Civility must guide debate on social challenges, bishops’ head says

BALTIMORE (CNS) — Acknowledging wide divisions in the country over issues such as health care, immigration reform, taxes and abortion, the president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) called for civility to return to the public debate. 

Contemporary challenges are great, but that they can be addressed without anger and with love Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston said in his first address as USCCB president during the bishops’ fall general assembly.

“We are facing a time that seems more divided than ever,” Cardinal DiNardo said.

“Divisions over health care, conscience protections, immigration and refugees, abortion, physician-assisted suicide, gender ideologies, the meaning of marriage and all the other headlines continue to be hotly debated. But our role continues to be witnessing the Gospel.”

He explained that the National Catholic War Council, created by the U.S. bishops in 1917 in the response to the world refugee crisis that emerged from World War I and the forerunner to the USCCB, was formed to address great national and international needs at a time not unlike today.

He said the history of the Catholic Church in America is full of examples of the work of “holy men and women” responding to social challenges. He particularly mentioned Capuchin Franciscan Father Solanus Casey, who ministered alongside homeless and poor people in Detroit and who will be beatified on Nov. 18.

“The history of Christianity is also the story of reconciliation. In 2017, we mark the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. Began as a moment of painful division, it stands as a journey toward healing, from conflict to communion,” Cardinal DiNardo said.

He continued, “Civility begins in the womb. If we cannot come to love and

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Civility must guide debate on social challenges, bishops’ head says

Latest ‘great American story’ highlights mentor’s commitment to refugee family

For nearly an hour, the young man stood anxiously by the exit of Concourse B at Indianapolis International Airport. Holding a bouquet of red roses, he repeatedly strained to see down the long corridor, waiting and hoping for his family to appear.

Finally—at last!—he saw them in the distance, and all his anxiety and tension disappeared as his face burst into a smile. Then he stood on his toes and waved at them as his eyes glowed.

Within seconds, he embraced his father, and greeted four of his sisters, his two brothers and his nephew—all the time making his way toward his mother. Handing her the bouquet of red roses, he wrapped his mother in his arms in the same extended motion. Her face reflected all the joy and all the emotion of a mother reunited with her child.

For the young man nicknamed “Alo” and his family, it was a long-awaited moment of thanksgiving. Ever since 2001 when their family fled their homeland of Sudan as refugees, they’ve held the dream of coming to the United States to start a new life—one without fear, one with freedom.

And 16 years later, on the night of Oct. 19 in Indianapolis, the dream finally came true with the assistance of the archdiocese’s Refugee and Immigrant Services program—a program of Catholic Charities Indianapolis that has helped 20,000 people during the past 40 years.

Alo, whose real name is Bershlmaws Koko, arrived in Indianapolis in January of this year. He and his family had spent 16 years in Egypt while waiting for clearance by the U.S. government so they could come to America. Reunited with his family again on that October evening, Alo softly said, “Everything is good. I’m just so happy to see my family.”

Still, the reunion is just part of the story for the 23-year-old Alo. So is the first year of his life in the United States, a year of change, challenge and cultural shock in which he has been helped by his Catholic Charities volunteer mentor, Fritz French.

During his first year of adjusting to life in the United States, Sudanese refugee Bershlmaws “Alo” Koko, left, has relied upon the guidance and friendship of Fritz French, a member of Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Indianapolis who serves as a volunteer mentor for the archdiocese’s Refugee and Immigrant Services program of Catholic Charities Indianapolis. (Photo by John Shaughnessy)

Helping people “at the ground level”

When Alo arrived in the United States, he faced the challenges that confront many refugees—separation from family, corrections ministry conference, page 9.
Nuncio: Bishops must focus on youths, evangelization, Jesus

BALTIMORE (CNS)—There are three things bishops must always keep in mind as they exercise their episcopal ministry, according to Archbishop Christophe Pierre, the Vatican’s nuncio to the United States: youths, the mission of evangelization and “the Lord himself.”

“The Holy Father has demanded of bishops that their mission requires passion,” Archbishop Pierre said in an address on the U.S. bishops on Nov. 13, the first day of their fall general assembly in Baltimore. “We need to have the passion of young lovers and wise elders.”

Pope Francis has warned that “the biggest threat of all is gluttony,” Archbishop Pierre added, in which all appears to proceed normally while in reality faith is winding down.

“I ask you for passion—the passion of evangelization—what are we as bishops totally passionately about?” he said. “As the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) celebrates its centennial in 2017, the archbishop added, “I think this is a foundational question that the thrust of your pastoral letter is to change the nature of the change as the change in age. Young people struggle not with existential questions but practical ones, like finding work.”

He noted that “50 percent of Catholics under 30 identify as ‘nones’ [having no religious affiliation]” and nearly 14 million Hispanics born Catholic but raised here have become ‘nones.’

“We are not speaking of it,” Archbishop Pierre said, “Pastors, parents and teachers know the difficulties of transmitting the faith in our day, which is not so much the nature of the message but the manifestation of a new criterion.”

On focusing on youths, Archbishop Pierre said, “Pastors and parents know the difficulties of transmitting the faith in our day, which is not so much the nature of the message but the manifestation of a new criterion.”

“In the last analysis, we are speaking of the new criterion,” he continued. “We need to become fully a community of disciples filled with joy and enthusiasm for the spread of the Gospel.”

The archbishop gave two recent examples of U.S.-born holy men: Blessed Stanley Rother and Capuchin Franciscan Father Solanus Casey, whose beatification is to take place in Detroit the weekend following the bishops’ meeting.

“It was this land that gave birth to Blessed Father Solanus Rother, even in the face of martyrdom, even though he gave up his life for people, even though he could have run away,” he said.

Father Solanus “made time for people. He listened to the pilgrims, and he touched the sick with great compassion.”

Archbishop Pierre added. It was, he said, “this love for the Lord and his people [that caused] light to rise in darkness.”

“Drawing strength and wisdom from circumstance of pastoral life,” he said. “For, the task and contemplation cannot be greater as an amicizia to the busyness of life.”

DIVIDED

Cardinal Christophe Pierre, apostolic nuncio to the United States, reminded the bishops that Pope Francis has given up, “as we bishops totally passionately about?” he said. “As the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) celebrates its centennial in 2017, the archbishop added, “I think this is a foundational question that the thrust of your pastoral letter is to change the nature of the change as the change in age. Young people struggle not with existential questions but practical ones, like finding work.”

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Digital Subscription: criterion@archindy.org

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1400 N. Meridian St. Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367
317-236-1570
800-382-9836 ext. 1570
info@archindy.org

Knights, Ladies of St. Peter Claver celebrate 70 years of faith

By Mike Krokos

Members of the Knights of Peter Claver and its Ladies Auxiliary were encouraged to follow their namesake’s example of displaying conviction as they live out their lives of faith in service to others.

Archbishop Charles C. Thompson offered that encouragement in his homily during an Oct. 22 Mass at St. Rita Church in Indianapolis celebrating the 70th anniversary of the parish’s Knights of Peter Claver and Ladies Auxiliary (St. Rita Council #97 and Christ the King Court #97).

“St. Peter Claver, referring to himself as the ‘slave of slaves forever’ . . . displayed incredible conviction in carrying forth his mission to the poor, the vulnerable, the mistreated, and those cast aside by society,” the archbishop said.

Born in Spain, St. Peter Claver was a missionary who travelled to South America in 1610. He was the first Jesuit a missionary who travelled to South America in 1610. He was the first Jesuit

Archbishop Thompson said, “stands in direct contrast to apprehension, indifference and disloyalty.”

Archbishop Thompson at the Knights’ and Ladies’ celebration, too.

Archbishop Thompson, noted that the Knights and Ladies of St. Peter Claver will continue to carry forth that conviction of faith and hope that leads others to encounter the person of Jesus Christ, the very presence we celebrate here and now in word and sacrament,” he said.

He’s very inspirational,” said Blaylock, who has been a Knight for 15 years and a member of St. Rita Parish for 12 years.

