life who were once strangers whom you now love; people who have taught you something, supported you, inspired you, challenged you and loved you back.”

On a recent winter morning, around 2 a.m., the 46-year-old Fichtner tried to imagine what was going through the mind of the 10-year-old girl standing before her. Fichtner knew the girl was one of the thousands of unaccompanied children from Mexico, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and other Central American countries who have made a long journey to cross the Mexican-American border and enter the United States in the hope of being reunited with their parents.

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Mental health crisis response bill remains a key priority for ICC

By Victoria Arthur

As lawmakers debate the next state budget, the Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC) is among the chorus of voices calling for full funding of a measure that would extend to lifeline to people experiencing a mental health crisis.

The ICC recently joined numerous faith leaders in a “Call for Care” rally in support of Senate Bill 1, which would establish mobile crisis intervention teams that are trained to respond to mental health emergencies across Indiana’s 92 counties and fund a additional community-based mental health clinics statewide.

The measure, which passed the Senate unanimously in February, is now moving through the House. Despite the broad base of support for the bill, advocates are alarmed because the legislation was stripped of its proposed $30 million funding during deliberations in the Senate.

But the author of the bill, Sen. Michael Crider (R-Greenfield), remains confident that the measure will not only make it through the General Assembly, but receive the funding required to implement it.

“Right now, everything looks good, and I don’t anticipate any problems at all in the House with the bill moving,” Crider said. “The thing that most people are concerned about is the financing portion of it, which will be an end-to-end-process decision and part of the budget discussions.”

This is a long session of the General Assembly, held in every other year and culminating in the passage of the state’s two-year budget, which originates in the House. Crider explained that because his bill originated in the Senate but did have a budget appropriation attached, it was not unusual for the proposed funding to be removed and tabled for the budget discussions late in the legislative cycle.

“I’m committed to be in there fighting for all the budget we can get,” said Crider, a member of the Senate appropriations committee. “It’s been my mission for the last decade, and it’s encouraging to see us get to this point. I’m very, very hopeful that we’re going to get substantial changes made for the people of Indiana.”

“I can’t imagine even forthcoming the pressing need for improved mental health services in the state. In a former role as director of disaster management and security at Hancock Regional Hospital in Greenfield, Crider frequently had to calm down crisis situations in an emergency room.

“This is an issue that captured my attention, and I knew there had to be improvement in that space,” he said. “I firmly believe that if we can get help to people when they need it, they won’t end up in our emergency rooms and in our county jails.”

Crider credits the faith community and the other wide-ranging coalition of advocates who continue to support Senate Bill 1. The March 7 “Call for Care” rally, sponsored by the advocacy group Faith in Indiana, drew leaders from a cross-section of Christian faiths as well as the Jewish community.

Regardless of the particular religion, one of the common themes that day was dignity,” said Angela Espada, executive director of the ICC and ways that everyone can get involved in our efforts. “I think one of the key questions that day was how can we better support our clients, and the answer is we can support them in all aspects of their lives.”

Espada said that people have seen the ICC生产 county-level mobile crisis intervention teams to respond to those in extreme distress due to mental illness or addiction.

People dealing with mental health issues are vulnerable and are deserving of dignity,” said Angela Espada, executive director of the ICC, the public policy voice of the Catholic Church in Indiana.

“We often in our communities, we have seen people suffering from mental health crises responded to by police, who are usually not equipped or trained to handle the nature of crises of this type. These crises have ended in the death of the person who needed assistance.”

For Espada, who spoke at a press conference held in conjunction with the March 7 rally at the Statehouse, this reality is deeply personal. She has a connection to the family of Herman Whittfield, a 39-year-old pianist and composer, who died at his parents’ home in Indianapolis last April after suffering a mental health crisis and being tased by police.

“Had an appropriate response system been available, there was very little doubt in my mind that he would be alive today,” Espada said.

Backed by the governor’s office and a base of support for the bill, advocates who continue to support Senate Bill 1, the ICC recently joined numerous other advocates, would allow a court order to require a father to pay for half of pregnancy and childbirth expenses. The measure, authored by Rep. Elizabeth Rowrav (R-Yorktown), passed the House almost unanimously and is now moving through the Senate.

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

(Victoria Arthur, a member of St. Therese of the Infant Jesus [Little Flower] Parish in Indianapolis, is a correspondent for The Criterion.) ©

ICC podcast is added to weekly Catholic Radio Indy programming

The Indiana Catholic Action Network (ICAN) podcast is hosted by ICC executive director Angela Espada and Alexander Mingus, associate director of the ICC, who cover legislation and issues in the light of Catholic social teaching. ICAN is the principal mode of communication for the ICC.

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• 90.5 FM (south side of Indianapolis to Columbus).
• 98.3 FM (Anderson).

“It’s exciting to have this new audience for our podcast,” Mingus said. “We are very grateful to everyone at Catholic Radio Indy for helping us to share the work of the ICC and ways that everyone can get involved in our mission.”

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March 17 – 11:30 a.m. St. Patrick’s Day Parade, Indianapolis

March 18 – 1 p.m. Mass and dialogue at Putnamville Correctional Facility, Greencastle

March 19 – 2 p.m. Baptism at St. Gabriel Church, Louisville, Ky.

March 20 – 10 a.m. All School Mass, St. John Vianney Catholic High School, Indianapolis

March 20 – 5:15 p.m. Installation of Acolyte at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, Indianapolis

March 21 – 10 a.m. Clergy Lenten Day of Prayer at Mother of the Redeemer Retreat Center, Bloomington

March 21 – 2 p.m. Virtual National Eucharistic Revival Congress Board meeting

March 22 – 10 a.m. Catholic Center Connection at Archbishop T. G. O’Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis

March 22 – 7:30 p.m. Awake Night at Marian University, Indianapolis

March 23 – 10 a.m. Leadership Team meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center

March 23 – 1:30 p.m. Prayer for Indiana State Senate at Indiana Statehouse, Indianapolis

March 25 – 9 a.m. Day of Prayer with Young Adult Discerners at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, Indianapolis

March 26 – 1 p.m. Mass and dialogue at Plainfield Correctional Facility, Plainfield

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POPE 

He does, he told the Argentinean nun Perla. He said often have little time and energy to mentor teens and young men who might be interested in ordained ministry.

“If that [priest-to-parishioner] number is lower, then priests can create relationships that foster vocations,” said Gruenewald, whose report draws on data from the Official Catholic Directory along with input from vocation directors and seminarians from around the country.

According to the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate at Georgetown University (CARA), in 2022 there were 34,344 priests (24,110 diocesan, 10,234 religious) and 452 priestly ordinations in the U.S., serving 16,429 parishes and 66.5 million “parish-connected” Catholics, but 66% of the diocesan priests were in active ministry, with an average of one active diocesan priest per parish.

The Vocations Ministry study group studied the nation’s Catholic dioceses into four tiers based on the size of their Catholic population, and then calculated how many replacement priests, seminarians and ordinands are needed in each diocese for pastoral viability, based on current conditions.

