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# Criterion

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## Operation Leftover

Coordinator of ministry to homeless leaves with many memories, page 9.

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## Priest shares wisdom gained from exorcism ministry in new book



By Sean Gallagher

BROOKVILLE—Father Vincent Lampert travels to the ends of the Earth in his ministry fighting the devil as an exorcist.

From South Africa to Alaska and points in between, the pastor of St. Michael Parish in Brookville and St. Peter Parish in Franklin County has carried out this ministry since 2005.

When Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein appointed him to this ministry 16 years ago, there were only 12 priests in the U.S. who were exorcists. Today, there are 125.

Now one of the senior exorcists in the U.S., Father Lampert is often called upon to mentor priests newly appointed to the ministry, or sometimes to perform exorcisms in far flung locales.

In 2019, he traveled to Alaska to help a newly appointed exorcist with a special case.

“We were in an Eskimo village about 300 miles west of Anchorage,” Father Lampert recalled. “A small, little village. And there we were in the church doing an exorcism.”

Father Lampert shared some of his experiences as an exorcist and the spiritual lessons he’s gained in his book *Exorcism: The Battle against Satan and His Demons*, published last fall by Emmaus Road Publishing.

In that book, Father Lampert likens exorcists to medical specialists who travel and consult far and wide to help people with their specialized knowledge.

He also emphasized in the book and in a recent interview with *The Criterion* that Catholics, with the help of their parish priests (whom he says are like general practitioners), can fend off the devil through their ordinary life of faith.

“Ultimately, it’s the very normal aspects of our faith that protect us from evil: going to Mass, celebrating the sacraments, praying, reading Scripture,” Father Lampert said. “It’s the ordinary aspects of our faith that will protect us from the evil one.”

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(Photo of Father Vincent Lampert by Sean Gallagher)

## School choice, pro-life measures still in play at midpoint of legislative session

By Victoria Arthur

At the halfway point of the 2021 legislative session, the Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC) and other allies are closely monitoring and calling for public engagement on important bills that continue to advance at the Statehouse.



Last week, the Indiana General Assembly reached what is known as crossover—the midway point of the session, during which bills that are still active move from one legislative chamber to the other.



John Elcesser

This is a long session of the legislature, held every other year and culminating in the passage of the state’s two-year budget.

A major proposal to expand school choice is among the measures the ICC and other advocates are tracking. House Bill 1005, which would extend the school voucher program to middle and upper-middle-class families and increase scholarship amounts for all students receiving vouchers, passed the House on a 61-38 vote. All of the Democrats in the chamber voted against the measure, along with nine Republicans.

Now that the bill has moved to the Senate, advocacy in favor of the measure will be critically important, according to John Elcesser, executive director of the Indiana Non-Public Education Association (INPEA).

“It will be more of an uphill battle in the Senate, which isn’t as broadly supportive of all the expansions to school choice,” said Elcesser, whose organization represents Indiana’s more than 400 non-public schools, including the state’s 175 Catholic schools. “Thus far, Senate lawmakers have pulled much of the choice language out of similar Senate bills with the idea of rolling it into the budget bill. It will take non-public

See ICC, page 9

## U.S. House passes Equality Act; bishops say it will ‘discriminate against people of faith’

WASHINGTON (CNS)—The House of Representatives passed the Equality Act in a 224-206 vote on Feb. 25.

A couple days ahead of the vote, the chairmen of five U.S. bishops’ committees said its mandates will “discriminate against people of faith” by adversely affecting charities and their beneficiaries, conscience rights, women’s sports, “and sex-specific facilities.”

The bill, known as H.R. 5 and recently reintroduced in the House, also will provide for taxpayer funding of abortion and limit freedom of speech, the chairmen said in a Feb. 23 letter to all members of Congress.



Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan

H.R. 5 amends the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender

identity in employment, housing, public accommodations, public education, federal funding, the credit system and jury duty.

“Human dignity is central to what Catholics believe because every person is made in the image of God and should be treated accordingly, with respect and compassion,” the bishops said. “This commitment is reflected in the Church’s



Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann

charitable service to all people, without regard to race, religion or any other characteristic.

“It means we need to honor every person’s right to gainful employment free of unjust discrimination or harassment, and to the basic goods that they need to live and thrive,” they continued. “It also means that people of differing beliefs should be respected. In this, we wholeheartedly support nondiscrimination principles to ensure that everyone’s rights are protected.”

H.R. 5 “purports to protect people experiencing same-sex attraction or

See EQUALITY, page 8



Pope Benedict XVI reads his resignation in Latin during a meeting of cardinals at the Vatican in this Feb. 11, 2013, file photo. Speaking of his resignation, the retired pope recently told the Italian newspaper *Corriere della Sera* that "it was a difficult decision, but I made it in full awareness, and I believe it was correct." (CNS photo/Vatican Media)

# Retired pope talks about his resignation, Pope Francis' upcoming trip to Iraq

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Although it took obvious effort to pronounce each word and sometimes his secretary repeated what he said to make it clear, retired Pope Benedict XVI spoke to an Italian newspaper about his retirement and about Pope Francis' planned trip to Iraq.

The retired pope, who will turn 94 in April, resigned on Feb. 28, 2013. He lives in the Mater Ecclesia Monastery in the Vatican Gardens where he and his personal secretary, Archbishop Georg Ganswein, met in February with the director of the newspaper *Corriere della Sera*.

"His words come out drop by drop; his voice is a whisper that comes and goes," according to the article published on the anniversary of his resignation. Sometimes, the report said, Archbishop Ganswein "repeats and 'translates,' while Benedict nods in a sign of approval."

Asked if he thinks a lot about his decision to resign, "he nods," the newspaper said.

"It was a difficult decision, but I made it in full awareness, and I believe it was correct," the retired pope said. "Some of my slightly 'fanatical' friends are still angry; they did not want to accept my decision."

Pope Benedict is aware of what he termed "conspiracy theories" about why he resigned. "Some have said it was because of the Vatileaks scandal," created when his butler leaked private documents to a journalist, he said. Others thought it was "a plot by the gay lobby," a supposed group of Curia officials who protect each other.

And, he said, some thought it was because of the case of Bishop Richard Williamson, who had been excommunicated in 1988 when he and three other traditionalist bishops were ordained against papal orders by the late French Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, founder of the Society of St. Pius X.

Pope Benedict lifted the excommunications in 2009 as a first

step toward beginning formal talks aimed at reconciliation with the group. However, there was widespread outrage at revelations that Bishop Williamson had denied the gassing of Jews in Nazi concentration camps. The Vatican said the pope had been unaware at the time of the bishop's radical views on the Holocaust.

Many of Pope Benedict's supporters, he said, don't want to believe his resignation "was a conscious decision" that had nothing to do with outside pressure. "But my conscience is clear.

"There are not two popes," he said. "There is only one."

*Corriere* described the retired pope as alert, even though it was difficult to understand his speech at times. His wrists are "extremely thin, which underlines an image of great physical frailty." He wears a watch on his left wrist and an emergency alarm on his other, the newspaper said.

When asked about Pope Francis' planned trip to Iraq on March 5-8, "his expression becomes serious, worried," the newspaper said.


"I think it is a very important visit," he said. "Unfortunately, it comes at a very difficult time that makes it a dangerous trip for security reasons and because of COVID."

And, in fact, Archbishop Mitja Leskovar, the Vatican nuncio to Iraq, who was supposed to host the pope throughout the trip, tested positive for the coronavirus and has gone into quarantine, the nunciature announced on Feb. 27.

"I will accompany Francis with my prayers," the retired pope said.

*Corriere* also asked Pope Benedict about U.S. President Joe Biden.

"It's true, he is a practicing Catholic, and personally against abortion," the retired pope said. "But as president, he tends to present himself in continuity with the platform of the Democratic Party. And on gender policy, we still don't have a clear idea of his position." †



## Public Schedule of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

March 5-13, 2021

<p><b>March 5 – 11 a.m.</b> United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) virtual National Advisory Council meeting</p> <p><b>March 5 – 1 p.m.</b> Virtual USCCB Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations meeting</p> <p><b>March 6 – 11 a.m.</b> Virtual USCCB National Advisory Council meeting</p> <p><b>March 7 – Noon</b> Virtual USCCB National Advisory Council meeting</p> <p><b>March 9 – 10:30 a.m.</b> Priest Personnel Board meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis</p> <p><b>March 10 – 11 a.m.</b> Mass for Deceased Priest, Very Reverend Richard Eldred at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, Indianapolis</p>	<p><b>March 10 – 7 p.m.</b> Confirmation Mass for youths of St. Christopher Parish in Indianapolis, at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral</p> <p><b>March 11 – 8:15 a.m.</b> Virtual Judicatories meeting</p> <p><b>March 11 – 10 a.m.</b> Leadership Team meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center</p> <p><b>March 11 – 3 p.m.</b> Finance Council meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center</p> <p><b>March 11 – 7 p.m.</b> Confirmation Mass for youths of Holy Spirit Parish in Indianapolis, at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral</p> <p><b>March 13 – 9 a.m.</b> Day of Prayer with Young Adult Discerners at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral Parish</p>
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## How has the COVID-19 pandemic had an impact on your faith?