Rosemary Lee, a member of Christ the King Court #97, was excited to have Archbishop Thompson.

“Given today’s climate of gun violence, injustice, terrorism, racism, hate crimes, opioid crisis, and scapegoating of immigrants and refugees, a person of faith necessarily needs to possess conviction.”

Mel Blaylock, a member of St. Rita Council #97, said this was the second time he had been to a Mass celebrated by Archbishop Thompson.

“His conviction enabled him to do with a spirit of joy and enthusiasm for the patron of missionary work among the slaves were sold, feeding, ministered aboard the ships and ashore before the slaves were sold, feeding, ministered aboard the ships and ashore.

Priest ordained in Cartagena, Colombia, a parish in the Archdiocese of Mobile, Ala., and Father Kenneth Taylor, pastor of St. Rita Parish, noted that the Knights of Peter Claver is the largest black Catholic fraternal organization in the country, and was founded in 1909 in New Orleans “as a way to keep the black Catholic men tied to the faith and tied to the Church. Everywhere the Clavers have gone, they’re connected to a parish.”

St. Rita Parish also began a trend for both the men’s and women’s organizations, he added.

“Given today’s climate of gun violence, injustice, terrorism, racism, hate crimes, opioid crisis, and scapegoating of immigrants and refugees, a person of faith necessarily needs to possess conviction.”

The conviction we must have in our lives, the archbishop noted, “stands in direct contrast to apprehension, indifference and disloyalty.”

“One who possesses conviction stands firm in resolve amid adversity, challenge and uncertainty,” he said.

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Grand Lady, Audlton Johnson of the Ladies Auxiliary proclaims the second reading during the Oct. 22 Mass.

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We must serve the poor

“The poor are not a problem,” Pope Francis said when he announced the first World Day of the Poor. “They are a resource from which we draw as we strive to accept and practice in our lives the essence of the Gospel.”

The first observance of the World Day of the Poor is on Nov. 19. Concern for the poor has been a top priority of the Church from the beginning. In his Letter to the Galatians, written about the year 54 or 55, St. Paul recounted the meeting he had with the “pillars” of the Church at which they approved Paul’s ministry to the Gentiles. “Only, we were to be mindful of the poor, which is the very thing I was eager to do,” he said (Gal 2:10).

Indeed, Paul was mindful of the poor. During his travels, he took up a collection from the churches in Jerusalem, designated for the poor. Of course, Jesus himself came into the world as a poor man, lived as a poor man, and died as a poor man. He urged all of us to be poor; if not in actual poverty, at least in spirit, for his first beatitude was “Blessed be the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Mt 5:3).

At the beginning of his ministry, in his hometown of Nazareth, he proclaimed: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor” (Lk 4:18). And he told the rich young man, “If you would be perfect, go sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven” (Mt 19:21).

The Acts of the Apostles tells us that the early Christians “sold their possessions and goods and distributed them to all, as any had need” (Acts 2:45).

Our current Holy Father, Pope Francis, has emphasized service to the poor from the moment he became pope. Now, in his message for the World Day of the Poor, he tells us, “Let us love, not with words, but with deeds,” which is what St. John wrote (1 Jn 3:18). And St. James wrote, “Faith by itself, if it has not works, is dead” (Jas 2:17).

Fortunately, our Church here in central and southern Indiana can affirm that it is following Christ’s command. Perhaps that fact is little known by the general public, but Catholic organizations throughout the archdiocese are doing wonderful things for the poor.

Catholic Charities has offices in Indianapolis, Bloomington, Terre Haute, New Albany and Tell City. Last year, those offices served a total of 90,415 unduplicated clients (209,519 duplicated clients) with more than 20 kinds of special services from food distribution, to clothing assistance, to shelter, and health-related services. It did that with a paid staff of 219 plus 2,056 volunteers.

However, Catholic Charities is hardly the only Catholic organization that serves the poor. The Society of St. Vincent de Paul is probably the best known. It feeds the hungry, provides beds for those without, gives appliances like refrigerators and washers, makes house visits with food, and has a medical clinic available.

The amazing thing about the Indianapolis archdiocesan Council of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul is that it is operated almost entirely by volunteers.

Many Catholic faith communities in central and southern Indiana have St. Vincent de Paul parish conferences, so it is located in 57 places, including five distribution centers and three food pantries. Its Beggars for the Poor ministry takes a truck to a Methodist church in Indianapolis every Saturday to provide meals for the homeless.

The homeless and the hungry are also given meals at the SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral Kitchen and Food Pantry in Indianapolis in the building behind the cathedral. It serves meals every day of the week.

The Church is obeying Christ’s command to serve the poor. But Pope Francis wants us to do more. He wrote, “If we want to help change history and promote real development, we need to hear the cry of the poor and commit ourselves to ending their marginalization.”

We must all do our part.

—John F. Fink

Archbishop Charles C. Thompson’s first fall meeting of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) as archbishop of Indianapolis was an historic occasion, the 100th anniversary of the founding of the bishops’ conference. One hundred years ago, in response to the immense human suffering and displacement of people brought about by the First World War, the American bishops came together as never before to bring the Gospel message of hope and joy to immigrants with all to the New World seeking security and a better life.

Much has changed in the past 100 years, but the bishops’ mission is the same: to be the welcoming arms of Jesus Christ for all who come to this country seeking freedom, justice and economic well-being. The bishops’ stance toward immigration was not always understood, or popular, a century ago. But it was grounded in the Church’s absolute conviction that every human person is made in God’s image and is, therefore, worthy of dignity and respect.

As Archbishop Thompson reflected on this anniversary, he noted, “Our celebration of the centenary of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops marks a wonderful milestone in the collegiality and unity of the U.S. Bishops with one another and the Holy Father.”

“Marking the 100th anniversary of our conference, noting that each bishop is a successor to the Apostles, impresses upon me the link of my own ministry with all those who have gone before, are currently serving and to come after me. The Church in the United States has known some incredible shepherds, not the least of which includes Bishop Benedict Joseph Flaget of Bardstown (Ky.) and Bishop Simon Bruté of Vincennes (Ind.).”

Pope Francis’ personal representative in the United States, Archbishop Christophe Pierre, apostolic nuncio, brought greetings from the Holy Father. But he also brought a challenge: Quoting Pope Francis’ remarks during his recent trip to Colombia, the nuncio said, “The essential things in life and in the Church are never written in stone, but remain a living legacy.”

Archbishop Pierre went on to remind bishops—one again in the Holy Father’s words—that their mission requires “passion.”

“We need to have the passion of young lovers and wise elders, a passion that turns ideas into viable options, a passion for the work of our hands, a passion that makes us constant pilgrims in our churches,” he said. “I ask you for passion, the passion of evangelization.”

These stirring words, and the experience of this historic meeting, prompted Archbishop Thompson to say: “I am also reminded of a prayer found in the Church’s Liturgy of the Hours, imploring the Lord to not leave the shepherd without a flock or the flock without a shepherd, which only increases my gratitude for the wonderful clergy, religious and laity that make up the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. Together, as members of both the local and universal Church, we are the Body of Christ called to give witness as missionary disciples to the joy of the Gospel.”

There was plenty of passion on display as the American bishops discussed at length the challenges we face today in the areas of abortion, immigration reform, racism, gun violence, physician-assisted suicide, protection for the rights of conscience among health care providers and employers and other “headline issues” of our time. Political advocacy is crucial, but so is the moral education of our people and, above all, the conversion of hearts.

As the apostolic nuncio reminded the bishops, Pope Francis urged all of us to beware of “the gray pragmatism of the daily life of the Church, in which all appears to proceed normally, while in reality faith is wearing down and degenerating into small-mindedness.”

Once again, passion, not pragmatism, is what should characterize the ministry of bishops, the successors of the Apostles called to be in “a permanent state of mission.”

