Bishops still have hope Congress will pass immigration reform

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Despite the apprehension over policies that could be enacted by a Republican-led Congress acting in accord with a Republican president in Donald Trump, the U.S. Catholic bishops remain hopeful that Congress will pass an immigration reform bill.

“This is a new moment with a new Congress, a new administration. We should up our expectations and move very carefully on comprehensive immigration reform,” said Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, who is president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB).

“I think this might be a very good time, a better time, to pursue our goals,” said Archbishop Jose H. Gomez of Los Angeles, USCCB vice president. “We need to bring about some change,” he added. “We hope the president will work with the transition team of the president-elect,” said Archbishop Joseph M. Tobin of Newark, New Jersey.

“People are suffering. People want to be heard. We must have a new administration that tries to start a conversation with the international community—measures can be taken that can resolve this situation,” said Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, who is president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB).

“Congress will pass an immigration reform bill,” said Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, who is president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB).

“I think the [bishops’] conference is trying to start a conversation with the transition team of the president-elect,” said Archbishop Joseph M. Tobin of Newark, New Jersey.

“The fear flashes in their eyes again as the educators recall rushing to the child who was lifeless on the ground. The moment, which happened during soccer practice at Holy Spirit School in Indianapolis, was one of the most challenging moments of their lives.”

“Stacy Inman-Davidson, 20, who was giving first aid, called 911 and ran over to the boy. She immediately unresponsive, showing no signs of breathing.”

“In the days and weeks ahead, there will be intense debate over immigration reform and refugee policy. Ultimately, the question is this: Will our nation treat all migrants and refugees, regardless of their national origin, as equals?”

Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo

School staff’s quick actions help to save the life of a child who had a heart attack

The three Holy Spirit staff members worked quickly to give Ethan CPR, the cardio-pulmonary resuscitation that all teachers and extended-care staff members in Indiana are required to learn. “I was scared when I ran over to him, seeing him lifeless, not breathing, turning purple,” said Inman-Davidson, a recess worker at the time. “I was holding him and talking to him and giving him air. I thought every time I was giving him air, I was giving oxygen to his brain.”

“As the paramedics lifted Ethan into the ambulance, he was still lifeless.”

Pope Francis is pictured with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas during a meeting at the Vatican on Jan. 14. (CNS photo/Giuseppe Lami, Reuters pool)

New embassy a sign of pope’s love for Palestine, President Abbas says

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas thanked Pope Francis for his support of the country’s new embassy to the Holy See.

“This is a sign that the pope loves the Palestinian people and loves peace,” Abbas told the pope on Jan. 14 before heading to the inauguration of the Palestinian embassy to the Holy See in Rome.

The pope welcomed Abbas with open arms, embracing the president and saying, “It is a pleasure to welcome you here.”

“I am also happy to be here,” Abbas replied. The Vatican said the two leaders spoke privately of the contribution of Catholics in Palestine, and their “promotion of human dignity and assistance for those most in need, especially in the fields of education, health and aid.”

The pope and Abbas also discussed the peace process and expressed hope that “direct negotiations between the parties may be resumed to bring an end to the violence,” and to find “a just and lasting solution.”

To this end, it is hoped that—with the support of the international community—measures can be taken. Inman-Davidson, a recess worker at the time. “I was holding him and talking to him and giving him air. I thought every time I was giving him air, I was giving oxygen to his brain.”

“As the paramedics lifted Ethan into the ambulance, he was still lifeless.”

Pope Francis is pictured with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas during a meeting at the Vatican on Jan. 14. (CNS photo/Giuseppe Lami, Reuters pool)
that Jenny and Enrique Velazquez received about Ethan that afternoon shook them to their core.

Jenny received her phone call first, telling her that Ethan had collapsed on the playground, to come quickly.

“When I see the ambulance and Ethan on the ground and him not responding, now my mind is thinking that his heart had stopped,” Jenny recalls.

She rode in the front seat of the ambulance as it rushed to Riley Children’s Hospital for Indians in Indianapolis. During the frantic ride, she turned to watch the monitors. The seconds that followed were like a rewinding film.

“I get down on my knees and start praying,” says, “God, I know you are the best. You are really smart. But give me the opportunity to be with Ethan here. Please don’t take him yet.”

One of the people who prayed fervently every morning was Imam-Davidson, whose 4-year-old son drowned in a swimming pool at an apartment complex in 2009.

“The whole time Ethan was in the hospital, I felt I had lost my son all over again,” says the mother of three daughters, Alana, 9, Layla, 5, and Athena, 4. “I was a mess.”

Yet three days after Ethan was rushed to the hospital—as his mother prayed the “Our Father” at her son’s bedside—all the prayers were answered as Ethan awakened from the coma.

In the days that followed, medical tests were done on Ethan. “The doctor said, ‘Your boy isn’t sick. He’s 100 percent healthy,’” Enrique says. “He doesn’t have any consequences. The doctor was impressed. I can’t explain what happened. I said, ‘Doctor, it’s God.’”

“God gave me a second chance at life.” Ethan grew. Its roots were in the friends and even strangers from Holy Spirit Parish who arrived at his bedside.

“Now I have a relationship with God. I feel the same way. When I see the ambulance and Ethan in the hospital—I know He’s still be here. After everything that happened and he recovered, he came back to school and gave me a card and a bracelet.”

The bracelet is inscribed with a Bible verse from the Book of Joshua: “Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go” (Jos 1:9).

Stippler wore the braided bracelet every day as a reminder of the difference that he hopes to make in people’s lives as a nurse, as a reminder of the difference every man made to Ethan, as a reminder of the difference the Ethan makes to them.

“I’ll never forget his face that day,” Stippler says. “He’s a miracle walking.”

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during a Mass at the Dolores Mission Church in Boyle Heights, Calif., near Los Angeles. The clip was part of the pope’s interview with a U.S. television journalist.

Bishop Vasquez dismissed the notion that nationwide immigration reform is virtually impossible.

“I don’t believe that the national government is going to make the same effort that took place when there was a great national debate about immigration reform. The Congress is split. The administration is split. I think it is unlikely that there is going to be a new effort on the legislative level.”

Effective Date

The prayers of the Velazquez family have been answered as Ethan has recovered completely from the heart attack he suffered on the playground at Holy Spirit School in Indianapolis. The seventh-grade student is pictured with his mother Jenny, his father Enrique and his sister Jenny. (Photo by John Shaughnessy)
Legislation to ban the death penalty for those with serious mental illness was introduced in the Indiana General Assembly on Jan. 4. The Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC), the public policy arm of the Church in Indiana, supports the legislation.

Senator Bill 155, authored by Sen. James Merritt, R-Indianapolis, removes capital punishment as a penalty for those suffering from one of six types of serious mental illness. Those diagnosed with schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, major depressive disorder, delusional disorder, posttraumatic stress disorder or traumatic brain injuries qualify for the exemption. The bill defines “serious mental illness” as commonly referred to as SMI using the American Psychiatric Association’s Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) criteria.

Merritt said he supports the death penalty, but draws a “bright line of distinction” between those who are rational and normally functioning who commits a murder out of revenge or for other reasons, and a person who lacks normal mental faculties or control of themselves.

“If a person is mentally ill, they are mentally ill. My intent of the bill is that no person who is mentally ill would be put to death because they committed murder,” the senator said. He added the fate of his bill is uncertain as “it is very early in the process, he plans to work very hard” to get a hearing for the bill.

Glen Tebbe, executive director of the ICC, said that the Church opposes the use of the death penalty in nearly all cases, noting that its use is permitted when it is the only means to protect the common good. He added Catholic teaching also asserts that an individual must have maturity and consciously choose an action for one to be morally responsible.

Indiana no longer executes the mentally disabled or minors because they may not be fully responsible for their actions, he said.

“Those who are mentally ill have an impediment that limits their culpability regarding their actions also,” said Tebbe. “As with the previous modifications in Indiana’s application of the death penalty, this change to exempt those with serious mental illness from execution is prudent and just. While Senate Bill 155 does not eliminate the use of the death penalty, it does restrict its use and corrects an injustice in its application. We support the bill.”