A year ago, the COVID-19 pandemic began to have a dramatic and often devastating impact on every aspect of life in the United States and around the world. A significant part of that impact extended to the faith lives of people—and their faith communities. It's an impact that continues today and will undoubtedly continue into the future.

As part of our coverage of the ongoing influence that the pandemic is having on the faith lives of people, *The Criterion* invites you, our readers, to share your thoughts,

experiences and stories of how the COVID-19 crisis has affected your faith—the way you live your faith, the way you celebrate your faith, and whether it has deepened or weakened your faith.

Send your thoughts, experiences and stories to John Shaughnessy by e-mail at [jshaughnessy@archindy.org](mailto: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. †

## Abstinence from meat not required on March 19 due to Solemnity of St. Joseph


The Solemnity of St. Joseph, the Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary, is celebrated annually on March 19. This year, that happens to be on a Friday in Lent.

According to Church law, abstaining from meat is not required on a solemnity, including during Lent. Therefore, Catholics throughout the Church, including in central and southern Indiana, are not obligated to abstain from



meat on March 19. Catholics in central and southern Indiana may want to receive a plenary indulgence on the Solemnity of St. Joseph this year, which falls in a year dedicated to the saint proclaimed last December by Pope Francis.

There are many ways to meet the necessary conditions to receive the indulgence. Learn more about it at [yearofstjoseph.org/indulgences](http://yearofstjoseph.org/indulgences). †



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# In interview, pope says he will remain in Rome until death

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope Francis said he believes he will die in Rome, either in office or retired, and will not be buried in his native Argentina.

In an interview published in the Argentine newspaper *La Nación* on Feb. 27, the pope said that while he thinks about death, he is not afraid of it.

“How do you imagine your death?” the pope was asked by Argentine journalist and doctor Nelson Castro.

“As pope, either in office or emeritus. And in Rome. I will not return to Argentina,” he replied.

The interview was an excerpt from Castro’s new book, titled *La Salud de Los Papas (The Health of the Popes)*, which details the health of the pontiffs from Pope Leo XIII to Pope Francis.

According to Castro, Pope Francis encouraged him to write the book and agreed to be interviewed. The conversation took place in February 2019.

In it, the pope spoke candidly about his mental health and told Castro that although he had never undergone psychoanalysis, he did meet with a psychiatrist for six months during “the terrible days of the dictatorship, when I had to take people into hiding to get them out of the country and save their lives.

“I had to deal with situations I didn’t know how to deal with,” he recalled.

Praising the psychiatrist as “a great woman” whose teachings “are still very useful to me today,” Pope Francis said she helped him to manage his anxiety and “to avoid rushing when making decisions.

“Imagine what it was like to drive a person hidden in a car—covered only by a blanket—and to go through

three military checkpoints,” he said. “The tension it generated in me was enormous.”

The pope also said that while he believes that the “study of psychology is necessary for a priest,” he does not believe that priests should practice psychology “due to the problem of transference and countertransference.”

When that happens, he explained, “the roles are confused and the priest stops being a priest and becomes a therapist with a level of involvement that makes it very difficult to distance himself.”

Pope Francis also spoke about a pulmonary condition he suffered in 1957 at the age of 21 that required him to undergo surgery to remove the upper right lobe of one of his lungs.

The pope said that while his recovery was painful, it was “complete, and I never felt any limitation in my activities.

“As you have seen, for example, in the various trips I have made and that you have covered, I never had to restrict or cancel any of the scheduled activities. I never experienced fatigue or shortness of breath,” he told Castro.

The Argentine journalist also asked Pope Francis if he was aware of his own neuroses.

Describing it as an “anxious neurosis,” the pope said that he has “quite tamed my anxiety” and has learned ways to



Pope Francis exits his car as he arrives for a prayer service in an empty St. Peter’s Square at the Vatican in this March 27, 2020, file photo. In an interview with Argentine journalist and doctor Nelson Castro, the pope said he is not afraid of death and that he expects to die in Rome “as pope, either in office or emeritus.” (CNS photo/Evandro Inetti, pool)

deal with “a situation or a problem that makes me anxious.

“One of them is listening to Bach,” the pope said. “It calms me down and helps me to analyze problems in a better way. I confess that, over the years, I have managed to put a barrier to the entry of anxiety in my spirit.

“It would be equally harmful to make decisions dominated by anxiety and sadness,” he added. “That is why I say that a person must be attentive to neurosis, since it is something inherent in his or her being.” †

# For Lent, read the Gospel, fast from gossip, pope says at Angelus

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—People should fast from gossiping and spreading hearsay as part of their Lenten journey, Pope Francis said.

“For Lent this year, I will not speak ill of others, I will not gossip and all of us can do this, everyone. This is a wonderful kind of fasting,” the pope said on Feb. 28 after praying the Sunday *Angelus*.

Greeting visitors in St. Peter’s Square, the pope said his advice for Lent included adding a different kind of fasting “that won’t make you feel hungry: fasting from spreading rumors and gossiping.

“And don’t forget that it will also be helpful to read a verse from the Gospel every day,” he said, urging people to have on hand a pocket-size edition to read whenever possible, even if it is just a random verse.

“This will open your heart to the Lord,” he added.

The pope also led a moment of prayer for the more than 300 girls who were kidnapped by unidentified gunmen on Feb. 26 in Jangebe in northwestern Nigeria.

Adding his voice to statements made by Nigeria’s bishops, the pope condemned the “vile kidnapping of 317 girls, taken away from their school,” and he prayed

for them and their families, hoping for their safe return home.

The nation’s bishops had already warned of the deteriorating situation in the country in a Feb. 23 statement, according to Vatican News.

“We are really on the brink of a looming collapse from which we must do all we can to pull back before the worst overcomes the nation,” the bishops wrote in response to a previous attack. Insecurity and corruption have put into question “the very survival of the nation,” they wrote.

The pope also marked Rare Disease Day, held on Feb. 28 to raise awareness and improve advocacy and access to treatment.

He thanked all those involved in medical research for diagnosing and coming up with treatments for rare diseases, and he encouraged support networks and associations so people do not feel alone and can share experience and advice.

“Let us pray for all people who have a rare disease,” he said, especially for children who suffer.

In his main address, he reflected on the day’s Gospel reading (Mk 9:2-10) about Peter, James and John witnessing the

transfiguration of Jesus on the mountain and their subsequent descent back down to the valley.

The pope said pausing with the Lord on the mountain “is a call to remember—especially when we pass through a difficult trial—that the Lord is risen and does not permit darkness to have the last word.”

However, he added, “we cannot remain on the mountain and enjoy the beauty of

this encounter by ourselves. Jesus himself brings us back to the valley, amid our brothers and sisters and into daily life.”

People must take that light that comes from their encounter with Christ “and make it shine everywhere. Igniting little lights in people’s hearts; being little lamps of the Gospel that bear a bit of love and hope: this is the mission of a Christian,” he said. †

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## Editorial

# Lenten practices of prayer, fasting and almsgiving help us be open to stewardship

As we are reminded each year, Christians are invited, and challenged, to prepare for the joy of Easter by engaging in the three traditional Lenten practices of prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Most of us have a pretty clear idea of what the first two disciplines require of us (even if we aren't as faithful in prayer and fasting as we know we should be), but "almsgiving" is another matter.

The dictionary definition of "almsgiving" is fairly straightforward. It means "the practice of giving money or food to poor people."

Synonyms proposed by Merriam-Webster include charity and philanthropy, and the same source lets us know that the practice of giving alms is important in virtually all world religions.

Many (but certainly not all) Catholics have been introduced to the spirituality of Christian stewardship. The American bishops' pastoral letter, "Stewardship: A Disciple's Response," published in November 1992, describes a Christian steward as "one who receives God's gifts gratefully, cherishes and tends them in a responsible and accountable manner, and returns them with increase to the Lord."

A Christian steward is constantly being invited (and challenged) to receive, cherish, share and return-with-increase the fruits of God's abundant generosity. This is why stewardship is a lifelong responsibility. As long as God keeps giving, we are called to be open and responsive to his gifts (his grace).

This understanding of the spirituality of stewardship includes, but is much more comprehensive than, almsgiving—the practice of giving money to the poor. A generous Christian steward gives back *everything* he or she has received from God, including all spiritual and material gifts. Stewardship properly understood and practiced is a total lifestyle of giving and sharing rooted in gratitude for all God's blessings.

