Pope asks forgiveness from victims of clergy sex abuse in Chile

SANITAGO, Chile (CNS)—Pope Francis, in his first formal speech in Chile, asked forgiveness from those who were sexually abused by priests.

Addressing government authorities and members of the country’s diplomatic corps on Jan. 16, the pope expressed his “pain and shame at the irreparable damage caused to children by some ministers of the Church.”

“The protests against the pope’s appointment of Bishop Juan Barros as head of the Diocese of Osorno sparked several protests—most notably at the bishop’s installation Mass—due to the bishop’s connection to Father Fernando Karadima, his former mentor. Father Karadima was sentenced to a life of prayer and penance by the Vatican after he was found guilty of sexually abusing boys.

The pope’s appointment of Bishop Barros as head of the Diocese of Osorno sparked several protests—most notably at the bishop’s installation Mass—due to the bishop’s connection to Father Fernando Karadima, his former mentor. Father Karadima was sentenced to a life of prayer and penance by the Vatican after he was found guilty of sexually abusing boys.

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Brenda Martinez, right, puts a puzzle together with her daughters, Luna, 4, and Athena, 5 months, in her Indianapolis home on Jan. 4. Brenda was brought to the U.S. from Mexico at the age of 6 and is currently protected from deportation by the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program.

‘Dreamer’ faces potential nightmare reality amid struggle for immigration reform

By Katie Rutter

Catholic News Service

Brenda Martinez’s first dream was to become an astrophysicist. As she finished seventh grade in Indianapolis, her heart was set on attending Purdue University in West Lafayette, Ind., with the help of a state scholarship program. But in one crushing blow, she learned she was “undocumented,” which made her ineligible for the financial assistance and dashed her hopes that her dream could become real.

“The pain of my heart was cut to pieces,” said Martinez.

The fate of Martinez and the other Dreamers is now being played out again in Washington as politicians try to find a solution to immigration reform. It’s a process that has also been influenced by a federal judge’s decision on Jan. 9 to issue an injunction that temporarily blocks President Donald J. Trump’s administration from phasing out protections for the undocumented Dreamers.

Now 25 and a member of St. Monica Parish in Indianapolis, Martinez fled as a 6-year-old from the bleak and dangerous border town of Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. The border town has been wracked by violence for years as rival gang battles for valuable drug trafficking routes and rule through fear.

“We were getting kidnapped, and they were getting raped and murdered and being dumped next to the border. It would be every other day, every other day,” Martinez said.

Holy hours for vocations in deaneries offer opportunity to pray for those discerning God’s call

By Sean Gallagher

Beginning later this month, the archdiocesan Vocations Office will sponsor holy hours for vocations in all 11 deaneries of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.

The first will take place at 7 p.m. on Jan. 30 at St. Paul Catholic Center, 1413 E. 17th St., in Bloomington.

Not all holy hours in each of the deaneries have been scheduled.

These one-hour periods of eucharistic adoration will include time for silent prayer, various prayers for vocations and a reflection on vocations. They are taking place for several purposes, said Andy Miller, associate director of vocations in the archdiocese.

They are a way to have Catholics across central and southern Indiana come together to pray for people discerning the vocation to which God is calling them.

This, in turn, said Miller, will hopefully encourage them to speak with such people and encourage them in their discernment.

“So often, vocations work for us has been a matter of encouraging others, to give them a voice to talk to young people,” Miller said. “So many of our older individuals in our parishes, even our...
Payday lending bill makes practice more equitable for borrowers, says ICC

By Brigid Curtis Ayer

A bill to make payday lending more equitable for borrowers is under consideration at the Indiana General Assembly this year. The Indiana Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis (ICC) and the Center for Responsible Lending (CRL) are both working to step in and help fill the gap for families in financial crisis.

Sen. Glenn Walker, D-Columbus, would cap fees and the interest collected on the loan to a maximum of 36 percent per year on payday loans. Brad Wilson, a CRL analyst, said the payday lending industry “continues to cause financial distress for families and causes families into a cycle of debt. They end up maxed out on the credit cards when payday loans are paid off, and they are at risk of losing their car or home if they can’t pay the next month’s bills.”

A customer for a payday loan is already in financial distress. A lot of the time the borrower is borrowing to pay off another debt, pay a utility bill or put food on the table, he said.

“There is a difference between interest and service fees,” said Walker. “It might be good for some to draw a bright line between the two. But I draw it at 391 percent.” Walker and others have noted the payday lending industry’s “dangerous practice of using high-pressure tactics on consumers.”

Walker added when looking at payday loans on a state-by-state basis, states that cap the rate at 36 percent cause most of the payday lender vendors to flee the marketplace. This is because payday lenders need very large rates of return to make their operations work. Walker said the financial impact of the loan on the borrower cannot necessarily be measured by the traditional stresses like a bankruptcy, losing a home, or the ability to meet other debt obligations.

“The reason is because the individuals that turn to the payday loan on a habitual level are already maxed out on the credit card,” said Walker. “They are already struggling to meet the weekly and monthly obligations that they have. And in any event it’s really nothing to file bankruptcy on.

“Where the stresses are more monetary as well as emotional and physical strain level,” said Walker. “This level of interest increases, and actually worsens the household’s financial stability. Walker and others have noted the importance of assisting these families struggling to make ends meet. In states without payday lending products available, the study concluded that rather than take a household, payday loans are more likely to create a debt burden and worsens the household’s financial stability.

“By putting a cap on payday lending we can help get help from family or friends. Some cut back expenses, and there are many churches, government agencies, non-profit and community organizations working to fill the gap. The most important thing is that they are helping get help from family or friends,” said Walker. “I am disappointed that the chance is slim for the payday lending bill to get a hearing.” Senate Bill 325 must receive a hearing before the end of January to advance.

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

Catholic Charities in Iowa archetype ends refugee resettlement program

There was the moment Ready said she will always remember when an airport arrival where a father got to meet his son for the first time because “We worked [with those who had] U.S. ties. The refugees who arrived here always had family back home,” she said. One particularly heartwarming scene

Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Dubuque is preparing to end its refugee resettlement program after 77 years in operation. The primary reason the program is closing down is because the numbers of refugees are down.

The U.S. Department of State decreased the number of refugees who can legally seek refuge in the United States from 110,000 to 45,000 annually. Also, the Department of Justice, Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration recently announced that all refugee resettlement sites across the country will be required to resettle at least 100 refugees annually to stay open.

These federal changes are happening when the need of local refugees also are being met by other groups, and as a result Catholic Charities will not be able to meet the new minimal threshold required.

“Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Dubuque has been resettling refugees from outside the United States since 1940, primarily in Cedar Rapids and Waterloo,” said Mary Ready, refugee resettlement manager at the agency, said the “ultimate reward” for her in working with the program has been “seeing families reunited.”

“We worked [with those who had] U.S. ties. The refugees who arrived here always had family back home,” she said. One particularly heartwarming scene

“Getting to witness those moments and to hear families say they finally feel at home and they’re happy to be back with their family, that’s the most memorable,” she said, adding that she hopes other groups will be able to continue this service.

Catholic Charities’ refugee resettlement program employed three full-time staff and two AmeriCorps members. There also were other staff members at the agency who didn’t work in the program directly, but their jobs will be impacted.

“Some employees will be laid off, others will be transitioned into other ministries,” Morrison told The Witness, Dubuque’s archdiocesan newspaper. Catholic Charities will continue to help newcomers to the country through the agency’s legal aid program for immigrants.

Morrison said the demand for legal services is so high that the charity is looking into hiring of another attorney.

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Fear becomes sin when it leads to hostility toward migrants, pope says

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Being afraid and concerned about the impact of migration is not a sin, Pope Francis said, but it is a sin to let those fears lead to a refusal to help people in need.

“The sin is to allow these fears to determine our responses, to limit our choices, to compromise respect and generosity, to feed hostility and rejection,” the pope said on Jan. 14, celebrating Mass for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees.

