U.S. bishops open fall assembly with prayer, reflection and Mass for peace

BALTIMORE (OSV News)—Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio of the U.S. Archdiocese for the Military Services, who is president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), led his brother bishops in prayer for wisdom as they began their fall plenary assembly in Baltimore on Nov. 13 with a Mass for peace.

The archbishop was the homilist for the Mass at the historic Basilica of the National Shrine of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the first Catholic cathedral in the United States. The Mass followed a morning of prayer, reflection and confession.

The morning also included a welcome to the Baltimore Archdiocese, the first Catholic diocese in the United States, by Archbishop William E. Lori of Baltimore, who is vice president of the USCCB.

“Living our faith, we open our plenary session in this historic basilica, home to so many meetings and councils of the vibrant Church in the United States,” said Archbishop Broglio in his homily.

“At the beginning of our plenary session, we beg for wisdom because we recognize that we are servants of the truth and charged to find ways to help those entrusted to our care welcome that truth, see its logic, and embrace the way of life that Christ holds out for us,” he said.

“We do so in many ways as we work in synodal fashion to serve the Church in this part of the world.”

The prayers of the Mass were offered for peace and reconciliation in a troubled world, and Archbishop Broglio pointed out the significance of the plenary opening on the feast of St. Frances Cabrini, patron saint of immigrants.

“It seems supremely eloquent that our nation’s first saint came over on a ship full of immigrants.”
Veronica Rogers models a hat that youths from the archdiocese will be given to wear during the National Catholic Youth Conference in Indianapolis on Nov. 16-18. As the director of youth faith formation and teen ministries for St. Patrick and St. Margaret Mary parishes in Terre Haute, Rogers will lead a youth group from those faith communities to the conference. (Photo by John Shaughnessy)

For Tipker, it’s the great joy that can come from a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ and a closer connection to the Catholic faith.

“My hope is that they come back with a renewed appreciation of being Catholic,” she says. “That’s what I received as a teen, and that spurred my lifelong desire to stay Catholic when there were times when maybe I could have faltered in my faith. It helps me to know there are like-minded people my age who love Christ.”

She’s already thrilled to share the conference with the 13 youths from St. John Paul II, who are among the 1,113 teenagers from across the archdiocese who will attend the event that has been life-changing for many.

“When I went to conferences in high school, just to see the overwhelming number of young Catholics together was such a cool experience,” Tipker says. “So, I’m really looking forward to see how my teens experience that, and what they have to say about that pin-drop silence during adoration and being there for Mass with so many people. Those are the things I’m really looking forward to see.

While Tipker will lead a group to NCYC for the first time, it will be the third experience for Veronica Rogers, director of youth faith formation and teen ministries for St. Patrick and St. Margaret Mary parishes in Terre Haute.

One moment from the last biennial conference—in 2021, in Indianapolis—already has Rogers excited for the start of NCYC, which this year has the theme, “Fullly Alive.”

“I think the biggest impact for me is when I get to see these teens get hit by the Holy Spirit,” Rogers says. “We had 15 girls crying, emotionally moved by the Holy Spirit during adoration. It’s such a moving moment in their faith. I love to see that.”

Rogers also knows the powerful impact that the conference has on adult group leaders, chaplains and volunteers, because it’s happened in her own life.

“When I went with my son as a chapernone many years ago, it changed my faith. It really did,” recalls Rogers, who will lead a group of 20 youths and six adult others from her two parishes to this year’s conference. “It really sparked everything. It led me to be with teens and get this job.”

Rogers is especially pleased that several youths who attended NCYC in 2021 have led the charge to sign up more youths for this one.

“They’ve been my biggest cheerleaders for this, telling others, ‘You have to go,’” Rogers says. “They really enjoyed the bonding experience of getting closer individually within our group because they all go to different high schools. They loved adoration. They enjoyed just being a part of this experience with everything that was happening with all these kids from all over the nation.”

When the conference ends, Rogers always stresses to the youths who attend, “Let that fire, that ember, keep burning. When you have a bad experience, reflect on what was good in the conference and bring it back in.”

That’s the challenge post-conference, according to Rachel Gilman, director of youth ministry for the archdiocese—-to channel all the emotion, electricity and excitement of NCYC into a sustained faith formation for teens.

“It’s utilizing the experience of NCYC to bring it back to their own regular life, and leveraging that experience more, getting involved in their youth ministry programs, and allowing it to impact their faith going forward,” she says.

At the same time, Gilman loves all the positives that NCYC creates during the three-day event and knows its impact from the three times she led youth groups there from Holy Spirit at Geist Parish in Fishers, Ind., in the Lafayette Diocese.

“The impact of seeing so many other teens around the country who have the same passion; faith; love in the Lord; the same passion to bring it back in,” Gilman says. “And then coming back to their public school with the feeling: ‘I’m not alone.’ It’s so rewarding to watch them find that confidence and comfort to grow more in their faith and to make their faith more of a commitment in their life.”

She has one great hope for the youths who attend this year’s conference.

“My hope is that teens can see the face of God more clearly through the experience, especially for teens who haven’t had a relationship with Christ. I hope they have awakenings come from [the conference] knowing God loves me, God cares for me, God wants a relationship with me. And to use it to propel them going forward.”

Bishops
continues from page 1

A ship in the 19th century like many of our grandchildren. She can only bless the tireless work to ensure a dignified welcome, which is a constant care of this assembly of bishops,” he said. Archbishop Broglio also reminded his brethren of the current situation in the Middle East.

“The suffering and death of the innocent on both sides continues to horrify people of good will as well, as Pope Francis reminded us yesterday,” he said, referring to the pope’s words during the Angelus.

The pontiff said on Nov. 12 that every day he remembers the suffering of Palestinians and Israelis, prays for them and offers his “embrace” at this “dark moment.” He appealed for a stop to the violence, immediate rescue efforts and humanitarian aid for all.

Archbishop Broglio said, “We pray for world leaders that they might find solutions to bring peace to every troubled corner of the world.”

St. Frances Cabrini “even obliged the poor to give from their poverty to help those more fortunate,” the archbishop said in concluding his homily. “It was also a way of insisting on the dignity of all and the common responsibility for others. It is a message that is very appropriate today and every day.”

Charity demands our attention and is the channel all the emotion, electricity and excitement of NCYC into a sustained faith formation for teens.

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The Criterion (ISSN 0574-4350) is published weekly except the last week of December, the first week of January and every other week from June-August (summer schedule). Mailing address: 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367. Periodical postage paid at Indianapolis, IN. Copyright © 2023 Criterion Press Inc. ISSN 0574-4350.
Father Joseph Sheets served for 22 years at St. Ambrose Parish in Seymour

By Sean Gallagher

Father Joseph Sheets, a retired priest of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, died on Nov. 5 at Franciscan Hospice House in Indianapolis. He was 91.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Nov. 9 at St. Bartholomew Church in Columbus. Archbishop Charles C. Thompson was the principal celebrant, Father Eric Johnson was the homilist. Burial followed at Garland Brooks Cemetery in Columbus.

A priest for the archdiocese for 66 years, Father Sheets served in parishes across central and southern Indiana. But it was his ministry at St. Ambrose Parish in Seymour that left a mark on him, and he on the faith community. Father Sheets served there for 22 years, four as associate pastor from 1957-61 and then as pastor from 1983 until he retired from active ministry in 2001. He was also administrator of the former Our Lady of Providence Parish in Brownstown during that same 18-year period.