Archbishop Thompson’s reflections on his own call to passionate ministry on behalf of the people of central and southern Indiana says it all: “Perhaps a personal renewal to the universal call to holiness and mission is the best way for me to celebrate this grand centennial moment in the history of the Catholic Church in the United States. To that end, I ask all to please pray for me.”

(Daniel Conway is a member of The Criterion’s editorial committee.)
God loves a cheerful giver because he loves to see us achieve our greatest potential as his children. God loves us more than we love him and for one another. God loves to see us become more Christ-like, more generous and self-sacrificing because he knows that this is what will bring us the most genuine satisfaction. True happiness is living generously for others. Profound sadness and dissatisfaction result when we live only for ourselves.

That’s why the greatest saints are also the most generous. The list is endless—St. Martin of Tours, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Rose Philippine Duchesne, St. Teresa of Calcutta and so many more. These are models of generosity and joy—what the New Testament calls “cheerful giving.” We should not get the wrong idea. Cheerful giving doesn’t mean giving without pain or sacrifice. Giving of self, giving of time and talent, and giving of material things all cost us something. That’s what we mean by “sacrificial giving.” If a gift costs us nothing, there’s no merit in giving it away. Gifts of substance, or sacrificial giving, are costly. They deprive us of something precious, in spite of the fact that we deliberately share it with someone else.

How do we become cheerful givers? Practice. Watch little children. Sharing is not something kids do naturally. Parents teach their children to share with others. Often it’s not easy, but the more children share with each other and with their sisters and brothers and their friends, the more fun they have. Selfish behavior (“This is my ball, and you can’t play with it.”) leads to unhappy playtimes. But sharing makes play possible and enjoyable.

The same is true for adults. We can lock ourselves into gated communities and cling to what we have, or we can share with those who are less fortunate than we are. The choice is ours. But self-centered living is not the way to happiness or joy.

As St. Paul teaches, “God is able to make every grace abundant for you, so that in all things, always having all you need, you may have an abundance for every good work” (2 Cor 9:8). Have you ever stopped to think that God’s gifts. Before you know it, you’ll be a cheerful giver, too.

Dar gracias y dar generosamente nos transforman la vida

“Según que el que simbra sembrador no se queda con la cosecha más pobre, en cambio, el que simbra con generosidad, cosechará abundantemente. Que cada uno dé conforme a lo que ha resuelto en su corazón, no de mala gana o por la fuerza, porque Dios ama al que da con alegría. Por otra parte, Dios tiene poder para colmarlos de todos sus dones, a fin de que siempre tengamos lo que les hace falta, y aún les sobren para hacer toda clase de buenas obras” (2 Cor 9:6-8).

El mes de noviembre se denomina “el mes del agradecimiento.” Es la época del año en la que se nos recuerda que debemos dar gracias por todos los dones que hemos recibido. Pero también podríamos llamar al mes de noviembre el “mes del dar” porque es el momento en el que muchas organizaciones de caridad emprenden sus campañas y nos invitan a dar generosamente.

Muchas veces hemos escuchado que: “Dios ama al que da con alegría.” (2 Cor 9:7) Y es cierto. Cuando somos capaces de dar sin sentirnos obligados o de mala gana, sentimos la verdadera alegría. Dar es un acto de transformación. Mientras más generosamente damos, nos convertimos en mejores personas y, sorprendentemente, mientras más sacrificamos, mejor nos sentimos.

God loves a cheerful giver because he loves to see us achieve our greatest potential as his children. God loves us more than we love him and for one another. God loves to see us become more Christ-like, more generous and self-sacrificing because he knows that this is what will bring us the most genuine satisfaction. True happiness is living generously for others. Profound sadness and dissatisfaction result when we live only for ourselves.

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December 1
Women’s Care Center, 4901 W. 86th St., Indianapolis. First Friday Mass, 5 p.m., Father Thomas Haan presiding, optional tour of center to follow. Information: 317-829-6800. www.womenscarecenter.org

December 2
St. Michael Church, 1450 E. 41st St., Indianapolis. First Saturday Marian Devotional Prayer Group, Mass, prayers, rosary, confession, mediation, 8 a.m. Information: 765-647-5462.

December 3
St. Matthew the Apostle Church, 4100 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. Advent Evening of Reflection, music, readings, prayer and reflections, 6 p.m., refreshments to follow. Information: 317-243-0777.

December 4
Benedict Imn Retreat & Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. Shop Inn-Spired Christmas Sale, deals for your holiday shopping needs, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., have your picture taken with Santa for $5 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Information: 317-788-7581.

December 5

December 6
Archbishop Edward O’Meara Catholic Center, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. Solea Seniors, Catholic, educational, charitable and social singles, 50 and over, single, separated, widowed or divorced. New members welcome: 317-243-0777.

December 6
St. Therese of the Infant Jesus Church, 1125 S. Meridian St., Indianapolis. St. Nicholas celebration, German style dinner, beer and wine, concert featuring the Indianapolis Maennerchor, doors open 5:30 p.m., adults $25, children 3-12 $7, 2 and under free, nonperishable food donations accepted to benefit the David S. Moore Food Pantry. Advance reservations only by Nov. 30. Tickets and information: 317-638-5551; or sacramentindy.org, click on donate.

December 7
Sisters of Providence Motherhouse Grounds, 2000 S. Providence, St. Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. Christmas-Fun at the Woods, sleigh rides, crafts, cookie-decorating, face painting, wagon rides, visit Santa, sing-a-long and more, 1-4 p.m. $5 per person, children age 3 and under, no free registration required. Information: 812-535-2931. www.spsprov.org or groups@spsprov.org, presence-center/events.

December 8
St. Thomas Aquinas Church, 4625 K. New Winfields, Indianapolis. Mass in French, 12:30 p.m. Information: 317-627-7729 or jcfal1201d@icloud.com.

December 9
St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) Church, 4720 E. 13th St., Indianapolis. Class of ’63 monthly gathering, 6 p.m., Mass, optional dinner afterward. Information: 317-408-6396.

December 11-14
Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Parish, 520 Stevens St., Indianapolis. The Four Last Things: Death, Judgement, Heaven, Hell, parish mission presented by Father Paul Landwerk, talks twice daily, 8:15 a.m. and 6:45 p.m., 7:30 a.m. In Ordinary Form and 5 p.m. in Extraordinary Form, confessions at 7 a.m. and 5:15 p.m. (optional). Information: 317-636-4748 or info@sacredrosary.org.

December 12

December 13

December 18-19

December 22
St. Catherine of Siena Church, 335 W. Euclid Ave., Indianapolis. Kentucky Derby viewing on the big screen.

December 23
St. Anthony Church, 1451 W. 38th St., Indianapolis. Christmas Eve Mass, Midnight, 12 a.m., 4:30 a.m., 7:30 a.m., noon, 3 p.m., 7 p.m., 9 p.m., 11:45 p.m., 12:15 a.m., 5 a.m., 6:30 a.m. Information: 317-536-0777.

December 24-25
St. Mary’s Catholic Church, 2425 S. Union St., Indianapolis. Christmas Day Mass, 8 a.m. and 10 a.m., Christmas Eve Mass, 11 p.m. Information: 317-247-7676. www.saintmaryscc.com.

December 29-31
St. Mary-of-the-Woods College, 145 St. Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. Sisters of Providence, 50th anniversary on Nov. 18. The couple was married at St. John the Evangelist Church in Indianapolis on Nov. 18, 1967. They have one child: Tara Ann McNamara. The couple also has five grandchildren and one great-grandchild. The couple will celebrate with Mass and a dinner hosted by their daughter and grandchildren.

Michael and Paula (Brake) Thompson, members of Christ the King Parish in Indianapolis, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on Nov. 23. The couple was married at St. John the Baptist Church in Fort Wayne, Ind., on Nov. 23, 1967. They have two children: Geoffrey and Matthew Thompson.

The couple also has six grandchildren.