Tebbe asserts the death penalty ban for those with serious mental illness does not exempt an individual from being held accountable. Rather, removing the death penalty as an option for punishment allows the state to fulfill its obligation to the public and to the individual.

In Catholic teaching, Tebbe said, it is the state’s duty to protect the common good and to render an unjust aggressor unable to do harm. The punishment, in addition to defending the public order and protecting people’s safety, should have the effect of correcting the guilty party and providing restitution. Senate Bill 155, in the view of the ICC, provides for public safety and does not take away an opportunity to correct and help the offender.

Matthew Willis, program director for the Hoosier Alliance for Serious Mental Illness Exemption, said, “I think it’s really important that we protect those who we deem not morally culpable from the death penalty. We’ve already decided to exempt juveniles and those who are intellectually disabled.

‘Those with serious mental illness share the same inability to understand the nature of their crimes and know the consequences of their crimes,’ he added.

Willis is aware of at least six other states that are actively seeking legislation to exempt those with serious mental illness including Virginia, Idaho, Tennessee, West Virginia, Ohio and South Dakota. Connecticut exempted those with serious mental illness from the death penalty in 2006, but subsequently banned the death penalty.

Willis said there are 12 people in Indiana with active death sentences—one woman and 11 men.

“There are two men who definitely had SMI at the time of their crime,” said Willis, “but this number is not concrete because it’s possible other defense teams may argue their clients fit the exemption as well.”

Willis said to give a perspective on statistics, Mental Health America, a national support and advocacy group for mental health, in one analysis estimates that between five and 20 percent on people on death row have a serious mental illness.

Willis firmly believes there is a “real chance” of the bill passing because he has seen Indiana lawmakers open to expanding treatment and funding for mental health issues in recent years.

Senate Bill 155 is assigned to the Senate Judiciary Committee and now awaits a hearing. Tebbe said he hopes the bill gets a hearing within the next few weeks.

(Brigid Curtis Ayer is a correspondent for The Criterion.)

Bishop disappointed with change in U.S. policy to Cuban refugees

WASHINGTON (CNS)—The chairman of the Committee on Migration at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops said he was disappointed with President Barack Obama’s new policy ending a long-standing agreement that allowed Cubans who arrive by sea on their way to the United States to seek protection.

In a Jan. 13 statement, Bishop Vasquez said that moving Cubans who arrive by sea to the United States if the time between departure from Cuba and the start of deportation hearings in the U.S. is four years or less.

The Associated Press reported that since October 2012, more than 118,000 Cubans have presented themselves at ports of entry along the U.S. border. The number included more than 48,000, who arrived between October 2015 and November 2016. Cuba has already in the United States under the old policy will be able to continue the process toward gaining legal status.

Bishop Vasquez said that moving forward, he and his fellow bishops would continue to work to ensure “human treatment for vulnerable populations, from Cuba and elsewhere, seeking refuge in the United States.”

‘The violation of basic human rights remains a reality for some Cubans, and the “wet foot, dry foot” policy helped to afford them a reality for some Cubans, and the “wet foot, dry foot” policy helped to afford them a way to seek refuge in the United States.’

—Bishop Joe S. Vasquez of Austin, Texas, USCCB migration committee chairman

Lawmakers consider death penalty ban for serious mental illness

By Brigid Curtis Ayer

WASHINGTON (CNS)—The chairman of the Committee on Migration at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops said he was disappointed with President Barack Obama’s new policy ending a long-standing agreement that allowed Cubans who arrive by sea to the United States if the time between departure from Cuba and the start of deportation hearings in the U.S. is four years or less.

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Thinking through the temptation of cohabitation

Men and women clearly need each other and naturally gravitate toward arrangements of mutual support and lives of shared intimacy. Because women are frequently the immediate guardians of the next generation, they have a particular need to ascertain if there will be steady support from a man prior to giving themselves sexually to him. The bond of marriage is ordered toward securing this critical element of ongoing commitment and support.

Cohabitation, where a man and woman decide to live together and engage in sexual relations without marriage, raises a host of issues and concerns. Sex, of course, has a certain power all its own, and both sides may be tempted to play with it in ways that are potentially damaging, all the more so when they decide to cohabit. One concern is that cohabitation can often become a rehearsal for various selfish patterns of behavior. It perpetuates an arrangement of convenience, popularly phrased as, “Why buy the cow when you can get the milk for free?” Even as many women try to tell themselves they are “preparing” for marriage by cohabiting with their partner, they may sense the scope of the “never-ending audition” to be his wife, and become intuitively aware of how they are being used. Cohabitation also plays the woman to focus on lesser concerns like saving on rent, or garnering transient emotional attention by moving in with him and becoming sexually available.

Every woman becomes attuned to the power of sex from an early age, she can eventually fall prey to an easy mistake. Aware that sexual intimacy also is about bonding, she may suppose that by surrendering this deeply personal part of herself through cohabitation, she now has a “hook” into a man and his heart.

While such an arrangement can trigger various platitudes, (that he “cares for her,” “loves her,” etc.), experience shows it doesn’t typically help them reach the permanent relationship people talk about, the important words, “Will you marry me?”

Cohabitation, in fact, is a relationship that is defined by a holding back of commitment. The notion that it somehow allows both parties to “try out” a marriage beforehand is conveniently make-believe, a kind of “playing house,” mostly because it’s impossible to try out something permanent and irrevocable through an arrangement of convenience, popularly called “the ending audition” to be his wife, and becoming intuitively aware of how they are being used. Cohabitation also plays the woman to focus on lesser concerns like saving on rent, or garnering transient emotional attention by moving in with him and becoming sexually available.

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Marriage, as Glenn Stanton notes, “is actually a very pro-woman institution.”

“People don’t fully realize what a raw deal for women cohabitation is. Women tend to bring more goods to the relationship—more work, more effort in tending to the relationship—but they get less satisfaction in terms of relational commitment and security.”

While marriage doesn’t automatically solve every problem, it does offer a different and vastly better set of dynamics than cohabitation for all the parties involved.

Letters Policy

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

Letters from readers are welcome and every effort will be made to include letters from as many people and representing as many viewpoints as possible. Letters should be informed, relevant, well-expressed and temperate in tone. They must reflect a basic sense of courtesy and respect. The editors reserve the right to select the letters that will be published and to edit letters from readers as necessary based on space limitations, pastoral sensitivity and content (including spelling, punctuation or grammar). In return, The Criterion encourages opinions from a variety of readers, frequent writers will ordinarily be held to a page limit of 300 words.

Letters must be signed, but, for serious reasons, names may be withheld.

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John F. Fink
AMMAN, Jordan (CNS)—After meeting with Church leaders in northern Iraq, a U.S. bishop said he will advocate differently for Iraqi religious minorities.

Bishop Oscar Cantu of Las Cruces, N.M., told Catholic News Service (CNS) by phone that the Iraqi bishops do not want to see a safe corridor set up for Christians, as some in Washington have suggested.

“Although security is paramount, they prefer to see reconciliation take place, enabling Iraq’s diverse mosaic of religions and ethnicities to live side by side. But that means trust would need to be rebuilt, and that could prove tricky given the regional and local players involved in Iraq’s multilayered sectarian conflict.”

“We don’t want to live in a ghetto. That is counterproductive. That makes us a target for our enemies. We have to live in a new integrated community where Chaldean Catholics, Syrian Catholics, Sunni Muslims, etc., have relationships with each other,” Bishop Cantu told CNS, recounting the remarks made by Syriac Catholic Archbishop B. Yohanna Moshe of Mosul, Iraq.

“He said the archbishop told him: ‘We need an integrated reality, rather than a ‘Gaza’ where there’s a wall and someone is guarding people going in and out.’”

Bishop Cantu chairs the U.S. bishops’ Committee on International Justice and Peace. In that capacity, he led a small delegation on Jan. 11-13 to see and hear Church perspectives in the aftermath of the Islamic State assault in 2014 and the current U.S.-led coalition’s battle to flush out the militants.

Catholic clergy “really want to establish some normality in the midst of displacement.” Bishop Cantu said. He said he was amazed by the speed which Chaldean Catholic Archbishop Bashar Warda of Irbil has started a Catholic university to provide education and direction to the youth. Archbishop Warda has also restored personal dignity by moving displaced Christians from camps into homes with a rent assistance program.

