



The

Criterion

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Measure promoting respect for life among ICC's 2020 successes, page 3.

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Indiana's Catholic bishops suspend public Sunday and weekday Masses; archdiocesan offices are closed

Criterion staff report

Based on recommendations from health officials concerning the danger of the COVID-19 pandemic and the urgency to stem the spread of the virus, the five Catholic bishops of Indiana have suspended until further notice all public Sunday and weekday Masses throughout the Province of Indianapolis, which is comprised of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis and the Dioceses of Gary, Evansville, Fort Wayne-South Bend and Lafayette.

See related editorial, page 4.

The suspension became effective on March 18. Indianapolis Archbishop Charles C. Thompson's dispensation from Sunday Mass continues until further notice.

Archbishop Thompson and archdiocesan priests will be making online Masses available soon. Please visit

the homepage of the archdiocese, www.archindy.org, for more information.

Out of an abundance of caution, the archbishop is also closing perpetual adoration chapels in the archdiocese until further notice.

All Catholic schools in the archdiocese will continue to be closed until at least April 6.

The Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center in Indianapolis and related offices and agencies have been closed until further notice as well.

"As the health and safety conditions in our archdiocesan community have shifted," an archdiocesan statement said, "the spread of the COVID-19 virus is a moment for Catholics and all people of goodwill to offer special prayers of intercession for the healing of those infected, for the protection of the elderly and infirm who are at greatest risk, for the prevention of the disease's spread, and for the courage and strength of care

providers who minister to the sick, their families and those most in need."

The archdiocesan statement also noted that for the celebration of other sacraments—including baptism, confirmation and holy matrimony—whenever possible they should be postponed until further notice.

Procedures are also being developed for the celebration of the sacraments of penance and the anointing of the sick.

Finally, the celebration of funerals should be postponed whenever possible. If a funeral is offered, then it should be celebrated outside of Mass and in the presence of a very small number of the faithful who practice the prescribed precautions for hygiene and social distancing. A Mass for the intention and the repose of the soul of the deceased may be offered privately by the priest.

Decisions about liturgical celebrations during Holy Week and beyond will be made in the coming days.

During a time of prayer on Sunday or while viewing the Mass on TV or online, the faithful are encouraged to make an act of Spiritual Communion. This beautiful devotional practice in the Church is a real source of grace in communion with our Lord. Below is an example of a prayer for spiritual communion:

My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.

The faithful are also encouraged to prayerfully read the readings of sacred Scripture for the day or to pray the rosary.

The Criterion is planning to continue its weekly publishing schedule. †

Superintendent gives advice for students, families to make the most of their time at home as they deal with the impact of the coronavirus

By John Shaughnessy

With Catholic schools in the archdiocese being closed at least until April 6 as a precaution against the coronavirus, *The Criterion* asked the



Gina Fleming

superintendent of archdiocesan schools to share her advice to students, parents and families on making the most of this time academically and spiritually.

Gina Fleming was also asked to offer her thoughts on traveling during spring break—

and on allaying the fears that children may have related to the coronavirus.

Fleming gives her thoughts and insights on all these areas in this conversation with *The Criterion*. As a mother of a Catholic school student,

she also shares a chart that parents could use to provide structure to a child's day to continue learning and growing while he or she is away from their school building. (See page 8 for the chart.)

Here is the text of the conversation with Fleming:

Q. What advice would you give to parents for handling the concerns of children who are worried and even fearful because of all the dismal news surrounding the coronavirus?

A. "As with all things, young people are consistently watching us as their role models. If we remain calm [and] ensure that conversations on this matter are based on factual information and logical reasoning, our children will be much better informed and will be able to use this as a true learning opportunity. Reinforce the importance of hand-washing and other hygiene practices

as well as proper responses to coughing, sneezing and food preparation."

Q. As a parent of a student in a Catholic school, what overall advice would you give to parents in helping their students stay focused academically during this time?

A. "Setting time frames and expectations up front is important. I suggest that if you feel overwhelmed, take time for prayer ... and then consider writing a thank you note to the awesome teachers who care for and help your child every day. Also, do what you can to make this time fun and memorable while honoring the priorities of enhancing your child's faith formation and education.

"For high school students, this is a great time to update resumés, explore career opportunities online, complete summer job applications, and apply for applicable scholarships."

Q. E-learning will be one important avenue to try to keep students learning and focused on school in the coming weeks. Yet not every family in Catholic schools has access to a home computer for e-learning. What advice would you give to parents in this situation to help them keep their children engaged academically during this time?

A. "Our Catholic schools know their families very well. Those who have families for whom Internet access is limited, work packets have been created and made available. Additionally, several of our schools are allowing students to check out Chromebooks or iPads for use at home, while still others are leaving a section of the school open for students to come in and use the technology with parent supervision. In this case, school leaders are spreading students/families out to honor the social distancing protocols that have been enacted."

See SUPERINTENDENT, page 8

System launched to report sexual misconduct of U.S. bishops

Criterion staff report

As part of a continuing effort to strengthen its commitment to protecting minors and vulnerable adults, Catholic dioceses in the United States have established a third-party reporting system

to receive allegations of sexual abuse, sexual misconduct and cover-up of abuse by bishops.

People can call a toll-free hotline at 800-276-1562 to submit a complaint or make a report online at ReportBishopAbuse.org.

The Catholic Bishop Abuse Reporting service was created in response to Pope Francis' call for "public, stable and easily accessible systems" for global reporting of abuse allegation in his apostolic letter "*Vos estis lux mundi*" ("You are the light of the world"), which he issued on May 7, 2019. That document mandated every

Story in Spanish, page 10.



Bishops from across the U.S. pray during a June 14, 2017, Mass in SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis during that year's spring meeting of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops held in Indianapolis. (File photo by Sean Gallagher)

Catholic diocese in the world to create procedures for such reporting by June 1, 2020.

The requirements put forth in "*Vos estis lux mundi*" do not replace systems

already in place in every diocese and archdiocese in the United States for reporting abuse by clergy, religious and Church employees or volunteers. The

See BISHOPS, page 10



Standing in the window of the library of the Apostolic Palace overlooking an empty St. Peter's Square, Pope Francis blesses the city of Rome on March 15, still under lockdown to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. (CNS photo/Vatican Media via Reuters)

Pope prays for clergy, public service employees working during lockdown

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Standing in the window of the library of the Apostolic Palace overlooking an empty St. Peter's Square, Pope Francis blessed the city of Rome still under lockdown to prevent the spread of the coronavirus.

During a live broadcast of his Sunday *Angelus* address on March 15, the pope praised "the creativity of priests," especially in the hard-hit northern Italian region of Lombardy, who continue to find new ways to minister to the faithful.

"I received so much news from Lombardy on this creativity. It is true, Lombardy has been struck hard. There are priests who think of a thousand ways to be close to the people, so that people do not feel abandoned; priests with apostolic zeal," the pope said. "A big thank you to you priests."

Several viral videos and articles showed how priests are trying to reach out to people, including Father Giuseppe Corbari, a priest in the northern city of Giussano, who asked parishioners to send him their selfies. He then placed each picture in the pews of his empty church while he celebrated Mass.

"It's a horrible time, we must believe and be close. I will continue to celebrate Mass with more joy because my parishioners are all here, even if only by photo," Father Corbari said in an interview published in the Lombardy newspaper *Il Giorno* on March 15.

After reciting the *Angelus* prayer, the pope said that while people find themselves "more or less isolated" during the pandemic, the lockdown can also be a time to "rediscover and deepen the value of the communion that unites all the members of the Church.

"United to Christ we are never alone, but instead form one body, of which he is the head. It is a union that is nourished with prayer and also with spiritual communion in the Eucharist, a practice that is recommended when it isn't possible to receive the sacrament. I say this to everyone, especially to people who live alone," he said.

Earlier in the day, the pope celebrated a livestreamed Mass at the Domus Sanctae Marthae, where he offered prayers for "all those who are working to guarantee public services: those working in pharmacies, supermarkets, transportation and police officers.

"Let us pray for all those who are working so that in this time, social and civil life can continue," the pope said.

In his homily, the pope reflected on the Sunday Gospel reading from St. John, which recounted Jesus' conversation with a Samaritan woman near Jacob's well.

The Samaritan woman's conversion, he said, did not come from the theoretical debate about on which mountain God should be worshipped, but by Jesus manifesting his divinity by speaking the truth about her life. †



Public Schedule of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

No public events scheduled for the remainder of March.

USCCB president offers reflection, prayer in this time of the coronavirus

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Acknowledging the fragility of human life because of the coronavirus, Los Angeles Archbishop Jose H. Gomez, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), shared a prayer for people who are ill with COVID-19, the disease caused by the virus, and those responding to the pandemic.

"Again we are reminded of our common humanity—that the peoples of this world are our brothers and sisters, that we are all one family under God," he said in a March 13 statement.

Reminding the faithful that God "does not abandon us," even now in this time "of trial and testing," the archbishop urged people to remember the importance of having hope in Jesus.

"Now is the time to intensify our prayers and sacrifices for the love of God and the love of our neighbor. Let us draw closer to one another in our love for him, and rediscover the things that truly matter in our lives," he said.

In unison with Pope Francis, "let us pray in solidarity for our brothers and sisters here and around the world who are sick," Archbishop Gomez said. "Let us pray for those who have lost loved ones to this virus. May God console them and grant them peace."

He also urged prayers for doctors, nurses and caregiver and for public health officials and all civic leaders. "May God

grant them courage and prudence as they seek to respond to this emergency with compassion and in service to the common good."

The text of Archbishop Gomez's prayer follows:

Holy Virgin of Guadalupe, Queen of the Angels and Mother of the Americas. We fly to you today as your beloved children. We ask you to intercede for us with your Son, as you did at the wedding in Cana.

Pray for us, loving Mother, and gain for our nation and world, and for all our families and loved ones, the protection of your holy angels, that we may be spared the worst of this illness.

For those already afflicted, we ask you to obtain the grace of healing and deliverance. Hear the cries of those who are vulnerable and fearful, wipe away their tears and help them to trust.

In this time of trial and testing, teach all of us in the Church to love one another and to be patient and kind. Help us to bring the peace of Jesus to our land and to our hearts.

We come to you with confidence, knowing that you truly are our compassionate mother, health of the sick and cause of our joy.

Shelter us under the mantle of your protection, keep us in the embrace of your arms, help us always to know the love of your Son, Jesus. Amen. †

Italian priests, religious women are among victims of COVID-19 in Italy

ROME (CNS)—A number of priests and religious women have been among the more than 2,100 people who have died in Italy because of illness connected with COVID-19.

One member of the Little Missionary Sisters of Charity died on March 15 at the age of 88 after she and 23 members of her community in Tortona, near Milan, were evacuated by helicopter on March 13 and hospitalized for fever and trouble breathing. Another unidentified nun was said to be in critical condition, ANSA, the Italian news agency, reported on March 15.

In the hard-hit Diocese of Bergamo, Bishop Francesco Beschi said on March 16 that many of his priests have been exposed to the virus. Twenty have had symptoms serious enough to be hospitalized while six have died in the past week.

In another part of northern Italy, Father Guido Mortari, 83, died on March 13 of pneumonia; his test results for COVID-19 had not come back at the time of his

death. He had served as a parish priest in his hometown of Reggio Emilia for more than 40 years.

In Cremona, Msgr. Vincenzo Rini, 75, died on March 14 after being hospitalized because of COVID-19. He was a journalist and directed the diocesan weekly, *Catholic Life*, for more than 30 years. He also served as president of SIR, the news agency of the Italian bishops' conference. †

Official Appointment

Effective Immediately

Rev. Binu Mathew, Archdiocese of Imphal, India, to parochial vicar of St. Lawrence Parish in Indianapolis.

(This appointment is from the office of the Most Rev. Charles C. Thompson, Archbishop of Indianapolis.) †

Share your stories on first Communion, the importance of the Eucharist

The Criterion is inviting our readers to share your stories of first holy Communion.

Maybe you have a story to share from making your first holy Communion.

Maybe you have a story to share from your child or grandchild preparing for and/or taking part in this wondrous sacrament.

Maybe you have a story to share as a teacher or catechist who prepares children for the first time to receive Christ into their

hearts and their bodies in this special way.

And maybe you have a story or thoughts to share about how the Eucharist still is a meaningful part of your life.

Please send your stories to John Shaughnessy by e-mail at jshaughnessy@archindy.org or by mail in care of *The Criterion*, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202. Please include your parish and a daytime phone number where you can be reached. †



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Measure promoting respect for life among ICC's 2020 successes

By Victoria Arthur

A major pro-life victory was among the highlights of this year's short session of the Indiana General Assembly, which saw successes as well as setbacks for the Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC).



Senate Bill 299, a measure that clarifies requirements for abortion providers to treat fetal remains with dignity, passed both chambers of the state legislature with bipartisan support and at press time was awaiting Gov. Eric Holcomb's signature.

Authoring by Sen. Liz Brown (R-Fort Wayne), the bill gives direction to the Indiana State Department of Health and augments a 2016 state law requiring the respectful disposition of fetal remains after abortion, which was upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court after being challenged by the abortion industry.

If signed into law, Senate Bill 299 will mandate that abortion providers in Indiana have policies in place with a funeral home or licensed burial provider to dispose of fetal remains by burial or cremation.

"This is a very positive outcome, and it needed to be done," said Glenn Tebbe, associate director of the ICC, the public policy voice of the Catholic Church in Indiana. "The clarification and implementation of the law stating that fetal remains be treated with dignity as human remains and not as medical waste is a significant step forward. The ICC always puts respect for life at the top of its priorities, and we applaud lawmakers for taking this important stand."

The 2020 legislative session, which concluded on March 11, marked the final one with Tebbe's longtime presence at the Statehouse. Tebbe led the ICC for

16 years before transitioning the executive director role to Angela Espada on Jan. 1. He continued to collaborate with Espada throughout the session and will remain involved in ICC business until his anticipated retirement in mid-May.

As in past years, the ICC promoted certain legislation in keeping with Catholic social teaching, while opposing other measures.



Glenn Tebbe

"We had many bills that would have been detrimental to the well-being of society that were fortunately not heard," Tebbe said. "Those included bills concerning physician-assisted suicide and gestational surrogacy."

Education is always a key priority of the ICC, and Tebbe and Espada point to positive moves on that front this year. Among the numerous measures that sought to streamline bureaucracy in education was House Bill 1003, which reduces ever-growing requirements for teacher training. Tebbe emphasized that this legislation, which moved forward with broad support, will benefit all schools in Indiana, both public and non-public.

Another measure backed by the ICC was House Bill 1066, an omnibus education bill that included closing certain gaps in school voucher eligibility for siblings and foster children. Although that language was eventually stripped from the bill, Tebbe said he was heartened by the tone of the debate and the fact that many lawmakers indicated the provision might be more successful in next year's longer legislative session, which will include

the creation and passage of the state's biennial budget.

"The discussion was very positive, without the animosity that is sometimes there with regard to the school choice program," Tebbe said. "Although in the end the law wasn't changed because of this being a non-budget year, we heard from many legislators that they intend to make that change next year."

Another ICC-supported bill was signed into law by Holcomb on the final day of the legislative session. House Bill 1009, authored by Rep. Chuck Goodrich (R-Noblesville), will benefit poor families by exempting a student's income earned through a paid internship or other work-based opportunity from their family's eligibility for certain government-assistance programs. Those include the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), more commonly known as food stamps, and the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program.

At the same time, a long overdue modernization of TANF itself was passed over again, to the dismay of the ICC and other advocates for the poor. Other setbacks during the legislative session included the failure of Senate Bill 67, a measure that would have given more authority to township trustees to aid the homeless in their area who may not be from their township or cannot prove their legal residence.

"This session had some disappointing moments, when legislation that would have helped the poor or vulnerable did not move forward," Espada said. "There were also many high points. And for me, one of the highlights was having Glenn as a source of information and knowledge. It was an honor to have him accompany me through my first session, and it remains an honor for me to represent the Church."

Tebbe said the ICC is in good hands moving forward under Espada's leadership.



