Pope Francis: U.S., North Korea need diplomatic solution to escalating tensions

ABOARD THE PAPAL FLIGHT FROM CAIRO (CNS)—A diplomatic solution must be found to the escalating tension between North Korea and the United States, Pope Francis told journalists.

“The path [to take] is the path of negotiation, the path of a diplomatic solution,” he said when asked about U.S. President Donald J. Trump’s decision to send Navy warships to the region in response to North Korea’s continued missile tests and threats to launch nuclear strikes against South Korea, Japan and the United States.

“What do you say to these leaders who hold responsibility for the future of humanity?” the pope was asked, during a question-and-answer session with journalists on the flight to Rome on April 29 after a 27-hour trip to Cairo.

“I will call on them. I’m going to call on them like I have called on the leaders of different places,” he said.

There are many facilitators and mediators around the world who are “always ready to help” with negotiations, the pope said.

The situation in North Korea, he added, has been heated for a long time, “but now it seems it has heated up too much, no?”

“I always call [for] resolving problems through the diplomatic path, negotiations” because the future of humanity depends on it, he said.

Pope Francis said his contention that the Third World War already is underway can be seen in places where there are internal conflicts, including in the Middle East, Yemen and parts of Africa.

“Let’s stop. Let’s look for a diplomatic solution,” he said. “And there, I believe that the United Nations has a duty to regain its leadership [role] a bit because it has been watered down.”

Olympics star shares ‘gold medal’ moments that lead her to serve God and people in need

By John Shaughnessy

As Tamika Catchings shared defining moments from the journey of her life, she never mentioned the four Olympic gold medals she earned as a member of the U.S. women’s basketball team—or how she led the Indiana Fever to a championship in the Women’s National Basketball Association (WNBA).

Instead, the keynote speaker at the archdiocese’s Spirit of Service Awards Dinner in Indianapolis on April 26 recalled a poignant moment from her childhood that propelled her to these accomplishments—and to her launching the Catch the Stars Foundation which helps disadvantaged youths achieve their dreams.

The moment occurred shortly after her family moved to a new city when she was in the second grade, a moment that occurred a few years after she was diagnosed with a hearing disability when she was 3 years old.

“In second grade, I realized I was different. Every single day, I went to school, I got made fun of—for the way that I talked, for the way that I looked, for the hearing aids I had to wear,” Catchings told the 460 people who had gathered at the Indiana Roof Ballroom for the fundraiser for Catholic Charities Indianapolis.

“Every single day I walked home, I’d have tears streaming down my face. I’d stomp into the house and I’d slam the door, and I’d beg my mom, ‘Please, please, don’t make me go back. I’ll do whatever it takes. I’ll wash dishes. I’ll fold clothes the rest of my life. Just don’t make me go back!’ And every single day it was different. Every single day, I said, ‘I’ll do whatever it takes. I’ll wash dishes. I’ll fold clothes.’

She endured the pain of being teased and laughed at, but she knew her parents had done the right thing in moving her.

“Like I told the pope, ‘It’s all about inspiring’”

Love others to the extreme, pope tells Egypt’s Catholics

CAIRO (CNS)—The only kind of fanaticism that is acceptable to God is being fanatic about loving and helping others, Pope Francis said on his final day in Egypt.

“True faith,” he told Catholics, “makes us more charitable, more merciful, more honest and more humane. It moves our hearts to love everyone without counting the cost.”

The pope celebrated an open-air Mass on April 29 in Cairo’s Air Defense Stadium, built by the anti-aircraft branch of the Egyptian armed forces. The pope concelebrated with Coptic Catholic Patriarch Ibrahim Isaac Sedrak of Alexandria and leaders of the other Catholic Churches in Egypt.

After spending the first day of his visit in meetings with Muslim leaders, government officials, diplomats and members of the Coptic Orthodox Church, the pope dedicated the second day of his trip to Egypt’s minority Catholic community.

Surrounded by security, the pope managed to personally greet only one small group of children who were dressed as pharaohs and other traditional figures. They hugged the pope affectionately as security tightly closed in on the group.

In his homily, the pope used the day’s Gospel reading of the two disciples’ journey to Emmaus to highlight how easy it is to
Justice Department holds on to Affordable Care Act’s mandate

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Groups that legally challenged the Affordable Care Act’s contraceptive, ab ortifacient and sterilization requirement for employer-sponsored health plans still do not have clear direction on how to move forward because nearly a year after the U.S. Supreme Court sent their cases back to the lower courts, the Justice Department is still appealing some of them.

On April 24, the Justice Department asked the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals for 60 more days to essentially pause the issues “presented” by the Supreme Court’s remand. It also asked for more time because the issues “presented” by the Supreme Court’s remand “are complex,” and several different positions remain unfilled.

But the request is a particularly newsworthy one because the Justice Department said it was asking for more time because the issues “presented” by the Supreme Court’s remand “are complex,” and several different positions remain unfilled.

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The Supreme Court justices, at the time, expressed hope that both sides might be able to work out a compromise, which has not happened. Early in 2017, with Trump’s presidency in place, religious groups opposed to the contraceptive, abortifacient and sterilization mandate seemed confident they would get relief when the Justice Department stopped its appeal of the cases. But the Trump administration asked a rule change from the Department of Health and Human Services.

East Texas Baptist University and other plaintiffs represented by Becket have asked the Justice Department to drop its appeal of the court ruling that does not require them to comply with the mandate. This litigation has gone on long enough,” the plaintiffs wrote in a petition to the Fifth Circuit. “It is time for the Department of Justice to move on, and to allow the court, the universities and other religious ministries to move on as well.”
WASHINGTON (CNS)—Carrying banners and signs with quotes from Pope Francis’ encyclical ‘Laudato Si’: on Care for our Common Home,” hundreds of Catholics joined the People’s Climate March to call for moral and prayerful action to protect creation.

On a sweltering day that reinforced the message about the need to respond to climate change—the 91-degree temperature at 3 p.m. on April 29 tied a 43-year-old Washington record for the date—many in the Catholic contingent said they felt they had a moral obligation to witness in the streets.

“We march for our grandchildren. Stop global warming,” read one sign propped up in the back of St. Dominic Church in Washington, where about 300 people gathered before the march for Mass celebrated by Dominican Father Hyacinth Marie Cordell, the parish’s assistant pastor. “The Vatican is solar. What about US?” read another. “We resist, we build, we rise,” read a sign from St. Francis and Therese Catholic Worker Community in Worcester, Mass.

Unifying the messages on the signs and banners were people who shared a heartfelt concern to carry out Pope Francis’ call in his 2015 encyclical to live responsibly with the planet, remember the needs of others around the world and to reduce consumption and energy usage for the sake of God’s creation.

They also wanted to send a message to President Donald J. Trump that his policies on the environment and energy development do not follow the pontiff’s call to protect the Earth.

For Manny and Mary Hotchkiss, the march was their second in two weeks. Both scientists, the couple from Portland, Ore., joined a regional March for Science in New Orleans on April 22 as they made their way on a cross-country trip to a meeting of Maryknoll affiliates in Ossining, N.Y.

After the Mass, Mary Hotchkiss, 72, a chemist, said the couple’s involvement was required by their Catholic faith. Manny Hotchkiss, 74, a mechanical engineer, expressed dismay about the president’s policies.

“The most important thing I see with this political scene, and it brings a tear to my eye to think about it, is that everything I tried to teach our kids growing up [about science] is fully rejected by the current administration,” he said.

“The 300 people at the Mass heard Father Hyacinth call for an ‘ecological conversion’ during his homily. He said each person must act in any possible way to protect God’s creation: reducing energy usage; limiting waste; choosing carpooling or biking and walking more; and buying less.

“We can learn increasingly to act not only with our own good and convenience in mind, but above all to think and choose according to what is best for all, especially for the poor and for future generations,” the Dominican priest said. “This ecological conversion calls us to self-examination, to make an inventory of our lives and habits so that we can learn to be better stewards of our common home and its resources, which are meant for the good of all.”

He said such steps require a revolution of the heart, as Pope Francis has called each person to undertake. He described it as a “change toward responsibility and virtue, a transition to thinking about the common good, future generations, the poor, other living beings, God’s glory and the environment in all of our decisions instead of thinking only in terms of a short-term, fleeting and superficial good or convenience for ourselves.”

Sister Kathy Sherman, a member of the Congregation of St. Joseph in LaGrange Park, Ill., was pleased to hear Father Hyacinth stress the encyclical’s themes. “I feel like I’m marching for the children, for the future,” she told Catholic News Service (CNS). “Earth is getting bad for us. If we don’t do something, there’s not going to be anything like we’ve known for the future generations, and it breaks my heart.”

Other members of Sister Kathy’s congregation joined a satellite march in Chicago, but she made the trek to Washington on her own because she said she felt it was important to take a message directly to administration officials.

“T think it’s so essential that we connect climate degradation with economic and racial justice,” Sister Kathy added. “It’s just the whole sense of the oneness.”

A large banner mounted on a 12-foot bamboo pole carried by Malcolm Byrnes, 57, a member of St. Camillus Parish in Silver Spring, Md., was one of several that quoted the pope’s encyclical. It read: “We need to reject a magical conception of the market.”

“We have to bring things back into focus and see climate change as a moral issue involving all of humanity, especially the poor,” Byrnes said as he waited for the Massgoers to begin walking to the assembly point for faith communities near the U.S. Capitol.

Byrnes explained that Pope Francis’ words had inspired him to consider his own actions in response to the divisive language the president and members of his administration have used during the first 100 days in office.

“We have to be activists,” he said. “We have to continue to put the pressure on and to be active. Doing it as a Catholic is even more poignant for me.”

March organizers said the event had been planned as a follow-up to the September 2014 People’s Climate March in New York City before Trump’s election in November. The April 29 march was led by indigenous people who already are facing disrupted lives as the climate warms and causes droughts and rising ocean levels.

The march kicked off less than 48 hours after the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) began to revamp its website, taking down pages devoted to climate science. The agency said in a statement late on April 28 that the information was “under review.”