Gruenewald, who has conducted training sessions for thousands of priests, catechists, Catholic school educators and laity in more than 50 dioceses, concluded that the 2021 vocation data showed only 33 dioceses ordained enough men to satisfy a “base need ordination rate,” while 17 were meeting their “base need seminarian rate.” Another 42 dioceses had no ordinands during that period.

She admits that the data “might be difficult for some to digest.”

CARA executive director Jesuit Father Thomas Gaunt, who reviewed the Vocations Ministry report, told OSV News the study did not account for shifts in the Catholic population across the U.S., which have led to a “massive movement of Catholics out of the cities and into the suburbs, and from the Northeast and Midwest to the South and West” of the nation.

However, Father Gaunt noted the report was correct in its “overall contention on targeting the importance of relationships in encouraging vocations.”

Of the four population tiers in the Vocations Ministry report, the highest-performing group was that with the lowest population and the lowest priest-to-parishioner ratio. Dioceses in this tier—which included Lincoln, Neb.; Tulsa, Okla.; and Reno, Nev.—typically ordain six times as many men as do the nation’s most populous dioceses.

Gruenewald stressed that Catholics have plenty of options for countering the declines in priestly vocations—such as regular prayer, education about vocations and how to foster them, affirmation of current priests and seminarians, and youth ministry.

“Priests and parishioners need to find those pockets where young people are and bring the vocations message to them,” she said, “Instead of throwing our hands up and saying, ‘Oh well, we need to be intentional and strategic. Vocations can happen if you believe. Let’s get to work.’

(To download the 2023 “State of Priestly Vocations in the United States,” visit vocationsministry.com/stateofpriestlyvocationsreport)

We are one family, in God, called to share our gifts with one another. Together, let us help those in need. United in the Eucharist Goal: $6.3 million

United Catholic Appeal Give safely and securely online at www.archindy.org/UCA
Happy Easter: A Time to Remember Resurrection

In the season of Lent, we are reminded of the importance of sacrifice and penitence. As Christians, we are called to reflect on our own sins and to seek forgiveness and redemption. This season is a time of renewal and spiritual growth, and we should use it to strengthen our faith and to prepare ourselves for the joyous celebration of Easter. As we reflect on the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross, let us also remember the promise of resurrection and new life. May this Easter season be a time of renewal and growth for all of us. Amen.
O, Dios, que elegiste al obispo san Patricio para predicar tu gloria a los pueblos de Irlanda, concede, por tus misterios e intercesión, que los que se glorian bajo el nombre de cristiano no cesen nunca de proclamar a todos tus maravillas. (Colecta).

Aun en época de sacrificios hay tiempo para la alegría en la oración y la renovación espiritual.

La fecha de publicación de esta columna es el viernes 17 de marzo, la festividad de san Patricio. Como la mayoría sabe, Patricio es el santo patrón de Irlanda, y el pueblo irlandés se enorgullece especialmente de su santidad y de que haya evangelizado su patria. A pesar de que esta fiesta conmemorativa tiene lugar durante la Cuaresma, en el Día de San Patricio los descendientes de irlandeses, ya sea que vivan en su país o en el extranjero, y todos los que son irlandeses de corazón, lo celebran con abundante comida, bebida, baile y música. ¿Acaso no contradice esto el espíritu de la Cuaresma? ¿No se supone que debemos pasar estos 40 días fastigando y haciendo penitencia?

La fe y la práctica católica a menudo se caracterizan por la expresión “both/ and”. Y, seguramente, no es excesivo decir que todos los que celebran el espíritu cuaresmal durante la solemnidad de la Anunciación del Señor recuerdan en la antífona de entrada el Día de la Anunciación del Señor. Se trata de la “Consolación y dejaría satisfechos” (Is 66:10-11). Pero se trata de un gran don que hemos recibido, la paz de Cristo resucitado.

Y sufre la Cuaresma como preparación para la alegría como la tristeza forman parte de la condición humana. Lo que es significativo para nosotros es que creemos que la alegría de la Pascua triunfa sobre todo nuestro dolor y tristeza.

Los terrenos de la Cuaresma están exentos de los requisitos de ayuno de la temporada, pero en este en particular se utiliza el color morado o rosado, se permite tocar música instrumental y se puede decorar el altar con flores. Todavía es un tiempo convincente de penitencia y penance.

A diferencia de la Navidad y la Pascua, cuyas fechas son fijas, la Cuaresma es un tiempo de prensa, suelen fijarse a los viernes y sábados durante la Cuaresma, pero la Iglesia ha hecho una excepción en el año de 2023. En este año, la Cuaresma es el viernes 17 de marzo, a pesar de que la Cuaresma es un tiempo de tristeza y sufrimiento. Los viernes durante la Cuaresma suelen ser un día de penitencia.

El domingo de la Cuaresma, conocido como domingo de Última Cena, es un día de reflexión sobre el sacrificio de Cristo. Aún en época de sacrificios hay tiempo para la alegría en la oración y la renovación espiritual. A diferencia de la Navidad y la Pascua, que se centran en las calles verdades de la encarnación y la resurrección de Cristo, la Cuaresma tiene un acento más sombrío, que es definitivo, estamos recorriendo el vía crucis junto a Jesús.

Pero es un error considerar la Cuaresma como un tiempo de tristeza y sufrimiento. Ayudamos, rezamos y hacemos obras de caridad durante la Cuaresma como preparación para la alegría del Domingo de Resurrección. Conscientes de que el sufrimiento y la muerte que Cristo padeció fueron necesarios para liberarnos de las consecuencias fatales del pecado y de la muerte, renovamos a nosotras y hacemos otros sacrificios para apreciar más plenamente el gran don que hemos recibido mediante la pasión, muerte y resurrección de nuestro Señor.

El calendario litúrgico de esta época del año reconoce la naturaleza dual de nuestra experiencia. Este año, por ejemplo, la solemnidad de san José, esposo de la bienaventurada Virgen María, se celebra el 20 de marzo, en lugar del 19, para dar prioridad al descanso y a la conmemoración del día de San José, que se celebra como domingo de Laetare, que en 2023 cae el 19 de marzo.

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Applications to become a Providence Associate are accepted throughout the year.

The Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods invite all to consider becoming a Providence Associate. The deadline for applications ending rich year is on June 30.

Applicants may apply at any time.

Providence Associates are women and men of faith who enter into a deeper relationship with the Sisters of Providence and help carry the mission of love, mercy and justice to the world in their everyday lives. Currently, more than 300 Providence Associates live and serve across the United States and in Taiwan.

To request an application, go to:

For a complete list of retreats as reported to The Criterion, log on to www.archindy.org/retreats

For more information, contact Juanita C. Brown at 317-236-1474, ext. 289 or jbrown@archindy.org.

April 1
Providence Spirituality and Conference Center Foley Room, 1 Sisters of Providence, 7533 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. Priests, Prophets and King—Day of Reflection. 8 a.m.-3 p.m., Deacon Robert Beyke facilitating. Includes lunch, program and Mass. Registration: 317-927-1085, sacramentals@archindy.org.