Angela Espada

"She embraced this role, was a quick learner, and was very effective," Tebbe said. "I look forward to her continuing what is now a more than 50-year tradition of the ICC at the Statehouse. We are one of the few religious entities

that have an ongoing and sustained presence there, and our conference is still relevant and effective, particularly when we work in harmony with other like-minded individuals and groups. We are even more effective when we have the Catholic faithful echoing Church teaching and reminding legislators that they're watching and they're interested.

"Legislators—both Catholic and non-Catholic—do want to know where the Church stands on many issues," Tebbe continued. "They recognize that we are a consistent moral voice, and we don't have an ideological or party affiliation. I've been privileged to have this position, and whatever successes we have had have been a team effort."

For more detailed information regarding these bills and other priority legislation of the ICC, visit www.indianacc.org. This website includes access to I-CAN, the Indiana Catholic Action Network, which offers the Church's position on key issues and ways to contact elected representatives.

(Victoria Arthur, a member of St. Malachy Parish in Brownsburg, is a correspondent for The Criterion.) †

Pope Francis prays family relationships thrive while stuck at home

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope Francis prayed for families who are cooped up in their homes and for all those who are ill with COVID-19.

During a live broadcast of his daily morning Mass on March 16, Pope Francis again prayed for the many people who have fallen ill and for families who, like all citizens, have been required to isolate themselves in their homes to slow the spread of the coronavirus.

"I am thinking of the families under lockdown, children who aren't going to school, parents who cannot leave the house, some who are in quarantine," he said at the beginning of Mass.

"May the Lord help them discover new

ways, new expressions of love, of living together in this new situation," he said.

"It is a wonderful occasion for rediscovering true affection with creativity in the family. Let us pray for families so that relationships in the family at this time always thrive for the good," he said.

In his homily, the pope reflected on the tendency of people to think that God only acts in big, impressive ways, leading them to dismiss or even scorn the ways he manifests himself—always in simple ways.

"Our God lets us understand that he always operates in simplicity, in the simplicity of the house of Nazareth, in the simplicity of everyday work, in the simplicity of prayer," he said.

"Instead, the worldly spirit leads us to vanity, to appearances," and when people start to become indignant, their scorn leads to violence, the pope added.

"Disdain is an attitude of the arrogant," who are spiritually impoverished and live with "the illusion of being more than they are," he said.

"Even we can have this happen to us," becoming "scandalized" by God's simplicity, "the simplicity of the poor."

The temptation may be to look at these simple things and say, "But no, this is not God. No. Our God is more refined, wiser, more important. God does not operate in this simplicity," the pope said.

"And this disdain always leads to violence, both physical violence and the violence of gossip," he said, praying that people would reflect on what they do when they do not understand the simplicity of God. †

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Editorial



A sign outside of St. Matthew Church in Allouez, Wis., on March 13 reminds people how to take care during the coronavirus pandemic. (CNS photo/Sam Lucero, *The Compass*)

The Church's 'both/and' response to the coronavirus

Indianapolis Archbishop Charles C. Thompson has often reminded us that the Catholic Church's position on important issues is rarely an "either/or." Most often, our Church views things from a more inclusive "both/and" perspective. So, for example, we both love sinners and hate the sins they commit. And we believe that God is both just and merciful, both holding us accountable for our actions and allowing us ample opportunities to repent and seek his forgiveness.

The Catholic Church's response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic reflects this both/and perspective. On the one hand, we must act out of an abundance of caution in order to protect the health and well-being of everyone. On the other hand, in these most challenging times we place our trust in the healing power of God and, in the final analysis, we turn to him alone. As a result, Pope Francis and our bishops and pastors must guide us in both trusting God and in respecting the decisions of civil authorities and medical professionals.

As is always the case in these situations, translating moral principles into practical actions requires prudence and, in many cases, courage. Benedictine Father Mark O'Keefe, professor of moral theology at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad, addresses this issue in his book *Virtues Abounding: St. Thomas Aquinas on the Cardinal and Related Virtues for Today*.

According to Father Mark in the introduction to his book:

"The Catholic Church, of course, continues to believe in moral rules that can be applied generally. There are some things that are black or white, right or wrong. Still, even contemporary Catholic teaching reflects a greater sense that there is more ambiguity than we might once have thought, and there are more areas in which people really do have to decide for themselves about what's right or wrong for them in a particular situation. There is black and white, but there are also areas of gray."

The worldwide crisis (pandemic) we are experiencing now presents our Church with plenty of gray areas. On the one hand, the obligation to attend Mass on Sunday is sacred. For people who are healthy enough to participate, the graces received through participation in the holy Eucharist are needed now

more than ever as we confront this personal and global crisis. On the other hand, the common good of all requires that the virus be contained and that we eliminate the public health risks presented by large gatherings of people.

As a result, bishops in various regions of the world, including throughout the state of Indiana, have suspended all public celebrations of the liturgy.

In addition, in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis and many other dioceses in the U.S. and throughout the world, schools have been closed and Church activities are being severely curtailed except when necessary to care for the pastoral needs of people, especially the poor and vulnerable. These unprecedented steps are being taken out of an abundance of caution, and with profound respect for the health and safety of all. But these decisions remain controversial—well within the gray areas of moral decision-making.

Some argue that it's a mistake to restrict access to the grace of the Eucharist during this critical time. Others, including Pope Francis, worry that efforts to contain the spread of this potentially deadly virus—while necessary in many cases—will cause us to turn inward and neglect those who are most in need of our care and assistance. That's why the Vatican has repeatedly assured the world community of the Holy See's continuing support for health care professionals and facilities in various parts of the world, especially in very remote areas in great difficulty, trusting in the active solidarity of all.

The fact is that the Church must make a prudent, courageous decision to both affirm the truth of God's presence and healing power, and to participate in the very practical efforts to contain the spread of the coronavirus by limiting public gatherings and social interactions. The both/and principle is vitally important here.

During this most difficult time in the life of our Church and our local, state, national and global communities, it's more important than ever to observe the Lenten practices of prayer, self-denial and stewardship of all God's gifts.

Let's take care of ourselves and, at the same time, care for the needs of others. Let's also pray that the wisdom of "the Catholic both/and" will guide Church leaders through the gray areas to the light of Christ.

—Daniel Conway

Sight Unseen/Brandon A. Evans

The secret at the heart of suffering

St. Paul makes a startling promise about the unstoppable nature of God's love in his letter to the Romans:

"For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor present things, nor future things, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom 8:38-39).

It is something we've all heard in our lives, undoubtedly most often in times of suffering. It is there with all the other words of advice that remind us that God is always at our side, and that he has a plan for everything.

And certainly, it is true the love of God *persists* in our world because all who seek find, and God seeks us. He will always find his own and will never stop.

But what about when the suffering pulls deeper? What then when flows from the tabernacle nothing but dread silence? When there is no consolation, no presence, no sense to it all, and worse, no healing to be seen?

Even the power of the Scriptures seem vacated before the awful things we each endure. The idea that we can "offer it up" or that God is blessing us with such suffering offends us.

How are we ever to live the grossly optimistic line from the hymn *O God Beyond All Praise*:

"And whether our tomorrows
Be filled with good or ill
We'll triumph through our sorrows
And rise to bless you still."

How? There are foes in this life that are bigger than us and times when *we are going to lose*.

There are pains that drive worse than death; depression and fear that steal all hope from our hearts and leave us on the ground weeping to an absent God. Our lonely eyes look in anguish only to find that there is no possible way out of such despair.

But there is an *impossible* way.

It is there, in that barren place—in that fire of senseless, pointless hurting—that a secret is hidden. It is a secret that reaches

to the heart of Christianity. Beyond even the grasp of the devil, all history *turns* on the power we find at all hopes end.

For there is something in us, planted by God, that cannot be taken, it cannot be conquered or caught, wrestled or matched or outwitted: it can only be given, and given freely.

When all goodness is taken from us, we can still *give joy*. A writer need not feel his words to wield their power, nor a singer revel in her song to make weep the hearer. A simple smile, though our hearts stay chilled, can bring light untold to another.

This is the miracle at the heart of love. This is the love of which all others draw near in reverence: a love that does not seek itself, but that takes the last meager morsels of goodness and passes them along.

Through God, we can give even what we do not—or cannot—possess. With us, God can reach *through despair* and bring light to the world. We became workers of the impossible.

From deep within the pain, we can beat the system; short-circuit it; transcend it.

There is no force, no strength, that can steal our ability to give love, nor does it require some terrifying feat of courage or strength.

The very power of God to bridge death and turn weakness to strength becomes shared with us in the ability to defy the darkness, even when it is all we see.

This is perhaps why St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians that love is stronger than faith or hope, and unlike them, it does not fail. Small acts of kindness can be willed by us at any time: in sorrow or in joy.

Each act of love that we give—that we *choose*, especially in dark moments—has a value that the Lord does not miss in his count of all things and *will not forget*.

Only a God-made-man could arrange such a miracle, in which the most common of all people is offered, each day, the chance to participate in the salvation of the world by the careful love of so many little things.

(*Sight Unseen* is a new, occasional column that explores God and the world. Brandon A. Evans is the online editor and graphic designer of *The Criterion* and a member of St. Susanna Parish in Plainfield.) †

Be Our Guest/Elliott Bedford

Assisted suicide vs. palliative care: What's the difference? Everything

Recently, our state legislature considered a bill to decriminalize the practice of physicians who might assist in their patient's death by suicide. Thanks

to efforts like those of our own Indiana Catholic Conference, the bill—the fourth attempt since 2017—failed to move forward. Yes, we get a reprieve, but recognize: these attempts will continue.

Persistence is the strategy of this assisted suicide movement.

Another facet of their strategy is perverting language. You will see proponents obfuscate and use euphemisms like "death with dignity" or "aid-in-dying." Most heinously, they will claim this is nothing more than palliative care. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Let's start to draw the distinction by clarifying some key terms.

First, *palliate* means "to cloak." The image should be familiar to us Catholics: when they are appointed, archbishops, for instance, receive from the bishop of Rome a vestige of a shepherd's cloak (i.e., a pallium) as a sign of their office.

In a similar way, palliative care seeks to cloak the pain and symptoms of a medical condition or disease. The goal is to minimize suffering so you can live as well as possible amid the limitations that come from the condition. It's a good means toward a good end. In this way, palliative care can be used alongside curative interventions, or by itself if comfort is the only goal of treatment. Palliative care is what allows us to say, "care always, even if there is no cure."

Second, *suicide* means "willful self-killing." That is, it is an action in which death is chosen for itself or as a means to something else. To be "assisted" means, in this case, a physician is administratively essential because they prescribe the death-inducing pharmacologic cocktail.

Advocates typically claim this option is necessary to help patients avoid a "death without dignity" due to excessive pain or loss of autonomy. The academic research shows that, in practice, patients often cite they want to avoid future pain or "being a burden" on their family or society.

The motives, concerns and fears of patients are certainly valid; the problem is the means by which they are trying to address those concerns. And it is these fears and

See GUEST, page 15



Christ the Cornerstone

Eyes of faith can cure all forms of blindness

“Then Jesus said, ‘I came into this world for judgment, so that those who do not see might see, and those who do see might become blind’ ” (Jn 9:39).

The Gospel reading for the Fourth Sunday of Lent (Jn 9:1-41) offers us a sustained reflection on different forms of blindness. First, there is the physical blindness of “the man born blind” (Jn 9:1). The second form of blindness in this Gospel story is psychological. This is the refusal to believe what we have seen with our own eyes. A third form of blindness is spiritual, the inability to recognize God’s grace in our lives.

The disciples are looking for an explanation for the man’s blindness. They want to know if his parents’ sins were the cause. Jesus dismisses the idea that physical disability is a consequence of sin. “Neither he nor his parents sinned” (Jn 9:3), he says. He is blind “so that the works of God might be made visible through him” (Jn 9:3). God’s ways are not our ways. The man’s condition provides an occasion for God’s healing power to be revealed. “We have to do the works of the one who sent me

while it is day,” Jesus says. “Night is coming when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world” (Jn 9:4-5).

The light of Christ illumines our blindness. Unfortunately, the man’s neighbors couldn’t accept this. They deny that the man whom Jesus has cured is the same man they are used to seeing as a blind beggar.

His neighbors and those who had seen him earlier as a beggar said, “Isn’t this the one who used to sit and beg?” (Jn 9:8) Some said, “It is,” but others said, “No, he just looks like him.” He said, “I am” (Jn 9:9). So they said to him, “[So] how were your eyes opened?” (Jn 9:10). He replied, “The man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and told me, ‘Go to Siloam and wash.’ So I went there and washed and was able to see” (Jn 9:11).

The incredulous neighbors take the man to the Pharisees. These religious leaders display the third kind of blindness, a spiritual sightlessness that prevents them from trusting in God’s presence and healing power. “So then the Pharisees also asked him how he was able to see. He said to them, ‘He put

clay on my eyes, and I washed, and now I can see’ (Jn 9:15). So some of the Pharisees said, ‘This man is not from God, because he does not keep the sabbath.’ [But] others said, ‘How can a sinful man do such signs?’ And there was a division among them” (Jn 9:16).

Spiritual blindness divides us from one another and from God. Even when the Pharisees summon the man’s parents who assure them that their son was indeed born blind, they can’t see beyond the fact that Jesus “does not keep the sabbath.”

So a second time they called the man who had been blind and said to him, “Give God the praise! We know that this man is a sinner” (Jn 9:24). He replied, “If he is a sinner, I do not know. One thing I do know is that I was blind and now I see.” So they said to him, “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?” (Jn 9:25-26)

He answered them, “I told you already and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples, too?” They ridiculed him and said, “You are that man’s disciple; we are disciples of Moses! We know that

God spoke to Moses, but we do not know where this one is from” (Jn 9:27-29).

The man Jesus cured sees clearly now—on all three levels. He has physical sight, but he also sees through the others’ psychological denial and religious hypocrisy:

The man answered and said to them, “This is what is so amazing, that you do not know where he is from, yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if one is devout and does his will, he listens to him. It is unheard of that anyone ever opened the eyes of a person born blind. If this man were not from God, he would not be able to do anything” (Jn 9:30-33).

If Jesus were not from God, he would have no power. Seeing this truth is what frees us from darkness and brings us into the light.

When Jesus cures the man born blind, he challenges his disciples, the sightless man’s neighbors, the Pharisees—and all of us—to see with the eyes of faith.

Let’s pray for the grace to see and believe what only the light of Christ can reveal. †



Cristo, la piedra angular

Los ojos de la fe son capaces de curar cualquier ceguera

“Y Jesús dijo: ‘Yo vine a este mundo para juicio; para que los que no ven, vean, y para que los que ven se vuelvan ciegos’ ” (Jn 9:39).

La lectura del Evangelio del cuarto domingo de Cuaresma (Jn 9:1-41) nos ofrece una reflexión sustancial sobre las distintas formas de ceguera. Primero está la ceguera física del “hombre ciego de nacimiento” (Jn 9:1). La segunda forma de ceguera que mencionan en este relato del Evangelio es la psicológica. Se trata del rechazo a creer lo que hemos visto con nuestros propios ojos. La tercera forma de ceguera es la espiritual, la incapacidad para reconocer la gracia de Dios en nuestras vidas.

Los discípulos buscan una explicación para la ceguera del hombre; desean saber si el pecado de sus padres fue la causa. Jesús desecha la idea de que la incapacidad física es una consecuencia del pecado. “Ni este pecó, ni sus padres” (Jn 9:3), dice. Está ciego “para que las obras de Dios se manifiesten en él” (Jn 9:3). Los caminos de Dios son distintos de los nuestros. El padecimiento del hombre representa una oportunidad para revelar el poder

sanador de Dios. “Debemos hacer las obras del que me envió mientras es de día,” dice Jesús. “La noche viene cuando nadie puede trabajar. Mientras estoy en el mundo, Yo soy la Luz del mundo” (Jn 9:4-5).

La luz de Cristo ilumina nuestra ceguera, pero lamentablemente los vecinos del hombre no pueden aceptar esto y niegan que el hombre al cual Jesús curó es el mismo ciego al que veían mendigar.