Archbishop Corrector Black Catholic Ministry to host two events in early December
The Black Catholic Ministry of the archdiocesan Office of Intercultural Ministry is sponsoring two events in early December. Archbishop Charles C. Thompson will be the main celebrant at an African Catholic Mass at St. Rita Church, 1733 Dr. Andrew J. Brown Ave., in Indianapolis, on 3 p.m. on Dec. 3. The Mass will include Scripture, music and dance from a variety of African countries.

A reception featuring foods from the African and African-American tradition will follow. All are welcome.

The Archdiocese of the Black Catholic Women’s Advent Day of Retreat will be held at Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., in Indianapolis, from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. with Mass following.

The theme of the retreat is “We Are the Light of the World” with Dr. Kathleen Dorsey Bellow and Divine Word Missionaries Father Charles A. Smith presenting.

The cost is $25, which includes lunch.

Registration is requested by contacting Pearlette Springle at 317-236-1474 or ppsringer@archind.org.

Online registration is available on the Black Catholic Ministry of Indianapolis Facebook page.

New Albany Deanery to present The Vigil Project tour and performance on Dec. 1
New Albany Deenery Catholic Youth Ministries will present The Vigil Project’s “To Save Us All Tour” on Dec. 1 at Mary of the Knobs Church, 5719 S. St. Mary Road, in Floyds Knobs, from 6:30-8 p.m. on Dec. 1.

The Vigil Project is a group of Catholic musicians that tour during Advent focusing on prayer, reflection and community through music and media.

This is an all-ages event with separate viewing rooms for young families.

There is no admission charge, although a freewill offering will be accepted. Seating is first come, first served.

The performance will be followed by a reception at Archbishop Hall.

For more information, contact Sandy Winstead at 812-923-8353 or e-mail sandy@knobsyouth.org.

Learn more about The Vigil Project at www.thevigilproject.com.

New Student of the Year
Matthew Thompson in this September photo. Each student added their favorite Bible quote and Christian symbol. (Submitted photo)
DETROIT (CNS)—For decades during the Great Depression and afterward, a Franciscan friar would welcome hundreds—if not thousands—of visitors per day: families with an ill child, destitute fathers desperate to make ends meet, loved ones distraught over a relative’s drifting from the faith.

And no matter the situation—whether a healing was imminent or not—he would tell them the same thing: “Thank God ahead of time.”

Now that Father Solanus is set to be beatified on Nov. 18 at Detroit’s Ford Field, home to the NFL’s Detroit Lions, everybody is so enthused about it. I get people asking me about the occasion all the time,” said Detroit Archbishop Allen H. Vigneron in an interview with The Michigan Catholic, the archdiocesan newspaper. “The quick way the tickets were free—with eager Detroiters snapping up the historic Mass—though the tickets were assigned is a strong sense of the community.”

Indeed, it took just hours for the 66,000-seat Ford Field to “sell out” for the historic Mass—though the tickets were free—with eager Detroiter snapping up the chance to be in attendance to thank God for the gift of the friar’s extraordinary life and intercession.

“People feel a strong connection to the friar. It’s like having someone in your family beheaded,” Archbishop Vigneron said. “Of course, in our region that’s very understandable. But really, I think it’s across the whole country and other parts of the world, too. I think Father’s humility and his accessibility help people feel that they belong to him, and he belongs to them.”

Born and raised in Wisconsin, Father Solanus joined the Capuchin order in 1897. Rejected by the diocesan seminary due to low grades, he nevertheless continued his studies toward the priesthood, and in 1904 was ordained a “simplex” priest in Milwaukee—a designation that meant he couldn’t hear confessions or preach doctrinal sermons.

While some priests might have been discouraged by a lack of facilities, which left him to do menial tasks such as answering the monastery door and recording Mass intentions, Father Solanus happily accepted God’s will for him.

“Father was able to be such a powerful vehicle for God’s marvelous healing and works because he was so transparent. There was so little of Father Solanus personally to get in the way,” Archbishop Vigneron said. “That’s really the secret behind his humbly accepting never being able to preach, never being able to hear confessions. He simply accepted who he was and said, ‘I’m happy to do whatever God wants of me.’”

As the monastery doorkeeper—first in churches and friaries around New York City and later in Detroit—Father Solanus quickly gained a reputation as a compassionate listener and intercessor during the Great Depression, and soon, dozens would arrive daily at the doors seeking “just a moment with Father.”

The late Cardinal John Dearden of Detroit opened the cause for canonization in 1954. The late Cardinal John Dearden of Detroit opened the cause for canonization in 1954. The cause was eventually created in 1976, a movement that's been championed by each Detroit archbishop since.

“I’ve always had confidence that Father would be beatified, and eventually that he’ll be canonized,” said Archbishop Vigneron, who inherited the cause from his predecessor, Cardinal Adam J. Maida. “I have no doubt about that.”

However, the possibility “became very real” when the Capuchins told the archbishop about the miraculous healing of a Panamanian woman that took place in 2012. Suffering from a severe skin disease—an affliction from which Father Solanus himself died—she visited the friar’s tomb and prayed for healing. Almost instantaneously, her disease vanished.

On May 4, Pope Francis announced the healing was authenticated as a miracle, paving the way for Father Solanus’ beatification. Though the woman has wished to remain anonymous, she will be present for the beatification Mass on Nov. 18, along with others who have received favors.

People pray during a healing service in late June at St. Bonaventure Monastery in Detroit, where dozens gather every Wednesday to pray for the intercession of Father Solanus Casey, a Capuchin Franciscan friar who will be beatified on Nov. 18. (CNS photo/Dan Meloy, The Michigan Catholic)
By John Shaughnessy

Imagine moving to a new country to live a life you have always dreamed of, yet it’s a country where you don’t know the language, the culture, or how to navigate the bureaucracy. And in the midst of this dramatic life change—a change that makes you feel excited, lost and overwhelmed at the same time—someone offers to guide you through the challenges of daily life, and the challenges of starting a new family. That’s the difference a volunteer mentor can make to a refugee or migrant arriving in the United States, says Beth Russell, supervisor of outreach and education for the Refugee and Immigrant Services program of Catholic Charities Indianapolis.

In 2016, Catholic Charities Indianapolis helped 676 refugees and migrants by offering food, clothing, housing, and job readiness classes. Refugee and Immigrant Services also worked to match the refugees and migrants with volunteer mentors.

In an interview with The Criterion, Russell talked about the refugee experience and the difference that mentors can make to them.

**Q. Talk about the refugee experience and the challenge of making a new life in a new country, who are the families, what are their expectations, and how do they get to the United States?**

Beth Russell

Refugee families are separated either by death or physical separation. Many times, the families do not know whether their loved ones are alive or whether they are being held captive in your family, home, country, culture and language, and you find yourself in a new country where everything is different. Many times, you have to overcome the language barrier. Every child with no exception has left a lasting impact on French. And it's exciting for me, too. Helping the people who are born into some very dramatic life change—a change that makes you feel excited, lost and overwhelmed at the same time—someone offers to guide you through the challenges of daily life, and the challenges of starting a new life. That’s the difference a volunteer mentor can make to a refugee or migrant arriving in the United States, says Beth Russell, supervisor of outreach and education for the Refugee and Immigrant Services program of Catholic Charities Indianapolis.

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Beth Russell “Alo” Koko, in the white jacket, poses for a photo with nine members of his family, shortly after Alo’s parents, two brothers, four of his sisters and his nephew arrived at Indianapolis International Airport on Oct. 19. Refugees of Sudan since 2001, the family members finally received clearance from the federal government to come to the United States this year. (Photo by John Shaughnessy)

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Misty Wallace and Keith Blackburn, now partners in ministering to the incarcerated, share about their journey to redemption and forgiveness after Blackburn’s attempted murder of Wallace 15 years ago. The pair spoke on Oct. 28 at the archdiocesan Corrections Ministry conference at St. Bartholomew Parish in Columbus. (Submitted photos by Katie Rutter)

The archdiocese’s Corrections Ministry sponsors two continuing education seminars on Dec. 5 and Dec. 6.CPCC www.archindy.org(CC)Fr. Ron Clouter

By Katie Rutter
Special to The Criterion
COLUMBUS—With a steady, even voice, Misty Wallace related the worst day of her life. On Oct. 18, 1992, at the age of 18, she stopped in a parking lot on the southwest side of Indianapolis to use a pay phone. Moments after hanging up, a stranger shot her in the head, took her purse and left her for dead. Wallace recounted the attack, a miraculous recovery and her struggle for emotional healing to about 100 people gathered at St. Bartholomew Parish in Columbus on Oct. 28 during an archdiocesan corrections ministry conference. “Corrections: A Ministry of Hope & Salvation.” Her audience, previously unaware of her experience, first expressed shock then sympathy.