April 2
Ramey Solutions’ Financial Peace University, nine Mondays, 6:30-8:30 p.m. $79.99, by appointment only. Contact Ramey Solutions’ Matt Womell.

April 4
Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center, 1402 Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish, 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m., Franciscan Sister Olga Witterick presenting, free. Information: 317-923-6437, centerw@spsmw.org, oldenburgfranciscancenter.org.

April 5
Mount Saint Francis Retreat Center, 8220 W. State Road 48, Bloomington. Easter Triduum Retreat. 6 p.m. Thurs.–8 a.m. Fri. Franciscans of the Incarnate Faith: Tertiarian Charter and Matthias Sako facilitating, $50.70 additional cost for adult, children include lunch and dinner on Sat., overnight accommodations additional cost, call for details. Information: 812-354-6242, ext. 1, motheroftherefugees@archindy.org.

April 7
Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center, 1402 Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish, 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m., Franciscan Sister Sue Pawelski at 312-909-7492 or spawuelski@spmw.org.

April 10
Oldenburg Franciscan Center, 2214 Main St., Oldenburg. Making Sacred Journeys. 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m., Carolyn Stewart facilitating, $30 includes materials. Information: 317-923-6437, www.oldenburgfranciscancenter.org.

April 11

April 19
Oldenburg Franciscan Center, 2214 Main St., Oldenburg. Workshop, O’Connor, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Franciscan Sister Amy Kinsler facilitating, free. Information: 317-923-6437, www.oldenburgfranciscancenter.org.

Mother of the Redeemer Retreat Center, 5200 W. State Road 48, Bloomington. Mercy Divine Sunday, 1-4 p.m., Franciscan Friars of the Immaculate Father Matthias Sako facilitating, free. Information: 317-923-6437, motheroftherefugees@archindy.org.
Father Wilfred “Sonny” Day and Frances Brown to be honored at gala

By Natalie Hoefer

At its annual Giving Hope-Changing Lives fundraising gala, St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities in New Albany presents one of its most prestigious awards: the Hope Award to honor those who have contributed generously of their time and talent in helping the organization and those it serves.

Frances Brown and Father Wilfred “Sonny” Day were amongst the recipients of the Hope Award at this year’s gala, to be held on April 20 at The Galt House Hotel in Louisville, Ky.

“As we are very pleased to have them receive the Spirit of Hope award,” said agency director Mark Casper. “We are very proud to have them as part of our team.”

This year’s winners are featured below.

A ministry of presence

Frances Brown, 81, was on a routine trip to the grocery recently. Being a self-proclaimed “people person,” she struck up a conversation with the store manager. And being a devotee of the mission of St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities, she shared that knowledge with the organization.

“She said, ‘If I can help, how can I help you? Can I help you?’” Brown recalled. “I said, ‘well—what have you got to give me now?’ I gave him 10 bouquets. ‘Run if you don’t want to help, because I’ll take you up on it if you say yes!’”

The story embodies comments about Brown by Father Sonny Day, who is a self-proclaimed “people person,” and current Nicaraguan president Daniel Ortega who jailed a prominent bishop, is strongly persecuted the Church in the country and jailed a prominent bishop, is “unbalanced,” Pope Francis says.

But an unofficial role he took on for himself was as a volunteer and promoter first of St. Elizabeth Maternity Home when it was founded in 1989 and then of St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities after the two organizations joined in 2017.

Father Day supports the charity because “it’s a good way of serving the needy and poor. They find themselves in a bad situation and struggling to make ends meet. They’re people in need of a helping hand.”

“I’m always amazed at how the ministry responds to so many needs here in southern Indiana and the Louisville area, too. If there’s a possible way of responding, St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities does.”

Father Day said he promoted the ministry and encouraged people to support it during his time serving in the New Albany Deanery. And he would volunteer and attend events when he could.

But now that he’s retired, he has more time to help at St. Elizabeth in person. “One of his favorite programs to volunteer with there is Marie’s Blessings community distribution service, which provides free baby food, diapers, formula, clothing, car seats, baby beds, household items, appliances and furniture to local families in need.”

He was pastor of Most Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish in Jeffersonville when the late Marie Robertson, founder of the formerly named Marie’s Ministry, started the service.

“She had that ministry going there [at the parish] for years,” Father Day recalled. “When she passed away, St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities picked it up to serve the poor and needy.”

Father Day said he liked “to meet the clients, to be as friendly as I can be. When people come asking for something, I try to do my best not to do anything to make them feel uncomfortable and to be as welcoming and kind as I can be.”

He recalled one young woman who sought help at Marie’s Blessings and was able to console her, that she’d be OK, that we would help her in every way we could. That’s what strikes me about that ministry.

Recently, Father Day has also been available to help at Marie’s Blessings with new sculptures at the organization’s Holy Trinity Heritage Park located next to the St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities administration building.

“As St. Elizabeth director, I can say Father Sonny has always been there when an issue arose where his experience and guidance was always available to me,” Father Day said. He said the priest’s “actions of support and guidance to St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities has contributed to the growth and community support of the St. Elizabeth mission. In both his spoken words and his pulpit and his actions, Father Sonny Day challenges us all to live out the works of charity Jesus called us to.”

Father Day was surprised to hear he was chosen to receive the award.

“I just thought I was doing my duty, and that’s what I will hopefully continue to do.”

The Giving Hope-Changing Lives Gala will take place on April 20 at The Galt House Hotel, 140 N. Fourth St., Louisville, Ky. Doors open at 5:30 p.m., and dinner will be served at 7 p.m. The evening will include client witnesses, videos and a live auction. Tickets are $150 and can be purchased online or by calling 812-949-7303 or e-mailing info@stecharities.org.

Nicaraguan president who jailed bishop is ‘unbalanced,’ Pope Francis says

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega is so strongly persecuted the Church in the country and jailed a prominent bishop, is “unbalanced,” Pope Francis said.

In a wide-ranging interview with Argentinean media outlet Infobae, the pope said that the current Nicaraguan government to the dictatorship of 1917,” referring to the Sandinistas’ revolution, and Hitler’s dictatorship in Germany before World War II, calling them “obscene” in Argentinean slang.

In the interview published on March 10, Pope Francis spoke about Bishop Rolando Alvarez of Matagalpa, who was sentenced to 26 years in prison on Feb. 10 after a trial in which the United States with 222 political prisoners deported by the Nicaraguan government. Bishop Alvarez and the Church throughout Nicaragua have been targeted for allegedly supporting opposition to President Ortega and his government.

With the sentencing of the bishop, “I have no choice but to think that a person in charge is unbalanced,” the pope said.

According to the Associated Press, the Nicaraguan government announced on March 12, in response to the pope’s interview, that it was considering suspending diplomatic relations with the Vatican. It expelled the apostolic nuncio to Nicaragua last year.

On March 7, the Nicaraguan government stripped the legal status from two Catholic universities in the country.