Some of the Catholic marchers, a multicultural mix of young and old, families, and clergy, religious and laity, said they never had been involved in such a massive event, but that it was time to put their faith into action.

Rosio Ramirez, 58, a member of St. Jerome Parish in New York City, said as she waited for the march to start that she decided to travel to Washington “for our rights.”

“This president does not believe in science, so I’m trying to raise my voice for my grandson, his future,” said the native of Mexico City.

Along the march route on Pennsylvania Avenue from the Capitol to the White House, Nancy Lorence, a member of St. Francis Xavier Parish in New York City, said personal actions are crucial if people of faith are going to make a difference. She carried a colorful cardboard sunflower on a short stick that read, “Catholics 4 the EPA,” one of 45 similar signs that she and others making the trip had made.

“We feel like ‘Laudato Si’ calls us to be in the streets, as Pope Francis says, and be active on the social justice issues and climate change,” Lorence told CNS.

“I’ve read enough to really think that this is an emergency,” Lorence continued. “It might not affect us directly right now. But I think we are all called to think about the common good. We’re all called to think about the least of these, and the people who are the least of these are being affected by climate change.”

Catholics bring pope’s call to protect creation to climate march

Sylvia Picard-Schmitt, member of St. Francis Xavier Parish in New York City, participates during the People’s Climate March in Washington on April 29. (CNS photo/Dennis Sadowski)

**Pope Francis’ prayer intentions for May**

- **Christians in Africa**—That Christians in Africa, in imitation of the Merciful Jesus, may give prophetic witness to reconciliation, justice, and peace.

*(To see Pope Francis’ monthly intentions, log on to www.spoultsiphostfortravel.org/2017.intentions.)*

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Italy trip helps collegians learn there is more to life than football

We read and hear stories about the perils of college athletics all too often these days. Practices and games that leave student-athletes precious little time for their studies, coaches under pressure to get their teams to win—sometimes at all cost—and fans who seem to live and die with the result of every competition of their favorite school.

In recent years, some have suggested that college athletics should be paid salaries for their time and commitment to the sport they are pouring their hearts and souls into—year-round in many cases. Though we could debate the pros and cons of that suggestion, we will save that discussion for another day.

Thankfully, there are lessons that can be learned when leaders of sports programs allow their players to take part in invaluable life experiences outside the arena.

One such example generated worldwide publicity when Jim Harbaugh, head football coach at the University of Michigan, took his football team on a trip to Italy as part of their spring practice program. The trip was funded by an anonymous donor.

Jim Harbaugh, who gained fame as an NFL quarterback for 14 years, including several seasons with the Indianapolis Colts, said the trip was a way of giving the team’s players “a major life experience, traveling to Rome to practice, but also to take part in social projects and offer them a look into a foreign country and culture.”

That life experience, according to a Catholic News Agency story, included connecting his team with people they otherwise might not have met, connecting his team with people of different religious beliefs and cultures—people who are in positions of family or social hardship.

A member of St. Malachi Parish in Brownsville while a quarterback with the Colts, Harbaugh, who earned the nickname “Captain Comeback” while playing in Indianapolis, made sure a trip to the Vatican for a papal audience was also on the itinerary.

Jim Harbaugh, head football coach for the University of Michigan, presents a team football helmet during a papal audience in St. Peter’s Square at the Vatican on April 26. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

It was there that Harbaugh, known for his outgoing personality, was visibly moved by his encounter with Pope Francis.

“His way he talks is peaceful, it’s calm. It felt like this is what it would be to meet Jesus Christ. That’s what it felt like to me. It was very emotional,” the coach told journalists on April 26.

Harbaugh and his wife, Sarah, briefly greeted the pope following his weekly general audience in St. Peter’s Square at the Vatican earlier that day.

“I said, ‘Buenos dias, Santo Padre’ (‘Good morning, Holy Father’), and then my wife came in and told him that she loved him. He held her hand and prayed and asked that we pray for him,” Harbaugh recalled.

According to press reports, two players were supposed to be able to get a little bit closer to the pope during the audience, with Harbaugh choosing through an essay competition. Though they were unable to because of a lack of seating, the winning offensive lineman Grant Newsome and defensive tackle Salim Makki, both said they are inspired by the Holy Father.

“It was just a great experience,” Newsome told the Detroit Free Press. “We were probably 40 feet from him. A lot of us were at a loss for words.”

Makki, a Muslim, said he looks up to Pope Francis as a hero. “He’s always shown that Muslims and Christians and Catholics can combine—we’re all brothers and sisters, we can co-exist together.”

For Harbaugh, his life has also centered on “faith, family, football.” This experience was “more emotional than he anticipated,” he told reporters, and meeting the pope gave him the chance “to live in a state of grace.”

“I’ve been trying to figure out what this experience means and am supposed to do with it,” Harbaugh said.

“At least he [Pope Francis] gave me the matching orders to pray for him, so I have that part of it down.”

We applaud Harbaugh and the University of Michigan administration for allowing these student-athletes to take part in this once-in-a-lifetime experience.

And we thank them for showing these young people there is much more to life than football.

—Mike Krokos

Tired of religious discrimination?

New U.S. Supreme Court Justice Neil Gorsuch hit the ground running in April, taking part in oral arguments on what he calls as see this as year’s most important case.

At issue is a Missouri program for safer playgrounds for children. It is funded by a tax on new automobile tires. Missouri recycled old tires into rubber surfacing to cover hard playground surfaces. Nonprofit institutions could apply for grants for the resurfacing—except religious institutions.

The Archdiocese of St. Louis in Columbia, Mo., filed suit, claiming the policy is unconstitutional discrimination against religious schools. After a lower federal court rejected the church’s claim, the case was taken up by our highest court.

At oral arguments, Missouri’s stance was sharply questioned by “liberal” as well as “conservative” justices. When the state’s advocate said it policy doesn’t forbid police and fire protection for churches, for example, Justice Stephen Breyer asked why it forbids protecting children from getting broken arms on their property.

The Supreme Court has long held that under the First Amendment, government generally cannot withhold public benefits from individuals or organizations merely because they are— or are not—religions. So Trinity Lutheran should prevail.

All believers should worry about policies that treat them as second-class citizens. For two reasons, Catholics should take a special interest. First, Missouri’s law at issue is a state constitutional provision forbidding public support for “any church, sect, or denomination of religion.” Similar provisions in more than 30 states are known as “Blaine amendments,” after a failed amendment to the U.S. Constitution offered in the 1870s by Rep. James Blaine.

Blaine’s effort to forbid public support for “sectarian” schools arose from fear of the growing population of Catholic immigrants. Public schools at the time taught a generic form of patriotism and “sectarian” was a code word for “Catholic.” So Justice Samuel Alito asked during oral arguments whether Missouri wants the court to uphold policies arising from thestate’s chief religious liberty.

Second, in many ways Catholic institutions provide more help for the poor and needy than other religious groups and often more than nonprofit groups of any kind. One-sixth of hospital patients in the U.S., for example, are served in Catholic facilities. In 2015, Catholic Charities provided more than 9 million food services, supported more than 2 million seniors and more than half a million people find housing.

These services are offered to people of any faith and no faith, because Catholics see all people without exception as children of God. Trinity Lutheran, as well as other Catholic institutions that participate in programs that are constitutional “establishment of religion.”

Under such pressure—because it agreed with the ACLU—the Obama administration in 2011 ended the leading role the Catholic Bishops’ Migration and Refugee Services agency in serving victims of human trafficking. The government’s changed contract went instead to two secular groups that could not help these vulnerable people as effectively.

The immediate issue was that the Catholic agency would not refer victims needing health care solely to doctors provided by religious providers involved in trafficking legislation, sponsored by pro-life leader Rep. Chris Smith (R-New Jersey), was passed.

So the Catholic Church has much to lose or gain from this case. So do the millions of people helped every year by faith-based organizations. It would not be unconstitutional to pray for wisdom on the part of our judges.

Coming of Age/Maria-Pia Negro Chin

Discerning the call to a religious life

In April, Pope Francis’ prayer intention, according to the Apostleship of Prayer, was “that young people may respond generously to their vocations and seriously consider offering themselves to God in the priesthood or consecrated life.”

What makes young men and women want to offer their whole life to God in this way?

To call to a religious life is different for each person. Sister Jennifer Barrow, who professed religious last year, said she that first thought about religious life in high school and in college. “I really didn’t know what I wanted,” she said, reflecting on her journey.

After college, she completed a year of service with Mercy Volunteer Corps, a volunteer program of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas. While volunteering in Texas, she realized she was attracted “to the joy of the Sisters [of Mercy], their prayerfulness and the care they show in community, in the way I engage in it.”

Afterward, Sister Jennifer went to law school while embarking on a discernment process with a spiritual director and a vocation director. During this time of inquiry, she also visited the Mercy community and attended an "A Day of Reflections" gathering.

—Mike Krokos

Discerning the voice and call of the Holy Spirit from other calls or desires in life can help people, especially young people, to become who they were created to be.

God calls people with different backgrounds, personalities and life experiences.

As a reporter, in addition to meeting diocesan priests from across the world, I once worked with a McNicholas High School brother who used to be in a gang, later pursued a career in finance and then realized that his vocation was to serve God and don a brown Franciscan habit.

I also met a new young member of the Vincentian Volunteers. She had wondered, “How do I know God is calling me?” and, “Is God calling me to live a life for the poor? What person?” soon after emigrating from El Salvador.

Recently, I talked to two young men who have a long process, are about to become Maryknoll priests and will be sent to any of the 20-plus countries where the missionary community serves.

All of their vocation journeys are unique, and God’s hand is evident in the
Two authors call on Christians to be witnesses within a Western culture that is becoming more secular

In his recently released book The Benedict Option: A Strategy for Christians in a Post-Christian Nation (Sentinel, 2017) that the RFRA debate was a “watershed event” that showed that the prevailing culture viewed Christians adhering to traditional biblical beliefs about contraception, regard regarding sexuality and marriage, as purveyors of “intolerance.”

Both authors see a need for Catholics and other Christians to be formed more intentionally in the tradition of the Church, both in terms of culture and in terms of forming communities that can best be done.