While fear is a natural human reaction, he said, “the sin is to refuse to encounter the other, the different, the neighbor, when this is in fact a privileged opportunity to encounter the Lord.”

Thousands of migrants and refugees now living in Rome, but coming from more than 60 countries, joined Pope Francis and an international group of cardinals, bishops and priests for the Mass in St. Peter’s Basilica.

Sixty of the migrants and refugees carried their homeland’s national flags into the basilica before the Mass, and hundreds wore the national dress of their countries, including many of the people who read the prayers of the faithful and brought up the gifts at the offertory during the multilingual Mass.

According to the United Nations, an estimated 258 million people are living outside their country of birth. The number includes 26 million refugees and asylum seekers, who were forced to flee their homelands because of war or persecution.

In his homily at the Mass, Pope Francis reflected on Jesus’ response to the disciples who asked him where he lived.

For people in the host countries, he said, it means welcoming newcomers, opening oneself “without prejudices to their rich diversity,” understanding their hopes, fears and vulnerabilities and recognizing their potential.

“In the true encounter with the neighbor, are we capable of recognizing Jesus Christ who is asking to be welcomed, protected, promoted and integrated?” Pope Francis asked.

“It is not easy to enter into another culture, to put oneself in the shoes of people so different from us, to understand their thoughts and their experiences,” the pope said. That is one reason why “we often refuse to encounter the other and raise barriers to defend ourselves.”

People in host countries may be afraid that newcomers “will disturb the established order [or] will ‘steal’ something they have long labored to build up,” he said. And the newcomers have their own fears “of confrontation, judgment, discrimination, failure.”

Both sets of fears, the pope said, “are legitimate, based on doubts that are fully comprehensible from a human point of view.”

Sin, he said, enters the equation only when people refuse to try to understand, to welcome and to see Jesus present in the refugee, the asylum seeker.”

For people in the host countries, he said, “the sin is to refuse to understand, to acknowledge and to welcome, to know and to acknowledge him or her.”

For the migrants and refugees, he said, that includes learning about and respecting the laws and customs of their host countries. “It even includes understanding their fears and apprehensions for the future,” he added.

People in the host countries, he said, means welcoming newcomers, opening oneself “without prejudices to their rich diversity,” understanding their hopes, fears and vulnerabilities and recognizing their potential.

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Sin, he said, enters the equation only when people refuse to try to understand, to welcome and to see Jesus present in the other, especially “the poor, the rejected, the refugee, the asylum seeker.”
Peace, justice, love: All gifts from God

What is peace? It's the absence of violence, certainly, but it's also much more. Saint Augustine called it “the tranquility of order,” which is certainly an important aspect of peace. When we’re at peace, we’re not filled with anxiety; our homes are not filled with loud arguments and discord; our neighborhoods are safe and well-ordered, not threatening or chaotic; and nations, races, and peoples live together in harmony and mutual respect without suffering the horrors of prejudice, minority or war.

But true peace is more than just good order or civility. The Second Vatican Council (“Gaudium et Spes,” No. 78) teaches that peace is the work of justice and the effect of charity. Peace is much more than the absence of war or the coexistence of nations. Peace is a gift from God, the sum total of God’s love, that helps us live fully with hearts full of charity and justice.

What is justice? Giving every human being the reverence and respect due to him or her as a child of God. Justice is structuring human affairs, and the organization of society, in accordance with God’s plan. We are just when we treat others fairly and kindly, and when we work together to protect the innocent and the vulnerable from violence or evil. We are just when all people (wealthy and poor, strong and weak) live together in mutual respect and solidarity.

What is love? The sharing of self that we learn most perfectly from God, who is Love, and who shows us that we learn most perfectly from him. All of us need to express love for others. If we do so, the world changes for the good. And whatever your resolutions for 2018, may it be a year of blessings for you and your family.

Greg Erlandson, director and editor-in-chief of Catholic News Service, can be reached at gerlandson@catholicnews.com.

Be Our Guest/Greg Erlandson

Resolutions for 2018

I think there is no holiday so we look forward to and are so happy when it’s over as Christmas. Christmas, we all know, should be about celebrating God’s great gift to us. Too often, it becomes instead an endless series of to-do lists: shopping for the perfect gift, planning perfect meals, scheduling all sorts of traditions that our families associate with the holiday.

In truth, the many to-do lists leading up to Christmas both preclude any time with family and seem to have been tailor-made to distract us from “the reason for the season.”

Now as we contemplate when to take down the tree and who will take down the lights, it is time to focus on the year ahead, which of course means another to-do list: creating New Year’s resolutions.

If you are casting about for resolutions, or you have tried many of them, I have four suggestions that may save you either anxiety, guilt or both.

Resolution No. 1: Make someone think all that Christmas shopping was worth it by writing a thank-you note. It is a lost art today, but a thank-you note can be a little gift in itself. In a world that often seems supremely ungrateful for all its blessings, thank-you notes are a tangible expression of gratitude.

A handwritten note sent via snail mail is the Platonic ideal of thank-yous, but an email thank-you is good too, even if adorned with heart expressions of gratitude.

Resolution No. 2: Work out a strategy for working out. The vast majority of us usually start the year thinking we need to exercise, diet or both. We set ambitious goals for ourselves, we fall off the treadmill early, so to speak, and then we throw in the towel and go off in search of a sugar high to cut our disappointment. It’s a vicious cycle.

When I had to put myself on an exercise regime, my guide to the workout station at my gym was a young woman who clearly had lost her faith in humanity. When I asked her how long people usually postponed before giving up on their plans, she answered with a cynical laugh: “By the middle of February.”

So my modification was to make it to March 1. Whatever you commit to, give yourself a two-month goal. You might find it easier to stay on track if you use your new habit, but you’ve outlasted those January crowds at your local gym.

Resolution No. 3: The same principle may apply to being a better Catholic. Many of us want something to add to our spiritual life: more Masses, more rosaries, more Scripture.

Again, my suggestion is pick one, and set yourself a goal: Go to a daily Mass once a week until Lent. Say one decade of the rosary every night until Lent. Just pick one thing, and see if you can get to Ash Wednesday (which is on Feb. 14 this year). If you want to extend that resolution to Easter.

Resolution No. 4: Finally, let us all resolve to add a little civility to our texts, e-mails and social media. Don’t say anything to anybody that you wouldn’t say to their face. Avoid anonymous messaging. Say a prayer for someone you want to snark bomb. Or wait 24 hours before you hit send.

Social media is becoming a nasty, bitter space. We can’t clean it all up, but we can make an effort not to add to the nastiness.

And whatever your resolutions for 2018, may it be a year of blessings for you and your family.

Greg Erlandson, director and editor-in-chief of Catholic News Service, can be reached at gerlandson@catholicnews.com.

Be Our Guest/Richard Doefinger

Loving our children well

On the last day of 2017, the feast of the Holy Family, Pope Francis pointed to war, conflict, genocide, ethnic cleansing, poverty, lack of opportunity, and environmental degradation as reasons that families and individuals become refugees and migrants.

Peace will happen when we learn to welcome others, especially the vulnerable. When that day comes, nations will unite in a world order that respects the fundamental human rights and authentic cultural diversity of nations and peoples. Neighbors will help and respect one another. Families will live together joyfully. And each woman and man on Earth will be calm, untroubled and at peace.

When that day comes, Christ will come again, and his peace will be established throughout all of creation.

In the meantime, as we begin this new year, let’s continue our search for peace by reconnecting ourselves to the work of justice and by loving God and our neighbor unselfishly as Christ loves us.

—Daniel Conway

Isaac as the guarantee of his personal legal rights. The parents could have seen their child as a personal possession, an extension of their own goals and plans. These parents could have heard their child’s cries as a public embarrassment or as a threat to their social standing and personal autonomy.

These parents might have been shocked out of that thinking. Instead, they “let go and let God,” raising and educating their child but trusting God for the final outcome.