“¿No es este el que se sentaba y mendigaba?” (Jn 9:8). Algunos dijeron “Él es,” en tanto que otros afirmaron: “No, pero se parece a él.” A lo que él dijo: “Yo soy” (Jn 9:9). Entonces le dijeron: “¿Cómo te fueron abiertos los ojos?” (Jn 9:10). “Él respondió: “El hombre que se llama Jesús hizo barro, lo untó sobre mis ojos y me dijo: ‘Ve al estanque de Siloé y lávate.’ Así que fui, me lavé y recibí la vista” (Jn 9:11).

Los vecinos incrédulos llevan al hombre ante los fariseos. Estos líderes religiosos demuestran el tercer tipo de ceguera: la espiritual, que les impide confiar en la presencia y el poder sanador de Dios. “Por eso los fariseos volvieron también a preguntarle cómo había recibido la vista. Y él les dijo: ‘Me

puso barro sobre los ojos, y me lavé y veo’ (Jn 9:15). “Por eso algunos de los fariseos decían: ‘Este hombre no viene de Dios, porque no guarda el día de reposo.’ Pero otros decían: ‘¿Cómo puede un hombre pecador hacer tales señales?’ Y había división entre ellos” (Jn 9:16).

La ceguera espiritual nos divide del prójimo y de Dios. A pesar de que los fariseos llaman a los padres del hombre y estos aseguran que efectivamente su hijo nació ciego, no son capaces de ver más allá del hecho de que Jesús «no guarda el día de reposo».

Así que llamaron por segunda vez al hombre que estaba ciego y le dijeron: “Da gloria a Dios; nosotros sabemos que este hombre es un pecador” (Jn 9:24). “Entonces él les contestó: ‘Si es pecador, no lo sé; una cosa sé: que yo era ciego y ahora veo.’ Ellos volvieron a preguntarle: ‘¿Qué te hizo? ¿Cómo te abrió los ojos?’ ” (Jn 9:25-26).

Él les contestó: “Ya les dije y no escucharon; ¿por qué quieren oírlo otra vez? ¿Es que también ustedes quieren hacerse discípulos suyos?” Entonces lo insultaron, y le dijeron: “Tú eres discípulo de ese hombre; pero nosotros somos discípulos de

Moisés. Nosotros sabemos que Dios habló a Moisés, pero en cuanto a Este, no sabemos de dónde es” (Jn 9:27-29).

El hombre que Jesús curó ahora ve claramente, en todos los sentidos; tiene visión física, pero también ve más allá de la negación psicológica y la hipocresía religiosa:

El hombre les respondió: “Pues en esto hay algo asombroso, que ustedes no sepan de dónde es, y sin embargo, a mí me abrió los ojos. Sabemos que Dios no oye a los pecadores; pero si alguien teme a Dios y hace Su voluntad, a este oye. Desde el principio jamás se ha oído decir que alguien abriera los ojos a un ciego de nacimiento. Si Este no viniera de Dios, no podría hacer nada” (Jn 9:30-33).

Si Jesús no fuera Dios, no tendría ningún poder. Ser capaces de ver esta verdad es lo que nos libera de las tinieblas y nos lleva a la luz.

Al curar al hombre que nació ciego, Jesús desafía a sus discípulos, a los vecinos del ciego, a los fariseos y a todos nosotros, a ver con los ojos de la fe.

Oremos por la gracia de ver y creer en aquello que solo la luz de Cristo puede revelar. †

Events Calendar

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

In response to recommendations from public health and government officials to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus, all parish and archdiocesan events have been canceled until further notice. At that time, *The Criterion* will resume running a list of events and retreats.

Archdiocese, other outlets offer Mass during coronavirus pandemic

Criterion staff report

Now that the five bishops of Indiana—including Indianapolis Archbishop Charles C. Thompson—have suspended public celebrations of Masses, Archbishop Thompson and various priests of the archdiocese will be making online Masses available soon. Visit the homepage of the archdiocese, www.archindy.org, for more information.

Catholic Radio Indy also has several ways that people throughout the archdiocese can listen to Mass every day, including on Sundays, during the coronavirus pandemic. The Mass is aired live every day at 8 a.m.

If you live in or around Indianapolis, tune in to

89.1 FM. If you live in Hamilton County, you can hear it at 90.9 FM, and in Anderson go to 98.3 FM.

Catholic Radio Indy station manager Jim Ganley said the station will also be airing a special 6 p.m. Mass each day during the crisis.

For those who don't live in any of these areas, Ganley noted, people can hear Catholic Radio Indy programming several other ways. On a computer, hear live-streaming 24 hours a day at: www.CatholicRadioIndy.org. On a cellphone, dial 605-562-9822 to listen. The call is free for those with unlimited minutes on their cell plan. A "Smart-Speaker" device, simply say, "Alexa, play Catholic Radio Indy." Watch and hear the Mass at any time, on-demand

24 hours a day, courtesy of Catholic TV, by going to www.CatholicRadioIndy.org and clicking on the daily Mass link near the bottom of the website.

- Other media outlets offering Mass include:
- EWTN (Eternal Word Television Network) at www.ewtn.org.
 - www.catholicTV.org/masses/notre-dame-mass (Sunday Mass)
 - www.catholicTV.org/masses/catholicTV-mass (Daily Mass)
 - adw.org/parishes-masses/sunday-tv-mass/
 - saltandlightTV.org/thesundaymass/
 - saintpatrickscathedral.org/live
 - livestream.com/oldstpts. †

Retreat houses cancel retreats, programs, events for health reasons

Criterion staff report

For health purposes and to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, Catholic retreat houses in central and southern Indiana have canceled or rescheduled retreats, programs and events. Below is a list reported to *The Criterion* or gathered from websites:

- Benedict Inn Retreat & Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., in Beech Grove, has canceled the following programs and retreats: Yoga & Spirituality on March 23, 30 and May 11; Triduum Retreat on April 9-12; and Good Friday Personal Day of Retreat on April 10. The fourth session of the Benedictine Spirituality series on March 31 will be rescheduled, with the date to be announced. Anyone who has registered for a program or event that has been cancelled may call 317-788-7581 or email benedictinn@benedictinn.org to request a refund. For updates, go to www.benedictinn.org.
- Mother of the Redeemer Retreat Center, has canceled all retreats and programs through March 31. For updates, call 812-825-4642, ext. 1.
- Mount Saint Francis Center for Spirituality, 101 St. Anthony Dr., in Mt. St. Francis, has canceled all retreats, programs and events through Easter Sunday. For updates, go to www.mountsaintfrancis.org.

- Oldenburg Franciscan Center, 22143 Main St., in Oldenburg, has canceled all retreats and programs through April 18. For updates, go to www.oldenburgfranciscancenter.org.
- Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., in Indianapolis, has closed its offices and canceled all programs through Easter. For updates, go to www.archindy.org/fatima/index.html.
- Providence Spirituality & Conference Center, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, in St. Mary-of-the-Woods, has canceled the following retreats, programs and events:
 - Springtime Scripture on March 19, 26 and April 2
 - Coffee with the Mystics on March 21 and 24
 - Retreat for Busy Moms on March 27-29
 - Art Guild events on April 1 and 2, and May 5 and 7
 - Way of the Cross for Justice on April 10
 - Easter Brunch on April 12
 - Taizé on April 14
 - Sundays at the Woods: Art at the Woods on April 19
 - Enneagram Workshop on May 1-3
 - Bikers, Brunch and Blessing on May 3
 - Women, Wine and Wisdom at the Woods on May 7
 - Mother's Day Brunch on May 10
 - Earth Day and Craft Fair festival on April 25

- All tours and other events
- Sunday Brunch in the O'Shaughnessy Dining Room through May 10
- For updates, go to spsmw.org/covid-19.

- Saint Menrad Archabbey Guest House and Retreat Center, 200 Hill Dr., in St. Meinrad, has canceled all retreats through Easter. For updates, call 800-581-6905 or 812-357-6585. †

Indiana Catholic Women's Conference on March 21 is canceled

The annual Indiana Catholic Women's Conference in Indianapolis, scheduled this year on March 21, has been canceled.

It will occur again on March 20, 2021, featuring the same speakers as scheduled for this year's conference.

For more information, e-mail mariancntr@aol.com. †

St. Vincent de Paul conferences modify ministries, call for volunteers

Criterion staff report

Due to the coronavirus, numerous Society of St. Vincent de Paul (SVdP) ministries throughout central and southern Indiana have been curtailed or canceled. Below is a list as reported to *The Criterion* or gathered from local SVdP websites:

Bedford:

The SVdP Thrift Store at 920 17th St., will be closed until April 6. Donations will not be accepted during this time. The plan for now is to re-open on April 6. For up-to-date information, go to the store's Facebook page, listed as St Vincent de Paul Society Thrift Store Bedford, Indiana (no period after "St").

Bloomington:

• Furniture assistance, donations and operations: Saturday distribution from the center at 1999 N. Packing House Road will be closed starting on March 21. Weekly updates can be accessed by phone at 812-961-1510 or by going to www.svdpbloomington.org. Furniture donations and pickups will continue. To donate furniture, go to the website listed above.

• Financial assistance programs will continue. Requests may be made by calling 812-961-1510, ext. 2, or online at the above website.

Indianapolis:

• The Food Pantry building at 3001 E. 30th St. will not be open, but pre-packaged boxes of food will be distributed from a tent via a drive-through line on

Tuesdays and Thursdays-Saturdays from 8 a.m.-noon.

• The Distribution Center at 1201 E. Maryland St. will still send trucks to pick up donated furniture on Saturdays, as well as accept and sort donations, but the client intake desk will be closed until further notice.

• The Mission 27 Resale shop at 132 Leota St. will remain open with its regular business hours of Mon.-Fri. from 10 a.m.-7 p.m. and Sat. from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. The Mission 27 Resale shop at 1618 Shelby St. will be closed until further notice. Go to www.mission27resale.org for updates.

Despite the modified hours, the Indianapolis conference is still in great need of volunteers.

"Our volunteers have been just wonderful," says John Ryan, SVdP Indianapolis president. "The passion they show for wanting to help the poor is miraculous. I've never seen such a group of dedicated individuals who want to make sure the poor are being served."

But because "a number of our volunteers are retired," many are understandably refraining from volunteering for the time being, he says.

Yet the coronavirus will not diminish the needs of those struggling. Those demands combined with the temporary decrease in volunteers creates a greater need for people to give of their time to keep these vital services going.

"We need at least 30 volunteers a day at the Food Pantry and at least 10 people a day at the Distribution Center," says Ryan.

"With schools being closed, we welcome families and teens to come practice works of mercy

with us, especially in this time of great need and also this time of Lent when we're called to re-energize our Christian life of charity.

"Just show up—we have plenty for everyone to do."

He also encourages those who have an SVdP collection bin at their parish to deposit clothes and shoes in the bins (in closed or sealed bags).

Volunteer hours and tasks for the SVdP Indianapolis Food Pantry and Distribution Center are as follows:

Food Pantry:

• Mon.-Sat., 8 a.m.-noon. Enter through the volunteer entry at the back (south side) of the building and ask for the day manager.

• Tasks include repackaging large donations into smaller portions; filling boxes with pre-packaged food in an assembly line; directing traffic through the drive-through line; distributing boxes of food at the tent-covered drive-through; and more.

Distribution Center:

• Mon.-Fri., 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Enter through the Mission 27 Resale entrance at 132 Leota St. on the east side of the building and ask for Ken Schutt.

• Tasks include sorting clothes and other donated items.

• Five trucks will still go out on Saturdays to pick up donated furniture and other items. Volunteer hours are typically 7:30 a.m. to 1-2 p.m. Drivers must be 21 and have a valid driver's license. It is recommended that truck helpers be 16 or older. For more information or to sign up to drive or help on a truck or to supervise dock workers, sign up in advance at www.svdpindy.org/i-want-to-help/#time. †



The Face of Mercy

By Daniel Conway



Lent prepares us for the great mystery of Easter

The annual message for Lent is an opportunity for the pope to call our attention to aspects of Christian spirituality that may be overlooked in the other liturgical seasons.

Lent's threefold emphasis—prayer, fasting and almsgiving—is certainly not inappropriate during the other seasons, but it is brought into sharp focus during this time that Pope Francis calls a “favorable time to prepare to celebrate with renewed hearts the great mystery of the death and resurrection of Jesus, the cornerstone of our personal and communal Christian life.”

In his 2020 message, Pope Francis calls our attention to four aspects of the spiritual discipline of Lent: 1) the paschal mystery as the basis of conversion; 2) the urgency of conversion; 3) God's passionate will to dialogue with us, his children; and 4) the willingness to recognize that all God's gifts present us with a richness to be shared, not kept for oneself. Certainly these are important concepts to reflect on all year long, but during Lent we are challenged to consider them in new ways.

When the pope says that the paschal mystery is the basis for our conversion,

he reminds us that “Christian joy flows from listening to, and accepting, the Good News of the death and resurrection of Jesus.”

Lent is not a time of gloom and doom, but a period of sober anticipation for an experience of great joy. This truly is Good News, but as the Holy Father warns us, “If we listen instead to the tempting voice of the ‘father of lies’ [Jn 8:44], we risk sinking into the abyss of absurdity, and experiencing hell here on Earth, as all too many tragic events in the personal and collective human experience sadly bear witness.”

The pope challenges us to see that genuine conversion has an immediacy and an urgency. God calls each of us *now*. He invites us to communicate with him and to change the ways we think, act and live. “That is why prayer is so important in Lent,” Pope Francis says. “Even more than a duty, prayer is an expression of our need to respond to God's love which always precedes and sustains us. Christians pray in the knowledge that, although unworthy, we are still loved. Prayer can take any number of different forms, but what truly matters in God's eyes is that it

penetrates deep within us and chips away at our hardness of heart, in order to convert us ever more fully to God and to his will.”

Now is the time to let go of selfishness and sin. By opening ourselves to God in prayer, penance and self-giving, we can “chip away at our hardness of heart” and discover how much God loves us.

Prayer opens our minds and hearts to receive God's abundant graces and enter into dialogue with him. As Pope Francis tells us, “The dialogue that God wishes to establish with each of us through the paschal mystery of his Son has nothing to do with empty chatter.” The recitation of formal prayers is valuable, but only to the extent that it disposes us to hear God's word, to reflect on it in our hearts, and, as St. James tells us, to “be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deluding ourselves” (Jas 1:22).

God's desire to enter into dialogue with us is insatiable. As Pope Francis says, “Despite the sometimes tragic presence of evil in our lives, and in the life of the Church and the world, this opportunity to change our course expresses God's unwavering will not

to interrupt his dialogue of salvation with us.” Lent offers us a unique opportunity to let God speak to us “where we live” as sinners who want, and need, the redemptive love of Christ crucified.

Finally, Pope Francis tells us that God's love and mercy, like all his gifts, are meant to be shared. “Today too, there is a need to appeal to men and women of good will to share, by almsgiving, their goods with those most in need, as a means of personally participating in the building of a better world. Charitable giving makes us more human, whereas hoarding risks making us less human, imprisoned by our own selfishness.”

The three traditional Lenten practices of prayer, fasting and almsgiving are inseparable. If we keep our eyes on the goal—“the great mystery of the death and resurrection of Jesus, the cornerstone of our personal and communal Christian life,” Lent will be a positive, life-giving preparation for Easter joy.

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

“Jesus of Nazareth, by his words, his actions, and his entire person reveals the mercy of God.”

—Pope Francis, “*Misericordiae Vultus*” (“The Face of Mercy”)



“Jesús de Nazaret con su palabra, con sus gestos y con toda su persona revela la misericordia de Dios.”

—Papa Francisco, “*Misericordiae Vultus*” (“El rostro de la misericordia”)

El rostro de la misericordia/Daniel Conway

La Cuaresma nos prepara para el gran misterio de la Pascua

El mensaje anual para la Cuaresma es la oportunidad en la que el Papa centra nuestra atención en aspectos de la espiritualidad cristiana que quizá se pasen por alto en otras temporadas litúrgicas.

El triple énfasis de la Cuaresma (oración, ayuno y limosna) ciertamente no es inapropiado en otras temporadas, pero lo vemos más nítidamente durante esta época que el papa Francisco denomina “un tiempo propicio para prepararnos a celebrar con el corazón renovado el gran Misterio de la muerte y resurrección de Jesús, fundamento de la vida cristiana personal y comunitaria.”