Both authors look back to saints who served as the bishop of Hippo Regius in North Africa and lived some 1,500 years ago during the decline of the western Roman Empire as an example of St. Augustine (354-430), who wrote his Rule the central Italian wilderness and later—a charge he has not entirely denied. In any case, Dreher says in the book that it is imperative for Christians to form communities with like-minded believers that consciously eschew negative cultural trends, especially in the areas of technology and the influence of digital technology.

In a March 21 speech about the book, he argued that “a strategic withdrawal from everyday life” was necessary for believers in the West today since they are now living in “a hedonistic post-Christian culture,” while still acknowledging that evangelization, hospitality and care for people in need are also important to Christians.

In these communities marked by “virtual walls,” Christians should foster a priority on “family groups” and offer, where possible, material and employment support for fellow members.

The last suggestion he makes is that Dreher says that Christians can respond in the not-too-distant future when employment with many companies and professional fields will require believers to compromise their consciences.

Benedict lived as a hermit in the central Italian wilderness and later founded a series of monasteries. He also wrote his Rule called the Rule of St. Benedict, and became the basis for Benedictine monasteries around the world to this day.

Dreher points readers to Benedict because it was his monasteries and one he guided by his Rule after his death that did much to preserve classical Greek and Roman civilization and the cultural life of the early Church during the brutal upheaval of the early Middle Ages.

Christians who live their faith more intentionally today, Dreher suggests, and form deliberately countercultural communities based on such Benedictine principles as a sacramental view of the world, the integration of prayer and work, community and hospitality can eventually serve a similar purpose in today’s Western society that he says is jettisoning its Christian roots in favor of a new worldview.

Some of Dreher’s reviewers claim that he wants Christians to shake the dust of contemporary culture from their sandals and head for the hills. They may have gotten that impression from the often blistering critique that Dreher makes of our contemporary culture and his sometimes alarmist foreshadowing of challenges that Christians may face sooner rather than later—a charge he has not entirely denied.

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Christians should also consider, Dreher recommends, starting schools based on a classical model of education that form children strongly in the faith and in the great works of literature of Western civilization.

Working on the local level is how Dreher advises Christians to build a strong foundation of faith to withstand a growing tide of secular opposition.

In the end, the differences in the approaches advocated by Archbishop Chaput and Dreher aren’t that great.

And that is not surprising if one looks more closely at the two saints they hold up as models. St. Augustine may have been a bishop busting his diocese and engaging the broader culture. But he sought to live as a monk, much as St. Benedict did later, before he was called to serve as a bishop. And even after becoming a bishop, Augustine lived in a monastic-like community with his diocese’s priests.

He also wrote a rule for consecrated men and women that many religious communities have since adopted as their own.

One religious he influenced was Dreher’s favorite, St. Benedict. The monastic founder borrowed from St. Augustine in writing “The Letter to Donigetus,” which said that “what the soul is in the body, that Christians are in the world.”

“When the world opposes Jesus Christ,” Archbishop Chaput writes, “we may find ourselves alone against the world for the sake of the world. After all, God so loved the world that he sent his only Son to save it, not to condemn it. If we want to follow Jesus, we must love the world and remain in it, as he did, to work for its salvation.”

Archbishop Chaput, though, goes on to say, much along the lines advocated by Dreher, that Christians can be comfortable in the world and that they need places “where the world’s influence is diminished, where we can rest before returning to the mission.

“Practically speaking,” he goes on, “this means working to renew our parishes, schools, and the small communities of which we’re a part. It means making sure that, whatever schools they attend, our children learn to live and think as Catholics.”

In the book The Benedict Option: A Strategy for Christians in a Post-Christian Nation (Sentinel, 2017), best-selling author Rod Dreher recommends believers found a Catholic school that follows a classical model of education, integrating subjects together and emphasizing the Catholic faith in all of them.

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May 9  Church of the Immaculate Conception, 1 S. 30th St., Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods. Mass for May 9 Young Life Prayer Service, theme “Praying for Peace in the World and in Our Hearts,” 7-8 p.m., silent and spoken prayers, simple music, silence. Information: 812-738-4052, provct@sprn.org.

St. Paul Hermitage, 501 N. 17th Ave., Beech Grove. Ave Maria Guild, 12:30 p.m. Information: 317-561-3867, vlasmn@comcast.net.

May 11  Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. 100th Anniversary of Fatima, reflection by Father Jeffrey Godecker and Mary Schaffner on “Your Life: Like a House,” 5-7 p.m. Information: 317-223-3687, ext. 122.

May 14  St. Michael the Archangel Church, 3354 W. 30th St., Indianapolis. Mass, 2 p.m. Information: 317-784-4439 or www.catholicexchangetour.com.

May 18  St. Joseph Church, 1401 S. Mickle Ave., Indianapolis. Third Thurdays Adoration, interceding for women experiencing crisis pregnancy, 11 a.m.-7 p.m., with Mass at 5-45 p.m. Information: 317-408-6936.


John and Dolores (Peterson) Williams, members of Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish in Greenwood, celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on May 4. The couple was married in Visitacion Church in Chicago on May 4, 1957. They have six children, Donna, Bill, Jim, John, Mike and Tom Williams. The couple also has nine grandchildren.

May 9  St. Luke the Evangelist Parish, 3221 W. 30th St., Indianapolis, on May 18-20. Third Thursday Adoration, interceding for women experiencing crisis pregnancy, 11 a.m.-7 p.m., with Mass at 5-45 p.m. Information: 317-408-6936.

Parishes offer May 13 activities to celebrate 100th anniversary of first Fatima apparition

On May 13, the 100th anniversary of the first apparition of Our Lady of Fatima to three shepherd children in Fatima, Portugal, four parishes will offer special services.

• Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish, 5692 Central Ave., Indianapolis: reflection of the apparition of Our Lady of Fatima shrine, corner of E. 57th St. and Washington Blvd. around 6:30 p.m.; Mass; recitation of rosary event at 6 p.m. on the 13th of every month throughout October.


• St. Luke the Evangelist Parish, 3221 W. 30th St., Indianapolis, on May 18-20. Third Thursday Adoration, interceding for women experiencing crisis pregnancy, 11 a.m.-7 p.m., with Mass at 5-45 p.m. Information: 317-408-6936.

• St. Joseph Church, 1401 S. Mickle Ave., Indianapolis, on May 18-20. Third Thursday Adoration, interceding for women experiencing crisis pregnancy, 11 a.m.-7 p.m., with Mass at 5-45 p.m. Information: 317-408-6936.

A “Celebrate Covenant—Centered in Christ” marriage enrichment event will be held at Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish, 335 S. Meridian St. in Greenwood, from 6:30-9 p.m. on May 20. Guest speakers are Keith and Kathy Syberg. The event is free. Participants are asked to bring a dish to share for a pitch-in dinner registration is available at www.mariageevent.com. For more information, call 317-886-2691 or e-mail olmariageministry@gmail.com.

Mount Saint Francis to host 5k run and 1-mile ‘Family fun walk’ on May 20

New Albany Deanery Catholic Youth Ministry (NADCYM) will host the Off the Road 5K Friar Run and 1-Mile ‘Family Fun Walk at the Mount Saint Francis, 101 St. Anthony Dr., Mount St. Francis, at 8 a.m. on May 20. Registration begins at 7 a.m. The 1-mile route will be accessible for strollers and/or wagons. The 5k run will be off road on a slightly hilly course.

The cost for the 5K run is $15 for students and $25 for all others. The cost for families to enter the walk is $35. Online registration is available at goo.gl/4XDKDY. Walk-ups are welcome the day of the event. Proceeds benefit NADCYM and Mount St. Francis Center for Spirituality.

For more information, call 812-923-8355 or e-mail events@nadv.org.

Sister to Sister Celebration to be held at St. Rita Parish on May 18-20

The 20th Sister to Sister Celebration will be offerd at St. Rita Parish, 1773 Dr. Andrew J. Brown Ave., in Indianapolis, on May 18-20. The retreat begins with a Bible study led by Society of the Divine Father Gabriel Smith at 6 p.m. on May 18. Father Smith will also lead a prayer, worship and healing service at 6 p.m. on May 19, with the St. Rita choir performing. Father Emmanuel Nyong will celebrate Mass at 9 a.m. on May 20, followed by breakfast with Gail Grynn speaking. All are invited.

For reservations and information, contact the parish office at 317-632-9493 or ritass@earthlink.net.

Retreats and Programs

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

Greenwood parish to host marriage enrichment event on May 20, register by May 14

The event is free. Participants are asked to bring a dish to share for a pitch-in dinner registration is available at www.mariageevent.com. For more information, call 317-886-2691 or e-mail olmariageministry@gmail.com.

John and Dolores (Peterson) Williams, members of Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish in Greenwood, celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on May 4. The couple was married in Visitacion Church in Chicago on May 4, 1957. They have six children, Donna, Bill, Jim, John, Mike and Tom Williams. The couple also has nine grandchildren.

VIPS

For a list of events for the next four weeks as reported to The Criterion, log on to www.archindy.org/events.

Oriental Church of the Spiritual Center, 635 S. Meridian St., Indianapolis. Meditation on “The Miracles of Fatima,” 3-5 p.m., with lunch. Information: 317-223-3687, ext. 122.


May 22  Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. Silent Self-Guided Day of Reflection, $32 includes room for the day, continental breakfast, lunch and use of common areas, additional $37 extends stay to include the night before or night after day of silence and includes light dinner. Information and registration: 317-545-6871, ext. 107 or www.archindy.org/quiet.


June 16-22  Archbacy House Retreat and Retreat Center, 1 Sisters of the Poor Home for the Aged, St. Meinrad. The Image as a Window to the Spiritual: A Retreat’s Skills: Hands-on Workshop and Retreat, Benedictine Sister Margaret Homann presenting. 9 a.m.-4 p.m., $650 single, $950 double. Information: 317-357-6855 or mroz@stmeinrad.edu.

