Pro-life bills supported by ICC advance in General Assembly

By Brigid Curtis Ayer

Two pro-life bills supported by the Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC) have advanced at the midpoint, commonly called “crossover” in the Indiana General Assembly. “Crossover” refers to the midpoint in the legislative session when House bills “crossover” to the other chamber, the Senate, and Senate bills “crossover” to the House.

Senate Bill 404, authored by Sen. Erin Houchin, R-Salem, would require parents seeking to arrange for an abortion for a pregnant minor child to verify their parental status. The measure would prevent adults who are not a minor’s parent from posing as the minor’s parent. The bill also would prohibit a person from aiding or assisting a minor who is pregnant in obtaining an abortion without the consent of the minor’s parent or guardian. If an adult did aid and assist a minor in obtaining an abortion without parental consent, it would allow parents to collect damages against an adult who either posed as the minor child’s parent to obtain an abortion, or aided or assisted the minor in obtaining an abortion.

“At this time in Indiana, we have a parental consent law, but we don’t have verification that that person is an actual parent,” said Houchin. As a former Department of Children Services employee, Houchin said she has seen this happen. “We can clarify in our state law that someone must verify they are the parent of a child seeking an abortion.”

Corrine Purvis, an attorney with Bopp Law Firm who serves as general counsel for Indiana Right to Life, testified in support of the bill. She said Senate Bill 404 would strengthen parental rights by protecting parents’ ability to give consent for their minor child to obtain an abortion by ensuring that parental verification is required and enforced. Eight other states require parental verification.

Deeper commitment to prison ministry hopes to change lives of all involved

By John Shaughnessy

Lynne Weisenbach knows it sounds unusual to describe her time in a jail as “sacred.”

After all, she acknowledges that it was disturbing for her to surrender her keys and her driver’s license as she went through the jail’s security clearance area.

And that uneasy feeling heightened when she heard the door close behind her as she entered the jail.

Still, there is one sound that is more memorable to her as she recalls those evenings when she visited the female inmates in that county jail, and prayed alongside them during a Mass that a priest celebrated there.

“There were 25 to 30 women in a crowded, stark room, and they’d start singing,” she says with a smile. “So many of the women came from religious backgrounds, and they appreciated the opportunity to sing. Their eyes were closed, and their singing filled the room. At that moment, jail was a sacred place.”

She pauses before she adds, “I wasn’t prepared for the spirituality of the women. As we were leaving, they would say, ‘Thank you for coming, thank you for not forgetting us.’ You could see they wanted to hug us, but it wasn’t allowed. We could shake hands—the grasp was unbelievable. And you could see how much it meant to them by the look in their eyes.”

Weisenbach shares that perspective as the chairperson of the archdiocese’s prison ministry task force—a group that met regularly for six months in 2016 to formulate a plan to help individuals, parishes and the broader archdiocese itself make an even deeper commitment to prison ministry.

While the task force has offered five major recommendations (see story, page 2), Weisenbach views prison ministry as “a magnetic force” that changes the lives of everyone involved in it.

“It’s about mercy and redemption”

By Natalie Hoefer

On Jan. 27, President Donald J. Trump signed an executive order temporarily banning refugees from entering the United States for four months.

While the ban was blocked by a federal judge on Feb. 4, refugee resettlement agencies such as Catholic Charities Indianapolis’ Refugee and Immigrant Services (RIS) in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis have been left uncertain of their future, especially with a revised ban expected soon, but not announced prior to the publication of The Criterion.

Heidi Smith, director of RIS, spoke to nearly 70 people on refugee resettlement at a meeting of the Catholic Business Exchange at the Northside Knights of Columbus facility in Indianapolis on Feb. 17.

“As we’ve heard so much about refugee resettlement in the news lately, it can be kind of hard to figure out what exactly is going on, especially when it’s a topic that has only come
PRISON

continued from page 1

circumstances. And it’s a good challenge to do this. I see it as a way to grow in my faith, and to serve in a way that is underserved and not always understood.

“Some of the misunderstanding is that if you help in prisons, it devalues or undermines what happens to the victim. But this isn’t about not respecting or not honoring victims. We do this in honor of God’s mercy for these people. It’s about mercy and redemption.”

The desire for a deeper commitment to prison ministry is one of the legacies of Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, the former archbishop of Indianapolis, who viewed building relationships with people in prisons and jails as an opportunity for the archdiocese and them personally to draw closer to God.

So with the help of the archdiocese’s chancellor of ministry “Mickey” Lentz, Cardinal Tobin created a task force to develop ways to increase that commitment.

“I can see why Cardinal Tobin chose this ministry for greater focus,” Lentz says. “This is social justice in the truest sense. The archdiocese respects and upholds the dignity of every human being.”

Annette “Mickey” Lentz, archdiocesan chancellor

Task force recommendations aim to improve prison ministry outreach

By John Shaughnessy

As the archdiocese strives to help parolees, groups and individuals make an even deeper commitment to prison ministry, here are the five main recommendations that an archdiocesan task force has offered to achieve that goal:

• Foster education.

A key component of this recommendation will involve preparing a presentation for diocesan jail and prisons that will be shared with interested parishes and groups.

• Extend pastoral care to persons in prisons and jails.

The major emphasis here will be on developing ways to recruit, educate and train volunteers to visit people in jails and prisons. Efforts will include developing a training program, putting together e-mail distribution lists for volunteers, and creating a website that provides educational resources.

www.archindy.org/prison

A main contact at the archdiocese is Deacon Michael Braun, director of the Secretariat for Pastoral Ministries. He can be reached by e-mail at mbraun@archindy.org or phone at 317-236-1531 or 1-800-382-9836, ext. 1531.

• Assist people who are re-entering society after prison.

The focus here is on building relationships that will help people as they return to society. Key elements of this goal include training potential mentors to help people during this transition, and establishing connections with parishes and the St. Vincent de Paul Society to provide material needs to assist people during this time. Another emphasis involves working with employees and programs that provide support and job opportunities for people who have been in jail or prison.

• Foster parachurch partners in support ministries.

The task force encourages parachurch organizations of parishes to work together to provide support for inmates, victims of crime and the families of both.

Support would include sending cards and letters, becoming prayer partners, donating subscriptions to magazines that offer Scripture reflection, and joining advocacy networks for victim and prisoners’ rights.

• Empower the task force.

Support at the archdiocesan level will be an important part of a deeper commitment to prison ministry. In this regard, the task force has recommended appointing a commissioner in prison ministry, hiring a coordinator to lead prison/jail ministry in the archdiocese, and organizing an annual event that will focus on education and support for prison/jail ministry.

St. Michael Parish hosts session on pre-planning a funeral Mass on March 18

St. Michael Parish hosts two sessions on pre-planning a funeral Mass at its Parish Life Center, 3354 W. 30th St., in Indianapolis, from 9-11:30 a.m. on March 18.

The session will address the elements of pre-planning of the sick, cremation, the funeral Mass and its Scripture readings, hymns and symbols; and burial.

Information will also be presented on pre-planned giving.

Speakers include Father Michael Hoyt, the parish’s administrator; Ruth Buening, its fundraising Mass coordinator; and Thelma Fisher, archdiocesan director of planned giving.

Once a death occurs, if no pre-planning has been done, there is the task of making arrangements and decisions in a relatively short period of time while trying to deal with grief, sadness, and perhaps shock. Financial legal implications can leave those with the responsibilities completely overwhelmed,” says Buening.

“While many people do make arrangements for the initial care of the body with the funeral home, few people plan for their funeral Mass,” she says.

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Papal remarks on immigration apply to U.S., too

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—When Pope Francis affirms basic Christian principles, he is not singling out one person or nation, but he definitely is not excluding them either. The ongoing global migration and refugee crisis is a case in point.

The United States is not the only country engaged in a heated political debate over immigration policy with often opposing voices focusing on ensuring the country’s security, regulating numbers based on the resources available to resettle them; or living up to an ethical obligation—and often a legal one, according to international treaties—to shelter people fleeing violence and persecution, and to welcome those seeking a more dignified life for themselves and their families.

While the pope’s remarks on welcoming migrants and refugees cannot be read as focused on the U.S. debate, one also cannot pretend they have nothing to do with it.

The new Migrants and Refugees Section of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development “regularly informs the Holy Father about events that touch on the issue of migration, including the current debate underway in the United States of America,” Scalabrinian Father Fabio Baggio, undersecretary of the office, told Catholic News Service (CNS) on Feb. 22.

For the first time in at least a year, more than 1,000 people commented on the pope’s tweet in English, six times the normal comment rate. By Feb. 22, the tweet also had racked up more than 64,000 retweets and some 160,000 likes.

