High school seniors encouraged to live ‘on God’s terms’ and transform the world

By John Shaughnessy

In a world where many people play the lottery in the hope of having the lives they desire, Archbishop Charles C. Thompson told seniors from Catholic high schools across central and southern Indiana that they have already won that prize.

“Every one of us has won the lottery,” the archbishop told the students who packed SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis on Nov. 29 during the annual Mass for archdiocesan high school seniors. “If you don’t believe me, just read the paper or listen to the news and see all the poverty, see all the people fleeing their country because of persecution and abuse and injustice. ‘You’re getting one of the greatest educations humanity has to offer. Your conscience is being shaped along with this education.’

Yes, that gift also comes with challenges that will test them every day, the archbishop told the seniors from the Indianapolis Catholic high schools of Bishop Chatard, Brebeuf Jesuit, Cardinal Ritter, Cathedral, Father Thomas Seccina Memorial, Providence Cristo Rey and Roncalli, plus Seton Catholic in Richmond, Father Michael Shawe Memorial in Madison and Oldenburg Academy of the Immaculate Conception in Oldenburg.

“What will you do with this gift?” the archbishop asked during his homily. “What will you do with this informed conscience when you have to meet the challenges to your faith—the challenges to what you know is right and what is wrong? How will you respond?”

See MASS page 2

Church leaders emphasize need for repentance and atonement for peace between North Korea and South Korea

(CNS)—Church leaders seeking peace on the Korean Peninsula emphasized the need for “repentance and atonement” between North Korea and South Korea.

At the first-ever conference on the role of Catholics in building peace on the Korean Peninsula and more broadly in northeast Asia, clergy and laypeople from South Korea, the United States, Japan and other parts of the world also called for fewer military exercises between South Korea and the U.S.

The call came just before the U.S. and South Korea opened a massive joint military air exercise on Dec. 4. North Korea and South Korea never signed a peace treaty at the end of the Korean War in 1953, and constant tensions have existed since then.

In the past year, North Korea, which takes the position that U.S.-South Korea military exercises pose a threat, tested missiles multiple times. The most recent occurred on Nov. 28 and involved an intercontinental ballistic missile that flew higher and farther than others, raising grave concern among North Korea’s neighbors and the U.S.

More than 320 symposium participants met in Paju City, South Korea, and heard from bishops whose dioceses border North Korea or are in contested territory as well as other Church leaders. Experts on international conflict, peace and disarmament also shared presentations from Catholic perspectives.

Bishop Peter Lee Ki-heon of Uijeongbu, South Korea, located about 20 miles south of the demilitarized zone (DMZ) that divides the peninsula, told the conference that he and representatives of his diocese attended the three-day symposium with “desperate hope” for peace.

“I desperately realize it is repentance and atonement that is needed for reconciliation of the two Koreas, genuine forgiveness and peace,” he said in remarks prepared for the conference.

Bishop Lee emphasized that repentance and atonement was not simply for what both sides did to cause bloodshed between them, but also that the Catholic Church in Korea needed to repent for “what we did wrong in our ill-fated history.”

“We are the proud descendants of martyrs who sacrificed themselves for justice and truth, while we haven’t been strong enough to arbitrate [between] the two Koreas in the context of peace within the tragic history of the nation,” Bishop Lee said. “It’s time to...”
The archbishop said that after Japanese colonization of the peninsula from 1910 to 1945, the Church was concerned with being able to practice its faith freely to the exclusion of looking beyond to the civil war that divided the country.

Today, he said, the conflict between both sides had serious geopolitical implications, with the two Koreas caught between China and the U.S. as both countries jockey for world power.

He also warned of Japan’s territorial disputes with China creeping into Korean waters.

As part of the conference, participants visited the demilitarized zone, a 2.5-mile-wide, 160-mile-long stretch of neutral ground bisecting the peninsula.

“Do you have something exciting or written about a humorous or serious topic related to your faith, family or friends?

Send your story to The Criterion, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202 or by e-mail to editor Mike Krokos at mkrokos@criterionindy.org by the Dec. 12 deadline.”
JACKSON, Miss. (CNS)—A good talk with your mother every day could improve your health. At least, that’s what happened for immigrants in one Mississippi community.

A study out of the University of Alabama exploring the link between faith and health demonstrated that those with a devotion to Our Lady of Guadalupe had fewer negative health issues related to stress.

“This drives home how important faith is,” said Read-Wahidi. “In the study results, I found that people who are exposed to stress—their well-being goes down over time. Those who were Guadalupan devotees broke that pattern,” explained Rebecca Read-Wahidi, the study’s author.

She grew up in Forest, where the state’s largest concentration of Latinos works in poultry plants. They worship at St. Michael Parish or at its mission San Martin.

A community of religious sisters, Guadalupan Missionaries of the Holy Spirit, ministers to the mix of Mexicans, Guatemalans and other Latin Americans. The sisters teach English, host consul officials and offer workshops in what to do if people are stopped by police or immigration agents.

Constant worry about immigration raids can wear down an already poor population. Read-Wahidi has told stories of 2012 raids that left the homes of 40 people, sending a wave of fear through the rest of the community. Having a patroness, a person to protect and a surrogate mother helps that ease that physical and mental stress.

Mary appeared to St. Juan Diego at dawn on Dec. 9, 1531, on Tepeyac Hill, not far from what is now northern Mexico City. She appeared to Juan Diego twice more, and the last time, on Dec. 12, filled his "tilma," or cloak, with a special place in the family.

Father Tim Murphy, pastor at St. James Parish in Tupelo, calls the relationship "intimate. "They enjoy seeing other people see Mary as the perfect intercessor. They make the celebration public—it is a feast being carried out in the streets of a hometown. It is really fascinating to me because it is more than just a mother figure to her people. She is their mother to them. They can wear down an already poor population. It is very Protestant. Here is this Mexican community a chance to share her heaven, to God," said Sister Lourdes. "It is really fascinating to me because it is a feast being carried out in the streets of a hometown. It is really a contrast in Mississippi—which is very Protestant. Here is this Mexican community a chance to share her heaven, to God," said Sister Lourdes.

A study out of the University of Alabama exploring the link between faith and health demonstrated that those with a devotion to Our Lady of Guadalupe had fewer negative health issues related to stress. (CNS photo/Elsa Baughman, Mississippi Catholic)

When she returned home, she began to see the Virgin of Guadalupe in her own hometown. "It is really fascinating to me because it is a contrast in Mississippi—which is very Protestant. Here is this Mexican feast being carried out in the streets of a Mississippi town," she said.

Read-Wahidi wrote her master’s thesis about Our Lady of Guadalupe and migrant communities in Mississippi. She expanded upon her earlier thesis while studying for a doctorate in bio-cultural medical anthropology at the University of Alabama. "I liked going there because I could continue working with the same community," Read-Wahidi said. "I went from [looking at] the celebration itself into how they use it to deal with their stress, specifically immigration stress."

The sisters in Morton welcomed her, introducing her to the community and facilitating meetings. Read-Wahidi developed a survey to gauge the impact of their faith on their health.

She found that Our Lady of Guadalupe is more than just a mother figure to her people. They are her mother to the Virgin. "She listens to their worries," said Sister Lourdes Gonzalez, a member of the Guadalupan Missionaries of the Holy Spirit, who helped with the study. "It’s a way to pray. People talk to her as if she is alive and seen God. She has a special place in the family.”