John and Dolores (Peterson) Williams, members of Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish in Greenwood, celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on May 4. The couple was married in Visitacion Church in Chicago on May 4, 1957. They have six children, Donna, Bill, Jim, John, Mike and Tom Williams. The couple also has nine grandchildren.
When the angel dijo a las mujeres que se habían reunido al sepulcro vacío, “No temáis; porque ya os buscaba a Jesús, el que fue crucificado. No está aquí; porque las mujeres le han visto calvario, en el lugar donde yacía” (Mt 28:5-6), proclamaba la Buena Nueva. El papa Francisco ha dicho que esta es la alegría de la Pascua, el amor que triunfó sobre el odio, la muerte y vence el horror de la crueldad. Resucitado! Ayúdanos a buscarte y encontrar tú, Señor, que tienes el poder de alumbrar tú corazón, el poder de consolar a los más necesitados y a acompañar a los heridos al encuentro de los demás, a acercarnos a los enfermos, los ancianos y los marginados. "¡Vengan y vean!" proclama el papa. "El amor es más poderoso, el amor crea vida. El amor hace que brote la esperanza en el desierto." (from Pope Francis' papal bull “Misericordiae Vultus”)

"When the angel said to the women who had gathered at the empty tomb, 'Do not be afraid, you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has been raised. . . Come, see the place where he lay'” (Mt 28:5-6), he was proclaiming the Good News. Pope Francis calls this moment “the culmination of the Gospel.” It is in this moment that we see clearly the fulfillment of God’s plan for us and for our world.

"This event is the basis of our faith and our hope," the pope tells us. "If Christ were not raised, Christianity would lose its very meaning; the whole mission of the Church would lose its impulsion, for this is the point from which it first set out and continues to set out ever anew.”

The whole meaning of Christianity is bound up in two great mysteries—the incarnation (God becoming man) and the resurrection (Jesus’ triumph over sin and death). Without the incarnation, we remain separated from God. Without the resurrection, we remain the slaves of sin. Both mysteries frame the story of Christianity, the basis for our hope and our joy.

Pope Francis tells us that “the message which Christians bring to the world is this: Jesus, love incarnated on earth for our sins, but God the Father raised him and made him the Lord of life and death. In Jesus, love has triumphed over hatred, mercy over sinfulness, goodness over evil, truth over falsehood, life over death.”

This truly is good news. It is the announcement of our liberation from a cold and cruel fate. It is the transformation of a world dominated by hopelessness into a world that is permeated by the saving grace of God. That is why the pope invites everyone: “Come and see!” It's why he insists that “in every human situation, marked by frailty, sin and death, the Good News is no mere matter of words, but a testimony to unconditional and faithful love.”

God’s unconditional and faithful love is not just a pious sentiment. It is a dramatic statement about who God is and who we are called to become. Pope Francis is convinced that Jesus’ resurrection compels us to live and act differently, to be “men and women of God” by allowing Jesus’ resurrection to have consequences. It challenges us to leave ourselves behind and encounter others, to be close to those crushed by life’s troubles, to share not only the needy, and to stand at the side of the sick, elderly and the outcast.

"Come and see!” the pope proclaims. "Love is more powerful, love gives life, love makes hope blossom in the wilderness.”

The "wilderness” that Pope Francis speaks about is our world deprived of compassion, hope or joy. It is the barren wasteland of sin and death that enslaves us and drains us of all that is good and life-giving in our lives. Thanks be to God, love is more powerful—making hope blossom and grow in our hearts.

"With this joyful certainty in our hearts, we turn to you, risen Lord! Help us to seek you and to find you, to realize that we have a Father and are not orphans; that we can love and adore you.”

This is Easter joy, the love that gives life, it is a joy that is not self-centered, but that looks outward to our sisters and brothers everywhere.

Keep fit by moving forward, reaching out, Pope Francis tells Catholics.

And at the end of the sermon, the pope gave a solemn wish: “May this day make you more capable of love, mercy and compassion. May it offer you the energy and the courage you need to go forward in life.”

The Criterion's essay on the papal document "Misericordiae Vultus" was written by Daniel Conway, an Italian native who has lived in the United States for 50 years. Conway was a Jesuit priest for 25 years, while working as a missionary in Africa, South America and the United States. He has authored several books on faith and spirituality, including "The Art of Ignatian Prayer," "The Ignatian Way," and "The Ignatian Day." Conway is a frequent contributor to The Criterion, the Catholic newspaper of St. Louis, and has written extensively on the subject of mercy and compassion in the life of Jesus and the Church.

The Criterion's coverage of Pope Francis' papal document "Misericordiae Vultus" reflects the pope's message of mercy and compassion in the life of Jesus and the Church. The essay on the papal document stands as a reminder of the importance of mercy and compassion in our own lives and in our relationships with others. It is a call to action for us to be merciful and compassionate to those in need, and to be a beacon of hope and love in a world that is often dark and cold.

The Good News for our world is that Jesus is alive and that his love and mercy are available to us. Pope Francis encourages us to live a life of love and mercy, to be a light in the darkness, and to be a source of hope and love for those who are in need.

"Enable us to protect the vulnerable, especially children, women and the elderly, who are at times exploited and abandoned."

Pope Francis continues with a plea to “comfort all those who cannot celebrate this Easter with their loved ones because they have been unjustly torn from their affections. Comfort those who have left their own lands to migrate to places offering hope for a better future and the possibility of living their lives in dignity and, not infrequently, of freely professing their faith.”

"Christ’s resurrection is ‘good news par excellence,’" the pope says. It is hope and joy—all—despite this weary, war-torn world.

"We ask you, Lord Jesus, to put an end to all war and every conflict, whether great or small, ancient or recent," the pope prays. Let the good news of the resurrection spread throughout the world and take root in every human heart!

(Daniel Conway is a member of The Criterion's editorial committee.)
day, my mom would wipe my tears away and say, 'Honey, I can’t let you give up.'" she told Gary Gadomski, Spirit of Service Award recipient. Mrs. Stumpf noted with tears in her eyes, "The kindness that you have shown to our friends in need is truly inspiring. We are all so grateful for your dedication and service.

Service continued from page 1

She also shared the moment when she saw the impact she could have on other people. It came after her father retired, when she worked for an organization that helped in need—a childhood moment when she helped to give food to hungry children and toys to children at Christmas.

"That’s when the seeds got planted,” she said.

Those seeds have since led to the New Year’s resolution that Catchings made to herself.

"Every year, we make New Year’s resolutions. One thing I decided was to focus on one week of our lives—’Impact.’ Everywhere I go, wherever we go, we have a choice. We can impact people positively or negatively. You have the choice.

"My choice everywhere I go, I want to impact people. I want to be to the extent they want to impact somebody. And the people they impact, they want to impact you. You job is to impact. Your job is to ignite. Your job is to inspire. It’s what Catchings did during her basketball career before retiring last year. It’s what she continues to do with her foundation. And it’s what she hopes to do in her new position as director of player programs and fund development for Pacers Sports and Entertainment.

"When I look around at all the people here and all of their stories, and the work that so many people, this is just the beginning. I’m not finished yet, and neither should you.

"During the dinner, Catholic Charities executive director David Bethuram also focused on the journeys that the agency has made in the archdiocese since its founding in 1919 and throughout its history. Catholic Charities has worked to meet the needs of those most vulnerable among us,” Bethuram said.

Helping others at the heart of Spirit Service winners’ lives of faith

By John Shaughnessy

Four individuals and a business were honored for their contributions to the community during archdiocesan’s 19th annual Spirit of Service Awards dinner in Indianapolis on April 26.

Here is capitalized information about the award recipients, who were prominently featured in the March 31 issue of The Criterion.

Grace Albertson, recipient of Spirit of Service Youth Award

A moment on the playground at St. Mark the Evangelist School in Indianapolis that is the focus of Grace Albertson’s life.

The year was 2012. Grace was in second grade at St. Luke’s Catholic School in Burmese refugee children who had just arrived at the school south side school. Grace went to the lifeguard. She was being held by one of the Burmese and used them to greet three of the new students.

Grace also found a strong, long-lasting friendship to those who continued. It was also the start of Grace’s six-year and continuing commitment to help refugees to the United States make an adjustment to life in Indianapolis.

"My faith has grown from being around them. It took me a long time to realize that I’m meant to be a servant to others,” Karen and Don Beckwith, Spirit of Service Award recipients

Karen and Don Beckwith still remember the first night they set out to help the homeless who live on the streets and under the bridges and railroad arches in Indianapolis.

"We drove into places I was scared to death of, places I would never go into the dark,” says Karen, recalling their initial effort as volunteers for the Homeless of Our Own People.

Yet that night also revealed to them how they could make a difference to those areas, and how the people they met could do the same for them.

"We met people out here who for a number of reasons are not making it in this world on their own—health issues, people with addictions,” Don says. "They’re just struggling to make it in this world. We’re giving them soup and sandwiches and blankets. And they encourage us and make us see that we need to be the best and most that we can be for people.

"Since that night in 2004, the couple from St. Barnabas Parish in Indianapolis has faithfully served the homeless community to strive to be “a link to the community for our homeless friends.” Don has also served the past seven years as chairperson of the organization’s board of directors.

"It took me a while to understand it wasn’t about holding out the soup and the sandwiches,” Karen says. "They wanted to be the best at what they could do for other people. It’s the human touch that matters to them."

Gary Gadomski, Spirit of Service Award recipient

Gary Gadomski begins every week with the same ritual—driving his 1996 "maroon and rust” Ford pickup truck to food distributors on Monday and Tuesday mornings to load up supplies that will help people who are in need.

"I like starting my week giving," says Gadomski. "That way, no matter what happens to me during the week, I can always go, we have a choice. We can also help people who are in need.

"He spoke about three things. He went on to say, ‘Let us help them know the love they are in need."

"He also shared that people at the Cathedral Soup Kitchen and food pantry, a ministry of St. Peter and Paul Catholic Parish in Indianapolis. There, he’s greeted by the heads when he enters for the first time. Gadomski has been volunteering at the Cathedral Soup Kitchen "for at least 10 years” and about 20 years for the Poor, a ministry that provides food, clothing and conversation for the homeless in downtown Indianapolis.

"We also volunteer at our home parish, St. Luke the Evangelist in Indianapolis. He has helped to develop a food pantry that has converted into a nursery and pre-school site. He’s also the go-to-handymen for many of our parishioners.