Many of the comments on his reminder of the Biblical obligation to welcome a stranger were not favorable, running the gamut from instructing the pope to “back off” and stay out of politics to wondering how many migrants and refugees the Vatican has welcomed.

The @Pontifex Twitter account does not reply to comments. But Pope Francis has responded to similar comments in the past, pointing out that living the Gospel in the real world often will have political or social consequences. And he has, in fact, taken refugees.

While Pope Francis and the Vatican are providing food, shelter and support to some 30 refugee families—mostly Syrians and also but a family from Eritrea—you cannot calculate the Catholic Church’s welcoming of migrants simply by counting how many asylum seekers are hosted by the Vatican, a state with 572 citizens, of whom only 444 are residents.”

Father Baggio said, “The pope leads a Church that goes beyond every national boundary and works on behalf of millions of migrants and refugees around the world, in many cases filling the gaps left by the institutions charged with caring for them.”

While the pope’s comments and actions have a political impact, he is not trying to dictate a country’s immigration regulations, a Vatican official said.

“While the pope gives a broad baseline of what should guide and animate immigration policy, then as he has said, every country must mold and articulate these indications for its own situation,” Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state, told reporters on Feb. 21.”But, certainly, the basic dimension must be that of welcoming. Welcoming is the only Christian attitude, an attitude that also is fundamentally the humane one.”

Father Baggio said, Pope Francis knows countries must “evaluate, on the basis of real data, the impact welcoming migrants will have on the common good they must seek for their constituents.”

But, he pointed out, “historically when faced with serious human tragedies, great countries never turned their backs on people fleeing, and their commitment to solidarity always abundantly repaid their small sacrifices.”

Catholics may eat meat on St. Patrick’s Day

St. Patrick’s Day, March 17, falls this year on a Lenten Friday, a penitential day for Catholics when they do not eat meat.

After due consideration of a number of requests and recognizing that this is a traditional day of celebration for many of the faithful, the Vatican has dispensed Catholics of the archdiocese of the obligation to abstain from meat on Friday, March 17.

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As we begin the season of Lent, let’s see what we can do to really prepare for the celebration of the mysteries of our redemption on Good Friday and the Resurrection on Easter. Let’s face it, many of us usually start out like a house on fire, but soon grow lackadaisical. Pope Francis is trying to help us. On Feb. 7, he issued his Lenten message titled “The Word is a gift. Other persons are gift.” He steered away from preaching about the usual Lenten practices of fasting, prayer and almsgiving. Well, perhaps not almsgiving since his message was that we must “serve Christ present in our brothers and sisters in need.”

The pope encouraged us to reflect on the parable of the rich man and Lazarus found in the Gospel of St. Luke (Lk 16:19-31). Lazarus is not anonymous in this parable, the pope points out. “His features are clearly delineated, and he appears as an individual with his own story.”

By contrast, Jesus doesn’t give the rich man a name. However, he describes his life as one of wealth, greed and vanity. The pope wrote. “For those corrupted by love of riches, nothing exists beyond their own ego. Those around them do not come into their line of sight. The result of attachment to money is a sort of blindness. The rich man does not see the poor man who is hungry and thirsty, who is not clothed, who is not in a home.

Perhaps this Lent, we can find ways to help the Lazaruses in our communities. Perhaps they’re the homeless, or immigrants trying to make a decent living for their families, or those who find it difficult to put enough food on the table for their families. But the pope’s message isn’t just about recognizing other persons as gift. He also wrote that Lent should be a time “for renewing our encounter with Christ, living in his word, in the sacraments and in our neighbor.” That’s where prayer and fasting come in.

All of our parishes try to make it easy for us to get to the sacrament of reconciliation, and we certainly should do that during Lent. We should also try to do more spiritual reading.

As for fasting, there was a time when Catholics fasted every day during Lent except Sundays. Those days are past, but surely we can give up more than just meat on the Fridays of Lent. We can try to do better than that.

In the parable of Lazarus and the rich man, the rich man doesn’t learn to care for others, including Lazarus, until it’s too late—after his death. Perhaps during this Lent, we could spend some time contemplating what will happen to us after our death. As the 25th chapter of St. Matthew’s Gospel spells out so well, we will be judged by how well we served others—if we fed the poor, gave drink to the thirsty, welcomed the stranger, clothed the naked, or visited the ill and those in prison.

As Pope Francis said, this Lent may “rediscover the gift of God’s word, be purified of the sin that blinds us and serve Christ present in our brothers and sisters in need.”

—John F. Fink

Serve Christ present in those in need

Reflection/John Mundell

What should I ‘give up’ for Lent?

“It cannot be emphasized enough how everything is interconnected.”


Two weeks ago, my wife Julie and I were lucky enough to be standing in the Vatican at an audience with Pope Francis with 1,200 supporters of the Economy of Communion, an international movement dedicated to the eradication of poverty through the pooling and redistribution of business profits to support those in need.

Thinking the pope was going to give us some praise for the work that we do, his words came as a reassurance but also a strong challenge to go beyond what is expected. “An entrepreneur who is only a Good Samaritan,” he said, “does half of his duty; he takes care of today’s victims, but certainly he cannot carry on tomorrow.” It was a reminder to us of how easy it is to be satisfied with just maintaining the status quo. And when the real challenge came in one brief sentence: “In the logic of the Gospel, if one does not give all of himself, he never grows enough of himself.” These words found a place deep inside of me, especially as I returned to the United States after having spent 10 days with people from all over the world who do not have the things we Americans have in our lives, but who have, nonetheless, true happiness and meaning in simplicity, because of and not in spite of their lack of material possessions.

This pope has reminded us in his recent environmental encyclical “Laudato Si’, on Care for Our Common Home” just how interconnected our lives are and how people and living things around the world are in an integral ecology.

What we do and how we live impacts others, for good or for bad, even if we cannot see it in our day-to-day choices. At the beginning of this Lent, in this year, at this time, an examination of conscience leaves me bare.

“Shall I give up for Lent?” I recall a quote from the inspiring American saint Elizabeth Ann Seton. “Live simply, that others may simply live.” With the pope’s reminder, I know the answer. It won’t be so much “giving up” as “giving.”

Lord, please help me to strip away everything that keeps me from offering my “all” to you that I find in the person you place before me in each moment this Lent. You, Lord, are our only good.

(John Mundell is a member of St. Pius X Parish in Indianapolis and of the archdiocesan Commission for Creation Care Ministry, which is part of the Office of Pastoral Ministries. For more information, contact Deacon Mike Braun at 317-236-1531 or mhbraun@archindy.org. Lent 4.2 is a seven-week faith formation program for parishes that uses the traditional Lenten readings and themes as guides and almsgiving to heed the call of Pope Francis to care for our common home. Through weekly bulletin inserts, participants learn about the significant issues facing our human family, what the Church is saying about them and how they can take practical steps to make a difference in our world. More ideas about living simply can be found at www.Lent42.org or TheEarthCube.org †)
Indianapolis parish to host annual Lenten speaker series

By Sean Gallagher

Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Parish, 5200 S. Meridian St., in Indianapolis, will host its 17th annual Lenten speaker series titled “Spaghetti and Spirituality,” on Wednesday evenings in Lent, starting on March 15 and ending on April 5. Prior to dinner and each week’s presentation, the Blessed Sacrament will be exposed in the parish’s church for adoration following the conclusion of an Anglican Use Mass celebrated at noon. An ordinary form Mass, celebrated in English, will start at 5:45 p.m. A light, meatless pasta dinner begins at 6:30 p.m. at Msgr. Priori Hall. Each presentation will begin at approximately 7:15 p.m., and ordinarily concludes by 8:30 p.m.

Holy Rosary parishioner Julie Lehner helps organize the series, and is looking forward to it this year. “When we learn more about our Catholic beliefs, we can better live out our lives with faith and with joy,” she said. “This year, we have some amazing individuals whose thoughts and ideas will sink in and inspire you day to day. ‘Maybe it will feed your prayer life, help you approach that person at the office or pique your curiosity about something and make you hungry to learn more.’”

Patty Schneier will begin the series on March 15 with a presentation titled “One Step Away,” in which the Catholic author and former radio host will reflect on her journey of faith through suffering, pain and in facing her own mortality.

On March 22, Father Joseph Newton, archdiocesan vicar judicial, will speak on the topic: “Is There Catholic Divorce? The Current Canonical Status of Marriage.”

As leader of the archdiocesan Metropolitan Tribunal, Father Newton and his co-workers strive to further the salvation of souls by offering pastoral care and guidance to people across central and southern Indiana seeking a declaration of nullity (commonly called an ‘annulment’) of a previous marriage.

Dr. Scott Sullivan will give a presentation on March 29 titled, “Did Jesus Really Rise from The Dead? How to Use Reason and Evidence to Make a Case for the Resurrection of Jesus.”