Stewardship as a Lenten observance begins with almsgiving and grows exponentially to include the generous giving of our hearts and minds and desires to God who is their source and, then, to all God's people. Stewardship is understood as a source of deepening spirituality because it challenges us to let go of any false notions that we are somehow in control of our lives, our skills and our talents, or our material possessions. We are not the authors of our own existence. We are not the owners of our spiritual and material gifts. We are stewards (caretakers or custodians) of what belongs exclusively and entirely to God.

God has given us the gift of life. Our response should be to praise



(CNS photo by Tyler Orsburn)

him and to demonstrate our gratitude by taking care of (and sharing) this wonderful gift. We have received the gift of intelligence. We are responsible for developing our minds and growing in wisdom and understanding. We have been given the skills and abilities that allow us to earn a living, care for those we love, and contribute to the common good by our work and by our service to others in the Church and in our community. These gifts make it possible for us to acquire the material possessions that we need and enjoy. All God's gifts are meant to be used responsibly and shared generously with others.

Stewardship is a source of grace when we respond to God's goodness by growing in gratitude, responsibility and generosity. As a spiritual discipline, stewardship invites us to reflect on what is most basic and fundamental in our lives—and to respond from the heart. A Christian steward is one who makes a conscious decision to remain open to God's grace and to respond generously (from the heart) to whatever opportunities and challenges may come.

The Lenten practices of prayer, fasting and almsgiving help us to be open to the stewardship opportunities that are presented to us every day. If we are in regular communication with God through prayer, it's much easier to discern his will for us as stewards of his generosity. If we are accustomed to self-denial and willingly sacrifice our wants and desires (even good things), then the sharing of our time, talent and treasure will not be nearly so difficult.

Lastly of course, if we are used to sharing our financial resources with others, we won't hesitate to give money (or food, clothing and shelter) to those who are poor. Almsgiving won't be just a Lenten practice. It will become a way of life.

Since God never stops giving, our opportunities to respond from the heart are truly endless. Let's practice almsgiving this Lent by being generous stewards of all God's gifts.

—Daniel Conway

Be Our Guest/Sr. Constance Veit, L.S.P.

## In tough times, go to St. Joseph

This month, we Little Sisters of the Poor and our residents and staff will observe two major COVID-19 milestones.



On March 11, we will have been in lockdown for a full year. And on March 19, we will finish the vaccination process at our residence in Washington, D.C., with a compliance rate of nearly 100 percent among those who live and work here.

As I got my second vaccine dose, I was almost ecstatic. I wanted to sing the old standard, "Happy Days Are Here Again!" Reality quickly set in, however. Nothing in our daily routine would change, at least for the foreseeable future. Our days are still ruled by an insidious virus and the dictates of health experts and bureaucrats. I wanted to cry out with the psalmist, "How long, O Lord? How long will you hide your face from us?" (Ps 13:1)

But then in his mercy God brought light into my darkness.

I've been reading "*Patris Corde*," the apostolic letter written by Pope Francis to mark the 150th anniversary of St. Joseph's designation as patron of the universal Church. I believe that our Holy Father wrote this letter specifically for the times we are living. His reflections have been helpful to me, and I'd like to share them with you.

Referring to Joseph's reaction to Mary's unexpected pregnancy, Pope Francis calls him an "accepting father" who can help us to accept life as it is, even when we don't understand. "The spiritual path that Joseph traces for us," he wrote, "is not one that explains, but accepts. Only as a result of this acceptance, this reconciliation, can we begin to glimpse a broader history, a deeper meaning" (#4).

St. Joseph did not look for shortcuts, Pope Francis writes, but confronted reality with open eyes, accepting personal responsibility for it. "Joseph is not passively resigned, but courageously and firmly proactive. In our own lives," the pope adds, "acceptance and welcome can be an expression of the Holy Spirit's gift of fortitude. Only the Lord can give us the strength needed to accept life as it is, with all its contradictions, frustrations and disappointments" (#4).

Pope Francis also calls St. Joseph a "creatively courageous father." In the face of difficulty, he writes, "we can either give up

and walk away, or somehow engage with it. At times, difficulties bring out resources we did not even know we had" (#5).

The pope suggests that Joseph turned challenges and problems into possibilities by always trusting in divine providence.

"If at times God seems not to help us," our Holy Father writes, "surely this does not mean that we have been abandoned, but instead are being trusted to plan, to be creative and to find solutions ourselves" rather than expecting God to intervene directly (#5).

God trusts us to be creative and take initiative! While I find this an exciting concept, when it comes to COVID I wish God would just swoop down and take it all away.

But I guess that's not how he has envisioned the COVID trajectory. So I turn again to St. Joseph, looking for encouragement in these trying times.

The pope writes of the "Christian realism" exemplified by Joseph. He shows us that believing does not mean finding facile and comforting solutions. "Reality, in all its mysterious and irreducible complexity, is the bearer of existential meaning, with all its lights and shadows" (#4).

He cites St. Paul's well-known words, "All things work together for good, for those who love God" (Rom 8:28), and St. Augustine's addition to this phrase, "even that which is called evil." Faith gives meaning to every event, however happy or sad, concludes Pope Francis.

God told St. Joseph, "Do not be afraid" (Mt 1:20). As I turn to St. Joseph, he tells me, "Do not be afraid. Set aside your fears, your frustrations and disappointments and embrace the way things are—both the positives and the negatives—not with mere resignation, but with hope and courage."

Pope Francis assures us that if we follow St. Joseph's example, we will be open to the deeper meaning of our current circumstances. "It does not matter if everything seems to have gone wrong or some things can no longer be fixed," the Holy Father writes. "God can make flowers spring up from stony ground" (#4).

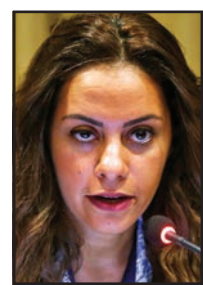
Besides our COVID milestones this month, we will also be celebrating the Solemnity of St. Joseph, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary on March 19. And the day after is the first day of spring—I think I'll plant some flowers.

(*Little Sisters of the Poor Sister Constance Veit is director of communications for the Little Sisters of the Poor in the United States.*) †

Be Our Guest/Sandra Azab

## Young people challenge us to work to create a better world for humanity

On Feb. 16, the Pontifical Academy for Life invited its members to meet online for a seminar on some of the ethical



perspectives presented in Pope Francis' encyclicals "*Laudato Si'*," on Care for Our Common Home," and "*Fratelli Tutti*:" On Fraternity and Social Friendship."

This meeting gave us a space to discuss and reflect on the human impact on all life on our planet. This raised some critical questions, such as: How can we speak about the dignity of every individual while our lifestyles and our use of natural resources are already depriving a significant part of humanity of the foundations of life?

It's important to share those reflections with the Church and the community to indicate practical steps for all of humanity to move forward.

"*Laudato Si'*" is a huge wake-up call for humanity so that we realize the destruction we inflict on the environment and our fellow human beings. We must develop and apply sustainable, ecologically compatible production methods with the help of people's expertise and science's creativity. But we must also shape our lifestyles in such a way that the Earth's resources are used justly.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed our false security. "*Fratelli Tutti*" highlights how this time has highlighted our interconnection and interdependence. The pope writes that "the brutal and unforeseen blow of this uncontrolled pandemic forced us to recover our concern for human beings, for everyone, rather than for the benefit of a few" (#33).

Pope Francis has given the Church and the community a guiding light that shows the way to repair our common home and build a better future for our society. It is

See GUEST, page 15



# Christ the Cornerstone

## Jesus: the hope that will never disappoint us

*(The readings for the Third Sunday of Lent—Ex 17:3-7; Rom 5:1-2, 5-8; Jn 4:5-42—that are being referenced in this column presume the celebration of the scrutinies as outlined in the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults. The scrutinies are rites of self-searching and repentance that have a profound spiritual purpose. They invite us to a conversion of our hearts and minds.)*

The world's cruelty—whether in the form of poverty, health crises, political turmoil or many other causes of personal and social unrest—too often cause us to turn inward, to close ourselves off from God and from each other. Like the people of Israel lost and disheartened after many years of wandering in the desert, we are tempted to cry out, saying: Why did we leave Egypt? Was it just to die here of thirst with our children and our livestock?

Life is hard, but that doesn't mean our reactions should be hard-hearted. In fact, as St. Paul tells us in the second reading, in Jesus we have been blessed with the great gift of hope, "and hope does not disappoint" (Rom 5:5).

The basis for our hope is, of course,

the suffering, death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Never was there a situation more dismal, or seemingly hopeless, than the Lord's passion and death. Preceded by the agony in the garden, where Jesus shed tears of blood, the hardships faced by God's only Son at the end of his ministry were intolerable by ordinary human standards. Only the grace of God could transform this barbaric cruelty into a miracle of redemption with far-reaching consequences for all humankind.