En su mensaje de 2020, el papa Francisco destaca cuatro aspectos de la disciplina espiritual de la Cuaresma: 1) el Misterio pascual, fundamento de la conversión; 2) urgencia de conversión; 3) la apasionada voluntad de Dios de dialogar con sus hijos; y 4) la voluntad de reconocer que todos los dones que Dios nos presenta son una riqueza para compartir, no para acumular solo para sí mismo. Ciertamente estas son nociones importantes sobre las cuales debemos reflexionar todo el año, pero durante la Cuaresma se nos desafía a analizarlas de nueva formas.

Al hablar de que el misterio pascual es el fundamento de nuestra conversión, el papa nos recuerda que “la alegría

del cristiano brota de la escucha y de la aceptación de la Buena Noticia de la muerte y resurrección de Jesús.”

La Cuaresma no es un período sombrío y de condena, si no la antesala sobria de una experiencia de gran alegría. En verdad, estas son buenas noticias, pero, tal como nos advierte el Santo Padre: “si preferimos escuchar la voz persuasiva del ‘padre de la mentira’ [cf. Jn 8:45] corremos el riesgo de hundirnos en el abismo del sinsentido, experimentando el infierno ya aquí en la tierra, como lamentablemente nos testimonian muchos hechos dramáticos de la experiencia humana personal y colectiva.”

El papa nos desafía a ver que la conversión genuina conlleva una inmediatez y un sentido de urgencia. Dios nos llama a cada uno de nosotros *ahora* y nos invita a comunicarnos con Él y a cuestionar nuestras formas de pensar, actuar y vivir. “Por eso la oración es tan importante en el tiempo cuaresmal,” afirma el papa. “Más que un deber, nos muestra la necesidad de corresponder al amor de Dios, que siempre nos precede y nos sostiene. De hecho, el cristiano reza con la conciencia de ser amado sin merecerlo. La oración puede asumir formas distintas, pero lo que verdaderamente cuenta a los ojos de Dios es que penetre dentro de nosotros,

hasta llegar a tocar la dureza de nuestro corazón, para convertirlo cada vez más al Señor y a su voluntad.”

Ahora es el momento de despojarnos del egoísmo y el pecado. Al abrirnos a Dios en la oración, la penitencia y la entrega desinteresada, podemos “llegar a tocar la dureza de nuestro corazón” y descubrir cuánto nos ama Dios.

La oración abre nuestras mentes y corazones para recibir las abundantes gracias de Dios y entrar en un diálogo con Él. El papa Francisco nos dice que “El diálogo que Dios quiere entablar con todo hombre, mediante el Misterio pascual de su Hijo, no es como el que se atribuye a los atenienses.” Recitar oraciones formales constituye una práctica valiosa únicamente en la medida en que nos dispone a escuchar la Palabra de Dios, a reflexionar en nuestros corazones y, tal como lo dice Santiago, a ser “hacedores de la palabra y no solamente oidores que se engañan a sí mismos” (Sant 1:22).

El deseo de Dios de entrar en un diálogo con nosotros es insaciable. Como lo expresa el Sumo Pontífice: “A pesar de la presencia—a veces dramática—del mal en nuestra vida, al igual que en la vida de la Iglesia y del mundo, este espacio que se nos ofrece para un cambio de rumbo manifiesta la voluntad tenaz de Dios de no interrumpir el diálogo de

salvación con nosotros.” La cuaresma nos ofrece una oportunidad única para permitir que Dios nos hable “donde quiera que estemos” como pecadores que desean y necesitan el amor redentor de Cristo crucificado.

Por último, el papa Francisco nos dice que el amor y la misericordia de Dios, al igual que todos sus dones están destinados a compartirse. “Hoy sigue siendo importante recordar a los hombres y mujeres de buena voluntad que deben compartir sus bienes con los más necesitados mediante la limosna, como forma de participación personal en la construcción de un mundo más justo. Compartir con caridad hace al hombre más humano, mientras que acumular conlleva el riesgo de que se embrutezca, ya que se cierra en su propio egoísmo.”

Las tres prácticas tradicionales de la Cuaresma—oración, ayuno y limosna—son inseparables. Si mantenemos la vista fija en el objetivo—“el gran Misterio de la muerte y resurrección de Jesús, fundamento de la vida cristiana personal y comunitaria”—la Cuaresma será una preparación positiva y dadora de vida para la alegría de la Pascua.

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

Superintendent says keep students on established routine

By John Shaughnessy

As a former teacher and as a parent of a Catholic school student, Gina Fleming believes that “young people do much better with established routines.”

Now as the superintendent of the 68 Catholic schools in the archdiocese, Fleming recommends that parents keep their focus on maintaining established routines for their children during this time when archdiocesan schools are closed at least until April 6 as a precaution against the coronavirus.

To start, Fleming suggests that parents should “stick to your child’s typical bedtime routine, allowing for students to wake up within an hour of their general wake-up time. This will help your child when it is time to head back to the classroom.”

She also recommends limiting their “screen time,” whether it is watching television or playing video games.

“Allow time for creative play, crafts, exploring hobbies, reading and even some ‘boredom,’ ” she says. “It is during these states that young people can be their most innovative, creative selves. You can build with Legos, popsicle sticks or other items around the house.

“You can play board games as a family, or even have your child create his/her own game for the family to play. Leave time to color together, paint together, exercise together ... there are endless options that do not require a screen of any kind.

“To create a healthy family media plan, go to: bit.ly/33mOchy. This is also available in Spanish.”

Fleming also provided a chart (to the right) that parents could use to provide structure to a child’s day to continue learning and growing while he or she is away from their school building. †

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
Eat breakfast.	Eat breakfast.	Eat breakfast.
Shower/bathe.	Shower/bathe.	Shower/bathe.
Brush teeth.	Brush teeth.	Brush teeth.
Say a prayer of thanksgiving.	Say a prayer of thanksgiving.	Say a prayer of thanksgiving.
Check in to e-learning.	Check in to e-learning.	Check in to e-learning.
Eat healthy morning snack.	Eat healthy morning snack.	Eat healthy morning snack.
Free read for 20 minutes.	Free read for 20 minutes.	Free read for 20 minutes.
Practice math facts for 10 minutes.	Practice math facts for 10 minutes.	Practice math facts for 10 minutes.
Say the mealtime blessing prayer.	Say the mealtime blessing prayer.	Say the mealtime blessing prayer.
Eat lunch.	Eat lunch.	Eat lunch.
Exercise for 20 minutes.	Exercise for 20 minutes.	Exercise for 20 minutes.
Complete remaining assignments.	Complete remaining assignments.	Complete remaining assignments.
Clean up space.	Clean up space.	Clean up space.
Complete chores.	Complete chores.	Complete chores.
Recite the “ <i>Memorare</i> .”	Recite the “ <i>Memorare</i> .”	Recite the “ <i>Memorare</i> .”
Write a letter to your grandma.	Write a letter to your teacher.	Write a letter to your godparent.
Say at least one decade of the rosary.	Say at least one decade of the rosary.	Say at least one decade of the rosary.
NOW you can play or rest!	NOW you can play or rest!	NOW you can play or rest!

Area Catholic colleges announce changes due to coronavirus pandemic

By John Shaughnessy

While the uncertainty and the fear surrounding the coronavirus continues to leave its impact on everyday life, the three Catholic colleges in the archdiocese have continued to monitor the ever-changing landscape and make adjustments for its students and its communities.

On March 16, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College in St. Mary-of-the-Woods announced that all athletic events are canceled through April 3. The college also postponed its annual ring ceremony on March 21, to keep in line with Indiana’s new restrictions that gatherings in Indiana should be limited to 50 people or less.

Classes at the campus near Terre Haute were also canceled on March 16-17 so the college could transition to providing online-only instruction, said Dee Reed, the school’s executive director of strategic communications. The online-only instruction is initially scheduled to be in place from March 18 through April 3.

As of *The Criterion* going to press this week, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College

planned to keep open its residential housing for students, while limiting access on residential floors to its students only. Reed also noted that the college’s dining hall plans to continue to be open for students, faculty and staff.

On March 16, Marian University in Indianapolis announced that it is “recommending that students leave campus and return to their primary residences, if possible. All courses will be taught online for the remainder of the academic year.”

In a note to students and their families, Marian’s president Daniel Elsener wrote that “students who have a need to remain in the residence halls will be accommodated.” He also stated that “there will be dining service available for students who must remain on campus.”

Elsener’s note also announced that Marian’s spring sports season has been cancelled.

“In closing, I can’t help but think of the foundational beliefs and traditions of Catholic higher education and how they apply to the situation in which we currently find ourselves,” Elsener noted.

“While scientists and medical professionals work diligently to mitigate the severity of the major changes this virus is making in our lives, our faith can give us perspective and hope. We have much to be thankful for in our lives and should not take those blessings, or each other, for granted.”

Seminarians at Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary in Indianapolis, who takes classes at Marian, are also returning to their primary residences.

On March 17, Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad announced that on-campus classes have been suspended for the rest of the spring semester, as part of Saint Meinrad’s effort to limit the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

Resident seminarians were told to return home to their dioceses and religious communities by March 20, according to a statement from Benedictine Father Denis Robinson, president-rector of Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology.

“Students will be completing coursework by way of electronic delivery

and email, according to the design of individual faculty members. All academic work will be completed,” Father Robinson noted in the statement.

He added, “I am also aware that, for some of our seminarians, it is impossible or impractical that they return to dioceses, religious communities or even to their homes. Seminarians who, for any reason, will not be able to leave campus or would prefer to remain at Saint Meinrad for a time will be able to do so. Meals and liturgical celebrations will be available for them, as will the support of the formation staff.”

In closing, he noted, “We here at Saint Meinrad remain united to our dioceses and religious communities in prayerful support during this difficult time. Please know of the prayers of the Saint Meinrad community for your local communities.

“If there is a positive outcome to this crisis, let us hope that it will be in the vast outpouring of charity and love on the part of many in our community. I have stressed with our seminarians that, as they leave Saint Meinrad, they go as ambassadors and servants of the Church. I know these men, and I know their quality.” †

SUPERINTENDENT

continued from page 1

Q. Many Catholic school students rely on the free-lunch program from the federal government for nutritious meals during their school day. Are there plans in place to help in that regard during this time?

A. “Several of our Catholic schools are providing meals either on site [again honoring the social distancing protocols] or providing ‘grab and go’ services. We encourage families to contact their school to know what options are available.”

Q. The closing of schools occurs during the season of Lent, extending at least until the beginning of Holy Week.

Any advice for helping students, staff and parents to stay focused on their faith during this time?

A. “In some ways, this unique situation may be viewed as a gift; in others, a challenge. Accept the challenge through prayer intentions for those who are ill and/or suffering, as well as in gratitude for health care professionals.

“This is also a wonderful time for each of us to review our Church’s social justice teachings. What can we do in times like these to care for the most vulnerable? To care for God’s creation? To participate in society while remaining cognizant of the health risks for many?”

“To learn more about some answers to these questions, go to bit.ly/38U3wmX.”

Q. Many families already have plans to travel for spring break

during this time. Do you have any advice for families about minimizing their risks in relation to traveling during this time?

A. “Continue to follow the guidelines provided by your local board of health as well as those provided by Indiana and U.S. health professionals.”

Q. Any other questions that need to be addressed that would be helpful to students and parents?

A. “On behalf of Archbishop [Charles C.] Thompson, the Office of Catholic Schools and all of our school leaders, we thank all of our parents and guardians for their patience, their partnership and their flexibility during this unique situation. Rob Bridges, president at Cathedral High School in Indianapolis, recently shared with his

community the written commentary from Blessed Basil Moreau, founder of the Congregation of the Holy Cross, in response to the 1849 cholera epidemic in LeMans, France:

Prayer is like a health zone which we must set up around our homes and schools. Moreover, it can heal souls. It is this spirit of prayer which gives me confidence that the plague will spare Holy Cross, which is so visibly under the protection of Divine Providence. Put your confidence in prayer, therefore, but at the same time, do not neglect the precautions recommended by doctors and other officials.

“Let us continue to trust in the Lord always and do our part to aid in the health and safety of the common good.” †

Seminarians make local pilgrimage in response to coronavirus

By Sean Gallagher

An outbreak of smallpox threatened the people of southern Indiana in 1871.

In response, the seminarians at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad made a pilgrimage on foot to the nearby Shrine of Our Lady of Monte Cassino to invoke Mary's prayers to keep them and the broader community safe from the disease.

The community was protected from the outbreak, and seminarians at Saint Meinrad have for many years commemorated that pilgrimage from nearly 150 years ago by making their own pilgrimages to the shrine in January.

But with the growing outbreak in the U.S. of the coronavirus, also known as COVID-19, some 50 members of the seminary community made another pilgrimage to the shrine on March 13.

It was quickly organized the day before when schools and large public events across the country began to be cancelled in response to the outbreak.

The effort at Saint Meinrad was led in part by Benedictine Father Christian Raab, a formation dean and assistant professor of theology in the seminary.

"It really was an act of faith in a scary time," he said. "In this moment, we feel under threat, similar to the way people felt almost 150 years ago."

The pilgrimage began with the singing of a Marian hymn on the hill on which Saint Meinrad is situated. As the pilgrims made their way down the hill, across an adjacent valley and then up a steep hill to the shrine, they prayed the sorrowful and glorious mysteries of the rosary.

The second rosary was completed as they reached the top of the hill and the shrine came in sight. The "*Salve Regina*" ("Hail, Holy Queen") was chanted outside the shrine, which could not hold all of the pilgrims because of its small size. A Marian litany was prayed, a hymn was sung and a final blessing was given before the pilgrims made their way back to the seminary.

"It was very moving," said Father Christian. "We prayed for all of our political leaders, that they be given the gifts of the Holy Spirit to make good decisions, because it's hard to make decisions in a time like this. We prayed for all those who are sick and who had died, all around the world. And we prayed in a special way for the protection of our students, staff, co-workers and neighbors [from this virus]."

"In addition to praying and petitioning, it was about demonstrating faith. We entrusted the situation to God so we could have courage and hope in a time where a lot of people might be despairing."

Archdiocesan seminarians James "JJ"



Led by Benedictine Father Christian Raab, seminarians in formation for the priesthood at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad walk on March 13 along State Road 62 outside of the southern Indiana town while on a pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady Monte Cassino. They sought Mary's intercession in response to the growing outbreak in the U.S. of the coronavirus. (Submitted photo by Corey Bruns)

Huber and Tyler Huber—who are not related—took part in the pilgrimage.

"In addition to the prayers we were offering up for the sake of our community and the world at large, it was an incredible opportunity to offer ourselves as a sign of Christ," said Tyler. "As Christians, we are not afraid of this pandemic for we have hope in Jesus Christ. Hopefully our pilgrimage directed people's eyes toward heaven and the divine life to which we are called."

The fact that the pilgrimage was much like the one that took place in 1871 was on JJ's mind as he made his way with the other pilgrims to the shrine and prayed with them.

"This is roughly the same scene that those seminarians 150 years ago saw as they made that first pilgrimage," he said. "They walked down this hill. They walked up that hill. They walked by this creek, all praying the same prayers we are now. And 100 years from now, seminarians may be commemorating this pilgrimage, too."

"It was a surreal moment of connection to the past, present, and future."

As a future parish priest, JJ knows that it will be his duty one day, God willing, to place the trials and challenges of the people he will serve at the heart of his prayer.

He's seen his pastor at St. Gabriel Parish in Connorsville, Father Dustin Boehm, do this in a public way through leading outdoor rosary processions in response to a drug abuse crisis in that southeastern Indiana town.

"The solidarity that comes from being in a public place praying for that place and those in it makes prayer more connected to those whom you're praying for," said JJ.

That connection, though, in a time marked by contagious diseases like COVID-19 can be more spiritual than physical when social distancing is emphasized.

Seminarians at Saint Meinrad are experiencing this by having the off-campus ministry they usually take part in on Wednesdays be suspended for the rest of the semester, along with their classes, which were suspended on March 17.