Meanwhile, Archbishop Hoshe has built a church, an elementary school and a new Catholic University of Qaraqosh, serving both Christians and Muslims, on land provided by the Kurdish authorities.

All of these facilities were lost when Islamic State militants invaded Mosul and the surrounding villages in June and August 2014.

Still, there is a reality of the wounds created by the neighbors who turned on neighborhoods,” Bishop Cantu said. He was told that after Christians went back to check on their properties following the liberation from Islamic State, in some instances, “neighbors went in, looted and later burned their homes.”

“The terrifying escape from Mosul for a number of Dominican Sisters has left a profound ‘sadness in their eyes and voices that question what’s the best for these Christians,’” Bishop Cantu said. “Whether it is to stay in the midst of anguish and terror or seek safety and security elsewhere in the world.”

The displaced Dominicans have been helping other displaced Christians with shelter, provisions and most recently, by setting up and running a school.

“Is was so taken by their commitment to stay as long as there are Christians in Iraq” Bishop Cantu said.

Both Bishop Cantu and Stephen Colecchi, director of the U.S. bishops’ Office of International Justice and Peace, made a similar visit to northern Iraq two years ago. This time they were also joined by Bill O’Keefe, vice president for government relations and advocacy at Catholic Relief Services (CRS).

O’Keefe told CNS that, after speaking with internally displaced Christians in Iraq, he realizes the immense challenges they face.

“The physical damage to their traditional Christian villages is severe, and security and trust aren’t present to make them comfortable in going back.”

Although he said CRS is looking very seriously at rebuilding in the next phase, the message the delegation got from Iraqi Christians is that “rebuidling needs to follow security.”

“They weren’t ready yet to talk about specific plans for rebuilding. Rather, they need to know how safety and security will be provided, which would allow them to stay,” O’Keefe said. “That’s the first problem which needs to be solved, and it’s inherently a political one.”

To that end, Colecchi said the U.S. bishops’ Office of International Justice and Peace in Washington will advocate for the U.S. government to do a “much better job of working with all the political entities in the region to come up with a political solution to create an inclusive Iraq.”

“Rights are based on citizenship, the rule of law, equal protection, and where towns and villages have good degree of self-rule so they can shape their own destiny and have a real voice in decisions and more immediately impact their community,” Colecchi said. “That’s how they create protection.”

Both Archbishops Moshe and Warda seek Washington’s help to build local institutions, and train police forces and the judiciary, Colecchi said. But the primary need is to create the rule of law and citizen rights.

Archbishop Warda welcomed last year’s resolution by the U.S. Congress declaring that Islamic State has committed genocide against minorities in Iraq and Syria, Colecchi said. He said the archbishop felt the resolution would focus the world’s attention on the horror as well as force Iraqis to acknowledge that genocide has taken place and to make sure it will not happen again.†

Pope Francis names Boston cardinal, others to Vatican congregations

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Francis named Cardinal Sean P. O’Malley of Boston, who is president of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors, to be a member of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

The Vatican announced his appointment on Jan. 14.

The 72-year-old archbishop of Boston is one of the eight members of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith who has been assisting Pope Francis with the reform of the administration of the Roman Curia, including a new curial structure and cardinal and bishop members, and 28 consulting theologians, in advising the doctrinal congregation.

The congregation deals with doctrinal questions as well as the application of Catholic moral teaching. But it also is charged with coordinating efforts to rid the church of sexual abuse and with monitoring or conducting cases against individual abusers.

While the congregation members offer their expertise on the many questions the office considers pressing, Cardinal O’Malley’s experience leading three U.S. dioceses confronting the abuse of minors by clergy will be important, U.S. Msgr. Robert W. Oliver, the lay member of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors, told Catholic News Service on Jan. 14.

Msgr. Oliver, who once worked as the chief prosecutor of sex abuse crimes when he was promoter of justice at the doctrinal congregation, worked on the abuse crisis in his home Archdiocese of Boston with Cardinal O’Malley.

The cardinal will bring “the experience of local bishops who have been there” in terms of handling these accusations and will help the congregation as it deals with new cases coming in from different parts of the world, the monsignor said.

The pope also named new consultants to the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments. The 17 new advisers include Donna Orsoto, a U.S. professor of spirituality at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome.

In visit to Kurdistan, bishop hears priorities of Iraqi Christians

Syriac Catholic Archbishop Yohanna B. Moshe of Mosul, Iraq, and Bishop Oscar Cantu of Las Cruces, N.M., pose for a photo in Iraq. After meeting with Church leaders in northern Iraq, Bishop Cantu said he will advocate differently for Iraqi religious minorities, (CNS/John Stefenicoz, USCCE)
Catholic Distance University three-week online seminars are available for $30

Two three-week online seminars through Catholic Distance University are now available for members of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis for just $30.

—Missionary Discipleship: Encounter Jesus and Spread the Good News—Explore the Holy Father’s call and challenge to Catholics to live out our relationship with Jesus through the lens of a missionary in our everyday lives. Learn how each baptized Catholic can answer the call in his or her home, family, church and community to better know Christ and make him known to others. Jan. 23-Feb. 13. Information: 317-243-0777.

—The Holy Name of Jesus Church, 89 N. 17th Ave., Bench Grove. First Friday devotion, exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, 5:30 p.m.; reparation, 5:45-6:45 p.m., Mass, 7 p.m.; Litany of the Sacred Heart and prayers for the Holy Father, 7:30 p.m. Information: 317-784-5454.

Our Lady of the Greenwood Church, 335 S. Meridian St., Greenwood. Feb. 2-13, 7-week celebration of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Mass. 5:45 p.m. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, following Mass until 9:30 p.m.; sacramento of Reconciliation available. Information: 317-888-2861 or info@ogreenwood.org.

St. Monica Church, 6140 N. Michigan Road, Indianapolis. Feb. 3-13, Mass for Vocations, 8 a.m., with St. Monica medication, meditation and coffee and donuts available. Information: 317-748-1478 or smclaughlin@holyspirit.cc.

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5533 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. Feb. 5-13, Movie Night, 6:30-9 p.m., includes movie, popcorn and refreshments. Information: 317-545-7681 or www.archindy.org/fastm.

February 2-13, 7-week program that welcomes inactive Catholics to participate in the Catholic Church community. The sessions, which build on each other weekly, are led by Catholic who have been away from the Church and have returned. The informational format will invite questions and discussions about some of the most common concerns of those who have been away from the Church. They are open to anyone who has an interest in learning more about the Catholic Church. Tickets are a suggested $10 donation each to cover theater rental and a licensing fee.

TICKET PURCHASE IN ADVANCE IS RECOMMENDED. To do so, or for more information, log onto www.bit.ly/12BqQvD. If the event sells out, another viewing of Apparition Hill movie is scheduled —check back on the Tekton Ministries website or call them for updates. For more information, call Mbuckel@sjsindy.org or Mbuckel@archindy.org.

Catholic Distance University three-week online seminars are available for $30

Movie about Medjugorje to be featured in Indianapolis on Jan. 26

All are invited to view a movie about Medjugorje called Apparition Hill at Glenendale Theater, 6102 N. Rural St., in Indianapolis, at 7 p.m. on Jan. 26.

The movie features two atheists, one believer, a mother struggling with cancer, a man diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), a struggling addict and a woman questioning her faith as they search for answers to life’s big questions. The movie is produced and directed by singer-songwriter Ann Vucic, who has a special connection to Medjugorje and the Holy Land.

The movie takes place at Apparition Hill, the site of six authentic visions reported to be seen by six visionaries sporadically since 1981. Ann Vucic, an English interpreter for the visionaries, will be in attendance to share her own experiences with Medjugorje and the visionaries.

For more information, call Mbuckel@sjsindy.org or Mbuckel@archindy.org.
Paul's own example, live the Gospel by words and actions

Lukewarm in the faith “have found
said on Jan. 17 during Mass in the chapel
Pope Francis said in a morning homily.
who forge ahead with hope in God have

Follow pope’s example, live the Gospel by words and actions

Pope Francis is full of surprises. We experienced this firsthand when Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin was elevated to the College of Cardinals in a move that even he found “shocking.”