As St. Paul reminds us:

*"For Christ, while we were still helpless, died at the appointed time for the ungodly. Indeed, only with difficulty does one die for a just person, though perhaps for a good person one might even find courage to die. But God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us" (Rom 5:6-8).*

Whenever we are tempted to be bitter or resentful because of the hardships we're required to face in our personal lives or in our society, we're invited to recall the fact that, while we were still helpless sinners, Christ died for us. And in the words of this Sunday's psalm refrain (Ps 95), we are

admonished, "If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts!"

The Gospel reading tells the familiar story of the woman who encountered Jesus at Jacob's well in Samaria. Breaking several social taboos, Jesus engages in dialogue with this foreigner (a woman), and he convinces her, simply by the power of his presence, that:

*"Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again; but whoever drinks the water I shall give will never thirst; the water I shall give will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life" (Jn 4:13-14).*

Incredulous at first, the woman ultimately says to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I may not be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water" (Jn 4:15). Then, after Jesus points out the truth about her marital status and, by implication, the state of her soul, the Samaritan woman's heart is unburdened and she experiences genuine liberation and heartfelt joy.

When she shares her experience with others, St. John tells us, "Many more began to believe in him because of his word, and they said to the

woman, 'We no longer believe because of your word; for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Savior of the world' " (Jn 4:41-42).

No matter what hardships or suffering we must face, no matter how far we have strayed from the way of life that leads to genuine happiness, we are invited to come to Jesus and to receive his living water. This water, which flows from the Sacred Heart of Jesus as from an inexhaustible fountain of love and mercy, brings with it healing, nourishment, consolation and the hope that will never disappoint us.

The living water that Jesus gives has the power to heal all our wounds and to break open our hardened hearts. As we continue our Lenten journey, through the sufferings of the cross to the joy of the Resurrection, let's remember that Jesus knows our pain and disillusionment. He has walked before us on the *Via Dolorosa*, the way of sorrow, and he has redeemed us and set us free.

Lord, you are truly the Savior of the world; give us living water, that we may never thirst again. Give us the gift of hope in you, so that we will never again be disappointed. †



## Cristo, la piedra angular

### Jesús: la esperanza que nunca nos defraudará

*(Las lecturas del tercer domingo de Cuaresma—Ex 17:3-7; Rom 5:1-2, 5-8; Jn 4:5-42—a las que se hace referencia en esta columna suponen la celebración de los escrutinios tal y como se indica en el Rito de Iniciación Cristiana para Adultos. Los escrutinios son ritos de autoindagación y arrepentimiento que tienen una finalidad profundamente espiritual. Nos invitan a una conversión de corazón y de mente.)*

La crueldad del mundo—ya sea en forma de pobreza, crisis de salud, agitación política o muchas otras causas de malestar personal y social—nos lleva con demasiada frecuencia a encerrarnos en nosotros mismos, a cerrarnos a Dios y a los demás. Al igual que el pueblo de Israel, perdido y desanimado después de muchos años de vagar por el desierto, sentimos la tentación de exclamar: ¿Por qué abandonamos Egipto? ¿Para sencillamente morir aquí de sed con nuestros hijos y nuestro ganado?

La vida es dura, pero eso no significa que nuestras reacciones también deban serlo. En efecto, como nos dice san Pablo en la segunda lectura, en Jesús hemos sido bendecidos con el gran don de la esperanza, "y la esperanza no

defrauda" (Rm 5:5).

La base de nuestra esperanza es, por supuesto, el sufrimiento, la muerte y la resurrección de nuestro Señor Jesucristo. Nunca hubo una situación más lúgubre, o aparentemente sin esperanza, que la pasión y muerte del Señor. Precedidas por la agonía en el huerto, donde Jesús derramó lágrimas de sangre, las dificultades a las que se enfrentó el Hijo único de Dios al final de su ministerio eran intolerables para los estándares humanos ordinarios. Únicamente la gracia de Dios podía transformar esa abyecta crueldad en un milagro de redención con consecuencias de largo alcance para toda la humanidad.

Como nos recuerda san Pablo:

*"Porque, aún siendo nosotros débiles, a su tiempo Cristo murió por los impíos. Difícilmente muere alguno por un justo. Con todo, podría ser que alguno osara morir por el bueno. Pero Dios demuestra su amor para con nosotros en que, siendo aún pecadores, Cristo murió por nosotros" (Rom 5:6-8).*

Siempre que tengamos la tentación de sentirnos amargados o resentidos por las dificultades que debemos afrontar en nuestra vida personal o en la sociedad, se nos invita a recordar el hecho de que, cuando todavía éramos

pecadores indefensos, Cristo murió por nosotros. Y en las palabras del estribillo del salmo de este domingo (Sal 95), se nos amonesta: "Si hoy escuchan su voz, no endurezcan sus corazones."

La lectura del Evangelio cuenta la conocida historia de la mujer que encontró a Jesús en el pozo de Jacob en Samaria. Contraviniendo varios tabúes sociales, Jesús dialoga con esta extranjera (una mujer), y la convence, simplemente con el poder de su presencia, de que:

*"Todo el que bebe de esta agua volverá a tener sed. Pero cualquiera que beba del agua que yo le daré, nunca más tendrá sed sino que el agua que yo le daré será en él una fuente de agua que salte para vida eterna" (Jn 4:13-14).*

Aunque al principio se mostraba incrédula, la mujer le dice por fin: "Señor, dame esta agua para que no tenga sed ni venga más acá a sacarla" (Jn 4:15). Entonces, después de que Jesús le señala la verdad sobre su estado civil y, por implicación, sobre el estado de su alma, el corazón de la samaritana se desahoga y experimenta una auténtica liberación y una sentida alegría.

San Juan nos dice que, tras compartir su experiencia con otros: "Muchos más creyeron a causa de su

palabra. Ellos decían a la mujer:—'Ya no creemos a causa de la palabra tuya, porque nosotros mismos hemos oído y sabemos que verdaderamente este es el Salvador del mundo' " (Jn 4:41-42).

No importa las dificultades o el sufrimiento que debemos afrontar, no importa lo mucho que nos hayamos alejado del camino de la vida que conduce a la auténtica felicidad, estamos invitados a acudir a Jesús y a recibir su agua viva. Esta agua, que brota del Sagrado Corazón de Jesús como de una fuente inagotable de amor y misericordia, trae consigo la curación, el alimento, el consuelo y la esperanza que nunca nos defraudará.

El agua viva que da Jesús tiene el poder de curar todas nuestras heridas y de abrir nuestros corazones endurecidos. Mientras continuamos nuestro recorrido cuaresmal, desde los sufrimientos de la cruz hasta la alegría de la Resurrección, recordemos que Jesús conoce nuestro dolor y desilusión. Él ha caminado antes que nosotros por la vía dolorosa y nos ha redimido y liberado.

Señor, tú eres verdaderamente el Salvador del mundo; danos agua viva, para que nunca más tengamos sed. Danos el don de la esperanza en ti, para que nunca más nos sintamos decepcionados. †

# Events Calendar

For a list of events for the next four weeks as reported to The Criterion, log on to [www.archindy.org/events](http://www.archindy.org/events).

## March 11

### The Third Option virtual marriage crisis/enrichment class, "Control Issues,"

7-8 p.m., series offered most Thursdays through May 20, viewing all sessions recommended but not required, no registration needed, free. Go to [carmelthirddoption.org/web](http://carmelthirddoption.org/web), click on link at top of page. Information: [carmelthirddoption.org/web](mailto:carmelthirddoption.org/web), or Keith Ingram, [kingram@aicinvest.com](mailto:kingram@aicinvest.com) or 317-324-8446.

## March 11, 18, 25

### The Eucharist, Source and Summit of Faith, through Old Testament and the Gospels, via Zoom, sponsored by St. Michael Parish, Greenfield, 1-2:30 p.m., three of six stand-alone sessions, led by graduates of Guadalupe Bible College, free. Information and registration: Darlene Davis, [ldarlene@gmail.com](mailto:ldarlene@gmail.com).

St. Jude School, 5353 McFarland Road, Indianapolis. **St. Jude Fish Fry Drive-Thru**, hosted by Boy Scout Troop 51, 4-7 p.m., menu includes fish filets, grilled cheese, coleslaw, macaroni and cheese, green beans with potatoes, soda or bottled water, free will

## March 12

donation. Information 317-753-0866 or [haggnjos0123@gmail.com](mailto:haggnjos0123@gmail.com).

St. Anthony of Padua Parish, 316 N. Sherwood Ave., Clarksville. **Men's Club Annual Fish Fry**, 5-7:30 p.m., take out only, includes baked or fried fish, oysters and shrimp, two sides, adult dinners \$7.50-\$9.50, children's dinners \$3-\$5. Information: [parish.office@stanthony-clarksville.com](mailto:parish.office@stanthony-clarksville.com) or 812-282-2290.

## March 12, 19

Sacred Heart of Jesus Church, 1530 Union Street, Indianapolis. **Praying the Stations with St. John XXIII**, 6:30 p.m., meditation, prayer, song. Information: 317-638-5551.