Still speaking of Latin America, the pope said that he was sending Pope Francis to Argentina, but that the right moment has not presented itself.

And he said he believes regime change is possible in Venezuela, since “historical circumstances will make them change the way they have.” The U.N. refugee agency estimates there are more than 7 million Venezuelan refugees and migrants worldwide due to high inflation and political persecution.

The pope said Francis is considering resistance in the Roman Curia, saying that he appreciates direct and productive criticism that resistance “on the verge of schism” is “ugly.” He cited “a well-known American bishop, who was nuncio” as an example of “poorly managed resistance.”

“We do not know if this man is Catholic or not, he is on the edge,” said the pope.

Despite a promise he made to Our Lady of Mount Carmel in 1990 to not watch the World Cup final, Pope Francis said he was kept up to date on the 2022 World Cup final, in which his native Argentina beat France 4-2 to win.

“I was in a meeting here with six Alitalia pilots and their wives. At one point I went to go find something, and when I came back one told me ‘they are winning’” along with the score.

Alitalia was running the match 2-0 with slightly more than 10 minutes left before conceding two late goals to go into overtime.

“Let’s have a good Sunday,” said Pope Francis. “Be in the positive or negative.”
The member of St. Monica Parish in Indianapolis also knows how to help children who have crossed the Mexican-American border—their parents are waiting for them in the United States. "I like for our kids to see how fortunate they are living here and not going through some of the struggles that kids from somewhere else have to go through," Massolo said. "This is a charity that we can do together as a family. And part of this service is teaching our kids about our faith. That's the commandment to love your neighbor. We have a responsibility to care for these children that are crossing our borders, and come to a place they aren't familiar with."

They also have completed an extensive training program for providing foster care, and have attended a foster care training and further training sessions. "Sometimes, that's the heartbreaking thing," says Anne. "You know how they're living because they had loving parents who cared for them in one place, but they're in a different environment now."

There's the commandment to love your neighbor As short-term foster parents, the Fichetons and the Corcorans are quick at providing for food, clothing and other necessities for the immigrant children they welcome into their home. They also have completed an extensive training program for providing foster care, and have attended a foster care training and further training sessions. "Sometimes, I want to say yes to every child," said Sara Fichet. "But it's really dangerous to say yes to every child."

Sara reflects on the Eucharist in light of the current social crisis "I would love to hear about how the kids lived, what they ate, what kind of friends they had, how they played and what kind of learning they did," she said. "It's been a blessing and a challenge for Christ."

"It's a love that was given."

Jenifer, 8, and her sister, Ava, 10, were among the unaccompanied children that the Corcorans have welcomed into their home. "We're trying to get to parents who are in the process of trying to reunite with their children," Jenifer said. "But that's not always possible."

"I like for our kids to see how fortunate they are living here and not going through some of the struggles that kids from somewhere else have to go through," Massolo said. "This is a charity that we can do together as a family. And part of this service is teaching our kids about our faith. That's the commandment to love your neighbor. We have a responsibility to care for these children that are crossing our borders, and come to a place they aren't familiar with."
The Delaware General Assembly

One of the first things that impressed Father Sahayam when he became administrator of the parish in July 2021 was the singing.

“Every parish I go to, I listen to how people pray and sing. They pray and sing so strong here—very loud, very unified!” he said enthusiastically. “The people here are very strong in faith.”

For example, he said, the parish has four Bible study groups that meet every week. And once a month, the parish youth take on ministries at Mass, from greeting and ushering to lectoring and serving God. “There is a growing number of young families,” said Father Sahayam.

Leadership here, from staff members to families, he said enthusiastically. “The people here are very strong in faith.”

Even the new ones, he said. A parish bereavement ministry began last year, providing eight sessions to help those grieving the loss of a loved one. A new round of sessions just began at the start of the Lenten season.

The Bible studies and bereavement sessions help parishioners know, love and serve God. But opening these and many other ministries—including a social group for widows and a senior exercise club—to those outside the parish and from other faiths becomes a means for the faith community to “know, love and serve God and our neighbor.”

Knowing, loving and serving God and neighbor is especially evident in St. Thomas More’s outreach efforts. “We’re trying to be more visible in the community,” said Father Sahayam.

For instance, the parish is involved with Churches in Mission, an interfaith ministry in Mooresville that serves those in need in Morgan County. The parish recently started an additional way to serve the local community:

“Last year, we held a public health fair,” Father Sahayam explained. “We offered blood draws, shots, checked bone density, cholesterol, blood pressure, sugar. There was an addictions center [represented], a booth on breast cancer. It’s a community thing we want to do annually.”

The parish’s annual fall festival, while a fun opportunity, is also a means to reach the local community.

“Catholics are a minority in Mooresville,” said Father Sahayam. “So, we have Mass during the festival and invite everyone to come. We offer a church tour. Deacon Joe [Beauchamp] puts everything in the sanctuary—theraband, bells, hymnal, books, holy water, incense, holy oils, crucifix, chasuble—and explains all of it.”

He welcomes all to visit St. Thomas More, whether coming for the festival, joining a bereavement session or just walking the parish’s outdoor Stations of the Cross during Lent.

“The first thing I hear from visitors is, ‘You have a great community,’” Father Sahayam said. “There’s a homey feel here, a closeness. I hope many people come to experience it.”

For Mass times and ministry information, go to stm-church.org or call 317-831-4142.

“Strong in faith” and “visible in the community”

Delaware bill would break seal of confession between priest and penitent

By Natalie Hoefer

The Delaware General Assembly is taking aim at a basic tenet of the Catholic Church and wants to break the seal of confession between a priest and penitent.

House Bill 74 (HB 74) would do away with the privilege between priest and penitent in a sacramental confession by requiring priests to report information relating to child abuse and neglect that is shared in a confessional.

The Diocese of Wilmington said priests are prohibited from breaking the seal of confession and are bound to keep the confidence of penitents in the sacrament of reconciliation.

“The sacrament of confession and its seal of confession is a fundamental aspect of the Church’s sacramental theology and practice. It is non-negotiable,” the diocese said in a prepared statement on March 6.

“No Catholic priest or bishop would ever break the seal of confession under any circumstances. To do so would incur an automatic excommunication,” the diocese added.

“The Diocese of Wilmington said priests are prohibited from breaking the seal of confession and are bound to keep the confidence of penitents in the sacrament of reconciliation. The seal of confession is the worldwide law of the Catholic Church, and wants to break the seal of confession between a priest and penitent.

“The Diocese of Wilmington considers the protection of the vulnerable to be one of the most important aims of public policy, the statement said. However, this legislation would not advance that vital objective.”

Within the next few weeks, the House Judiciary Committee could hold a hearing on HB 74. The primary sponsor of the bill is Democratic Rep. Eric Morrison. In Vermont and Utah, state lawmakers introduced similar legislation. Two other states, Washington and Kansas, are advancing measures to require clergy to be listed as mandatory reporters of child abuse or neglect. They are among a handful of states in the U.S. that do not already require this. However, the Kansas measure, introduced by Democratic Sen. Tom Holland, does not include protections for religious confessions.