How are your Catholic schools celebrating the Eucharistic Revival?

The Criterion is inviting teachers and principals of Catholic schools in the archdiocese to share their stories and photos of how their classrooms and/or their school communities are celebrating this year of the National Eucharistic Revival. We hope to include these special celebrations of the Eucharist as part of our Catholic Schools Week supplement in January and in our regular issues.

Please send your stories and photos to John Shaughnessy by e-mail at jshaughnessy@archindy.org. †

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- Youth Ministry Programs

After graduating from the eighth grade in Martinsville, Father Sheets became an archdiocesan seminarian and received 12 years of priestly formation at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad.

Father Sheets was ordained a priest on May 3, 1957, by Archbishop Paul C. Schulte at the Archibby Church of Our Lady of Einsiedel in St. Meinrad. He celebrated a Mass of thanksgiving two days later at St. Martin of Tours Church in Martinsville.

Father Sheets served in his pastoral assignment from 1957-61 as associate pastor of St. Ambrose Parish in Seymour.

From 1961-68, he ministered as associate pastor of St. Patrick Parish in Terre Haute while also serving as an instructor at the former Archbishop Paul C. Schulte High School there.

For three months in 1968, Father Sheets served as associate pastor-pro-tem of St. Peter and Paul Cathedral Parish in Indianapolis. After that, he ministered from 1968-69 as associate pastor of St. Andrew the Apostle Parish in Indianapolis.

From 1969-83, Father Sheets ministered as pastor of St. Mary Parish in Lanesville.

In 1983, Father Sheets began his last pastoral assignment, serving as pastor of St. Ambrose Parish in Seymour and administrator of the former Our Lady of Providence Parish in Brownstown until his retirement in 2001.

Memorial gifts can be sent to St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital, 501 St. Jude Place, Memphis, TN 38105, or made at sjude.org. †
November is often called “gratitude month.” We Catholics begin this month by remembering with grateful hearts all those who have gone before us—not the saints (known and unknown) and the “poor souls,” who require the assistance of our prayers before they can enter their heavenly homeland.

During November, we also celebrate Thanksgiving Day, a national holiday that challenges us to be grateful for God’s blessings on our country. And, as November passes, we begin preparing for the coming again of our Lord at Christmas—a time of immense gratitude and joy.

Gratitude is an essential component of Christian spirituality. It calls our attention to the goodness of God, and it reminds us that our most appropriate response to God’s love is eucharistia, the Greek word for “giving thanks.” As Christians, our way of life is centered on the divine worship of the holy Eucharist, where we give thanks to the Father for the precious gift of his only Son and the grace of the Holy Spirit.

Generous people are often the first to say “thank you.” Frequently, they give out of gratitude, out of a genuine sense of appreciation for all the ways that they themselves have been blessed. As strange as it sounds to ask this question, could it be that God feels the same way? If God is the source of all the good things that we have, could it be that God feels grateful for these same things?

We know that God is infinitely generous, and that leads us to suppose that he is also infinitely grateful. Why? Because even the most basic reflection on Christian stewardship reveals that gratitude and generosity are inseparable. Generous people express their gratitude by sharing everything they have with others. This is exactly what God does when he exercises his creative love and goodness. By giving us the gift of life, God expresses the gratitude that is inseparable from his generosity.

Responsible Christian stewardship flows from a keen awareness that all we have and all we are comes to us from a generous and loving Father. But God isn’t a steward, is he? He’s the Creator and, therefore, the owner of all things. God owns everything. We human beings are called to be God’s faithful stewards.

True enough, but God became a man—like us—in all things but sin. That means that Jesus Christ became a steward. He became a human person who was grateful, responsible, generous and willing to give back to his Father with increase. God’s only Son became human to show us how to live—to free us from our ingratitude, our irresponsibility, our selfishness and our abuse of God’s generosity. To live as Jesus did, we have to cast off self-centeredness and learn to give thanks generously and joyfully.

Gratitude is God’s gift to us. Saying thank you keeps us from being Pope Francis calls “sourpusses”—ungrateful people who are bitter, stingy or vindictive. Saying “thank you” is our way of sharing in the life of the Holy Trinity. It is the way of holiness lived by Mary and all the saints who gratefully and generously followed in the footsteps of Jesus. Let’s give thanks to God for all his goodness to us.

—Daniel Conway

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” (“Communo et Progresso,” 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 brief, relevant, well-expressed and temperate in tone. They must reflect a basic sense of courtesy and respect. The editors reserve the right to select letters that will be published and to edit them.

Be Our Guest! Archbishop William E. Lori ‘High Anxiety need not win’

Mel Brooks’ movie, High Anxiety, was released in 1977. It was a comical satire of Alfred Hitchcock’s horror movies, such as Psycho, The Birds and Vertigo. But today, anxiety is no laughing matter. It has spread through our culture more widely and pervasively even than COVID. It not only pervades many lives and is characteristic of our whole culture. I say this not as a mental health professional, but as a pastor in ministry. I often encounter people who suffer from anxiety, and these are people, almost everyone, including me, suffers from it. It’s not my place to offer a clinical description of anxiety or a diagnosis, but I will reflect on how it affects us spiritually.

What is anxiety? How is it related to our everyday worries and concerns? Let’s start with the latter. When we are worried about something specific, we do well to take it to prayer, to ask the Lord to help us dispel the fear, to show us with whom we should be working, and then we roll up our sleeves and address it. We may or may not solve the problem, but in taking steps in the right direction, our worries lessen.

Anxiety is related to our everyday worries, but not identical with them. Sometimes, as our worries accumulate and the world changes in ways that are difficult to cope with, our lives seem to spin out of control. We may find ourselves overtaken by a generalized sense of sadness about what we perceive to be our future. We may feel that no one will listen to us, no one cares.

This is not the way we normally think of God. If God is the source of all the good things that we have, could it be that God feels the same way? But isn’t it possible, or even likely, that God feels the same way? This is why the psalmist says, “Cast your cares upon the Lord and he will support you” (Ps 55:23).

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Las parábolas rara vez son historias que deben tomarse al pie de la letra. Con frecuencia son exageraciones que se hacen para destacar una enseñanza. Y, sin embargo, también es cierto que las parábolas de Jesús están pensadas para ser tomadas en serio. Nuestro Señor habló en parábolas para ayudarnos a comprender que su camino es difícil y está lleno de desafíos. Los dones que cada uno recibió en el bautismo están destinados a ser administrados con responsabilidad y compartidos generosamente con los demás. Eso es lo que significa la corresponsabilidad cristiana: dar gracias a Dios por todos sus dones, cuidarlos, compartirlos y devolverlos a Dios con creces.

El gran fracaso del sirviente desobediente fue que no comprendió lo que se esperaba de él como administrador de la propiedad del señor. En lugar de recibir esa única moneda—el talento—con gratitud e invertirlo sabiamente, lo desechó. Absurdo de su responsabilidad como servidor de confianza y desaprovechó la única oportunidad que se le brindó de devolversel a aquel que, aunque fuera con un modesto interés.

A los dos administradores responsables se les invita a compartir la alegría del señor. El que no tiene fe se siente desgraciado (“llorando y rechazando los dientes”).

Mediante esta parábola, Jesús les da a sus discípulos (y a todos nosotros) que administrar de manera responsable es fuente de gran alegría. Tomamos los dones y talentos que se nos han dado, los cuidamos con responsabilidad y los compartimos generosamente con los demás, los multiplicaremos más allá de cualquier expectativa. De este modo, devolveremos con creces los dones que recibimos, y participaremos de la alegría de Dios.