Today our competitive society encourages a different view. We may see our sons and daughters as opportunities to extend our own legacy, even if it means that our aspirations could not live up to us. Severe disappointment sets in when, as they grow, children fall short of our expectations or simply develop their own ideas on how to live.

The very idea of self-love does not occur to us as children’s unique persons developing their own ideas. As they grow, children become objects of our love and not subjects to “quality control.” Some parents hope to replicate themselves (or other admired persons) through their children.

In vitro fertilization treats nascent offspring as objects in the laboratory, subject to “quality control.” Some parents hope to replicate themselves (or other admired persons) through their children.

In “surrogate motherhood” contracts, couples hire a woman to bear and then surrender the child to them, often without the mother herself having any say in the final outcome. The mother herself is not allowed to challenge the contract. She has no say in the final outcome. The mother herself is not allowed to challenge the contract. She has no say in the final outcome.

In a recent case in Texas, after the
Human life should be respected, protected in all circumstances

“Cada cual es responsable de su vida delante de Dios que la ha dado. El siga tuviese su soberano Dueño. Nosotros estamos obligados a recibirla con gratitud y a conservarla para su honor y para la salvación de nuestras almas. Somos administradores y no propietarios de la vida que Dios nos ha confiado. No disponemos de ella” (Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica, #2281).

El próximo lunes 22 de enero es la Jornada de Oración para la Protección Legal de los Bebés No Nacidos. Se trata de un día importante en el que recordamos a los millones de víctimas de las leyes y prácticas inmorales e injustas con respecto al aborto en nuestro país.

Nuestra Iglesia se opone vehemente al aborto porque creemos que desde el primer momento de la concepción se debe reconocer el derecho inviolable a la vida que poseemos todos los seres humanos. Ninguna ley ni política social puede sustituir este derecho civil fundamental otorgado por Dios. La Iglesia también nos compromete a respetar y defender la dignidad de todos los seres humanos, seres que tienen la responsabilidad moral de mostrar compasión, comprensión y un amor amoroso a nuestros hermanos que sufran tanto dolor emocional y psicosis que son capaces de considerar seriamente la posibilidad de tomar una vida humana, ya sea la suya propia, la de un niño que no ha nacido o la de un ser querido que agoniza.

No podemos imaginar la presión tan intensa a la que estamos sometidos quienes contemplan el abanio, la eutanasia o el suicidio. Por encima de todo, lo que necesitamos es el amor incondicional y la misericordia que nuestro Señor Jesucristo ofrece a aquellos que sufren de cualquier forma. Necesitamos un amor, un amor desesperadamente, para romper las barreras de la culpabilidad y la vergüenza que rodean a nuestros hermanos que han perdido la esperanza y que buscan una salida a las crisis que agobian sus vidas.

El compromiso absoluto de nuestra Iglesia con la dignidad de la vida no se traduce en un trato prepotente contra los hombres y mujeres que sufren. Al contrario, es un llamado para el resto de nosotros—cónyuges, familiares y amigos, vecinos y parroquianos, todas las personas de buena voluntad—para que nos acerquemos a quienes sufren y les ofrezcamos palabras de aliento y una mano amiga siempre que sea posible.

Para poder ser símbolos del amor incondicional y la misericordia de Dios, tenemos la convicción de que “la vida humana ha de ser tenida como sagrada, porque desde su inicio es fruto de la acción creadora de Dios y permanece siempre en una especial relación con el Creador, su único fin.”

Puesto que sabemos cuánto nos ama Dios, afirmamos que: “Sólo Dios es Señor de la vida desde su comienzo hasta su término; nadie, en ninguna circunstancia, puede atribuirse el derecho de matar de modo directo a un ser humano inocente” (Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica, #2258).

Autodeterminación, la vida a la que albergamos el derecho de elegir con el que eligen nuestros seres queridos que sufren de cualquier forma. Necesitamos un amor, un amor desesperadamente, para romper las barreras de la culpabilidad y la vergüenza que rodean a nuestros hermanos que han perdido la esperanza y que buscan una salida a las crisis que agobian sus vidas.

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Archdiocesan Black Catholic Ministry to host young adult event on Feb. 5

The Black Catholic Ministry of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis of Intercultural Ministry is sponsoring a young adult gathering at the Indiana Pastoral Institute at 2100 E. 56th St., Indianapolis, on Feb. 13. The event is free. Registration is required. For information and reservations, contact Pearlette Springer at 317-236-8243 or contact Pearlette at pspringer@archindy.org.

Mission 27 Resale offers weekly sales discount and vital projects

Mission 27 Resale, 132 Leota St., in Indianapolis, offers two-weekly sales of clothing, household items, furniture, toys and more on Tuesday and Friday afternoons. The sale is free. For information on the shop, call 317-825-4642, ext. 1.

Mission 27 Resale

Money raised by Mission 27 Resale helps support vital projects in the Indianapolis community and its changing Lives Forever program, which teaches people how to lift themselves out of poverty. For more information on the shop, call 317-825-8260 or go to www.mission27resale.com.

Mission 27 Resale

The Mission 27 Resale offers a private retreat for 2018 on one of three retreat centers in the archdiocese. A private retreat allows one to reconnect with God for a day or several days with a personally chosen focus, and without the distractions of daily life. Three retreat centers in central and southern Indiana offer such opportunities:

Our Lady of Grace Monastery, 1401 S. Boulevard, Indianapolis. First Saturday Marian Ministry Series: Young Musicians Concert Series: Young Musicians Concert, Feb. 3, free admission. For more information, call 317-326-1474 or pspringer@archindy.org.

Our Lady of Peace Cemetery, 9001 E. St. Nicholas Dr., Indianapolis. First Friday Charismatic Renewal Prayer and Mass, and praise and worship, 7 p.m. March 30, 7 p.m. Information and registration: sandra.hartlieb@archindy.org.

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish, 607 W. Main St., Indianapolis. Second Sunday of Lent, 7 p.m. $25. Information and registration: 317-567-7238, nmyers@archindy.org.

St. Vincent de Paul, 9001 E. St. Nicholas Dr., Indianapolis. March 20, 5 p.m. Three to five days. Information: 317-748-1478 or mcguhanl@archindy.org.

Plan a private retreat for 2018 at one of three retreat centers in the archdiocese

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., in Indianapolis, offers various silent, self-guided retreats throughout the year. Silent retreat days are available on Jan. 26, Feb. 14, April 18, May 4, June 25, July 24, Aug. 14, Sept. 25, Oct. 19 and Nov. 26, during Holy Week on March 26, 27 and 28, and during Advent from Dec. 18, 19, 20 and 21. The cost is $35, which includes a continental breakfast, lunch and dinner. Overnight stay is available for an additional $28, with dinner available only. For more information or to register, call 317-788-7581 or go to www.archindy.org/events.

Mission 27 Resale

While Father William Blakez will be the provider of the second-hand resell shop operated by the Society of St. Vincent de Paul in Indianapolis, a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping those experiencing poverty and disadvantage, the shop’s name honors the mission of St. Vincent de Paul, who used to say: “Seven items. For sale include clothing, household items, furniture, toys and books. Every Tuesday, senior citizens receive 30 percent off clothing.

Mother of the Redemer Retreat Center to offer Ignatian spirituality

The Mother of the Redeemer Retreat Center will offer Ignatian spirituality for prospective families, donate to or receive help from the Indianapolis Society of St. Vincent de Paul. To go to www.vdpindy.org or call 317-924-5769.

Mission 27 Resale

Mission 27 Resale offers weekly sales discount and vital projects

Mission 27 Resale, 132 Leota St., at 132 Leota St., in Indianapolis, offers two-weekly sales of clothing, food pantries and its Changing Lives Forever program, which teaches people how to lift themselves out of poverty. For more information on the shop, call 317-825-8260 or go to www.mission27resale.com.

