By Sean Gallagher

DOVER—Three years ago, many members of All Saints Parish in Dearborn County had heavy hearts as they continued to struggle with the merger a few months earlier of four parishes in the area into All Saints.

On the evening of March 1, Ash Wednesday, many of those same hearts were filled with faith and hope. Former Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin announced to the parish on March 1, 2014, that Father Jonathan Meyer would be its new pastor and would seek to help the area into All Saints.

Richard O’Keefe, vice president for advocacy and government relations at Catholic Relief Services (CRS), said in a statement, “As the world’s most blessed nation, we should be doing more to provide assistance overseas and resettle the most vulnerable, not less. It is wrong, during this time of great need, to cut humanitarian assistance and reduce resettlement.”

O’Keefe added, “Refugees are fleeing the same terrorism that we seek to protect ourselves from. By welcoming them, we show the world that we are an open, tolerant nation which

Perpetual adoration chapel gives life to parish once marked by ‘heavy hearts’

By Sean Gallagher

The building up of that unity on display three years to the day later, Father Meyer said, was the working of “tremendous grace from our Lord Jesus Christ and the power of his Holy Spirit.”

On that recent windswept night, Father Meyer led parishes in eucharistic procession that ended in the inauguration of a perpetual adoration chapel on its St. John the Baptist campus in Dover. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

Scifres tapped to replace retiring Tinder, lead CYO

As Bruce Scifres prepares to become the new executive director of the archdiocese’s Catholic Youth Organization (CYO), it means he will no longer lead the Roncalli High School football team that he has guided to seven state championships, including the 2016 team that finished its season with a perfect 15-0 record.

Still, Scifres doesn’t view his new position as an end to his 30 years of teaching and coaching at the high school in the Indianapolis South Deanery. Instead, the 60-year-old father of four sees the move as a continuation of his commitment to help shape the lives and faith of young people through sports.

“Leaving is definitely hard for me, but I truly see it as a continuation,” Scifres says. “CYO is committed to forming young people, and CYO’s athletic, enrichment and camp programs touch the lives of almost 24,000 young people and 7,200 volunteers throughout central and southern Indiana each year.”

“I’ve been privileged to be a part of great teams for a long time, and now I will get to be part of a much larger team that has a profound and positive impact on thousands of lives.”

Before he assumes the full leadership of the CYO later this summer, Scifres will spend his mornings teaching at Roncalli and his afternoons “shadowing” the CYO’s retiring executive director Ed Tinder—who praised the selection of Scifres.

“He personifies what CYO sports is all about,” Tinder added, “He personifies what CYO sports is all about.”

Initial reaction to presidential refugee ban ranges from deep concern to opposition

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Within hours of President Donald J. Trump’s new executive order on March 6 temporarily banning refugees from all nations for 120 days, and banning the issuance of new visas for citizens from six majority-Muslim nations for 90 days, Catholic and other religious groups joined secular leaders in questioning the wisdom of such a move, with others vowing to oppose it outright.

Bill O’Keefe, vice president for advocacy and government relations at Catholic Relief Services (CRS), said in a statement, “As the world’s most blessed nation, we should be doing more to provide assistance overseas and resettle the most vulnerable, not less. It is wrong, during this time of great need, to cut humanitarian assistance and reduce resettlement.”

O’Keefe added, “Refugees are fleeing the same terrorism that we seek to protect ourselves from. By welcoming them, we show the world that we are an open, tolerant nation which
seeks to protect the vulnerable. That has always been America’s greatest strength.

“At the heart of the work of Catholic Charities is the Gospel mandate to welcome the stranger and care for the most vulnerable among us,” said Dominican Sister Donna Markham, president and CEO of Catholic Charities USA, in a statement.

“Today’s executive order not only hinders that work but also actively abandons, for four months, the thousands of endangered refugees fleeing violence, starvation and persecution,” she added. “It is deeply disturbing to know that the thousands of women, children and other persecuted individuals around the world will face a closed door rather than a helping hand from the United States.”

The revised order replaces Trump’s Jan. 27 order, which has been blocked by a federal appeals court. The new order imposes a 90-day ban on issuing visas to people from six predominantly Muslim nations—Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen. It suspends the U.S. refugee program for all countries for 120 days; Syrian refugees are now not banned indefinitely. The ban also temporarily bars individuals who have been located abroad from entering the country and still bars nationals from six countries.

The bishops “have long recognized the importance of ensuring public safety and would welcome reasonable and necessary steps to accomplish that goal,” said a joint statement. “But based on the knowledge that refugees are already subjected to the most rigorous vetting process of anyone who enters the United States, there is no merit to the refugee resettlement program, except for furthering improvement to that vetting process.”

People “are called to both address the root causes of migration and seek ways to welcome our migrant sisters and brothers,” Wright continued. “We stand against any policies that seek to build a wall, internationally detain families and limit migration based solely on a person’s origin or religion.”

Eli McCarthy, director of justice and peace for the Congregation of Major Superiors of Men, expressed it “completely unjust to punish an entire country due to the suspicion of a potential crime by an individual.”

“We should be asking about the root causes of violent acts, such as U.S. militarization of conflicts, and giving our attention to those addressing concrete structures of injustice,” said amy. “Women religious have been blessed to be able to accompany and serve refugee and immigrant communities across this country for a very long time,” said a statement by Holy Cross Sister Joan Marie Steadman, executive director of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious. “Catholic sisters remain committed to welcoming those who come to this country after passing through the U.S. government’s already rigorous screening processes.

“The ban goes against everything that we stand for as Franciscan Catholic Christians, and against what Jesus and Francis of Assisi taught and lived,” said a statement from Patrick Carolan, executive director of the Franciscan Action Network. “St. Bonaventure tells us that how we choose and what we choose makes a difference—first in what we become by our choices, and second [in] what the world becomes by our choices.”

(Because Catholic Charities Indianapolis’ Refugee and Immigrant Services is federally funded on a per capita basis, financial donations at this time are greatly appreciated. To donate securely online, log on to www.archindy.org, then select “Donate” from the menu on the left. Checks made out to “Catholic Charities Refugee Program, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202” are welcome.)

Correction

The sacrament of reconciliation will be offered following the 8 a.m. and 10 a.m. Masses this coming March 19 and Holy Family Church in Oldenburg.†

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Amid fears, unauthorized immigrants ask Church for spiritual, legal help

ARLINGTON, Va. (CNS)—In late February Father Mauricio Pineda, parochial vicar of All Saints Parish in Manassas, Va., heard from a couple he had married a few years ago.

The husband had been detained by immigration authorities. They just had a baby four months ago. They didn’t know what to do.

Father Pineda gave the best advice he could. Trust God. Keep praying hard. And he promised to pray for them, too.

The conversation was one of many such calls Father Pineda, and priests throughout the Arlington Diocese, have taken during the last few weeks amid increased enforcement of immigration laws. In a time of personal crisis, immigrants in the country without documents are turning in large numbers to their Church for spiritual counsel and practical legal assistance through Catholic Charities.

“I’ve been living in this country for 18 years, and I’ve never seen this kind of pressure and fear,” said Father Pineda, who is originally from El Salvador.

“My concern is when I visit families,” Father Pineda told the Arlington Catholic Herald, the diocesan newspaper. “I find mothers who are pregnant. They are afraid to go to the doctors’ offices and hospitals. They don’t want to send their children to schools. … They are coming to my office asking for help, like ‘What about, Father, if they took my husband or my children or my wife?’”

When it comes to immigration, the Church balances two values: the dignity of every individual and the right of the state to enact just laws, said Father Thomas Ferguson, vicar general and pastor of Good Shepherd Parish in Alexandria.

“We are created in the image and likeness of God,” Father Ferguson said. “Every person has a right to live in a place where they and their families can be safe and secure, and have those fundamental things that are necessary to live a decent human life. First of all, personal safety, adequate food and shelter, and a job.”

The Church offers spiritual and practical support to immigrants and others in light of these teachings—with respect for the law.

“The Church does recognize the right of the state to protect its citizens, and protect its reasonable and legitimate boundaries, and provide for the security of its people,” Father Ferguson said. “So immigration laws in themselves can be good if they enable the state to really create a condition of safety and security for the people of a country.”

The government also has a duty to be careful how it implements those laws, he added. Not every person in the U.S. without legal permission should be deported. If not, the government is not enforcing the laws.

“ICE also plans to publicize crimes committed by these immigrants, rescind privacy protections and build new detention facilities. Some unauthorized immigrants, already used to staying below the radar, are now taking extreme precautions to avoid detention.”

There’s a lot of confusion inside the Hispanic communities. Some are living in their own neighborhood, Spanish Apostolate. “Some of them are afraid to go to their work sites, to go to the supermarket, to take the children to schools. … They are coming to my office asking for help, like ‘What about, Father, if they took my husband or my children or my wife?’”