Dios nunca es mezquino ni vengativo. Su amor y su misericordia están siempre a nuestra disposición si nos arrepentimos y buscamos Su perdón. Pero si descuidamos los dones que Dios nos ha dado y no somos administradores adecuados, generosos o responsables, nuestras propias acciones (u omisiones) provocarán nuestra infelicidad. Esta parábola nos dice que la buena administración conduce a la alegría y la irresponsabilidad solo puede traer desilusión.

Agradezca a Dios por sus dones, compartálos y multiplíquelos. Aunque esta parábola, Jesús les dice a sus discípulos (y a todos nosotros) que administrar de manera responsable es fuente de gran alegría, tomamos los dones y talentos que se nos han dado, los cuidamos con responsabilidad y los compartimos generosamente con los demás, los multiplicaremos más allá de cualquier expectativa. De este modo, devolveremos con creces los dones que recibimos, y participaremos de la alegría de Dios. Dios nunca es mezquino ni vengativo. Su amor y su misericordia están siempre a nuestra disposición si nos arrepentimos y buscamos Su perdón. Pero si descuidamos los dones que Dios nos ha dado y no somos administradores adecuados, generosos o responsables, nuestras propias acciones (u omisiones) provocarán nuestra infelicidad. Esta parábola nos dice que la buena administración conduce a la alegría y la irresponsabilidad solo puede traer desilusión.

Agradezca a Dios por sus dones, compartálos y multiplíquelos.
Advent and Christmas concerts will help spread joy in the archdiocese in December

It’s the time of year when parishes celebrate the seasons of Advent and Christmas with sacred music concerts. Below are the events reported to The Criterion as of Nov. 14.

December 3
—St. Matthew the Apostle Parish, 4100 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. Advent Evening of Music. 6 p.m., featuring choirs, handbell choir, readings and reflections, followed by refreshments in parish café, free. Information: 317-257-4297, smill@smithart.org

December 5
—Marian University Hall Theater, 3200 Cold Spring Road, Indianapolis. Advent Concert: The Archdiocese of Indianapolis features many concerts throughout the Advent season. This night features the Indianapolis Symphonic Band, the Indianapolis Civic Choral Society, the Indianapolis Chamber Choir and others. 5:30-8 p.m., $25. Information: catholiccemeteries.cc.

December 10
—St. Mary Church, 1331 E. Hunter Robbins Way, Greenwood. Come Home for Christmas Dinner. 6:30 p.m., Catholic composer John Angotti with Marian University Sacred Choir, followed by piano service during holy hour with sacred music. In Bishop Charchard Memorial Chapel, free. Information: 317-955-6000, jgracia@mariand.edu.

December 12
—St. Malachy Church, 9833 E. County Road 750 N., Brownsburg. A Most Wonderful Christmas. 7 p.m., Christmas concert by the Indianapolis Symphonic Band and the Malachy choir featuring St. Malachy organist Hector Sacedo, free. Information: 317-852-3195.

December 16

—St. John the Evangelist Church, 126 W. Georgia St., Indianapolis. Sacred Music Festival and Caroling. 6 p.m., three parish choirs perform sacred music of Palestine, Britain, and Dunfel. Additionally, the choirs will perform carols through the streets of Indianapolis, hot drinks and light refreshments provided, free. Information: 317-635-2021, office@villageofchrist.org.

—St. Luke the Evangelist Church, 7577 County Line Rd., Indianapolis. “How Far is it to Bethlehem?” 7 p.m., featuring the archdiocesan schola da Silva. The concert includes performances by Cantor Antonio Bruckner, Domenico Bartolucci, Gerald Near, 4 Motets for the regime de Noel (4 Motets for the Christmas of Christmas) by Francis Poulenc and more, free. Information: amoryk@archindy.org.

December 17
—St. Mark the Evangelist Church, 535 E. Edgewood Ave., Indianapolis. Holy Season Concert. 7 p.m., Advent and Christmas concert featuring more than 80 singers and musicians including children, bell, ensemble and brass choirs, free. Information: 317-787-8246, octagon@smarkindy.org.

The Village Dove to host book signing with author Ken Ogorek on Dec. 1
Ken Ogorek, co-author of Breaking the Bread: A Biblical Devotion for Catholics, will be at The Village Dove, 6935 Lake Plaza Drive, B3, in Indianapolis, for a book signing from 5:30-7 p.m. on Dec. 1.

The executive director of the Secretariat for Evangelizing Catholic catechists in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, Ogorek co-wrote the book with Scripture scholar Scott Hahn.

The new devotional reflects on the lectionary cycle for Year B of the Sunday Masses. Year C and Year A are in production.

The easy-to-use devotional also includes carefully selected passages from the Catechism of the Catholic Church that provide an overview of the Church’s basic doctrinal and moral teachings, and challenges its readers to greater fidelity to Christ.

For more information, go to www.thevillagedove.com or call 317-845-5487.

Wedding Anniversaries

ROBERT and MARGARET (HAMILTON) NANGLE, members of St. Susanna Parish in Plainfield, celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on Nov. 16. The couple was married in St. Luke Church in Belmont, Mass., on Nov. 16, 1963. They have three children: Elizabeth Ryan, John and Robert Nangle.

The couple also has three grandchildren.

WILLIAM, SR., and MARGARET (COSTELLO) BEIKES, members of St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) Parish in Indianapolis, will celebrate their 75th wedding anniversary on Nov. 17. They have two children: Joseph Beikes and William Beikes, Jr. The couple also has four grandchildren.

For events and activities please see the Events Calendar on www.archindy.org/events/.
Catholics from around the world living in the archdiocese celebrate St. Martin de Porres

By Sean Gallagher

Catholics from around the world have come to Indianapolis to live and practice their faith. Their great diversity in culture, language and experience of the faith was on display as they came together as one on Nov. 3 at St. Rita Church in Indianapolis for a Mass to honor St. Martin de Porres on his feast day.

The saint was a Dominican brother who died in 1639 in Lima, Peru. The son of a Spanish father and a mother who was a freed African slave, he is a patron saint of racial justice.

Taking part in the Mass were many African-Americans and Catholics from numerous countries in Africa, Central and South America and the Philippines.

Marianhill Father Jean Bosco Ntwagushira, administrator of St. Rita Parish and a native of Rwanda, reflected on how the spiritual gifts that St. Martin shared with the sick and poor whom he served flowed from his relationship with God in prayer.

“We see there’s an obligation for us to love one another,” Father Jean Bosco said. “The more we pray to God, the more we relate to God, the more we will see our spiritual gifts. We’ll have strength from God.”

Calling St. Martin “an elder brother supporting us in every community,” Stovall said. “So, it makes sense that we can come together as one.”

He spoke of the lessons that people in Indianapolis and around the world can learn from the saint from his home country.

“In these days, the world is a little bit materialistic,” Pecho said. “But this man was always teaching others to share with everybody. I love that.”

Sally Stovall, a member of Holy Angels Parish in Indianapolis, and her husband Eva moved to Indianapolis five years ago from Lima, Peru, where St. Martin de Porres lived and where there is a great devotion to him today.

“They call me to live in peace and love so that kind of love can be a manifestation of Christ’s presence,” Stovall said. “The Church is made up of different cultures, of people from every ethnic community.”