Indiana law designates clergy as mandatory reporters, but does not require them to disclose information shared in confession.

On March 3, Bishop Christopher J. Coyne of Burlington, Vt., testified at a state Senate Judiciary Committee hearing that the Church opposes an effort by lawmakers to remove an exemption from Vermont’s child abuse and neglect reporting laws that currently protects priests from having to violate the seal of confession if a penitent confesses to child abuse or neglect.

“A priest faces excommunication if he discloses the communication made to him during confession,” Bishop Coyne said. “And the sacramental seal of confession is the worldwide law of the Catholic Church, not just the [statewide] Diocese of Burlington, Vermont.”
Prayer, fasting and almsgiving are at the heart of the Christian faith

By OSV News

The three traditional pillars of Lent are prayer, fasting and almsgiving.

—Pray daily

The act of praying, especially the prayer Jesus taught us, expresses our humility and dependence on God. Jesus shows us how to pray in the Gospels when he hands on the words of the Lord’s Prayer. He encourages us to address God as Father—literally, Abba, or “Dad.” Jesus invites us to enter into a relationship with God. In order to sustain this relationship, he gives us words to communicate with God. When we pray the Lord’s Prayer, we acknowledge our own struggle with striving to live according to God’s will. We also confess our humble dependence on God, noting that even our “daily bread” comes from him. Lent is a time to devote ourselves to prayer in a more intentional way. Set aside time every day to pray. Remember to pray for the gift of an increased spiritual life, for all of the catechumens who will be baptized at the Easter Vigil and for the humility to serve others as Jesus did.

—The practice of fasting

Fasting is more than simply developing self-control around food. Spiritual fasting reminds us of our hunger for God. The Lenten pillar of fasting is one of the most ancient practices in Lent. The early Church celebrated the Paschal fast—abstaining from food for two days before the Easter Vigil. The Second Vatican Council, in “Sacrosanctum Concilium” (“Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy”), called us to renew the observance of this tradition: “Let the paschal fast be kept sacred. Let it be celebrated everywhere on Good Friday and, where possible, prolonged throughout Holy Saturday, so that the joys of the Sunday of the resurrection may be attained with uplifted and clear mind” (#110).

Fasting and abstinence help us overcome the temptations to selfishness that can come from an oversized ego.

Quick facts on fasting and abstinence:

—Fasting means eating only one normal-sized meal and two small meals, with no snacks.
—Abstinence means eating no meat. Milk, eggs and fish are fine.

—Fridays during Lent are abstinence days. Those 14 and older are required to abstain from meat on abstinence days.
—Those 18-59 are required to fast. Those with special medical conditions that prevent fasting are excluded.
—Ash Wednesday is 46 days before Easter, but Lent is considered 40 days long, because Sundays are not counted as days of Lent. The reason? Fasting was considered inappropriate on Sunday, the day commemorating the resurrection of Jesus.

—Give alms

The giving of alms can be traced back to before the time of Jesus. Jesus taught his disciples about the importance of almsgiving when they saw the rich giving large amounts of money to the treasury of the temple in Jerusalem and a widow giving a very small amount. Jesus showed his disciples that it was the widow who gave the better share because she gave out of her daily living expenses, out of her poverty, while the rich gave simply from their surplus (Lk 21:1-4).

This Gospel passage reminds us that sharing our blessings is not optional for Catholic Christians. Works of charity and the promotion of justice are integral to the Christian way of life. Jesus reflected on all of these practices in a passage from the Sermon on the Mount that is proclaimed at Mass on Ash Wednesday (Mt 6:1-6, 16-18).

The words of our Lord and the 2,000-year history of the Church show us that prayer, fasting and almsgiving are at the heart of what it means to live as a disciple of Christ at all times and places in our world.

These practices are at the heart of our Lenten journey. But with the help of God’s grace, we can make them a part of our life of faith the whole year through. †
A friend of mine who’s passionate about serving folks with disabilities recently suggested a way of being that I have been trying to embrace for a long time: be an eye-opening experience at any parish. “Every now and then, says my friend, “stand as far as you can from the doors, during and after Mass.” “Like a back-of- the-narthex kind of back. And just watch. Watch who struggles just to get through the doors. Watch who struggles to hear or see. Watch who appears flustered or embarrassed because of making loud noises beyond the typical little-kid-in-church noises.

Watch who’s overcome the no small amount of staring because her or his disability is very noticeable; or he doesn’t look like the usual, typical parishioner. Notice who, quite possibly, might not always feel welcome or included at Mass or in parish life generally speaking.

“Watch to see who might be struggling to belong.”

You can’t judge a book by its cover.

Granted, we’re not mind-readers. Just because a person appears to be struggling or might not fit with our group doesn’t mean that she or he is consciously suffering because of a predicament, or that each and every person surrounding her or him is uncomfortable with how he or she looks, behaves, sounds, etc.—and that the discomfort of surrounding worshipers is sensed by the person in question in a way that brings sadness, self-consciousness, discomfort, etc. But our empathetic intuition is often reliable. Folks with disabilities often struggle—physically or emotionally—in ways that many of us don’t.

Who’s not at the table?

For every person with a noticeable disability (directly or that of a family member) shies away from attending. It’s perceived, too hard, too uncomfortable.

And while perceptions are subjective, a kernel of truth can be present in these thoughts and feelings of persons with disabilities. Sometimes belonging to a parish community is harder than it should be.

So what can I do?

Awareness and acknowledgement of disabilities is where inclusion and welcoming can start, helping folks understand that disabilities of various sorts are far more prevalent in our faith communities than many people realize. You can reach out to fellow parishioners who you know have a disability of some sort, offering to meet them at Mass. You can work with parish leaders such that parishioners hear a consistent message: “Odds are you know at least one fellow parishioner with a disability. Please be in communication with him such that any barriers or hesitancy about joining us for worship can be surmounted—together.”

A feather in our cap

Most dioceses don’t even have a policy or staff member focused on including persons with disabilities in the life of our Church, let alone a full-time diocesan ministry coordinator—such an archdiocesan support. Here in our archdiocese, Jennifer Bryans, recently started as Disabilities Ministry Coordinator in our catechetical office, and she would love to hear from you that together we can collaborate toward a more welcoming parish for persons with disabilities. She can be reached at jbryans@archindy.org.

(Ken Ogorzek is catechetical director within the archdiocesan Secretariat for Worship and Evangelization. He can be reached at kogorzek@archindy.org.)

Good Friday prayers are filled with God’s hope for salvation

Good Friday is three weeks away.

The Good Friday Service is a unique liturgy. There are four “movements” if you will: Liturgy of the Word, Intercessions, Adoration, Stations of the Cross and Communion. Let’s focus on the second movement.

There are 10 intercessions. Each begins with the prayer “We pray, O Lord, that…” (by a deacon, lector or cantor. After silence (with kneeling if possible), all rise and the presiding priest or bishop prays the actual prayer.