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Pope, bishops teach about justice for migrants

The Catholic bishops in the U.S. realize that many Catholics don’t accept the Church’s teachings about immigration. That was discussed during the fall meeting of the bishops in Baltimore the week of Nov. 13. It happened after Bishop Joe S. Vasquez of Austin, Texas, chairman of the bishops’ Committee on Migration, said that there needs to be a “path to legalization and citizenship for the millions of our unauthorized brothers and sisters who are law-abiding, tax-paying and contributing to our society.”

When other bishops pointed out that many Catholics disagree with that approach, did the bishops back down? Definitely not. Instead, they voted to prepare and issue a statement calling for comprehensive immigration reform.

Whether those who support President Donald J. Trump’s immigration rhetoric listen to the bishops remains to be seen. But a bishop’s first duty is to teach the faith, and that’s what the bishops plan to do.

As Archbishop Thomas G. Wenski of Miami said, “We can make America great, but you don’t make America great by making America mean.”

The bishops disagreed with those who think that Catholics can support Trump’s views about immigrants. Archbishop Salvatore J. Cordileone of San Francisco said that disagreement about “a justice issue like immigration” cannot be taken lightly.

A week after the bishops’ meeting concluded, they got support from Pope Francis. On Nov. 24, the Vatican released the pope’s message for World Peace Day, which will be observed on Jan. 1, 2018. The theme of the message is “Migrants and refugees: Men and women in search of peace.”

In his message, Pope Francis points out that welcoming refugees and migrants actually benefits host countries. He said that migrants and refugees “do not arrive empty-handed. They bring their courage, skills, energy and aspirations, as well as the treasures of their own cultures; and in this way, they enrich the lives of the nations that receive them.”

This is especially true of the young adults who arrived here as children and were raised as Americans even if they didn’t have proper documentation. The U.S. bishops have in the past called for comprehensive immigration reform. That hasn’t happened since the Simpson-Mazzoli Act was passed in 1986, 31 years ago. That was accomplished through the recommendations of a bipartisan Commission on Immigration Reform chaired by Holy Cross Father Theodore Hesburgh, who was then president of the University of Notre Dame. It granted amnesty to the 3.2 million illegal immigrants then living in the United States.

A study after the passage of that law, by the way, found that the legalization of those immigrants faced crime 3.5-3 percent, primarily property crime, because of greater job opportunities for the immigrants.

—John F. Fink

Letter to the Editor

Reader offers thanks for story on organization that honors veterans for their service

I read the article in the Nov. 10 issue of The Criterion, and I just wanted to say thanks for promoting the Honor Flight Network, a nonprofit organization whose mission is to sponsor and coordinate trips for aging veterans to see the monuments built in memory of their dedication and sacrifice.

I had taken a flight with them on April 1, thanks to the local chapter of the Honor Flight Network, which is based in Plainfield.

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Mary invites us to come home to her son Jesus

“Puesto que María está íntimamente compenetrada con la historia de la salvación, en cierta forma reúne en su persona las grandes verdades de la fe y hace que estas revivan y reverberen cuando ella el objeto de la predica y veneración: ella lleva a los fieles ante la presencia de su Hijo, ante Su sacrificio y el amor del Padre; antes de saber exactamente qué era lo que ocultaba Dios en su corazón; sin ningún temor o reserva, no matter how long it’s been since we practiced our faith or grew in our relationship to the Lord. May we respond, with Mary, with an enthusiastic ‘Sí’ (‘yes’). We acknowledge that we truly are missionary disciples of the Lord. May his will be done according to his word!”

ARCHBISHOP / ARZOBISPO CHARLES C. THOMPSON

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CHRIST, THE CORNERSTONE

“Mary, because she has entered intimately into the history of salvation, invites every person who seeks God to accept her as his mother in the faith, and to entrust himself to her care. This is what the Church teaches when she says that Mary, the Mother of God, is the ‘Mother of the faithful’ (cf. Lumen Gentium, #63-65).”
**December 11-14**
Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Parish, 520 Stevens St., Indianapolis.

**The Four Last Things: Death, Judgment, Heaven, Hell**
patron mission presented by Father Paul Landwerlen, talks twice daily, 8:15 a.m. and 6:45 p.m., 7:30 a.m. and 5:15 p.m. (optional).
Information: 317-636-4478 or info@holoscho.org.

**December 12**

**Ave Maria Guild, Christmas party and pitch-in,** noon.
Information: 317-574-8898 or info@abbeycaskets.com.

**December 13**
Father Thomas Sienza Memorial High School, 5000 Nowland Ave., Indianapolis.

**Serra Club Mass for Vocations,** school Mass followed by coffee and donuts, 9:30 a.m.
Information: 317-748-1478 or info@abbeycaskets.com.

**December 15**
Knights of Columbus Hall, 3505 E. 56th St., Indianapolis.

**Our Lady of Fatima Retreat, 1347 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis.**

**December 16**
St. Michael Church, 3354 W. 30th St., Indianapolis.

**Simpang Gabi Filipino Mass and Reception,** sponsored by Filipino Ministry and archdiocesan Office of Intercultural Ministry, 5:30 p.m.
Information: 317-261-3380.

**December 17**
Catholic Business Exchange, 1306 27th St., Columbus.

**December 20**
Cathedral Basilica of the Immaculate Conception, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods.

**Mass on the Sundays of Advent** will include Lessons and Carols will be held from 4:30 p.m. on Dec. 10 and 17. Advent Vespers will be offered at 4:30 p.m. on Dec. 10 and 17.

**The Christmas Eve Festival of Lessons and Carols** will be held from 7-8 p.m. on Dec. 24 and will include Scripture readings, prayer, singing of carols and candle lighting.

**Christmas Day Mass** will be celebrated at 11 a.m. on Dec. 25. All services are open to people of all faith traditions.

**Dec. 19**
Benedictine Father Adrian Burke will lead the prayer service, which will include prayer, Scripture and music.

**Dec. 21**
Our Lady of Peace Cemetery and Mausoleum, 9001 S. 1347 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis.

**November 23**
Sisters of Providence announce Christmas prayer and service times.

The Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods have announced their Christmas prayer and liturgy times, all of which will be celebrated in the Church of the Immaculate Conception, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, in St. Mary-of-the-Woods.

**St. John’s hosting Christkindl Village Christmas Festival on Dec. 15-17**

St. John the Evangelist Parish, 126 W. Georgia Ave., Indianapolis, will host its annual Christmas Village Christmas Festival on Dec. 15-17.

The three-day holiday gathering will include booths, a live animal nativity, children and teen activities, photos with Santa, German food, beer and wine. The hours are from 5-9 p.m. on Dec. 15, 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. on Dec. 16, and 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Dec. 17.

For more information, call 317-635-2020 or visit www.stjohnindy.org/christkindl-village.html.

**December 22**
Our Lady of Peace Cemetery and Mausoleum, 9001 S. 1347 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis.

**December 23**
St. Joseph Church, 1401 S. Mckley Ave., Indianapolis.

**December 24**
SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, 1347 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis.

**Christmas Eve Liturgies,** 5 p.m. Vigil Mass, 10 p.m. Mass with Archbishop Charles C. Thompson, parking available for both Masses. From 4 p.m. midnight behind the cathedral and at the Archishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center.