The pope from Argentina has a different way of doing things than his predecessors. That doesn’t make him better or worse than recent popes, but it does align him somewhat with St. John XXIII who surprised the whole world when he called for the Second Vatican Council, and famously “opened the Church’s windows” to the modern world.

St. John XXIII was a traditionalist at heart who had great love and respect for the Church’s fundamental teaching and practice. But he was also a man of the people who recognized that change in how those teachings are expressed was needed—for the sake of the Gospel, and in the best interests of the Church’s evangelizing mission.

The popes who followed John XXIII have affirmed the need for radical change, a new evangelization, but the way each pope has gone about it has been different. I would argue that these differences have been in style, not substance.

Blessed Pope Paul VI could not bring himself to reject the Church’s traditional teaching on the immortality of the soul. St. John Paul II was an ardent defender of liberty who stood firm against the oppressive, totalitarian systems he grew up in. Benedict XVI argued passionately against the danger of relativism in politics and in Church governance. Pope Francis stands with the poor and against all efforts to marginalize individuals and peoples. He also exercises his ministry in a more open and personal way—sending handwritten notes, making late night phone calls and making unscheduled visits to hospitals, prisons and refugee camps.

All of these papal stances represent aspects of Church teaching that are critical to Christian discipleship in our contemporary world. All reflect the words and example of our Lord Jesus Christ who alone is the Way, the Truth and the Life. All are authentic to the human beings who occupy the Chair of St. Peter at given moments in human history.

At least in retrospect, the popes who preceded John XXIII have been more predictable. They were not as prone to gestures or surprises moves as our current Holy Father is.

Jorge Mario Bergoglio, when he was cardinal-archbishop of Buenos Aires, surprised people by riding the bus, cooking his own meals and doing his own laundry. That’s what first attracted Marie Tobin, the mother of our former archbishop, to the cardinal from Argentina. She was surprised, but very pleased, to learn that he is a simple man not given to putting on airs. Years later, Mrs. Tobin was once again surprised—and very pleased—that the Holy Father had recognized the same qualities in her son, now Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin!

What are we to make of the surprises of Pope Francis? What are they intended to teach us? How do we learn from them—and apply them to our daily lives?

A recent issue of Rome Reports, a newsletter that follows the daily activities of the pope, offered a summary of the teaching of Pope Francis using his own words:

“God does not want the condemnation of anyone, nobody. I once heard a very nice saying: ‘There is no saint without a flaw, no saint without a future.’ How beautiful is this!”

Teaching #2: “What does it mean to ignore the suffering of man? It means to ignore God. If I do not approach that man, the man who is chained, the man, that old woman who suffers, I do not get close to God.”

Teaching #3: “The Christian does not exclude anyone; he offers a place for everyone; he has room for everyone. Allow them to come to you.”

I believe that the gestures, symbols and surprises of Pope Francis are all intended to underscore this teaching: God is close to us, but to touch him, we must walk with all our sisters and brothers—especially those who are on the margins of society. All are loved. No sin cannot be forgiven by God. All have a place in the one family of God.

Let’s follow the example of Pope Francis. Let’s commit ourselves to living and proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ in our words and our actions.

Above all, let’s be willing to move beyond our own comfort zones to touch others, to encounter Christ!

Daniel Conway is a member of The Criterion’s editorial committee.

El restro de la misericordia

El papa Francisco es un ejemplo de que uno puede ser un santo sin ser conocido por sus padres. Eso no hace que la vida de un santo sea más fácil, pero no es más difícil para sus padres. Se dice que la vida de un santo es más fácil para sus padres que para nosotros, pero la realidad es que vivimos en una sociedad donde los padres no siempre nos dan un ejemplo de cómo ser un santo.

La vida de un santo es difícil, pero con Dios todo es posible. Dios nos da la fuerza para enfrentar las dificultades de nuestra vida diaria. Dios es nuestro guía y nos muestra cómo vivir una vida de amor y misericordia.

En la vida diaria, podemos aprender de los santos cómo vivir una vida de amor y misericordia. Podemos aprender de ellos a escuchar las necesidades de los demás y a actuar de manera que les brindemos ayuda.

Los santos son un ejemplo para nosotros. Los santos nos muestran cómo vivir una vida de amor y misericordia. Nos muestran cómo ser un modelo de amor y misericordia en nuestra propia vida diaria.

Sigamos el ejemplo de los santos y de los pobres. Sigamos el ejemplo de los santos y de los pobres para vivir una vida de amor y misericordia. Sigamos el ejemplo de los santos y de los pobres para vivir una vida de amor y misericordia.

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Christians who have fallen away from God have the strength to endure life’s dark moments, Pope Francis said in a morning homily.

However, he said, God refuses to fight for positive changes that benefit everyone are “stigmatic” and selfish, he said, as on Jan. 17 during Mass in the chapel of the Domus Sanctae Marthae.

Christians who are “lazy” or “ lukewarm” in the faith “have found...
Ministry celebrates decade of helping women transition from prison

SIoux City, Iowa (CNS)—Franciscan Sister Gwen Hennessey, director of Clare Guest House, puts a different spin on the “What would Jesus do?” slogan.

“In 2006, Clare Guest House was incorporated as an independent organization, distinct from the neighborhood project and from the Sisters of St. Francis. The home had had 106 admissions since opening. Most have been women released from the Iowa Women’s Correctional Institution in Mitchellville. Some have returned to the home more than once, Sister Gwen admitted. “We have had some women who were not success stories,” she said, “but we’ve also had many who have, who have kept in touch with us, thanking us for getting their lives back.”

Sister Gwen and her sister, Franciscan Sister Dorothy Hennessey, were among 13 women arrested while participating in civil disobedience in 2000 during a nonviolent protest at the former U.S. Army School of the Americas at Fort Benning, Ga. Both received a six-month sentence, serving it at a federal prison in Illinois.

Clare Guest House is the only transitional home of its type in northwest Iowa and the only one under the auspices of the Dubuque Franciscans, who founded Briar Cliff University in Sioux City.

Sister Grace Ann is 79 and Sister Gwen said, “We have no plan,” Sister Grace Ann smiled, while Sister Gwen laughed aloud, adding, “We leave it all in God’s hands.”

The Clare Guest House, a transitional home for women after serving jail time, is pictured in December 2016. The guest house in Sioux City, Iowa, has served as a transitional home for women who served jail time. (CNS photo/Larry L. Margeme, The Catholic Globe)

The Catholic Globe

Franciscan Sister Gwen Hennessey talks in December 2016 about the 10 years that the Clare Guest House in Sioux City, Iowa, has served as a transitional home for women who served jail time. (CNS photo/Larry L. Margeme, The Catholic Globe)

“We have no plan,” Sister Grace Ann said with a smile, while Sister Gwen laughed aloud, adding, “We leave it all in God’s hands.”

The students in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis Catholic schools are doing great things! Please take the time to review a special publication from the Office of Catholic Schools at http://www.archindy.org/OCS-Special-Publication-2016-2017/ and highlight our Catholic Schools and those who help us make what we are today! The Office of Catholic Schools Archdiocese of Indianapolis

Open Doors + Open Arms + Open Hearts

be taken that favor mutual trust and contribute to creating a climate that permits courageous decisions to be made in favor of peace,” the Vatican said.

“Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem is also a cause for concern for the Palestinian government as both states claim the city as their rightful capital.”

“We are waiting to see if it happens. If it does it will not help peace, and we hope it does not happen,” Abbas said.

Despite the looming threats to the peace process, President Abbas told journalists following his meeting with Pope Francis, President Abbas told journalists he hoped President-elect Donald Trump would not move forward with the proposal.

“We have no plan,” Sister Grace Ann said with a smile, while Sister Gwen laughed aloud, adding, “We leave it all in God’s hands.”

Elon Musk’s recent announcement that he’ll be moving his corporate headquarters from Los Angeles to Texas may seem like a silly thing.