These intercessions originated in Rome during the early centuries of the Church and have endured.

Intercessions one through four focus upon all those in communion with Rome: the Church, pope, faithful and catechumens.

Good Friday essentially celebrates Jesus’ triumph on the cross. The Resurrection culminates the paschal mystery. The invitation: “... that the priest holds up the cross. The Resurrection culminates the paschal mystery.

Prayer for Christian Unity

The invitation: “... that those whom one baptism has joined in faith—men and women—may find the truth and that we ourselves, being constant in mutual love and striving to understand more fully the mystery of your life, may be made more perfect witnesses to your love in the world.”

Prayer for Those Who Do Not Believe in God

The invitation: “... that, enlightened by the Holy Spirit, they, too, may enter on the way of salvation.”

The prayer: “... God, grant to those who do not confess Christ that, by walking before you with a sincere heart, they may find the truth and that we ourselves, being constant in mutual love and striving to understand more fully the mystery of your life, may be made more perfect witnesses to your love in the world.”

Prayer for Those Who Do Not Believe in Christ

The invitation: “... that, following what is right in sincerity of heart, they may find the way to God himself.”

The prayer: “... God, who created all people to seek you always and find you when we seek you, grant that, ... all may recognize the signs of your fatherly love and the witness of the good works done by those who believe in you, and so in gladness confess you, the one true God and Father of our human race.”

My, I love these prayers! They are so filled with hope and the fulfillment of the promise of salvation.

Part of that design is benign mystery. This mystery unfolds through many agents.”

God is active in each prayer. The Church proclaims its longing for all to find a way to salvation. All who are fully a part of the Church are responsible for revealing Christ and God by our prayer and witness.

Once again, the reciprocal “law of prayer is the law of belief”—an ancient principle in the Church—is on display. May our lived belief help to bring about that for which we pray. A blessed Holy Week and Happy Easter!

(Father Rick Ginther is director of the archdiocesan Office of Ecumenism and Interreligious Affairs. He is also the pastor of Holy Name Catholic Church in Indianapolis.)

Let’s welcome those who struggle to belong at our parishes

looks, behaves, sounds etc.—and that the sense brought about by the person in question in a way that brings sadness, self-consciousness, discomfort, etc.

But our empathetic intuition is often reliable. Folks with disabilities often struggle—physically or emotionally—in ways that many of us don’t.

Ken Ogorzek is catechetical director within the archdiocesan Secretariat for Worship and Evangelization. He can be reached at kogorzek@archindy.org.
The Sunday Readings

Sunday, March 19, 2023

1 Samuel 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13a
1 John 9:1-41

The first reading for this weekend is taken from the First Book of Samuel. An ancient prophet and therefore God’s representative and spokesman, Samuel selected, at God’s direction, the young David to be king of Israel. To signify this appointment, Samuel anointed David with oil.

Anointings always have marked persons for special jobs or to strengthen them in certain circumstances, as if the mark of the oil on the flesh is indelible and the oil infuses the person with grace. All Catholics are anointed when they are baptized and confirmed. Priests and bishops are anointed in their ordinations. Faithful people in bad health are anointed in the sacrament of the anointing of the sick to strengthen them and reinforce their spiritual constitution in their trials.

In May at his coronation, Britain’s King Charles III will be anointed, a representative and spokesman, Samuel questioned the man. The Pharisees are shown as obstinate and smug. By contrast, the blind man is humble and sincere. He has faith in God and in Jesus. An added element, surely of special interest to the early generations of Christians who suffered persecution, was that the Pharisees expelled the man from their synagogue. The righteous often suffer from the ill will of others.

The Gospel story recalls a miracle. It also is a study in contrasts. On one side is the man born blind whom Jesus healed. The other side is that of the Pharisees, spiritually blinded by their own sin or a sin of his parents?

Searching for an answer, the Pharisees questioned the man. The Pharisees expelled him from their synagogue. The righteous often suffer from the ill will of others.

Reflection

The Gospel story recalls a miracle. It is also a study in contrasts. On one side is the man born blind whom Jesus healed. The other side is that of the Pharisees, spiritually blinded by their self-satisfaction, their confidence in their own knowledge and in their own high estimates of themselves.

We must apply these contrasts to ourselves. We may not be very evil, foolishly pompous or boastful as were the Pharisees. Still, we downplay our limitations. Our exaggerated judgments of ourselves trick us again and again and again.

This keeps us in the dark. Lent is the time to face facts. We must recognize our need for God. We must turn to God. He alone is light.

The wonder of this is that God will receive us, love us, forgive us and give us light to see reality. The light of God awakens us in Christ. Rejoice!

My Journey to God

It’s a place I feel calm, that’s designated for You and me.
I am comforted by Your peace, in a place that’s chaos free.
Blessed to be here with You, feeling the embrace of Your presence.
Safe to be my true self, unguarded, honest, and with no pretense.

I know You’re pleased I’m here, I sense Your nearness to me.
Quietly praying or sharing my thoughts, You open my eyes to see.
I often reach out to others, trying to encourage them to come.
Sharing personal experiences of my visits, hoping it’ll make a difference to some.

Spending time in the Adoration Chapel, is a special place for me.
A place to be with You.
A place I choose to be.

Adoration Chapel, A Place

By Stephanie J. Jackson

(Stephanie J. Jackson is a member of St. Vincent DePaul Parish in Bedford. Photo: An altar server, left, Father Jonathan Meyer and Deacon Robert Decker pray for the all-night eucharistic adoration during the weekend of the new adoration chapel at St. John the Baptist Church in Dover, a campus of All Saints Parish in Dearborn County, on March 1, 2017. (File photo by Sean Gallagher)"

Daily Readings

Monday, March 20
St. Joseph, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Psalm 89:2-5, 27, 29
Romans 4:13, 16-18, 22
Matthew 1:16, 18-21, 24a
or Luke 2:41-52a

Tuesday, March 21
Ezekiel 47:1-9, 12
Psalm 145:3, 5-8, 8-9
John 5:1-16

Wednesday, March 22
Isaiah 49:8-15
Psalm 145:6-9, 13c-14, 17-18
John 5:17-20

Thursday, March 23
St. Turibius of Mogrovejo, bishop
Exodus 25:17-18

Question Corner/Jenna Marie Cooper

Penitential practices throughout the year held Christ in his suffering

Q

While answering a question about vegetarians and vegans during Lent, you mentioned the requirement for continuing a penance on Fridays, even if not abstaining from meat. Can you explain this? My understanding is that our penance helps us remember Good Friday every week, to draw us closer to our Lord.

A

Our obligation to do some form of penance on Friday is identified in canon 1249 in the Code of Canon Law, which tells us that the “penitent days and times in the universal Church are every Friday of the whole year and the season of Lent.”

The preceding canon 1249 gives us a definition of “penitential days” as days “on which the faithful Christian devote themselves in a special way to prayer, perform works of piety and charity, and deny themselves by fulfilling their own obligations more faithfully and especially by observing fast and abstinence.” And as canon 1249 notes, these days of penance “in order for all to be united among themselves by some common observance.”