**December 25**
St. Michael the Archangel Church, 200 Hill Dr., Indianapolis.

**St. Meinrad Archabbey Church, 200 Hill Dr., Indianapolis.**

**Monthly Eucharistic Taize Prayer Service,** sung prayers, meditation and readings.

7:8 p.m. Information: 317-926-7359 or myseo@marypatmcelhiney.com.

**December 26**
St. Meinrad Archabbey Church, 200 Hill Dr., Indianapolis.

**Monthly Mass,** 7 p.m. CT Mass.

**December 27**
St. Meinrad Archabbey Church, 200 Hill Dr., Indianapolis.

**St. Meinrad Archabbey Church, 200 Hill Dr., Indianapolis.**

**Monthly Mass,** 7 p.m. CT Mass.

**December 28**
St. Michael the Archangel Church, 200 Hill Dr., Indianapolis.

**Monthly Eucharistic Taize Prayer Service,** sung prayers, meditation and readings.

7:8 p.m. Information: 317-926-7359 or myseo@marypatmcelhiney.com.

**December 29**
St. Meinrad Archabbey Church, 200 Hill Dr., Indianapolis.

**Monthly Mass,** 7 p.m. CT Mass.

**St. Meinrad Archabbey Church, 200 Hill Dr., Indianapolis.**

**Monthly Mass,** 7 p.m. CT Mass.

‘Longest Night’ prayer service and Mass scheduled for those grieving during the holidays

A “Longest Night” prayer service and a Longest Night Mass of Consolation will be held in the archdiocese for those who mourn and struggle with loss during the holiday season.

Abbey Caskets, a ministry of Saint Meinrad Archabbey, will host a Service of the Longest Night at the Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guest House Chapel, 200 Hill Dr., in St. Meinrad, at 6 p.m. CT on Dec. 16. Benedictine Father Adrian Burke will lead the prayer service, which will include prayer, Scripture and music.

“Longest Night” prayer service and Mass will be celebrated at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church, 1752 Scheller Ln., in New Albany, at 7 p.m. on Dec. 20. The Mass is open to the public, and all those in attendance will be offered a keepsake.

For information about the Mass, call 317-926-7359 or e-mail tyost@olphna.org.

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

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

**Retreats and Programs**

**January 16**
Providence Spirituality & Conference Center, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods.

**Series: Women, Wine and Series:**

**January 20**
Providence Spirituality & Conference Center, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods.

**February 19**
Sisters of Providence announce Christmas prayer and service times.

The Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods have announced their Christmas prayer and liturgy times, all of which will be celebrated in the Church of the Immaculate Conception, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, in St. Mary-of-the-Woods.

**March 4**
The Christmas Eve Festival of Lessons and Carols will be held from 7-8 p.m. on Dec. 24 and will include Scripture readings, prayer, singing of carols and candle lighting.

**Christmas Day Mass** will be celebrated at 11 a.m. on Dec. 25.

All services are open to people of all faith traditions.

**Award winner**
Sister of Providence Mary Beth Klangel was awarded the 2018 Leadership and Advocacy Award by the Guerin Outreach Ministries Board of Directors on Oct. 18. A member of the Sister of Providence Province for more than 50 years, Sister Mary Beth has served as an ex-officio member of the board and as general councilor for the Sisters of Providence for six years.

**Distinguished alumna**
Diana Hoyt Kowalski, left, a graduate of the former St. Mary Academy in Indianapolis, receives a distinguished alumna award from Nancy Yavonovich during the Indianapolis All Girls High School Reunion held in Indianapolis on Nov. 5. Providence Sister Susan Dinnin (not pictured) also received an award. (Submitted photo by Mary Pat McDowell)
By John Shaughnessy

The story of Jean Zander’s and Brenda Henry’s special gift to their parish begins at a wedding that Zander attended in one of the many beautiful churches in the archdiocese.

On that wedding day at St. Joan of Arc Church in Indianapolis, someone not of the Catholic faith engaged in a conversation with Zander, making a point about how the church and its art work were so striking, drawing the person closer to God.

“It was refreshing for me to hear this different perspective from someone who is not Catholic, and I thought we don’t talk about this enough,” recalls Zander, a member of the parish, as she sits in the church. “I began to notice that visitors to the church would immediately look up when they came inside. There’s so much to see here.”

From that moment four years ago, Zander thought it would be great to create a 16-page booklet that would capture the beauty, sacred art and evangelization quality of this northside Indianapolis church.

Yet after she enlisted the help of her longtime friend Brenda Henry, the two women decided to add another dimension to their effort—using the art work of the church as a springboard for prayers and meditations designed to lead parishioners and non-parishioners to a deeper relationship with God.

That combined emphasis on prayer and photographs of the church’s art has led to a springboard that the church’s “images and works of art are meant to inspire the human heart,” he notes.

“We are truly blessed at St. Joan of Arc Church to have inherited such a beautiful structure in which to meet God in the flesh,” Father Roberts writes in the foreword to the book. “Not only do we meet God in word and sacrament, but the building itself tells the story of our Catholic faith.”

To enter the church “is as if an entire new universe opens,” Father Roberts notes. “The mundane world is left outside, and most first-time visitors immediately look upward toward heaven. This reaction is by design, to teach us that our constant habit should be to lift our hearts and minds to God.”

That same inspiration guided Zander and Henry while collaborating on Every Heart an Altar for four years.

“We just felt that in reading about sacred architecture, that it’s supposed to lead us closer to God,” Zander says. “We felt the best way to do that was through prayer and meditation.”

Henry nods and adds, “From a faith standpoint, I’m in awe of this church. I’ve felt the best way to do that was through prayer and meditation.”

The book serves as a terrific springboard for prayers and meditations designed to lead parishioners and non-parishioners to a deeper relationship with God. (Photo by John Shaughnessy)

Book’s images, art meant to inspire the human heart

St. Joan of Arc parishioners Jean Zander, left, and Brenda Henry pose for a photo outside the northside Indianapolis church known for its striking sacred art and architecture—the springboard that the church’s “images and works of art are meant to inspire the human heart.”
In Myanmar and Bangladesh, pope calls for dialogue and respect for all

Myanmar's transition to democracy has brought hope and possibilities to some, but Pope Francis said the wounds of violence in the country are still visible, and there is a long way to go for peace and reconciliation.

On Dec. 1, Pope Francis visited the Rohingya refugee camps in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, and met with refugees from Myanmar, highlighting the suffering of the Rohingya people. He called for dialogue and respect for all people, and emphasized the importance of human rights and dignity.

In Bangladesh, the pope met with religious leaders and visited a children's camp, where he spoke about the importance of education and the need to prepare young people for the future.

On Dec. 2, Pope Francis traveled to Myanmar, where he met with religious leaders and visited a children's shelter. He called for an end to violence and oppression, and urged for the protection of human rights and dignity.

The pope's visit to Myanmar and Bangladesh brings hope and encouragement to the people living in these countries, and reminds the world of the importance of peace, dialogue, and respect for all people.

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—As on every papal trip, Pope Francis’ visit to Myanmar and Bangladesh included a mix of meetings with government officials and religious leaders, and homilies in the Catholic communities.