But attendance surpassed all expectations. A typical workshop might draw a few dozen people. That day, more than 150 people listened as speakers explained how to prepare for a raid:

• Memorize the phone number of an attorney, a nonprofit organization and a family member.

• Sign a document that, upon deportation or detention, gives a loved one power of attorney over your home, bank account and custody of your kids.

• Remember that if asked, no one is required to say anything to immigration officials or the police other than their name. Answering questions about legal status or place of birth—even during a routine traffic stop—could lead to deportation in light of ICE’s goal to renew partnerships with local police.

“Pretty much any minor offense could expose somebody [if they have to show up in court],” Perez said.

Countless people have walked through Hogar’s doors over the past few weeks hoping to remedy their legal situation—the 33-year-old El Salvador native who came to the U.S. two years ago and found a job at a hotel, only to be raped by her employer; the woman fleeing forced prostitution by the gangs in Honduras.

“A lot of people say, ‘Why don’t they just come legally?’ Well, they don’t have a means to come legally,” Perez said. “They’re fleeing because they have to.”

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The Criterion Friday, March 10, 2017
Recipe for a joyful Lent

Pope Francis is known as a man who proclaims in every time and season the promise of peace, joy, trust in each other, and life. He understands the church as the body of Christ, the bride of Christ—show we are members of God’s family with acts of love and forgiveness that are a beautiful gift with others through prayer, fasting and almsgiving as entertainment or the stroking of our egos. This Lent, let’s fast from inner selfishness, and be filled with prayer.

• Fast from offensive words and fill yourself with peace, joy, trust in each other, and life.
• Fast from sadness and bitterness, and fill your heart with joy.
• Fast from selfishness, and be filled with compassion for others.
• Fast from unfruitfulness and vendetta, and be filled with acts of reconciliation and forgiveness.
• Fast from words and fill yourself with silence and readiness to listen to others. This is not how we were taught to be. But Pope Francis assures us that this is what Christ asks of us—“mercy, not sacrifice.” If we all practice this more positive and proactive style of fasting, the Holy Father assures us that our daily lives will be filled with peace, joy, trust in each other, and life. Lent does not need to be a time of bitter privation. It can be a season of eager preparation for the greatest joy of all—the Easter celebration of the Lord’s resurrection.

Be Our Guest/Matt Nelson

Young adults are passionate, eager to live out their faith in parishes

I am a young adult and practicing Catholic living in the Indianapolis area and working in a parish of the Diocese of Lafayette. I recently read your article about Saint Meinrad’s Lilly Endowment Inc. program to evangelize to young adults. I think that this is a great effort, not only of Saint Meinrad’s part, and I know that this program is in good hands under Tammy Recht’s leadership, having seen the good work of the effectiveness of the One Cup, a program of liturgical formation for youths and young adults.

However, as a member of the demographic for which this ministry has been created, I feel that I would be remiss if I did not offer some input.

I believe Benedictine Father Dennis Robinson, Saint Meinrad’s president-rector, and any leader who is starting in new parishes and conducting outreach to young adults estranged from their faith or having grown up with no faith at all. Young adults, such as myself, need the Catholic Church.

In a constantly changing world, we need a foundation to hold on to. In a world with no mercy, where we are constantly seeing people ruined by one wrong word or one unkind thought, or a troubled past that comes to light again, we need to hear Christ’s words of mercy in the sacrament of reconciliation.

In a world full, of distractions, we crave a quiet place that draws us in and gives us a place of rest. Without peace, the Church can offer those things. It is meant to offer those things. However, so often, it does not offer those things to its own disservice and the disservice of others.

Parishioners, this starts with us. Not our pastors, not Saint Meinrad, not the young adults coming in—us. Too often, young adults are met with resistance. We are met with complaints about people’s children and grandchildren who are our age. We are met with resistance when we want to make a change. Is it possible that our parish is not operating and our charitable donations spent. We are told. “You haven’t been here long enough,” or “Sorrel, this community/parish/ ministry is full,” or the deadbeat phrase for anyone in any organization to utter. “This is the way we’ve always done it” with no explanation as to why.

Our children receive scathing looks when they fuss and cry during Mass or even, worse, we’re asked to “sit in the back” or “don’t bring them here again.” (Yes, those are actual phrases that many young moms and dads have heard.)

Parishes must be ready to welcome young adults. Parishes must be willing to change in order to serve the needs of their new parishioners, in addition to the existing ones. Parishioners must be willing that, if they wish to grow from 200 families to 2,000 families, there will be changes, there will be differences. The “status quo,” or “the way we’ve always done it” will no longer apply.

While I believe that many priests and parish staffs are open to such changes, the existing parishioners must be willing to accept some change as well. I am not suggesting an immediate overhaul, but simply acknowledging and accepting the natural changes that occur with a growing parish.

Fellow Catholics, if and when this program comes to your parish, I hope you will not be yourselves: “Do you want this parish to exist in 10 years? Do I want it to survive, even after I’m gone? Do I want it to be a home for my children and grandchildren? Am I ready to be tested in my vocation to ‘go and make disciples of all nations’ [Mt 28:19] and accept all that entails?”

I hope that you would answer with a whole hearted “Yes!” to those questions. You’ve invested so much of your life into your parish—your time, your talent, your treasure. Ultimately, your faith is your legacy. You will not be judged on your time in the Church, your accomplishments, your talents, etc. You will be judged on what you did for God and to build his kingdom on Earth.

We young adults are ready to be Catholic. We are loyal, we are passionate, we will pull our weight in the parishes. We will be involved in the existing ministries, and find new ways to serve as well. We want what the Church offers us. We are ready to be tested in our vocation to ‘go and make disciples of all nations’ [Mt 28:19]."
Death penalty ban for serious mental illness fails to advance

By Brigid Curtis Ayer

A bill to ban the death penalty in Indiana for those with serious mental illness stalled in the Senate Judiciary Committee, and failed to advance before the third reading Senate deadline. The Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC) supported the death penalty ban.

Sen. James Merritt, R-Indianapolis, would have removed capital punishment as a penalty for those suffering from one or more of six various types of serious mental illness. Those diagnosed with schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, major depressive disorder, delusional disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder or traumatic brain injuries would have qualified for the exemption.

The bill defines “serious mental illness,” commonly referred to as SMI, by using the American Psychiatric Association’s Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders.

Merritt said, “Unlike an insanity defense, under an SMI, the defendant is still found guilty versus not guilty but not guilty by reason of insanity, and is still punished. An insanity defense means the defendant was totally unaware that their conduct was wrong. They 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, Tebbe noted.

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.”

During a Feb. 15 meeting of the Senate Judiciary Committee, lawmakers on the panel raised concerns about how the bill would be carried out in practice. Sen. Mike Young, R-Indianapolis, said he was not convinced of the process by which the court would determine if a person had mental illness and it was the cause of the crime. Joseph R. Granger, R-Indianapolis, said he didn’t want to put anyone to death that has a serious mental illness, but he believed that the language in the proposed legislation was too broad and could be misused in practice for some criminals to get a reduced sentence.

Members of the mental health community and a representative from the American Bar Association testified in support of the bill. The Indiana Prosecuting Attorneys Council (IPAC) and the Indiana Attorney General’s office opposed the bill.

Steve Schutte, who works in the States Public Defenders’ office, said he has spent 25 years representing men on death row.

“I have experience with the kind of people with serious mental illness who would have benefited from this kind of legislation.”

Schutte clarified to Senator Young that the bill does link the conduct of the defendant to active serious mental illness at the time of the crime. Schutte added the bill covers a gap in Indiana law for those with serious mental illness who would not be protected from getting the death penalty based on other provisions in Indiana law.

Tebbe said the concerns raised by panel members as well as those by IPAC and the Attorney General’s office could not be rectified before the committee hearing deadline in the Senate, and the measure died in committee. He said even though the topic theoretically could return before the end of the session if the bill’s language was amended into another bill that is proceeding, chances of that happening this year are “slim.”

The ICC executive director said a more likely scenario is the bill will be brought back during the 2018 legislative session after interested parties have ample time to study and address the concerns raised.

“I am hopeful going forward that a resolution can be found so that Indiana can pass a death penalty ban for those suffering from serious mental illness,” Tebbe said.

“The Indiana Catholic Conference will continue to work toward this goal.”

Currently, at least six other states 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 completely.

Mental Health America, a national support and advocacy group for mental health health, estimates that between 5-20 percent of people on death row have a serious mental illness.