Felix Navarrete, archdiocesan coordinator of Hispanic Ministry, helped to organize the Mass and the reception that followed. “It was very exciting seeing such a diverse congregation—Filipinos, Africans, African-Americans, Anglo and Hispanics worshiping one God,” said Navarrete. “Seeing our diversity reflected in the celebrants not only in terms of nationality but also in terms of age was fascinating.

“I appreciate the openness of our communities to congregate together in the celebration of the memory of a great saint such as Martin de Porres. I believe that today we are called to humility.”

Participaron en la misa muchos católicos afroamericanos de numerosos países de Africa, Centro y Sudamérica, así como de las Filipinas.

El padre Jean Bosco Ntwagushira, administrador de la parroquia de Santa Rita y oriundo de Ruanda, en África oriental, reflexionó sobre cómo los dones espirituales que san Martin compartió con los enfermos y los pobres a los que servía surgieron de su relación con Dios en la oración.

“Debemos rezar”—afirmó el padre Jean Bosco—. “Cuanto más oremos a Dios, cuanto más nos relacionemos con Él, más veremos nuestros dones espirituales. Tendremos la fuerza de Dios.”

Cristalizando a san Martin de “hermano mayor que nos ayuda a amarnos los unos a los otros,” el padre Jean Bosco animó a sus oyentes a imitar el ejemplo del santo de prestar un servicio amoroso a todas las personas, sin distinción de origen racional o étnico.

“Al celebrar a San Martin de Porres, dejemos que este gran hombre sea nuestro ejemplo de fe para que todos nos sintamos hijos de Dios”—afirmó el padre—. “Estamos llamados a vivir en paz y amor para que ese tipo de amor pueda ser una manifestación de la presencia de Cristo.”

La primera lectura de la misa la realizó Andrés Pecho, quien ayuda a dirigir el ministerio de catequesis en la parroquia de Santa María de Indianapolis. Pecho y su esposa Eva se trasladaron a Indianapolis hace cinco años desde Lima, Perú, donde vivió san Martin de Porres y donde hoy existe una gran devoción por él.

“Fue maravilloso”—dijo Pecho con respecto a participar en la misa—. “Este país es multicultural. Estoy aprendiendo a compartir con gente de otras comunidades.”

Habíamos las lecciones que la gente de Indianapolis y de todo el mundo puede aprender del santo oriundo de su país natal.

“En estos tiempos, el mundo es un poco materialista”—comentó Pecho—. “Pero este hombre siempre enseñaba a los demás a compartir con todo el mundo. Me encanta.”

Sally Stovall, feligresa de la parroquia de los Santos Ángeles de Indianapolis y natural de Nigeria, ha asistido a la larga a los años a muchas misas de san Martin de Porres organizadas por la Oficina de Ministerio Intercultural de la Arquidiócesis. Valora la forma en que la liturgia reúne a católicos de todo el centro y el sur de Indiana.

“La Iglesia está formada por diferentes culturas, por personas de todas las comunidades étnicas”—aseguró Stovall—. “Así que tiene sentido que podamos reunirnos como un solo cuerpo unido. Mostramos nuestro patrimonio cultural. Desde el principio, la comunidad afroamericana ha formado parte de esto.”

Felix Navarrete, coordinador arquidiocesano del Ministerio Hispano, ayudó a organizar la misa y la recepción posterior.

“Fue muy emocionante ver una congregación tan diversa: filipinos, africanos, afroamericanos, anglos e hispanos adorando a un solo Dios”—expresó Navarrete—. “Ver nuestra diversidad reflejada en los celebrantes, no solamente en cuanto a nacionalidad sino también edad, fue fascinante.”

“Valoramos la apertura de nuestras comunidades para reunirse a celebrar la memoria de un gran santo como Martin de Porres. Creo que hoy estamos llamados a la humildad.”

Católicos de todo el mundo residentes en la Arquidiócesis celebran a San Martín de Porres

Por Sean Gallagher

Católicos procedentes de todo el mundo han venido a Indianapolis para vivir y practicar su fe. Su gran diversidad cultural, lingüística y de experiencia con la fe se puso de manifiesto al congregarse el 3 de noviembre en la Iglesia de Santa Rita de Indianapolis para celebrar una misa en honor a San Martín de Porres, patrono de la justicia racial.
Parents teach Christian values best by example, Pope Francis says

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—The only way parents to teach their children the beauty and importance of marriage and of accepting children as a gift from God is through their own example, Pope Francis said.

“The only way is by their own life,” the pope said. “This is the only way to teach your children to love, to teach your children to live in this world and grow confident and enthused by the connection to the larger community or the greater community, it’s just wonderful.”

Parents must help their children recognize “the beauty of life in this world and grow confident and enthused about the prospects of embarking on the adventure of life, convinced that they too have a mission to carry out, a mission which will bring them great fulfillment and happiness,” Pope Francis said.

To instill that in children, he said, they must know that God loves them.

“When we realize that at the root of our being is the love of God our Father, then we see clearly that life is good, that being born is good and that loving is good,” the pope said.

Firm in the knowledge that one is loved by God and is a gift to one’s family gives a person the strength he or she needs to avoid “a demeaning tendency to hoard material goods, a constant concern not to run risks, not to get overly involved, not to get our hands dirty.”

Instead, he said, they learn to see “life blossoms in God’s embrace.”

Parents teach Christian values best by example, Pope Francis says. 

In his talk, Pope Francis reiterated the Church’s strong support for the right of parents “to raise and educate their children in freedom, without finding themselves constrained in any sphere, particularly in that of schooling, to accept proposals from marriage agency or other community bodies.”

While the culture and its values change, “the needs of the human heart remain the same,” the pope said, and that is the place where efforts must start in educating children to be good Christians and responsible citizens.

“God himself has planted in our nature an irrepressible yearning for love, truth, beauty and meaning—in life, in human relationships, in an openness to others as our Creator,” he said. “These yearnings of the human heart are powerful allies of every educator.”

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Many reasons to truly celebrate at this year’s Celebrate Life dinner

By Natalie Hoefer

Each year, Right to Life of Indianapolis (RTLH) hosts a fundraiser dinner called Celebrate Life. And each year, there have been small victories and progress to celebrate in the battle to save unborn lives and promote a culture of life.

But this year, the cause to celebrate exceeded all years past.

“This year, Indiana has joined the ranks of those states with strong protections for the preborn,” said RTLH executive director Marc Tuttle.

“It has been a rocky road getting there,” he said, referring to the legal challenge by Planned Parenthood and others to a 2022 law restricting most abortions in the state. The law was upheld by the Indiana Supreme Court on Nov. 12.

“But finally we can announce that, [according to the new law] in Indiana, women who choose to have an abortion will be forced to bury the body of the innocent unborn,” Tuttle said. “This is a victory we’ve been allowed to save the life of the mother or in cases of rape, incest or fatal fetal anomaly, and that will end about 96% of the abortions.”

His comments were followed by a rousing round of applause by the nearly 900 people present at the Celebrate Life event held on Sept. 20 at the Indianapolis Marriott Downtown.

The evening included speakers, awards and a keynote address by Christian filmmaker Alex Kendrick, known for such movies as Facing the Giants, Fireproof, Courage, War Room and Lifemark.

“None of these accomplishments would have been possible without each of you standing up for life,” Tuttle said. “Now that the law has been set, the culture is our focus.”