For Tyler, that means taking an

unwelcome break from campus ministry at the University of Southern Indiana (USI) in Evansville, Ind.

"I have absolutely loved experiencing campus ministry, and I love the students I get to minister to every week," said Tyler. "The possibility of not returning to USI's campus this year is saddening, but to offer up the names of my supervisor and the students as I made that pilgrimage was something special."

JJ knows that many of the Catholics of central and southern Indiana he hopes to one day serve as a priest are wondering how to approach this challenging time with their faith. His advice: go back to the basics, including what is at the heart of Jesus' message to everyone, "Repent and believe in the Gospel" (Mk 1:15).

"If we do this," JJ said, "if we engage the sacraments of the Church as we should, if we pray as we should, if we live as we should, we can know that we have a home with the Father. There is nothing more important than that." †

Religious sister, security guard among those killed in Nigerian gas explosion

LAGOS, Nigeria (CNS)—The principal of a Catholic girls' school was among 15 people killed in the impact of an explosion at a gas processing plant in Lagos, Nigeria's commercial capital.

Sacred Heart of Jesus Sister Henrietta Alokha and a woman who worked as a security guard were rescuing

students from a chapel that had caught fire. They "died in the process of ensuring that the students were safe," Archbishop Alfred Adewale Martins of Lagos said in a March 16 statement. He did not release the name of the security guard.

The roof of the chapel at Bethlehem Girls' College in

the Lagos suburb of Abule Ado caved in and fell on the two women, the statement said.

The March 15 explosion destroyed about 50 buildings after a fire broke out in Abule Ado. Nigeria's state-owned oil company said the explosion was triggered after a truck hit some gas cylinders stacked in a gas processing plant near a pipeline.

The "devastating explosion, which very badly affected our Bethlehem Girls' College ... occurred while the students and staff were at Sunday Mass," the archbishop said.

The priest who was celebrating the Mass helped in rescuing the students and is safe, the statement said. All of the students were taken to safety, and those who were injured were hospitalized, it said.

The school's staff quarters, administrative building, refectory and hostel buildings were razed to the ground in the fire.

"No essential building is standing except the convent housing the nuns in charge of the school," the archbishop said.

The archdiocese is making plans for the students to be accommodated in its other schools to ensure their education is not disrupted, he said.

Noting that official investigations into the explosion are yet to be done, the archbishop said, "All we know is that a truck accident was involved, the pipeline going through the community was involved, as well as a stack of gas cylinders."

Nigeria is Africa's biggest crude oil producer. †



Paramedics and security in Lagos, Nigeria, observe a building that was damaged by a pipeline explosion on March 15. Archbishop Adewale Martins confirmed on March 16 that a nun and a female security guard died while rescuing students from a chapel that had caught fire. (CNS photo/Temilade Adelaja, Reuters)

Inauguran servicio nacional para denunciar conductas sexuales indebidas relacionadas con obispos estadounidenses

Criterion staff report

Como parte de un esfuerzo continuo para fortalecer su compromiso de proteger a los menores de edad y a los adultos vulnerables, las diócesis católicas de los Estados Unidos han establecido un sistema de denuncia independiente para recibir alegaciones de abuso o conducta sexual indebida, así como también encubrimiento de dichos abusos por parte de obispos.

Las personas pueden llamar a la línea de atención gratuita 800-276-1562 para presentar una queja o pueden realizar una denuncia por Internet en ReportBishopAbuse.org.

El servicio llamado Informes sobre Obispos Católicos fue creado en respuesta al llamado del papa Francisco a contar con “sistemas estables y fácilmente accesibles al público” para denunciar en todo el mundo casos de abuso, planteamiento que expuso en su carta apostólica titulada “*Vos estis lux mundi*” (“Vosotros sois la luz del mundo”), publicada el 7 de mayo de 2019. En dicho documento se exige que cada diócesis católica del mundo cree procedimientos para presentar tales denuncias antes del 1 de junio de 2020.

Los requisitos expresados en “*Vos estis lux mundi*” no reemplazan los sistemas que ya existen en cada diócesis y arquidiócesis de los Estados Unidos para denunciar abusos por parte del clero, religiosos y empleados o voluntarios de la Iglesia. Este nuevo sistema de denuncia independiente ha sido creado específicamente para atender quejas de abuso sexual, conducta sexual indebida y quejas relacionadas con encubrimiento por parte de obispos y superiores generales de órdenes religiosas.

Mediante el servicio de Informes sobre Obispos Católicos se pueden transmitir a las autoridades eclesiales denuncias con respecto a obispos católicos estadounidenses que hayan:

—forzado a alguien a realizar o a someterse actos sexuales mediante violencia, amenaza o abuso de poder;

—realizado actos sexuales con un menor o una persona vulnerable;

—producido, expuesto, tenido en su poder o distribuido pornografía infantil, hayan reclutado o inducido a un menor de edad o una persona vulnerable a participar en exhibiciones pornográficas;

—o bien, un obispo diocesano, eparquial o un clérigo que tenga a su cargo una diócesis o eparquía, en ausencia de un obispo diocesano o eparquial, que haya interferido intencionalmente con una investigación civil o eclesial relacionada con alegaciones de abuso sexual cometido por otro clérigo o religioso.

En respuesta a “*Vos estis lux mundi*,” la Conferencia de Obispos Católicos de los Estados Unidos (USCCB) aprobó en su reunión de otoño de 2019 tres documentos que reafirman su pleno compromiso con las disposiciones contenidas en la carta apostólica del papa Francisco, así como también directrices y protocolos para cumplir con los mandatos expresados en “*Vos estis lux mundi*.” Los tres documentos, a saber: “Afirmación de nuestro compromiso episcopal” (*Affirming our Episcopal Commitments*), “Directrices para la implementación de las disposiciones de ‘*Vos estis lux mundi*’ relativas a los obispos y sus equivalentes” (*Directives for the Implementation of the Provisions of ‘Vos estis lux mundi’ Concerning Bishops and their Equivalents*) y el “Protocolo concerniente a las restricciones no penales que existen con respecto a los obispos” (*Protocol Regarding Available Non-Penal Restrictions on Bishops*), se encuentran en el sitio web de cada diócesis en Indiana.

Según el nuevo servicio de denuncia independiente, Convercent, Inc., una empresa independiente encargada de administrar la línea telefónica gratuita y el sitio web, recibirá las denuncias y tendrá la responsabilidad de enviarlas al arzobispo metropolitano y al Nuncio apostólico correspondiente, este último como representante del Santo Padre en Washington D.C., y el encargado de transmitir el informe a la Santa Sede. La Iglesia católica en los Estados Unidos tiene 32 provincias, cada una de las cuales tiene una arquidiócesis y varias diócesis. Al encargado de la arquidiócesis (el arzobispo) también se lo denomina el “metropolitano” y es quien preside la provincia. Las demás diócesis se denominan “sufragáneas.”

En Indiana, las cinco diócesis católicas—Indianapolis, Gary, Fort Wayne-South Bend, Lafayette y Evansville—conforman la Provincia de Indianapolis. El metropolitano de la provincia es el arzobispo de Indianapolis.

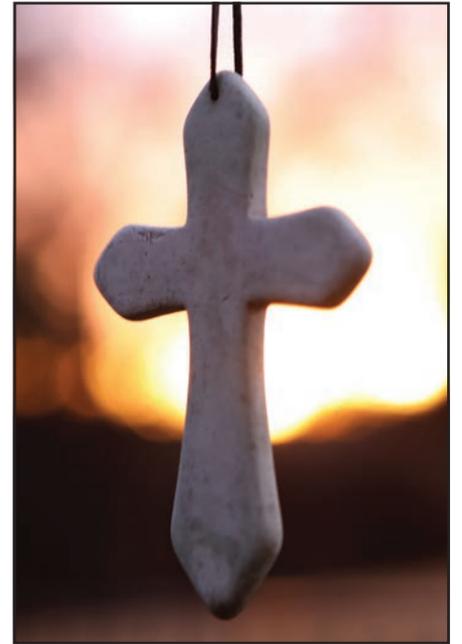
Si se presentaran alegaciones contra el arzobispo de Indianapolis, el informe se transmitiría al obispo sufragáneo de mayor antigüedad de la provincia.

Cada metropolitano ha designado a un seglar para que reciba los informes de conducta sobre los obispos, ya sea a través de la entidad independiente encargada de recibir las denuncias o presentadas directamente al metropolitano. Además de designar a un seglar para que reciba los informes, cada metropolitano debe designar a expertos calificados para que colaboren en las investigaciones de denuncias. En Indiana, la lista de expertos, todos seculares, comprende detectives de policía jubilados, un exfiscal federal, psicólogos clínicos, un abogado de derecho civil jubilado, el director de una escuela y otros con especialidades en campos relevantes.

Una vez que se recibe un informe, el metropolitano cumplirá rápidamente con todas las leyes civiles pertinentes con respecto a presentar informes a las autoridades civiles y alentará a toda persona que tenga una alegación a que presente su propia denuncia ante dichas autoridades. Asimismo, cada metropolitano tiene la responsabilidad de velar porque toda persona que presente una denuncia de haber sufrido daños reciba atención pastoral.

Se debe realizar de inmediato una evaluación inicial del informe para determinar si aparenta ser manifiestamente infundado o no, o bien si la imposibilidad y la falsedad del informe es obvia y evidente y no se requiere más investigación. Si se determina que el informe es manifiestamente infundado, se deberá informar al Nuncio apostólico de los motivos para arribar a esta conclusión y presentarle cualquier información relevante al respecto. El Nuncio apostólico puede indicar que se lleven a cabo más investigaciones para determinar con un mayor grado de certidumbre que el informe es falso.

Si el informe no resulta ser manifiestamente infundado, el metropolitano debe solicitar la autorización de la Santa Sede a través del Nuncio apostólico para comenzar una investigación basada en el informe. Al mismo tiempo se debe realizar una determinación con respecto a si existe sesgo personal o conflicto de interés que pudiera impedir al



metropolitano que recibió el informe llevar a cabo una investigación imparcial. En ese caso, el metropolitano deberá indicar en la solicitud a la Santa Sede que se lo excuse del caso.

Una vez que la Santa Sede concede la autorización para comenzar la investigación, el metropolitano puede llevar a cabo dicha investigación personalmente o designar a un investigador elegido a partir de un grupo de expertos seculares identificados previamente por la provincia para que lleven a cabo la investigación.

Al concluir la investigación, el metropolitano debe enviar sus hallazgos a la Santa Sede a través del Nuncio apostólico, inclusive los nombres y títulos de las personas de la lista de expertos elegidos para colaborar en el proceso, así como también otros documentos pertinentes. Una vez que la Santa Sede recibe las conclusiones de la investigación, esta iniciará el proceso adecuado que culminará en una determinación final.

De conformidad con la presunción de inocencia, se deben aplicar todos los pasos adecuados para proteger la reputación de la persona investigada, para garantizar el ejercicio de los demás derechos de los que goza según el derecho canónico y para restituirle su buen nombre si ha sido ilegítimamente dañado.

La USCCB revisará estas directrices cada tres años. †

BISHOPS

continued from page 1

new third-party reporting system has been created to specifically address sexual abuse, sexual misconduct and cover-up of complaints involving bishops and general superiors of religious orders.

The Catholic Bishop Abuse Reporting service allows for individuals to relay to Church authorities any reports of U.S. Catholic bishops who have:

—forced someone to perform or to submit to sexual acts through violence, threat, or abuse of authority;

—performed sexual acts with a minor or a vulnerable person;

—produced, exhibited, possessed or distributed child pornography, or recruited or induced a minor or a vulnerable person to participate in pornographic exhibitions;

—or, a diocesan or eparquial bishop, or a cleric overseeing a diocese/eparchy in the absence of a diocesan or eparquial bishop, who has intentionally interfered with a civil or Church investigation into allegations of sexual abuse committed by another cleric or religious.

In response to “*Vos estis lux mundi*,” the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) approved three documents at its fall 2019 meeting affirming full commitment to the provisions in Pope Francis’ apostolic letter as well as directives and protocols for fulfilling the mandates in “*Vos estis lux mundi*.” The three documents—

“*Affirming our Episcopal Commitments*,” “*Directives for the Implementation of the Provisions of ‘Vos estis lux mundi’ Concerning Bishops and their Equivalents*” and “*Protocol Regarding Available Non-Penal Restrictions on Bishops*”—may be found on the website of each diocese in Indiana.

Under the new third-party reporting service, complaints will be fielded by Convercent, Inc., an independent company, which is operating the toll-free hotline and website. Convercent is responsible for sending the allegations to the appropriate metropolitan archbishop and to the apostolic nuncio, who is the Holy Father’s representative in Washington, D.C., who sends the report to the Holy See. The Catholic Church in the United States has 32 provinces. Each province has one archdiocese plus several dioceses. The head of the archdiocese (the archbishop) is also known as the “metropolitano,” and he presides over the province. The other dioceses are referred to as “suffragan” dioceses.

In Indiana, the five Catholic dioceses—Indianapolis, Gary, Fort Wayne-South Bend, Lafayette and Evansville—make up the Province of Indianapolis. The metropolitan of the province is the Archbishop of Indianapolis. If an allegation were to be made against the Archbishop of Indianapolis, the report is forwarded to the senior suffragan bishop in the province.

A layperson has been appointed by each metropolitan to receive reports of

conduct about bishops either through the third-party reporting entity or those made directly to the metropolitan. In addition to appointing a layperson to receive reports, each metropolitan is to appoint qualified experts to help with investigations of claims. In Indiana, the list of experts, who are all lay people, includes retired police detectives, a former federal prosecutor, clinical psychologists, a retired civil rights attorney, a school principal and others with appropriate areas of expertise.

Once a report has been received, the metropolitan will promptly comply with all applicable civil laws with respect to making reports to civil authorities and will encourage anyone with an allegation to make his or her own report to civil authorities. Each metropolitan is also responsible for seeing that any person making a report of having been harmed receives pastoral care.

An initial examination of the report is to be immediately conducted to determine whether or not the report appears manifestly unfounded or whether its impossibility or falsehood is obvious, clear and in need of no further investigation. If the report is determined to be manifestly unfounded, the apostolic nuncio should be informed of the reasons for the conclusion and provided any relevant information. The apostolic nuncio can direct that further inquiry be conducted in order to determine with more certainty that the report is false.

If the report is not manifestly unfounded, the metropolitan is to

request authorization from the Holy See through the apostolic nuncio to begin an investigation into the report. A determination should also be made at the same time whether there is any personal bias or conflict of interest that would hinder the metropolitan who received the report from completing an impartial investigation. If so, the metropolitan should indicate in the request to the Holy See that he has recused himself.

Once authorization is given by the Holy See to begin the investigation, the metropolitan may carry out the investigation personally or appoint an investigator chosen from among the lay experts identified previously by the province to conduct the investigation.

At the conclusion of the investigation, the metropolitan is to send the findings to the Holy See through the apostolic nuncio, including the names and titles of the individuals from the expert list who were chosen to assist in the process, as well as any other pertinent documents. Once the Holy See receives the conclusions of the investigation, the Holy See will initiate the appropriate process that will lead to a final judgement.

In accord with the presumption of innocence, all appropriate steps are to be taken to protect the reputation of the person under investigation, to assure the exercise of other rights afforded him under canon law, and to restore his good name if it has been illegitimately harmed.

These directives will be reviewed every three years by the USCCB. †

Faith *Alive!*

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Lent can be a special time of seeking and offering forgiveness

By Mike Nelson

Forgiveness—both seeking and offering it—is one of the great challenges of our Catholic faith. But it is also among its greatest treasures.

In some respects, forgiveness shouldn't be that challenging, great though our need to seek or offer forgiveness may be. Look to the Old Testament reading for Thursday of the Fourth Week of Lent from Exodus (Ex 32:7-14), where we find God's patience being tested yet again by the Israelites whom he brought out of slavery in Egypt through the leadership of Moses.

By now, God has heard more than enough of the Israelites' grumbling. Now these "depraved" people had built a golden calf to worship in place of God—and that, God told Moses, was the last straw; he is ready to give this "stiff-necked" people the ultimate heave-ho (Ex 32:7, 9).