## March 12, 19, 26

St. Thomas the Apostle Parish Knights of Columbus #15712, 523 S. Merrill St., Fortville. **Friday Night Lenten Fish Fry**, 5 p.m. until supplies last, includes fish sandwich, fries, coleslaw, dessert, \$10. Information: [kofc115712info@gmail.com](mailto:kofc115712info@gmail.com) or 317-485-5102.

## March 12, 19, 26, April 2

St. Thomas the Apostle Parish Knights of Columbus #15712, 523 S. Merrill St., Fortville. **Friday Night Lenten Fish Fry**, 5 p.m. until supplies last, includes fish sandwich, fries, coleslaw, dessert, \$10. Information: [kofc115712info@gmail.com](mailto:kofc115712info@gmail.com) or 317-485-5102.

## March 17

Calvary Mausoleum Chapel, 435 W. Troy Ave.,

Indianapolis. **Monthly Mass**, 2 p.m. Information: 317-784-4439 or [www.catholiccemeteries.cc](http://www.catholiccemeteries.cc).

## March 18

St. Joseph Church, 1401 S. Mickley Ave., Indianapolis. **Third Thursday Adoration**, interceding for women experiencing crisis pregnancy, 11 a.m.-7 p.m., with Mass at 5:45 p.m.

Our Lady of Peace Cemetery and Mausoleum, 9001 Haverstick Road, Indianapolis. **Monthly Mass**, 2 p.m. Information: 317-574-8898 or [www.catholiccemeteries.cc](http://www.catholiccemeteries.cc).

## The Third Option virtual marriage crisis/enrichment class, "Listening Beyond the Words," 7-8 p.m., series offered most Thursdays, recommended but not required, no registration needed, free. Go to [carmelthirddoption.org/web](http://carmelthirddoption.org/web), click on link at top of page. Information: [carmelthirddoption.org/web](http://carmelthirddoption.org/web), or Keith Ingram, [kingram@aicinvest.com](mailto:kingram@aicinvest.com) or 317-324-8446.

St. John Paul II Parish, St. Paul Chapel, 216 Schellers Ave., Sellersburg. **First Saturday Marian Devotion**, 8 a.m. rosary, meditation, prayer; 8:30 a.m. Mass with

## March 25

St. John Paul II Parish, St. Paul Chapel, 216 Schellers Ave., Sellersburg. **First Saturday Marian Devotion**, 8 a.m. rosary, meditation, prayer; 8:30 a.m. Mass with

7-8 p.m., series offered most Thursdays through May 20, viewing all sessions recommended but not required, no registration needed, free. Go to [carmelthirddoption.org/web](http://carmelthirddoption.org/web), click on link at top of page. Information: [carmelthirddoption.org/web](http://carmelthirddoption.org/web), or Keith Ingram, [kingram@aicinvest.com](mailto:kingram@aicinvest.com) or 317-324-8446.

## April 2

Calvary Mausoleum Chapel, 435 W. Troy Ave., Indianapolis. **Way of the Cross**, noon. Information: 317-784-4439 or [www.catholiccemeteries.cc](http://www.catholiccemeteries.cc).

Our Lady of the Greenwood Church, 335 S. Meridian St., Greenwood. **First Friday bilingual celebration of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus**, Mass, 5:45 p.m., exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, following Mass until 9 p.m., sacrament of reconciliation available. Information: 317-750-7309, [msross1@hotmail.com](mailto:msross1@hotmail.com).

## April 3

St. John Paul II Parish, St. Paul Chapel, 216 Schellers Ave., Sellersburg. **First Saturday Marian Devotion**, 8 a.m. rosary, meditation, prayer; 8:30 a.m. Mass with

confessions prior. Information: 812-246-3522.

St. Michael Church, 145 St. Michael Blvd., Brookville. **First Saturday Marian Devotional Prayer Group**, Mass, devotional prayers, rosary, 8 a.m. Information: 765-647-5462.

## April 7

MCL Cafeteria, 5520 Castleton Corner Lane, Indianapolis. **Solo Seniors**, 5 p.m., Catholic, educational, charitable and social singles—separated, widowed or divorced—age 50 and older, new members welcome, also call about regular Friday night dinner events. Information: 317-796-8605 or 317-243-0777.

## April 8

**The Third Option virtual marriage crisis/enrichment class, "Childhood Issues and Emotional Baggage," 7-8 p.m., series offered most Thursdays through May 20, viewing all sessions recommended but not required, no registration needed, free. Go to [carmelthirddoption.org/web](http://carmelthirddoption.org/web), click on link at top of page. Information: [carmelthirddoption.org/web](http://carmelthirddoption.org/web), or Keith Ingram, [kingram@aicinvest.com](mailto:kingram@aicinvest.com) or 317-324-8446. †**

## April 14

Calvary Mausoleum Chapel, 435 W. Troy Ave., Indianapolis. **Monthly Mass**, 2 p.m. Information: 317-784-4439 or [www.catholiccemeteries.cc](http://www.catholiccemeteries.cc).

## April 15

St. Joseph Church, 1401 S. Mickley Ave., Indianapolis. **Third Thursday Adoration**, interceding for women experiencing crisis pregnancy, 11 a.m.-7 p.m., with Mass at 5:45 p.m.

Our Lady of Peace Cemetery and Mausoleum, 9001 Haverstick Road, Indianapolis. **Monthly Mass**, 2 p.m. Information: 317-574-8898 or [www.catholiccemeteries.cc](http://www.catholiccemeteries.cc).

## The Third Option virtual marriage crisis/enrichment class, "Handling Anger Constructively," 7-8 p.m., series offered most Thursdays through May 20, viewing all sessions recommended but not required, no registration needed, free. Go to [carmelthirddoption.org/web](http://carmelthirddoption.org/web), click on link at top of page. Information: [carmelthirddoption.org/web](http://carmelthirddoption.org/web), or Keith Ingram, [kingram@aicinvest.com](mailto:kingram@aicinvest.com) or 317-324-8446. †

## All are invited to join Knights during Prayer Vigil for Life on night of March 19

As part of the 40 Days For Life spring campaign, the central Indiana Knights of Columbus will hold an all-night vigil for life in front of the Planned Parenthood abortion facility at 8590 Georgetown Road, in Indianapolis, from 7 p.m. on March 19 through 7 a.m. on March 20.

All are invited—including non-members—to pray for any amount of time during the 12-hour vigil.

The vigil will begin with the Stations of the Cross, led by Msgr. William

F. Stumpf, archdiocesan vicar general. At 8 p.m., Father Christopher Shocklee, a priest of the Diocese of Lafayette who serves as the Indiana Knights' associate state chaplain, will lead participants in prayer.

All attendees will receive a special St. Joseph prayer card to mark the saint's March 19 feast day.

For more information, contact Indiana Knights of Columbus State Life Director Larry Kunkel at 317-223-4892 or [life@indianakofc.org](mailto:life@indianakofc.org). †

## St. Vincent de Paul conferences in central and southern Indiana in urgent need of furniture, funds

Due to the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, several St. Vincent de Paul conferences in central and southern Indiana are in urgent need of furniture and funds to help the many who are turning to them for assistance.

**Bloomington St. Vincent de Paul Society** has provided free furniture to Monroe County households for more than 20 years. In 2020, 5,147 furniture pieces, 336 major and minor appliances and more than 1,100 non-voucher items (sheets, blankets, silverware, etc.) were distributed to more than 700 unique households. The conference is now in desperate need of furniture and funds to keep the furniture operations going.

To schedule a furniture pickup in Monroe County or to make a financial contribution, call 812-961-1510 or go to [www.svdpbloomington.org](http://www.svdpbloomington.org). Checks made out for St. Vincent de Paul may also be sent to St. Vincent de Paul, 1413 E. 17th St., Bloomington, IN 47408.

**St. Vincent de Paul in Brown County** continues to be the primary emergency food responder for Brown County. They have distributed more than 100 tons of food since the start of the pandemic. Now operating two 26-foot Freightliner trucks, their

gravel parking lot no longer meets the challenge, especially when trying to move pallets of food on pallet jacks. The conference is seeking funds to cover the cost of surfacing the lot.

To contribute online, go to [stagnescatholicnashville.org](http://stagnescatholicnashville.org) or [stvincentdepaulbrowncounty.com](http://stvincentdepaulbrowncounty.com). Donations may also be sent by mailing a check made out for St. Vincent de Paul directly to P.O. Box 577, Nashville, IN 47448.

In fiscal year 2019-2020, **St. Vincent de Paul Indianapolis** gave 1,584 dining sets, couches, dressers and chairs and 432 refrigerators, washers, dryers and stoves to those in need. The demand has only increased, making the organization in great need of furniture, particularly couches, living room chairs and recliners, kitchen tables and chairs, dressers, end tables and coffee tables, as well as appliances.