“No legislation can cure culture of death
It is a culture that allowed about 800 babies to be aborted each year in Indiana prior to the new law, Tuttle noted.

“They are 8,000 women who need our assistance,” he said. “Those are 8,000 women who are looking for alternatives, who are looking for help. It’s up to us to be the generous, warm, kind Hoosiers to offer them something other than the horrible choice of abortion.”

Such assistance received a boost with “about $1 million set aside in this last budget specifically to help pregnant mothers,” he noted.

State Attorney General Todd Rokita praised the work of “courageous legislators” who made the new Indiana law a reality.

“The statehouse right after the Holocaust, ‘That’s the Holocaust over 12 times each year,’ said Sara. ‘This is a sign of a dying civilization.”

She said that, according to the pro-choice Guttmacher Institute, more than 73 million abortions take place globally per year (bit.ly/GuttmacherStats).

Considering that 6 million people were killed during the Holocaust, “That’s the Holocaust over 12 times each year,” said Sara. “It has been a rocky road getting there,” he said, referring to the legal challenge by Planned Parenthood and others to a 2022 law restricting most abortions in the state. The law was upheld by the Indiana Supreme Court on Nov. 12.

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She also noted that in the United States she can “get an abortion at my age [16] without my parents ever finding out, but I can’t [legally] buy Wine-Out at the store, get a tattoo or even see an abortion at an R-rated movie without them.”

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2,876,699 abortions took place in the U.S. in 2007, the year Sara was born.

“That’s how many people my age are missing,” she said. “How many more souls will you let go missing from this next generation?”

Melissa Coles and her husband Shawn pose with the Respect for Life Award Melissa received from Right to Life of Indianapolis during the organization’s Celebrate Life event on Sept. 20 at the Indianapolis Marriott Downtown. (Submitted photo by Maria Hernandez)

“Whoever wants the next generation the most is going to receive the award with her, noting “he was the one who really encouraged me to start using the word ‘yes.’”

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Melissa Coles and her husband Shawn pose with the Respect for Life Award Melissa received from Right to Life of Indianapolis during the organization’s Celebrate Life event on Sept. 20 at the Indianapolis Marriott Downtown. (Submitted photo by Maria Hernandez)

“Whoever wants the next generation the most is going to get the award,” said Kendrick. “The world wants their hearts, their minds, their loyalties, their perspectives, their morals.

“The body of Christ that loves the Lord has to go after the next generation. Whatever your sphere is, wherever you are, that’s where you go after them … with a desire to honor and glorify God, and let God be the hero of your story.”

Look away from your screen and into your heart, Pope Francis says

“VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Like replenishing the oil that fuels a lamp, Christians must nourish their interior lives by paying attention to the movements of their hearts, Pope Francis said.

“Many times, we are very careful about our appearance,” he told some 20,000 people gathered on Nov. 12 to pray the Angelus with him at St. Peter’s Square. “But Jesus says that the wisdom of life lies elsewhere: in taking care of what cannot be seen, but which is more important, taking care of the heart, nurturing the inner life.

“This means knowing how to stop and listen to one’s heart, to keep watch over one’s thoughts and feelings,” the pope said. “Wisdom means knowing how to make room for silence, so as to be capable of listening to oneself and others. Wisdom means knowing how to give up some of the time passed in front of the television, look at the light in the eyes of others, in one’s own heart, in God’s gaze upon us.

“Reflecting on the day’s Gospel reading from St. Matthew, in which Jesus shares the parable of 10 virgins awaiting a bridegroom—five who brought extra oil for their lamps and five who did not—the pope said that the difference between the two groups in the parable was in the preparation of the ‘conspicuous’ oil, without which their lamps have no light.

“Pope Francis said the Gospel “gives us the right advice for not neglecting the oil of inner life” or “the oil of the soul,” which requires one to be prepared.

“The inner life cannot be improvised,” he said. “It is not a matter of a moment, of once in a while, of once and for all; the inner life must be prepared by dedicating a little time every day, with constancy, as one does for every important thing.”

“The pope urged Christians to reflect on what they are preparing for at this moment in their lives. “Perhaps I am trying to put aside some savings, I am thinking about a house or a new car, concrete plans,” he said.

“They are good things. But am I also thinking about dedicating time to the care of the heart, to prayer, to service to others, to the Lord who is life’s destination?” he asked. “In short, how is the oil of my soul?”

Indiana Right to Life to host Christmas Gala on Dec. 5

Indiana Right to Life will hold a Christmas gala at the Ritz Charles, 12156 N. Meridian St., in Carmel, Ind., on Dec. 5. A VIP sponsor reception will begin at 5:30 p.m., and the dinner and program will follow at 6:30 p.m.

Super Bowl champion, ESPN commentator and author of The New Fight for Life Benjamin Watson will serve as keynote speaker. The evening also includes music performed by Christian artist Jordan Martin and the 2022 scholarship winner.

Two awards were also presented to adults that evening. The evening included speakers, awards and a keynote speech to the crowd of nearly 900.

“Go after the next generation”
Two awards were also presented to adults that evening. Donnita Smith received the Charles E. Stimming, Pro-Life Award for 14 years volunteering as the organization’s human resources specialist, and Melissa Coles of the Columbus area was honored with RTLH’s Respect for Life Award.

“Melissa didn’t start off seeking to have a profound impact on life,” said Tuttle. “She simply said yes, and she simply continued to say yes as her story began to unfold and as God began to use her in ways that she could have never imagined to be able to touch hearts and to eventually save lives.”

Coles called her husband Shawn to the podium to receive the award, noting “he was the one who really encouraged me to start using the word ‘yes.’”

“Whoever wants the next generation the most is going to get the award,” said Kendrick. “The world wants their hearts, their minds, their loyalties, their perspectives, their morals.

“The body of Christ that loves the Lord has to go after the next generation. Whatever your sphere is, wherever you are, that’s where you go after them … with a desire to honor and glorify God, and let God be the hero of your story.”

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Christian filmmaker Alex Kendrick addresses nearly 900 people at Right to Life of Indianapolis’ Celebrate Life event on Sept. 20 at the Indianapolis Marriott Downtown. (Submitted photo by Maria Hernandez)
Share joy of God’s love, sow seeds of hope in world, pope tells youths

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Embrace God’s unconditional love and live in a way that is based on and radiates hope, Pope Francis told Catholic young people.

Christian hope “is the celebration of the love of the risen Christ, who is always at our side, even when he seems far from us,” the pope said in his annual message for local celebrations of World Youth Day.

Hope is nurtured by prayer and the concrete choices one makes every day, he said in the message, published on Nov. 14 at the Vatican.

“If we have all of you to choose a style of life grounded in hope,” he wrote. For example, instead of sharing negative things on social media, share things that inspire hope.

“Each day, try to share a word of hope with your friends,” he wrote. “Try to sow seeds of hope in the lives of your friends and everyone around you,” the pope wrote.

He also encouraged all young people, especially those engaged in youth ministry, to retread the final document of the 2018 Synod of Bishops on young people, the faith and vocational discernment, and the apostolic exhortation “Christus Vivit” (‘Christ is Alive’), published in 2019.

“The time is ripe to take stock of the situation and to work together with hope for the full implementation of that unforgettable synod,” he wrote.

While the next international celebration of World Youth Day will be held in Seoul, South Korea, in 2027, Pope Francis has asked Catholic young people around the world to prepare for the Holy Year 2025 and its Jubilee of Young People in Rome, which will be part of the Holy Year celebration.