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

Bishops: Congress must consider budget’s moral, human dimensions

WASHINGTON (CNS)—The chairman of six U.S. bishops’ policy committees on March 3 told members of the House and Senate that every decision they make on the federal budget “should be assessed by whether it protects the economy, but that a ‘just framework to address their impact on the health of and believes the country has an obligation to promote the common good of all, especially ordinary workers and families who struggle to live in dignity in difficult economic times.”

The letter said the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops supports the goal of reducing future unsustainable deficits, and the lives of the poor and vulnerable, vulnerable and at risk, without work or in poverty should come first,” the six chairman said.

They pointed out that the government and other institutions have “a shared responsibility to promote the common good of all, especially ordinary workers and families who struggle to live in dignity in difficult economic times.”

The letter was signed by: New York Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan, chairman of the Committee on Pro-Life Activities; Bishop Christopher J. Coyne of Burlington, Vt., chairman of the Committee on Communications; Bishop Frank J. Dewane of Venice, Fla., chairman of the Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development; Bishop Oscar Cantu of Las Cruces, N.M., chairman of the Committee on International Justice and Peace; Bishop George V. Murry of Youngstown, Ohio, chairman of the Committee on Catholic Education; and Bishop Joe S. Vasquez of Austin, Texas, chairman of the Committee on Migration.

‘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.’

—Glenn Tebbe, executive director of the Indiana Catholic Conference

Sen. James Merritt
March 13
Monastery Immaculate Conception, 802 E. 10th Street, Frackville, Ind. College of Saint Scholastica Choir and Bella Voce Sacred Music Concert, 7 p.m., firework offering accepted. Information: Greg Eckel, 812-367-1411 or gregekel@theschones.org.

St. Luke the Evangelist Parish, Magnificat Chapel, 7575 Holliday Drive E., Indianapolis. 100th Anniversary of Fatima, holy hour, rosary and devotions honoring the hour, benediction, rosary, Holy Anniversary of Fatima 100th E., Indianapolis. 7575 Holliday Drive Parish, Magnificat Chapel, St. Luke the Evangelist Ave Maria Guild, 11 a.m. March 14
St. Paul Hermitage, 501 N. 17th Ave., Breck Grove. Ave Maria Guild, 11 a.m. Mass for deceased members of the guild, 12:30 p.m. meeting. Information: 317-223-3675, vansomni@att.net.


March 15

St. Luke the Evangelist Parish, cafeteria, 7575 Holliday Drive E., Indianapolis. Lenten Soup Suppers and Speaker Series, week two of five, (March 22 and April 5), Mike McCoy, president of Mike McCoy Ministries, speaking on “Decision Determine Our Destiny,” 5:30 p.m. Mass, 6 p.m. soup supper, 7 p.m. speaker. Information: dean@stlouiske.org, 317-259-4573.

March 16

St. Joseph Church, 1401 S. Mckiey Ave., Indianapolis. Third Thursday Adoration, interceding for women experiencing pregnancy, 11 a.m. - 7 p.m., with Mass at 4:35 p.m.


March 17
Northside Knights of Columbus Hall, 2100 E. 71st St., Indianapolis. Catholic Business Exchange, Dr. Matthew Wil, University of Indianapolis Associate Professor of Finance, presenting, Mass, breakfast and program, 7:30 a.m., $15 members, $21 non-members, breakfast included. Reservations required. Information: 317-631-5824.

St. Bridget of Ireland Parish, 404 E. Vine St., Liberty. Lenten Fish Fry, fish, potato wedges, hush puppies, slaw, dessert and drink, 5:30-8:30 p.m., $10. Information: 765-827-8587.

St. Patrick Parish, school basement, 950 Prospect St., Indianapolis. Monthly Catholic Business Exchange, Dr. Matthew Wil, University of Indianapolis Associate Professor of Finance, presenting, Mass, breakfast and program, 7:30 a.m., $15 members, $21 non-members, breakfast included. Information: 812-933-6437, center@oldenburgusf.com.

March 21
Marian University, Michael A. Evans Center for Science, Room 105, 3200 Cold Springs Road, Indianapolis. Eighth Annual Lenten Fish Fry, 5-8 p.m., $15 for adults, $7 for children 6-12 and younger. Information: 317-631-5824.

Commercial relationship: Mike McCoy, speaking.

March 18
Helpers of God’s Precious Infants, Indianapolis, Mass and Divine Mercy Chaplet at 8:30 a.m. at St. Michael the Archangel Church, 3354 W. 30th St., followed by prayer at a local abortion center, continuing prayer at the church for those who wish to remain.

St. Michael the Archangel Parish Center, 3354 W. 30th St., Indianapolis. Pre-Planning a Funeral Mass or Service, Father Michael Hoyt, RCC, and Joana Feltz presenting. 9:11 a.m. - 12 noon. Registration required. Information: saintmichaelindy.org or by phone: 317-926-7359.

March 19
Oldenbach Franciscan Center, 22143 Main St., Oldenburg. Evening Prayer for Families, 5-6 p.m., free, well-prepared offerings accepted, register 18 months and older. Information: 812-933-6437, center@oldenburgusf.com.

March 22
St. Luke the Evangelist Parish, cafeterias, 7575 Holliday Drive E., Indianapolis. Lenten Soup Suppers and Speaker Series, week three of five, (March 22 and April 5), Mike McCoy, president of Mike McCoy Ministries, executive director of the archdiocesan Secretariat for Worship and Evangelization, speaking on “The Way We Pray: The Jewish Roots of Our Way of Praying,” 6-7 p.m., Mass, 6 p.m. soup supper, 7 p.m. speaker. Information: dcarollo@stluke.org, 317-259-4573.

St. Thomas More 5K event to benefit Churches in Mission; deadline is March 25
St. Thomas More Parish in Mooresville will sponsor a 5K run/walk at Pioneer Park, 1101 Mooresville Road, in Mooresville, from 8 a.m. to about 10 a.m. on April 1. Proceeds benefit Churches in Mission, a non-profit organization whose mission is to provide necessities for daily living to those in need in the Morgan County community.

Check-in for the race is from 8:30-4:5 a.m. The race begins at 9 a.m. Parking is available at First United Methodist Church across from the park.

The cost is $25 for ages 18 and older, $15 for ages 6-17, or $60 for a family of four. Additional donations will also be accepted, and participants are asked to bring a canned good for the Churches in Mission food pantry. The event will occur rain or shine.

The deadline for registration is March 25. To register, log on to www.stm-m.org.

For more information, e-mail thomasmoremooreville@gmail.com.

Coats help hungry, homeless
Copeland Corporation in Rushville donated more than 200 men’s, women’s and children’s winter coats to the St. Mary Food Pantry, a ministry of St. Mary (Immaculate Conception) Parish in Rushville. Half of the coats were distributed in Rush County, and the remainder were donated to the homeless in Indianapolis. Picture receiving the coats from food pantry volunteer Susan Hoesing is Gary Riggs, a member of the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department’s homeless unit, (Submitted photo)

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

March 24-26
Archabbeigh House Retreat Center, 519 Hill Drive, St. Meinrad. "I Am With You Always, Even to the End of the World: The Sacraments of the Church," Benedictine Father Vincent Toba, private prayer and veneration of the blessed, presented at 8:30 a.m., Mass or Service, 9 a.m., Evening Prayer of Families, 2-3 p.m., Evening of Plein-air art on display at Archabbey Library Gallery
A larger-than-life-sized, handmade cross stitch of the Image of the Divine Mercy, measuring 84 inches by 40 inches, will be on display at the Benedictine Monastery of the Holy Cross, 311 S. Ahlbrecht Dr., in Chicago, Ill., through Vesperas on Divine Mercy Sunday, April 23. Created from 2005-13, the Divine Mercy cross stitch was created by Brigitta Gedvillas of the Diocese of Marquette in Michigan, with assistance from her husband Jerry. It contains 237 colors and 514,503 stitches composed of 13.8 miles of floss. During the eight years of its fabrication, Brigitta prayed for the poor souls in purgatory. The monastery church will be open for private prayer and veneration of the cross-stitched Divine Mercy image from 2-6 p.m. CT Mon-Sat during Divine Mercy Sunday, April 23, with Vespers chanted daily with the monks at 5:15 p.m. A special schedule of public prayer, public access on April 23 includes Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament at 3 p.m., Chaplet of the Divine Mercy at 4:30 p.m., Solemn Vespers at 5:15 p.m. and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament at 5:40 p.m., all in Central Time.

This unique display of the Divine Mercy image is free and open to the public. All are welcome. For additional information, log on to www.chicagomonk.org, e-mail edward@chicagomonk.org, or call 773-927-7424, ext. 206.