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It’s no surprise that Pope Francis is against the death penalty. Recent pope have taken a strong stand against the practice. Pope St. John Paul II clarified the Church’s teaching in his pro-life encyclical, “Evangelium Vitae” (“The Gospel of Life”), and amended the Catechism of the Catholic Church to say that the death penalty is only permissible under very strict, and rare, circumstances.

But Pope Francis has made clear that the Church teaching on the death penalty should be reconsidered. In his “Apostolic Exhortation on the Conversion of hearts in the Celebration of the Eucharist” in 2016, Pope Francis wrote that the “abolition of the death penalty is a value to be promoted.”

As a retiree, Pope Francis has had the opportunity to reflect on the matter, and he has dedicated some of his recent public statements to the question of capital punishment.

In his 2018 Christmas address, Pope Francis said, “The Gospel of Life,” the latest encyclical letter by Pope Francis, is a “calming reminder” that the Church’s teaching on the death penalty is a “value to be promoted.”

“Pope Francis encourages us to think about the death penalty and its effects on the human person,” said Father Samuel Alito, a priest in New York City.

“Pope Francis has spoken out against the death penalty many times in the past, and his recent statements reflect his continued concern about the issue,” said Father Alito.

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“A papa Francisco afirma que la pena de muerte es contraria al Evangelio”

El papa Francisco reconoce que esta es “una cuestión que amplía la noción de las enseñanzas de la Iglesia. Antiguamente se permitía la pena capital porque se la consideraba desde la misma perspectiva de la propia defensa. En ausencia de una oposición, una persona puede justificadamente tomar la vida de aquel que representa una amenaza inmediata para la propia vida o para la de otra persona. Matar en defensa propia es un acto permitido en circunstancias extremas en la que existe un peligro para la vida, precisamente porque este acto respete la dignidad humana y protege al aquel contra un grave daño”. Sin embargo, la defensa de la pena capital es mucho menos sólida. Muy rara vez, una sociedad tendría que recurrir a la pena de muerte para proteger a sus ciudadanos contra un peligro inminente. Cuando una persona que comete delitos crímenes y que constituye una amenaza para la comunidad se encuentra detenida, siempre existen opciones en cuanto a prisión y, tal vez, rehabilitación. Ciertamente la prisión de por vida representa una carga costosa para la sociedad, pero la vida humana es sagrada e inamovible. Es imposible ponerle precio a un ser humano, aunque esa persona haya cometido los crímenes más abominables. El papa Francisco considera que esta novedad en las enseñanzas de la Iglesia no contradice ni cambia las convicciones que han tenido siempre los cristianos. La fe cristiana siempre ha insistido en cuanto a la dignidad de la vida humana desde el momento de la concepción hasta la muerte natural. Como seguidores de Jesucristo, tenemos la obligación de defender el carácter sagrado de la vida humana siempre y dondequiera que esta sea amenazada. “Por lo tanto, afirma el papa—es necesario reiterar que, por muy grave que sea el delito cometido, la pena de muerte es inadmisible porque atenta contra la inviolabilidad y la dignidad de la persona.”

“La pena de muerte debe ser vista como una medida de último recurso, que sólo puede ser aplicada cuando no haya otras opciones disponibles. Sin embargo, la pena de muerte debe ser considerada con sumo cuidado y bajo condiciones muy estrictas. En varias ocasiones, el papa ha expresado su preocupación por el uso de la pena de muerte y ha instado a los gobiernos a considerar otras opciones menos brutales.”

El papa Francisco ha expresado su preocupación por la pena de muerte en varias ocasiones. En una carta al presidente de los Estados Unidos, Barack Obama, el papa expresó su deseo de que se reconsiderara la aplicación de la pena de muerte en todo el país. En otra ocasión, en un conocido discurso en 2013, el papa expresó su preocupación por el uso de la pena de muerte en todo el mundo.

“La pena de muerte es una práctica que debe ser abolido en todo el mundo, y se debe asegurar que los procedimientos de ejecución sean justos y humanos,” afirmó el papa.

“La pena de muerte debe ser vista como una medida de último recurso, que sólo puede ser aplicada cuando no haya otras opciones disponibles. Sin embargo, la pena de muerte debe ser considerada con sumo cuidado y bajo condiciones muy estrictas. En varias ocasiones, el papa ha expresado su preocupación por el uso de la pena de muerte y ha instado a los gobiernos a considerar otras opciones menos brutales.”
Director is hopeful, realistic about immigration reform efforts

By John Shaughnessy

Tim Winn has watched closely as politicians in Washington have begun the new year seeking to find a solution to immigration reform in the United States.

“It’s unfortunate that there are some stipulations that both sides are trying to include in it because ultimately that hurts the thousands of people who would benefit from some sort of policy change,” says Winn, the director of immigration legal services of Catholic Charities Indianapolis. “But I’m glad that there is some momentum.

“It does feel like with the new year there was a new shift in importance for some sort of immigration reform. So I’m happy about the momentum being picked up.”

Winn has also kept that balance of hope and reality as he has followed the news surrounding a federal judge’s decision on Jan. 9 to temporarily block President Donald J. Trump’s attempted rescission from phasing out protections for undocumented “Dreamers”—the name given to the nearly 800,000 young people under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, the program that covers children who were brought to the U.S. illegally.

It’s nice to think that people whose DACA has expired can possibly renew it while they’re sorting this all out. So maybe they can continue to keep their status,” Winn says.

“There is some concern it will affect [the politicians in Washington] from wanting to do any major overhaul or make any actual policy change—that it will just kind of delay everything. So there’s that concern. But obviously for the clients who are really just caring about the day to day—going to school and working—I think it could be good.”

Winn’s ultimate hope for immigration reform is a policy that will lead to a win-win for immigrants and the country.

“I would like to see a major overhaul of immigration law that puts people first, that recognizes the efforts and benefits of immigrants in this country, and recognizes the history of immigrants in this country,” he says.

“One of his major concerns is that immigration reform just doesn’t “focus on those immigrants who are going to bring economic change.”

“From what we’ve seen, there’s an effort towards allowing the high-skilled immigrants in, which is great,” he says. “But we also have to recognize that there are a lot of other folks who can bring a lot of benefit to the country, but who might not necessarily have those high skills. So I think we need an overhaul to immigration reform that is humanitarian in nature, that creates new lines for getting some pathway [to citizenship], and that those lines aren’t 20 years long.”

That humanitarian approach has been the hallmark of the archdiocese’s Refugee and Immigrant Services program that has helped 20,000 people during the past 40 years.

In 2016, Catholic Charities Indianapolis helped about 600 refugees and migrants by offering food, clothing, housing and job readiness classes. The archdiocese’s Refugee and Immigrant Services program also matches migrants and refugees with volunteer mentors.

The assistance continues to extend to the “Dreamers” and their families.

In his work, Winn has seen where the power of a dream can lead.

“I’ve had a number of clients who I have seen since the beginning of DACA, which was in 2012. So for six years, we’ve been doing the renewals. And I’ve had multiple clients come back to me asking for a letter of recommendation because they’re buying houses.

“I get the benefit of looking into their case and their story, and there are a few people who you really just see making huge strides—going back to school, having great jobs, making good money and then taking off with buying houses and stuff like that.”

(For more information about immigration efforts in Indiana, visit www.archindy.org/immigration)
POPE continued from page 1

“Think with your head, don’t let yourself be led by all the lefies who are the ones that started all of this,” the pope said. “Yes, Osorno is suffering, but for being foolish because it doesn’t open its heart to what God says and allows itself to be led by all this silliness that all those people say.”

Survivors of abuse and their supporters planned a conference and protests around the pope’s arrival.

But Pope Francis made his way to La Moneda, the presidential palace, and was welcomed by Chilean President Michelle Bachelet. Thousands were gathered in the square outside the palace, chanting “Francisco, amigo, Chile esta contigo” (“Francis, friend, Chile is with you”).