Sullivan earned a doctorate in philosophy at the University of St. Thomas in Houston. Through his production company, Classical Theist, Sullivan seeks to strengthen the faith of Catholics by introducing them to the Church’s intellectual tradition.

A convert to Catholicism and a native of southern Indiana who now lives with his wife and eight children in Texas, Sullivan was previously a competitor in international kickboxing and holds a black belt in Brazilian Jiu Jitsu.

The last presentation in this year’s “Spaghetti and Spirituality” will feature a concert by the St. Ambrose Schola Cantorum sacred music choir from the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music in Bloomington on April 5.

The concert, titled “A Bullet Train through Western Music” will help attendees learn about the role the Church has played over the centuries in the development of music in western culture. The concert will take place in Holy Rosary Church after the evening’s supper in the parish’s Priori Hall.

Title IX obligations regarding transgender students, administration officials said, and that it also explained how the Education and Justice departments will “evaluate a school’s compliance with these obligations.”

Title IX statute prohibits sex discrimination in educational programs and activities, like sports. Some months before issuing the directive, the Obama administration had warned schools that denying transgender students access to the facilities and activities of their choice was illegal under its interpretation of federal sex discrimination laws. The federal Title IX statute prohibits sex discrimination in educational programs and activities, like sports. Some months before issuing the directive, the Obama administration had warned schools that denying transgender students access to the facilities and activities of their choice was illegal under its interpretation of federal sex discrimination laws. The federal Title IX statute prohibits sex discrimination in educational programs and activities, like sports. Some months before issuing the directive, the Obama administration had warned schools that denying transgender students access to the facilities and activities of their choice was illegal under its interpretation of federal sex discrimination laws.
March 5-6
St. Maurice and Immaculate Conception parishes? Lenten Mission
Father Daniel Bedel presenting. Sun., St. Maurice Church, 8574 Harrison St., Naperville. “Finding God Within Us.” 7 p.m.; Mon., Immaculate Conception Church, 201 E. County Road 820 S., Greenbush. “Finding God Outside of Us.” Information: Laurie Husted, 812-496-7512, hustedmir@ gmail.com.

March 7
Mission 27 Resale, 132 Leota St., Indianapolis. Senior Discount Day, every Tuesday, sale gets 30 percent off clothing. 9 a.m.-6 p.m.; ministry supports Indianapolis St. Vincent de Paul Society Food Pantry and Changing Lives Forever program. Information: 317-687-8260.

March 8
St. Luke the Evangelist Parish, 7575 Holiday Drive, Indianapolis. Lenten Supper Sponsors and Supporters series: week one of five, (March 15, 22, 29 and April 5), author Beth Leonard speaking on “Gite Mercy? Don’t Leave Lent Without it!” 5:30 p.m. Mass, 6 p.m. soup supper, 7 p.m. speaker. Information: Angela Wiltzie, 317-257-4373.

March 10
March 10-12

March 11
St. Monica Parish, St. Augustine Room, 6113 N. Michigan Road, Indianapolis. "Marriage in Focus: Marriage Enrichment," for engaged and married couples, Tom and Mary Roesnig presenting, 5 p.m. Mass (optional); 6:30 p.m. pitch-in dinner and speakers, free-wheel offering, carry out available. Information: marclee15@gmail.com.

March 12
March 12-14
Carmel, Ind. "Explore, Explain and Experience," Mercy Father Tribute Fundraiser, benefiting the Joe and Barb Krier Memorial Grant, 7:30-11:30 p.m.; beer, wine, appetizers, live music, $30 per person, 10 and younger $20. Free parking. Parting gift tickets: stlouisbishop@carmel.org or 317-872-9888.

March 13
St. Mark the Evangelist Church, 535 E. Edgewood Ave., Indianapolis. Disability Awareness Mass and Reception. 5:30 p.m. Mass followed by reception in Shenan Hall. Information: Dan O’Brien, dubrien@brownservices.com.

March 15
All Saints Parish, St. Joseph Campus, 7536 Church Lane, Westfield. "Spirit of Show and Lunch," artists, soup and sandwich lunch and bake sale, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Information: 812-576-4302 or www.allisachtsuethely.org.

March 16-19
King of Columbus Council 3443, 2100 E. 71st St., Indianapolis. Bishop Chaturd High School 2017 Tropical Paradise. $55 for all. Information, registration: 812-933-6437, center@oldenburgosf.com. More information, log on to rilindy.com.†

March 16-April 6
Oldenburg Franciscan Center, 22143 Mass St., Oldenburg. Lenten Series on Matthew 22. April 15. "Close Walk with Thee," 7:30 p.m.; "Mercy Father Experience, Explore, Explain and Experience," 5:30 p.m. Mass (optional), 6:30 p.m. pitch-in dinner and speakers, free-wheel offering. Registration: register@feministfathers.org (include dish you will bring). Information: 317-293-2193.

March 17
March 17-19

March 19
March 19-20

March 19-22
Indianapolis. "Got Mercy? Don’t Leave Lent Without It!" 5:30 p.m. Mass, 7 p.m. presentation.

March 23
March 23-26
Bishop Chatard High School, 7536 Church Lane, Indianapolis. "Praying for Peace in the World and in Our Hearts," 7:30 p.m.; "Mercy Father Experience, Explore, Explain and Experience," 5:30 p.m. Mass (optional), 6:30 p.m. pitch-in dinner and speakers, free-wheel offering. Registration: register@feministfathers.org (include dish you will bring). Information: 317-293-2193.

March 24
March 24-25
Oldenburg Franciscan Center, 22143 Mass St., Oldenburg. Lenten Series on Matthew 22. April 15. "Close Walk with Thee," 7:30 p.m.; "Mercy Father Experience, Explore, Explain and Experience," 5:30 p.m. Mass (optional), 6:30 p.m. pitch-in dinner and speakers, free-wheel offering. Registration: register@feministfathers.org (include dish you will bring). Information: 317-293-2193.

March 25
March 25-26
Oldenburg Franciscan Center, 22143 Mass St., Oldenburg. Lenten Series on Matthew 22. April 15. "Close Walk with Thee," 7:30 p.m.; "Mercy Father Experience, Explore, Explain and Experience," 5:30 p.m. Mass (optional), 6:30 p.m. pitch-in dinner and speakers, free-wheel offering. Registration: register@feministfathers.org (include dish you will bring). Information: 317-293-2193.

March 26-30
March 26-30
Oldenburg Franciscan Center, 22143 Mass St., Oldenburg. Lenten Series on Matthew 22. April 15. "Close Walk with Thee," 7:30 p.m.; "Mercy Father Experience, Explore, Explain and Experience," 5:30 p.m. Mass (optional), 6:30 p.m. pitch-in dinner and speakers, free-wheel offering. Registration: register@feministfathers.org (include dish you will bring). Information: 317-293-2193.
Continuando uno de sus temas predilectos, el de la importancia de “ir adelante en la fe” y no quedarnos atascados en el aquí y ahora, el papa Francisco nos dice que la “memoria,” nuestra capacidad para recordar, es esencial para avanzar en el camino de la vida. La memoria es motivación. Es lo que nos impulsa a seguir adelante y a ser un pueblo que no se ría. Los pasos dados, no se puede olvidar nuestra vida cristiana sin la memoria del pasado, el papa Francisco nos dice. “Que la memoria, nuestra capacidad para recordar, es esencial para avanzar en el camino de la vida.”

El papa Francisco nos dice que “la memoria es una gracia. Señor, que yo no olvide los buenos momentos, tambien los feos; las alegrías y las cruces.”

Incluso el recuerdo de los malos momentos es algo necesario para evitar quedarse paralizado por la inacción. Los momentos de sufrimiento nos recuerdan que “no debemos conformarnos con nada menos que la perfección, tanto con respecto a nuestras propias vidas como a las vidas de los demás. Estamos llamados a ir en pos y a esforzarnos por aquello que es bueno y verdadero, sin dejarnos caer en el conformismo de cumplir con los requisitos mínimos de la vida cristiana.”

El papa Francisco cree que un enfoque minimalista al apostolado cristiano, es decir, cumplir con los mandamientos religiosos pero no arriesgar, no ir más allá por amor a Cristo y a su pueblo, se puede convertir en una pusilanimidad. “Te olvido de tus tiempos de esfuerzo para el bien de los demás. Que quiera conservar su propia vida, la vida cristiana sin mirar al futuro con la esperanza del encuentro con el Señor.”

La gracia de la memoria hace posible la esperanza. "Trusting in him doesn't magically solve our problems, but it allows for facing them with the right spirit—courageously," he said before praying the Angelus with those gathered in St. Peter’s Square on Feb. 26.