The political implications of his Nov. 27-30 stay in Myanmar and his Nov. 30-Dec. 2 stop in Bangladesh grabbed the headlines mainly because of the situation of the Rohingya people, a Muslim minority being pushed out of Myanmar’s Rakhine state and seeking refuge in Bangladesh.

But the political and pastoral sides of his trip were intertwined, including his attention to the Rohingya and his defense of their rights.

Meeting Rohingya refugees at the end of an interreligious gathering in Dhaka, Bangladesh, on Dec. 1, Pope Francis said each human being is created in God’s image and likeness, and the presence of God is also called “Rohingya,” he said after listening to each of the 16 refugees briefly tell their stories.

“They, too, are images of the living God,” Pope Francis told Christian, Muslim, Buddhist and Hindu leaders.

“Let’s not close our hearts. Let’s not look away.

The Catholic communities in both Myanmar and Bangladesh are very small; Catholics make up slightly more than 1 percent of the population in Myanmar, and only a quarter of 1 percent of the population in Bangladesh. Yet, in both countries, the influence of the Church is disproportionately large because of the contributions of Catholic schools, hospitals and other ministries.

In Myanmar, the majority of people are Buddhist and in Bangladesh the majority is Muslim. On the return flight to Rome on Dec. 2, Pope Francis was asked about how a Catholic should balance a commitment to evangelization with the need to respect the religious convictions of others.

“Let’s not lose our hearts. Let’s not look away.

The pope was asked what he thought of recent criticism by human rights groups of Aung San Suu Kyi, the Nobel Peace Prize laureate and de facto leader of Myanmar.”

The pope said it was difficult to move forward, he said, but it also would be difficult to stay where they are.

As Myanmar continues its transition to democratic rule and tries to deal with the challenges of development and full equality for all its ethnic groups, Pope Francis told the bishops to reclaim that their voices are heard, “particularly by insisting on respect for the dignity and rights of all, especially the poorest and most vulnerable.”

Before leaving the country, Pope Francis said:

“The Catholics in both countries are a child as he meets the Rohingya refugees from Myanmar during an interreligious and ecumenical meeting for peace at the archbishop’s residence in Dhaka, Bangladesh, on Dec. 1. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)
By Katie Rutter

Special to The Criterion

ST. MEINRAD, IND.—A group of 14 priests sat around tables, sharing stories and laughing together. Some would stop mid-sentence to mentally translate from their native tongue into English. Each understood the struggle of learning an entirely new culture.

“American coffee is very different from Italian,” explained Father Daniele Marshall, director of the Institute for Priests and Presbyterates at Saint Meinrad.

“The essence of priesthood in every culture and every continent is the same, but the way we function as priests is basically different. It has to work with the systems here,” Marshall told the priests.

The topics addressed during the World Priest Workshop include the history of Christianity in the United States, the typical organization and tasks of an American parish, methods for ministering to different groups within the congregation, and common cultural norms in this country.

“There’s a cultural difference of standard of living, or the relationship between men and women or authority and the role that the priest has in the larger community,” explained Father Peter Marshall, director of the Institute for Priests and Presbyterates at Saint Meinrad.

The workshop also helps clergy to improve their communication skills. An instructor covers non-verbal cues, teaches accent reduction techniques and outlines phrasing that will be more familiar to their listeners.

“Every day, we have a long experience in America of being generous to the missions. It’s helpful for us to experience the larger Church not only as a recipient of need, but to see strong, smart pastors in our local Churches and say, ‘The Church is vibrant elsewhere.’”

— Father Peter Marshall, director of the Institute for Priests and Presbyterates at Saint Meinrad

Father Crispine Adongo, center, relates ideas for ministering in parishes in the U.S. to a group of international priests gathered for the World Priest Workshop at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad on Oct. 19. Father Adongo is a native of Kenya and serves as the associate pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Jasper, Ind., in the Evansville Diocese.

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“Today those newly-evangelized countries, particularly countries like India, they are sending missionaries all over the world.”

More than just filling a vacancy, the World Priest Workshop aims to help these men bring their own unique gifts to the Church in the U.S. For many parishioners, the presence of an international priest might be their only exposure to his unique culture.

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Father Adongo suggested that parishioners of Indiana can also help these men adjust to their new home. He recommended inviting the clergy for dinner or for a cup of coffee to help these priests learn about American culture. This would also give the parishioners an opportunity to inquire about life in the priest’s home country.

“Whether you are in India, in Africa, Japan or here in the U.S., we are one family, and we have to embrace this,” said Father Adongo. “As we share one cup, as we share one body of Christ, we need to embrace and share everything and work together in one faith community.”

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Father Peter Marshall, director of the Institute for Priests and Presbyterates at Saint Meinrad, speaks at the World Priest Workshop. The workshop aims to give foreign clergy sure footing as they begin ministry in the U.S.

Four international priests who are ministering in parishes in the U.S. listen on Oct. 19 to some of the challenges that others have faced while learning a different culture. The discussion was part of the World Priest Workshop at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad. Pictured are Fathers Chris Jesudhasan, left, Prabhakar Kalivela, Rajesh Kumar Nettam and Anthony Ram.

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Cancer deters comedian's NCYC gig, but not her faith or humor

By Natalie Hoefer

A common sight among the excited youths and siblings attending the 2019 National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) is comedian Judy McDonald and her service dog Daisy. While they were not able to make it this year, and the reason is no laughing matter.

On Sept. 29, McDonald was diagnosed with breast cancer. She underwent a mastectomy on Oct. 27. The surgery was the latest in a list of issues that might make McDonald seem like a modern-day Job: an early trauma that led to ongoing post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), a ruptured disc that resulted in back surgery three years ago, and a car accident that caused Daisy, her service dog for PTSD, to develop the disorder as well, which limits where McDonald can now travel.

But the comic, 41, is far from letting setbacks get her down. “What doesn’t kill you gives you more material,” she quips. “I’m taken care of,” she says. “I have more [possessions] than half the people in the world. I have running water and a roof, and I’m living somewhere where I can get good medical care.”

One gig she can count on in the future is NCYC 2019 in Indianapolis. “I like, many, many, many, many, many times when she told me about the breast cancer, says Christina Lamas, executive director of the National Catholic Youth Ministry, which has NCYC as one of its ministries. “I just couldn’t believe it. She’s young. It hit home. She’s a talented, full-of-life person.”

Lamas says McDonald joked that her lack of material, “This is the first time I don’t have anything booked for the next year except one [show].”

McDonald jokes that her lack of material has left her “feeling confident—confident that I don’t know how I’m going to pay my medical bills,” she says with a laugh. “Being an itinerant minister, she only gets paid when she is performing.”

But, she adds on a more serious note, “I’m confident that somehow God will make the situation work. I’ve had an outpouring of support from my family, my friends’ and her fellow itinerant ministers.”