"Jesus taught us to be servants,” he says. "It always seems the more I give, the more I’m taken care of. I had some health problems early on in my life. I’m thankful for the things I can do now. It’s happy.”

Hall, Render, Killian, Heath & Lyman law firm, recipient of Spirit of Service Corporate Award

As the executive director of the archdiocese’s Catholic Charities, David Bethuram says the law firm received this year’s Spirit of Service Corporate Award “for its values, skills and accomplishments to the community.”

They have demonstrated a real interest in helping Catholic Charities address the human and health services for those most vulnerable in our community,” Bethuram says. "Their staff has volunteered on our boards, councils, committees and task forces to help provide confidence, integrity and efficiency to how Catholic Charities want to deliver service to those in need.”

The award was a surprise and an honor for the law firm.

"We were told this reflects ‘a sum of the parts’—that we have a number of people in the firm who are active in their parishes and in the archdiocese,” says Greg Wallander, a lawyer with the firm.

"So we’re excited and appreciative.”

Wallander represents that involvement, helping with the Spirit of Service event for more than 10 years. He served as the chairman of the dinner in 2016.

"Everything that Catholic Charities does is for the right reasons,” he says. "They really help people to get on their feet, and they make a permanent difference in people’s lives—and for our community. I’ve just been so moved over the years to see what they do.”

Tamika Catchings, a former Olympian who played with the Indiana Fever basketball team, shares a story during the Spirit of Service Awards Dinner on April 26 in Indianapolis. (Submitted photo by Rich Clark)
POPE
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When asked if he would want to meet with President Trump, when the U.S. leader
walked in a short procession to the Coptic Catholic Cathedral, the pope said, “Yes, of
course.” The president, when he was asked if he would want to meet with the pope,
didn’t want to answer the question.

But he added, “I receive every head of state who asks for an audience.”

A journalist with German media asked the pope about the controversy he sparked on April 22 for saying some refugee camps are concentration camps.

For us Germans, obviously that is a very, very serious term. People say it was a slip of the tongue. What do you want to say?” the reporter asked.

“No, it was not a slip of the tongue,” Pope Francis said. “I was not talking about some refugee camps in the world, but definitely not in Germany—that are real concentration camps.”

When centers are built to lock people up, where there is nothing to do, and they can’t leave, “that is a lager Lager,” he said, referring to the German term for concentration camp.

Another reporter asked how people should interpret his speeches to government officials when he calls on them to support peace, harmony and equality for all citizens, and whether it is reflected in supporting that government.

The pope said that with all 18 trips he has taken to various countries during his pontificate, he always hears the same concern.

However, when it comes to local politics, “I do not get involved,” he said. “I talk about values,” he said, and then it is up to each individual to look and judge whether this particular government or national person is “delivering these values.”

When asked if he had had a chance to run off to see the pyramids, the pope said, “Yes, you know that today at six in this morning two of my assistants went to see them.”

But he said if he wished he had gone with them, too, the pope said, “Ah, yes.”

EGYPT
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feel disappointment, despair and defeat when one is trapped by a false notion of who God really is. The disciples could not believe that the one who could raise others from the dead and heal the sick could “end up hanging on the cross.” Believing Jesus was dead, all their dreams died with him on the cross and were buried in the tomb.

“How often do we paralyze ourselves by refusing to transcend our own ideas about God, a god created in the image and likeness of man,” he said. “How often do we despair by refusing to believe that God’s omnipotence is not one of power and authority, but rather of love, forgiveness and life.”

Like the disciples, he said, Christians will never recognize the true face of God until they let their mistaken ideas die on the cross, rise up from the tomb of their limited understanding and shatter their hardened hearts like the “breaking of the bread” in the Eucharist.

“We cannot encounter God without first crucifying our own notions about God who reflects only our own understanding of omnipotence and power,” the pope said. “True faith is not the same as not being an enemy to overcome, but a brother or sister to be loved, served and helped,” he added.

He encouraged Catholic and Orthodox to work hard to “oppose violence by promoting and sowing goodness, fostering concord and preserving unity, praying that all these sacrifices may open the way to a future of full communion between us and peace for all.”

Pope Tawadros, in his speech, said Pope Francis was following in the footsteps of his namesake, St. Francis of Assisi, who came to Egypt nearly 800 years ago to teach children of Kamel and engage in “one of the most important experiences of intercultural dialogue in history—a dialogue that is renewed today with your visit.”

Calling Pope Francis one of the symbols of peace “in a world torn by conflicts and wars,” the Orthodox leader underlined that the world was thirsting for sincere efforts of spreading peace and love, and stopping violence and extremism.

Pope Tawadros said Pope Francis’ visit “is a message for the rest of the world,” showing Egypt as a model of mutual respect and understanding.

Despite Christianity’s deep roots in Egypt, which was evangelized by St. Mark, Christians have lived through some difficult and turbulent periods, Pope Tawadros said. But that only made people’s desire to love even greater, showing that “love and tolerance are stronger than hatred and revenge, and that the light of hope is stronger than the darkness of desperation.”

“The criminal minds” behind all the violence and threats hurting Egypt will never be able to break or weaken the hearts of its citizens who are united and showing an example for future generations.

The majority of the 85 million Egyptians are Sunni Muslims. Most estimates say 10-15 percent of the Egyptian population are Christians, most of them Coptic Orthodox, but there are Catholics, Protestants and other various Christian communities in the country as well.”

Archdiocesan Catholics are invited to participate in an online survey through which they can share what they believe are the strengths and areas for improvement in the Church in central and southern Indiana. The survey, which is available online in English, Spanish and Burmese through May 19, is part of an archdiocesan pastoral assessment commission late last year by Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin shortly before his ministry here came to an end and he was installed as the archbishop of Newark, N.J.

The assessment has also included listening sessions involving parish leaders from across the archdiocese and other interviews. Expected to be completed by the end of June, it is intended to present a clear picture of the Church in central and southern Indiana for the next archbishop of Indianapolis when he is appointed by Pope Francis.

Links to the survey are available at www.archindy.org/survey.
WASHINGTON (CNS)—In the insurance world, extreme weather events such as tornadoes are often referred to as “acts of God.”

But in the diocese of Emory, about 50 miles northwest of Tyler and 70 miles east of Dallas, some 45 people are considering it an act of God that they survived a tornado, a reminder of all of their church except for the hallway in which they were huddled.

The providential event took place on the evening of April 29, as severe storms tore through Texas, Oklahoma and Arkansas on a northeasterly path that killed at least 13 people in three states.

The youth ministry at John the Evangelist Parish in Emory was hosting a dinner honoring the parish’s Knights of Columbus council and its ladies’ guild.

“I got a phone call from Maggie [Conder], the volunteer in the office,” youth minister Monica Hughes told Catholic News Service May 1. “I almost didn’t answer, because I didn’t want to interrupt the speaker.” But Hughes knew Conder was monitoring the paths of storms in Texas, and “she wouldn’t have interrupted unless it was important,” Hughes said.

It was: “The tornado that hit Canton was heading straight for us,” she recalled.

Hughes said she and her husband both tried to pull up weather radar on their cellphones without luck. Then Hughes made the decision to tell teens and adults to move to the church hallway. The decision, she said, was based on “this instinct you learn when you’re a child—you go to the hallway and you cover your head.”

There was some grumbling by the teens but everyone complied, Hughes remembers. It’s “the inner place of the church,” she said of the hallway. “Everything else had exterior walls. On my way, I went around and I locked all the exterior doors to the building—just one little extra step to keep the wind from ripping them open.”

Hughes said the hallway had about 20 adults, along with three children, teenagers huddling together. We began to pray,” Hughes said.

A statue of Mary is seen in the ruins of St. John the Evangelist Church in Emory, Texas, on April 30 after a tornado hit the area a day earlier. (CNS photo/courtesy Diocese of Tyler)

Once outside, they saw the church was destroyed—except for the hallway. The pastor’s house nearby was spared, save for a damaged backyard fence. One irony was that Hughes’ 22-year-old daughter, who was at the dinner as well, had been evacuated in March from Peru where flooding and landslides destroyed entire communities. “And now, we had to pluck her out of a tornado,” Hughes said.

“She’s a miracle,” declared the pastor, Father Victor Hernandez. “People could experience the hands of God protecting them.” The priest was not at the dinner, having been called to a rash of tornadoes in Pittsburg, Texas, about 75 minutes from Emory. On his drive back, “I heard the sirens go off, and I wanted to be with my community,” he said.

But Dopp said: “Within the context of my hospitality, I’m living out what Benedictine Spirituality can look like and can be beneficial to everyone around me.”

At the same time, she recognizes the challenge faced by the relatively small group of oblates in the broader secular culture.

“The raw material that we’re up against as far as the culture is concerned seems insurmountable,” Dopp said. “But you have to work with what you have. Jesus only had 12 Apostles. Small numbers can be powerful and sound arts.”

Small numbers is valued by the families who enroll their children at Lumen Christi’s pre-kindergarten through 12th-grade Catholic school. For over the past 13 years, it has been located on the campus of Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Parish in Indianapolis.

Jason Adams
Lumen Christi’s headmaster, the school’s maximum class size of 15 is designed to allow teachers to get to know their students well and do in-depth study of their subjects, often including rigorous writing assignments and reading primary sources instead of textbooks.

The small size of the school also helps the teachers and students to take a classical approach to education, integrating the study of the great works of Greek, Roman and later European writers and artists. “We want truth, beauty and goodness to be accessible in everything we study,” Adams said. “When we study history, science or music, it’s totally appropriate to incorporate a novel, biography or a primary source. We try to actively engage these perennial sources in that formed Western culture.”

Dreher placed great importance on the role of education in the future of Catholics and other Christians in the U.S. He specifically recommended that believers consider starting classical-oriented schools deeply imbued in the faith, and that seek to incarnate students in the great works of Western culture.

At Lumen Christi, this includes the study of Latin, in age-appropriate ways, at all grade levels. Students also begin each school day with Mass: “That’s huge,” Adams said. “It’s the one, clear non-negotiable that’s been here from day one.”