In the two years preceding the Jubilee of Young People, dioceses around the world are to celebrate World Youth Day on a local level on the feast of Christ the King, which will be on Nov. 26 this year and on Nov. 24, 2024. The papal messages for both years are dedicated to Christian hope in preparation for the jubilee year whose theme is “Pilgrims of Hope.”

“Rejoice in hope,” the theme of this year’s message, “was St. Paul’s encouragement to the community of Rome at a time when it was undergoing harsh persecution,” the pope wrote.

This “joy in hope,” he wrote, “is not a product of our human efforts, plans or skills, but of the energy born of an encounter with Christ. Christian joy comes from God himself, from our knowledge of his love for us.”

Quoting Pope Benedict XVI, Pope Francis said Christian hope comes from a “certainty based on faith. I am wanted. I have a task in history. I am accepted, I am loved. … Ultimately we need a sense of being accepted unconditionally. Only if God accepts me and I become conscious of this, do I know definitively—it is good that I exist … even in hard times.”

Pope Francis urged young people to be part of God’s answer to the problem of so many tragedies and difficulties humanity faces today. “Created by him in his image and likeness, we can be signs of his love, which gives rise to joy and hope even in situations that appear hopeless.”

The pope pointed to SS. Maximilian Kolbe and Josephine Bakhita as well as Blessed Józef and Wiktoria Uhma and their seven children as people who “were witnesses of hope even amid the most horrific examples of human evil.”

He also recalled the Italian film Life is Beautiful, in which a young Jewish father helps his small son to see things with “‘eyes of hope,’” protecting him from the horrors of the concentration camp, preserving his innocence and preventing human malice from robbing him of a future.

Hope must be nurtured, he added, so it will not be “extinguished by the worries, fears and pressures of daily life.”

The Holy Spirit, prayer and everyday decisions all nurture hope, he said, as hope is “a virtue that is built up day by day.”

“Each of you can be such a beacon” of hope, he wrote, “to the extent that your faith becomes concrete, rooted in reality and sensitive to the needs of our brothers and sisters.”

Dear young people, do not be afraid to share with others the hope and joy of the risen Christ! Nurture the spark that has been kindled in you, but at the same time share it,” he wrote.

“Stay close in particular to your friends who may be smiling on the outside but are weeping within, for lack of hope. Do not let yourselves be infected by indifference and individualism. Remain open, like canals in which the hope of Jesus can flow and spread in all the areas where you live,” the pope wrote.

Pope Francis removes Bishop Strickland from governance of Texas diocese

(OSV News)—Pope Francis has removed Bishop Joseph E. Strickland from the pastoral governance of the Diocese of Tyler, Texas, the Holy See Press Office announced on Nov. 11. Simultaneously, the pope has appointed Bishop Joe S. Vásquez of Austin as apostolic administrator of the diocese until a new bishop is appointed.

No reason was given for the bishop’s removal.

The decision, however, followed a May post by Bishop Strickland on X (previously known as Twitter) in which he accused the pope of “undermining the deposit of faith.” Bishop Strickland also gave an address on Oct. 31 in Rome in which he read from a letter attributed to a “dear friend” describing Pope Francis as “a usurper of [St.] Peter’s chair. Later, the bishop himself said that the pope was supporting “an attack on the sacred” coming out of the Vatican.

Speculation about Bishop Strickland’s future was accelerated by a June 19-24 apostolic visitation of the Diocese of Tyler conducted by retired Bishop Gerald F. Kicanas of Tucson, Ariz., and Bishop Dennis J. Sullivan of Camden, N.J.

On Nov. 11, Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston released a public statement on the bishop’s removal, explaining that after the apostolic visitation of the Tyler Diocese took place—which he described as “an exhaustive inquiry into all aspects of the governance and leadership of the Diocese of Tyler”—it was recommended “the continuation in office of Bishop Strickland was not feasible.”

“After months of careful consideration by the Dicastery for Bishops and the Holy Father, the decision was reached that the resignation of Bishop Strickland should be requested,” Cardinal DiNardo said in his statement. “Having been presented with that request on Nov. 9, 2023, Bishop Strickland declined to resign from office. Thereafter, on Nov. 11, 2023, the Holy Father removed Bishop Strickland from the office of Bishop of Tyler.”

“Let us keep Bishop Strickland, the clergy and faithful of the Diocese of Tyler, and Bishop Vásquez in our prayers,” Cardinal DiNardo concluded.

OSV News was told by Elizabeth Slaten, communications director for the Diocese of Tyler, that Bishop Strickland is “not available for comment at this time.”
speaks often about the need to respect and nurture both of power on the human person and creation. Pope Francis the divine law, freedom simply becomes the imposition of error in the current ideologies, which seek to redefine human freedom and integrity. The siren song of the serpent’s lies and temptations in Genesis should sound familiar to us, for they are the rallying cry of many current ideologies: “You can create your own identity. The body is not simply raw clay, which unlimited freedom can refashion according to its own willfulness. Our bodies are sacred, indeed temples of the Holy Spirit! As St. Paul says, “You are not your own; you were bought at a price, so glorify the Lord in your body.” (1 Cor 6:19-20). Thus, “a doctrine which dissociates the moral act from the bodily dimensions of its exercise is contrary to the teaching of Scripture and Tradition” (#49).

In this context, we can understand the true meaning of the natural law, for it refers to “man’s proper and primordial nature … the person himself in the unity of soul and body.” St. John Paul says (#50). Human nature does not change, nor, consequently, does the moral law.

Many today would argue that cultural differences, shifting moral norms or the current spirit of the age make the Church’s teachings obsolete, as if human nature has changed or even varies in multiple cultural expressions. Such thinking has led to great moral and social confusion. St. John Paul goes on to reflect upon conscience, viewing it as a person’s interior dialogue with both himself and God. According to St. Paul, St. John Paul says (#80). Conscience “confronts man with the law, and thus viewing it as a person’s interior dialogue with both himself and God. Despite persecution, torture, suffering and death, the martyrs remained true to God and the Church. As St. John Paul proposes martyrdom as the profound exaltation of the inviolable holiness of God’s law. Despite persecution, torture, suffering and death, the martyrs remained true to God and his law, willing to give up their earthly lives rather than to betray or deny their faith. Every martyr reveals the sacred intersection of God’s grace and human obedience, for they are willing to sacrifice even life itself in order to uphold the truth and to embrace the good.

Put another way, the Lord gives us the freedom to choose how to live. The Lord upholds the Church’s constant teaching, in the light of much contemporary commentary to the contrary, that mortal sin is possible and that an individual can lose eternal salvation if such grave sins are not repented of and confessed. “Veritatis Splendor” is a long, dense and nuanced document, flowing from the keen intellect and expansive heart of St. John Paul. In the encyclical, the pope affirms the love of God for humanity; the dignity of the person; our ability, helped by grace, to know the truth and live the good; the need to understand the proper relationship of truth, freedom, conscience, law and nature; the importance of individual moral actions; the intrinsic relationship between the Ten Commandments of the Hebrew Scriptures and the Beatitudes of the Gospel; the social, political and cultural implications of living God’s truth in the public square; and Jesus Christ as the Word who reveals all which the Lord asks of us in a life of discipleship and virtue, and the one who saves us from sin and death through his life, death and resurrection. In a moving conclusion, St. John Paul proposes martyrdom as a profound exaltation of the inviolable holiness of God’s law. Despite persecution, torture, suffering and death, the martyrs remained true to God and his law, willing to give up their earthly lives rather than to betray or deny their faith. Every martyr reveals the sacred intersection of God’s grace and human obedience, for they are willing to sacrifice even life itself in order to uphold the truth and to embrace the good.
I have a confession to make. I sometimes consume media that includes violence. I’m not much of a video game guy, so the graphic violence featured in several popular video games isn’t part of my media diet. And I don’t acknowledge the right of unborn babies to be born, as well as that of all folks to live until dying a natural death.