Despite the jovial atmosphere outside La Moneda, there were serious signs of protest in Santiago.

Chilean media reported vandalism at Divine Providence Parish, not far from O’Higgins Park, where the pope was to celebrate Mass later in the morning. Vandalism spray painted the words “complice” (“accomplice”) and “papa ore” (“burn, pope”) on the facade of the church below a banner welcoming Pope Francis.

Three days earlier, several Chilean churches were firebombed and police found other, unexploded devices at two other churches in Santiago. Some of the pamphlets included the phrase, “The next bombs will be in your cassock,” and spoke of the cause of the Mapuche indigenous group.

“How are you? Were you able to...
The title of the conference is taken from the sixth chapter of St. Paul’s Letter to the Ephesians, which calls on the faithful to “put on the armor of God” (Eph 6:11) in their spiritual battle against evil.

In addition to the speakers, the conference will include the celebration of the Mass, the opportunity to participate in the sacrament of penance, adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and Benediction.

Archbishop Charles C. Thompson is scheduled to be the principal celebrant of the Mass.

Registration for the conference will begin at 7 a.m. Lunch will be provided for conference participants.

The speakers will participate in a question-and-answer session in addition to giving their own presentations.

Last year’s conference drew more than 800 participants from across Indiana, Ohio and Kentucky.

Duane Meyer, a conference organizer and member of All Saints Parish and St. Lawrence Parish in Lawrenceburg, said he hopes that “the conference can bring men into a deeper relationship with Christ, help men grow, and have healthy engaging talks about their faith with other men and their family, and inspire them to be better husbands and fathers.”

Advance registration for the conference is $45 per person, $50 on the day of the conference, and $15 per person for high school and college students. Clergy and religious may attend free of charge, but must register online.

Members of the Knights of Columbus can register online for $35, using the promotional code “kofc35.”

(Correction: For more information or to register online, go to e6catholicmensconference.com or call 812-576-4302.)

Fr. Jonathan Meyer
Fr. Larry Richards

Chaplain Mila Dunay

Robert (Bob) and Mary Dunay,

Director of Finance

Mr. David L. Truitt

Executive Director

Msgr. Charles E. Pope

Director of Catholic Bioshops United (TPS) and include Haiti, El Salvador and some African nations that, one by one, have seen the protection evaporate since Trump took office. Trump questioned why the U.S. would accept more immigrants from Haiti and ["expletive] countries.”

Those countries the president disparaged are not only in Latin America’s [sic] but what people emigrate from them,” said Miami Archbishop Thomas Wenski on Jan. 8, in a statement. "As Emma Lazarus’ poem on the Statue of Liberty suggests, they become the ‘best and the brightest’ of the immigrants to this country.”

The Archdiocese of Miami, which he leads, is the spiritual home to one of the largest populations of Haitian Catholics in the country.

Archbishop Wenski also said via Twitter that while the president had on Jan. 9 suggested he would sign Congress brought about an immigration reform, his remarks instead “laid bare the true motivations of those who want to close our nation’s doors.”

A Jan. 12 statement issued by James Rogers, chief communications officer for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), said the reported “disparaging” remarks “have aroused great concern.”

As “our brothers and sisters in these countries are primarily people of color, these alleged remarks are especially disturbing,” the statement said.

In Maryland, Jeanne Atkinson, executive director of the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, said, the hateful disrespect [the president] expressed only confirms the bigotry that underlies immigration administration’s inhumane policies—canceling Temporary Protected Status for Haiti, El Salvador, Sudan, Nicaragua, ending DACA, barring people from majority-Muslim countries.

And it was “especially appalling” that the president “graphically enunciated the contempt he feels for people in struggling nations” during a week when the Catholic Church in the U.S. was marking National Migration Week, Atkinson said. The U.S. Catholic bishops instituted National Migration Week—observed this year on Jan. 7-14—to reflect on the circumstances confronting migrant, refugee and human trafficking victims.

“We call on the president to apologize to people of all the nations who have been belittled and to the American people,” Atkinson said. “We ask members of Congress and other leaders to denounce these slurs. They do not reflect who we are as Americans.”

The Sisters of Mercy of the Americas in a statement said they found it appalling that Trump would use “vulgar and offensive” language to describe the countries, which include places where the women religious serve.

We find the sentiment behind the comments even more troubling and agree with the spokesperson for the United Nations Human Rights Commission, who in a statement noted that the language is consistent with the racist decision making and attitude that has been expressed by the administration over the past year,” the Mercy Sisters said referring to comments from Rupert Colville, U.N. human rights spokesman. “These are shocking and shameful comments from the president of the United States. There is no other word one can use but ‘racist.’”

Colville said to press members in Geneva, adding that vulgarity wasn’t the offensive in what the president said.

It’s about opening the door to humanity, about dismantling and encouraging racism and xenophobia that will potentially disrupt and destroy lives of many people,” he said.

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In his statement, the USCCB’s Rogers called on the president to apologize to people of all the nations who have been belittled and encouraged rac...
The sacrament of confirmation is perhaps the most mysterious of all the sacraments. Many Christians find it difficult to understand what benefit it brings. Isn’t the Holy Spirit received at baptism?

Baptism makes us “a member of Christ and a temple of the Holy Spirit” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, #1279). Then why do we need to receive the Holy Spirit again in confirmation?

And, isn’t baptism “valid and efficacious” without confirmation? Yes (#1306). Then why do we say “confirmation is necessary for the Holy Spirit again in confirmation?” (#1289)? Then why do we need to receive the Holy Spirit once more in confirmation?

The Holy Spirit was poured out upon the Apostles to strengthen them for their apostolic mission. Confirmation “perpetuates the grace of Pentecost in the Church” (#1290). The sacrament thus has a unique connection to the Apostles, and indeed the original root of confirmation consisted of the Apostles’ laying on of hands of the newly baptized, to strengthen them for their mission with the same special outpouring of the Spirit that they received.

In baptism, the action of the Holy Spirit configures us to the passion, death and resurrection of Christ, bringing about our death to sin and our rebirth in the love and life of Christ. We have a new identity as children of God.

In confirmation, the action of the Holy Spirit is to strengthen us in our new identity, imparting an “apostolic” character. It associates us more fully with the apostolate and the active mission of the Church.

It is baptismal grace itself that in a profound as that of David, youngest son of Jesse, by the anointing in the Bible was a special sign of being chosen by God

Anointing in the Bible was a special sign of being chosen by God

By John C. Cavadini

In the Catholic tradition, to be confirmed is to be chosen—chosen by God to be a sign of his presence in the world.

“Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit,” declares the minister of the sacrament (ordinarily a bishop, but sometimes, a priest) as he traces the sign of the cross—a sign of consecration—with the sacred chrism oil while blessing it on March 22, 2016, during the installation of Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin as the new archbishop of the Archdiocese of Newark.

Bishop David L. Ricken of Green Bay, Wis., uses sacred chrism oil to trace a cross on the forehead of Alma Karina Ruiz, 16, during the sacrament of confirmation at St. Joseph Church in Wautoma, Wis., on Aug. 26, 2017. In confirmation, the action of the Holy Spirit is to strengthen us in our new identity, imparting an “apostolic” character. It associates us more fully with the apostolate, or the active mission of the Church. (CNS photo/L确定ars, The Compass)

By Mike Nelson

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“Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit,” declares the minister of the sacrament (ordinarily a bishop, but sometimes, a priest) as he traces the sign of the cross—a sign of consecration—with the sacred chrism oil—representing health and strength—on the recipient’s forehead.

With this action, the newly confirmed “shares more completely in the mission of Jesus Christ and the fullness of the Holy Spirit with which he is filled,” so that his life may emulate “the aroma of Christ,” reads the Catechism of the Catholic Church (#1294).

Scripturally, we find numerous instances where God’s choice of a person has been expressed through being anointed with holy oil. In the Book of Exodus, God instructs Moses in the consecration of priests, in this case Moses’ brother Aaron: “Take the anointing oil and pour it upon his head, and anoint him” (Ex 29:7).