For information on the Benedictine options of Saint Meinrad Archabbey visit www.saintmeinrad.org. For more information about Lumen Christi Catholic School in Indianapolis, visit www.lumenchristischool.org.
Our Lady of Fatima appealed for prayer, penance in revelation

By Michael O'Neill

This year, the Catholic Church celebrates the 100-year anniversary of the events at the Cova da Iria area of Fatima, Portugal, witnessed by three shepherd children who reported that they saw visions of Mary beginning on May 13, 1917, and continuing for the 13th day of five subsequent months.

While tending sheep in a field, Lucia Santos and her two younger cousins, Blessed Francisco and Blessed Jacinta Marto, reported seeing a woman dressed all in white, “more brilliant than the sun, shedding rays of light clearer and stronger than a crystal glare, filled with the most sparkling water and pierced by the burning rays of the sun.”

Calling herself “Our Lady of the Rosary,” Mary asked the children to pray the rosary daily for the conversion of sinners. She asked for prayer, penance and the consecration of Russia to her Immaculate Heart.

On May 13, 1917, Mary appeared for the first time in Fatima. She placed a bullet fragment from the attack by Antonio de Oliveira on May 13, 1981—the feast of Our Lady of Fatima—the pope believed that the secret applied to this event.

The next year, he took a bullet fragment that had entered his body and had it placed in a consecrated host. The pope placed the feast day of Our Lady of Fatima on the Church’s liturgical calendar.

That day, St. John Paul placed the feast of Our Lady of Fatima on the Church’s universal liturgical calendar and beatified the two deceased seers, Jacinta and Francisco.

When Pope Francis visited Fatima this month, he will declare them saints.

Fatima has become an important place for people as far as 40 miles away.

Due to the 1918 influenza epidemic, the two younger children did not live long beyond the apparition events.

The first is the 100th anniversary of apparitions of Mary to three shepherd children in Fatima, Portugal. On May 13, 1917, Mary appeared for the first time to the children, bearing the message of her Son and pointing to the dire need for the consecration of Russia to her Immaculate Heart.

The month of May was named the month of Mary.

Mary appeared six times to the children, eventually revealing the “Secret of Fatima,” of which there were three parts. The first was a vision of hell because they have no one to pray and ask men and women ‘to stop offending Her; otherwise, the destiny of her children is at stake.”

For this reason, she asks the little shepherds: ‘Pray, pray much and make sacrifices for sinners; many souls go to hell because they have no one to pray and make sacrifices for them.’

On June 26, 2000, the Vatican formally released the third secret of Fatima, publishing “The Message of Fatima,” including a photocopy of the text from Carmelite Sister Lucia dos Santos, the remaining survivor of the three children who saw Mary at Fatima in 1917 and who later died in 2005.

It featured “a bishop clothed in white” being shot. Understandably, St. John Paul understood this secret to refer to the assassination attempt against himself.

Celebrating the 100th anniversary of Fatima is, in a way, also the celebration of St. John Paul’s survival from an assassination attempt and the subsequent revelation of the third part of the Fatima secret. The message was pertinent in 1917, and even more pertinent in 2017.

(Marge Fenelon is a freelance writer from Milwaukee. Her website is http://margefenelon.com.)
The Open House for Jewish and Arab Children in Israel

Yehzekel Landau taught Judaism to our class at the Tantur Ecumenical Institute in Jerusalem in 1997. He came to Harvard, and in 1990 received the alumnus-of-the-year award from Harvard Divinity School. He moved to Jerusalem in 1978, and was director of OZ veshalam, a relief group for peace movement in Israel. Besides teaching, he and his wife directed the Open House for Jewish and Arab Children in Ramle, Israel, and that’s the story I want to tell this week.

Dalia Eshkenazi arrived in Ramle in 1948 at the age of 11 months when her family, fleeing from Bulgaria with 50,000 other Jews from that country. The family settled in a house that was vacated by an Arab family when the Jews forced their evacuation, and that’s where she grew up.

On the other hand, the history of science has created the possibility of destroying the atom and the development of Armageddon through its discovery. Scientists are trying to prevent with science. What doesn’t go with the scientists is science that can create deadly diseases.

Throughout the centuries, scientists have frequently come under fire. Galileo’s trial was a case in point. A man condemned for his findings—findings centuries later admitted to be right. President Garfield’s trial didn’t die from his assassin’s bullet, but due to infection resulting from doctors’ treatment. The real crime, President Garfield’s statue in front of the U.S. Capitol is testimony to the harm of being foolishly skeptical of scientific discovery.

As I walked around campus, I recalled the spelling conversation with my daughter, when I emphasized that just as you do for me, I expect you already have a knack for it. Anything new takes time to learn, even if these words were entirely new, and that’s why I searched for reassurance, explaining that just because she doesn’t get it on the first try does not mean that she’s “no good.” While I made my way around campus, I glanced down at my watch and realized it was time to head back to my electronic meeting invitation to an evening faculty meeting. As I entered an episode of pasting, I glanced at the punchline the pastor had reminded us in his homily of something important. Lent, he said, lasts 40 days. The Easter season lasts 50, and we should spend it rejoicing. No doubt arguments around climate change will continue, and the cries of skepticism and thoughtless prejudice will get louder. Backlash, skepticism and thoughtless prejudice will clash with outrages of disbelief over the blindness of supposedly intelligent people protecting their ignorance in fear of climate change.

The classes go with the theatre of science. What doesn’t go with the theatre is becoming mass murder. The truth of the matter must be pursued at all costs, even to putting one’s life on the line.

The Human Side

Fr. Eugene Hemrick

Science and its discoveries aren’t always glamorous

Some consider it miraculous, some fear it and still others wish it never existed. The “it” is scientific progress, and we can see the awe-inspiring awesome wonders and produce fearful results.

Thanks to science, our lifespan is longer, the pain of some deadly diseases has been reduced, and we are better protected against deadly diseases. On the other hand, science has created the possibility of Armageddon through its discovery of the atom and the development of nuclear weapons.

When we put aside the pros and cons of science, we realize that science is sometimes dangerous as it looks. One of its dark sides is the validity of its findings not always being accepted.

It is this especially true regarding the role that air pollution plays in climate change, we see scientists engage in debates about damaging effects, or are they correct about the need for immediate action to correct impending climate change?

When we make it back to my building, I saw another sticky note, this time on a mostly-bare bulletin board above an ATM machine. It read: “Chun up, buttercup!”

As I saw a student preparing to use the ATM, I asked her if there was some relevance to these sticky notes I was seeing.

I glanced down at my watch and realized it was time to head back to my desk. When I looked up, I saw a yellow sticky note above the handle of the door I was about to open. Written in black Sharpie marker, it said, “You are doing just fine.”

It was as if God had placed that message right in front of me. I was baffled, overwhelmed by the overpowering mystery of the resurrection. Sometimes it is referred to as a time of “mystagogy” —a time of learning in the Greek language—that basically means we Christians are being initiated into mystery.

We’ve moved from the sorrow and pain of the Lenten journey into the overpowering mystery of the resurrection. We call it Easter Sunday and the Easter Season.

That word “mystagogy” is most often associated with the entrance of new Christians into the Church. At the Easter Vigil, catechumens are baptized, confirmed and receive their first Eucharist. In the Church, mystagogy, the time of mystagogy, they continue to attend classes and delve more deeply into the mystery of Christ, the Church and their relationship to Christ through liturgy. We are a liturgical Church.

At the parish where I formerly worked, we’ve tried to explain to our older and new members the practicalities of celebration. Easter and Pentecost is a glorious time. Sometimes it is referred to as a time of “mystagogy” —a time of learning in the Greek language—that basically means we Christians are being initiated into mystery.

We renewed our baptismal promises on Holy Thursday, and receive their first Eucharist.

Some consider it miraculous, some fear it and still others wish it never existed. The “it” is scientific progress, and we can see the awe-inspiring awesome wonders and produce fearful results.

Th...
Readings from the Acts of the Apostles frequently occur during the Easter season. They clearly show that there was a special place for the Apostles and St. Peter as their leader among the early Christians. Inevitably, Peter speaks on behalf of all the Apostles. Such is the case in this weekend’s first reading. Peter preaches. His sermon goes to the heart of the Gospel message. Jesus is Lord, the Savior. He came among humans as human, but also as God’s own Son. He died. He rose. He reconciled humanity with Almighty God.

Humans have an option. They can accept Jesus as Lord. They can follow the Gospel—or they can reject Jesus. The author of Acts, traditionally believed to have been St. Luke, dates the sermon. It was preached on Pentecost, a Jewish holiday. This and other Jewish holidays celebrated God in relation with humanity, and with the Hebrew people in particular. The holidays celebrated the covenant and God’s constant and uninterrupted mercy. In this case, the Jews recalled their special status as the people whom God protected and through whom God was revealed.

The First Epistle of St. Peter provides the second reading. Jesus died on the cross to bring God and humanity together. Peter explains that Jesus died on the cross to bring God and humanity together. The second reading. Jesus died on the cross to bring God and humanity together.

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Some weeks have passed since Easter, but the Church still rejoices in the risen Lord. He lives! Giving us the words that will go to the heart of the Gospel message. He died. He rose. He reconciled humanity with Almighty God.

Reflection
Several weeks have passed since Easter, but the Church still rejoices in the risen Lord. He lives! Giving us the words that will go to the heart of the Gospel message. He died. He rose. He reconciled humanity with Almighty God.

The essence of this weekend’s message is clear and simple. We need the Lord. Otherwise, we shall die.

We can follow the Lord, or we can go our own way, just as sheep may wander, but if we turn from Jesus, we will walk into peril.

Ordinarily, the sacrament of baptism is administered only by a bishop, priest or deacon. An exception is made when a bishop is imminent. In that case, the Code of Canon Law indicates that baptism may be administered by anyone who has the proper intention (#861).

Ordinarily, too, the permission of at least one parent is necessary for a child to be baptized (#868). But again here, there is an exception: In danger of death, the sacrament may be administered against the parents’ wishes. But the question is whether it should be.