But I like cops and robbers shows. Good guys bring in bad guys to justice. And yes, some of these programs and movies include people blowing away indiscriminately at times.

Cheaper by the dozen

Why the big confession? Because violence saturates our culture. Dozens of people—young and old alike—are injured or killed in mass shooting incidents. The lives of unborn babies are still being snuffed out using surgical tools and morning-after pills. Human life has become cheap.

When playing a video game necessitates simulated murder of real people, streaming a show to unwind exposes our senses to shooting, stabbing, neck-breaking—whatever; when civil law allows the use of chemical agents—innocent, defenseless, unborn children—to be exterminated and discarded like medical waste, we become desensitized to the preciousness of human life. Murder becomes routine. Human life loses its preciousness.

Evangelization involves proclaiming the Gospel. St. John Paul II reminds us that the good news includes the Gospel of life—cooperating with people of good will in building a civilization of love by professing the preciousness of each person.

I’m not very good at fasting—from food or violence in media. But I’ll try, at least regarding the role violence plays in my life. Will you?

(Criterion readers: I’m open to your suggestions about cops and robbers shows that don’t contain gratuitous violence. Please e-mail them at the address below, your thoughts on programs and movies I might like. Thanks!)

(Ken Oregor is executive director of the archdiocesan Secretariat for Evangelizing Catholics. He can be reached at kogorek@archindy.org)

I am very excited about my new friends, my husband and I found Springs of Love, an apostolate to help Catholics discern and live out the call of life. We are especially eager to meet all of the requirements, and the boys spend at least one weekend a month in the foster home. We didn’t realize how inviting children in foster care into their home would stretch their hearts to love not only the children who came to them, but also the children’s birth families.

After almost three years of fostering two young boys, it looked as if PJ and Kristina would be able to adopt them. However, the boys’ father, Josh, notified the agency that he was being released from prison, had turned his life around, and would be willing to have his kids back. Within a few months, he met all of the requirements, and the boys went home with their father. PJ, Kristina and their kids were heartbroken. Josh soon realized that PJ and Kristina’s families genuinely loved his boys. He saw how they’d opened their hearts to him, too, and he grew to trust and rely on them for support. The boys spend at least one weekend a month with their former foster family, which brings PJ and Kristina great joy and comfort. “We are all one big family now,” Kristina explains. “We have all become one big family.”

Fostering is challenging, and sadly, about 50% of foster families must give up fostering after one year. The retention rate, however, increases to 90% when those families feel sufficiently supported. Every Catholic can stand in radical solidarity with families in crisis by...
The Book of Proverbs provides the first reading for Mass this weekend. This book was composed when God’s chosen people had experienced massive changes as a result of the military conquest of the Holy Land, and indeed much of the Eastern Mediterranean world, by Alexander the Great (356–323 BCE), the young Greek king from Macedonia. Alexander did not live long enough to enjoy fully the successes of his victorious armies, but his conquests placed Greeks and Greek philosophy at the summit of cultures across all the Middle East. This Greek influence most often brought ideas that were contrary to traditional Hebrew theology. Committed Jews had to struggle to keep their faith alive, and they especially struggled to reestablish their tradition to oncoming generations. Proverbs was written as a part of this effort. Along with other books of the Hebrew Scriptures, Proverbs attempted to blend human logic with Hebrew theology to say that ancient Jewish beliefs are not illogical. (In the Greek mind, human logic was superior.)

The reading from Proverbs proclaimed by the Church on this weekend obliquely makes reference to the fact that marriages under the Greek arrangement usually were not. Quite disturbing for Jews was the fact that wives were not much better off. (In the Greek mind, marriage usually meant little more than plunder.)

Victims of sexual assault do not commit a sin by not resisting their attackers

**Questions Corner**

**Jenna Marie Cooper**

*Q* As a cradle Catholic, I was taught that the denial of Christ is gravely wrong and that Christians must be prepared to die rather than apostatize. However, now I’ve become aware of a claim that I am not sure about. It has been asserted by someone claiming to be Catholic that in the cases of attempted rape, a married woman is obligated to resist the point of death or else be guilty of breaking her marriage vows.

**A** No. It is never a sin to be a victim of rape, regardless of how actively one tries to resist. Sin requires knowledge of the sinfulness of the act and a free choice to engage in the act. Rape, by definition, involves a lack of knowledge and consent—or both.

**It is a horrifically grave sin to force sexual activity upon someone who does not consent to it. But the sinfulness of the one committing rape does not in any way impact the moral or spiritual status of the one who suffers from this kind of violence.**

Despite what some individual Catholics may have said or thought through the years, the Church has never taught that rape victims are in any way guilty for what has happened to them. In the fourth century, St. Augustine—who lived at a time of great civil instability, when foreign invaders would often abuse women during their plundering of urban cities—taught that in many cases, a victim of rape should still be considered a virgin. In Book I, chapter 18, of his massive work *The City of God*, he writes that “the sanctity of the soul remains even when the body is violated.” Therefore, the Church does not teach that anyone is required to resist an attacker to the point of death. In terms of the Church’s teachings on martyrdom in general, there is certainly a good argument that we should prefer death to denying Christ. Even so, being in a position where we must choose between martyrdom or actively committing a sin ourselves is very different from the situation of anyone, male or female, who is the sinned-against victim of an attacker. But then what should we make of the story of St. Maria Goretti and the many others?

First, in terms of St. Maria Goretti in particular, it’s good to keep in mind that it is difficult to engage in her story than resisting her would-be rapist. There are many reasons why she was named a saint—most importantly for her demonstration of heroic mercy. Pious and prayerful from a young age, she died while forgiving her attacker. After her death, she appeared to her attacker in prison, inspire his sincere repentance and conversion.

In my own personal opinion, I think we can regard it as praiseworthy to resist an attacker to the point of death, even while fully understanding that a lack of resistance would not be a sin. “Martyrs of purity” did not die to avoid sinning (because being the victim of an assault was never a sin in the first place); they died to bear an exceptional, above-and-beyond witness to the sanctity of the human body. We might look at these saints as being somewhat like those martyrs who died in order to prevent the proliferation of the Eucharist, like St. Tertullian. That is, a Catholic is not guilty of sacrilege if someone else profanes the consecrated host. Some saints have been called to take the extra, non-required step of preventing the destruction of the Eucharist even at the cost of their lives.

*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.*


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HENKEL

Let’s reimagine foster care as a pathway toward healing for hurting families. When we open our hearts and homes to love a child in foster care, we can extend our love to his or her birth parents to encourage and pray for them. If reunification occurs, we can continue our support and connection with that family.

The true goal of radical solidarity is to witness the profound love of God who invites us into his family as his adopted sons and daughters. Foster families emulate the profound love of God who invites us into his family as his adopted sons and daughters. Foster families emulate the profound love of God who invites us into his family as his adopted sons and daughters.