Perhaps no anointing in the Old Testament is more profound than that of David, youngest son of Jesse, by the prophet Samuel.

“The Lord said: ‘There—anoint him, for this is the one!’ Then Samuel, with the horn of oil in hand, anointed him in the midst of his brothers, and from that day on, the spirit of the Lord rushed upon David” (1 Sm 16:12-13).

The expression of grace in the anointing was very profound. In Jewish law, anointing was associated with dressing in holy attire, symbolizing a person’s being set apart for God’s service.

The latter led up to David’s older brothers before instructing Samuel to anoint David suggests that anointing is not administered according to worldly standards, but only to those God chooses to do his work. “You love justice and hate wrongdoing,” declares the Book of Psalms, “Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness above your fellow kings” (Ps 45:8).

Jesus himself makes known the power and purpose of anointing in one of his first public actions, the teaching and proclamation of Scripture in the synagogues, for which he was well-received—at least, initially.

Then, in his hometown of Nazareth, he quotes Isaiah—“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor”—and adds, “Today this Scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing” (Lk 4:18, 21). The ensuing uproar causes those assembled to drive him out of the town—a lesson to Jesus’ followers of the risks awaiting the anointed ones who seek to do God’s will.

Paul, for one, took that lesson to heart, fearlessly proclaiming the Good News despite enduring persecution and punishment throughout his ministry. “The one who gives us security with you in Christ and whom anointed us is God,” Paul tells the people of Corinth. “He has also put his seal upon us and given the Spirit in our hearts as a first installment” (2 Cor 1:21-22).

And the catechism echoes that promise: “This seal of the Holy Spirit marks our total belonging to Christ, a guarantee of our enrollment in his kingdom, anointed with the promise of divine protection in the great eschatological trial” (#1296).

(Catholic journalist Mike Nelson writes from Southern California.)
Willa Cather's portrayal of Archbishop Lamy of Santa Fe

After writing last week’s column about Sister Blanche of Santa Fe’s exploits in the Old West, I decided to stay with adventures of the Old West. I bought from Amazon and downloaded the Kindle edition of Willa Cather’s book “Death Comes to the Archbishop” (it cost all of $1.98), the fictionalized story of Archbishop Jean Baptiste Lamy. The book has been selling forever since it was written in 1927, and for good reason: Archbishop Lamy (Archbishop Jean Marie Latour in the novel) was the first appointed bishop and the third bishop to have been appointed by the United States after the United States acquired the territory from Mexico in 1849. He became the first bishop of Santa Fe when it was made a diocese in 1853, and then archbishop in 1875 when the pope made Santa Fe a province that included the territory of New Mexico. He retired in 1885 and died in 1888.

Tha’s the thumbnail biography. But a lot happened to him during the 52 years he lived in New Mexico. I became interested in him the first time I visited Santa Fe many years ago. I was the only one in the magnificent cathedral he constructed. If you have been there, I’m sure you will agree.

One of the things that occurred to me while reading Cather’s book was how long it took to travel back in the 19th century. Although Lamy was named apostolic vicar in 1849, he didn’t make it to the territory until 1851. He was born in France in 1814, was ordained a priest in 1838, came to the United States in 1839, and spent 11 years in Ohio before he left for New Mexico. There were two ways to get there. One was the Santa Fe Trail from St. Louis, but it was dangerous because of Comanche Indian raids. Lamy chose the other route: down the rivers to New Orleans, then a boat to Galveston, across Texas to San Antonio, and then up into New Mexico. Because of mishaps along the way (his boat sank and he hurt his leg when he jumped from an overloading wagon), it took him nearly a year.

Once he arrived in Santa Fe, the local clergy refused to accept him. They thought he was too young to be the magisterial cathedral he constructed. If you have been there, I’m sure you will agree.

I have always felt that as Christians, our response to the world’s suffering and the situations that situation should be bountiful and full of compassion, and that every woman should be treated with respect.

That line is from Frederic Buechner, an ordained Presbyterian minister, who was a celebrated theologian and author. Most of us, within the bounds of our busy lives, want to serve God, whether it’s a new career or just finding a volunteer role. But sometimes we get bogged down in “what is God calling me to?” and we stand still.

Buechner’s quote is a good one to pray with during the new year. Discovering the world’s “deep hunger” isn’t a challenge. Every day, the news bombards us with the cry of the poor in this weary world. We can all name organizations in our town that need help, and we all know our parish has hosts of ministries needing assistance.

We know where the hunger is. It’s that “immense sadness” that part requires some prayer.

Years ago, when I was first married, I volunteered at a center that offered help to women caught in unexpected, and sometimes unwanted, pregnancies.

I ate another French fry. End of story.

When Isaiah speaks of a bear and cow being neighbors and a baby sitting aside and being neighbors and a baby sitting aside and sometimes unwanted, pregnancies.

What I like about the story of the bear and cow do and the hopefulness this inspires is the mainstay of the Christian life on this earth. Theologian Bernard Olivier tells us, “Hope possesses power to conceive of possibilities and to dream of a better life.” With hope’s inspiration, zestful powers and strength. But I’m really squeamish. And we seek to understand and love God, His Church and the entire human family. An opportunity lost, an advantage missed.”

That didn’t mean that the Mexican priests in Santa Fe were ready to accept a Frenchman as their bishop. It took about 6 years for Fr. Lamy to win them over, especially some who insisted that celibacy for priests might be OK for a Frenchman but not for a Spanish priest. There was a schism, and Bishop Lamy traveled back to Europe to recruit priests to replace those who opposed him. He also brought back Sisters of Loreto from Kentucky to help him.

Bishop Lamy was a friend of Kit Carson, who had a home then in Taos (it’s still open to tourists today). He also supported the organization that had belatedly begun to publish the Catholic newspaper, the “Albuquerque Catholic.” The organization had begun publishing in 1850, and it was a grace-filled moment of deep gladness was missing. So I tried to subsume my interior yearnings in the hope of the sacredness of the moment, but finally I realized this wasn’t working for me. Worse, I wasn’t at my best for those whom I hoped to serve. Deep sadness and thorns were produced for which I had a wee bit of talent. I also produced handwritten thank-you notes for every single donation we received.

I loved this commitment. It was, as the old saying goes, right up my alley.

Often, we see a need, as when the bulletin screams, “The faith formation program needs 20 more teachers!” and we have a sense of “have to.” Sometimes, taking on a “have to” project works out. But sometimes, an interior battle rages and gladness is missing.

Questions to ponder in the new year: What kind of service would bring me fulfillment and gladness? What do I do well? When am I sharing my best? What gets me excited to serve? Where will I be wholly present to another? Answer those, and then run, do not walk, to make this commitment.

(Effie Caldarola writes for Catholic News Service.)

The Human Side/Fr. Eugene Hemrick

Remembering that all is possible with God, be hopeful in 2018

When Isaiah speaks of a bear and cow being neighbors and a baby sitting aside and a waiter overheard parts of what we were saying. As he lived out his life and a quest to live out the moral dimension of discipleship.

What is my relationship to my Church and the entire human family. An opportunity lost, an advantage missed.”

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(Effie Caldarola writes for Catholic News Service.)

Worship and Evangelization Outreach/ Ken Ogorek

An opportunity lost, a lesson learned

I could kick myself. Rather than engaging in a conversation about Jesus, I settled for a label. It was last summer. A group of catechetical leaders, religious educators, school principals and I were on the way home from John Bosco Conference for Evangelization and Catechesis in southeastern Ohio. We stopped at a fast-food restaurant, and I started having a lively conversation about the workshops we attended—about discipleship, evangelization and teaching the faith.