"I am brave because I trust in my Father who cares for everyone and loves us very much." The pope’s reflection looked at the day’s Gospel reading (Mt 6:24-34) in which Jesus tells his disciples not to worry about your life” (Mt 6:25), what to wear and what to eat. Instead, look at God how provides for the wild flowers and animals, and learn from them that worrying will not “add a single moment to your life” (Mt 6:27), the passage reads.

Too much worrying "tricks taking serenity and balance away" from one’s life, the pope said. "Often, this anxiety is pointless because it is unable to change the course of events."

"God is our shelter, the source of our serenity and our peace. He is the rock of our salvation," he said. "Whoever holds onto God never falls. He remains steady against evil that always lies in ambush," the pope added.

Many people do not realize or they deny that God is a "great friend, ally, Father," making this a world of "orphans" who would rather seek security in or show "an excessive love" for earthly goods and wealth, he said.
Refugees

up in the news in the last few years,” Smith said.

“They’re literally running for their lives.”

Refugees are not people simply seeking a better life in America. Smith explained.

“Refugees are pushed from their homes because they have nowhere else to go,” she said. “When I ask them how they knew it was time to leave, … for most of them it was when the war was literally at their doorstep. Their village was lost, or they had lost homes, or they had family members who were brutally killed in front of their eyes.

“They’re literally running for their lives. It’s not a refuge, it’s not a kind of faith journey, because they literally have absolutely nothing else—they’ve left their homes, they’ve left everything that they’ve ever known.”

She explained that refugees have three lives: the life they knew in their homeland, their life waiting to be resettled, and their life once they are resettled.

“In that second phase, it’s a life of waiting,” said Smith. “Sometimes that can be [in] a refugee camp in a neighboring country. Sometimes that can be [in] a city in a neighboring country where they’re under the radar … as illegal residents. Some of them find there are limitations because they can’t stay where they are. They don’t know what will come next. Their dream would be for peace, and for them to go to their homeland, but for so many that opportunity doesn’t come. Some people live in refugee camps for decades.”

* “Refugee” is a very specific status

Smith explained that the placement of refugee resettlement began after World War II. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was founded in December 1950 in response to the situation in Europe. Smith said it was established to accommodate 20 million refugees who had fled World War II. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was founded in December 1950 in response to the situation in Europe.

“The goal was repatriation,” said Smith. “That remains the top priority today, and the top priority for the UNHCR, which is around the world.”

Refugee and Immigrant Services

Purvis said the bill also would strengthen the placement of refugee resettlement began after World War II. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was founded in December 1950 in response to the situation in Europe.

“The refugees then begin the busy matter of assimilating into American society,” Smith said. “Each of the nine national agencies has hundreds of local affiliates [like RIS] where they designate cases to,” she said. “Refugee and Immigrant Services staff members or volunteers go to the airport to pick up refugees assigned to be resettled in Indianapolis, and drive them to a temporary apartment furnished with donated items. The refugees learn in the matter of assimilating into American society. They attend classes offered by IRS on learning English, social service providers, and orientation classes, to set up a bank account, balance a checkbook and more, plus receive job placement assistance.”

“Most refugees are able to get a job within one to three months after arriving, which is good, because the financial assistance that’s provided to them covers rent and utilities and basic needs is very short term, just for a couple of months,” said Smith. “So it’s not only good for the refugees, it’s good for our economy, because refugees are hardworking, resilient people. We want people to understand the goodness of who these people are and what they bring. They’re so excited for the opportunity to be here, to learn English, become American and start their new lives.”

Last year, RIS resettled 676 refugees from six countries, about 500 of whom were joining family members already resettled in Indianapolis.

“So when we hear executive orders that are even doing a temporary block, it puts these families in such a state of worry, not knowing if they’re ever going to be reunited with their families again,” Smith explained.

Another cause for concern she cited was the 110,000 refugees that Congress allowed for the federal budget year that began last October has been decreased to 50,000.

“Another cause for concern,” Smith said, “is that the bill would change the way that the refugee resettlement program in question, wondering how we’ll sustain ourselves, particularly not knowing what will happen past those four months.”

While those working on this issue are awaiting the text of the next executive order, Smith said the agency is not seeking to resettle South Sudanese or anyone in a four-month period where we’re not having any come in—that leaves the future of our program in question, wondering how we’ll sustain ourselves, particularly not knowing what will happen past those four months.

“They’re trying to help refugees get a job and some are aware of the plight of the refugees was not heard by all in the community.”

“We’re asking for financial contributions, so that we can sustain ourselves throughout this time of uncertainty,” she said. “When refugees do start coming again, we want to have the same talented staff available to serve them. And we ask you to contact your representatives to let them know the goodness that refugees bring into our community.”

* “So touched by their faith”

Jim Lustin, founder of the Catholic Business Exchange and a member of St. Thomas Aquinas Parish in Indianapolis, found the talk to be “timely and very interesting.”

“As most people, we don’t have a clue what is the reality of the refugees’ plight is,” he said. “All we get are the soundbites at the 6 o’clock news.”

“It would be wonderful if every person in every parish could hear [Smith’s] message.”

One person present at the talk who is aware of the plight of the refugees was Alice Steppe, a member of St. Pius X Parish in Indianapolis.

“All of my grandparents were immigrants, so I know some of that story,” she said.

Steppe has been involved in helping the refugees from Myanmar (formerly Burma) in her parish.

“I’ve had a business and a realtor, I’ve gotten to know the families. … One man looked at four houses, and he said, ‘I want this one, because this is where my Marian shrine will go.’ I have been so touched by their faith.”

The story of the refugees’ experiences has impacted Steppe as well.

“When I hear the stories from their mouths, I just can’t believe the things I’ve heard,” she said. “I have been involved in some small way in their lives.”

“And they’re so motivated. I love the energy they bring to our liturgy. Now, they’re involved in the Mass, they’re readers. I see them being integrated into our lives, and they’re so excited to be American. It’s been a huge. It forms us. It’s a part of that hospitality as Catholic Americans.”

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“She said Smith.

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(To hear Smith’s talk, log on to gogolatv.com. For more information on Refugee and Immigrant Services or to donate, log onto www.indianacc.org/ refugee )
Priests’ pilgrimage of faith connects local Church to France

By John Shaughnessy

As he looked around the historic room in France, Father Eric Augenstein couldn’t stop thinking about the 14-year-old youth who once witnessed the horror and the courage that unfolded there.

He also couldn’t stop thinking about how people’s choices of faith can have a great impact on the faith of others, sometimes even creating influences that extend for generations and across centuries.

Standing in the room, Father Augenstein learned that it had once been used as a chapel during the French Revolution of the late 18th century—a chapel that later became a courtroom where priests and other people were condemned to death by guillotine during a period known as the Reign of Terror.

Letting all that horror and history soak into him, Father Augenstein thought of the 14-year-old boy who watched as the priests were sentenced to death. The vocation directors for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis also marveled at how that defining experience would eventually lead the youth to leave France, travel to Indiana and become the archdiocese’s first bishop.

“Fourteen-year-old Simon Bruté would sit in the back of the chapel-turned-courtroom during the trials of priests, all the while knowing that his mother was hiding priests in their apartment one floor below,” Father Augenstein says. “He would also secretly take the Eucharist to prisoners.

“Over the years, I had heard a lot about Bishop Bruté’s ministry in the United States, but I didn’t know about his firsthand experiences of the French Revolution and the Reign of Terror. To be in the same room where the young Simon Bruté took all these events unfold was quite moving.

“Then to think that the courageous witness of these condemned priests inspired Simon to answer God’s call to the priesthood himself—that’s a vocation story worth much reflection and admiration.”

Discovering the roots of faith

That story of the ripple effects of faith is just one of the memorable moments from the journey that Father Augenstein, Father Anthony Hollowell and Father Kyle Rodden made to France in January.

Indeed, that moment is just one part of the extraordinary story that connects the archdiocese to a certain section of France—a connection that Father Augenstein described in a blog post he wrote about the journey:

“The first three dioceses of the Diocese of Vincennes (now the Archdiocese of Indianapolis) were born in France. —Two of the major religious and educational institutions in Indiana—the University of Notre Dame and Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College—were founded by religious orders that were started in France.

—The only canonized saint who lived and ministered in Indiana—St. Theodora Guérin—was born and raised in France.

—The first Catholics in Indiana were French.

—Even more remarkably, the three most prominent Catholic pioneers of Indiana were not only all French, they were from a small region of northwestern France, 150 miles east of Rennes is Le Mans, where Blessed Basil Moreau founded the Congregation of Holy Cross and sent a group of priests and brothers, including Father Edward Sorin—who had been born halfway between Rennes and Le Mans—to Indiana, where they founded the University of Notre Dame.

—And all of this happened in more or less a 50-year period after the French Revolution, from 1800-1850.”