One face in the room, however, was far from shocked and was a regent. He had heard the story dozens of times, but Keith Blackburn was still visibly moved. He was the shooter.

“What kind of monster,” he asked the crowd when Wallace finished her story, “would go into a parking lot and do what you have heard I have done?”

Both victim and shooter have undergone a long journey of conversion and forgiveness. Today, they work side by side in a ministry called Bridges to Life, an organization that brings locked-up inmates into prisons to share their stories with inmates.

“The inmates can relate because either they’ve committed that certain crime or they’re familiar with that crime,” Wallace said. She is now the Indianapolis regional coordinator for the organization.

“It’s understanding their crime, taking accountability, being responsible for the crime, then moving forward and giving back to the community in a positive way,” she said, knowing from experience that it is possible for even the hardest of hearts.

“I got to look her in the face and say, ‘Blackburn, I’m speaking to you that right there, [through] Bridges to Life that she knew that I was sincere, and her forgiveness wasn’t wasted on me.”

The conference was the first of its kind sponsored by the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. Its purpose was to inform and encourage those who want to minister to the incarcerated.

The archdiocese’s Corrections Ministry office aims to keep the people who are being ministered to, but it is difficult to get into because just by you coming in, you give them hope,” explained Weisenbach.

“I’m sorry,” “I’m sorry,” “It was a ‘profound need’ for people to help the formerly incarcerated re-enter society.

“Things are stacked against these people when they get out, and yet they really do want to be successful,” she said. “A lot of them have turned a corner, and they do have the will to make it, but they don’t necessarily have the skill to make it.”

“Things are stacked against these people when they get out, and yet they really do want to be successful,” she said. “A lot of them have turned a corner, and they do have the will to make it, but they don’t necessarily have the skill to make it.”

“We have a whole host of obstacles for returning citizens, Weisenbach noted, including large problems like lack of employment and small issues like not knowing what to do if transportation fails.

“If the bus doesn’t come and they have to make it to the parole office by 10 a.m. and they don’t make it, then they’re back in,” Weisenbach explained.

“We’re aware of that statistic rate, that is those who are returned to incarceration within three years of release, was nearly 40 percent last year according to the Department of Corrections. When former inmates are paired with mentors or assisted by re-entry organizations, however, that number can drop significantly.

“We have a God of second chances, we can really help these men and women returning to society by helping them overcome the barriers to re-entry,” said Dan Braun.

“Prison ministry is one of the easiest things we can do,” said Blackburn.

“I would encourage anyone who hears this message to join in this ministry so they know we’re here,” he said.

Presenters continually spoke about the spiritual and emotional darkness present in prisons and jails—a darkness that no could number of people experience.

According to the Indiana Department of Corrections, more than 25,000 people are currently incarcerated in the state. Records also show that more than 11,500 people were admitted into the state’s correctional facilities in 2016.

“The Church has to be missionary,” said Father Clouter. “We have to get out of our rectories and go to the jail, to go after the lost and forgotten.”

“The words of Christ that were shared with me had such an impact on my life, strengthened me,” said Tim Stevenson, one of the breakout leaders. Now a member of St. Barnabas Parish, he previously served time for a felony conviction.

“You shouldn’t turn your back on someone for being incarcerated,” he asserted.

Daylong conference evolved out of an effort by the Church in central and southern Indiana to more effectively engage in prison ministry. Although many Catholics were volunteering in jails and prisons, no formal structure existed to recruit, connect and support these missionaries.

To remedy the situation, a task force was founded last year to develop recommendations on the topic, and Weisenbach became the coordinator of a newly-formed archdiocesan Corrections Ministry office. She now serves as key coordinator, helping conference attendees connected and add to their number.

“We’ve got an incredibly powerful ministry, and I’m hopeful that we can increase the number of people who are in the ministry,” Weisenbach said. “There is no doubt that it impacts the people who are being ministered to, but equally it impacts us, the ministers.”
Carmen Rosa Hurtado, a member of St. Monica Parish in Indianapolis, proclaims the first reading in Spanish during the annual St. Martin de Porres Mass celebrated on Nov. 3.

By Mike Krokos

It’s about family. More specifically, it’s about God’s family and how its rich diversity can come together to celebrate as brothers and sisters in faith.

That was the message a joyful Nneka Jemie shared at the annual archdiocesan St. Martin de Porres Mass celebrated on Nov. 3 at St. Lawrence Church in Indianapolis.

“I am very, very excited” to be a part of this, said a smiling Jemie, a native of Nigeria, who has been a member of St. Lawrence Parish for 10 years and serves as an extraordinary minister of holy Communion at the Indianapolis North Deenary faith community.

The celebration offered a way “of defining unity, and blending everybody—black, white, [people of all] colors—because we are one family,” said Jemie, who attended the celebration with her sister Amaka Ogbuehi, who was visiting from Lagos, Nigeria. “We are God’s children, so we are one.”

An estimated 200 people attended the liturgy, which included a choir which sang hymns in English and Spanish. The prayers of the faithful were also offered in several languages.

A Dominican brother who lived from 1579 to 1639 in Lima, Peru, Martin de Porres was the son of a Spanish nobleman and a freed Panamanian slave of African descent. He grew up in poverty and struggled with the stigma of being of mixed race in a time of great prejudice. But he showed great compassion for all people, no matter their race or background.

After starting to work at age 12 as an apprentice to a barber—who also served as a surgeon in those days—he was accepted a few years later as a lay helper in the Dominican order. After nine years, the community, impressed with his prayer life, humility and love, invited him to profess vows.

In his ministry for the Dominicans, he answered the door for visitors, maintained the linen closet, cared for the medical needs of the friars, and distributed bread to hunger beggars.

Outside the monastery, St. Martin founded an orphanage, visited the sick and dying, visited criminals in prison, and cared for African slaves at the New World’s busiest port of Lima.

In his homily reflecting on the Gospel reading from Matthew (Mt 22:34-40) selected for the liturgy, Father Thomas Schliessmann noted that although the Pharisees and Sadducees attempted to trap Jesus, he used the opportunity as a teaching moment to highlight two commandments.

“Loving the Lord God—the Lord our God—is the primary activity of life and worship,” said Father Schliessmann, who is pastor of St. Lawrence and was the principal celebrant of the liturgy. A second commandment, “to love our neighbor as ourselves, is found and emphasized in the Letter to the Romans [chapter 13], Galatians [chapter five] and James [chapter two].

“In Christ’s answer to the officials, he invites everyone to enter the heart of God’s revelation. That heart is to love,” he continued.

St. Martin de Porres, he noted, offered a faith-filled example on following these two tenets.

“St. Martin lived a life at the heart of the Gospel. He loved. He loved as Christ loved,” Father Schliessmann said. “This teaches us that, first and foremost, we, too, are to love God, the priest continued.

“And it is no surprise then that if we truly love God—we will love who God loves—which is every person God has made,” Father Schliessmann said. “God has made every person in his image and likeness.”

“St. Martin loved—and loves—who God loves.”

The liturgy, which came only a few days after the Solemnity of All Saints, reminds us that we are all called to be saints, Father Schliessmann noted.

“St. Martin teaches us that being a saint is what Christ means by true power,” he said. “Power is not in making people do what we want. Holiness is embracing both: boldness and humility, intercultural diversity and unity.”