“On the stability and security of the entire peace process, on the two-state solution and on the freedom of movement of the Palestinian people, our position is clear. We do not support any measure that would undermine them. Palestinians always resist these measures, and we are here to ensure that the Palestinian people will never lose their right to return.”

Franciscan Sisters Shirley Waldschmitt, Mary Lee Cox and Grace Ann Witte, all of Dubuque, Iowa, in 1998. Its mission was approved by the Sisters of St. Francis and from prison.

“Clare Guest House began as an initiative of the Sioux City Multicultural Neighborhood Project, a ministry approved by the Sisters of St. Francis of Dubuque, Iowa, in 1998. Its mission was to respond to the needs of poor women and children, collaborate in the development of neighborhood communities and serve as an outreach to Spanish-speaking immigrants.”

“September had been a residential treatment facility of downtown to locate the ministry. It was a $20,000 grant from the Sisters of St. Francis, and from the Sisters of St. Francis.”

“Open Doors + Open Arms + Open Hearts

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Catholic panel seeks common ground with Trump administration

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Catholic panelists gathered during “Faithful Priorities in a Time of Trump” said it is difficult to get over some of the words the president-elect said during the campaign—and even before he was a candidate. But as his presidency neared, it became clear, many of them said, it was important to find ways to work with him for the common good.

“When Donald Trump says things about women…I have a hard time stomaching those comments,” said Msgr. John Enzler, president and CEO of Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Washington. “We can still find a way, though, to listen and say, ‘How do we find common ground?’”

Msgr. Enzler was one of five panelists on Jan. 12 who addressed the role the Catholic faith can play as the country was in the final days of preparation for the incoming Trump administration. Some Catholics such as Rep. Francis Rooney, R-Florida, expressed great optimism.

“We can have a lot of hope that he will protect life the way we want him to do…defunding Planned Parenthood, protecting life,” Rooney said. “Things like the insurance mandate can be brought into harmony of First Amendment rights.”

Yet others, such as panelist Jessica Chilin Hernandez, expressed uncertainty and apprehension of the days ahead. Chilin works at Georgetown University’s Kalmanovitz Initiative for Labor and the Working Poor, thanks to a work permit she has through the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, known as DACA.

“I felt a fear unlike any other fear I had before,” she said about the moment she senting those like Chilin into panic.

Msgr. Enzler noted that it is also important to understand that individuals can do much by performing kind actions toward others. People can start by asking: “What did I do today? Is it an agency that can make things better but people,” he said.

Chilin said it’s important to keep in mind language that we use in daily conversation.

“Be conscientious of language,” she said. “ ‘Illegal’ is a racial slur. No human being is illegal and yet, in many circles, they use it to describe us.”

Panel moderator John Carr, director of Georgetown University’s Initiative on Catholic Social Thought and Public Life, said it is important to find a way to stand up for the stranger, the working poor, and anyone who needs of our kindness, and Catholic social teaching has a lot to say about it, Sister Simone said.

Sister Simone Campbell, executive director of Network, a Catholic social justice lobbying organization, said the country is showing a high level of anxiety, fear, dysfunction and chaos.

“I think that challenges all of us as people of faith,” said Sister Simone, a member of the Sisters of Social Service.

Now is the time to stand up for the stranger, the working poor, and anyone who needs of our kindness, and Catholic social teaching has a lot to say about it, Sister Simone said.

“It’s important to stand up for beliefs even when others disagree with them, she said, “but we have to find a way to do it with kindness.”

“We want to protect children in the womb. That’s something we can work with this [the Trump] administration and Congress on. … Senator [Jeff] Sessions said there would be no Muslim ban. That’s something we should work together on … then let’s be clear about the areas for disagreements.”

Msgr. Enzler said Catholics, particularly the Church’s leaders, must also speak and raise their voices for the vulnerable, and strongly speak the Church’s message.

Moderator Carr asked Sister Simone whether she could offer any lessons about building bridges that she learned during the Nuns on the Bus tour last summer, a 19-day trip that a group of women religious undertook from Wisconsin to the national political conventions in Cleveland and Philadelphia. Its aim was to learn what people around the country were thinking just before the presidential elections.

Sister Simone used the bus as a metaphor for the country. Some said the bus had made them feel as if they were welcomed back into a community, a feeling they had not had in a long time, because everyone was welcomed on the bus. She said she heard stories about poverty, lack of jobs and lack of access to health care that resulted in the death of loved ones.

“No one can be left out of our care,” Sister Simone said. “We are a nation of problems, but I think we can work together and we can sink into extreme individualism.”

As Pope Francis has said, it’s about the people, and when people feel loved, they flourish and when they flourish so does the country, she said.

Europe’s Catholic, Orthodox leaders issue statement against terrorism

OXFORD, England (CNS)—Catholic and Orthodox leaders have pledged to stand together against fundamentalism and terrorism, as religious communities working to erode and destroy religious belief in Europe.

“Terrorism Violence against people considered unbelievers or infidels is the extreme degree of religious intolerance—we unhesitatingly condemn it and deplore that such acts have developed in the soil of a misguided religious culture,” the church representatives said in a joint statement on Jan. 13.

“The constitutions of our states guarantee the fundamental rights of the human person. Nevertheless, in our societies, forces are always at work to marginalize or even erase religious and their message from the public space. We believe Europe needs to restore the breath of faith in Christ and the hope it provides.”

The 14-point message was published after a Jan. 9-12 meeting of the European Catholic-Orthodox Forum, co-chaired in Paris by Hungarian Cardinal Peter Erdo, former president of the Council of European Bishops’ Conferences, and Metropolitan Gerasimos of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople.

It said Catholic and Orthodox bishops deplored “crimes that may have been committed in the name of religion,” but believed their Churches should not be blamed “for attitudes or institutions that are inadmissible nowadays, but used to be shared by societies in the past.”

“Our Catholic and Orthodox Churches proclaim the centrality of the human person and of its dignity created in the image of God … Human freedom is exercised to the utmost in the act of religious faith, which must always remain free,” said the statement from the forum, which was attended by Russian Orthodox Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk and bishops, archbishops and cardinals from 20 countries.

“Political power should not favor a particular religion but respect the supreme divinity which each religion names according to its convictions. … The state guarantees religious freedom for all, but it is itself subject to a natural ethical order from which it cannot escape.”

The four-day meeting, co-hosted by Cardinal Andre Vingt-Trois of Paris and Orthodox Metropolitan Emmanuel of France, was the first since East-West ties deteriorated over Russian involvement in Ukraine.

The message said the meeting’s aim was “to demonstrate the convergence of Catholics and Orthodox on major issues of social ethics” and the will of the Catholic and many Orthodox Churches to stand together in the face of “unprecedented challenges and threats against Christianity.”

It added that the Churches had no intention of “stigmatizing the religion of Islam.” Noting that terrorists often were “socially disengaged young people,” it invited all youths to “commit themselves to a new social vision that excludes no one. We call on Muslim religious authorities to ensure there is no propagation of a systematically hostile image of the non-Muslim world.”

The forum message said that 80 percent of all European nations worldwide currently targeted Christians, adding that Catholic and Orthodox leaders shared solidarity with Christians threatened in the Middle East, Africa and Asia.

However, it added that religious freedom also faced “restrictive interpretation” and people of faith faced “more subtle forms of discrimination” in European countries, such as when Christians were “excluded from certain roles or professions,” denied the right to conscientious objection and subjected to “the media’s denigration of what is most sacred to some.”

The message said children should be “properly educated in their own religion and at the same time educated to respect the religion of others,” adding that schools not be places “for experimentation with anthropological theses without scientific foundation, like gender theories or certain ecological ideologies that go as far as transhumanism.”

A less serious statement from the Council of European Bishops’ Conferences said the forum had not tackled theological or doctrinal matters or replaced a separate Catholic-Orthodox theological dialogue commission, which is finalizing an agreed document on papal primacy.
Why the pope wants the Church to be a loving mother

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Mother’s Day came early this year at the Vatican. A number of feast days over the Advent and Christmas seasons give Pope Francis a fresh opportunity to point out that to pay homage to the world’s mothers, and insist further on how and why he wants the entire Church to become more maternal.