To schedule a pickup, call 317-687-1006. Donations may also be dropped off at the St. Vincent de Paul Distribution Center at 1201 E. Maryland St., in Indianapolis. For a complete wish list of items needed and a list of items the organization does not accept, go to [cutt.ly/SVDPIndyItems](http://cutt.ly/SVDPIndyItems). †

## Virtual 'Shelterbration' on March 11 will raise funds for Becky's Place in Bedford

A virtual "Shelterbration" event to raise funds for Becky's Place shelter for homeless women and children in Bedford will take place at [BeckysPlaceBedford.org](http://BeckysPlaceBedford.org) at 7 p.m. on March 11.

The event includes an online silent auction of items beginning on March 4 at [bidpal.net/beckysplace](http://bidpal.net/beckysplace) (PIN is 6480).

The virtual event on March 11 will include residents' success stories, results of the silent auction and awards.

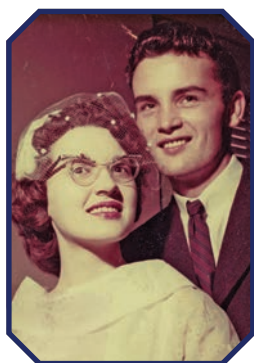
Each year, Becky's Place provides services to more than 100 women and children to move them into more sustainable housing. Services include offering shelter, meals, case management, support services, counseling and more.

To become a "Shelterbration" event sponsor or to donate, go to [cutt.ly/Shelterbration](http://cutt.ly/Shelterbration).

For more information, contact Cheri Bush at [cbush@archindy.org](mailto:cbush@archindy.org) or 317-236-1411. †

## Wedding ANNIVERSARIES

Announcements for couples celebrating 50, 55, 60, 65, 70 or more years of marriage are accepted. Go to [bit.ly/2M4MQms](http://bit.ly/2M4MQms) or call 317-236-1585.



**CORNELIUS AND KATHERINE (FOX) CARR**, members of Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ Parish in Indianapolis, celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on Feb. 11.

The couple was married in St. Patrick Church in Indianapolis on Feb. 11, 1961.

They have four children: Cori Dabney, Claire Strahan, Cornelius and Francis Carr.

The couple also has two grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. †



**VINCE AND JANE (SCHWENDEMAN) HORENKAMP**, members of SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi Parish in Greenwood, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on Feb. 20.

The couple was married in St. Charles Borromeo Church in St. Charles, Mo., on Feb. 20, 1971.

They have two children: Emilie Dorsett and Lizzy Lucas.

The couple also has three grandchildren. †

# Bishops' working group set up in November completes work

WASHINGTON (CNS)—A special working group of the U.S. bishops formed last November to deal with conflicts that could arise between



Archbishop Jose H. Gomez

the policies of President Joe Biden, a Catholic, and Church teaching has completed its work, Los Angeles Archbishop Jose H. Gomez said in a March 1 memo to all the U.S. bishops.

Catholic News Service obtained a copy of the memo

issued by Archbishop Gomez, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), as a follow-up to a February memo he sent to the bishops explaining the working group's two recommendations given to him in its final report.

The March 1 memo confirms the actions taken on them.

The first of two recommendations made by the working group, he said, was to write a letter to Biden "conveying the USCCB's eagerness to work with him on issues where we will undoubtedly express strong support, while acknowledging a lack of support

on other issues where we cannot agree with anticipated policies."

The second recommendation was to develop "a document addressed to all of the Catholic faithful on eucharistic coherence," the archbishop said.

Archbishop Gomez issued the Biden letter on Jan. 20, which was Inauguration Day and when Biden was sworn in as the nation's 46th president. "I look forward to working with President Biden and his administration, and the new Congress," the archbishop said. "As with every administration, there will be areas where we agree and work closely together and areas where we will have principled disagreement and strong opposition."

The archbishop said that the bishops hold deep concerns about "many threats to human life and dignity in our society," including euthanasia, the death penalty, immigration policy, racism, poverty, care for the environment, criminal justice reform, economic development and international peace.

He also expressed hope the incoming administration "will work with the Church and others of goodwill" to "address the complicated cultural and economic factors that are driving abortion and discouraging families."

For the U.S. bishops, the "continued injustice of abortion" remains the

"pre-eminent priority," Archbishop Gomez said, but "preeminent" does not mean 'only.' We have deep concerns about many threats to human life and dignity in our society."

As for developing a document on "eucharistic coherence," as Archbishop Gomez called it, he said this recommendation has been "forwarded to the Committee on Doctrine in the hope that it will strengthen an understanding and deepen a common faith in the gift that has been given to us in the Sacrament of the Altar."

The reference to "eucharistic coherence" may reflect a growing concern among the bishops regarding Catholic understanding and practice regarding the sacrament.

While there has been fierce debate in some circles, including among bishops, over the reception of the Eucharist when one is not in accord with Church teachings, there also is a deep concern about polling that suggests a confusion or lack of understanding about the real presence of Christ in Catholic belief and practice.

Archbishop Gomez announced the establishment of this special working group at the end of the public portion of the U.S. bishops' fall general assembly on Nov. 16-17, which was

held completely online because of the coronavirus pandemic.

He named Archbishop Allen H. Vigneron of Detroit, USCCB vice president, to head up the group to address issues surrounding the election of a Catholic president and policies that may come about that would be in conflict with Catholic teaching and the bishops' priorities.

Other members were the chairmen of USCCB committees focused on various policy areas.

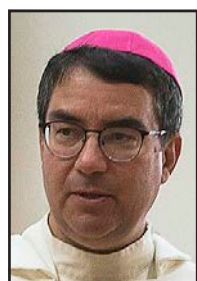
"We are facing a unique moment in the history of our country" with the election of Biden, only the second Catholic to become president, Archbishop Gomez said in announcing the group. "This presents certain opportunities but also certain challenges."

Biden has indicated his faith commitments "will lead to certain policies that we favor," Archbishop Gomez said, such as immigration, aid to refugees and the poor, racial justice and climate change, but he supports *Roe v. Wade* and has said he favors repeal of the Hyde Amendment.

Hyde, re-enacted every year for 45 years, outlaws federal tax dollars from directly funding abortion except in cases of rape, incest or when the life of the woman would be endangered. †

# Supreme Court decision lifts ban on indoor worship in California county

WASHINGTON (CNS)—A Supreme Court decision allowing indoor worship services in Santa Clara County, Calif., was praised by Bishop Oscar Cantu of the



Bishop Oscar Cantu

Diocese of San Jose, located in the county where the ban had been in effect.

"I join all Catholics and people of faith in Santa Clara County in expressing our satisfaction in tonight's U.S. Supreme Court decision," the bishop said in a Feb. 26 statement just after

the court issued its brief order allowing the pandemic-related worship restrictions to be lifted while these limits are challenged in federal court.

The bishop's statement pointed out that Santa Clara was the only county in the country with a ban on indoor worship.

"Banning indoor worship and yet allowing people to gather at airports, personal services establishments and retail shopping is unconstitutional—and the Supreme Court has said so several times," he added.

The court's 6-3 vote was in response to a lawsuit brought against Gov. Gavin Newsom, Santa Clara County and County Health Officer Sara Cody by a group of five county churches.

Bishop Cantu said he was grateful for the work of these churches and their "efforts to uphold our right to worship" in the county as guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution.

Effective immediately, he said, all parishes, missions and chapels in the Diocese of San Jose may resume indoor worship services up to 20% capacity, as long as each parish can do so following masking, social distancing and sanitization protocols.

"As we continue to protect the most vulnerable among us, the dispensation from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass is still in effect. Parishes will continue to offer outdoor and livestream Masses wherever possible for parishioners who are vulnerable to COVID-19 or hesitant about indoor worship," he added.

He also urged the Catholic community to "move forward in hope, continuing all necessary safety precautions" and receiving the COVID-19 vaccine when they could. "Let us pray for all those suffering from the effects of the pandemic and its aftermath," he added.

This all sounds somewhat familiar because on Feb. 5, the Supreme Court gave California churches the go-ahead to resume indoor worship services with a ban on singing and chanting and a limit of 25% capacity.

Santa Clara County officials said

the county was not subject to the ruling because it already prohibited all indoor gatherings even at retail establishments where people could shop but not attend gatherings, like book readings. Similarly, county officials said people could go into houses of worship for individual prayer, but not join in gatherings with others.

After the county's action, five Santa Clara County churches filed a motion in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California to attempt to block the county's ban, saying the Supreme Court's ruling must apply to the entire state.

A U.S. district court judge granted an injunction to temporarily block the Santa Clara ban on indoor worship services, but less than two days later, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit temporarily suspended that order, leaving in place the county's ban on all indoor gatherings.

The churches filed their appeal with the Supreme Court on Feb. 17, and pointed to the high court's recent rulings on indoor worship where it lifted New York's pandemic-related limits on attendance at worship services and where it allowed California churches to resume indoor worship services.