Saul Llacsa, archdiocesan coordinator of Hispanic ministry, said at the end of the Mass that St. Martin de Porres, who was canonized in 1962 by St. John XXIII and is the patron of people of mixed race and those who work for social justice, is one of his favorite saints.

He also noted that his feast day is an appropriate time to celebrate our rich, cultural diversity.

The Church welcomes us, every single day, and in every moment,” Llacsa said. “The Church welcomes everybody, every language, every race, because we are all children of God, and we are all one family.”

Members of a combined choir sing a hymn during the Nov. 3 Mass.

Report sexual misconduct now

If you are a victim of sexual misconduct by a person ministering on behalf of the Church, or if you know of anyone who has been a victim of such misconduct, please contact the archdiocesan victim assistance coordinator.

Carla Hill, Archdiocese of Indianapolis, PO. Box 1410, Indianapolis, Indiana 46206-1410

317-236-1548 or 800-382-9836, ext. 1548

chill@archindy.org

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The Archdiocese of Indianapolis has partnered with the University of Notre Dame and Catholic Distance University (CDU) to offer not-for-credit online theology classes:

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• Employees also receive reimbursement upon course completion

For more information, please log on to www.archindy.org/layministry

St. Martin de Porres Mass celebrated on Nov. 3 at St. Lawrence Church in Indianapolis. Joining him at the altar are Father Martin Rodriguez, left, Father Kenneth Taylor, Deacons Oliver Jackson and Emilio Ferrer-Soto, and Fathers Christopher Wadelton and Todd Goodson. (Photos by Mike Krokos)
Faith
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Richard John Neuhaus: From radical to liberal to neo-conservative

Two weeks ago, I wrote about the Berigan brothers and their anti-war efforts beginning this week. The week after next, I’ll tell about another firebrand in the ’60s, but he was very much different, still passionate but less radical. Richard John Neuhaus was a Lutheran minister in Brooklyn in the 1960s. He was one of the clergymen who marched with St. John and Father Luther King Jr. for civil rights. He ran for Congress as a liberal Democrat, but lost. He was a delegate to the Democratic convention, where he was arrested with Dick Gregory for leading a protest march against the Vietnam War. They all supported it. Dick Gregory was arrested and was released. Richard John Neuhaus was a Lutheran minister in Brooklyn in the 1960s. He was one of the clergymen who marched with St. John and Father Luther King Jr. for civil rights. He ran for Congress as a liberal Democrat, but lost. He was a delegate to the Democratic convention, where he was arrested with Dick Gregory for leading a protest march against the Vietnam War. They all supported it. Dick Gregory was arrested and was released. Richard John Neuhaus was a Lutheran minister in Brooklyn in the 1960s. He was one of the clergymen who marched with St. John and Father Luther King Jr. for civil rights. He ran for Congress as a liberal Democrat, but lost. He was a delegate to the Democratic convention, where he was arrested with Dick Gregory for leading a protest march against the Vietnam War. They all supported it. Dick Gregory was arrested and was released. Richard John Neuhaus was a Lutheran minister in Brooklyn in the 1960s. He was one of the clergymen who marched with St. John and Father Luther King Jr. for civil rights. He ran for Congress as a liberal Democrat, but lost. He was a delegate to the Democratic convention, where he was arrested with Dick Gregory for leading a protest march against the Vietnam War. They all supported it. Dick Gregory was arrested and was released. Richard John Neuhaus was a Lutheran minister in Brooklyn in the 1960s. He was one of the clergymen who marched with St. John and Father Luther King Jr. for civil rights. He ran for Congress as a liberal Democrat, but lost. He was a delegate to the Democratic convention, where he was arrested with Dick Gregory for leading a protest march against the Vietnam War. They all supported it. Dick Gregory was arrested and was released. Richard John Neuhaus was a Lutheran minister in Brooklyn in the 1960s. He was one of the clergymen who marched with St. John and Father Luther King Jr. for civil rights. He ran for Congress as a liberal Democrat, but lost. He was a delegate to the Democratic convention, where he was arrested with Dick Gregory for leading a protest march against the Vietnam War. They all supported it. Dick Gregory was arrested and was released. Richard John Neuhaus was a Lutheran minister in Brooklyn in the 1960s. He was one of the clergymen who marched with St. John and Father Luther King Jr. for civil rights. He ran for Congress as a liberal Democrat, but lost. He was a delegate to the Democratic convention, where he was arrested with Dick Gregory for leading a protest march against the Vietnam War. They all supported it. Dick Gregory was arrested and was released.
Daily Readings

Monday, November 20
Psalm 119:53, 61, 134, 150, 155, 158
Luke 18:35-43

Tuesday, November 21
The Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary
2 Maccabees 6:18-31
Psalm 3:2-8
Luke 19:1-10

Wednesday, November 22
St. Cecilia, virgin and martyr
2 Maccabees 7:1-20, 31
Psalm 17:1, 5-6, 8, 15
Luke 19:11-28

Thursday, November 23
St. Clement I, pope and martyr
St. Columban, abbot
Blessed Migiel Pro, priest and martyr
1 Maccabees 2:15-29
Psalm 50:1-2, 5-6, 14-15
Luke 19:41-44

Saturday, November 25
St. Catherine of Alexandria, virgin and martyr
1 Maccabees 4:36-37, 52-59
(Response) 1 Chronicles 29:10-12
Luke 19:45-48

Sunday, November 26
Our lady, Queen of Heaven, Mother of the Universe
Ezekiel 34:11-12, 15-17
Psalm 23:1-3, 5-6
1 Corinthians 15:20-26, 28
Matthew 25:31-46

Question Corner
Fr. Kenneth Doyle

Agoraphobia can lessen a person’s obligation to attend Sunday Mass

Q

Togetherness seems to have become such an integral part of Catholicism. So some people wonder at those like myself who prefer to sit at the end of the pew, shake hands about grabbing hands, shudder at the thought of being hugged or have difficulty with extemporaneous small talk. For me, being squashed in the center of a pew is agonizing, and there is no way I can focus on the Mass in that situation. I have once or two or three months, I feel compelled to go into our parish’s adoration chapel during Mass and follow the prayers and readings from there—or I find it necessary to stay at home and follow the Sunday Mass on television in my den. If I do you as missing Mass, there’s just nothing that I can do about it. Agoraphobia is no joke, and even those of us with milder forms suffer greatly. But I believe that we are also loved by God. (Virginia)

A

Your behavior does not count as missing Mass. And yes, you are surely loved by God. Agoraphobia is a real disease, affecting as many as 1.9 million U.S. adults at some level in a 12-month period. It is characterized by significant anxiety in places where crowds gather, especially in situations where one might feel trapped and unable to escape. This disease can justify one’s absence from Mass as certainly as would a high fever or a contagious cold. If it is more comfortable for you to pray in a side chapel, by all means do that. Perhaps you might want to ask your pastor to help him understand, and you might benefit from his pastoral care. Or, if sometimes you find it necessary to stay at home and pray, do that. I credit you for your desire to share in the Eucharist. (Ann Wolski)

Your letter serves, too, as a reminder to us all to forgo judging the behavior of others—those, for example, who insist on sitting at the end of a nearly vacant pew or who choose to stand in the back of the church. They could well be suffering from the same condition you have described.

Q

I have been attending one Catholic parish for several years now. As far as I know, this is the only Catholic church where parishioners do not have to give up their pews. I can understand churchgoers declining to shake hands if they have a cold or other ailment during times of widespread sickness. However, at this particular parish, the congregation will not even turn around and greet others—let alone, shake hands. It is not really a big deal for me, but I do find it a little odd. Is there an explanation for this, or are parishes simply not required to follow the practice of shaking hands? (Oregon)

A

The “General Instruction of the Roman Missal” in 892 indicates that the rite of peace should be a regular part of the liturgy in which “the faithful express to each other their ecclesial communion and mutual charity” before receiving the Eucharist. As to the actual gesture to be used, the general instruction leaves that up to national bishops’ conferences to determine in accord with local culture and customs.