Judy McDonald interacts with her service dog Daisy during a past National Catholic Youth Conference in Indianapolis on Nov. 25, 2013. (Photo by Natalie Hoefer)

Judy McDonald runs a mini-marathon in Vista, Calif., with a friend’s service dog on Oct. 22, just five days before undergoing a double mastectomy that prevented the comedian from performing at the National Catholic Youth Conference in Indianapolis on Nov. 16-18. (Submitted photo)

There’s just been a resounding response of, ‘I’m going to be OK.’ I’ve had that my whole life. I think it’s a deep-rooted belief that if you get hit by a car and die, you’ll be OK, or if you win the lottery, you’ll be OK. My faith in Jesus tells me that these trials and tribulations on Earth don’t matter.” —Comedian Judy McDonald

Judy McDonald interacts with her service dog Daisy during a past National Catholic Youth Conference in Indianapolis on Nov. 25, 2013. (Photo by Natalie Hoefer)

Judy McDonald runs a mini-marathon in Vista, Calif., with a friend’s service dog on Oct. 22, just five days before undergoing a double mastectomy that prevented the comedian from performing at the National Catholic Youth Conference in Indianapolis on Nov. 16-18. (Submitted photo)

“We want our cancer stories to be the ones that put her at greater risk for breast cancer.” —Lamas

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:

- Courses on the Catechism of the Catholic Church from CDU
- B & C classes for a Certificate in Lay Ministry, available online
- 25% discount for all employees, volunteers, and parishioners
- Employees also receive reimbursement upon course completion

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

www.judymcdonald.net/index.html

To see videos of McDonald’s acts, go to www.judymcdonald.org/958920

“What cancer can’t take away from me is just the love I feel from my community, which isn’t just in San Diego County, but all over the world,” she says in her Nov. 16 video. “I’m so thankful for that.”

(To contribute to a YouCaring site started for Judy McDonald by her friends to help pay for her medical bills, go to www.youcaring.com/judymcdonald-958920)

If you are a victim of sexual misconduct by a person administering 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
P.O. Box 1410, Indianapolis, Indiana 46206-1410
317-236-1548 or 800-382-9836, ext. 1548
chill@archindy.org

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Online Lay Ministry Formation

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Faith
Advent is a season of promise, prophets and penance
By Father Herbert Weber

Promises are part of our lives. As kids, we extract promises from parents and friends just as we learn to make promises. Some later turn into the promise to bring a treat. Others demand more commitment, like the promise to be there when our friends need us.

The most significant promises that I witness take place at marriage ceremonies. As the officiating minister, I ask both the man and the woman if they will repeat after me. Then they say how they promise to be faithful in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health, to love and honor all the days of their lives.

I hear these statements of promise and ask God to help them fulfill them, knowing how hard it sometimes can be. With the image of the promise between the husband and wife in mind, we can easily focus on a still more significant promise. That is the promise of God to remain faithful to his people. It is a promise that is celebrated during Advent and reflected in the Scripture readings.

Sadly, Advent is always a short period of time between Thanksgiving and Christmas. It is a season of promise and preparation that is easily overlooked. This year, the season is even shorter with only three weeks and a day left.

That last day, which is both the fourth Sunday of Advent and Christmas Eve, will be lost to many. Nonetheless, we need this season as a time to meditate on the promise, even if it means finding a way to listen to the din of other voices.

The other day, a group gathered for a banquet was getting louder and louder. The host tried to get everyone’s attention, but no one seemed to hear him.

Then someone took a spoon and tapped the side of a wine glass, producing a high pitched ringing sound. The room quieted down.

Like the tap of that glass, Advent comes to us with a cry of the prophets over the noise of our own agendas and concerns. Like Isaiah, God reminds the people of Israel that their time of service is at an end and their guilt expiated. This is followed by the promise that the glory of the Lord is to be revealed.

That promise was made millennia ago. It was fulfilled and continues to be fulfilled. It is the ultimate promise that should be the center of our attention.

Perhaps the world needs modern-day prophets like Isaiah who continue to declare hope during bleak times and can remind people that God has not forgotten them. God’s promises live on.

For many, Pope Francis has become that sign of hope. As a prophet, he stands up to people of power and offers humble service. Instead of searching for fame or acclaim, he reaches out to the poor and cries out for compassion for all people. His voice is like the tap of the wine glass that gets people’s attention.

If we look, there are other prophets among us. Earlier this fall, an Oklahoma priest was beatified as the first American martyr.

Blessed Stanley Francis Rother was living and working with the Tz’utujil people, a group of Mayan indigenous people of Guatemala, when he was killed in the middle of the night by those who opposed his preaching justice for the poor. This took place in 1981, during the 36-year Guatemalan civil war.

Each year when I take a group from my parish to Guatemala on mission, I make a promise to myself and to my parish: I want to follow the path of Father Rother’s death. It is a room in the old rectory that has been converted to a humble and unpretentious shrine. I always stop and kneel in prayer.

Moved by Father Rother’s willingness to stay with his people and lead them through turbulence, I always find myself praying for perseverance and courage in ministry. I always pray that I may have a prophetic voice when necessary.

Father Rother, like Pope Francis or any other prophet, did not merely oppose evil. He also offered hope by his willingness to preach that God would not abandon his people. So he would not abandon his people either. That is the promise that we recall during Advent.

There is one other aspect of Advent that we don’t want to forget. This holy season is also a time of preparation through repentance, especially through the sacrament of penance. Like those in the crowd who went out to John and were baptized in the Jordan River, we must admit our sinfulness.

Yet this repentance is not simply about all our failings or our lack of faith. Instead, it is a repentance through which we behold the face of God’s promise to overcome sin and to renew humanity. It is a repentance from which springs renewed hope.

Consequently, Advent becomes a time for promise, prophets and repentance. Through that combination, the world is changed now and forever. The nature of any true promise is to withstand time. It is always made in the present with the future in mind.

(Father Herbert Weber is the founding pastor of St. John XXIII Parish in Perrysburg, Ohio.)

Prepare for Christ’s coming by lowering mountains, raising valleys in your heart
By Barbara Hoshbach

I dread the shorter, colder days that coincide with Advent here in the northeast. It’s hard to enjoy a sunset at 4:30 in the afternoon. Fortunately, while the days grow darker, our parish Advent wreath grows brighter with each candle we light.

This photo illustration shows a candle being lit on an Advent wreath at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington. It is hard to face this truth because we have the reassurance of God’s love for us just as we are. We celebrate Our Savior’s coming to be with us on that first Christmas. We also have his promise that he will come again and take us to be with him forever. God kept the first promise so we can trust him to keep the second.

Meanwhile, as we prepare our hearts for Christ’s coming this Advent season, let’s remember that God is eternal. Eternity doesn’t mean an endless extension of time; it means being beyond time.

We can trust the light of God’s love to burn within us whenever life is at its darkest—whether the darkness is outside of us or within our hearts—because eternity includes right now.

(Barbara Hoshbach is a freelance writer and author of Your Faith Has Made You Well: Jesus Heals in the New Testament.)

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Today, Dec. 8, is the 33rd anniversary of the death of Jesuit Father Walter Ciszek. But his Jesuit province had already determined that he officially died in 1947, 70 years ago, because it had not heard from him since 1941.

Ciszek, born in 1904, was a tough kid growing up in Shenandoah, Penn. He later described himself as “tough, stubborn, a bully, the leader of a gang, a street fighter.” So his father was amazed when Walter announced, after he had completed eighth grade, that he wanted to be a priest.

In seminaries, he kept in top physical condition. He said that he always wanted to drive a bus or a limousine. So, too, he decided to be a Jesuit. He entered the society and was ordained in Rome in 1937. It is impossible to turn our heads away from the Soviet Union, Walter volunteered. In 1939, he entered the Society of Jesus.

In 1941, Soviet secret police officers arrested Father Ciszek. He was surprised to learn that his real name, his national origin, and the fact that he was a priest.