St. Thomas Aquinas taught in the Summa Theologica that children of Jews and unbelievers should not be baptized against their parents’ wishes, and that to do so would be “contrary to natural justice.”

Certainly, in the view of the Catholic Church, baptism is the ordinary and surest way to salvation. The Catechism of the Catholic Church states: “The Church does not know of any means other than baptism that assures entry into eternal beatitude; this is why she takes care not to neglect the mission she has received from the Lord to see that all who can be baptized are ‘born of water and the Spirit’” (#1257).

However, the catechism also says: “The great mercy of God ... and Jesus’ tenderness toward children ... allow us to hope that there is a way of salvation for children who have died without baptism” (#1251). “The more you mentioned should have first tried, perhaps, to determine the parents’ wishes, and then proceed accordingly.

Growing up, I was always taught to genuflect with the right knee. But now I see more and more people using their left knee. Has there been a change that I am not aware of? Is it permissible to alternate knees?” (Pennsylvania)

Right is right. According to the “General Instruction of the Roman Missal,” “a genuflection, made by bending the right knee to the ground, signifies adoration, and therefore it is reserved for the Most Blessed Sacrament (#274).”

The custom was formally approved by the Church in the early 16th century. (Note that it is only practiced in the Western Church; Eastern Catholics and members of the Orthodox Churches use instead an profound bow as a sign of their deep reverence.)

Genuflection on the left knee was used to pay honor to kings and emperors (and, at certain times in the Church’s history, to the bishop of one’s diocese), but the right knee is reserved to God alone as a sign of divine worship.

Questions may be sent to Father Kenneth Doyle at askfatherkennedy@gmail.com and 30 Columbus Circle Dr. Albany, New York 12220.”

The Church teaches that a lay person can baptize in the face of the danger of death. Question Corner Fr. Kenneth Doyle

The other day, I was told that if a baby, born to Catholic parents in a Catholic hospital, is in danger of dying, it is routine practice for a nurse—or whoever is available—to baptize the baby as soon as possible. But what if the parents are members of some other Christian tradition—or no religion at all? Would their permission be needed? I knew a nurse many years ago, a Catholic, who worked in the nursery of a nondenominational hospital. She never told me in so many words, but I got the idea that she made a practice of baptizing any baby whose condition was uncertain. (Iowa)

Ordinarily, the sacrament of baptism is administered only by a bishop, priest or deacon. An exception is made when a bishop is imminent. In that case, the Code of Canon Law indicates that baptism may be administered by anyone who has the proper intention (#861). Ordinarily, too, the permission of at least one parent is necessary for a child to be baptized (#868). But again here, there is an exception: In danger of death, the sacrament may be administered against the parents’ wishes. But the question is whether it should be.

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Readers may submit prose or poetry for faith column

The Criterion invites readers to submit original prose or poetry relating to faith or experiences of prayer for possible publication in the “My Journey to God” column. Seasonal reflections also are appreciated. Please include name, address, parish and telephone number with submissions.

Send material for consideration to “My Journey to God” The Criterion, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202-2376 or e-mail to criterion@archindy.org.
Please submit in writing to our office by 10 a.m., Thursday before the week of publication; be sure to state date of death. Obituaries of archdiocesan priests serving our archdiocese are listed elsewhere in this section. Please submit in writing to our office by 10 a.m., Thursday before the week of publication; be sure to state date of death.

**Hospital Mass**

Bishop David R. Choby of Nashville, Tenn., imparts the final blessing from his hospital bed during an April 11 Mass he con-celebrated at St. Thomas Hospital in Nashville. The bishop was scheduled for a surgery on his back in preparation for the more extensive surgery to repair fractures in his back in May before a few weeks later. (CNS photo/Rick Musacchio, St. Thomas Hospital)

**Prayer is important part of helping the poor, Pope Francis tells U.S.-based group**

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Prayer is a central part of Catholics’ work to support the mission of the pope and of the Church, especially in the poorest corners of the world, Pope Francis told members of the U.S.-based Papal Foundation.

“I ask you, as a vital part of your commitment to the work of the Papal Foundation, to pray for the needs of the poor, the conversion of hearts, the spread of the Gospel and the Church’s growth in holiness and missionary zeal,” he told foundation members on April 27.

Each spring, members of the group make a pilgrimage to Rome and present to the pope the projects they have funded for the year. This year’s grants total $10 million. With an endowment of more than $200 million, the foundation provides grants to build or repair churches, schools, convents and seminaries, and to fund projects ranging from evangelization and communications training to helping parishes in Africa install a solar-energy plant.

“Today’s world, so often torn by violence, greed and indifference, greatly needs our witness to the Gospel message of hope in the redeeming and recentering power of God’s love,” the pope told members of the foundation, who were led by Cardinal Donald W. Wuerl of Washington, chairman of the foundation’s board of trustees.

He thanked foundation members for helping “proclaim that message of hope to the ends of the Earth, and to work for the spiritual and material advancement of our brothers and sisters throughout the world, especially in developing countries.”

**Providence Sister Anne Krause served in education and in her order’s administration**

Providence Sister Anne Krause died on April 16 at Union Hospital in Terre Haute. She was 94.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on April 21 at the Sisters of Providence Contemplative Churchhouse in St. Mary-of-the-Woods. Burial followed at the sisters’ cemetery.

She was born on Jan. 10, 1927, in Terra Haute, Ind., to Fred and Zela (Hartman) Heil. She entered the Sisters of Providence in 1946 and made her vows on June 24, 1950.

She is survived by a sister, Sally Jones of Beaumont, Texas.

In the archdiocese, Sister Anne served at the former St. Joseph School in Terre Haute from 1949-53, at the former St. Catherine of Siena School in Terre Haute from 1953-71, and Holy Family School in Terre Haute from 1971-97.

She also served as principal of the Contemplative Churchhouse from 1971-91 as and as manager of planned giving in her order’s office of mission advancement from 1991-99.

Memorial gifts may be sent to the Sisters of Providence, 1 Sisters of Providence Road, St. Mary-of-the-Woods, IN 47876. †

**Conventional Franciscan Father Joel Burget grew up in Terre Haute parish, ministered as its pastor, and also served as missionary to the African continent**

Conventional Franciscan Father Joel Burget died on April 21 in Terre Haute. He was 77.

A Funeral Mass was celebrated on April 24 at St. Benedict Church in Terre Haute, where Father Joel had served as pastor for 12 years. A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on April 27 at the friars’ chapel at Mount St. Francis. Burial followed in the friars’ cemetery.

Robert Joseph Burget was born on June 17, 1939, in Terre Haute. He grew up as a member of St. Benedict Parish there.

After having attended the minor seminary at Mount St. Francis of the Conventional Franciscans’ Our Lady of Consolation Province, he entered the order in 1957 and took the religious name Joel. Father Joel professed simple vows on July 10, 1958, and solemn vows on Oct. 11, 1961. He was ordained a priest on March 5, 1966, in St. Paul, Minn.

Later that year, Father Joel began 20 years of missionary service in Zambia in southern Africa as a teacher and in priestly ministry in locations that often required difficult and long travel.


He continued to live in the Conventional Franciscan’s friary in Terre Haute until his death.

Father Joel is survived by a sister, Sally Jones of Beaumont, Texas.

Memorial gifts may be sent to the Conventional Franciscan Friars at The Province of Our Lady of Consolation, Development Office, 103 St. Anthony Drive, Mount St. Francis, IN 47146.

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WASHINGTON (CNS)—Even the youth group at John Fitzgerald Kennedy would be put to the test today, as JFK would have turned 100 years old on May 29, which happens to be Memorial Day this year.

The centenary of Kennedy’s birth has been marked across the nation, from the first—and so, only—Catholic to attain the presidency and his assassination-announced term of office.

“Still he is a towering figure in American history,” said Patrick Maney, a presidential historian at Boston College, in a phone interview. “It’s hard to imply why he had such a bold a people, although he could vividly remember the details of every event he attended, close” to Kennedy during a presidential campaign stop in Green Bay, Wis.

“He was the beginning, my first hero in politics. Before that, it was baseball players,” said Maney, who grew up following the Milwaukee Braves and football’s Green Bay Packers. “He played a pretty important role in my life, and still does in a way.”

In May, O’Toole announced he would run for Boston College presidential historian, took note of the times in which JFK lived and campaigned.

Cardinal Joseph Cardinal [Richard] Cushing, the archbishop of Boston. It might not have worked, of course, but it did. The point is he had to address the question.”

In a nail-biter election, Kennedy won, carrying 70 to 80 percent of the Catholic vote, although his opponent, then-Vice President Richard Nixon, picked up about 80 percent of the white Protestant vote.

Author Shaun A. Casey, in his 2009 book The Making of a Catholic President: Kennedy vs. Nixon, 1960, said Protestant denominations bandied together to deride the Catholic campaign and training in leaflets, newspapers, sermons and radio broadcasts that the Catholic Church would take his orders from the pope. Casey suggested the cross-denominational effort ultimately brought about the birth of the religious right, which has tried to leave its mark on politics for the last 40 years or more.

Many said Kennedy became the first “celebrity president,” being the son of a millionaire and being a World War II hero with his rescue of his Navy crewmen of the stern battleship PT 109, not to mention his quick ascendance in Congress and his marriage to Jacqueline Bouvier.

The Kennedy’s were regular attendees at Mass during his presidency. That image does not square with the reports of womanizing that surfaced more than a decade after his 1963 assassination (he was also the last president to die in office). By that time, media images of the Vietnam War had marginalized Lyndon Johnson’s presidency, and dogged reporting of the Watergate scandal had brought down JFK’s onetime rival Nixon.

Speaking of Vietnam, John McGreevy, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Notre Dame in northern Indiana, said the debate will long continue whether Kennedy would have been a strong enough U.S. involvement in Vietnam as Johnson had.

“His was a presidency that placed a great deal of faith in McNamara,” said McGreevy. “The experts got us deeper into Vietnam.”

Maney said there were 200 “advisers” in Vietnam when the conflict began, but 16,000 at the time he was killed.