Packed with that history, the three priests set off to discover the roots of the Catholic faith in the archdiocese—and the roots of faith in their own lives.

Moments to treasure

One of the most moving stops on their journey occurred in the village of Ruelle, home to the motherhouse of the Sisters of Providence—the order that has had a hand in the education of all three priests as they grew up in Indiana.

“On this property, we went to a small house, not much bigger than a barn, and it contained two bedrooms, a common room and a little chapel,” recalls Father Hollowell, who is finishing his master’s degree from the Catholic university in Indiana French Catholic ancestry,” Father Rodden says.

“Then did the fact that a band of men so did the renewed, meaningful effort to travel to the wilderness of Indiana to begin a religious community of women who would help shape the minds and hearts of children throughout the state for generations to come.

So did the fact that a band of men from the Congregation of Holy Cross that Father Moreau founded would leave France in 1841, and a year later establish the University of Notre Dame.

So did the new knowledge about the French Revolution’s influence on the life of Bishop Bruté.

“The testimonies of their devotion and zeal came to life before our eyes as we touched the humble beginnings of our Indiana French Catholic ancestry,” Father Rodden says.

A fire of faith, flavored by ashes

Father Hollowell sees something poetic in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis being “founded on the ashes of the French Revolution.”

“Our diocesan founders lived at a time when being a priest or even participating in the sacraments was immediately punished by death,” he says. “Yet they lived through these times with a deep sense of Christian joy and trust in the providence of God.

“Neither Bruté, nor Guérin, nor Moreau could have possibly foreseen how their small acts of trust would grow into a gushing fountain of grace: how many people have been baptized in our archdiocese over the years, how many first Communions, how many happy Catholic weddings, how many lives enriched and souls saved by the seeds they planted. But they did trust, and they did act. And the result is astonishing.”

It’s also a lesson in faith for our times, he says.

“This trip gave me a deep appreciation for the grandeur of God’s plan and the beauty of his providence as it unfolds over time,” Father Hollowell says. “Pope Francis encourages us to ‘go out to the margins.’ I understand more deeply just how such an effort can bring forth abundant fruit, because 200 years ago the untamed lands of central and southern Indiana were definitely in the margins.”

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As part of their pilgrimage to France in January, Fathers Eric Augenstein, Anthony Hollowell and Kyle Rodden of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis traveled to Le Mans to visit the shrine of Blessed Basil Moreau, the founder of the Congregation of Holy Cross—the order that would send Father Edward Sorin from France to Indiana where he would start the University of Notre Dame. (Photos by Father Eric Augenstein)
Lahn Scholarship recipients

Recipients of this year’s Brooke Nichole Lahn Scholarship for international mission trips pose on Feb. 27 at the Archbishops Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center in Indianapolis with the founders of the fund, which is managed by the archdiocesan Catholic Community Foundation. The scholarship was created in memory of Lahn, a lay missionary from St. Gabriel the Archangel Parish in Indianapolis, who was struck and killed by a car in Mexico in 2013 at the age of 23 while doing what she loved—international missionary work. Distributions from the fund are used to provide scholarships for youth of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis who are preparing for their first experience with international mission work. Posing in the photo are, bottom row: Gretchen Bowers, left, Bridget Nash, Rachel Doyle, Ashley Chamberlain and Emily Wysocki; and back row: Collen Lahn, left, Seen Driscoll, Bridge McCarty, Valarie Hummer, Tyler White, Katie Nickelson and Mark Lahn. (Photo by Natalie Hoefer)

Lenten penance services are scheduled at archdiocesan parishes

Parishes throughout the archdiocese have scheduled communal penance services for Lent. The following list of services was reported to The Criterion.

Batesville Deanery
• March 22, 7 p.m. at St. Michael, Brookville
• April 6, 7 p.m. at St. Thomas the Apostle, Fortville

Bloomington Deanery
• March 9, 7 p.m. at St. Martin of Tours, Martinsville
• March 16, 7 p.m. at Our Lord Jesus Christ the King, Paoli
• March 21, 7 p.m. at St. Agnes, Nashville
• March 23, 7 p.m. at Our Lady of the Springs, French Lick
• March 28, 7 p.m. for St. Mary, Mitchell, and St. Vincent de Paul, Bedford, at St. Vincent de Paul
• April 6, 6 p.m. at St. John the Apostle, Bloomington
• April 12, 4-9 p.m. for St. Charles Borromeo, Bloomington, and St. Paul Catholic Center, Bloomington, at St. Paul Catholic Center

Connorsville Deanery
• March 9, 7 p.m. at St. Mary (Immaculate Conception), Rushville
• March 17, 7 p.m. for St. Anne, New Castle, and St. Elizabeth of Hungary, Cambridge City, at St. Elizabeth of Hungary
• March 22, 7 p.m. for St. Gabriel, Connorsville, and St. Bridget of Ireland, Liberty, at St. Bridget after 6 p.m. Mass
• April 4, 4-9 p.m. for St. Elizabeth Ann Seton at St. Mary Church, Richmond, after 5:15 p.m. Mass

Indianapolis East Deanery
• March 7-April 11, 6:30-7:30 p.m. confession every Tuesday at St. Mary
• March 8, 7:30 p.m. at Holy Spirit
• March 13, 7 p.m. for St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) and Our Lady of Lourdes, at Our Lady of Lourdes
• March 27, 7 p.m. for Holy Angels and St. Rita, at St. Rita
• March 31, 6-8 p.m. confession at St. Michael, Greenfield
• April 1, 10 a.m.-noon confession at St. Michael, Greenfield
• April 6, 7 p.m. at St. Thomas the Apostle, Fortville

Indianapolis North Deanery
• March 19, 2-3:30 p.m. at St. Lawrence
• March 20, 7-8:30 p.m. at St. Lawrence
• March 21, 7-8:30 p.m. at St. Lawrence

Indianapolis South Deanery
• March 9, 4 a.m. SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi, Greenwood
• March 8, 6:30 p.m. for St. Ann and St. Joseph, at St. Joseph
• March 14, 7 p.m. at St. Jude
• March 15, 7 p.m. at Holy Name of Jesus, Beech Grove
• March 19, 7 p.m. at Good Shepherd
• March 20, 7 p.m. at Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ
• April 4, 7 p.m. at St. Barnabas, St. Mark the Evangelist and St. Roch, at Barnabas
• April 10, 7 p.m. at Our Lady of the Greenwood, Greenwood

Indianapolis West Deanery
• March 8, 6:30 p.m. at St. Joseph
• March 9, 7 p.m. at Malachy, Brownsburg
• March 14, 7 p.m. at St. Monica
• March 22, 7 p.m. at St. Michael the Archangel
• March 27, 7 p.m. for Holy Angels and St. Rita, at St. Rita
• March 29, 7 p.m. at St. Gabriel the Archangel
• April 4, 7 p.m. at St. Susanna, Plainfield
• April 8, 7 p.m. for St. Anthony and St. Christopher, at St. Christopher
• April 7, 7 p.m. at St. Thomas More, Mooresville

New Albany Deanery
• March 15, 7 p.m. at St. Mary, Navieveton
• March 16, 7 p.m. at St. Mary, Lanesville
• March 21, 6:30 p.m. at St. Michael, Bradford
• April 6, 8 a.m.-4 p.m. at Our Lady of Perpetual Help, New Albany (“12 Hours of Grace”)
• April 9, 1 p.m. at St. John, Starlight

The following additional confession times are part of the New Albany Deanery’s “The Light is on for You.”
• 6-7 p.m. each Tuesday in Lent at St. Anthony of Padua, Clarksville
• 5:45-7:30 p.m. with adoration each Wednesday in Lent at St. Michael, Charlestown
• 6:30-7:30 p.m. each Wednesday in Lent for St. John Paul II, Clark County at St. Paul Church, Sellersburg
• 4-6 p.m. each Wednesday in Lent at Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Jeffersonville
• 4-6 p.m. each Friday in Lent at Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Jeffersonville

Seymour Deanery
• March 14, 7 p.m. for Most Sorrowful Mother of God, Vevay, and Prince of Peace, Madison, at Prince of Peace
• March 15, 7 p.m. at St. Ambrose, Seymour
• March 19, 2 p.m. for St. Rose of Lima, Franklin
• March 28, 6:30 p.m. for St. Ann, Jennings County; St. Mary, North Vernon; and St. Joseph, Jennings County, at St. Mary
• March 30, 7 p.m. at St. Bartholomew, Columbus

Tell City Deanery
• March 15, 6:30 p.m. for St. Boniface, Fulda, and St. Meinrad, St. Meinrad, at St. Meinrad

Terre Haute Deanery
• March 16, 1:30 p.m. for St. Mary-of-the-Woods; Sacred Heart of Jesus; St. Benedict; St. Patrick; St. Joseph University; St. Margaret Mary, all of Terre Haute, at St. Margaret Mary, Terre Haute
• April 3, 7 p.m. for St. Mary-of-the-Woods; St. Mary-of-the-Woods; Sacred Heart of Jesus; St. Benedict; St. Patrick; St. Joseph University; and St. Margaret Mary, all of Terre Haute, at St. Joseph University
• April 10, 7 p.m. at St. Paul the Apostle, Greencastle
• April 11, 7 p.m. at Annunciation, Brazil
Praying the penitential psalms can nurture conversion of heart and mind

By Nancy de Flon

The cross of ashes traced on our forehead on Ash Wednesday invites us to “repent, and believe in the Gospel.” These are one of the two options given by the Church to be said as the ashes are imposed. Lent calls us to examine our lives, assess our relationship with God and discover where we need to set things right.