Father Michael Keucher celebrates a Mass on Nov. 2, the Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed (All Souls Day) at St. Joseph Cemetery in Shelbyville. He is assisted by altar server Daniel Barker. Father Keucher is pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Shelbyville and St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Shelby County. (Submitted photo)

Praying for the dead

Father John Hollowell, who serves in the four parishes in Dearborn County, preaches during a memorial Mass for the dead on Nov. 8 at St Joseph Cemetery of All Saints Parish in Dearborn County. (Submitted photo)
Advent message encourages Holy Land’s Christians to ‘stand strong’

JERUSALEM (OSV News)—
Christmas in Bethlehem and the Holy Land this year will be one of solemnity, prayer and fasting as the patriarchs and heads of the Churches in Jerusalem called upon the faithful to forgo any “unnecessarily festive activities” during the Christmas season this year, and to “stand strong” with those facing the afflictions of war, focusing most on the spiritual meaning of Christmas.

“Since the start of the war, there has been an atmosphere of sadness and pain. Thousands of innocent civilians, including women and children, have died or suffered serious injuries,” they said in a Nov. 10 statement on the “Celebration of Advent and Christmas in the Midst of the War.” “Many more grove over the loss of their homes, their loved ones, or the uncertain fate of those dear to them. Throughout the region, even more have lost their work and are suffering from serious economic challenges.”

Israel launched a military assault on Hamas after Hamas terrorists from Gaza breached a security fence on the southern border with Israel on Oct. 7. Thousands of heavily armed terrorists infiltrated the border and attacked some 22 civilian agricultural communities and cities inside Israel. Israel revised its official estimated death toll of the attack, lowering the number to about 1,200 people, down from the more than 1,400 initially cited, a spokesman for the country’s Foreign Ministry said on Nov. 10. More than 240 people, including babies and elderly, were kidnapped into Gaza.

Israel has continued with its military incursion against Hamas targets both on land and by air. According to the Ministry of Health in Gaza, which is governed by Hamas, more than 11,100 Palestinians have been killed since Oct. 7. Although there is no breakdown available distinguishing between Hamas members and civilians, the World Health Organization has said that most of the dead are women and children. Israel is charging that Hamas uses civilians as human shields. Despite their repeated calls for a humanitarian ceasefire and a de-escalation of violence, the war has continued, said the Church leaders in their statement.

“They said that though the sacred Advent season is normally one of joy and anticipation in preparation for the celebration of Christmas, including religious services as well as colorful public festivities, ‘these are not normal times.’

“We call upon our congregations to stand strong with those facing such afflictions by this year foregoing any unnecessarily festive activities,” the Church leaders said. “We likewise encourage our priests and the faithful to focus more on the spiritual meaning of Christmas in their pastoral activities and liturgical celebrations during this period, with all the focus directed at holding in our thoughts our brothers and sisters affected by this war and its consequences, and with fervent prayers for a just and lasting peace for our beloved Holy Land.”

They also invited the faithful to “advocate, pray and contribute generously” as they are able for the relief of victims of the war and the needy.

“In these ways, we believe, we will be standing in support of those continuing to suffer—just as Christ did with us in his incarnation, in order that all of God’s children might receive the hope of a new Jerusalem in the presence of the Almighty, where ‘death shall be no more, neither mourning, nor crying, nor pain, for the former things have passed away’ (Rev 21:4),” they wrote in their statement.

Meanwhile, bishops around the world joined prayers for peace in the Holy Land and condemned the violence.

On Nov. 10, the Australian bishops’ conference issued a statement titled “Praying for a Lasting Peace.”

“Since the start of the war and the ongoing Israel-Gaza war, Christmas in Bethlehem and the Holy Land in 2023 will be one of solemnity, prayer and fasting, the patriarchs and heads of the Churches in Jerusalem said. (OSV News photo/Debbie Hill)
Seniors and bond of love lead Providence to state championship

By John Shaughnessy

In the days leading up to its state championship match, the volleyball team of Our Lady of Providence High School in Clarksville was reeling emotionally. Tears flowed when the team members learned that an MRI exam showed that one of its key players, senior Nicole Stratford, had suffered a severe injury in the semi-state match and wouldn’t be able to play against the top-ranked team of Bellmont High School in Indiana’s Class 3A state championship.

Knowing that Nicole’s teammates were heartbroken for her, Providence’s head coach Terri Purichia gathered the team together at the end of their last practice in their home gym and gave each player the same small gift—a gift to symbolically take Nicole on the court with them.

“We gave them a pink ribbon to put on their left shoe. That was a reminder of Nicole. Her favorite color is pink, and it was a hot-pink ribbon,” Purichia recalled about the team’s starting left-side hitter. “I told them this is always a symbol when people want to remember somebody that is either in pain, or they have a special circumstance that you want to remember for them.”

“I said, ‘I want this to be a reminder of our strength and love. And every time you get nervous in the game or something doesn’t go your way, just go and look to your shoe at Nicole’s ribbon and know that you have for your teammate and how much support you have, and that should be a calming effect on you.’”

We did this at every practice—on Nov. 4—the Providence girls walked on the Worthington Court at Bellmont High School with their pink ribbons on their left shoes and won the state championship.

In defeating Bellmont 25-19, 31-23, 28-25 and 25-21, the Providence girls especially dug deep in that breathtaking 31-29 game, which had 15 lead changes. And while the team’s journey was in part an emotional show of their love for Nicole, it was also a stirring reflection of the combined power and dedication of the other nine seniors who also led the team this year. Camila Adams, Ella Bialy, Taylor Lazinc, Ava Lyons, Claire Gillespie, Lilly Kaiser, Anna Nicole, it was also a stirring reflection of the contributions of the parents in the conversation to her three varsity position without the people around me.”

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“ início da pagina: Terri Purichia, guardiana do time na vitória anterior, recebeu um abraço da torcida.”

“Remembering that scene, Purichia said, “I can’t believe it.” “It was just absolute happiness and pride,” she said. “I’ve never been so proud of them I was. I said, ‘I don’t see any of them crying, and we can see at any time except the love that we have for each other, and how we’re going to fight as hard as we can for the person next to us.’”

Purichia also remembers the way that Nicole reacted that afternoon as her teammates pursued their shared goal of winning a state championship.

“She was the first one off the bench, yelling and screaming for them. She was so proud when we were able to pull it off. Because she knew they were really inspired to do it for her.”

When Providence clinched match point and the state championship, the dancing, the celebration and the hugs began. The over-the-top joy flowed from the players and coaches on the court to the cheering sections filled with Providence students, family members and fans—the usual support that Providence teams have received for generations.

“Remembering that scene, Purichia said, ‘I could not believe it.’ ‘It was just a lot of tears because we’re all cried out.’ We were so excited. I just thought they were crying with joy.”

“I said, ‘I want this to be a reminder of our strength and love,” she said. “It was a lot of wins that people had a lot of tears because we’re all cried out.’

Purichia also remembers the last practice the team had on the morning before the championship match later that day.

“At the very end of the practice, we did this thing called, ‘high-fives, handshakes and hugs.’ That’s where each member of the team goes around to each other, and they do those three things. Sometimes they say some really sweet things, too. You feel that it’s real.”

“Finally, the head coach also remembers the last practice the team had on the morning before the championship match later that day.

In the locker room, I told them how proud of them I was. I said, ‘I don’t see a lot of tears because we’re all cried out.’ It was just happiness and pride. They were laughing and loose and having so much fun.

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