For the United States, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has noted that this would typically be done by shaking hands. So while this ritual can be eliminated in particular circumstances—a flu epidemic, for example—it should not be skipped regularly. The Roman Missal does allow, though, some discretion for the celebrant to determine the appropriateness of this action in certain circumstances.

In 2014, the Vatican’s Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments reminded Catholics that a certain restraint should mark the ritual so as not to distract from receiving Communion, that the gesture of peace should be extended by the faithful only to those nearest them and that such about “the exchange of a greeting from their places” should be avoided.

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

My Journey to God

I’m Praying for You
By Ann Wolski

I’m praying for you.
I’m praying God will cure the malignant cells rampaging through your body.
I’m praying God will steady the surgeon’s healing hands.
I’m praying God will strengthen your body and soul for the battle ahead.
I’m praying God will grant you peace for whatever the outcome might be.
I’m praying God will help you through this time.
I’m praying you will come to know that you are loved and not alone.
I’m praying God will give you strength to overcome this anger and grief so that I can be the comforting friend you need me to be.

(Ann Wolski is a member of St. Matthew the Apostle Parish in Indianapolis. A general view taken on March 15, 2016, shows the furnishings from the papal hospital room at Rome’s Gemelli Polyclinic in which St. John Paul II stayed after the assassination attempt on him in 1981. The reconstructed room was part of the “Suffering has Meaning” exhibition at the Holy Father John Paul II Family Home Museum in Wadowice, Poland.) (CNS photo/Check Boden/ab XPI)

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, November 19, 2017

• Proverbs 31:10-13, 19-20, 30-31
• 1 Thessalonians 5:1-6
• Matthew 25:14-30

The Book of Proverbs provides the first reading for Mass this weekend. This book was composed when God’s chosen people had experienced vast changes as a result of the military conquest of the Holy Land and much of the Eastern Mediterranean world by Alexander the Great (356-323 B.C.). The young Greek king had a great appetite for bria.

Alexander did not live long enough to fully enjoy the successes of his victorious armies. But his conquests allowed Greek philosophy and technology to deeply influence peoples across the Middle East.

This most often introduced ideas that were contrary to traditional Jewish beliefs. Committed Jews had to struggle to keep their faith alive, and they especially struggled to relay their tradition to oncoming generations.

Proverbs was written as a part of this effort. Along with other books of the Hebrew Scriptures, Proverbs attempted to blend human logic with Jewish theology, to say that ancient Hebrew beliefs were not illogical. (In the Greek mind, human reasoning was supreme.)

The reading from Proverbs proclaims the Church in this weekend obliquely makes reference to the fact that marriages in Greek life, including women as well as men, spouses, was not expected by any means supreme.

In the meantime, even as changes occur is not known to us, but the Lord will return. This is fact. One day, at a time known to God alone, life will change for each of us individually. Our societies also will change. Jesus has promised one day to return in glory. How and when this return will occur is not known to us, but the Lord will return.

Reflection

To The Church will soon conclude its liturgical year. Its great celebration is Christmas. The Lord’s birth marks the end of a long wait.

Jesus has given each Christian skills and talents. He has revealed to them the way to live. He has sent Jesus to them as Redeemer. No one can waste time or ignore the fact of life and its uncertainty. They must live as good disciples.

After this reading, the Wochenende, the great celebration of the Church this weekend presents First Thessalonians. The story in essence also appears in Mark.

The story builds on the same theme as that given in First Thessalonians. The present order will end one day. Everyone will die. No one can predict exactly when natural death will occur.

Life can change suddenly and unexpectedly, as Americans realized after Dec. 7, 1941, when Japan bombed Pearl Harbor, or on Sept. 11, 2001, when terrorists destroyed so many lives, or more recently when hurricanes devastated so many places.

The reading from Matthew counsels Christians to remember the uncertainty of life, as well as the certainty of the end of life.

God has given each Christian skills and talents. He has revealed to them the way to live. He has sent Jesus to them as Redeemer. No one can waste time or ignore the fact of life and its uncertainty. They must live as good disciples.

I’m Praying for You

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The Vatican announced Pope Francis’ decision on Nov. 9. It marks the first major step on the path to sainthood for the pope who died in 1978 at the age of 65, shocking the world and a Church that had just mourned the death of Blessed Paul VI.

Pope Francis would have to recognize a miracle attributed to the late pope’s intercession in order for him to be beatified, the next step toward sainthood. A second miracle would be needed for canonization.

Stefania Falasca, vice postulator of the cause, said one “presumed extraordinary healing” had already been investigated by a Vatican commission and a second possibility is being studied, but the Vatican does not begin its investigations until a sainthood candidate is declared venerable.

Although his was one of the shortest papacies in history, Pope John Paul left a deep spiritual legacy, said John Paul II who fondly remembers him as “the smiling pope.”

“He smiled for only 33 days,” read the front page of the Italian newspaper, Corriere della Sera, while the Catholic Telegraph of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati reported: “Saddened Church seeking another Pope John Paul.”

The surprise of his death after just over a month in office opened a floodgate of rumors and conspiracy theories, running the gamut from murder to culpable neglect. The Vatican doctor insisted then, as the Vatican continues to insist, that Pope John Paul died of a heart attack.

His papal motto, “Humilitas” (“Humility”) not only emphasized a Christian virtue, but also reflected his down-to-earth personality and humble beginnings.

“The Lord recommended it so much: Be humble. Even if you have done great things, say: ‘We are useless servants.’ On the contrary, the tendency in all of us is rather the opposite: to show off. Lowly, Lowly: This is the Christian virtue which concerns us,” he said on Sept. 6, 1978.

Born Albino Luciani in the small Italian mountain town of Canale D’Agordo on Oct. 17, 1912, the future pope and his two brothers and one sister lived in poverty and sometimes went to bed hungry.

His father, a bricklayer by trade, would often travel to Switzerland and Germany in search of work.

During a general audience on Sept. 13, 1978, the pope told pilgrims he was sickly as a child and his mother would take him “from one doctor to another” and watch over him “whole nights.” He also said he had been hospitalized eight times and operated on four times throughout his life.

Despite his weak health and poverty, his father encouraged him to enter the minor seminary. He did so, but would return to his hometown in the summers and often was seen working in the fields in his black cassock.

He was ordained a priest in 1935 and was appointed bishop of Vittoria Veneto in December 1958 by St. John XXIII. More than 10 years later, he was named patriarch of Venice by Blessed Paul VI and was created a cardinal in 1973.

During his time as patriarch of Venice, then Cardinal Luciani was known for his dedication to the poor and the disabled. In February 1976, he called on all priests in his diocese to sell gold and silver objects for the Don Orione Day Home for people with disabilities. Leading by example, he started the fund drive by putting up for auction a pectoral cross and gold chain—given to him by St. John XXIII—that had once belonged to Pope Pius XII.

His contribution, “is a small thing compared to the use it will have. Perhaps it is worth something if it helps people understand that the real treasures of the Church are the poor.”

In addition to serving at his community’s minor seminary, Father Kenneth also ministered in the archdiocese as a chaplain from 1988-94 at Terre Haute Regional Hospital and Union Hospital, both in Terre Haute. He served as administrator of Most Precious Blood Parish in New Middleton, St. Joseph Parish in Corydon and St. Peter Parish in Harrison County from 1994-95. From 1996 until his death, Father Kenneth served as chaplain at Providence Retirement Home in New Albany.

Father Kenneth also ministered as the chaplain for the Knights of Columbus in New Albany and New Albany and a chapter of the Legion of Mary in New Albany. He is survived by his sisters Mary Rose Gaas Brown of The Villages, Fla., Joan Miller of Louisville Ky., and his brother Robert Gering of Mount Joy, Pa.

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

Autumn leaves

Benedict XVI put John Paul I on a path to sainthood, but did not make him a saint before he died of a heart attack on Sept. 24, 1978. The pope was 80 years old.