For library hours, call 812-357-6401 or visit www.chicagomonk.org.
Keep hope alive, keep your gaze fixed on Jesus

With all the horrible things happening in our world—from natural disasters to mass shootings to wars and from the evil one to global pandemics—how do we remain people of hope? Pope Francis tells us in no uncertain terms: We keep our hope alive by keeping our gaze fixed on Jesus Christ. We can do this, he says, because Jesus keeps his gaze on us! “The gaze of Jesus falls on both the big and the small. That’s how Jesus sees us all. He sees things, as he says in the Gospel, which are small in comparison to the big. So, we seek out his gaze and assimilate it into our lives,” he said.

By Daniel Conway

“Why is the gaze of Jesus so important to our hope? There is nothing that we can suffer: loneliness, fear, pain, discouragement or death itself that Jesus has not suffered and, overcome, for our sake. He is proof that ‘hope springs eternal’ and ‘love is stronger than death.’ If Jesus is with us, then we are invincible. If his grace sustains us, then we can endure every privation and overcome any obstacle.”

When our eyes meet the eyes of Jesus, we can connect with him in ways that are truly transformative. Jesus’ gaze is not passive or indifferent. As Pope Francis says, Jesus is closer to us—not simply in the sense of being nearby, but one with us, closer to us than we are to ourselves. The gaze of Jesus looks right through us. It penetrates to the core of our being, to our heart of hearts, and gives us the most profound hope possible. “And behold I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Mt 28:20).

Even in the face of death, Jesus is always with us. He is always close to us. So, Pope Francis teaches, we have nothing to fear: “For Christ is the first fruit of the future resurrection. Before the mystery of death, and the loss of our loved ones, we Christians are challenged to hope more firmly in the Lord’s promise of eternal life. Paul tells the Thesalonians to wear the hope of salvation like a helmet (1 Thes 5:8), in the knowledge that, because Christ is risen, the object of our hope is certain. Christian hope, then, is a way of life; we live daily in expectation of the resurrection.”

The way of life that is Christian hope must be lived daily in the face of all life’s disappointments and sorrows whether large or small. Martyrs are witnesses to hope. They are children, women and men who “lived daily in expectation of the resurrection.” They are people who fixed their gaze on Jesus, and refused to look away no matter what the cost. Pope Francis likes to quote the saying that “The saint has a past and every sinner has a future.” He sees this as an affirmation of the transforming power of God’s grace. We are all sinners who are called to be holy. We are all despairing, discouraged and fearful people who are called to be witnesses to hope. Those who have succeeded (the saints and martyrs) are not a privileged class of people far removed from us. They too are like us. That’s why we see their intercession in prayer. That’s why we try to live the way they did, the way of Christian hope.

If we run “with perseverance, keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus,” Pope Francis says, “we will be completely astonished” by the power of his love and by his closeness to us.

Let’s be people of hope who keep our gaze firmly fixed on the face of God’s mercy, Jesus Christ.

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

Mantengan viva la fe, la mirada fija en Jesús

En vista de los terribles sucesos que se viven en el mundo, desde desastres naturales hasta las atrocidades que comete el hombre en todos los rincones del planeta, ¿cómo podemos seguir siendo un pueblo de fe?

El papa Francisco nos lo explica muy claramente: mantengamos viva la fe posando la mirada fija en Jesucristo. El mismo papa Francisco nos lo explica: “Si Jesús está con nosotros, somos invencibles. Con el sustento de su gracia podemos soportar todas las privaciones y superar cualquier obstáculo.”

Cuando nuestros ojos se encuentran con los de Jesús podemos conectarlos con Él de formas verdaderamente transformadoras. La mirada de Jesús no es pasiva ni indiferente. Tal como lo expresa el papa Francisco, Jesús está cerca de nosotros, no solamente en el sentido de proximidad, sino que es uno con nosotros. Es más cercano de nosotros de lo que estamos nosotros mismos. La mirada de Jesús nos atraviesa y penetra hasta la esencia de nuestro ser, nos mira con un verdadero corazón y nos infunde la fe más profunda que existe. “Y les aseguro que estaré con ustedes siempre, hasta el fin del mundo” (Mt 28:20).

Incluso en la vispera de la muerte, Jesús está siempre con nosotros. Siempre está cerca de nosotros. Así que el papa Francisco nos enseña que no tenemos nada que temer. “Porque Cristo es el primero fruto de la futura resurrección. Ante el misterio de la muerte y la pérdida de nuestros seres queridos, los cristianos morimos en el deseo de mantener fierte la fe en la promesa de la vida eterna del Señor. Pablo dice a los tesalonicenses que llevan la esperanza de la salvación como un yelmo [1 Tesalonicenses 5:8] sabiendo que, puesto que Cristo ha resucitado, el objeto de nuestra esperanza es algo cierto. De esta forma, pues, la esperanza cristiana es una forma de vida: vivimos diariamente con la esperanza de la resurrección.”

El camino de la vida de la esperanza cristiana debe vivirse diariamente, en presencia de todas las desilusiones y los sufrimientos de la vida, sean estos grandes o pequeños. Los mártires son testigos de la esperanza. Son niños, hombres y mujeres que “vivieron a diario con la esperanza de la resurrección.” Son personas que fijaron su mirada en Jesús y se negaron a apartarla, sin importar las consecuencias. Al papa Francisco le gusta la frase “todo santo tiene un pasado y todo pecador tiene un futuro.” Ve en esto una afirmación del poder transformador de la gracia de Dios. Todos somos pecadores que estamos llamados a la santidad. Todos somos personas desesperadas, desalentadas y temerosas, llamadas a ser testigos de la esperanza. Aquellos que han tenido éxitos en esta tarea (los santos y los mártires) no forman parte de una clase privilegiada alejada y distante de nosotros. Ellos también están cerca. Es por ello que pedimos su intercesión en la oración; por ello intentamos vivir como lo hicieron ellos, a la manera de la esperanza cristiana.

“Los santos, los ‘héroes’, los ‘mártires’ nos enseñan ‘con perseverancia, manteniendo los ojos fijos en Jesús,” el papa Francisco nos dice que “nos sentiremos completamente estupefactos ante el poder de su amor y su cercanía con nosotros.”

Son un pueblo de esperanza que mantienen la mirada fija en el rostro de la misericordia de Dios, Jesucristo.

(Daniel Conway es integrante del comité editorial de The Criterion.)

Bible, like cellphone, should be carried always, Pope Francis says

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Christians should care about reading God’s messages in the Bible as much as they care about checking messages on their cellphones, Pope Francis said.

As Christ did in the desert when tempted by Satan, men and women can defend themselves from temptations by keeping the Word of God if they “read it often, meditate on it and assimilate it” into their lives, he said before praying the Angelus with those gathered in St. Peter’s Square on March 5.

“What would happen if we turned back when we forget it, if we opened it more to see what do I find? That he has his gaze fixed on us, his gaze on Jesus, and refused to look away no matter what the cost.”

Pope Francis says, “we will be ‘completely astonished’” by the power of his love and by his closeness to us.

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Priests reflect on positive influence of perpetual adoration chapels

The first parish-based perpetual adoration chapel in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis was established in 1989 at St. Michael the Archangel Parish in Indianapolis. Established in 1989, the chapel was the first parish-based perpetual adoration chapel in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. Twelve others have subsequently been started.

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By Natalie Hoefer

Bishop Edward K. Braxton of Belleville, Ill., is one of eight active black Catholic bishops in the United States. With black men making up less than 3 percent of the 269 active U.S. bishops, one might call them a "minority."

Such a word is precisely the type of language that perpetuates the racial divide in the U.S. and in the Church, Bishop Braxton said in a talk titled "The Catholic Church and the Racial Divide in the United States" at St. Thomas Aquinas Church in Indianapolis on Feb. 18.

"Are there really minority Catholics?" he asked the crowd of about 400 people.

"These expressions are regularly used by the media, by the government—certainly in Catholic documents, they are radically incorrect, and they exacerbate sometimes difficult relationships between people of different ethnic and racial groups."

Bishop Braxton’s talk looked at the history and current presence of the racial divide in America and the Church.

Picture if you will

He started with an exercise in imagination, asking those present to picture being taken on a tour by an African-American of an Afrocentric Catholic church where statues and paintings all depict dark-skinned people.

"What if you asked your African-American acquaintance, ‘Would the Catholic Church be more Catholic or more universal and welcoming of all people if the holy men and women of the Bible were pictured as people of different ethnic and racial backgrounds?’ After all, though we know they were Jewish, no one knows what they looked like."

"But your friend responds, ‘Oh, that question has been asked before many times. People who are white should realize that ethnocentric art clearly represents them as well, because Afrocentric art is universal.’"

After asking those gathered to put the picture in their heads of the other foot, Bishop Braxton then outlined the history of the racial divide in the U.S. starting with the introduction of slavery.

He pointed out that out of 70 million Catholics in the U.S., only 3 million—or 4.2 percent—are black.