He was sent to the infamous Lubianka Prison in Moscow. For four years, he was held in solitary confinement in a cell measuring 6 feet by 10 feet, with nothing in it except a bed and a bucket that served as a toilet. He was allowed out of the cell for 20 minutes a day for exercise. He spent his time praying.

After his ordination, his Jesuit superior assigned him to a parish in Albertville, Poland. He was sent there to volunteer as a chance to minister in Russia.

After Germany and the Soviet Union invaded Poland in 1939, Walter and a friend got false permits that allowed them to work in the Ural Mountains. There they chopped a railroad boxcar headed for Russia.

Using the alias Vladimir Lyninski, Father Ciszek got two hand-luggage bags from a river and piling them on shore. He and his friend celebrated Mass secretly on a tree stump. Then they were discovered. Soviet police officers arrested Father Ciszek and his friend and gave them instructions at night. In 1941, Soviet secret police officers arrested Father Ciszek. He was surprised to learn that his real name, his national origin, and the fact that he was a priest.

He was sent to the notorious Lubianka Prison in Moscow. For four years, he was held in solitary confinement in a cell measuring 6 feet by 10 feet, with nothing in it except a bed and a bucket that served as a toilet. He was allowed out of the cell for 20 minutes a day for exercise. He spent his time praying.

After being given drug-laced tea, he confessed under duress to being a Vatican spy. He was sentenced to 15 years of hard labor, including 11 years in Siberian slave-labor camps. He was forced to work in inhuman conditions. He was a coal retrieving and construction worker. In those camps, though, he was also able to maintain secrecy as a priest among his fellow prisoners.

In 1963, he and another American were exchanged for a Russian couple who had been convicted of spying in the United States. It was the Cold War. The Jesuits assigned him to the John XXIII Center for Eastern Studies at Fordham University where he taught and gave retreats. He also co-wrote two books: With God in Russia, a re-telling of his life in the Soviet Union, published in 1964, and He Ledeth Me, a spiritual reflection on his experiences there published in 1973.


Twenty Something/ Christina Capuchi

The art of giving, the challenge of Advent

Opah Winfrey sings claps and captures when presented with the 569 lunch box that makes her 2017 “Favorite Things” list. “I don’t need her bells out in mock fafette. She doesn’t need to finish her sentence by naming the object of her affection. It is. She gives it, and today, in a video of the selection process for her favorite things, it comes to life. It covers 102 items, totaling $13,400 in value and ranging from a $20,000 55-inch Samsung high-definition TV down to a $10 carabob.

People spend the best years of their lives either giving or receiving. They never seem to track down missing carabobs. Oprah grans in the December issue of her magazine, O, which pictures all her favorite things.

It includes a $600 espresso maker, a $200 bird house, a $20 automated dog feeder, a $350 ring “full of blueberries.” “My new definition of everyday luxury,” Oprah writes. “a five-pound box of organic wild blueberries frozen within 24 hours of harvest from Jojoba Farm.” Oprah’s ingenuity is remarkable. Everyone talks about the clever gift idea, making transactions that require a nanosecond.

And so goes the drumbeat of commercialism: more, more, more. So, I am asked, “What can you recommend for someone not called to answer Advent’s hushed invitation for less, less, less. To clear out our closets and turn off our phones, to resist the click-and-procure in favor of the wait-and-wonder. What a challenge to live into space for the better together? How do we fill our bellies and whistles; emptying requires discernment and allows for quiet. And maybe, just maybe, we have vast resources. We have so much self-storage space, the Self Storage Association once pointed out, it is physically possible that every American could stand at the same time under the canopy of self-storage roofing.

I have been reflecting on the art of gift giving—what it can do for us, at its best, and what it negate to do at its hastest. The more you put in, the more you get out.

My neighbor recently showed me a Christmas picture book, Holly Hobbi’s charity To Puddle, Let It Snow, in which best friends—who happen to be a Russian couple who had been separated—meet. The young boy, a Russian couple who had been separated for 20 minutes, met. The young boy, a Russian couple who had been separated for 20 minutes, met. The young boy, a Russian couple who had been separated for 20 minutes, met. The young boy, a Russian couple who had been separated for 20 minutes, met.

In the “Canticle of Daniel” (Dan 3:57-88), we possess a litany of instructions at night.

In Romans 8:28, Paul addresses this harmonizing order in stating, “We know that all things work for good those who love God, who are called according to his purpose” (Rom 8:28).

One way to appreciate our gift of order and fend off craziness is to observe the virtue of “fear of the Lord,” which best friends—who happen to be a Russian couple who had been separated—meet. The young boy, a Russian couple who had been separated for 20 minutes, met. The young boy, a Russian couple who had been separated for 20 minutes, met. The young boy, a Russian couple who had been separated for 20 minutes, met. The young boy, a Russian couple who had been separated for 20 minutes, met.

The virtue “fear of the Lord” usually contains fright and terror. It is true we often fear God’s justice and possibly not God’s justice. God’s justice. But more important, fear means being in awe of God’s gift of order and its strength to discernment and allows for quiet. To know that they are not alone, so they can meet the challenges they’re facing. To know that they are not alone, so they can meet the challenges they’re facing. To know that they are not alone, so they can meet the challenges they’re facing. To know that they are not alone, so they can meet the challenges they’re facing.

We often come across individuals whose “joy quotient” is quite as high as mine at Christmas with a three-year-old child who had medicine could be over. I know a young man who was told he had cancer and that he had to undergo delicate surgery this week.

What is your “joy quotient” this Christmas season?

The virtue of temperance contains what holds it together. It is by absorbing God’s awesome order that allows us to work in the Ural Mountains. There they chopped a railroad boxcar headed for Russia.

As I absorbed God’s awesome order, that which orders our cosmic existence: God’s gift of order and its strength to discernment and allows for quiet.

It is physically possible that every American could stand at the same time under the canopy of self-storage roofing. Yes, I am reflected on the art of gift giving—what it can do for us, at its best, and what it negate to do at its hastest. The more you put in, the more you get out.

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What is your “joy quotient” this Christmas season?

The virtue of temperance contains what holds it together. It is by absorbing God’s awesome order, and its harmonizing effect. But more important, fear means being in awe of God’s gift of order and its strength to discernment and allows for quiet.

No matter with whom I converse, one word sums up their feelings about today’s world: craziness. It is a way of erratic politics, senseless shootings, discontented marchers, the absence of a moral compass, bizarre weather and other unnerving things that both shock and amaze us.

What exactly can we stop us from going crazy?

The virtue of temperance contains what holds it together.

Usually we think of it as discipline in which we better control which threats our spiritual and physical well-being. It means that God endowed us with a sense of order we need to remain balanced. Craziness happens when chaos reigne, creating turmoil.

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, December 10, 2017

- Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11
- 2 Peter 3:8-14
- Mark 1:1-8

The second part of the Book of Isaiah provides the first reading for Mass on this Second Sunday of Advent. When this book was written, God’s people were happy. Their long, dreary exile of four generations in Babylon was about to end. They were looking forward to returning to their homeland. This passage captures well the people’s joy and relief. It certainly expresses their longing to return to their homeland.