Conventional Franciscan Father Kenneth Gering served as a hospital chaplain from 1988-94 at Terre Haute Regional Hospital and Union Hospital, both in Terre Haute. He served as administrator of Most Precious Blood Parish in New Middleton, St. Joseph Parish in Corydon and St. Peter Parish in Harrison County from 1994-95. From 1996 until his death, Father Kenneth served as chaplain at Providence Retirement Home in New Albany.

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VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope Francis recognized that Pope John Paul I, who served only 33 days as pope, lived the Christian virtues in a heroic way.

The Vatican announced Pope Francis’ recognition of Pope John Paul I, who served only 33 days as pope, lived the Christian virtues in a heroic way.

Pope John Paul I, known as the smiling pope, is pictured at the Vatican in 1978. Pope Francis has advanced the cause of sainthood for Pope John Paul I with a decree recognizing his heroic virtues. (CNS photo/Denis Orlandi)
I know it’s hard to believe that it’s already time to start talking year-end tax planning, but it is.

If you’ve been thinking about legacy giving, one of the most tax-efficient ways to do it is to transfer appreciated stock. The benefits are two-fold. If you transfer the appreciated stock to charity rather than selling it and donating the cash, you avoid capital gains taxes on the stock’s appreciated value. Also, if you itemize, you can receive an income tax deduction in the tax year that you make the gift. Assume, for example, that Mary purchased stock two years ago for $15,000, and it is now worth $20,000. Mary gives a gift of this stock to the Catholic Community Foundation (CCF). She can deduct the full $20,000 value if she itemizes her taxes, plus she pays no capital gains tax on the $5,000 appreciation.

In order to be able to deduct the full fair market value of the stock in 2017, you must have owned the stock for at least one full year prior to making the gift. Secondly, the transfer must be made by Dec. 31. Gifts of stock can be made outright for a parish, school or Catholic agency. In addition, you can give your stock to an existing endowment fund within the CCF (we manage more than 400 of them) for a preferred ministry, or establish a new endowment fund in memory of a loved one. Moreover, you could use the stock to fund a charitable remainder trust. This financial vehicle allows you to receive the immediate tax benefits of your stock gift as well as provide a stream of income to you or a loved one for life or a period of years. Once the time limits are met, the trust’s balance is transferred to the ministry of your choice.

Funding your legacy giving by donating stock is an excellent way to reduce your taxes while helping further God’s kingdom. As director of the CCF, I am pleased to help you connect your resources to Catholic ministries in need.

If you’d like to learn more about how you can make year-end stock gifts, feel free to reach out to me by e-mail at elisa@archindy.org or by phone at 1-800-382-9836, ext. 1427, or 317-236-1427. For instructions on donating stock to an archdiocesan parish, school or agency, please visit www.archindy.org/plannedgiving/stock.html.

(Elisa Smith is director of the archdiocesan Catholic Community Foundation. Tax information or legal information provided here is intended as tax or legal advice and cannot be relied on to avoid statutory penalties. Always check with your legal, tax and financial advisors before implementing any gift plan.)

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Benedictine sisters of Ferdinand with ties to archdiocese celebrate jubilees

Compiled by Natalie Hoefer

Four Benedictine sisters who celebrated special anniversaries of their religious profession at Monastery Immaculate Conception in Ferdinand, Ind., in the Evansville Diocese, also have ties to the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.

At the monastery on Oct. 29, the Benedictine Sister Sylvia Gehlhausen marked the 70th anniversary of her profession of monastic vows, and the Benedictine Sisters Jan Youart, Mary Agnes Sermersheim and Corda Troy celebrated their 60th anniversaries.

Benedictine Sister Sylvia Gehlhausen entered the monastery in 1942 and made monastic profession in 1948. In the archdiocese, she served as a teacher at St. Mary-of-the-Knobs School in Floyd County, at the former St. Meinrad School in St. Meinrad, and at the former St. Bernard School in Cannelton. She currently serves as a minister of hospitality at the monastery.

Benedictine Sister Jan Youart, a native of Shelbyville, entered the monastery in 1955 and made her monastic profession in 1957. She served as a teacher at the former St. Meinrad School in St. Meinrad. She currently serves at the monastery in the ministry of prayer.

Benedictine Sister Mary Agnes Sermersheim entered the monastery in 1955 and made her monastic profession in 1957. She served as a teacher at the former St. Meinrad School in St. Meinrad. She currently serves as sacristan, works in the liturgy office and helps with health care at the monastery.

Benedictine Sister Corda Troy, a native of New Albany, entered St. Joseph Monastery in St. Marys, Pa., in 1955 and made her monastic profession in 1957. She transferred to Monastery Immaculate Conception in 1998 and served as a religious education instructor at St. Martin of Tours Parish in Siberia. She currently serves as an associate in the Evansville Diocese as a religious education teacher, and at the monastery ministering to the senior citizens in Hildesheim Health Center, offering hospitality at the sisters’ Kordes Hall retreat center, and working in supportive services.

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People should reflect on this, he said, and if they complain, “‘Oh Father, Mass is boring.’ What are you saying? ‘The Lord is boring’? ‘No, not the Mass, but the priest.’ Ah, well, may the priest be converted, but just never forget that the Lord is always there. Catholics need to learn or rediscover many of the basics about the Mass, and how the sacraments allow people to “see and touch” Christ’s body and wounds so as to be able to recognize him, just as the Apostle St. Thomas did. He said the series would include answering the following questions:

• Why make the sign of the cross at the beginning of Mass? Why is it important to teach children how to make the sign of the cross properly and what does it mean?

• What are the Mass readings for and why are they included in the Mass?

• What does it mean for people to participate in the Lord’s sacrifice and come to his table?

• What are people seeking? Is it the overflowing fount of living water for eternal life?

• Do people understand the importance of praise and thanksgiving with the Eucharist and that receiving it “makes us one body in Christ”? 

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The holidays can be difficult for those who are grieving the loss of a loved one. To honor the lives of those who have died and to help those who mourn, the Catholic Community Foundation (CCF) is offering its first “An Evening of Lights” event in the Assembly Hall of the Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center, 1400 N. Meridian St., in Indianapolis, at 6 p.m. on Dec. 7, with doors opening at 5:30 p.m.

Archbishop Charles C. Thompson will lead a prayer service, which will include Scripture, a reflection, music by the Vox Sacra schola cantorum, the blessing of a Nativity scene, and the lighting and blessing of a Christmas tree. Lighting the room will be luminaries purchased for a small donation, featuring the names of loved ones whom donors wish to memorialize.

“The holiday season is meant for joy, laughter and celebration in spending time with family,” says CCF director Elisa Smith. “But for those who are grieving someone, the holidays can bring sadness and loneliness to the surface. “It is important for those people to know that the Church is here sharing that sadness with them. We want them to know that we haven’t forgotten their loved ones, and that the holidays can be a time to celebrate their loved one’s lives as their light and legacy live on forever.”

Creating those legacies is the work of the CCF, which has a number of tribute and memorial endowments for parishes, schools and Catholic agencies established by individuals in memory of a loved one.

Luminaries for the event can be purchased in advance at www.archindy.org/CCF/eveningoflights. The minimum donation asked is $10, although more can be given. With each luminaria purchased, donors can list the name of a loved one they wish to have printed on the luminaria, which they may take home after the program. The money collected for the event will be invested in the Catholic Community Foundation to support the growth of parish, school and agency ministries.

The deadline for purchasing a luminaria is Nov. 29. All are invited to the event, even if no luminaria is purchased. Reservations are requested and may be made at www.archindy.org/CCF/eveningoflights.

Smith says the CCF staff hopes “that people find a special comfort in knowing that their loved ones are remembered by the Church in a special way during the Advent and holiday season.”

(For questions or more information, call the Catholic Community Foundation at 800-382-9836, ext. 1482, 317-236-1482, or e-mail ccf@archindy.org.)