"Unprecedented unrest"

But the current state of racial relations can best be described as "disturbing," said Bishop Braxton.

"The Catholic Church has all over this country, like the rest of the country, have pondered the disturbing events in cities around the United States," he said.

"These events include the deaths of young men of color during confrontation with local law enforcement, as well as the public expression of grief by family members [and the] reaction to grand jury decisions that seem unreasonable.

"These events have led to unprecedented unrest in our country, including the taunting of police, violence, senseless destruction of property and heinous revenge murders—police officers shot down in revenge of the death of young men of color."

Bishop Braxton described two encounters he had with police while not wearing his clerical garb. In one incident, he was walking in a predominantly white neighborhood. In the other, he was transporting a table and chairs donated by a wealthy white family.

"In both cases, I never could figure out what I was doing that was so wrong, so suspicious, other than ‘walking while black,’” he said.

"Flawed history of the Catholic Church"

When it comes to race within the Church, Bishop Braxton said, "Many younger Catholics in the U.S. are very surprised when they learn about the flawed history of the Catholic Church in regard to the racial divide in the United States."

"They are amazed to learn that Catholic leaders and institutions actually owned human beings from West Africa. They are amazed that Catholic bishops did not condemn the human bondage, contrary to the Gospel of the Jesus Christ."

He noted that John Carroll, the first bishop in the United States who served as bishop of Baltimore from 1789-1815 and was the founder of Georgetown University’s "owned human beings. Not only that, but Georgetown University announced that they have recently uncovered evidence that the Jesuits who built the university sold nearly 300 slaves to wealthy Catholics to pay for the buildings."

Even after the Civil War, Bishop Braxton said, "people of color were excluded from seminaries and convents, and generally could not become priests or sisters except in those orders that were designated for colored people."

He quoted the words of Bishop Joseph Francis, a former black auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Newark, N.J., when people would ask him why there were so few African-American Catholics.

"Joe would tell them, ‘If you had seen and heard, if you had experienced what I’ve experienced, if you knew the history of the Catholic Church in this country in regard to people of color, you would not be amazed that there are so few African-American Catholics—you would be amazed that there are so many.’"

Bishop Braxton also noted that the Church has contributed to the lives of African-Americans.

"Catholic schools in urban settings have made an extraordinary contribution to the intellectual and moral formation of African American youth. Women of color who are not Catholic, many of whom have become leaders in our land,” he said. "The Catholic Church has also been active in eradicating the effects of poverty, which is a fact for so many African-American families."

He also noted various pastoral letters that have been issued on the topic since 1958, but lamented the fact that they were not made widely used.

"The American Catholic bishops are thinking of publishing another letter on the religious and cultural racism of the United States in 2018,” he said. “But some Catholic lay people and some priests and bishops say, ‘Does the Catholic Church really need to say more, write more, publish more—or does the Church need to do more? I feel the Church should do more.’"

"Every citizen … is fully American"

For Bishop Braxton, the problem of the racial divide in the United States is perpetuated by semantics.

"Language has meaning,” he said. "The words we use carry weight. When we divide the country between minorities and majorities, the weight of that is very negative."

"He pointed out that there are other cultural minorities in the United States—people who come from Sweden or Luxembourg, he stated as an example—that are not referred to as a minority."

"You know ‘minority’ is a code word primarily for African-American, perhaps Hispanic Americans, and less and less for Asian Americans, often indicating people who are poor, uneducated, unemployed and from broken family structures,” he said.

"It begs to question, who among us in American society are the majority groups?” he asked. “There’s not a single ethnic group or racial group or cultural group that constitutes true Americans. Every citizen in the United States is fully an American. Citizens who are descendants from the Mayflower are no more truly American than descendants from the passengers on a slave ship."

When people use the term ‘minority group’ in the U.S., said Bishop Braxton, "it reinforces something that is called white privilege. If we refer to people as something they are not, then we diminish them. That is true for those of other faiths. We use the term ‘non-Catholic’ for other denominations. Protestants and Jews do not think of themselves as ‘non-Catholic.’"

"What is needed, he said, is a paradigm shift. To demonstrate, he used the cities of Cleveland and San Antonio as examples, where blacks and Hispanics comprise the majority of the residents, respectively."

"It takes a paradigm shift to realize that, when referring to those cities, people will say, ‘The majority are minorities.’ They can’t bring themselves to say that (Caucasians) are a minority!”

Bishop Edward K. Braxton of Belleville, Ill., makes a point at St. Thomas Aquinas Church in Indianapolis while speaking on the racial divide in the Church on Feb. 18. (Photo by Natalie Hoefer)

Patrice Payne, left, and her husband Mike speak with Bishop Edward K. Braxton of Belleville, Ill., in St. Thomas Aquinas Parish Church in Indianapolis after listening to the bishop speak on the racial divide in the Church on Feb. 18.

"Listen, learn, think, pray and act" to overcome racial divide, bishop says

Bishop Braxton wrote a pastoral letter for his diocese for the 2015 World Day of Peace titled, “The Racial Divide in the United States.”

"That letter, he said, “is designed with activities for small groups. It has activities for listening, learning, thinking, praying and acting, so you can contribute in your own local neighborhood to the solution.”

He closed with a recommendation to all Catholics and all Americans:

“In order to bridge the racial divide in the United States, it is very important that we open our minds and hearts, and listen to the people who disagree with us, and learn what they think, and hear their points of view. We must do all of these things: listen, learn, think, pray and act.

"Ryan Malone, a member of St. Thomas Aquinas Parish, said he found the bishop’s talk "thought-provoking.

"I do a lot of reading on my own,” he said. "A lot of the things he talked about aren’t things that are necessarily accepted in the larger culture, even by educated people, because you’re talking about things that really aren’t necessarily easy."

"Until we can really deal with what is, it’s going to be very difficult to develop ideas that will be good.

"His fellow parishioner, Patrice Payne, said she attended the talk “because I think the topic needs to be discussed.

"When I heard the bishop was coming to discuss this area he’s so well-versed on, I definitely wanted to be a part of it. It was excellent. I want to learn and do more.

Thanks to Father Steven Schwab, pastor of the parish, she might get the chance. In an interview after the bishop’s talk, Schwab said he needs to discuss his initial small groups to discuss Bishop Braxton’s pastoral letter "and see if we can become more sensitive to these issues here at St. Thomas," where he estimates the number of black members to be around 20 percent.

"We’re just not aware of how pervasive racism still is in the basic structures of our society," he said.

"Very few of us, myself included, know much about the history of the Black Church in the Catholic Church. As Bishop Braxton pointed out, that is not a part of our history that we’re very proud of, so we don’t talk or teach much about it … I think it’s good to just honestly own up to our shortcomings as a Church here in the United States, and learn from our mistakes, and see if we can do something not to undo what’s been done, but to somehow address what still remains of that wrong for the benefit of those who are here with us today.

(To read Bishop Braxton’s pastoral letter, "The Racial Divide in the United States," log on to oepi.org/DEE/17)"
Donald J. Trump. On March 3, the president and other dignitaries toured the predominantly black school in which 70 percent of students benefit from the school choice scholarship program.

Trump was joined by Education Secretary Betsy DeVos, U.S. Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Florida, and Florida Gov. Rick Scott on a tour of the school that started with a visit to a fourth-grade class. The visit, which was private, was dubbed as a listening session. During a roundtable discussion, the president heard from parents, teachers and students, including Marcus.

Marcus is the son of a single mother who emigrated from Haiti as a refugee to the United States. Marcus didn’t use the financial aid his own hometown. Although his family does not have the financial resources for him to attend private school without a scholarship, the son said he is a patriot.

“My mother struggled, but didn’t want me to have to struggle,” Marcus said of the reasons his mother chose to put him through school. “Ever since I was here at St. Andrew, I found a sense of community and people who cared for me and had my best interests at heart.”

Artayia Wesley, 17, a fellow junior at Bishop Moore, agreed with Marcus’ assessment of St. Andrew. She also participated in the roundtable discussion and is a graduate of St. Andrew.

“This community helped us put our best foot forward,” she said. “My father works very hard to provide for our family. Before he even went to school, we wouldn’t have been able to go to St. Andrew. My academic and my behavior [about school] improved while I was here.”

During her high school graduation, both teens said they would attend college. Artaya has aspirations in law and politics. Marcus hopes to play college basketball while pursuing a degree in sports medicine or neurology.

No matter what they pursue, they know their Catholic education will put them on the right path.

“Always remember who helped you get where you are and who supported you … and continue to offer the values and support they gave you,” Marcus said.

“Remember you wouldn’t be who you are without the support you had.” Those words are exactly what brought Stephanie Jean-Jacques to serve as a teacher at St. Andrew School for the past two years. The daughter of Haitian immigrants, she had her share of bumps in the road as she attended Orange High School in Orlando and the University of South Florida.