John Kenneth White, associate professor of political science at the University of Virginia in Washington, who specializes in history, said Kennedy was aware of not wanting to be linked by “spokes of the wheel” model of governing, listening to competing arguments by top staffers, before deciding on a course of action. As opposed to Jimmy Carter and current President Donald Trump, White noted Kennedy made the model work.

“He had a marvelous capacity to grow in the presidency. You saw that growth from the Bay of Pigs to the Cuban missile crisis. When it came to challenging the intelligence community, he challenged information that was given to him,” he added.

With 10 occupants of the White House since JFK, and with 23 percent of the nation the Catholic, no other Catholic has been elected president. The only major-party nominee who was Catholic was John Kennedy in 2004. And with the exception of Joe Biden, Catholics have been unlucky in the vice presidential sweepstakes: Republicans William Miller in 1964 and Paul Ryan in 2012, and Democrat Geraldine Ferraro in 1984.

As opposed to Protestants who blasted Kennedy for being too Catholic, Kerry denounced any attack for being not Catholic enough,” O’Toole said. “There were bishops who argued for denying him communion because of his abortion stance. The sides have changed in a way.”

He added, “For Catholic leaders who did criticize John Kennedy for that, what they did criticize him for was following the position that Kennedy had laid out: ‘I’m not going to let the demands of my faith and the opinions of the leaders of my faith affect my policy.’ Kerry was saying the very same thing, but being criticized for it rather than being praised for it.”

White said Kennedy’s election into Catholics and Catholicism in the mainstream of U.S. society and politics. McGreevy said another influence on the American body politic was the Vatican. “Low-level religious tension got reshaped in the Second Vatican Council,” he added. “We used to be told, ‘Never go into a Protestant church. That could be a mortal sin.’”

The juxtaposition of Kennedy’s election and Vatican II, they happened at the same time, and it accelerated the pace of change.”

Cardinal Dolan slams DNC pledge to support only pro-abortion candidates

WASHINGTON (CNS)—New York Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan described the recent pledge from the Democratic National Committee’s (DNC) to support only pro-abortion candidates as “disturbing” and “intolerant.”

The cardinal’s April 26 statement was in reaction to recent comments by DNC chair Tom Perez, who said: “Every Democrat, like every American, should support a woman’s right to make her own choices about her body and her health. That is not negotiable and should not change city by city or state by state.”

Perez went on to say in an April 21 statement: “At a time when women’s rights are under assault from the right—we must speak up for this principle as loudly as ever and with one voice.”

“Pro-life principles are the core of the DNC ‘unity tour’ rally in Nebraska, where another DNC leader and Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vermont, appeared on April 20 with a former state senator, Howard Goodspeed, the Democratic mayor of Cincinnati. The tour was sharply criticized by pro-abortion groups for joining forces with Mello, who denounced a 2002 bill in New York that would require women to be informed of their right to request a fetal ultrasound before having an abortion.

“The actions today by the DNC to embrace and support a candidate for office who will strip women—one of the most critical constituencies for the party—for our basic rights and freedom is not only disappointing, it is politically stupid,” NARAL Pro-Choice America President Ilyse Hogue said in an April 20 statement.

Sanders responded to the criticism by saying different views about abortion within the party were normal. Perez took this further, saying he fundamentally disagreed with “Mello’s personal beliefs about women’s reproductive health.”

On NBC’s “Meet the Press” on April 23, House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, D-California, was asked if a Democratic presidential candidate should be pro-choice or pro-life. “Of course,” she said, adding that she has “served many years in Congress with members who have not supported abortion, my family would be very aggressive—position on promoting a woman’s right to choose.

Dolan, who offered prayers at the Democratic and Republican national conventions in 2012, had strong words for the Democratic party in his April 26 statement saying the party’s “platform already endorses abortion without the ninth month of pregnancy, even forcing taxpayers to fund it; and now the DNC says that to be a Democrat—indeed be an American—requires supporting that extreme agenda.”

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It was mid-morning on Good Friday as Father Dustin Boehm stood on a bridge over Brookville Lake and addressed 53 members of St. Bridget of Ireland Parish in Liberty and St. Gabriel Parish in Connersville.

“We renewed our baptismal promises, recalling who we’re called to be and how God created us to be in his Son,” says Father Boehm. “The direct effects of the cost our Lord paid, we’re baptized because of that.”

On that note, the group set off on foot on a nearly 10-mile pilgrimage between the two Connersville Deanery parishes. With as many pilgrims, the journey was spiritual, says Father Boehm.

But this particular journey had an additional purpose: to draw together members of two parishes which became linked in February 2016 through the archdiocese’s Connected in the Spirit planning process. As linked parishes, the faith communities share resources as well as a priest.

The idea for the pilgrimage was conceived during a liturgy committee planning meeting in December. The committee was discussing Holy Week, says Father Boehm.

“We knew that Holy Thursday (Mass) was going to be held at St. Gabriel, and Good Friday service (was going to be) at St. Bridget,” he says.

That was when James Jerome “J.J.” Huber, a member of St. Gabriel Parish, proposed the idea of a walking pilgrimage from St. Gabriel to St. Bridget prior to the Good Friday service.

“I was kind of jokily,” says Huber, 25, who had been accepted as a new seminarian for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. “But Father’s eyes got wide, and he said, ‘Yeah! We need to do that!’”

Father Boehm says he saw the idea as “a way for [members of the two parishes] to grow together, not just be thrown together.”

And there was the beauty of traveling to a town called Liberty, he says, “which on Good Friday meant a lot more than just entering the town limits.”

The 34-year-old priest, who was ordained in 2011, is familiar with pilgrimage journeys, having taken part in several himself, including walking the centuries-old, 850 mile trek through Europe to Santiago de Compostela in Spain.

He describes three spiritual aspects of making a pilgrimage, noting that first is the component of suffering.

“Walking nine-and-a-half miles isn’t easy,” he says. “So you enter a little into the suffering of the Lord’s walk to Calvary. ...”

“But even in the midst of that suffering there’s [the] joy of getting to know fellow pilgrims, and knowing the end result of the resurrection,” he says, explaining the second spiritual aspect of the pilgrimage.

The third spiritual aspect, he says, is that “at some point you want to be done, to be at the end, but you’re not yet there. So what do you do in that moment? Keep walking forward with joy, and ask for God’s grace.”

The spiritual aspect of the pilgrimage was the focus of the second half of the journey, when Father Boehm requested the pilgrims walk in silence and meditate upon Christ’s passion.

“That was around noon,” he says. “By that time, our Lord would have been hanging on the cross.”

But the first portion of the pilgrimage provided the opportunity for two members of the two parishes to pray the sorrowful mysteries of the rosary out loud, and to mingle and get to know each other.

“It was absolutely awesome, just awesome,” says Huber. “Any sort of time you’ve got a group of people together on some sort of mission, go through some kind of hardship together, that strengthens bonds. Walking nine-and-a-half miles in the sun will join anyone! The sense of solidarity was really big.”

St. Bridget parishioner and cathchist Lisa Goecke agreed.

She says she and her daughter were discussing a family member’s involvement in the live Stations of the Cross the parishes were conducting at St. Bridget after the Good Friday service.

“The family in front of us that goes to St. Gabriel overheard our conversation,” she says. “They had a family member involved in it, too. So we walked to them for a while. It was nice to get to know each other.”

At the midpoint, the mother of seven was grateful for the owner of an auto dealership who opened his doors for the group to use its restroom. Father Boehm and Huber, who had walked the route together on St. Patrick’s Day to gauge how long it would take, had mentioned the Good Friday pilgrimage to the owner.

“He’s not Catholic, but he opened his doors for us,” says Goecke. “His little girl had water for us. It was inspiring to know there are a lot of good people in the area.”

By this time on the nearly 10-mile journey “you could start to feel it,” she says. “Father said this is nothing compared to what Jesus went through. “I know it doesn’t compare, but it was an eye opener. I’m sure people [driving by] looked at us funny, but I’m sure [God] had the same kind of reactions, people staring at him. It was the most wonderful Good Friday I’ve ever had, and I think a lot of people felt the same.”

Josh Marszalek, a member of St. Gabriel Parish, says it was especially important that the pilgrimage was to St. Bridget, which at 67 households is less than 10 percent the size of St. Gabriel.

As a member of the parish pastoral council, he says they are already “finishing up” the linking process and now “trying to establish between the two parishes what the common vision is going forward.”

“We’re trying to figure out how to not just go through the motions and be stagnant. We want to move forward.”

Marszalek has been touched by the linking process in a personal way. He recounts how St. Gabriel was hosting a fundraiser to support an organization that researches a rare neurological disorder his daughter suffers from.

“Without anyone asking, [members from St. Bridget] just jumped in and started contributing to the effort. It was a great success, made greater by their help.”

Marszalek admits that as a father of two and with the medical attention his daughter requires, “quiet meditation time is rare.”

“The pilgrimage was a nice time to really get in touch with those three days (of the triduum). I don’t think my Easter would have been as good if I didn’t have that time.”

For Huber, he sees the success of both the pilgrimage and the linking process in the youth ministry he helps coordinate.

“In high school, [the youths] were mortal enemies,” he says, referring to the rivalry between the high schools the youths of each parish attend.

But through joint activities and gatherings, Huber says “now they’re brothers and sisters in Christ. We’ve gotten to see the youths grow closer. Of anybody, they already had their own groups, but it’s really cool to see them meet outside of the county.”

More than 20 youths from the parishes joined in the Good Friday pilgrimage. As a youth ministry activity on Holy Thursday, they watched The Passion of the Christ.

“We went over the movie [they watched] the night before, why Jesus had to suffer the way he did,” says Huber of the youths during the first portion of the walk. “They asked questions while we were walking. It was great for them.”

The forward movement and success of the three-hour pilgrimage parallels the journey Father Boehm sees of the linking process of St. Bridget and St. Gabriel parishes.

“Our parishes need one another,” he says. “We’re starting to see that … starting to see how this is better, how we’re going to be better for it. Our Lord will be better served for [the parishes being linked], so what our Lord calls us to in our various ministries will be much more effective.”

—Father Dustin Boehm, pastor of St. Bridget of Ireland Parish in Liberty and St. Gabriel Parish in Connersville