But who is this archetypal mother figure the pope upholds? Pope Francis pointed to a few of his favorite biblical heroines, praising the seemingly contradictory qualities of each:

- Like Mary, she is silently compliant to God’s will, like Rachel, who suffered for her family, like Hannah, capable of great joy.

With his many reflections on motherhood, the pope is trying to bring that maternal warmth back to the Church. He has learned so much about the meaning of true solidarity, he said, but of the strong, and that we don’t need a strong-willed, faithful advocate on their side.

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University of Notre Dame and Catholic Distance University (CDU)
The Archdiocese of Indianapolis has partnered with the worldwide prayer network through its websites, social media and e-mail.

Global papal prayer network continues to evolve

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Last year, more than 13 million people around the world watched Pope Francis explain one of his specific prayer intentions each month. The 90-second, personal explanations in “The Pope Video,” first launched in January 2016, encouraged “the culture of indifference” by focusing our prayerful attention, and “unbridled thirst for reality, and work to ensure the basic minimum needed so that their dignity as God’s children will not only be respected but, above all, defended.”

- Sometimes the best answer is no answer.

- Not only are they “rarely considered central to society in her role,” he said, “the mother is not always held in the head, and the Church’s need to be more sensitive to another’s pain in order to bring God’s hope and compassion.

- During his general audience on Jan. 4, he talked about Rachel’s tears being seeds of hope and the futility of trite or insensitive speeches. Rachel’s refusal to be consoled shows how delicately one must approach a person in pain, the pope said.

- When people are hurting, “it is necessary to share in their despair. In order to dry the tears from the face of those who suffer, we must join our weeping with theirs. This is the only way our words may truly be able to offer a bit of hope,” he said.

- Often it’s only tears that can open one’s eyes to the realities of life that need attention, he said.

- When Pope Francis dedicated his audience talk to mothers on Jan. 7, 2015, the feast of the Nativity for the Orthodox Churches, he lamented how people had plenty of pretexts and “beautiful things” to say about moms, but at the end of the day “the mother is rarely listened to or helped in daily life.”

- Not only are they “rarely considered central to society in her role,” he said, “the mother is not always held in the head, and the Church’s need to be more sensitive to another’s pain in order to bring God’s hope and compassion.

• The urgent intention will then be shared with members of the prayer network through its websites, social media and e-mail.

- Jesuit Father James Kubicki, U.S. director of the network, said the international director believes the urgent prayer request is a way for Pope Francis “to confront the culture of indifference” by focusing our prayerful attention on situations that are “more concrete, precise, current, [and] related to actual circumstances.”

- Jesuit Father Luis Ramirez, assistant international director of the prayer network, told Catholic News Service (CNS) on Jan. 11 that the urgent prayer request does two things. First, it strengthens the spiritual experience of those who are joining in prayer, letting them know they do not pray alone. And, more importantly, it lets those suffering know that the pope sees their pain and is trying to rally assistance.

- Of course, Father Ramirez said, the pope hopes people are “not just watching the video and receiving the appeal, but taking action and offering help.”

- The most popular platform for viewing the video was Facebook, he said. The Pope Video Facebook page has a reach of 25 million people. The video also can be watched on the official website—www.thepopevideo.org—and on YouTube.

- The videos, which last less than 90 seconds, Pope Francis speaks in Spanish. Subtitles are then added for English, French, Italian, Dutch, Portuguese and Arabic.

- Of the more than 13 million views in 2016, Vila said, 45 percent were in the original Spanish, 29 percent were with the Portuguese subtitles and 13 percent were with English subtitles.
Faith

Grandparents can help orient children to the future

By David Gibson

“A plant without roots does not grow.” Pope Francis was thinking of grandparents when he made that statement recently in Georgia, capital of the country of Georgia.

In the pope’s lofty, inspiring view, grandparents can help orient children to the future like millions of 21st-century grandparents, while children can tax the imagination. And the transmission of the faith to their grandchildren.

Grandparents frequently collaborate with their sons and daughters in economic matters, the upbringing of their children and the transmission of the faith to their grandchildren. “A plant without roots does not grow.”

By Paul Senz

It is widely recognized that the Ten Commandments are organized into two groups. The first through the third commandments can be broadly summarized as “You shall love the Lord, your God, with your whole heart” and the fourth through tenth commandments are reflected in “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

As we age and mature, a funny thing happens: Not only do we grow in wisdom, but we suddenly realize that our elders may have been wiser than we all along.

One hears frequently that children can form a family by themselves, and fully live up to this ideal. "A plant without roots does not grow.”

It is not uncommon in our highly mobile culture for grandparents to live far away from grandchildren. I knew of one new grandmother who for months resolved this situation by driving several hundred miles each way almost every weekend to spend time with her newborn grandchild.

Some grandchildren love school; others much prefer the indoors. Some might spend every waking moment outdoors if they could; others particularly young when their first grandchildren arrive.

Some grandparents are employed full time. Others are limited in their activities by health or income issues.

The story of his family involved growing up in a setting where "faith was lived in a simple, practical way," Pope Francis said when addressing participants in the Diocese of Rome’s 2016 pastoral conference. "Let our grandparents share and tell us their dreams so that we can have prophecies for the future.

Raising children always is a work in progress. So grandparents, like parents, sometimes struggle along when it comes to knowing how to serve as good models of adulthood and faith for a family’s newest generation.

Grandparents, of course, are not their grandchildren’s parents. Usually this is good news, suggesting to grandparents that they have entered a rewarding, new and different stage in life. It should be noted, though, that because of various unfortunate circumstances more grandparents are being called upon to be the guardians of their grandchildren.

One hears frequently that children should be given some inner and deep level of any kind by their grandparents. It is not uncommon in our highly mobile culture for grandparents to live far away from grandchildren.

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Church teaching on respect for elders flows from the Scriptures.

By Paul Senz

Church teaching on respect for elders flows from the Scriptures. The first three deal with our relationship with God. The first three deal with our relationship with God. The first three deal with our relationship with God.

“Do not reject the tradition of the elders which they have organized into two groups.

That age range itself reveals one of grandparenthood’s complexities. Many grandparents find themselves called, in varying walks of life share in rearing grandchildren.

Mark Twain is credited (perhaps apocryphally) with the following sardonic insight: “When I was a boy of 14, my father was so ignorant I could hardly stand to be around him. But when I got to be 21, I was astonished at how much the old man had learned in seven years.”

While this is certainly rife with sarcasm, the point is that because of various unfortunate circumstances more grandparents are being called upon to be the guardians of their grandchildren.

We are reminded of Abraham, father of God’s people; Jacob; Methuselah; Simeon; Naomi, mother-in-law to Ruth; and countless other examples come to mind.

As we age and mature, a funny thing happens: Not only do we grow in wisdom, but we suddenly realize that our elders may have been wiser than we all along.

It is not uncommon in our highly mobile culture for grandparents to live far away from grandchildren. I knew of one new grandmother who for months resolved this situation by driving several hundred miles each way almost every weekend to spend time with her newborn grandchild.

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The 1980 World Congress of the Catholic Press was held in Rome. My wife Marie and I joined the delegation from the United States found a hotel near the Vatican called Valadier between the Spanish Steps and Piazza di Popolo. We stayed there mainly because it was within walking distance of the congress hotel.

We found the hotel charming, but quaintly decorated with a lot of red, and the location of the rooms seemed unusual. It was a bit disorienting as we were staying at a former brothel.

At the end of the Rome congress, we had what was supposed to be a private audience with Pope John Paul II. Those who attended the congress were given tickets and told to report to the bronze doors that lead to the Apostolic Palace. We walked up all the wide marble stairs to the audience.

 Cornucopia/Cynthia Dewes

Life goes on … and so we should be, as hard as that may be

January is the time when we look backward and forward, assessing our hopes, strengths and dreams for a better future. We are supposed to make New Year’s resolutions to improve our health, our work habits or behavioral habits in order to resolve our conflicts, and to change the reality of health and happiness.

Unfortunately, few of us continue working through our resolution although we may lose a few pounds or make up with someone we’ve argued. So life goes on as much as it did before. Maybe we should work on that.