Santa Clara County Counsel James Williams said the Supreme Court's decision regarding Santa Clara County was disappointing, reported *The Mercury*

*News*, a San Jose daily newspaper.

In a statement, he said the high court's order was issued "without any analysis at all of the county's gathering rules, which have always been neutral and applied equally to all gatherings across-the-board. Indoor gatherings of all kinds remain very risky, and we continue to urge all religious institutions to carefully follow the public health recommendations to avoid spread of COVID-19 among their congregations and the broader community."


He also noted the county is still permitted to restrict the capacity of indoor worship services—at a 20% capacity, instead of the state's 25% limit. The 20% limit is what the county is currently imposing on retail and grocery stores and other indoor businesses, Williams said.

In its brief order on Santa Clara worship services, the Supreme Court did not provide reasons for siding with the churches but said the decision was "clearly dictated" by its previous decision on California's indoor worship.

According to Becket, a religious liberty law firm, 33 states have no restrictions on in-person worship and 17 have a percentage limit—most at 50% capacity. But Louisiana has a 75% capacity cap, and Maine's limit is 13% capacity. Only the District of Columbia has a numerical cap, which is 250 people. †



The U.S. Supreme Court in Washington is seen on Nov. 26, 2020. (CNS photo/Tyler Orsburn)



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# LAMPERT

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## 'The focus should be on the power of God'

Father Lampert was appointed to serve as the archdiocese's exorcist after the death of his predecessor, Msgr. John Ryan. That priest was discreet in his ministry, not speaking about it publicly.

Because of that, and because there were so few exorcists in the U.S. in 2005, Father Lampert was in a bind. How would he learn about this ministry?

"There was nobody I could turn to," he recalled. "The knowledge of Msgr. Ryan had died with him."

So, while on a sabbatical in Rome soon after being appointed as exorcist, Father Lampert was mentored by a Franciscan priest there who had been trained as an exorcist by Passionist Father Candido Amantini, the chief exorcist of the Diocese of Rome for decades.

"The Church says the best way to become an exorcist is the apprenticeship model," Father Lampert said.

Observing his mentor perform exorcisms, though, was shocking at times, as Father Lampert recalls in his book. The mentor priest never flinched, even when an afflicted person started levitating in one incident.

"As the demon laughed hysterically and began to levitate, the priest put his hand on the person's head and pushed the manifesting demon back into the chair, all the while never pausing with the exorcism prayer of the Church," Father Lampert wrote. "I must say at that moment I thought, 'What has my bishop gotten me into?'"

Years later and with much experience under his belt, Father Lampert isn't taken aback by the manifestation of demons, taking it all in stride.

"I'm not interested in seeing the theatrics of the devil," he said. "The focus should be on the power of God and what God is doing in the lives of people who are afflicted."

## Debunking devilish myths

Father Lampert is happy to see the growth in the ministry of exorcists in the U.S. He credits the increase in part to attention drawn to it by St. John Paul II, retired Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Francis.

"If the Church isn't prepared to help people who turn to her and who believe that they're dealing with demonic influence, then they'll turn elsewhere," Father Lampert said. "And where they turn elsewhere may not necessarily bring them the help that they need. It may actually

fracture and break them even further."

He also sees the growth related in part to the openness of him and other exorcists to speaking about their ministry, which Father Lampert has done around the world. He views these speaking opportunities as a chance to help focus his listeners' attention on what's most important.

"More people today are fascinated by the devil than they are with the power of God," Father Lampert said. "We should never believe that God and the devil are on the same playing field. The devil is still a creature."

"Very intellectual. Superior to us, you could say, intellectually. But still a creature. We should never put a creature on the same level as the Creator."

He also wants to "debunk a lot of the myths that surround the devil."

"The more that you shroud something in secrecy, the more you give it a life of its own," he said. "To me, being public about the ministry is pulling back the curtain on who the devil is."

Bishop Jeffrey S. Grob, an auxiliary bishop for the Archdiocese of Chicago, was appointed exorcist for his archdiocese in 2006, a year after Father Lampert took up the ministry. He and Father Lampert have known each other for decades, having been seminarians together before they were ordained in the early 1990s.

Bishop Grob appreciates Father Lampert's willingness to speak publicly about the ministry of exorcism.

"There are a handful of guys who are more out there, trying to build a healthy balance in the understanding of it," Bishop Grob said. "There are so many skewed understandings of the ministry. Father Lampert is a very solidly grounded guy in his faith, his practice of the faith and his teaching of the faith."

"He has good discernment. He looks at a situation and sees what it is and what it's not."

## 'Trained to be a skeptic'

Father Lampert thinks the Church's approach to demonic activity takes a healthy middle ground between two more extreme views.

"There are people who don't believe in the reality of a personified evil," he said. "They would say that evil is nothing more than humanity's inhumane treatment of one another. ... Then there's the flip side of that where you have people that see the devil behind everything and that we're all poor victims of what the devil is trying to do."

In his book, Father Lampert explains that, while he affirms the reality of the devil and the possibility of him and other demons afflicting people, he is

nonetheless "trained to be a skeptic."

"I should be the last one to believe that someone is possessed," he wrote. "I must exhaust all reasonable explanations for what is taking place in the person. Therefore, experts in the medical and psychiatric sciences are always consulted."

But when those explanations are exhausted, Father Lampert is willing to minister to afflicted people with the spiritual means the Church provides.

Bishop Grob spoke of the challenge of charting this middle course.

"In a purely psychological world, there is no place for what we profess in the creed that God created all things visible and invisible," he said. "Those invisible things, as we believe in them, don't necessarily have a place when you talk about angels and demons. As Catholics, that's part and parcel of our tradition."

"It's always a challenge to keep a healthy balance, because either end is counterproductive."

He said that Father Lampert's book portrays this middle course well.

"He presents the mind of the Church, our understanding," Bishop Grob said. "It's a balanced read that presents concrete situations. It's down-to-earth and is approachable. It's grounded in our theology and tradition."

Sometimes, it takes a long time for the ministry of an exorcist to have the desired effect. Father Lampert describes in his book ministering for more than a year to a woman possessed by seven demons.

Not being caught up in the "theatrics of the devil," when she was finally free of them, Father Lampert took his success as another day at the office.

How did he celebrate? By going to a nearby Dairy Queen for a chocolate milk shake.

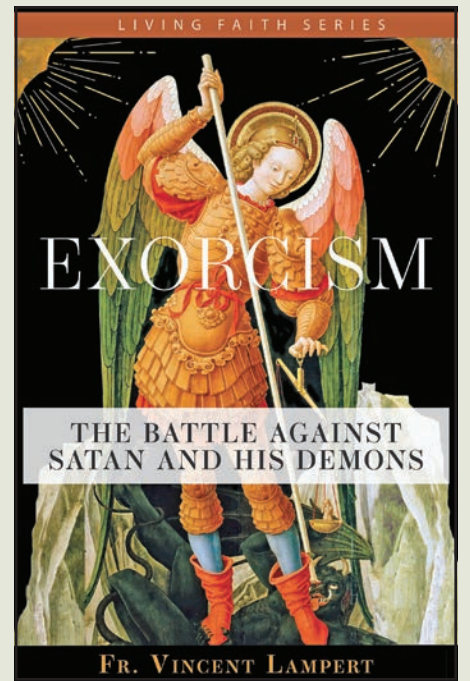
"The place was crowded and as I waited in line to place my order," he notes in the book, "I thought to myself that if these people knew where I had just come from I would be like Moses parting the Red Sea."

One of the reasons Father Lampert is so successful in his ministry is that he doesn't just see it as another day at the office. It's part of his priestly vocation.

"A vocation is a calling from God," Father Lampert said. "Because there are fewer priests, we wear so many hats and are pulled in so many directions, there's the danger of seeing the priesthood as an occupation. As a vocation, though, you're a priest 24/7. As an occupation, you do your thing and you're done and go on to the next thing."

## 'I always have hope and joy'

Father Lampert's priestly ministry was curtailed enough at the start of the



coronavirus pandemic last year that he had time to write his book.

He recognizes, though, that the pandemic and trends going on in society before it began gave an opening to the devil to work in ordinary ways in people's lives.

"The devil is an opportunist," Father Lampert said. "So, if we find ourselves in a crisis, he's going to use that to his own benefit to advance his agenda and his kingdom."

"Christ came to give us community. But the devil is all about isolation—divide and conquer—and we're all living in isolation today because of the pandemic. Even before the pandemic, we were all in isolation because of technology. We're all walking around with gadgets in our hands and not really communicating with each other. We're all in isolation."

Despite the challenges of the pandemic and the continued efforts of the devil to divide and isolate people, Father Lampert is grounded in the hope of Christ.

"It may be challenging, but I know that every time the devil is doing something that he believes is advancing his kingdom, ultimately he's advancing the kingdom of God," Father Lampert said. "When you think of the crucifixion, the moment the devil thought he had won in Christ's death on the cross, it was the moment of his defeat."