Our Lenten prayer might include growing in sorrow for sin, and requests to God to help us to change the mind and heart that we call conversation. Our tradition offers prayers whose words can help us along—the seven penitential psalms (Psalm 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143).

Psalms 32 and 102 emphasize an important psychological truth: the effects of guilt on our physical health and other unresolved spiritual issues. Psalm 32 expresses the relief that comes from honestly acknowledging one’s sin to God. I like to use this psalm as a prayer of thanksgiving after confession. Other psalms describe how one’s strength (Psalm 6, 102) and health (Psalm 38) are sapped by guilt. Penitence would be incomplete without confidence in God’s mercy. Despite the guilt that plagues them, the psalmist trusts in God’s merciful love (Psalm 6).

For example, let us choose Psalm 130 as a helpful prayer that can lead one into a deep experience of Christ’s passion and a deeper love for him. Or perhaps committing to a time of eucharistic adoration will help you find the intimacy and silence that bring one to prayer.

But how to pray?

Psalm 130 is traditionally known by its first words in Latin “Miserere mei” ("Have mercy on me").

Composed after David had sinned by seducing Bathsheba, Psalm 51 has all the elements of an act of contrition: It appeals to God’s mercy; acknowledges one’s sin; pleads to God for wisdom; and recognizes that he prefers a humble, contrite heart to adherence to outward ritual. Psalm 51 appears frequently in our Lenten liturgy, beginning with the responsorial psalm at Ash Wednesday Mass.

The Book of Psalms originated not as a single book, but as something like the hymnal you use at Mass: a compilation of several smaller collections assembled over a long period of time. That the penitential psalms are spread throughout the Book of Psalms, not grouped together under a subcollection, suggests that sorrow for sin is a part of the human condition that can assert itself in different contexts in an individual’s life.

The “examen” (Latin, “out of the depths”) and is used as a prayer of thanksgiving after confession. Other psalms describe how one’s strength (Psalm 6, 102) and health (Psalm 38) are sapped by guilt. The effects of sin can include alienation from other people and from God. The psalmist is said to feel his heart’s longing and acknowledged by God (Psalm 143).

Penitence would be incomplete without confidence in God’s mercy. Despite the guilt that plagues them, the psalmist trusts in God’s merciful love (Psalm 6). Though beset by ill health and the taunts of friends and foes, the psalmist has unshakeable confidence in the mercy of God who knows him through and through.

The “examen” is a powerful daily prayer. It allows you to review the preceding 24 hours with gratitude, focusing on how Christ helped you in doing good deeds and where you fell short of his glory by sinning. The examination of conscience helps you examine where you felt the hand of God, and how you responded or failed to respond to God’s will. More detailed directions for the “examen” can be found online or in books.

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Meetings with Israeli leaders in Jerusalem in 1982

For one year, long ago, my four siblings and I were all in grade school at the same time. Once, we were all teenagers together. Now, we’re all in different stages of life, but we get together, which is always fun, we spend a bit of time catching up—”remember when?” and “can you believe we’re all so much [fill in the blank] has changed?”

Remember the house in Deans and Veach’s (1955) “Coming of Age,” or the neighborhood in D.K. Calcutta’s “It’s All Good?” or the “spirit-life sap … with the sun of Spring” in Anya Seton’s “The Dark is Beautiful,” or the words resonated with me that night.

Although I’ve read the passage many times, “God Calling,” my favorite devotional book.

John Fink’s recent series of columns on Church history is now available in book form from Amazon. It is titled How Could This Church Survive? with the subtitle, It must be more than a human institution."

This Church Survive? It’s All Good/ Maria-Pia Negro Chin

Coming of Age/Maria-Pia Negro Chin

Holy Father asks young people to let their voices be heard

When I worked as a reporter covering young people in the Diocese of Brooklyn for The Tablet newspaper, my favorite feature was “Youth Calling,” where high schools and ask a handful of teenagers who are freshmen, sophomore, junior and senior to give them time to reflect and answer on a particular topic. The only thing I asked for was for them to be honest. Their answers were always insightful, faith-filled and creative. Reading their answers was a chance to learn more about their actual experiences instead of relying on generalizations made about young people.

This is why I found so much hope in Francis’ letter asking youth to let their voices resonate in their communities and “be heard by your shepherds of souls.”

Teens and young adults from around the world will have a chance to share their experiences and input their vision for the Church leaders. The first people will be the center of discussion at the next world Synod of Bishops, which will focus on how the Church can listen to the voices of young people today as they discover their life’s vocation. This vocation discernment refers to the vocations of marriage, ordained ministry, consecrated life, etc. and how to fulfill it joyfully.

More specifically, young people ages 16 to 29 can submit reflections on their expectations and their life experiences in any form, comes with a sense of discomfort from time to time. I suppose it’s inevitable. Maybe we’re simply growing “grayer” around the edges.

I remind myself to think of the end—result—the glory of Easter, which is victory over shame, pain and utter brokenness. I’m comforted to know that ultimately there is an everlasting peace that no person, no situation, no mistake, no mistake and lose the Jewish character of the state?” He also expressed the wish that King Hussein of Jordan would negotiate for the Palestinians. That, of course, never happened.

Next week: On to Egypt.

(John Fink’s recent series of columns on Church history is now available in book form from Amazon. It is titled How Could This Church Survive? with the subtitle, It must be more than a human institution.)

Your Family/Bill Dodds

Changing and changeless on our life journey

For any age, for any generation, for any family, there will be things that are always the same, things that will change, and things that will never change. Like the way a butterfly emerges from its cocoon, the cycle of the seasons or the aging of our loved ones, there are changes that are always the same. Like the way a butterfly emerges from its cocoon, the cycle of the seasons or the aging of our loved ones, there are changes that are always the same.

For all religions, something that he said was a chance to learn more about their filled and creative. Reading their answers has been a bit rocky for my family. While I love the idea of change and freedom, there are times when it feels challenging.

It’s All Good/ Maria-Pia Negro Chin

Remember, you are in the hands of the master gardener

When I worked as a reporter covering young people in the Diocese of Brooklyn for The Tablet newspaper, my favorite feature was “Youth Calling,” where high schools and ask a handful of teenagers who are freshmen, sophomore, junior and senior to give them time to reflect and answer on a particular topic. The only thing I asked for was for them to be honest. Their answers were always insightful, faith-filled and creative. Reading their answers was a chance to learn more about their actual experiences instead of relying on generalizations made about young people.

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For various reasons, the past months have been a bit rocky for my family. While life is good, I am grateful that these recent bumps weren’t an indication of something gone wrong, it just felt a bit heavier. The word that read the minds of mine that I felt like I’ve been in a valley. I found myself at a crossroads in a sort of eternal winter, where life felt cold and skies were stuck on gray. It was the type of experience that wore through molasses while others gazed past me effortlessly, laughing and enjoying an easy life.

I hope you don’t misunderstand me. I am very blessed, and I know that God is always good, but sometimes it feels hard, and I just wanted to share the obstacles.

One evening, I encountered a passage in “God Calling,” my favorite devotional book. Although I’ve read the passage many times, “God Calling,” my favorite devotional book.

In the words of Blessed John Henry Newman, “To live is to change, and to perfect is to have changed often. When we say we do that which is hurtful and sinful and stupid, can—by our efforts through the grace of God—decrease. We can become better; we can, throughout our lives, move toward better. How? Two tips."

“After hearing about different studies on how the religiously unaffiliated, or “nones,” are growing as a demographic and how many young people feel left behind by the Church, this synod process gives me hope. It is unique that both youth and the Church to move forward, while recognizing the vibrancy and gifts young people can contribute to the Church.”

Starting with the opportunity of making their voices heard, this process leading to the second of Bishops can make young people feel more involved in the Church and more empowered and energized to participate in a Church that is for them. As the pope said, it is a chance to have our voices resonate in our communities.