You are correct that Fridays have a penitential character because of Good Friday. Because Friday is the day on which Christ dwelled on this earth for his life on earth, every cross, every Friday is an especially suitable time to draw closer to the mystery of his passion and death.

By practicing self-denial in spiritually healthy and appropriate ways—whether that be foregoing a worldly food, sharing our resources with the needy or taking time out of our daily lives for prayer—we recall and imitate Jesus’ own self-denial in how he “emptied himself, taking the form of a slave,” and “humbled himself, becoming obedient to death on a cross” (Phil 2:7-8).

Traditionally, a penitential self-denial (traditionally referred to as “mustering”) in many classic old works of spirituality) was also understood as an aid to personal growth in holiness. We know that muscles grow stronger through exercise. In a similar way, a habit of making small sacrifices when the stakes are relatively low can prepare us to choose the right thing in more serious situations. In other words, those who are spiritually “in shape” through regular training and practice of their own regular penances and the practice of self-denial are spiritually stronger and thus better able to face difficult challenges as they arise.

In terms of specifics, canon law further tells us that “abstinence from meat, or from some other food as determined by the episcopal conference, is to be observed on all Fridays, unless a solemnity should fall on a Friday” (#1251), and that local bishop’s conferences also have the power to “determine more precisely the observance of fast and abstinence as well as substitute other forms of penance, especially works of charity and exercises of piety, in whole or in part, for abstinence and fast.”

In the United States in 1966, our own bishop’s conference issued a “Pastoral Statement on Penance and Abstinence,” which reiterated the requirement for Catholics in the United States to abstain from meat on Fridays during Lent. But this same document—noting that “changing circumstances, including economic, dietary and social elements, have made some of our people feel that the renunciation of the eating of meat is not always and for everyone the most effective means of practicing penance”—formally permitted Catholics to “subscribe other penitential observances” on Fridays outside Lent.

It is worth noting, though, that the document did urge Catholics to freely choose to continue the tradition of year-round Friday abstinence from meat, if though it’s less strictly required.

(Jenna Marie Cooper, who holds a licentiate in canon law, is a consecrated virgin and a canonist whose column appears weekly at OSV News. Send your questions to CatholicQA@osv.com)
Please submit to writing to our office by 10 a.m. Thursday before the week of publication; be sure to state date of death. Obituaries of archdiocesan priests serving our archdiocese are listed elsewhere in The Criterion. Order priests and religious sisters and brothers are included here only when they are natives of the archdiocese or have significant connections to it; see separate obituary pages on this page.


**GINDLING, Esther**, 87, St. Lawrence, Indianapolis, March 4. Mother of Sherri Brederick, Sandy Hipp, Dan, Lisa and David Gindling. Grandmother of nine. Great-grandmother of 13. Memorial gifts may be sent to the Sisters of Providence. 


**WILZ, Susan (Stark)**, 82, St. Luke, Indianapolis, Bloomington, Feb. 25. Mother of Margaret Binko, Catherine Patterson, Jenny Sarko. Mary Zabikski, Dr. James, Dr. John and Stark Wilke. Grandmother of 14. Great-grandmother of 11. ↑

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**Providence Sister Rosemary Burtnagar served in Catholic education for 40 years**

Providence Sister Rosemary Burtnagar (previously Sister Rose Cecile), a member of the Province of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods in St. Mary-of-the-Woods, died Feb. 26 at 16th Avenue and Theodore Hall on the campus of her religious community’s motherhouse. She was 90. A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on March 7 in the Church of the Immaculate Conception at the Congregation of the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, 1 Sisters of Providence Road, St. Mary-of-the-Woods, IN 47876.


**WILZ, Susan (Stark)**, 82, St. Luke, Indianapolis, Bloomington, Feb. 25. Mother of Margaret Binko, Catherine Patterson, Jenny Sarko. Mary Zabikski, Dr. James, Dr. John and Stark Wilke. Grandmother of 14. Great-grandmother of 11. ↑

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**Franciscan Sister Mary Jean Sora taught music, served as a liturgical musician**

Franciscan Sister Mary Jean Sora died on March 26, 2022, at the motherhouse of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis in Oldenburg. She was 97. The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Jan. 4 at the Motherhouse Chapel in Oldenburg. Burial followed at the sisters’ cemetery.


**WILZ, Susan (Stark)**, 82, St. Luke, Indianapolis, Bloomington, Feb. 25. Mother of Margaret Binko, Catherine Patterson, Jenny Sarko. Mary Zabikski, Dr. James, Dr. John and Stark Wilke. Grandmother of 14. Great-grandmother of 11. ↑

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**Franciscan Sister Carmela Whitton served in Catholic schools and parishes**

Franciscan Sister Carmela Whitton died on Feb. 26 at the motherhouse of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis in Oldenburg. She was 96. The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on March 6 at the Motherhouse Chapel in Oldenburg. Burial followed at the cemetery.


**WILZ, Susan (Stark)**, 82, St. Luke, Indianapolis, Bloomington, Feb. 25. Mother of Margaret Binko, Catherine Patterson, Jenny Sarko. Mary Zabikski, Dr. James, Dr. John and Stark Wilke. Grandmother of 14. Great-grandmother of 11. ↑
Vatican accepts ‘positio’ in Mother Mary Lange’s sainthood cause

ABRTUS, Md. (OSV News)—The canonization cause of Mother Mary Lange, founder of the world’s first sustained women’s religious community for Black women, has taken a step forward.

Sister Rita Michelle Proctor, superior general of the Baltimore-based Oblate Sisters of Providence, said her religious community received a Feb. 27 e-mail from the Vatican informing the sisters that it has approved the “positio”—the documentation on the life of Mother Lange, which includes both the theological and historical record of her life.

Sister Michelle made the announcement on March 5 at her religious community’s motherhouse in Archbist, just outside Baltimore, during the annual confrerral of the Mother Lange Awards honoring local Black Catholic leaders in the Black Catholic community.

More than 300 people broke into applause and cheers at the news. “I don’t want you to go and say Sister Rita Michelle has just gone and proclaimed Sister Mother Lange a saint,” the superior general said, noting that the sisters have long considered their founder a saint in their hearts.

Mother Lange established St. Frances Academy in Baltimore in 1828 to educate Black children in an era of slavery.

Mother Lange’s positio will go to the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints for review, Sister Rita Michelle said. She went on to explain that, after its review, the dicastery may send it to Pope Francis, who could then declare Mother Lange “Venerable.”

“Venerable” is a declaration of a sainthood candidate’s heroic virtues. Next would come beatification, after which she would be called “Blessed.” The third step is canonization. In general, the last two steps require a miracle attributed to the intercession of the sainthood candidate and verified by the Church.

Baltimore Archbishop William E. Lori said he was excited to hear the news about the latest development in Mother Lange’s cause.

“The information indicates the next step forward, more people learn about the life and legacy of our beloved Mother Lange,” he said.