Verse also convey well the sense that this happy circumstance has occurred as a result of God’s mercy and faithfulness to the covenant. It was not as if the people had earned God’s munificence in this regard, or that they had been unusually loyal to the covenant themselves. To the contrary, their sins had brought misery upon themselves. Nevertheless, God’s mercy endured. The prophet thus insists that upon returning to their homeland, the people must go to Jerusalem to the holy mountain where stood the temple, and there proclaim aloud the goodness of God.

For its second reading this weekend, the Church presents a passage from the Second Epistle of St. Peter. Its theme differs from that of the first reading. The first reading was wonderfully optimistic. This reading is grim in its predictions of dark days and unwelcome possibilities in the future. However—and this is critical—it does not predict everlasting death. Bad things will happen. Difficult times will come, but God always will protect the faithful. In this last reassurance, the reading parallels the message of the first reading.

St. Mark’s Gospel furnishes the last reading. It is the beginning of the Gospel, as the first verse of the reading states. This opening verse states the purpose of the Gospel. It is the “Good News” about Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

In these relatively few words, the entire reality of salvation is revealed. Something new is being proclaimed, utterly different from the sadness and dreariness of human life, unbound by the variances of earthly existence. The news, furthermore, is good. Jesus, the Son of God, both conveys this Good News and brings its effectiveness into human life.

This reading quotes Isaiah’s prophecy that God will send a representative to guide the people from death to life, from the deadly effects of their sins to the bright realms of God’s forgiveness. God has been true to this pledge. He gives us Jesus. The Gospel then tells of John the Baptist, who went throughout Judea calling people to repentance. John recognized Jesus as the Son of God. Anyone can do this. Too many, however, create an unrealistic image, an invention to confirm the easy way out or excuse us from the task of genuine conversion.

Reflection

In Advent, the Church clearly, frankly and directly calls people to remember who they are as humans and to realize sin’s devastating results. Such was the message of John the Baptist.

These steps require frankness and humility. We first must admit our sin and also our human limitations. We must see what sin—total estrangement from and rejection of God—actually is. It is the cause of eternal death and often of misery in earthly existence.

The ultimate message, nevertheless, is not of doom and gloom. While we are limited and have sinned, while we may well have made quite a mess for ourselves and for others, all of this weekend’s readings remind us that God’s mercy is overwhelming and unending. So, we have reason to hope. God will forgive us. God will strengthen us.

The key to obtaining this mercy personally is in admitting our sin and repenting. God does not drag us kicking and screaming into heaven, so we must turn to God, wholeheartedly.

Open Our Hearts

By Sandy Bierly

Let us open our hearts... By Sandy Bierly (Sandy Bierly is a member of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in New Albany. Ginny Maher of SS. Peter and Paul Catholic Parish in Indianapolis knelt to touch the place reverencing the site where Christ was born in the crypt below the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, West Bank, on Feb. 12, 2015.)

Daily Readings

Monday, December 11
St. Damasus I, pope
Isaiah 55:1-10
Psalm 85:5-10
Luke 5:17-26

Tuesday, December 12
Our Lady of Guadalupe
Zechariah 2:14-17
or Revelation 11:19a: 12:1-6a, 10ab
(Response) Judith 13:18bc, 19
Luke 1:26-36
or Luke 1:29-47

Wednesday, December 13
St. Lucy, virgin and martyr
Isaiah 40:25
Psalm 103:1-4, 8, 10
Matthew 11:26-30

Thursday, December 14
St. John of the Cross, priest and doctor of the Church
Isaiah 41:13-20
Psalm 145:1, 9-13b
Matthew 11:11-15

Friday, December 15
Isaiah 48:17-19
Psalm 1:1-4, 6
Matthew 11:16-19

Saturday, December 16
Sirach 48:1-4, 9-11
Psalm 80:2-3, 15-16, 18-19
Matthew 17:9a, 10-13

Sunday, December 17
Third Sunday of Advent
Isaiah 61:1-2a, 10-11
(Response) Luke 1:46-50, 53-54
I Thessalonians 5:16-24
John 1:6-8, 19-28

Question Corner

To those who receive Communion should last for an hour before receiving it

Q I'm confused about the rules regarding fasting before receiving Communion. I've been told we are not to ingest any food or drink within one half-hour of a service. But I've also heard that water or even coffee is not included in this prohibition.

A The current rules on fasting before Holy Communion are simple and clearly expressed in the Code of Canon Law. They provide that one must abstain for one hour from all food and from the exception of water or medicine, prior to receiving the Eucharist (#919).

But that same code also states “the elderly, the infirm and those who care for them can receive the most holy Eucharist even if they have eaten something within the preceding hour.” Perhaps the fact that these rules have changed several times within my own lifetime may explain your confusion.

For centuries, Catholics were required to abstain from all food and drink (including water) from midnight of the evening before. In 1953, Pope Pius XII decided that water or medicine no longer broke the fast. Four years later, that same pontiff—anxious to make the Eucharist more easily available while still wanting to maintain proper reverence for this sacred gift—reduced the time period; no longer would you have to fast from midnight but, instead, for only three hours.

Then, in 1964, Pope Paul VI reduced it even further—to only one hour—and that is still the rule. Note that fasting is required for one hour before the actual reception of Communion, not one hour before the start of Mass. (And note, too, that coffee drinkers do not get a pass; coffee does break the fast!)

My question is as a faithful Catholic is this: Is it wrong for me to pray daily and unceasingly for death? I have lived in prison now for 25 years. I am so tired of this existence that I am seeking legal action to have my sentence changed from life in prison to the death penalty.

I have always been opposed to capital punishment, but the past few years have made me realize the unbelievable suffering that results from a life term and what a relief death would bring. Nearly every one of my fellow prisoners—even those on death row—thinks that execution is much less cruel than life without parole.

I used to believe that God had a job for me to do here in prison, a role to play but I’ve never been able to find it, and the many years in prison have hardened my heart. It is so difficult to be happy about all the time and never really talked to. Is there any help for me? Is there anybody on my side? (Missouri)

A I don’t see a problem with your praying for death. There are many accounts of saints asking to be taken into the peace of heaven and to be released from the pain of the present life. I think, though, that you should not be seeking the death penalty.

The Church has historically taught that there are limited circumstances in which the death penalty can be validly applied. However, over the past 25 years, St. John Paul II and now Pope Francis have suggested that these circumstances might be so rare as to not be practically applicable.

Indeed, Pope Francis put great emphasis on how the death penalty “heavily wounds human dignity,” is “an inhuman measure” and cuts short the possibility for conversion of those facing such punishment.

More than anything else, though, I would like to respond to your plaintive cry, “Is there any help for me?” I believe that there is help for you, even in the growing bleakness of your life that you describe.

Continue to seek out the guidance of a priest, chaplain or other counselor. But, perhaps more importantly, nurture a deeper relationship with the Lord. Join your sufferings to his and the grace that will flow from this to others will be great indeed.

You may never know in this life what effects that grace has on others. But in faith you can know that you in your own suffering are working with Christ to transform the world through his passion and death. That is a sure hope that can begin to dispel your darkness.

(Questions may be sent to Father Kenneth Doyle at askfatherdoyle@gmail.com and 30 Columbus Circle Dr., Albany, New York 12203).†
WASHINGTON (CNS)—The Archdiocese of Washington filed suit in federal court on Nov. 28 over the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority’s (WMATA) advertising guidelines and the rejection of an Advent and Christmas advertisement.