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

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The Sunday Readings
Sunday, May 3, 2017

- Genesis 2:7-9, 31-7
- Romans 3:12-19
- Matthew 4:1-11

The first reading for Mass on this first weekend of Lent 2017 is from the Book of Genesis.

Few passages in the Scriptures are as abundant in literary technique and in theological message as this reading from Genesis. Bluntly confronting paganism and the tendency of all humans to avoid accusing themselves of fault, it goes to the heart of sin. The heart of sin is that it is the result of a freely chosen act by humans. While in this reading the role of the tempting devil is clear, it is also clear that the devil only tempts. The devil did not force the first man and woman to sin. They sinned of their own will.

The temptation itself has a lesson. Rebellion against God, the perfect and the perfectly just, was foolishly, Yet, imperfect even in their pristine state of holiness, the first man and woman listened to bad advice and trusted not God but another.

It is a process that has been repeated untold number of times in the lives of us all. The second reading is from St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans.

In this reading, the Apostle looks back to the incident described in Genesis. It reminds us that the first humans introduced sin, and resulting chaos and trouble, into earthly existence by their own will. It reminds us that the first humans to what we will. We choose to sin. Perhaps, ultimately, the deadliest effect of original sin was the human tendency to minimize the danger of sin and to deny personal responsibility.

In these readings, the Church calls us to awaken and then turn away from sin. It reminds us of our own personal role in sin. It pleads with us not to underestimate temptation. It teaches us that, although temptations may be strong, Jesus is our Redeemer and our strength. His strength is enough to overcome any temptation.

However, we must fortify ourselves by asking for the Lord’s strength. This is the purpose of Lent.

Reflection
This is the first weekend of Lent. The Church uses this weekend to teach us one of the most basic facts of spiritual life. Sin removes us from God. Sin is not thrust upon us. We are not captured by sin against our will. We choose to sin.

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Names of parishes and churches can change when faith communities merge

Q Why do names of churches do not necessarily have to change when parishes merge and, in fact, in many instances, the name chosen for the newly merged parish is a combination of the former ones—as you indicate, “St. Mary/St. Joseph”?

A The new title may be selected by the parishioners of the newly merged parish, with the approval of the diocesan bishop. It can be named after: the Holy Trinity; the Holy Spirit or the angels; Christ; a Person other than Christ whose name is included in the Liturgy; under one of the mystery titles of Christ, Mary, or her traditional titles; or a canonized or beatified saint.

On occasion, I choose a letter for Adnos column not so much to answer the question posed, but to present what I think is a writer’s valid concern—hoping that it will prompt some reflection among readers. So it is with this query.

The situation presented gives a glimpse into the difficult but perennial balancing act between the practicalities of life and what might constitute the ideal. One of a pastor’s responsibilities is to keep a parish afloat financially. The parish provides spiritual enlightenment, pastoral support, educational opportunities and social services to the poor and vulnerable.

To do all of that requires staff, facilities and their upkeep—all of which requires money. Fundraisers have long recognized that, while most people are genuinely unselfish in wanting to help, parsimony can be loosened a bit when a donor is recognized and thanked.

But the letter writer points out correctly that there are many ways to serve a parish. We priests are forever reminding our congregations that their generosity can be expressed by sharing “time, talent or treasure.” So why not recognize all three ways of giving?

In the parish from which I recently retired, we scheduled an annual “Volunteers’ Dinner” to which dozens of people were invited who had offered their help in a wide range of parish programs and projects—catechists, lecturers, ushers; extraordinary ministers of holy Communion; parish council and school board members, home visitors; food pantry workers, etc.

(QUESTIONS MAY BE SENT TO FATHER KENNETH DOYLE AT askfatherdoyle@gmail.com AND 30 COLUMBIA CIRCLE DR. ALBANY, NEW YORK 12203.)
Late bishop’s Little Black Book provides many with Lenten inspiration

ALLOUEZ, Wis. (CNS)—Every year, Catholics look for ways to observe the 40 days of Lent.

Finding inspiration for prayer—one of the three Lenten focuses of the Catholic Church—along with fasting and almsgiving is a priority for many. Here is one favorite source for many is The Little Black Book.

Now in its 17th year of publication, the Little Black Book has been edited by Catholic News Service’s Bishop Kenneth E. Untener.

In its mid-1990s, Bishop Untener had decided that he wanted to do something to bring the traditions of Lent to the forefront of peoples’ minds, said Haven. “He started a Lenten task force and chose the theme of ‘reconciliation.’”

The task force included diocesan staff members with backgrounds in religious education and liturgy. The result was a Lenten reflection that was well received.

The popularity of this reflection led to the first Little Black Book.

In 1999, Bishop Untener asked Haven, who was diocesan director of communications, and Sister Nancy Kyotte, an Immaculate Heart of Mary sister, to help him create a reflection that would use the tradition of “licita divina,” a prayerful way of reading Scripture, to help people prayerfully experience Jesus’ passion. “However, ‘he wanted something that could be put into a coat pocket,’” said Haven, “a booklet with not much material is featured each year, the staff of Little Books—a nonprofit corporation not affiliated with the Saginaw Diocese—continues to draw from Bishop Untener’s writings.”

“I am honored by the fact that I am doing this,” said Haven. “I know I am writing in the faith’s legacy. While new material is featured each year, the staff of Little Books—a nonprofit corporation not affiliated with the Saginaw Diocese—continues to draw from Bishop Untener’s writings.”

This Lent, thousands of Catholics in the Diocese of Green Bay and elsewhere will turn to The Little Black Book for their Lenten inspiration. Reflections, based on Christ’s Passion according to John, began on Feb. 26 and end on Easter Sunday, April 16.

Late bishop’s Little Black Book provides many with Lenten inspiration

**Mardi Gras sisters**

Members of the Sisters of the Holy Family hand beads to a man and child on Feb. 19 from a float during a Mardi Gras parade in New Orleans. It was the first time in New Orleans Mardi Gras history that a religious women’s congregation participated as a group on a carnival float. Over their habits, they wore a T-shirt honoring Mother Henriette Delille, who founded their congregation in 1842. (CNS photo/Dave MacLeod)
Investing with Faith/Joanna Feltz

A final gift can help build your legacy of faith

As Catholics, we believe that once our life on Earth is over, we will enter into a new life. We look forward to the promise of peace with God, our Father, yet sometimes we will wonder if we lay everything down that we will leave for this world. Our souls become one with Christ, what about everything else? I know I worry a lot about what I will leave behind for my family, my friends, and the Church. While there are many ways to leave a legacy of faith, planned giving offers the most personalized opportunities. The simplest and fastest way to do so is through a bequest, a testamentary (left in your will) gift.

A bequest is provided through a will or trust and is funded by assets, cash, stocks, bonds, mutual fund shares, real estate or other types of property. Also, a bequest may come in the form of a specific asset (land, home, stock, etc.), a specific cash amount, a percentage of assets (for example, 5 percent of your net asset to the Church), or whatever remains after all obligations and previous wishes are met. Another simple giving technique is a beneficary designation. You choose a charitable organization and name it as a beneficary on an annuity, life insurance policy or retirement plan. After your passing, the organization receives whatever percentage of the amount of assets you designated on your beneficary form. Through a bequest or beneficary designation, donors may receive income and estate tax deduction at death, all while giving back and directly supporting the needs of future generations. When considering planned giving, knowing that the archdiocesan Catholic Community Foundation (CCF) is here to help. We can answer any questions you may have, provide all giving options, and connect you to ministries, organizations or causes that could benefit from your gift. Reach me by e-mail at jfelzt@archindy.org or by phone at 1-800-382-8936, ext. 1482, or 317-236-1482.

Consider investing in your faith through planned giving.

Joanna Felzt, J.D., is director of planned giving for the Catholic Community Foundation in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis and consultant to the last Will Trusts, Wedenimmert, Micheletti, Rudnick & Galbraith PLLC. For more information about planned giving, log on to www.archindy.org/plannedgiving. Tax information or legal information provided herein is not intended as tax or legal advice and cannot be relied on to avoid statutory penalties. Always check with your legal and financial advisor before implementing any gift plan. ↑

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Humanity’s greed and selfishness can turn creation into a sad and desolate world instead of the sign of God’s love that it was meant to be, Pope Francis said.

Human beings are often tempted to view creation as “a possession we can exploit as we please and for which we do not have to answer to anyone,” the pope said on Feb. 22 at his weekly general audience.

“When carried away by selfishness, human beings end up ruining even the answer to anyone,” the pope said. “Thus making it a slave, submissive to our frailty,” the pope said.

“As an early sign of spring, the audience was held in St. Peter’s Square for the first time since November. Despite the chilly morning temperatures, the pope made the rounds in his popemobile, greeting pilgrims and kissing bundled-up infants.