I could have, would have, should have. Hindsight is often 20/20. I would have everything different. But based on his response to the word Catholic when I did use it, this gentleman shared his genuine concern about Catholics and our faith. I could have left him with the notion, maybe surprising him, that Catholics are laser-focused on their personal relationship with Jesus as well as their membership and participation in the Church, and that a deepening relationship with the real Jesus of sacred Scripture and sacred Tradition that draws people into the sacramental life and a quest to live out the moral dimension of discipleship.

We need to make sure that two disciples of Jesus, sharing briefly about the difference that daily prayer makes in our lives as we seek to understand and love God, His Church and the entire human family. Instead, my clumsy and thoughtless albeit accurate response tended to shut down the conversation. He went his way. I ate another French fry. End of story.

What’s your story?

It’s worth asking ourselves: How prepared am I to talk conversationally about my faith? When God puts people in front of me—and he will—who brooch the topic of religion, what contribution will I make to the conversation? Will I start with labels and creeds—both of which are very unspiritual events, or might I say something like, “What can I tell you for starters is that I have a relationship with Jesus. I live out that relationship in a way that impacts the way I worship him at Mass. My relationship with Jesus and living it out with my fellow Catholics makes a huge difference in my life. Wanna hear some more?”

Never accept—or offer—a label in place of a story. Be ready to talk about the power and beauty of being a disciple of Jesus and living in full communion with his one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I’ll try harder to follow—by God’s grace.

(Ken Ogorek is catechetical director within the archdiocesan Secretariat for Worship and Evangelization. He can be reached at ken.ogorek@archdetroit.org)
The first reading for Mass on this weekend is from the Book of Jonah, an Old Testament writing seldom presented in the liturgy. While Jonah is the central figure in this book, he was not the author. The author is unknown. Scholars believe the Book of Jonah was written sometime after the Babylonian Exile of the Jews.

The reading speaks of Jonah’s visit to Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian Empire, located roughly in the region of modern Syria. He went there at God’s command to preach conversion.

Preaching conversion in Nineveh was a tall order, and the Jews who first heard this reading knew exactly how difficult the assignment would have been. No city on Earth had the image of evil and vice that surrounded Nineveh.

Nineveh, after all, was the capital of Assyria. Over the centuries, many neighboring powers invaded and overwhelmed the Holy Land. None of these invaders matched the Assyrians for bloodthirstiness and brutality.

To convert the people of Nineveh would have been regarded as almost impossible.

For its second reading this weekend, the Church offers us a passage from St. Paul’s First Epistle to the Corinthians. Paul was challenged in leading the Corinthian Christians to a fully devout Christian life. The city was in reality a place in the Roman imperial world as a center of vice and licentiousness. This distinction said very much, since vice and lewdity were major issues for the ancient Jews. Corinth was known around the ancient world as the place with the highest number of brothels and taverns.

The Apostle called upon the Christians in Corinth to remember that life is eternal, that the body is real and important, and that one will be judged only for what he does here in life.

The Gospel of St. Mark provides the last reading. First is a brief mention that John the Baptist “has been handed over,” a phrase later to describe the arrest of Jesus on Good Friday (Mk 1:14). The reading continues to say that Jesus was preaching that the “kingdom of God is near” (Mk 1:15).

Then, the Lord calls Simon and Andrew, brothers and fishermen, as Apostles, to be followed by the call of James and John.

For the early Christians, the Twelve especially were important. From the Apostles came knowledge of Jesus. It was vital to assure and present their credentials. Thus, this Gospel carefully identifies these Apostles.

The Lord’s call was sudden. They were unprepared, yet Jesus and the offer of salvation caused them to drop everything and follow him.

The call of the Apostles is instructive. They were part of the Lord’s plan of salvation. They continued the Lord’s work.

Reflection
The Church called us to celebrate the birth of Christ in its liturgy. Two weeks later, it celebrated the feast of the Epiphany of the Lord. Later, it offered us the feast of the Lord’s baptism by John in the Jordan River.

All these celebrations taught critical lessons about Jesus. He is human, the son of Mary. He is also the Son of God. And he is the Savor, assuming our sins even in life.

When we join the Mass on Sunday, let us remember the call of the Apostles and the Lord’s call to us. May we be open to receiving the Lord’s invitation.

My Journey to God
Soft Landings

By Stephanie Kilpatrick

Today I fell. Again.

But with cushions clutched to my side
The landing was
Soft.
This is the blessing
Of You.

So I rest.

Fallings, failings are
Unavoidable.

So human.

What grace is given when we ask
For You.

When we join
With You.

When I rest.

Soft landings

Is that you?

“You are chosen.

I am chosen.

(discipleship)

(Soft Kilpatrick is a member of St. Joan of Arc Parish in Indianapolis. A prison inmate at Curran-Fonothermal Correctional Facility in Philadelphia prays on his knees during Mass in 2013.) (CBS pool/Justin Weihn/DTCP/philadelphia.com)
OTTAWA, Ontario (CNS)—Faith-based groups and pro-life organizations are mobilizing to fight a new federal government program that allows summer job grants only for employers who demonstrate they are mobilizing to fight a “core mandate” of the organization (sex-selection based groups and pro-life organizations) and legal” abortion and gender identity groups.

The government settled that suit by explicitly requiring applicants to affirm that they “attestation be true” to the government to compel speech or else it would withhold the funds to which they are entitled.

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Young adults gather for fellowship, learn ways to share faith

CHICAGO (CNS)—More than 5,000 young adults from around the archdiocese of Indianapolis were part of the nearly 8,000 people from around the country who gathered at McCormick Place in Chicago in early January to gain the tools to share their faith with others.

Chicago was one of 137 campuses to host SLS18, a biennial conference sponsored by the Fellowship of Catholic University Students, known as FOCUS.

The main message of the conference centered on how to bring others into the life of active participation in the Church. "FOCUS is a missionary discipleship organization that is designed to see how to bring others into that life as well," Faley said.

Besides Faley, the archdiocesan contingent included Father Eric Augenstein, the archdiocese’s director of vocations, and chaplains and students from St. Thomas More College in Washington, DePaul University in Greenacre and Indiana University-Purdue University in Indianapolis (IUPUI).

During the conference in Chicago, it was also officially announced that the SEER 2019 conference will be held in Indianapolis on 3-7, 2019.

"This is the largest Catholic young adult and college community in the country and potentially the world," Faley notes. "They are expecting anywhere between 15,000-20,000 people, and we are thrilled. This will be our par with the National Youth Conference as far as size, infrastructure, and potential fruitful impact to the archdiocese."

At the Chicago conference on Jan. 2-6, Mass was the focal point of each day, along with talks by keynote speakers such as Los Angeles Auxiliary Bishop Robert E. Barron; actor Jim Caviezel, who played the role of Jesus in The Passion of the Christ; and Sister Bethany Madonna, a Sister of Life. Christian recording artist Matt Maher performed an evening concert on Jan. 5.

In addition, organizers said priests heard more than 4,000 confessions, and many of the young people attended eucharistic adoration held in a small hall at the convention event.

In the past, SLS, which stands for Student Leadership Summit, was limited to college students and FOCUS missionaries. The missionaries—who this year numbered 700 on 137 campuses in the U.S. and Europe—serve on college campuses, accompanying students on their faith journeys.

However, this year, SLS18 included lay ministers, parishioners, seminarians, men and women religious, and others who minister in the wider Church, even if they are not involved with FOCUS. Each group—students, missionaries and others—had its own track of workshops, and all came together for Mass and keynotes.

This year’s emphasis was equipping participants with tools to evangelize.

"For the last three years, we have seen that conferences have played a really important role in helping students and young adults take their next step in discipleship," Father John Zimmer, vice president of apostolic development for FOCUS.

"Conferences, much like the international World Youth Days—where young people from around the world gather in one country for several days of prayer, teaching and Mass with the pope—help young adults see that Catholicism is broad and encompasses all people," Zimmer said.

Much like other national and international Catholic gatherings, faith was the center at SLS18 as well, with concerts, magicians and events such as a "Tacky Christmas Sweater Party" one evening.