The archdiocese seeks injunctive relief after WMATA, as the agency is known, refused to allow an ad promoting the archdiocese’s annual “Find the Perfect Gift” initiative for the Advent and Christmas season. The suit was filed in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia.

The archdiocese contends WMATA’s policy that “prohibits all noncommercial advertising, including any speech that purportedly promotes a religion, religious practice, or belief, and a violation of free speech and free exercise of religion clauses of the First Amendment and a violation of the time place clause of the Fifth Amendment.”

The WMATA’s prohibition, the archdiocese contends “violates the plain and simple” free speech rights of the Archdiocese because the prohibition creates an unreasonable and disproportionate burden on the exercise of the archdiocese’s speech without any legitimate justification.”

“We believe rejection of this ad to be a clear violation of the First Amendment’s free speech and a limitation on the exercise of our faith,” said Kim Fiorentino, archdiocesan chancellor and general counsel. “We look forward to presenting our case to affirm the right of all to express such viewpoints in the public square.”

The archdiocese has in previous years advertised on WMATA’s public buses. Up until 2015, the archdiocese purchased WMATA space for ads that, according to the lawsuit, “were explicitly religious in character.”

“These advertisements included a campaign highlighting the importance of the season of Lent, another highlighting the liturgical season of Lent. This campaign, “The Light is on for you,” was remarkably successful for the archdiocese and lucrative for WMATA—with advertisements on the backs of 85 buses throughout the metropolitan area.

The advertisements rejected by WMATA highlight the archdiocese’s annual “Find the Perfect Gift” campaign, which refers viewers to the FindThePerfectGift.org website that includes Mass schedules, reflections on the meaning of Advent and Christmas, religious holiday traditions and opportunities for charitable service. The image is a silhouette of shepherds and sheep standing on a hill. “The rejected ad conveys a simple message of hope, and an invitation to participate in the Christmas season,” the lawsuit states.

Yet citing its guidelines, WMATA’s legal counsel said the ad “depicts a religious scene and thus seeks to promote religion,” said Ed McDuffey, secretary for communications for the Archdiocese of Washington.

“From a favorite Christmas story, under WMATA’s guidelines, if the ads are about packages, boxes or bags, if Christmas comes from a store . . . then it seems WMATA approves. But if Christmas means a little bit more, WMATA plays Grinch.”

Susan Timoney, secretary for pastoral ministry and social concerns for the archdiocese, noted that the rejected advertisement “was designed to be placed on Metro bus exteriors to reach the broadest audience and to invite everyone to experience the well-accepted joyful spirit of the season, or to share their many blessings with others less fortunate through service opportunities.”

She said the ads were to convey the message that “the archdiocese wishes to encourage our society to help feed, clothe, and care for our most vulnerable neighbors, and to share our blessings, and welcome all who wish to hear the good news.”

The lawsuit notes that because of WMATA’s “discriminatory and arbitrary” enforcement of its policy, “the Archdiocese has suffered and will suffer irreparable harm, including the loss of its constitutional rights.”

“WMATA’s rejection of the archdiocese’s speech amounts to a violation of the First Amendment, plain and simple,” said Paul Clement of Kirkland & Ellis LLP, who is serving as counsel to the archdiocese in the case. “We are bringing this complaint to vindicate the basic principle that the government may not allow a wide variety of speech in a forum and then turn around and deny the archdiocese access because of the religious nature of its speech.”

In a statement, Bishop Michael F. Burbidge of the neighboring Diocese of Arlington, Va., said WMATA’s decision “to suppress free speech and ban the depiction of a religious scene is saddening and troubling.”

WMATA approves the commercialization of Christmas by showing ads depicting gifts and material goods, but unfortunately the portrayal of the reason we celebrate this time of year—the birth of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ—is a guideline violation,” he added.

He called for the “egregious action” to be “reversed,” and applauded Washington Cardinal Donald W. Wuerl and the archdiocese “for courageously addressing this issue.”

“I pray that those with authority over WMATA guidelines will see reason and allow a simple, peaceful and joyful religious image to be displayed. Religious freedom must be upheld,” he said.
Priest's vocation has ‘transcended’ health challenges over 50 years

By Sean Gallagher

Father Michael O’Mara, pastor of St. Gabriel the Archangel Parish in Indianapolis, had Father Mader as his spiritual director at Saint Meinrad, describing him as “an intellectual” who was “mystical” in his approach to faith. “He always kind of left things with an open-ended question or remark,” said Father O’Mara. “One of his favorite quotes I remember him saying was, ‘Never say never except about God and one or two other things.’ Then you’d say, ‘What are the other things?’ And he would just say again, ‘Never say never except about God and one or two other things.’

“He kind of liked to push your mind around a little bit.”

Father O’Mara said that Father Mader helped him as a young college seminarian to gain confidence that God had called him to the priesthood.

Father Mader also helped him through challenging times when his grandmother was struggling with depression, and said that she couldn’t take life one day at a time, but only half an hour at a time.

“I remember him getting up out of his chair, getting a little card and writing the fraction 1/2 on the card,” Father O’Mara recalled. “He said, ‘Hang that up in your room and remember that wisdom that your grandmother taught you. Take it a half hour at a time, and don’t try to take on everything at the same time.’

At the Latin School, Father Mader taught math to high school seminarians. Msgr. Svarczkopf, who was a faculty member at the Latin School with Father Mader, said that he was interested in remaining a priest, forming priests and that priests be well grounded in theology.

Father Mader, who was unable to be interviewed for this article, spent 16 years seeking to form future priests at the Latin School of Indianapolis, the archdiocese’s high school seminary that closed in 1978, and at the former Saint Meinrad Archabbot’s residence in St. Meinrad.

He also served for nine years in parish ministry in central and southern Indiana, ministering as pastor at St. Thomas More Parish in Mooresville from 1984-88, and as associate pastor during other periods at St. Charles Borromeo Parish in Bloomington, St. Michael Parish in Cannelton, St. Paul Parish in Tell City and St. Pius V Parish in Troy.

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May Altar at St. Catherine of Siena Parish

In this 1947 photo, Msgr. James Downey poses with the outdoor May Altar at the former St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Indianapolis. Msgr. Downey was the pastor of St. Catherine Parish from 1917-1948. St. Catherine Parish merged with the former St. James Parish in Indianapolis to found the current Good Shepherd Parish in 1993.

(Would you like to comment on or share information about this photo? Contact archdiocesan archivist Julie Motyka at 800-382-9836, ext. 1538; (317) 236-1538; or by e-mail at jmotyka@archindy.org.)

From the ARCHIVES

Retirement Fund for Religious

Please give to those who have given a lifetime.

My sister was to be a nun, and I was to be a mother,” says Notre Dame Sister Mary Ann Hanson (foreground), 79, “but God had other plans.” During 61 years of religious life, she has joyfully followed those plans. Along with the senior religious shown here—and 32,000 more across the United States—Sister Mary Ann benefits from the Retirement Fund for Religious. Your gift helps provide nursing care, medications, and other necessities. Please be generous.

To donate:
Archdiocese of Indianapolis
Mission Office
1400 North Meridian Street
Indianapolis IN 46202
Make check payable to Mission Office with Religious Retirement on the memo line.

Or give at your local parish December 9–10.

www.retiredreligious.org