She felt called to serve at the school, in the heart of a lower-income area of Orlando.

“I am a proud Haitian, and I make it my priority to share my history of who I am and where I came from,” Jean-Jacques said recalling a moment in her first year at St. Andrew when her surprised their teacher, a Haitian woman, went to college and found success. “It was important to share that with the children, that, yes, people just like them can succeed.”

She said she witnesses firsthand the benefits of the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship program, which is utilized by so many of her students. But the opportunities don’t stop with the financial funding. As a teacher, she does all she can to support them and remind them of two things: don’t give up, and remember where you came from. And the students abide by that understanding.

“I’ve learned that they are driven, lovable. They are dreamers and talented, and they have high hopes for success,” she said. “They truly strive for the goals of college and beyond.”

Those two goals are something that is planted all over the school, which in 2015 started a partnership with Notre Dame initiative to become one of 14 Notre Dame ACE (Alliance for Catholic Education) Academies.

This partnership is designed to bring in classroom instruction, enhance student enrollment practices and support optimal operations.

According to Theo Helm, director of communications for ACE, one aspect that dictates how an academy is chosen is parental choice.

“We are so proud of our partnership with the Orlando Diocese and with this school,” Helm said, adding that three other schools in the nine-county diocese are ACE academies. “It’s so important that parents have a right to choose the best education for their child.”

The success of the parental choice program prompted the Orlando Diocese to invite Trump to St. Andrew. With Secret Service on the premises, children had to process through a makeshift, temporary metal detector to get to their classrooms that day. Bishop John G. Noonan visited classes in the morning before the president’s 1:30 p.m. arrival.

Streets were closed off around the school some time before the visit.

The president’s arrival was marked by an entourage of cars, including two stretch limo SUVs, regular SUVs and vans. A gaggle of some 20 members of the press huddled in the back of Jane Jones’ fourth-grade classroom just before the door opened and Latrina Peters-Gipson, principal, escorted the president inside.

Two of the fourth-graders got up to greet the president and other dignitaries who arrived, including Scott, Rubio and DeVos. The president’s daughter and son-in-law—Ivanka Trump and Jared Kushner—were also on hand.

The president only stayed a few minutes, and shook a couple of students’ hands. He smiled, commented to a few of the girls how beautiful their hair was, and offered all the students the following advice: “You will all succeed because you all work very hard.”

Along with the fourth-grade classroom, the president visited eighth graders before heading to the library for the roundtable discussion. Although the press was not invited to stay for the discussion, there were preliminary words heard while cameras flashed.

Henry Fortier, secretary for education and superintendent of Catholic schools for the Orlando Diocese, said the discussion about school choice was both an exciting and important opportunity.

“I know there is a lot of controversy about school choice, but I see it as a partnership because it’s not a situation of us versus them but of a situation of all of us working to provide opportunities for all parents so they have a right to choose an education appropriate for their children,” he said. “It shouldn’t be just for the wealthy.”

On a state level, we really appreciate the school choice programs because it makes Catholic education possible to low-income families,” he said. 

Bellarmines first female president says taking job like ‘a homecoming’ for her

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (CNS)–Susan M. Donovan—the first woman to be appointed president of Bellarmine University in Louisville—told students, faculty and staff during a welcoming reception on Feb. 23 that she felt “called to lead” the Catholic school.

Donovan will take the helm at Bellarmine on July 1. Until then, she will continue as executive vice president of Loyola University Maryland in Baltimore, where she has served in various roles for 32 years.

Donovan told those who packed Frazier Hall on the school’s campus that her appointment at the Catholic university felt like a “homecoming.”

“When I read the university’s mission statement and the presidential profile, it spoke to the core of who I am as a person,” she said. “I’m honored and humbled to serve as the fourth president.”

She told those present that she stands “on the shoulders” of Joseph J. McGowan, Bellarmine’s longest-serving president, who died last March. “I am in awe of his vision and consider it a privilege to build on that vision,” she said, drawing applause.

Donovan went on to say that the university was “radical and revolutionary” in its beginning, opening its doors in 1950 to all races.

The leaders of the school saw differences not as “threats, but barriers that shaped the institution,” she said. “I understand that Bellarmine students continue to speak out against injustices. I applaud them, she said: “You are the reason Bellarmine exists. You’ve embraced our mission, and we hope it inspires you throughout your lifetime. We are committed to your success and inspired by your good works.”

Donovan promised to keep leading the school in that same spirit. “We will not back away from our responsibility to the community,” she said. “This university on the hill will continue to serve.”

In meeting with news media prior to her speech to the school, Donovan said that Catholic social teaching is the foundation of the university. She believes, she said, that “a few people committed to a purpose can change the world.”

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U.S. President Donald Trump chats with students from St. Andrew Catholic School in Orlando, Fla., March 3. U.S. Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla., left, and U.S. Education Secretary Betsy DeVos also joined the president. (CNS photo/Jonathan Ernst, Reuters)
Faith

meditation, prayer and fasting. on Mediterranean Sea shores, when in 2015 he spoke of to enrich our faith. 

The goal in what we refrain from doing is neither to weaken nor discourage us, but to encourage growth and sight of its essentially positive, spiritual characteristic. 

doors of our heart to others because each person is a gift, 

hungers of the poor or the hunger to comprehend better what God is asking of me or, alternatively, what I need to try a clearer focus in life? What that is right before our eyes are we allowing to remain blunted, out of focus? 

Fasting helps to “focus our attention, move our hearts” and “give vision and insight,” according to the archbishop. He accorded a place to fasting on a list of ways to support refugees fleeing violence in their homelands. 

Archbishop Durocher’s observations suggest a possible question to ask when we fast. Where do I or where do we need a clearer focus in life? What that is right before our eyes are we allowing to remain blunted, out of focus? 

Here I recall a discussion by Amy-Jill Levine, a biblical scholar, about the parable of the prodigal son (Lk 15:11-32) and, in particular, about the prodigal’s older brother. Readers often judge the older brother harshly because he felt so slighted by his father’s great celebration of the younger brother’s return home. But is the older brother often misunderstood? Levine proposed in her book Short Stories by Jesus that the older brother may represent the faithful child who is taken for granted and whose real feelings are overlooked. 

The older brother, the father will discover in the parable, “was the son who was truly ‘lost’ to him” and who needed his father’s understanding, Levine indicates.

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Keep spiritual goals in mind when fasting in Lent

Fasting in Lent can help us and all the faithful to “open our doors to the weak and poor.” (CNS photo/Enrique Mancurion, Reuters)

Fasting from food is a practice rooted deeply in Judeo-Christian history. Scripture links it directly to actions that provide care for others. Describing the kind of fasting God desires, the prophet Isaiah makes this clear, saying “Is this not, rather, the fast I choose: releasing those bound unjustly, untying the thongs of the yoke; setting free the oppressed, breaking off every yoke? Is it not sharing your bread with the hungry, bringing the afflicted and the homeless into your house; clothing the naked when you see them?” (Is 58:6-7).

Typically, when fasting is mentioned among Christians it is coupled with penance and prayer. Fasting throughout Christianity’s history always was considered a practice of spiritualty. So it points beyond itself by focusing attention on the reality of God’s presence here and now. Fasting, however, is not a passive action for Christians, something simply to undergo or suffer through. Paradoxically, it is meant to set the wheels of the mind and spirit into motion, and to reawaken us to the overlooked and unresolved challenges in our actual lives.

(David Gibson served on Catholic News Service’s editorial staff for 37 years.)

People who fasted in the Scriptures did so for several purposes

By Daniel S. Mulhall

“They proclaimed a fast ... that we might humble ourselves before our God to seek from him a safe journey for ourselves, our children, and all our possessions.” So we fasted, seeking this from our God, and it was granted.” (Ezr 8:21, 23).

Fasting has been a time-honored practice from the early days of Israel. The practice, which Jesus followed as an observant Jew, was taken up by the early Christians and is still practiced by Christians today, most prominently during the season of Lent.

Many passages in the Bible show why we should fast. The first is atonement, when we ask God’s forgiveness for the evil we have done and the good we have failed to do.

The Jewish holy high day of Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement) is such a day of fasting (see Lv 23:26-32). The prophet Joel illustrates this idea in a passage that is proclaimed on Ash Wednesday: “Yet even now ... return to me with your whole heart, with fasting, weeping and mourning. Rend your hearts, not your garments, and return to the Lord, your God.” Perhaps he will again relent and leave behind a blessing” (Jl 2:12,14).

This is also seen in Jonah 3:5-10 when the king of Nineveh declares a fast with the hope that God will relent from his anger and not destroy the city.