"When you come to an event like this and you see 8,000 other people from all walks of life, and all colors and all ethnicities, and everyone is bowing down on their knees in front of the Blessed Sacrament, it quite honestly blows your mind and helps you think of the Church in a different way," Zimmer said. "There’s something about recognizing ‘I’m not alone’ that really helps launch a young person into missionary discipleship."

To engage this age group, you have to communicate truth and try to make it relatable. "This generation wants the truth, everybody hunger for the truth, our hearts were made for the truth, and we have speakers who come and teach truth, who are willing to come and provide it in all forms."

FOCUS and the SLS18 conference is an example of “discipleship in action,” of seeing a need and going out to fill it, said Father Peter Wojcik, director of the Archdiocese of Chicago’s Department of Parish Vitality and Mission.

For its part, the Archdiocese of Chicago hosted an evening theology on Tapas, and Cardinal Blase J. Cupich celebrated the conference’s closing Mass on Jan. 5.

Bishops, priests and seminarians are now "in the thick of everything, and fighting the battle on this side of the fence, and the priests have a real vision and they really understand that," said Father Anthony Paolelli, a vice president for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

"The bold vision Cardinal Cupich has put before us is the foundation of all our programs as we develop ways of support and assistance for those who may see changes and rethink what pastoral vitality is," he said.

In the past, young adults who were raised Catholic don’t practice their faith, and as a Church we cannot ignore those numbers. "We are doing great,” the priest noted.

Chicago’s cardinal and other archdiocesan officials hope that having a "dedicated resource engaging young adults… will bring them back to practice their faith," Father Wojcik told the Chicago Catholic, the archdiocesan newspaper.

"We also know that three or four people on our archdiocesan team will not be able to do it themselves,” he said. “So FOCUS created a perfect opportunity for us to reach out to a number of recently ordained priests, youth and young adult ministers, campus ministers, religious, seminarians and directors of religious education and others to join us for this gathering.”

The priest described it as a “first step” for the archdiocese to build more regionalized young adult ministry to help young people “easily connect” with one another, “and find faith and service offerings relevant to them” wherever they are in the Chicago Archdiocese.

Father Wojcik said that young adults are an important part of Renew My Church, the archdiocese’s wide-ranging pastoral approach to all programs, including evangelization, vocations, education and parish life.

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Kate Brown from the University of Toledo, Ohio, and Anna Davis from the University of Missouri Columbia, write their prayer intentions on a wall at the SLS18 conference sponsored by the Fellowship of Catholic University Students in Chicago. More than 8,000 young adults from around the country gathered on Jan. 2-6 for the SLS18 conference. Among the attendees were lay ministers, parishioners, seminarians, and men and women religious.

Northwestern University junior Ben Paolilli attended SLS18 after family and friends told him it would be an enriching experience.

“I’ve really taken in a lot about being authentic and being authentically Catholic,” Paolilli said. “It’s a lot about what Bishop Barron said [on the] first night. We need to speak boldly, we need to speak bold words like when the Apostles were first given the tongues of fire over their heads at Pentecost.

Sometimes, it’s not going to be what people want to hear, but it’s what people need to hear,” added that “I feel a lot of Catholics today don’t do That’s something I’m definitely going to take away from this.”

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For a full description of the position and its requirements, please visit:

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Required application materials include: letter of application, current CV with evidence of outstanding teaching and professional activities, names and contact information of three professional references. Only complete applicants submitted to hr@mariantech.edu will be considered. Marian University is an EOE and is committed to diversity and encourages persons from diverse backgrounds to apply for this position.
Laity take their rightful place in pro-life work and ministry

St. John the Baptist School dedication

In this photograph, Father Charles Noll speaks at the dedication of St. John the Baptist School in Starlight in September 1962. Archbishop Paul C. Schulte officiated at the dedication. St. John the Baptist Parish was founded in 1861, and the school opened the following year. The building shown in this photo was constructed to replace a wooden structure that had been built in 1929. The school closed in 1991.

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

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Building a culture of life is not solely the work of bishops and ordained clergy. Laypeople take the lead in diocesan and parish settings, and in independent organizations, to make the case for life.

Johanna Coughlin is one such example, but far from the only one. In her eighth year of working for the Archdiocese of Baltimore’s Respect Life Office, she took on as director last year when her predecessor retired.

To Coughlin, it seems to her, “I’ve always been in pro-life ministry.” Growing up in Memphis, Tenn., where her mother was involved with the local Birthright chapter, “we had several young moms stay with us,” she said. When Coughlin was in middle school, she recalled, “one of the moms invited my mom and me to witness the birth of her son.”

“Moms invited my mom and me to witness the birth of her son,” she said. When Coughlin was in middle school, she recalled, “one of the moms invited my mom and me to witness the birth of her son.” She likened it to “trying to swim to the top of the pool and people are trying to dump more water on you.” She said faith gives one “out those rough spots.”

Hawkins is no longer a student. She founded Students for Life in 2006, a year or so after her college days ended, and is now busy in the run-up to the March for Life, as are many engaged in pro-life ministry. Her organization’s national conference takes place this year on Feb. 7-8 at the National Center for Life and Eucharistic Ducation in San Francisco for the annual Walk for Life West Coast in that city, followed by another conference.

She got her start in pro-life activity at age 15, when she said yes to a request from a friend at her church to volunteer that summer at a pregnancy resources center. After that experience, Hawkins said, “I’ve put my heart that I needed to do more.”

She started a pro-life group at her high school in West Virginia and at her college. Hawkins said she couldn’t find a pro-life faculty member to sponsor the group, but a professor who was not pro-life sponsored the club. He “didn’t agree, but he thought we should have the right to form a pro-life group on campus,” she said. She got known as “the pro-life girl” at school.

“These days,” she said, “my husband is a great source of support. I can go home at the end of the day and talk about things.”

“I have four children, and two were born with CF. In a way, it’s been a big help in my professional life—keeping things prioritized, keeping things balanced.”

Hawkins added, “We strung out the burnout in the pro-life movement—a lot of people in the pro-life movement. We want to do better, and we want to win it. God has put this on my heart. This is something I was specifically called to do, and I want to see it through.”

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Prayer is a “high stakes” endeavor, requiring courage, perseverance and patience, Pope Francis said.

Courage is needed to stick one’s neck out and “challenge the Lord,” pursuing and confronting him with one’s needs, the pope said in his homily at Mass in the Domus Sanctae Marthae.

“If prayer isn’t courageous, it isn’t Christian,” he said.

The pope reflected on two Gospel readings from St. Mark—one describing Jesus’ healing of a leper and another recounting his healing of a paralytic. The leper challenged Jesus, begging him on his knees, “If you wish, you can make me clean.” Meanwhile, the paralytic and the four men carrying him refused to let a huge crowd prevent him from seeing the Lord, so they broke through the roof and lowered the man down to Jesus.

In both cases, the pope said, Jesus saw the great faith, courage and persistence in the people asking him for healing.

“Always, when we draw near to the Lord to ask him something, you must start with and [ask] with faith,” even challenging him like the leper, he said.

The other role model for prayer, he said, is the paralytic, who was someone in great need and who faced many difficulties, and yet he never gave up because “where there is a will, there is always a way.”

“So often, you need patience and to know how to wait over time and not give up, to always go forward,” Pope Francis said.

It is necessary to have “courage to fight to get to the Lord, courage to have faith from the start, ‘If you wish, you can heal me. If you wish, I believe.’ ”

The Gospel readings should prompt people to reflect on how they pray, he said. Do people pray like “parrots,” echoing words with no interest or care in what one is asking or do people “beg the Lord to help us [in] our little faith,” and keep at it no matter the difficulties, he asked.

Courage is needed to “throw one’s hat in the ring,” he said. “Many people do not get what they ask for right away because prayer is a ‘high-stakes game.’ ”

Pray with courage, conviction, not mindlessly like a parrot, pope says