But Moses implores God not to do away with the Israelites, but to instead recall his promise to Abraham, Isaac and Israel: that he would "make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky," that he would give those descendants all the land he promised as their perpetual heritage (Ex 32:13).

"So the Lord relented in the punishment he had threatened to inflict on his people" (Ex 32:14).

Other Scripture readings during the Fourth Week of Lent speak to our need and desire for forgiveness, and God's promise of a better life.

On Monday, God—through the prophet Isaiah—says, "I am about to create new heavens and a new Earth. The things of the past shall not be remembered or come to mind. Instead, there shall always be rejoicing and happiness in what I create" (Is 65:17-18).

And on Tuesday, the psalmist says, "A clean heart create for me, O God; give me back the joy of your salvation" (Ps 51:12,14).

If God, who has been offended countless times by our sins, can forgive, why can't we? Our faith teaches us that everyone—even the depraved and the stiff-necked among us—can ask for and receive forgiveness through the sacrament of penance.

"There is no offense, however serious, that the Church cannot forgive," says the



St. John Paul II sits with his would-be assassin, Mehmet Ali Agca, in Rome's Rebibbia prison in 1983. Pope John Paul II forgave Agca and later said he did so "because that's what Jesus teaches. Jesus teaches us to forgive." Lent can be a special time for Catholics to seek and offer forgiveness.

(CNS photo/Arturo Mari, L'Osservatore Romano)

Catechism of the Catholic Church (#982).

"There is no one, however wicked and guilty, who may not confidently hope for forgiveness."

Provided, the catechism quickly adds, the person's "repentance is honest." We must be sincere in our desire not just to be forgiven but to change our ways for the better—to "go, and from now on do not sin any more," as Jesus told the adulterous woman he saved from stoning by confronting the would-be stone-throwers with the realization that they had their own sins on which to reflect (Jn 8:11).

Looking into our own house, as it

were, is another aspect of forgiveness worth exploring during this season of Lent, a season in which we hopefully seek to change our lives for the better. That aspect is addressed clearly in the Our Father that we pray at every Mass:

"Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who have trespassed against us."

Recall the story of the wicked servant, who pleaded with his master to forgive him when he owed him a great sum of money (Mt 18:23-35). The master did so. But then the servant turned right around

and imprisoned his own fellow servant who owed him a much smaller amount.

Clearly, the importance of forgiveness was lost on the wicked servant, who quickly incurred the wrath of his master, as should any of us who similarly refuse to "do to others" as was done to us (Mt 7:12).

Every celebration of the Mass on solemnities and Sundays, in fact, offers us several reminders of the importance of forgiveness:

—The optional *Confiteor* ("I confess") prayer in

the penitential rite, in which we confess "to almighty God" and one another our sins of commission and omission; we ask blessed Mary, the angels and saints, and those assembled for prayers on our behalf. In response, the celebrant prays, "May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life."

—The Apostles' Creed (especially during Lent), in which we proclaim our belief in not only the Father, Son, Holy Spirit and the Church, but also in "the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting."

—And, as mentioned, the Our Father, praying—shortly before offering one another the sign of peace and receiving the Eucharist—that we may be forgiven, and that we may forgive others.

Forgiveness is love, as Pope Francis declared in his apostolic exhortation *"Amoris Laetitia"* ("The Joy of Love"), when he refers to "the Christian ideal" as "a love that never gives up" (#119).

Such love embraces forgiveness, as God offers his people throughout the Scriptures. Recall the Easter Vigil's seventh reading, in which God, speaking to the house of Israel that has profaned his holy name, promises them new hearts, a new spirit and a new beginning: "You shall be my people, and I will be your God" (Ez 36:28).

And it is certainly what Jesus offers when, crucified on the cross at Calvary, he cries out, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do" (Lk 23:34). It's this kind of unconditional and never-ending love that we seek—and which we are called to offer.

(Catholic journalist Mike Nelson writes from southern California.) †



A man prays during an Ash Wednesday Mass at St. Andrew Church in the Manhattan borough of New York. There are many reminders in every celebration of the Mass of the importance of forgiveness in the Christian faith. (CNS photo/Carlo Allegri, Reuters)

Worship and Evangelization/Erin Jeffries

Find God's presence each day in the loving work of prayer

"Prayer is a remembrance of God often awakened by the memory of the heart: 'We must remember God more often than we draw breath.' But we cannot pray at all times if we do not pray at specific times, consciously willing it" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #2697).



If there is one thing that I have found in my time in formation with the secular Carmelites it is this: prayer is truly a work, a discipline that we must learn and practice, a habit we build intentionally. Find a time that works for you and show up faithfully, as you would anything else on your calendar.

Prayer begins with our certainty and awareness of God's presence, in the quiet of our soul, and active in our lives. A growing awareness of his presence helps us to recognize moments to turn to God to offer him our praise, our sorrow and contrition, our joy and gratitude, our needs and desires, and intercede for the needs of others. Then prayer becomes a heart-to-heart conversation, expressing a

relationship between you and the Holy Trinity, in which both listen, and speak, and sometimes just sit quietly with one another.

Prayer has become a time that I rely on, especially when I am particularly busy. There are times, sometimes even long periods, when prayer feels dry, when you do not feel the consolation—or anything for that matter.

Sometimes when you pray the Liturgy of the Hours, you might find yourself praying a psalm of praise and joy through tears, or at times the only honest answer is "God, I've got nothing, but I'm here." It is in those moments that the habit "keeps you," and you know it is becoming habitual when you are drawn to prayer and restless until you have stopped even just for a few moments.

I was once asked a surprising question by a confessor: he asked what sort of prayer I was drawn to. This is not something I had ever considered, and I offer you this same question.

The Catholic Church has a rich tradition of prayer. Scripture is always a sound beginning, and there is a treasury of spiritualities, various forms of contemplative, meditative prayer, music, and visual arts to explore. Whatever

expression prayer takes, as St. Thérèse of Lisieux put so beautifully, "Prayer is a surge of the heart; it is a simple look turned toward heaven, it is a cry of recognition and of love, embracing both trial and joy" (cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #2558).

The following are two short prayers written by Patty Ochoa, a member of St. Lawrence Parish in Indianapolis, who participates in the Shepherd's FLOCK group hosted by St. Lawrence, St. Andrew the Apostle, and St. Matthew the Apostle parishes, all in Indianapolis:

"Fear not, just be happy.

Talk with your pastor at your church, or your doctors and nurses or family and friends.

Don't feel down and blue, just talk with Jesus and He will be there for you."

"Fill your life with love.

The way to fill your life with love is very simple.

If you want more love, give more love."

(Erin Jeffries is the coordinator of Ministry to Persons with Special Needs in the archdiocesan Office of Catechesis. She can be reached at 317-236-1448 or erjeffries@archindy.org.) †

Making A Difference/

Tony Magliano

'Let's try this again'

Some years ago, I was working as director of Christian formation at a Catholic high school. I remember that on Ash Wednesday while assisting in signing students with blessed ashes, instead of saying "Turn away from sin and be faithful to the Gospel," to one of the students I heard myself starting to say, "Turn away from the Gospel..." At that point, I immediately stopped, and with a smile said



to her: "Let's try that again."

It was a teachable moment for me, one that helped me better appreciate God's delightful sense of humor, and the easy-going, down-to-earth, incarnational way he usually relates to us.

And even more importantly, I more deeply realized that out of our mistakes, shortcomings and even sins, the spirit of God is continuously inspiring us to not get discouraged when we fall short of the mark. Instead, encouragingly the Spirit always says to us, "Let's try that again."

Lent is indeed the perfect time for each of us to ask ourself what thoughts, feelings, words and actions in our life do we need to admit are not good for us and others? And what good thoughts, feelings, words and actions are we failing to nurture for ourself and for others—both near and far?

Once we have honestly done this healthy examination of conscience, with a sorrowful heart and a firm amendment to sin no more, we will hear the Spirit of the Lord peacefully say to us, "Let's try that again."

As has been well noted, our good and merciful Lord is the God of second chances—and third, fourth, fifth and even infinite chances! But for this bountiful gift to take effect in our lives we need to have the humility—the foundational virtue of all the other virtues—to acknowledge our shortcomings, and especially what is sinful in our lives, seek God's forgiveness—especially by regularly availing ourselves to the wonderful sacrament of reconciliation—and concentrate on growing in virtue ever more so.

Now what is true for us as individuals is also true for us collectively as the Church—the "people of God."

In light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, what shortcomings and sins of commission and omission do we need to humbly own up to, and seek pardon for? Perhaps it's a sense of clericalism which Pope Francis has condemned among some clerics. Perhaps it's a rather lackluster, somewhat inattentive participation at what is supposed to be the "celebration" of the Eucharist. Or maybe it's mere token gestures toward the poor, unborn, war-torn and the Earth. What else do you think we as Church need to repent of?

And what is true for us as individuals and as Church is also true for us as a nation. So, likewise, let us ask ourselves what is our government, corporate structures, culture and society saying and doing that is harmful and sinful to the nation and its inhabitants, as well as to the world's inhabitants and the Earth itself?

And what are the many good things our nation is failing to do, things that really could be done—like ending abortion, poverty, hunger, homelessness, war and environmental degradation—to make our nation and world a far more just and loving place?

This Lent, let us wholeheartedly admit our sins to God and resolve as individuals, Church and nation to avoid evil and to do good.

For as the proverb wisely teaches: "Confession is good for the soul."

(Tony Magliano is an internationally syndicated social justice and peace columnist. He is available to speak at diocesan or parish gatherings. Tony can be reached at tmag6@comcast.net.) †

That All May Be One/Fr. Rick Ginther

The connections of Passover to our observance of Holy Week

When I was growing up, Art Linkletter had a delightful TV show, "Kids Say the Darndest Things."



And the title of the show remains true to this day. Kids often leave parents and elders shaking their heads, holding their sides, wondering how to respond appropriately!

Some things that kids say are quite serious. They lead to moments of thought, discussion and prayer.

"Why is this night different from all other nights?" asks a child.

The sun has set on 14 Nisan. It is now 15 Nisan in the Jewish calendar. The days of Passover have begun. A child, often the youngest, has spoken the question.

This meal is unique among Jewish meals. The finest china and silverware are brought out. The food to be eaten and the four cups of wine to be drunk are prepared. The family reclines—if possible—to share the meal.

The feast is highly organized. "Seder" reflects this. The word is derived from the Hebrew word for "order" or "arrangement."

The meal is divided into 15 parts. Tradition has it that these parts "parallel" the 15 steps of the Temple in Jerusalem

on which the Levites stood during Temple services. These same steps are remembered in the "Psalms of Ascent"—Psalms 120-134.

The Seder meal commemorates the Hebrew people fleeing from Egypt. A special text called the "*Haggadah*" is used to retell the story. All observant Jews are called upon to celebrate the Seder meal with their families and friends each year (Ex 12:14, Dt 16:12).

The children present play an integral part. From an early age their eyes, ears and minds are filled with the uniqueness of the night—the food eaten, the words spoken, the psalms sung and the deep meanings of the entire ritual.

Altogether, five questions are asked by a child/children. After the first question as to why this night is different, there follow questions that seek the meaning of the differences of this night: the food (unleavened bread, bitter herbs, the twice dipping of food) and reclining to eat.

All listen to the sacred texts. Comments and insights of meaning follow. For their participation, the children are rewarded with nuts and other sweets.

And all await the finding by a child of the "hidden" piece of unleavened bread (*matzo*). Of course, there is a reward for the finder!

The 14th part of this festive meal is the reciting of the "*Hallel*," Psalms 113-118. (For Christians, each of these psalms

begin with "alleluia," a Greek version of the Hebrew "*hallel*.")

The days of Passover conclude with a full Jewish holiday, *Shvi'i shel Pesach*, or "seventh day of Passover." Special prayer services and festive meals commemorate the miracles at the Red Sea.

There are so many connections of Passover to our Christian observances of Holy Week!

Holy Thursday Mass of the Lord's Supper is rooted in the Seder meal tradition. And like the Seder, it is a "living memorial" in which we participate.

Good Friday, according to John's Gospel, was the time for the slaughtering of the paschal lambs, the time of the death of the Lord—the Lamb of God—on the cross.

At Easter, we refer to the Easter candle as the "Paschal candle," another allusion to Pesach meal and the lamb. And we renew the moment of our "passing through the waters" at our baptism.

Out of the mouths of children (babes), innocence leads to awe. Let us pray for our Jewish brothers and sisters this year (on April 8-16) even as we celebrate Holy Week and the Great Three Days (on April 5-12).

(Father Rick Ginther is director of the archdiocesan Office of Ecumenism and Interreligious Affairs. He is also the pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Indianapolis.) †

The Human Side/Fr. Eugene Hemrick

Our Father reminds us of our connectiveness to others

In his book, *Eating Your Way Through Luke's Gospel*, author Franciscan

Father Robert J. Karris writes about the simplicity of making beer bread because it only takes self-rising flour, sugar and beer.



He then reflects on another aspect of making it: "Even though this recipe is so simple, I cannot accomplish it by myself. I don't grow

self-rising flour or sugar cane in my background. Cans of beer don't grow on the trees in my front lawn. I didn't manufacture the stove either. It is 'we' together who have to bake this simple loaf of bread."

He points out that when we pray the Our Father the words "we," "us" and

"our" are found throughout it, reminding us of our connectiveness and dependence on others.

Theologian Father Romano Guardini and Pope Francis have repeatedly pointed to connectiveness in our postmodern times and the respect it generates for people and God's creation.

Father Guardini felt that less and less will a single person stand out for his or her creativity. Rather, teams of people will jointly accomplish something that, because of its complexity, could not be attained by one researcher working alone. Take, for example, breakthroughs in medicine.

In his encyclical "*Laudato Si'*: On Care for our Common Home," Pope Francis encourages us to see all of life connected and the gratitude we should possess for God's law of connectiveness that sustains human life and the laws of nature.

Sometimes in life there is the temptation to disconnect with those who annoy us, who are the black sheep in the family or who aren't like us. We may embrace the motto, "Charity begins at home." We can't solve the world's problems or of those "people out there."

Instead of thinking in terms of "we," "our" and "us" and community spirit, we may be overly concerned about "I," "me" and "my little world."

Lent is a time to take to heart more fully the words in the Our Father. It's a time to recall that just as God has connected with us, so are we to connect and be one with others, enjoying the blessings of God's creation and living the kingdom of God on Earth.

(Father Eugene Hemrick writes for *Catholic News Service*.) †

Fourth Sunday of Lent/Msgr. Owen F. Campion

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, March 22, 2020

- 1 Samuel 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13a
- Ephesians 5:8-14
- John 9:1-41

Drawing from the first word of the original Latin text of the entrance antiphon for the Mass this weekend, this Sunday long has been called “*Laetare Sunday*.” *Laetare* means “to rejoice.” The Church rejoices that, even amid the drabness and penance of Lent (and indeed of life in general), the glory of Christ shines forth—warm, enlightening and nourishing.

The first reading for this weekend is from the First Book of Samuel. An ancient prophet, and therefore God’s representative and spokesman, Samuel selected the young David to be king of Israel. To signify this appointment, Samuel anointed David with oil.

Anointings have always marked people for special duties or to strengthen them in particular circumstances. All Catholics are anointed when they are baptized or confirmed. Priests and bishops are anointed. Faithful people in bad health are anointed to strengthen them and reinforce their spiritual constitution should they near death. Christian kings were anointed.

David was (and still is) special in the Hebrew mind. He was the great king who united and empowered the nation. But he was much more than a successful political leader. His ultimate duty was in tightening the bond between God and the people. The bond was in the people’s genuine acknowledgement of God. Their lives of obedience to his law confirmed this bond.

St. Paul’s Epistle to the Ephesians provides the second reading. In this passage, Paul admonishes the Christians of Ephesus, in the first century one of the major seaports, commercial centers and pagan shrines of the Roman Empire.

Drawing heavily upon the imagery of light and darkness, Paul links light with righteousness and darkness with sin, calling upon the Christian Ephesians to live in the light.

St. John’s Gospel furnishes the last

reading. Central to the story is the Lord’s meeting with a man blind since birth. The Lord gives the man sight. To understand this entire story, it is necessary to realize how Jews at the time of Jesus looked upon physical difficulties.