“She unlocked educational opportunities for children in Baltimore and beyond during her lifetime—and that impact continues today. The Oblate Sisters have worked very hard to help bring about this key development. Along with so many others, we are delighted.”

The uplifting news was just one highlight of the annual awards ceremony that the good works parishioners from traditionally Black parishes in the archdiocese of Baltimore.

The program also included singing performances, opening remarks and a prayer by Auxiliary Bishop Bruce A. Lewandowski, a historic portrayal and presentation on Mother Mary Lange by Catholic storyteller Janice Currie Greene, as well as formal public recognition for award recipients.

“God spoke to me and told me that I could make a difference,” said Greene, speaking in character as Mother Lange. “And I wanted to be a powerful woman of God—something I had hoped for and prayed for my entire life.”

Those honored with Mother Lange Awards were applauded as they were introduced. More than 40 parishioners from a dozen parishes received the awards for leadership and service. Youths were among the award recipients.

In his remarks, Bishop Lewandowski recalled the

...cont...
The bond between parents and high school athletes shows in the journey of a state champion

By John Shaughnessy

The tears were different this time. This time, they were tears of joy.

In his first three years of competing in high school, Bryce Lowery was devastated as he left the finals of the Indiana High School Athletic Association’s wrestling state championships.

After losing in the state finals each of those years—including last year when it was his only defeat of the entire season—Bryce slumped toward a back hallway where he broke down crying, knowing of his dream of becoming a state champion had slipped from his grasp.

Those memories haunted the senior at Roncalli High School in Indianapolis as he prepared to step on the mat for this year’s state championship match of the 152-pound weight class on Feb. 18 at Gainbridge Fieldhouse in Indianapolis.

“I ended up losing in the quarterfinals last year,” Bryce recalled. “It was a heartbreaking loss in the last 30 seconds. I felt I let myself down and my coach. I never wanted to feel like that again.”

Bryce succeeded in avoiding that feeling this year, winning his state championship match to complete a perfect 43-0 record for the season.

“I found my love for wrestling again,” he said. “I wasn’t raised Catholic,” he said. “I’ve had a similar positive impact on his teammates, said Richardson, in his

Bryce Lowery of Roncalli High School in Indianapolis shows his joy after winning a state championship in wrestling on Feb. 18 at Gainbridge Fieldhouse in Indianapolis. (Submitted photo)

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Beyond becoming a state champion, Bryce's thoughts of his mom.

“Her gratitude also extends to the sport she helped me with everything.”

“I wasn’t raised Catholic,” he said. “I’ve never had to have high expectations or you’re not going to be successful,” Richardson said. “Bryce had goals, and he was willing to do the extra things to reach those goals. It’s just great having someone to set that example for other kids.”

Near the end of the conversation with Bryce, his thoughts returned to the feeling of winning a state championship, and to thoughts of his mom.

“When you lose, you think, ‘I’m never going to win it,’” he said. “But when you finally do it, it doesn’t seem real at first. It took me a while to realize what I did. “All the practices I didn’t want to go to, all the practices my mom drove me to, those were the ones that helped me win that match. I just want to give a big shout-out to my mom.”

Lenten penance services are scheduled at archdiocesan parishes

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

**Batesville Deanery**

- March 17, 9 a.m.-9 p.m. at St. Joseph, Shelbyville
- March 17, 9 a.m.-6 p.m. at St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception, Aurora
- March 21, 7 p.m. at Holy Family, Oldenburg
- March 21, 7 p.m. at St. Michael, Brookville
- March 22, 6:30 p.m. at St. Peter, Franklin County
- March 28, 6-8 p.m. at St. John the Baptist, Osgood
- March 28, 7 p.m. at St. Catherine of Siena, St. John Campus, in Decatur County
- March 29, 6:15 p.m. at St. Vincent de Paul, Shelby County
- March 29, 6-8:30 p.m. at Holy Family, Millhousen
- March 30, 7 p.m. at St. Louis, Batesville

**Connersville Deanery**

- March 19, 11 a.m. at St. Ann, New Castle
- March 26, 11 p.m. at St. Elizabeth Anne Seton, Richmond

**Indianapolis East Deanery**

- Recurring opportunities for reconciliation in the East Deanery are as follows:
  - Sundays 9 a.m. (except Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday) at Our Lady of Lourdes

**Indianapolis North Deanery**

- March 20, 6:30 p.m. at St. Luke the Evangelist March 21, 6:30 p.m. at St. Pius X

**Indianapolis South Deanery**

- March 18, 6:30 p.m. at SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi, Greenwood
- March 22, 7 p.m. for St. Jude and St. Mark the Evangelist at St. Mark the Evangelist
- March 24, 6:30-7:30 p.m. for St. Ann and St. Thomas More, Mooresville (Indianapolis West Deanery), at St. Ann

**Indianapolis West Deanery**

- March 22, 7 p.m. at St. Malachi, Brownsburg
- March 23, 7 p.m. for St. Michael the Archangel and St. Monica at St. Michael the Archangel
- March 24, 6:30-7:30 p.m. for St. Ann (Indianapolis South Deanery) and St. Thomas More, Mooresville, at St. Ann

**March 24, 6 p.m. for St. Charles Borromeo, St. John the Apostle and St. Paul Catholic Center, in Bloomington, at St. Paul Catholic Center**

**March 29, 7 p.m. at Holy Angels**

Additionally, recurring opportunities for reconciliation in the West Deanery are as follows:

- Wednesdays 6-7 p.m. at Mary, Queen of Peace, Danville
- Fridays 3:30-4:30 p.m. at St. Christopher and 5:30-6:30 p.m. at St. Gabriel the Archangel
- Saturdays 4-6 p.m. at St. Gabriel the Archangel

**New Albany Deanery**

- March 22, 10 a.m. in English and Spanish at St. Mary, New Albany
- March 22, 7 p.m. at Our Lady of Perpetual Help, New Albany
- March 23, 6:30 p.m. at St. John Paul II, Sellersburg
- March 27, 7 p.m. at St. John the Baptist, Starlight
- March 28, 7 p.m. at St. Mary, Navarrette
- March 29, 7 p.m. at St. Anthony of Padua, Clarksville
- March 29, 7 p.m. in English and Spanish at St. Michael, Charlestown
- March 30, 6-7 p.m. at St. Francis Xavier, Jeffersonville

**Terre Haute Deanery**

- March 22, 6:30 p.m. for St. Joseph, Rockville, and Sacred Heart, Clinton, at Sacred Heart
- March 23, 7 p.m. at St. Benedict, Terre Haute
- April 1, 10-11 a.m. at Annunciation, Brazil
- April 2, noon-3 p.m. at St. Paul the Apostle, Greencastle

Additionally, recurring opportunities for reconciliation in the Terre Haute Deanery are as follows:

- Thursdays 7-8:30 p.m. at St. Joseph University, Terre Haute
- Saturdays 3:30-4:30 p.m. at St. Joseph University, Terre Haute