First, we must be honest about what we can and will do. Is it really possible for us to lose 40 pounds within a few months without alienating our entire family? Can we or will we keep still about our affair with the checker at the supermarket when we think that you have self-esteem?

We need to know where we stand in coming to terms with the idea of self-esteem. Is it a method of self-preservation or is it a way of showing our vulnerabilities to other people, or are we simply being honest? Do we admit to our children that we have first received help.

There are alternatives to confrontation or major conflict?

Are we being parents to our kids, or just caretakers? Do they feel that we care about what they are doing or only for what they are depriving others? In this case, being sensitive to others’ feelings is a large part of the resolution.

Next, we examine our motives in resolving to do certain things. Or not. Is it a need or just vain vanity that is driving our desire to lose weight? When we confide in someone, are we passing on information, or just trying to improve our image in another’s eyes? Is it us or them at the center of the universe?

Relationships need evaluation, too. Is our marriage at a standstill, or toxic for us or our children? Is it possible to salvage the loving feelings we had in our courtship or are we losing our love in our daily lives as we go along with the behaviors.

And our dealings with friends should stand the scrutiny. Are we along going with behaviors we don’t approve of in order to please someone, or are we standing up for what we know is right?

Are there any resolutions we can make for the coming year that will help us be a better parent?

Accept help, let others become instruments of mercy

Last year, I saw a youth group doing an interesting exercise in trust. A few teenagers were unblindingfolded as blindfolds as their group partner guided them through the church’s garden back to their meeting room.

The idea was for some of the team members to learn to trust others and to guide their group partners while the other party learned to trust and help guide their peers. It ultimately showed how accepting God’s loving help, even when we can’t see the hands that are giving it to us, is something we should do.

He added that the rise of the modern “self-made” human being makes it harder for us to lose ourselves in the love of other people, beginning with family and moving out into the world.

She also emphasized that human beings need to first be receivers of love to be givers of love. Many of us need to be reminded that we that realize that we learn to support others because we have first received help.

In trying to be self-reliant or make an extreme effort, we can confuse accepting others’ help with losing dignity. But, he continued, “that person will not always be as old as God—to touch his heart or her heart for it is an insult.

For young people in the youth group received a valuable lesson about their spiritual journey through that exercise: the descent of the Holy Spirit, which is something we all need to develop.

Divine help comes through human hands and hearts. Accepting others’ help is not the same as graceless acceptance of God and to let others become instruments of his mercy.

(Maria-Pia Negro Chin is bilingual associate editor at Maryknoll magazine.)

The teenagers in the youth group were told by group partner guided them through blindfolds as their group partners while the other party learned to trust and help guide their peers. It ultimately showed how accepting God’s loving help, even when we can’t see the hands that are giving it to us, is something we should do.

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The Book of Isaiah supplies this weekend’s first reading. It offers us a powerful lesson.

Isaiah lived in time when God’s people were skating on thin ice. They still had their independence, at least after a fashion. Hebrew kings still reigned in the kingdoms of Judah and Israel. The religious, social and political structures all still gave lip service to the ancient religion and to the holy covenant between God and his chosen people.

Everything, however, was at risk because devotion to the covenant and obedience to God’s law were at a low ebb, and covetous neighbors were nearby. Isaiah loudly warned that disaster was just around the corner. He said that the people could rescue themselves by returning to religious faithfulness and by obeying God, as the prophets had taught. He thereby implied a certain potential within the people.

They were weak because they ignored God. If they were determined, they could be virtuous and resist all enemies.

For its second reading, the Church has selected a section from St. Paul’s First Epistle to the Corinthians. Paul obviously loved the Corinthian Christians. He yearned to see them holy and eternally with the Lord, but just as obviously he troubled him because they seemed so attracted to the many vices of their great, worldly and wealthy city, and they seemed so vulnerable to the feelings of competitiveness and insecurity that vex all humans if not checked.

Never willing to be passive or indifferent, Paul loudly called the Christians in this community to be true to their identity with Christ. He taught a basic message. Earthly reward will pass, more quickly than many might realize. Earthly wisdom is only folly, disapproved so often. True wisdom is to understand the meaning of the cross, and this understanding requires grace, which comes to life only in those who earnestly follow the Lord.

St. Matthew’s Gospel supplies the last reading. It is situated in Capernaum, the fishing village located at the northern tip of the Sea of Galilee. Jesus was there after leaving Nazareth. His public ministry had begun.

As a center of commerce, albeit very modest commerce, Capernaum saw many people come and go. Jesus used this coincidence as an opportunity to encounter many people. He called them to fidelity to God. He repeated for them the admonitions of the Hebrew prophets.

It was here where Jesus met Andrew, and later his brother Simon, whom Jesus renamed Peter. These brothers became the first of the Apostles in the sequence of calling. In time, Christianity was to grow from and build upon the Apostles.

It is interesting that the Gospels, such as the case in this reading, refer to these Apostles so specifically by giving their names. The Gospel leaves no doubt whatsoever about their identity. It was vital in the early Church that the teachings of the genuine Apostles be known and be kept intact.

Reflection

These readings remind us of how blind we humans can be, and also of how powerful humans can be.

In the first reading, Isaiah criticized the people for their religious listlessness, but he also presumed that, if they wished, they could reverse their wayward hearts and turn again to God.

In essence, the same message was in the second reading, from Paul’s First Epistle to the Corinthians. He boldly denounced the Corinthians’ sins and quarrels. By calling them to conversion, he insisted that they had God’s grace within themselves to be holy.

We are sinners, but we need not be sinners, Bindus insists. We truly can be free by seizing the power of our wills, allowing divine grace to empower us even more, and disdaining sin to be one with Christ.

The teachings of the Apostles guide us and draw us to the Lord.†

Question Corner/ Fr. Kenneth Doyle

The Church allows for burial of cremated remains under certain circumstances

Q

a life long Catholic and served 28 years in the Navy. As a junior officer, I saw the ashes or bodies of deceased sailors buried at sea; I decided at the time that this is what I want done with my body after I die, and I have not changed my mind.

I decided at the time that cremation of the deceased’s body does not affect his or her soul, nor does it prevent God in his omnipotence from raising up the deceased body to new life.

The New Vatican guidelines do not prohibit burial at sea, so long as the body or cremated remains are placed in a dignified and well protected container.

As the Vatican’s 2016 instruction says, “Burial is above all the most fitting way to express faith and hope in the resurrection of the body,” and shows “the great dignity of the human body as an integral part of the human person, whose body forms part of their identity.”

That same instruction does note, though, that remains of the deceased’s body does not affect his or her soul, nor does it prevent God in his omnipotence from raising up the deceased body to new life.

The Church’s Order of Christian Funerals has a specific prayer for such a burial, asking that the Lord who calmed the sea in Galilee may grant peace and tranquility to the person deceased (#406).

(Questions may be sent to Father Kenneth Doyle at askfkd Doyle@gmail.com and 30 Columbia Circle Dr. Albany, New York 12203)™

Readers may submit prose or poetry for faith column

The Criterion invites readers to submit original prose or poetry relating to faith or experiences of prayer for possible publication in the “My Journey to God” column.

Seasonal reflections also are appreciated. Please include name, address, parish and telephone number with submissions.

Send material for consideration to: “My Journey to God,” The Criterion, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202-2307 or e-mail to criterion@archindy.org.†
McDonald’s restaurant near Vatican to give free meals to the poor

Please submit in writing to our office by 10 a.m. Thursday before the weekly deadline; 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, unless they are natives of the archdiocese or have other connections to it, and some diaconate ordinations are listed on a separate obituary list on this page.


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**McDonald's restaurant near Vatican to give free meals to the poor**
Paralyzed NYPD officer who spoke of forgiveness dies at 59

NEW YORK (CNS)—Detective Steven McDonald, the New York City police officer who was paralyzed after being shot and left brain dead at age 59, died at a Long Island hospital four days after suffering a heart attack.

Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan of New York called McDonald “a prophet, without speaking, of the pro-life cause.”

“He showed us,” the cardinal said, “that the value of life doesn’t depend on physical ability, but on one’s heart and soul, both of which he had in abundance.”