Unaware of the scientific explanations for blindness and other problems that people of this age have come to know, the ancient Jews believed such terrible hardships came as a result of sin. After all, original sin ushered death itself into the world. In this thinking, sin also upset the good order of nature itself, hence blindness.

Thus, the question came. Was this man’s blindness the result of his own sin or a sin of his parents?

Searching for an answer, the Pharisees questioned the man. They were obstinate and smug. By contrast, the blind man was humble and sincere. He had faith in God and in Jesus.

An added element, surely of special interest to the early generations of Christians who suffered persecution, was that the Pharisees expelled the man from their synagogue. The righteous often suffer from the ill will and short-sightedness of others.

Reflection

The Gospel story recalls a miracle. It also is a study in contrasts. On the one side is the man born blind whom Jesus healed. On the other side are the Pharisees, self-satisfied and confident in their high estimates of their own piety and knowledge.

Apply these contrasts to ourselves. We may not be very evil or even pompous and boastful as were the Pharisees. Still, we have our limitations, among them an incorrect trust in our personal attributes. Our exaggerated judgments of ourselves trick us again and again and again.

All this keeps us in the dark. Lent is the time to face facts. We must recognize our need for God. We must turn to God. He is light.

Life can be a dark night. *Laetare Sunday* represents the dawn, edging across the horizon. Easter is near. Christ, the light of the world, shines. Rejoice! †



Daily Readings

Monday, March 23
St. Turibius of Mogrovejo,
bishop
Isaiah 65:17-21
Psalm 30:2, 4-6, 11-12a, 13b
John 4:43-54

Tuesday, March 24
Ezekiel 47:1-9, 12
Psalm 46:2-3, 5-6, 8-9
John 5:1-16

Wednesday, March 25
The Annunciation of the
Lord
Isaiah 7:10-14; 8:10
Psalm 40:7-11
Hebrews 10:4-10
Luke 1:26-38

Thursday, March 26
Exodus 32:7-14
Psalm 106:19-23
John 5:31-47

Friday, March 27
Wisdom 2:1a, 12-22
Psalm 34:17-21, 23
John 7:1-2, 10, 25-30

Saturday, March 28
Jeremiah 11:18-20
Psalm 7:2-3, 9b-12
John 7:40-53

Sunday, March 29
Fifth Sunday of Lent
Ezekiel 37:12-14
Psalm 130:1-8
Romans 8:8-11
John 11:1-45
or John 11:3-7, 17, 20-27,
33b-45

Question Corner/Fr. Kenneth Doyle

The Church encourages funeral Masses for all Catholics, does not require them

Q Is a Catholic required to have a Catholic burial ceremony—in a church with a Mass? I am thinking of having just a graveside service instead, with a priest, of course, but just a private ceremony. I mean no disrespect to the Church, but I think this might be easier for the family. (Indiana)



A A funeral Mass is not mandated by the Church when a Catholic dies. But it is certainly strongly encouraged. In fact, the *Order of Christian Funerals* says: “The Mass, the memorial of Christ’s death and resurrection, is the principal celebration of the Christian funeral” (#5).

It pleases me that you do want a priest involved in your burial service. But the Mass is the most powerful prayer that the Church has, so why deprive yourself of that benefit? The celebration of the Eucharist commends the deceased to the mercy and compassion of the Lord, and it reminds those in attendance that death has been overcome by the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross.

So, it is also educational and can thus serve to bring comfort and peace to those in attendance. It bothers me that sometimes these days certain funeral homes seem to discourage the family of the bereaved from celebrating a funeral Mass, citing the extra cost of transporting the body to a church. But for me, I would surely want the strongest help that the Church can offer at the time of my passing—and that is the Eucharist.

It needn’t, though, be a public event. You can have as many (or as few) people at the Mass as you like; that all depends on whether you decide to publish in advance the details of the ceremony. At the very least, if you decide to mark your burial without a Eucharist, you would want to arrange a Mass at a later date.

Q I read with sadness in today’s news that a priest in New Jersey denied the sacrament of first Eucharist to a boy who is autistic because the priest believed that the

boy was “unable to determine right from wrong due to his disability.” Could you please clarify the Church’s position on this?

I question whether a person’s mental status is an unambiguous reflection of what might be occurring in that person’s soul. I see individuals with Down syndrome who receive Communion regularly, so where does the Church draw the line? Would individuals with other mental challenges also be denied Communion—say, persons with schizophrenia or early onset dementia? (Missouri)

A I’m sure that by this time, you have seen the follow-up to the situation you mention. Soon after the story broke, the New Jersey pastor issued an apology on the parish’s website, saying that there had been “an unfortunate breakdown in communication that led to a misunderstanding.”

“A delay in receiving the sacrament was discussed,” he said, “until readiness could be assessed; there was never to be denial of Communion to this child.” The boy, said the pastor, is “welcome in our program and will be able to receive first holy Communion this year.”

The sacramental guidelines for persons with disabilities, issued by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in 2017, explain that the criterion for reception of Communion is simply that the person be able to distinguish the body of Christ from ordinary food—“even if this recognition is evidenced through manner, gesture or reverential silence rather than verbally.”

The same guidelines also note that, regarding Catholics who “have been regular communicants” and later develop Alzheimer’s disease or dementia, “there is to be a presumption in favor of the individual’s ability to distinguish between holy Communion and regular food. Holy Communion should continue to be offered as long as possible, and ministers are called to carry out their ministry with a special patience.”

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

My Journey to God

The Whisper

By Cindy Leppert

Wordless, it comes to me at odd times.

Washing dishes,
Familiar routine, getting control in the kitchen
One more time.
In an office waiting for an appointment,
Watching a mother with a newborn;
Making room for an elderly woman,
Painfully frail, but her face soft with peace;
In conversation with a woman from another culture,
Very proper and self-contained, but present to that moment.
I felt heard, and validated. Her eyes, they saw me.

In my quiet times I turn to it,
As if checking to make sure everything is going to be ok,
Lingering.

Finally, soft words come,
“Remember Me.
I am with you. I am with you.
I am with you.”
Then, the whisper,
“YHWH.”



(Cindy Leppert is a member of St. Christopher Parish in Indianapolis. Photo: In St. Augustine Church in Jeffersonville, light illuminates a stained-glass window depicting the Ascension, when Christ told the disciples, “And behold, I am with you always ...” (Mt 28:20).)

Submit prose or poetry for faith column

The Criterion invites readers to submit original prose or poetry relating to faith or experiences of prayer for possible publication in the “My Journey to God” column.

Send material for consideration to “My Journey to God,” *The Criterion*, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367 or e-mail to criterion@archindy.org. †

Rest in peace

Please submit in writing to our office by 10 a.m. Thursday before the week of publication; be sure to state date of death. Obituaries of archdiocesan priests serving our archdiocese are listed elsewhere in *The Criterion*. Order priests and religious sisters and brothers are included here, unless they are natives of the archdiocese or have other connections to it; those are separate obituaries on this page.

BECHTOLD, Sr., Robert, 95, St. Martin of Tours, Martinsville, March 7. Father of Margaret McGuire, Robert, Jr. and Richard Bechtold. Grandfather of 13. Great-grandfather of 19.

BOX, Johnathon, 27, St. Lawrence, Indianapolis, Feb. 29. Father of Bentley and Bryson Box. Son of Mary Box. Brother of Jennifer Kessler and Joyce Box.

DELUCA, Joseph S., 95, Holy Spirit, Indianapolis, Feb. 14. Father of Tom DeLuca. Grandfather of three. Great-grandfather of three.

DILLON SULLIVAN, Joanne, 92, St. Luke the Evangelist, Feb. 28. Mother of Margaret Dillon, Agnes Hall, Sally McGree, Katie Robinson, Francis and Vincent Dillon. Grandmother of 12. Great-grandmother of 20.

ECKSTEIN, Joseph H., 81, St. Anthony of Padua, Morris, March 6. Father of Debbie Kaeser, Bev Kneueven, Andy, Joey and Pat Eckstein. Brother of Rosella Koehne, Franciscan Sister Helen Eckstein and Tony Eckstein. Grandfather of 17. Great-grandfather of eight.

GRIESHOP, Jeffrey T., 64, Holy Family, Oldenburg, March 4. Father of Kim Owens and Will Grieshop. Son of Rita Giesting. Brother of Sandy Cameron and Lisa Struewing. Grandfather of one.

LUKEN, Juanita T. (Crowley), 93, St. Margaret Mary, Terre Haute, Jan. 23. Wife of Albert Luken, Sr. Mother of Rita Cottrell, Theresa McCullough, Karen Shafer, Sheryl Smith,

Albert Jr., Garold and Gregory Luken. Sister of Martha Boyke, Mary and Gertrude Dragon, Dorothy LeBrun, Rose Schaffer, Albert, George, James, John and William Crowley. Grandmother of 36. Great-grandmother of 93. Great-great-grandmother of 17. (Correction)

POPP, Carol Ann (Bickel), 70, St. John Paul II, Sellersburg, March 9. Wife of Marvin Popp. Mother of Lori Garrison and Dr. Bryan Popp. Sister of Brenda Wilkerson. Grandmother of six.

RIEMENSCHNEIDER, Joseph L., 74, St. Joseph, Shelbyville, March 7. Uncle of several.

SINCLAIR, Christine A., 68, St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower), Indianapolis, Feb. 24. Wife of Jeff Walden. Mother of Kimberly Hall, Amy Harris and Nichole Williams. Sister of Deborah Morelock, Charles and Daniel Sinclair. Grandmother of nine. Great-grandmother of four.

WILEY, Joan, 84, St. Joseph, Corydon, Feb. 28. Mother of Darrell Wiley. Sister of Mary Veronica Baumer, Mary Cabrini Gordon, Diane Mattingly, Mary Elaine Miles, Charlene Nugent, Mary Angie Puckett, Mary Terri Sympson, Johnny, Joseph and Michael Blandford. Grandmother of two.

WISE, Charles E., 84, Holy Family, New Albany, March 2. Father of Grace Martin, Melissa Mendick, Dee Pate and Chris West. Grandfather of seven. Great-grandfather of seven. †



Farm blessing

Bishop Brendan J. Cahill of Victoria, Texas, blesses farm seed in Ganado on Feb. 1. The diocese established the first Catholic Rural Life chapter in the state in 2018. (CNS photo/Janet Jones, *The Catholic Lighthouse*)

Providence Sister Francis Edwards served in Catholic schools as a math teacher, librarian for 32 years

Providence Sister Francis Edwards died on March 2 at Mother Theodore Hall at the motherhouse of the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods in St. Mary-of-the-Woods. She was 95.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on March 12 at the Church of the Immaculate Conception on the motherhouse grounds. Burial followed at the sisters' cemetery.

Sister Francis was born on Sept. 20, 1924, in Oklahoma City. She entered the Sisters of Providence on Sept. 8, 1942, and professed final vows on Aug. 15, 1950.

Sister Francis earned a bachelor's degree in mathematics at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College in St. Mary-of-the-Woods, a master's degree in mathematics at Indiana State University in Terre Haute and a master's degree in library science at the University of Oklahoma in Norman, Okla.

During her 77 years as a member of the Sisters of Providence, Sister Francis served for 32 years in Catholic schools in Illinois, Indiana, Missouri and Oklahoma.

In the archdiocese, Sister Francis served in Indianapolis at the former St. Catherine of Siena School from 1948-50, St. Anthony School from 1950-52, the former St. John Academy from 1952-55, the former St. Agnes Academy from 1959-66 and the former Ladywood High School from 1968-69.

Although she retired from ministry in 1999, Sister Francis returned to Indianapolis in 2006 when Providence Cristo Rey High School was founded to help set up its library, serving there until 2008.

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

Colorado lawmakers vote to create day honoring St. Frances Xavier Cabrini

DENVER (CNS)—The Colorado Senate on March 11 approved a measure to do away with the state's observance of Columbus Day, a federal holiday, and instead create a day to honor St. Frances Xavier Cabrini, the patron of immigrants.

The bill passed 19-15 in the Senate. The House OK'd it with a 37-26 vote in February. The measure now goes to Gov. Jared Polis for his signature.

If signed into law by Polis, Cabrini Day will be observed the first Monday of October. Columbus Day, which commemorates the arrival of Christopher Columbus in the Americas in 1492, is the second Monday of October.

Popularly known as Mother Cabrini, the saint is revered for her devotion to children, immigrants and the destitute. Born in Italy, she became a naturalized U.S. citizen in 1909. She died at age 67 in Chicago on Dec. 22, 1917. She was beatified in 1938 by Pope Pius XI and canonized in 1946 by Pope Pius XII. She was the first American to be canonized. She was named patroness of immigrants in 1950.

One of the sponsors of the House bill, Rep. Adrienne Benavidez, a Democrat from Commerce City, said the effort to do away with Columbus Day in Colorado began in 2007.

At least 11 states and dozens of U.S. cities have done away with observing Columbus Day and instead celebrate Indigenous Peoples' Day in recognition of the indigenous populations displaced after Columbus and other European explorers reached this continent.

CNN quoted Benavidez as saying: "The pain that they endure and the historical trauma endured by indigenous people in this country as a result of what Columbus has put in place is real. And this is a step forward in erasing that pain."

Sen. Bob Gardner, a Colorado Springs Republican, objected to creating a second paid holiday for state workers and offered an amendment to observe Cabrini Day on the second Monday in October, but it was rejected.

"This is a very one-sided attempt to cast a moral judgment with negative connotations on historical events that happened over 500 years ago," said Sen. Vicki Marble, a Republican from Fort Collins. "This is the way many people see it and wish it would be just laid to rest."

St. Frances Xavier Cabrini was the foundress of the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart. Her dream was to go to China but at the insistence of Pope Leo XIII, who asked her to work among Italian immigrants in the United States, she left Italy for New York in 1889, accompanied by six sisters.

She established orphanages, schools and Columbus Hospital, and held adult classes in Christian doctrine. She received requests to open schools all over the world. She traveled to Europe, Central and South America and throughout the United States. She made 23 trans-Atlantic crossings and within 35 years



St. Frances Xavier Cabrini is depicted in a stained-glass window at the saint's shrine chapel in New York City. In Colorado, the state House and Senate have approved a measure to do away with Columbus Day and rename the official holiday for St. Frances Xavier Cabrini, patron of immigrants.

(CNS photo/Gregory A. Shemitz)

established 67 houses with more than 1,500 sisters.

On a hilltop in the foothills west of Denver near Golden sits the Mother Cabrini Shrine. The shrine property was purchased in 1912 by Mother Cabrini. It was an abandoned ranch she wanted to use as a summer camp for children at the Denver orphanage she founded in 1904. She opened a school in north Denver in 1902.

According to well-known Colorado historian Tom Noel, Columbus Day was created in Denver in 1905, and the city held its first Columbus Day Parade a couple of years later. After launching the Colorado parade, Italian American Angelo Noce of Denver "led a nationwide campaign to establish Columbus Day."

In recent years, Denver's Columbus Day Parade has met with protests by groups that believe Columbus was "a killer and slave trader." It was canceled in 1992, the 500th anniversary of Columbus' landing. According to news reports, the parade was not resumed until 2000. †

Online Lay Ministry Formation

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:

- Earn certificate in Lay Ministry
- Complete 12 courses online with ND STEP program
- CDU offers classes on Catechism of the Catholic Church
- 20% discount for all employees, volunteers, and parishioners

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



REPORT SEXUAL MISCONDUCT NOW

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

- 1 Ethics Point**
Confidential, Online Reporting
www.archdioceseofindianapolis.ethicspoint.com or 888-393-6810
- 2** Carla Hill, Archdiocese of Indianapolis, Victim Assistance Coordinator
P.O. Box 1410, Indianapolis, IN 46206-1410
317-236-1548 or 800-382-9836, ext. 1548
carlahill@archindy.org

GUEST

continued from page 4

concerns that the political agenda uses to advance its cause. This agenda will also claim that patients with terminal conditions who chose this course are not choosing suicide since they are already dying. But if that's true, then no suicide should be problematic: we are all mortals, doomed to die.