Continuing his series of talks on Christian hope, the pope reflected on St. Paul’s Letter to the Romans, which expresses the hope that “creation itself will be set free from slavery to corruption” (Rom 8:21).

“St. Paul, the pope said, pointed backwards to Christians that creation is a “marvelous gift that God has placed in our hands.”

Through this gift, he said, “we can enter into a relationship with him and recognize the imprint of his loving plan, which we are all called to achieve together.”

Sin, however, breaks communion not only with God but with creation itself. “Thus making it a slave, submissive to our frailty,” the pope said.

“Water is a beautiful thing; it is so important. Water gives us life, and it helps us in everything. But when minerals are exploited, water is taken away, new life, new creation and creation is destroyed and dirtied. This is what happens; there are many; he said, departing from his prepared remarks.

When people break their relationship with creation, they not only lose their original beauty, he said, but they also “disturb everything surrounding them,” causing a blisters of God’s love to become a bleak sign of pride and greed.

St. Paul tells believers that hope comes from God, he said, because “God’s love wants to heal the ‘wounded and humbled hearts’ of all men and women, and through the heart of Christ, ‘regenerate the human family, the world and a new humanity, reconciled in his love,’” Pope Francis said. ↑

Full-Time Associate Coordinator of Youth Ministry Position Available

The Terre Haute Catholic Community is seeking a full-time Associate Coordinator of Youth Ministry to work collaboratively with the Coordinator of Youth Ministry to facilitate a Total Youth Ministry program for the five city parishes of Terre Haute, Vigo County for Grades 7th through 12th. This position includes, but is not limited to: religious education and Confirmation programs, retreats and prayer services, mission trips, service projects, leadership development of students and volunteers, and fundraising.

Applicant should be a practicing Catholic and possess a love for and knowledge of the Catholic faith, as well as a strong commitment to the faith development of young people. The applicant must have the ability to organize, collaborate with coordinator, work well with volunteers, exhibit good leadership skills, creativity and initiative. Professional work ethics and excellent communication skills, both written and oral, are essential. Bachelor’s Degree and Youth Ministry programming experience preferred. Possession of a Youth Ministry Certificate or the willingness to obtain one is essential. Some overnight travel, frequent evening and weekend work is required.

Direct Inquiries by March 17, 2017 to:

Barbara Black
Youth Ministry Supervisor
2323 N 131 St., Terre Haute, IN 47804
812-466-1231 * barbar@jshj.org

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Vandalism at Jewish cemeteries decried, called hateful actions

PHILADELPHIA (CNS)—Responding to the destruction of some 100 gravestones at a Jewish cemetery in Philadelphia, Archbishop Charles J. Chaput on Feb. 27 deplored the “senseless acts of mass vandalism.” The gravestones were discovered toppled over from their bases the previous morning at Mount Carmel Cemetery in northeast Philadelphia.

The archbishop issued a statement in which he called on the clergy, religious and laypeople of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia “to join in prayerful solidarity with the families of those whose final resting places have been disturbed. Violence and hate against anyone, simply because of who they are, is inexcusable.”

The incident at Mount Carmel Cemetery mirrors gravestones destroyed at another Jewish cemetery near St. Louis about a week earlier.

In a statement on Feb. 24, the chairman of the U.S. bishops’ Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs expressed solidarity and support for the Jewish community and also called for the rejection of such hateful actions.

“I want to express our deep sympathy, solidarity and support to our Jewish brothers and sisters who have experienced once again a surge of anti-Semitic actions in the United States,” said Bishop Mitchell T. Rozanski of Springfield, Mass., speaking on behalf of all the bishops and U.S. Catholics. “I wish to offer our deepest concern, as well as our unequivocal rejection of these hateful actions. The Catholic Church stands in love with the Jewish community in the current face of anti-Semitism.”

Two days earlier, the National Council of Churches in a statement said that “anti-Semitism has no place in our society. Eradicating it requires keeping constant vigil.”

In his statement, Archbishop Chaput said that “for Catholics, anti-Semitism is more than a human rights concern. It’s viewed as a form of sacrilege and blasphemy against God’s chosen people. In recent weeks, our country has seen a new wave of anti-Semitism on the rise. It’s wrong, and it should deeply concern not only Jews and Catholics, but all people.”

Even as the archbishop issued his statement, a new wave of fear spread for Jewish people in the United States as about a dozen Jewish community centers across the country received anonymous threats of violence.

Operations at the Jewish Community Center of Indianapolis ground to a halt for about an hour on the morning of Feb. 27 as local law enforcement officials investigated a bomb threat targeting the northside facility. No bombs were found an all-clear was given, and the center resumed its daily operations.

Several centers in the Philadelphia region—including the Kaiserman Jewish Community Center, which includes a preschool, in the Philadelphia suburb of Wynnewood—had been evacuated the morning of Feb. 27 because of bomb threats, local media reported. By the afternoon, the facility along with others in Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware had reopened.

Scores of other such threats have been received by Jewish community centers in recent weeks across the country. “As a community, we must speak out to condemn inflammatory messages and actions that serve only to divide, stigmatize and incite prejudice,” Archbishop Chaput said. “We must continually and loudly reject attempts to alienate and persecute the members of any religious tradition. Rather, as members of diverse faith and ethnic communities throughout the region, we must stand up for one another and improve the quality of life for everyone by building bridges of trust and understanding.”

The heads of the Religious Leaders Council of Greater Philadelphia met the afternoon of Feb. 27 at the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia to discuss the situation. Msgr. Daniel Kury, moderator of the curia for the Philadelphia Archdiocese, represented Archbishop Chaput at the meeting.

The archbishop, who is a co-convenor of the more than 30-member religious leadership council, was unable to attend the meeting. In the neighboring Diocese of Camden, N.J., Bishop Dennis J. Sullivan called the desecration of the Pennsylvania cemetery “ahrerrent behavior” that “has no place in contemporary culture [and] stands in opposition to everything the Catholic Church believes and teaches.”

Bishop Sullivan also noted that Jewish community centers in his diocese as well as in Pennsylvania and Delaware received bomb threats over the weekend and on Feb. 27, the day he issued his statement. “In a Catholic Church, we are spiritual descendants of Abraham. We recognize that an attack or threat against our Jewish family members is an attack against all peoples of faith,” he said, adding that everyone in the Camden Diocese stands “in solidarity with our Jewish sisters and brothers against these hateful and anti-Semitic incidents.”

“We pray that the perpetrators of these incidents will come to know God’s love, bringing them to the light of peace where they may recte these acts of hate and join with all people of goodwill in forging a community of compassion,” Bishop Sullivan said.

In St. Louis, an interfaith cleanup effort of the vandalized cemetery took place on Feb. 22 followed by an interfaith prayer service. Vandalism toppled more than two-dozen gravestones and damaged an estimated 200 more at the historic Chesed Shel Emeth Cemetery, which dates to 1893.

Represented by seminarians, priests, deacons, students and laity, Catholic Archdiocese of St. Louis stood with Jewish brethren at the cemetery in University City.

Men went to right toppled Jewish headstones on Feb. 27 after a vandalism attack on Chesed Shel Emeth Cemetery in University City, Mo. The incident at the cemetery near St. Louis was repeated in suburban Philadelphia on Feb. 26 when gravestones were destroyed at a Jewish cemetery there. (CNS photo/Tom Gannam, Reuters)

They were among about 1,000 people who helped with cleanup, including Vice President Mike Pence and Missouri Gov. Eric Greitens. When he came to help rakes leaves, Pence was wearing work clothes, as he had come from another event.

“Nothing is in America for hatred, prejudice, or acts of violence or anti-Semitism,” he said later. “I must tell you that the people of Missouri are inspiring the nation by your love and care for this place and the Jewish community. I want to thank you for that inspiration, for showing the world what America is all about.”

Greitens, who came ready to work in jeans, boots and a work shirt, described the vandalism as “a despicable act... anti-Semitic and painful. Moments like this are what a community is about... We’re going to demonstrate that this is a moment of resolve. We’re coming together to share service.”

Seminarians were among those who answered St. Louis Archbishop Robert J. Carlson’s call on Feb. 21 “to help our Jewish brothers and sisters.” About a dozen used their afternoon free time to help out.

“This is neat to see,” said seminarian Cole Bestgen, watching the workers fan out on a sunny and unseasonably warm 67-degree day, armed with rakes, trash barrels and buckets. Though toppled headstones already had been replaced, the volunteers took care of general cleanup and maintenance.

The desecration sparked outrage from numerous ecumenical groups—Jewish, Catholic, Christian, Muslim and more—and dignitaries across the country, including President Donald J. Trump, who sent messages of thanks through Pence and Greitens. †