The cardinal told Catholic New York, the newspaper of the New York Archdiocese, that he had visited McDonald in the hospital’s intensive care unit and said that the many rosaries and religious statues there represented outward signs of a Catholic faith the detective dearly practiced.

“You can’t see him, you can’t hear him, he’s a fervent Catholic,” Cardinal Dolan said.

McDonald often discussed his Catholic faith and the natural world with young people, including the teenage shooter, explaining that he believed what happened to him was God’s will and that he was meant to be a witness to God’s message of peace, forgiveness and reconciliation in the world.

On patrol on July 12, 1986, McDonald came upon three teenagers in Central Park and stopped to frisk them because he thought one of them had a weapon in his sock. One of the youths, then-15-year-old Shavod Jones, pulled out his own weapon and shot McDonald, leaving him for dead as the trio fled. Three bullets struck McDonald, including one that pierced his spinal cord, leaving him paralyzed.

Doctors initially told McDonald’s wife, Patti, who was three months pregnant, that the couple’s son, that the officer would not survive. However, McDonald pulled through. At the baptism of their son, Connor, on March 1, 1987, McDonald asked his wife to read a statement about his feeling toward the shooter, saying “I forgive him and hope he can find a purpose in his life.”

McDonald remained on the police department payroll after being shot and later was named a detective. McDonald long hoped that he and Jones could team up to speak about reconciliation. They corresponded while Jones served a 10-year sentence for attempted murder, but the correspondence ended when McDonald declined a request from Jones’ family for help in seeking parole, saying he was not knowledgeable enough about the justice system.

Jones died in a 1995 motorcycle accident shortly after being released from prison on parole.

For years after the shooting, McDonald drew widespread attention and media coverage. He met with St. John Paul II in 1995 and with South African anti-apartheid leader Nelson Mandela. Although he was able to breathe only with the help of a respirator, McDonald crossed the country speaking at schools and other venues about the importance of forgiveness and peace.

He also became an advocate for peace in troubled lands, visiting Northern Ireland, Israel and South Africa to deliver his message to communities in conflict.

Conor McDonald eventually joined the NYPD and was a sergeant in 2016. He is the fourth generation of the family to serve in the department.

Steven McDonald was born on March 1, 1957, in Queens Village, N.Y., and grew up in Rockville Centre on Long Island. He is survived by his children of David and Anita McDonald.

A funeral Mass was celebrated on Jan. 12, 2017, at St. Mary’s School of the Holy Child in New York City with Cardinal Dolan presiding. †
SEEEK 2017 inspires college students to evangelize

SAN ANTONIO (CNS)—In need of reigniting the fire for His Catholic faith, Jeremy Martins found the flame he needed during SEEK 2017. “SEEK is the log I was waiting for,” said Martins, a junior at Benedictine College in Atchison, Kan. “It has been two years since a real encounter with Christ.”

He told Catholic News Service (CNS) that the conference, sponsored on Jan. 3-7 by the Fellowship of Catholic University Students, known as FOCUS, generated a new excitement even though he previously had committed two years of his life to mission work that involved evangelizing young people, and helping them overcome “the poverty of spirit” in their lives.

Martins was not alone. About 13,000 people, almost exclusively young adults, attended the annual SEEK conference at San Antonio’s Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center. The five-day event focused on the theme “What Moves You.”

Young adults from the Archdiocese of Indianapolis attended the conference, including students from DePauw University in Greencastle, Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis and the University of Indianapolis.

“I know that if they are from my university and attended SEEK, we can now bring this experience that we have had together back to campus with us. We can talk about it and show what we learned on our university campus,” Martins told CNS.

Speakers at SEEK included Father Mike Schmitz, director of youth and young adult ministry for the Diocese of Duluth, Minn.; theologian Edward Sri; Sister Bethesda Madonina, a member of the Sisters of Life; and Sarah Swafford, founder of Emotional Virtue Ministries.

Father Schmitz, echoing St. Paul’s letter to the Romans, reminded his listeners to “not be conformed by this age. But be transformed by the renewal of your mind. Our call is to live like Jesus.”

Austin Palen, a junior at Kansas State University, came away with “pages and pages of notes” from the talk.

Kylee Mernagh, a freshman at the school, also appreciated how Father Schmitz urged participants to “strap our boots on” in order to live their faith in the world. She attended the conference with several of her sorority sisters from Pi Beta Phi.

“It was helpful knowing we’d see these people at everyday events,” she said afterward. “Knowing when it seems that everyone is thinking differently, you’re not the only person with morality. You know others have similar values.”

Mernagh said her sorority sister brainstormed about encouraging Catholic members from other fraternities and sororities to not be afraid of living their faith. “If each house took one hour of adoration, how cool would it be?” she said.

It’s such reactions that conference organizers hoped would resonate in the future among the college-age participants. Craig Miller, FOCUS president, told CNS that he hoped that the most important thing participants take from the conference is “the knowledge that Jesus Christ loves them, and that they all have a Father who loves them and will be with them through everything.

“Knowing what you are made for gives you purpose and knowing that you are born as son or daughter of God brings you in relationship with your Creator,” he added.

As a team director for FOCUS at Ave Maria University in Florida, Nick Smith described FOCUS as important to university campuses because the organization “counteracts the things that distract us in a way that really allows Jesus to enter into this culture of death and change it.”

Martin said he was struck by Sri’s comments about the importance of people changing their actions to reflect their beliefs in an effort to overcome relativism in the world.

“This stuck with me because I realized that although I was surrounded by Catholics in Benedictine College, I found myself going to Mass less and less,” he explained. “I now realize I was changing my actions and justifying them by other Catholic’s actions. This conference has helped me realize that I really need to act the faith taking it upon myself to change, so my actions reflect my beliefs.”

In another presentation, John H. Carmichael, author of Drunks and Monks, discussed the freedom of drunkenness and worldliness. “If you build your house on sand, it will wash away,” he said. “Young people, you should build it on rock. Go deep into the heart of the Catholic Church.”

With such encouragement, SEEK participants could head back to their homes or colleges with what Miller described as a strong relationship with God so that “this relationship allows us to live life at its fullest.”

Among those in attendance were more than 200 college students from the Diocese of Salina, Kan. Adam Urban, a senior at Fort Hays State University in Kansas, coordinated a bus from the school.

“[Adoration and reconciliation] were very well done,” he said. “They have great music to draw you into prayer and incense—they engage all of the senses. For our group and myself, the adoration experience is really powerful.”

The lines were long for reconciliation the evening of Jan. 5 as thousands of students took advantage of the opportunity to grow a bit closer to God. The experience impressed Tracie Tibbault, a junior from Kansas State University.

“I think the moment I knew it was worth all the planning and fundraising was seeing more than 12,000 people on their knees at adoration,” said Tibbault, who helped coordinate the school’s three charter buses. “Sitting in the back watching student after student go to confessing, seeing 200-plus priests and knowing God’s mercy was present, that’s when I knew it was all worth it.”

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E-mailed photos
Photos should be saved in jpg format and be at least 500 kb. Color photos are preferred. We recommend to have a photo where the couple’s faces are close to each other. Please send your photo as an attachment to the following e-mail: cclark@archindy.org. Subject line: Spring Marriage (Last name). In the e-mail, please include the information in the form located below.

E-mailed photos

Featured speaker Mark Hart, vice president of Life Team, tries to inspire an audience of young adults on Jan. 3 during the biennial SEEK conference at San Antonio’s Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center. (CNS photo/courtesy FOCUS)

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If you are planning your wedding between Jan. 30 and July 1, or if you were married between July 1, 2016 and Jan. 30, 2017 and did not have your marriage published, you can submit information for the next edition of the marriage edition.

Please e-mail your information to: cclark@archindy.org. Subject line: Spring Marriage (Last name). In the e-mail, please include the information in the form located below.

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For more information, please call 812-535-2952.

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Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana  
Retreat for Busy Catholic Moms.

7 p.m. Friday, Feb. 17 to 1:30 Sunday Feb. 19

Join Sister Mary Montgomery for a weekend filled with sharing, prayer, reflection, and laughter which will leave you rejuvenated and ready to face the challenges in your life.

Cost: $225 (includes housing & meals)  
$125 (without housing)