Yet, we see clearly how deeply false this is: the death of actor Robin Williams, and the countless young men and women

who suffer from this fate, is rightfully mourned as a tragedy. How can suicide be on the one hand, tragic and terrible (even considered a regrettable national epidemic) and, on the other, laudable and "dignified"? It can't, plain and simple.

I would suggest that, from a spiritual and even pragmatic perspective, assisted suicide is a simple fix, a means to an end: it lets a patient and physician eliminate suffering by helping to eliminate the one who suffers.

True compassion, which means "suffering with" or "in solidarity," is difficult and draining. It's time consuming

and, yes, involves suffering of our own. But that's not all.

Consider a story told to me by a colleague. Her cousin was diagnosed with a glioblastoma, the same brain cancer that affected Brittany Manyard, who, with national media attention, moved to Oregon to end her life under its law. Instead, my friend's cousin chose the palliative care route. He spent his remaining days receiving treatment for pain and symptoms, but he chose to forgo any aggressive curative radiation or surgery—they wouldn't work anyway. Most importantly, he also spent his time with his dad fishing and watching baseball games, preparing well for death. His dad was his caregiver the whole way. At the end, the father said to his son, "Thank you, for letting me be a father."

When I told this story to then-Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin, when he was in Indianapolis, he paused and said reflectively, "What an opportunity for grace!" Indeed, grace for every one of them. And grace for us, to learn how to love.

Love doesn't eliminate the one who suffers or help them eliminate themselves. Love doesn't run away or abandon the suffering one. Love descends and enters into the suffering of the beloved. Love

makes the suffering of the beloved its own. Love places, as it were, the suffering other on its shoulders—like a shepherd's cloak—and carries the beloved home, to rest and be healed.

The political movement advocating assisted suicide will, indeed, continue. But the true antidote to this societal impulse toward assisted suicide is not to simply say "no."

We need to lead with our "yes": "yes" to palliative care, "yes" to the dignity of patients and clinicians, and "yes" to life—even amid its limitations and hardships.

We need to build our resources for palliative care—medical care that treats pain and symptoms in a holistic way to uphold the dignity of the patient no matter their condition or life expectancy.

Advocate for it, support it, ask for it, receive it, recommend it to your loved ones. Now is the time. Don't miss your opportunity for grace.

(Elliott Bedford is the director of Ethics Integration for Ascension Indiana in Indianapolis and a member of the Hospice and Palliative Care Initiative, a collaborative initiative among the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, Ascension St. Vincent and Franciscan Health.) †

Classified Directory

For advertising rates call (317) 236-1585.

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St. Margaret Mary and St. Patrick Churches of Terre Haute, Indiana are seeking a fulltime director/coordinator of religious education to implement and oversee parish faith formation programs at all levels beginning June 1, 2020.

Applicant should have a love for the Catholic faith, knowledge of and commitment to the Archdiocesan Faith Formation Guidelines and Faith-Formation Curriculum and the ability to work together with catechists, youth ministers, RCIA team, school personnel and pastoral staff. Experience in parish formation programs preferred. Masters in Theology or related field preferred.

Canon law requires that the person in this position be a baptized Catholic and, if married, be validly married according to the laws and teachings of the Catholic Church.

To apply, please e-mail a cover letter, resume, and list of references, in confidence, to:

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1400 N. Meridian St.
Indianapolis, IN 46202
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PRINCIPAL

Sacred Heart Academy, Louisville, Kentucky

Sacred Heart Academy, an all-girls Catholic high school in Louisville, Kentucky seeks a mission-driven, visionary, collaborative, student-focused and community-centered Principal beginning July 1, 2020. The Principal will promote the Catholic educational development of the school's staff and students, with emphasis on the Ursuline core values. The ideal candidate will serve as a community leader, fostering a climate of well-being and engagement of students, faculty and staff within the Academy and serve as a role model, reflecting the school's Catholic and Ursuline identity while embodying the creative and forward-thinking direction of the school.

The Principal holds primary responsibility for providing personal and visible leadership for the faculty, staff, students and families on the mission of the school and will be involved with the development and implementation of a strategic long-term plan that is consistent with both that mission and the vision of Sacred Heart Schools. The Principal is responsible for personnel management including recruiting and supporting highly qualified faculty and staff. This position ensures the ongoing development of rigorous academic standards, works collaboratively with the administrative team and is an integral part of the planning, managing and monitoring of the annual budget.

Sacred Heart Schools offers a comprehensive benefits package to employees working at least 30 hours per week, which includes a 50% tuition discount at all four campus schools. Sacred Heart Schools is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Doctorate in education or related field preferred. Current state certification in education specializing in administration. Experience as a teacher. Experience as a Catholic school principal. Supportive member of a Catholic parish.

Interested candidates should send a letter of interest and resume to shsemployment@shslou.org.

ADMINISTRATIVE & RESEARCH ASSISTANT (FULL TIME)

Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology is seeking an individual to work full time assisting the Director of the Young Adult Initiative in carrying out all activities and functions of a grant-funded program that aims to help parishes engage young Catholics ages 23-29. Full job description can be found at www.saintmeinrad.org/jobs.

An Associate's degree or equivalent work experience is required. Office technology and computer literacy are essential. Internet research, website design, and social media engagement experience preferred. Desktop publishing experience beneficial.

We offer a competitive wage and benefit package. Please email your cover letter and resume to hr@saintmeinrad.edu or fax: 812/357-8262, or mail to:

Saint Meinrad Archabbey
Human Resources Dept.
200 Hill Drive
St. Meinrad, IN 47577

Coordinator of Stewardship and Membership

St Elizabeth Seton Catholic Church, Carmel IN, is seeking a Coordinator of Stewardship and Membership who reports to the Director of Finance. The Coordinator provides leadership, strategic direction and coordination for all parish stewardship, fundraising efforts, and initiatives, including Diocesan appeals, offertory enhancement campaigns, and Parish Database Management. Coordinator Develops and implements a stewardship program that: increases parishioner's awareness of stewardship, challenges them to integrate stewardship into their daily lives, to engage parishioners into active, full and mindful participation in the parish and, encourages generous sharing of financial resources.

Core Responsibilities:

- Must be a practicing Catholic in good standing.
- Strong strategic, leadership, and organizational skills. Cultivates best practices for engaging parishioners through gifts of time, talent, and treasure.
- Ability to build positive and enduring relationships with clergy, parish staff, lay leaders and ministers, as well as diocesan staff and leadership.
- Partners with parish Stewardship Council to cultivate a warm and hospitable culture of stewardship in the parish that is guided by the parish mission.
- Strong written communication skills, including the ability to write in a clear, concise, persuasive, and grammatically correct manner.
- Ability to respond well to shifting priorities and changing work situations; ability to work effectively in ambiguous situations; ability to develop new skills to remain effective; ability to adapt to changes; ability to adapt strategies in response to new information or changes to a situation.

Education and Qualifications Preferred:

- Bachelor's Degree from an accredited college or university required.
- Demonstrates good judgement, decision-making and problem resolution skills independently.
- Ability to work well under pressure, be flexible and collaborate with others.
- Can effectively work under timelines and deadlines.

Please send cover letter, resume, and salary history, in confidence, to:

Kevin Sweeney, Director of Finance
St. Elizabeth Seton Catholic Church, Carmel IN
kevin.sweeney@setoncarmel.org

Coronavirus leads priest to think ‘outside the box’ to offer Mass

By Sean Gallagher

As a pastor, Father Shaun Whittington wanted to keep the Eucharist available to the people he ministers to at St. Anthony Parish in Morris and St. Nicholas Parish in Ripley County in the midst of the growing national outbreak of the coronavirus, also known as COVID-19.

But as a volunteer emergency medical technician in the Sunman Area Life Squad and fireman in the Sunman Rural Fire Department, two longtime interests of his, he was well aware of the potential danger of the illness and wanted to do what he could to limit it spreading.

A couple of days before Mass was to be celebrated at his Batesville Deanery faith communities on the weekend of March 14-15, Father Whittington and some college friends visiting him brainstormed to find a way to bring these two goals into harmony.

“My thought was to think outside the box,” Father Whittington said. “There



Members of St. Nicholas Parish in Ripley County receive Communion outside their vehicles in the parking lot of their faith community on March 15 during a Mass celebrated there that was broadcast over a low power FM transmitter. (Submitted photo)

had to be a way to leverage modern technology so we could do both.”

They eventually settled on the idea of a parking lot Mass at the parishes that would be broadcast over a low-power FM transmitter, which worshippers could hear and pray with while sitting in the privacy of their cars with an appropriate distance from others attending the liturgy.

One of Father Whittington’s parishioners had an FM transmitter that could be used. Its signal only reaches to the edges of the parishes’ parking lots.

Others stepped up quickly to volunteer as parking lot attendants and others as extraordinary ministers of holy Communion that would be needed to distribute the Eucharist to people in their cars. A tent was set up in St. Anthony’s parking lot for an altar and ambo. A portable concession stand with large side windows was placed near St. Nicholas’ parking lot for the same purpose.

Parishioners learned of the new Mass arrangement through the online Flocknotes’ message system. And parking lot attendants handed out bulletins and an instruction sheet as parishioners arrived in their cars.

“Everybody just stepped up and said, ‘OK, let’s figure out how to make it work.’” Father Whittington said.

Temperatures were in the lows 30s for the first Mass on Saturday evening at St. Anthony.

“It wasn’t exactly the best weather to start this the first time,” Father Whittington said. “But it was awesome to have Mass knowing that my parishioners who were there were practicing good hygiene, staying separated from each other and in the warmth and comfort of their own cars, knowing that they were going to be safe from the elements and potentially safe from the virus.”



Father Shaun Whittington celebrates Mass on March 15 under a tent in the parking lot of St. Anthony Parish in Morris. The Mass was broadcast over a low-power FM transmitter to parishioners joining him in prayer in their cars. The pastor of St. Anthony Parish as well as St. Nicholas Parish in Ripley County, Father Whittington offered parking lot Masses in his faith communities to make the Eucharist available to his parishioners in a way that would prevent the spread of the coronavirus. (Submitted photo)

Paul and Norma Newton, members of St. Nicholas, are in their 70s and have health challenges that put them at a higher risk of contracting and suffering from the coronavirus. They appreciated the efforts of Father Whittington and members of both faith communities to make the parking lot Masses possible.

“Had it not been for the arrangements at this Mass, we would not have been able to attend Mass,” Norma said. “Watching Mass on TV would not have been the same. Being in person with a priest, being able to receive the

Eucharist, and worshipping together was the best.”

The members of St. Anthony and St. Nicholas parishes are also looking out for each other—especially parishioners who are in high risk groups, such as the elderly.

“I have parishioners who have offered to do errands, pick things up, go to the grocery store,” Father Whittington said. “All they have to do is call the parish office or call me on my cell phone. That’s what we need to do as a faith community. We need to care for each other ... in a time of need.” †

Pope entrusts world threatened by coronavirus pandemic to Mary

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope Francis entrusted to Jesus’ mother the suffering and anguish of millions of people affected by the coronavirus pandemic.



Pope Francis

In a video message broadcast on March 11, the pope prayed before a portrait of Our Lady of Divine Love, beseeching her to “not disdain the entreaties of we who are in trial,” but to “deliver us from every danger.”

“We entrust ourselves to you, Health of the Sick, who at the cross took part in Jesus’ pain, keeping your faith firm,” the pope prayed. “You, Salvation of the Roman People, know what we need, and we are sure you will provide so that, as in Cana of Galilee, we may return to joy and to feasting after this time of trial.”

The pope’s video message was aired on TV2000, the television channel of the Italian bishops’ conference, and the Diocese of Rome’s Facebook page. Cardinal Angelo De Donatis, papal vicar of Rome, celebrated a Mass at Rome’s Shrine of Divine Love that was aired live after the pope’s message.

The Mass, according to the Diocese of Rome, capped a day of prayer and fasting for the city and for Italy, which has been under a government-mandated lockdown to contain the spread of the coronavirus.

As of March 16, nearly 28,000 people in Italy have contracted the virus, known as COVID-19, and at least 2,158 of them have died since the outbreak began in northern Italy, health care officials said. However, an estimated 2,749 people have been cured since the outbreak began.

The image of Our Lady of Divine Love

is of particular significance for Catholics in the city of Rome, especially during troubling times.

It was before the original image of Mary and the child Jesus at the shrine where Pope Pius XII prayed in 1944, imploring the Mother of God to protect the Roman people during the final battle for the city’s liberation from Nazi occupation.

More than 75 years later, his successor once again implored Mary’s protection for the city of Rome, Italy and the whole world now threatened by the pandemic.

“Help us, Mother of Divine Love, to conform to the will of the Father and to do as we are told by Jesus, who has taken upon himself our sufferings and carried our sorrows to lead us, through the cross, to the joy of the resurrection,” Pope Francis prayed.

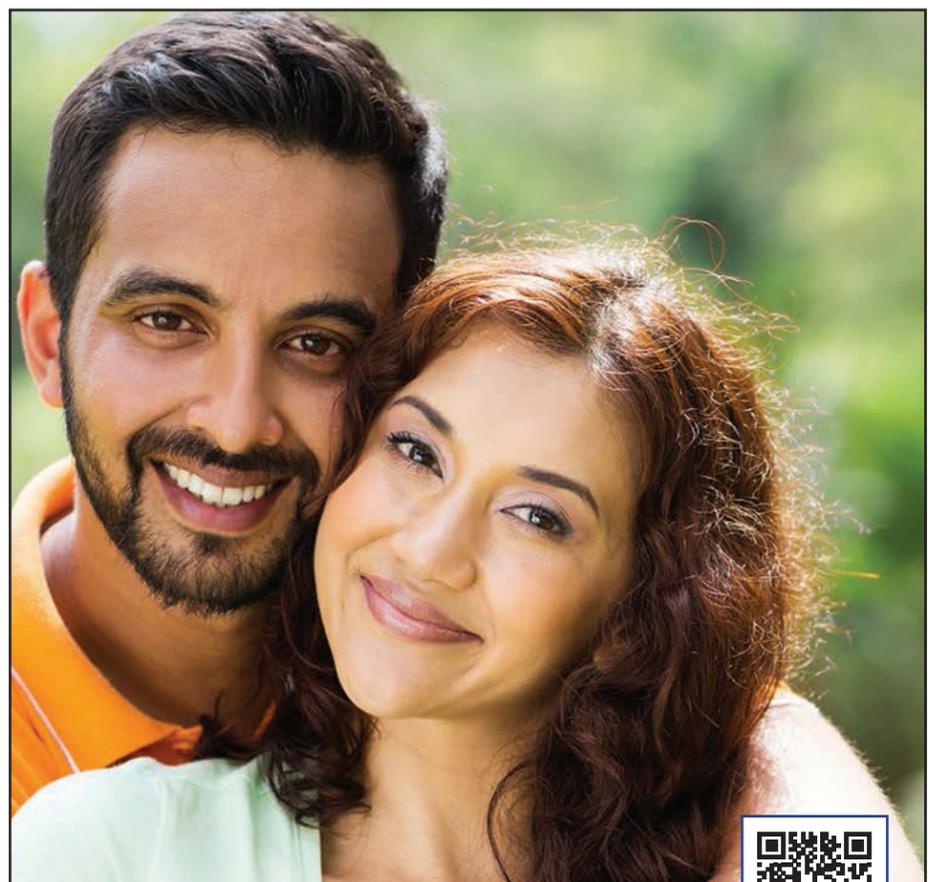
In his homily during the Mass, Cardinal De Donatis echoed the pope’s prayer to Mary.

“We are here to cry out: ‘Save us, Lord, by your mercy,’” he said. “Mary is here with us, and we pray for her powerful intercession to be freed by the evil of the virus.”

The cardinal said the faces of many Christians today, despite their faith, reflect the same anguish experienced by Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Nevertheless, Christians must trust in their heavenly father, like Jesus, who “had the permanent awareness that no one had the power to tear him away from God’s hands.”

“It is an awareness that each one of us must guard in these difficult times,” Cardinal De Donatis said. “The antidote, the therapy for the anguish of the present moment is to entrust yourselves to God’s hands. We are in his hands, and no one can tear us away from him.” †



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