The second biblical purpose of fasting is to prepare ourselves for a spiritually intense period of time, as when Jesus went into the desert and fasted for 40 days as he prepared for his ministry (see Mt 4:1-11), or as Moses fasted for 40 days when he received the Ten Commandments (see Ex 34:28).

The third reason people in the Bible fasted is as part of a profound prayer, as is seen in the passage from Ezra 8 above. Another example of this is found in Psalm 35: “Yet I, when they were ill, put on sackcloth, afflicted myself with fasting, sobbed my prayers upon my bosom.” (Ps 35:13).

People also fasted as a way to enter more deeply into a significant event, as when Paul and Barnabas appointed leaders for Christian communities. The Acts of the Apostles notes that “they commended them [the leaders] to the Lord” (Acts 14:23) with prayer and fasting (see also Acts 13:2-3).

The prophet Nehemiah wept for several days, “fasting and praying before the God of heaven,” when he learned the fate of Jerusalem following the exile (Neh 1:4). Zechariah 8:19 lists four days when Jews are to fast to remember significant events in Jewish life. In several Bible passages, prophets describe the fast that God desires. The most powerful of these is Isaiah 58:3-7 where God says omitting food or drink is not enough. God calls additionally for the unjustly bound to be released, the oppressed set free, the hungry fed, the afflicted nurtured and the immigrant given shelter.

Jesus also addressed how we are to fast. In Matthew 6:16-18, he tells us to look happy and not show our fasting on the outside. It’s enough for God to know that we fast.

(Daniel Mulhall is a catechist who lives in Louisville, Ky. Eugene Fisher, a professor at Saint Leo University in St. Leo, Fla., assisted with this article.)

A young woman studies the Bible at St. Mary of Celle Parish in Berwyn, Ill. Several purposes for fasting are presented in the Scriptures. (CNS photo/Karen Callaway, Colum)
Meetings with President Mubarak and other Egyptian leaders (Fourth and last in a series)

I’m writing about a trip I took back in 1982 when I led a group of 26 American Catholic journalists on a trip to Israel, Jordan, Egypt and Syria. On Nov. 11, we had a meeting with Mubarak. He told us that he had a previous meeting with a U.S. delegation led by Congresswoman Lee Hamilton of Indiana—when we learned that Soviet Union President Leonid Brezhnev was in the Middle East. It happened too late for the morning’s paper. That morning’s paper did, though, have a story about our visit on the front pages of the two French-language newspapers. In both French papers, there were references to the visit with President Bush and the death of Leontide Brezhnev. I’m not sure if it was the visit or the death of Leonid Brezhnev that makes you wonder about their sense of news value. After all, what was so important about the death of Leonid Brezhnev? The previous night’s television news show led off with the press conference after the pope’s visit. It was an important trip 35 years ago, but we didn’t expect to be part of the news.

(Cornucopia/Cynthia Dewes)

Did you know that the Holocaust never happened? Or that the story of the Titanic was just the product of a conspiracy to make us entertain the hateful Jews, or fear for our safety or whatever? These are just examples of revisionist history. It’s when people revise history to suit their own agenda, or just because they’re ignorant of the facts. Whatever the cause, revisionist history is a disservice to all of us because it is entirely negative and won’t help us going forward.

The problem is, despite our access to all kinds of information because of advanced technology, revisionist history is constantly being delivered to us. I mention this because some of us were actually alive to see these events in question.

As an example, consider the public attention paid to a new book by Frankfurter on Japan to end World War II. No one we know or read about or heard of, including our own, made any clear about this event and the time. That’s because we all knew the Japanese believed in fighting until the last man standing. This is the time when, even if we had invaded Japan to put an end to it, the ensuing slaughter on both sides would have been horrendous and unsatisfactory.

Today, we think we should not have dropped the bomb because of the tremendous damage it did to generations of Japanese civilians. We say the end did not justify the means we used. We were so shocked by the event that we vowed never to use atomic weapons again.

But, that was then. And there were reasons to take this action, if not excuses. With the possible exception of Robert Oppenheimer, I don’t think we can realize the terrible destruction unleashed by such a weapon, including the long-term effects on the Japanese and us. To this day, people suffer the physical and emotional problems caused by the bomb. Not only that, we believe that modern advances would always be for the good. We are called to make good moral decisions and try to follow God’s will. Of course, both the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bomb would not be God’s will. But we are human, and we have the free will to err. Unfortunately, we do big things now and then.

But beating ourselves up over past mistakes can be revisionist, also. Even when we try to do the right thing for the right reasons, we can and do get it wrong. And the hope of what we’ve done and how can we do better. But it explains why it happened then… We need to learn from this history, and do better in the future.

Even when we didn’t live through certain events which come into question later, we have sources to use to learn factual history and dismiss what is revisionist hindsight. There are all kinds of revisions. Jesus was really married, probably to Mary Magdalene, or vaccinations cause autism. Some are ridiculous and most cannot be proven. Truth always lies somewhere in the middle in human understanding. So my advice is, keep praying, and relax. God is in charge.

(Cynthia Dewes, a member of St. Paul the Apostle Parish in Greencastle, is a regular columnist for The Criterion.)
**The Sunday Readings**

**Sunday, March 12, 2017**

- Genesis 12:1-4a
- 2 Timothy 1:8b-10
- Matthew 17:1-9

The Book of Genesis is the source of the first biblical reading for this weekend’s Mass. As its name implies, Genesis reveals the divine origin of life and God’s plan in the forming of the Hebrew race. First and foremost, Genesis is a splendidly vivid revelation of God's majesty and power, but also of the dignity of humanity and purpose of life. It is a great pity that this marvelously book has been so tortured and misconstrued by well-meaning but uninformed readers over the years. The message of Genesis is not about the details of how creation occurred. This weekend’s reading is about Abraham. Considered by scholars to have been an actual person and not a myth, Abraham is regarded as the father of the Jewish people. The reading makes several points. God is active in human affairs, and humans and God communicate with each other. Abraham has a strong faith. God rewards this faith by pledging that Abraham’s descendants will be God’s special people until the end of time. But it is not a dignity conferred without obligation. Abraham’s descendants must be faithful to God and reveal God to the world by their lives of faith. For its second reading, this weekend’s liturgy presents a passage from St. Paul’s Second Epistle to Timothy.

Timothy was a disciple of Paul. The Church venerates Timothy as a great saint who was important in the formation of Christianity. According to the New Testament, Timothy was the son of a pagan father and a devout Jewish mother. He was Paul’s secretary at one point and once was imprisoned with the Apostle, although eventually released. Tradition holds that Timothy was the bishop of Ephesus, then a major city, its present ruins being on the Mediterranean coast of modern Turkey. Paul encourages Timothy to be strong and God’s people until the end of time. He is just as strengthened the faith of the Apostles who stood trembling and in dismay when his divinity was manifested on the mountain. The message is clear. Jesus is God, active and present among us. In order to be saved, however, we must believe, and in our belief we must commit our very lives to Christ. So Abraham is critically a part of this weekend’s lesson as an example.

Nowhere in these readings is any account of the crucifixion, no reference to Calvary. Nevertheless, the event of the Lord’s death on the cross is essential to understanding fully this weekend’s message. Calvary represents the world. It was for a moment, seemingly, the triumph of earthly power and human sin over good. Certainly, the enemies of Jesus saw the crucifixion as their victory. Jesus died, but then came the wonder of Easter. Every human being can be tricked into assuming that earthly things or earthly satisfaction will bring them reward. Instead of reward, sin brings death. All around it is gloom and darkness. So the Church counsels us to have faith, see beyond the gloom and rejoice in the light of Jesus. Remember his transfiguration, and remember Abraham, our model of absolute faith. Remember the true reward in life!

**Reflection**

Lent is little more than one week along, and already the Church is encouraging us and reinforcing our faith just as Jesus strengthened the faith of the Apostles who stood trembling and in dismay when his divinity was manifested on the mountain.

The surest way is a death certificate, from a government agency since he was a citizen, or verification of his first wife’s death. Although in many jurisdictions your husband would not be able to obtain that from a government agency since he was not her husband at the time of her death. In that case, a newspaper obituary or a letter from the funeral home would almost certainly suffice.

The priest will speak with you as to whether preparation might be made for him to officiate at (formally called “convalidate”) your marriage in the Catholic Church. This preparation would include you and your husband receiving the sacrament of penance with a priest of your own choosing. Additionally, most dioceses will require that you and the priest prepare for the wedding through some premarital preparation and submission of forms, depending upon your circumstance. The marriage ceremony would likely be a simple one, with some appropriate scriptural readings; you and your husband, in the presence of two witnesses, would then exchange your consent in the form of marriage vows in front of the priest, who would then grant you a nuptial blessing over the marriage.

**Daily Readings**

**Monday, March 13**
- Daniel 9:4b-10
- Psalm 79:8-9, 11, 13
- Luke 6:36-38

**Tuesday, March 14**
- Isaiah 1:10, 20
- Psalm 50:8-9, 16bc-17, 21, 23
- Matthew 23:12-23

**Wednesday, March 15**
- Jeremiah 18:18-20
- Psalm 31:5-6, 14-16
- Matthew 20:17-28

**Thursday, March 16**
- Jeremiah 17:5-10
- Psalm 1:1-4, 6
- Luke 16:19-31

**Question Corner**

**Fr. Kenneth Doyle**

**Traditional English translation of “Glory be” prayer can cause confusion**

Q: I enjoy reading your column in our diocesan newspaper, and I am hoping that you can help with something I have always wondered about: Why, at the end of the “Glory be to the Father” prayer, do we say “world without end”? (Indiana)

A: Your question serves as a good reminder of how unreflectively we often pray. I have been saying the “Glory be to the Father” prayer for 70 years, and it had never occurred to me to think about the confusion that the words “world without end” might cause. Actually, the phrase refers not to the physical universe as we know it, but simply an ideal; a poetic way of expressing the notion of eternity. What we are really saying is that the glory of God and the praise owed to the Trinity are endless.

The phrase attempts to translate the Latin ending of many Mass prayers, “per omnia saecula saeculorum,” which, when translated literally, means, “through all ages upon ages.”

In fact, some prayer books now render the prayer this way: “Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.”

My husband was previously married and divorced. Back when we were engaged, we wanted to be married in the Catholic Church, but when we called my parish, the priest said he doubted that he could marry us. So we got married by a justice of the peace, have now been married for 38 years and have raised our children as Catholic. We still consider ourselves Catholic, have practiced the faith all these years and continue to be blessed by the fact that our marriage is not blessed by the Catholic Church. Recently, we found out that my husband’s ex-wife passed away, and we are wondering how this affects our situation and our relationship with the Church. (Louisiana)

A: First, I admire your continued loyalty to the Church. Now, to your question: Assuming that this is your own first and only marriage, the solution is quite simple. You and your husband should make an appointment with a local priest, your husband bringing with him verification of his first wife’s death. The surest way is a death certificate, although in many jurisdictions your husband would not be able to obtain that from a government agency since he was not her husband at the time of her death. In that case, a newspaper obituary or a letter from the funeral home would almost certainly suffice.

The priest will speak with you as to whether preparation might be made for him to officiate at (formally called “convalidate”) your marriage in the Catholic Church. This preparation would include you and your husband receiving the sacrament of penance with a priest of your own choosing. Additionally, most dioceses will require that you and the priest prepare for the wedding through some premarital preparation and submission of forms, depending upon your circumstance. The marriage ceremony would likely be a simple one, with some appropriate scriptural readings; you and your husband, in the presence of two witnesses, would then exchange your consent in the form of marriage vows in front of the priest, who would then grant you a nuptial blessing over the marriage.

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

**My Journey to God**

**Little Feet**

*By Marie LeRoy*

*Where are you going little feet? Dusty beyond possible cleaning Tinted red from the soil*  
*And calloused by the stones For lack of shoes.*

*Where are you going little feet? Burdened by the weight of the world Carried to make a fire Several times a day To feed family.*

*Where are you going little feet? Walking together with other little feet Small in size But giant in bearing The weight of the world.*

(Marie LeRoy is a member of St. Pius X Parish in Indianapolis. Children eat their meal in a camp for internally displaced people on Nov. 25, 2015.)

**St. Patrick**

*4.389-461 | Feast day: March 17*

*Born in Britain, Patrick was carried off by raiders and enslaved in Ireland. He became parochial during six solitary years as a herdsman. He escaped, was made his way to Gaul, on the continent, where he trained as a priest. In a dream he was called to evangelize Ireland, and in about 432 returned as a bishop. For nearly 30 years he was the apostle to the Irish, bringing an organized church into existence in a pagan land. Toward the end of his life he made a 40-day retreat in Mayo that gave rise to the ongoing Croagh Patrick pilgrimages.*

*Copyright Catholic News Service*
Rest in peace


DE LEON, Emmanuelle, infant, St. Lawrence, Jan. 18. Son of Maria Del Rosario De Leon.

DICKS, Cleo, 79, St. Lawrence, Indianapolis, Feb. 7. Mother of Margaret and Donald. Grandmother of four. Great-grandmother of one.


BURKE, Margaret, 57, St. Mary, Novi, Feb. 28. Husband of Debra Burke. Brother of Jean Mau and Joelyn Niguel.


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Cassandra Poynter, 17, right, and Children’s Liturgy of the Word participant Hannah Sitz, both of Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ Parish in Indianapolis, pose with mats and the cabinet Cassandra made to improve the children’s ministry in her parish. Cassandra’s efforts helped her to earn her Girl Scout Gold Award. (Submitted photo)

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Evangelization at the margins drives USCCB convocation planning

WASHINGTON (CNS)—This summer’s convocation of American Catholic leaders will give the 3,000 participants a better understanding of what it means to be missionary disciples who evangelize in every facet of their lives.

Representatives of sponsoring organizations preparing for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB)-led, invitation-only “Convocation of Catholic Leaders: The Joy of the Gospel in America” on July 1-4 in Orlando, Fla., said they are drawing from key papal documents and long-standing Church teaching to develop a program that inspires attendees to act joyfully in bringing mercy to a 21st-century world.

Pope Francis, following in the footsteps of his predecessors since the Second Vatican Council, has focused his papacy on the meaning of missionary discipleship and the importance of reaching to the margins of the world, said Pallotine Father Frank Donio, director of the Catholic Apostolate Center.

“The term ‘missions’ or ‘missionary discipleship’ is saying that we’re a follower [of Jesus], but we’re being sent,” Father Frank explained.

The call to be sent means people are invited to evangelize, he said.

“What does that look like in the domestic Church of the home, the workplace, as a student, in the public square, in peace and justice work? It’s bringing all of these different people together [to] discuss and understand how it plays out in your parish in worship, faith formation, or others in terms of care for neighbor and charity and justice,” Father Frank told Catholic News Service (CNS).

Blessed Paul VI outlined the Church’s call in his 1975 apostolic exhortation, “Evangelii Nuntiandi” (“Evangelization in the Modern World”). The document emerged a year after the 1974 Synod of Bishops, which re-emphasized the essential missionary character of the Church and the duty of each member to bear witness to Christ in the world.

In his exhortation, one of the most authoritative categories of papal document, Blessed Paul VI wrote that each member of the Church is called to evangelize the world because “the preaching of the Gospel message is not an optional contribution for the Church.”

“For the Christian community is never closed in upon itself,” he wrote. “The intimate life of this community—the life of the Word and the Apostles’ teaching, charity lived in a fraternal way, the sharing of bread—this intimate life only acquires its full meaning when it becomes a witness, when it evokes admiration and conversion, and when it becomes the preaching and proclamation of the good news. Thus it is the whole Church that receives the mission to evangelize, and the work of each individual member is important for the whole.”

Subsequently, Pope Francis in his 2013 apostolic exhortation “Evangelii Gaudium” (“The Joy of the Gospel”) laid out his vision for an evangelical Church that seeks to lead us through the pain of loss to a new chapter in our lives one day at a time.

The death of a child has been described as the “ultimate tragedy.” This four-hour retreat is offered for parents, grandparents, sisters or brothers, aunts or uncles, who have experienced a miscarriage, a stillborn infant, or the death of a child and are ready to tend to their own grieving heart in a supportive group setting.

Grief is not the problem, rather it is the solution for the grieving heart in a supportive group setting.

The program runs from 4:30 pm – 8:15 pm and includes dinner.

There is no registration fee for this program. Donations are gratefully accepted.

APRIL 9 - 13, 2017
HOLY WEEK OF SILENT DAYS and NIGHTS

From 6:00 p.m. on Sunday, April 9th through Good Friday, the Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House will be silently observing Holy Week.

Anyone is welcome to stay with us for as many days and overnight visits as you desire.

Registration fees:
$32.00 includes a room to use for the day, continental breakfast, lunch and the use of the common areas and grounds of the retreat house.

To register or find out more about these programs, contact our registrar, Marcia Johnson at Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House or (317) 545-7681 extension 102 if you are interested in meeting with a spiritual director.

APRIL 12, 2017
THE LIGHT IS ON FOR YOU AGAIN! SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

7:00 AM until 8:00 PM

Father Jeff Godecker and Father Keith Hoose are offering the Sacrament of Reconciliation this Lent to all who wish to receive it.

To register or find out more about these programs, visit our website at: www.archindy.org/fatima Or call us at 317-545-7681.