"Ultimately, everything the devil does plays into the hands of God. I believe that wholeheartedly. And, because of that, I always have hope and joy."

(To purchase *Exorcism: The Battle against Satan and His Demons*, visit [stpaulcenter.com](http://stpaulcenter.com) or [amazon.com](http://amazon.com).) †

# EQUALITY

continued from page 1

gender discordance from discrimination. But instead, the bill represents the imposition by Congress of novel and divisive viewpoints regarding 'gender' on individuals and organizations," they said.

"This includes dismissing sexual difference and falsely presenting 'gender' as only a social construct," they said. "As Pope Francis has reflected, however, 'biological sex and the sociocultural role of sex—gender—can be distinguished but not separated.'"

Signing the letter were: Bishop Michael C. Barber of Oakland, Calif., chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) Committee on Catholic Education; Archbishop Paul S. Coakley of Oklahoma City, chairman of the USCCB Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development; Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan of New York, chairman of the USCCB Committee for Religious Liberty; Bishop David A. Konderla of Tulsa, Okla., chairman of the USCCB Subcommittee for the Promotion and Defense of Marriage; and Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann of Kansas City, Kan., chairman of the USCCB Committee on Pro-Life Activities.

"It is one thing to be understanding of human weakness and the complexities of life, and another to accept ideologies that attempt to sunder what are inseparable aspects of reality," the bishops said, further quoting Pope Francis.

"Tragically, this act can also be construed to include an abortion mandate, a violation of precious rights to life and conscience," the committee chairmen added.

"Rather than affirm human dignity in ways that

meaningfully exceed existing practical protections, the Equality Act would discriminate against people of faith," they said. "It would also inflict numerous legal and social harms on Americans of any faith or none."

The measure first passed the House on May 17, 2019, in a bipartisan 236-173 vote, but the Senate did not act on the bill after receiving it. President Donald J. Trump had threatened to veto the measure if it ever reached his desk.

House leadership pledged to see it reintroduced in the 117th Congress. On Feb. 18, Rep. David Cicilline, D-Rhode Island, reintroduced it. Democratic Sens. Jeff Merkley of Oregon, Cory Booker of New Jersey and Tammy Baldwin of Wisconsin are expected to reintroduce a Senate version soon.

A group of faith leaders who support the Equality Act who held a webinar for the media on Feb. 24 included Sister Simone Campbell, a Sister of Social Service, who is the outgoing executive director of Network, a Catholic social justice lobby organization.

Network has long supported the measure, she said. "It's critically important to ensure there is no discrimination in our nation especially with regard to the LGBTQ community."

In the Catholic faith, all are welcome, she said, "and if all are welcome, all need to be protected. I think the bedrock position of our faith is to welcome and secure safety and the ability to flourish for all."

Sister Simone and representatives of other faiths, including Jewish, Muslim and other Christian leaders, said in the webinar that the measure "will not reduce religious liberty," as protected by the First Amendment and religious exemptions in current law, "but it will reduce religious bigotry."

However, the U.S. bishops' committee chairmen said in their Feb. 23 letter that if passed, the Equality Act will "discriminate against individuals and religious

organizations based on their different beliefs by partially repealing the bipartisan Religious Freedom Restoration Act, an unprecedented departure from that law and one of America's founding principles."

The Religious Freedom Restoration Act, or RFRA, is a 1993 law that protects religions against government intrusion.

Among its other provisions, the bishops said, the measure would expand "the government's definition of public places into numerous settings, even forcing religiously operated spaces, such as some church halls and equivalent facilities owned by synagogues or mosques, to either host functions that violate their beliefs or close their doors to their broader communities."

On Feb. 26, House Republicans introduced a compromise measure called the Fairness for All Act, which differs from H.R. 5 in that it would "clarify protections based on race, color and national origin." But also unlike the Equality Act, the compromise bill says RFRA can be used "as a defense in court against allegations of illegal anti-LGBTQ discrimination."

The USCCB on its website posted an "Action Alert"—[bit.ly/3qVHIkL](http://bit.ly/3qVHIkL)—asking Catholics to write to their representatives and senators to urge them to vote against the Equality Act.

Some state Catholic conferences have done the same, including the Montana Catholic Conference. In a Feb. 24 "Call to Action," it said: "Everyone deserves to be treated with respect and dignity. The Equality Act ... in many ways does the opposite and needs to be opposed."

(The full text of the bishops' letter to members of Congress can be found online at [bit.ly/3dEDhXE](http://bit.ly/3dEDhXE).) †



# A trip with a cooler leads to a journey of offering hope

By John Shaughnessy

Andrew Costello's uplifting journey started when he rolled a cooler filled with leftover picnic food from a parish get-together through the streets of downtown Indianapolis.

As the cooler bumped along behind him, the then-25-year-old Costello looked for anyone who seemed "down on their luck."

When he met someone, he asked the person if he or she would like something to eat and drink. Then Costello spent a few moments talking with the homeless person—"just to let them know someone cared about them, and that they were not forgotten."

Costello kept following that simple approach until the cooler was empty. And when he headed home that evening, he had this amazing feeling, a feeling he wanted to continue.

That's how "Operation Leftover" began. And for the past 11 years, one evening a month, Costello has roamed through downtown Indianapolis in a personal ministry that has grown to involve hundreds of volunteers, embraced the dignity of countless people who are homeless, and touched his life in a way he never imagined.

Now, the 36-year-old Costello is stepping aside as the coordinator of that ministry as he and his wife, Rebecca, are expecting their second child in late March.

"I need to be a dad first," says the member of St. Joan of Arc Parish in Indianapolis.

While Costello says the grassroots effort will continue, he also reflected upon his time of leading the ministry—a ministry that he believes God called him to start.

"If you are docile to the Holy Spirit, God can will something that will take off like a train," Costello says.

Sharing that belief leads him to one of his favorite moments of Operation Leftover.

## 'Half the battle is being present'

"There was a woman we helped," he says. "She was on crutches, and she was staying at one of the shelters. She asked me if I was giving out something. I gave her some bus passes. Within 10 months, I learned she was gainfully employed at a furniture store. My understanding was that the bus passes helped her get to work. I needed a new sofa so I went there, and she was very knowledgeable about the product. I got a recliner there, too."

Besides the new furniture, Costello received a bonus in seeing how God works—including how God seeks people's help: "We do what we can, and God fills in the gaps behind the scenes. We just need to take the step forward."

Stepping forward to help is so simple in Operation Leftover that it draws many young adults as volunteers, according to Costello.

"It was just a simple approach—me going down there

to talk to people," he says. "Others saw it was a good thing that brought me joy. They saw they could put themselves out there like I had. And it's hands-on. Half the battle is being present."

Another part of the approach is using the creativity and skills that God gives people, he adds. Beyond distributing food and clothing, groups of volunteers also share a list of job prospects "because one of the main reasons for homelessness is job loss."

"Helping someone out is not a long, drawn-out process," Costello notes. "It can start with buying someone in need a sandwich at a local deli, having 'goodie bags' ready in a vehicle to hand out, purchasing IndyGo bus tickets for medical appointments or job interviews—or paying for a P.O. box so someone can privately receive mail. Be creative with how you help others."

And never underestimate the power of prayer and God's mercy to change lives, he says.

"Although I don't measure the effectiveness of our ministry by numbers, I can safely say that we have helped at least 30 individuals get off the streets, and that may be a modest number," he says. "I have confidence that our prayers have helped many more achieve autonomy, for we know that prayer changes things."

## 'Be people of forgiveness and compassion'

That combination of faith in God and the need for compassion toward others echoed through the farewell note that Costello recently shared with volunteers and supporters of Operation Leftover.

"Aside from the power of prayer and the effectiveness of God's mercy, I wanted to remind everyone that the people we serve are regular human beings like you and me," he wrote. "I have learned that people behave the way that they do because of their life experiences."

"Many of our brothers and sisters on the streets have fallen on hard times due to a plethora of reasons: mental health, chronic illness, loss of a job, broken family relationships. I implore all of you to be



Andrew Costello, second from left, leads a prayer on the night of Feb. 21, 2013, as members of Operation Leftover take to the streets of downtown Indianapolis to provide food, clothing and conversation with people who are homeless. The group of young adult Catholics dedicated to helping the homeless is based at St. John the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis. Costello prays with a man who is homeless, left, and two other members of the group, Michael Gramke, second from right, and Kellye Cramsey. Costello is stepping aside as coordinator of the ministry to focus on his family. (File photo by John Shaughnessy)

people of forgiveness and compassion."

Costello praised the hundreds of volunteers, thanking them for their "time, talent, treasure and sacrifices" to help and interact with people who are homeless.

He especially focused on Juan Aguilar, a volunteer for the past five years who will be the new coordinator of Operation Leftover. He also thanked Father Rick Nagel, the pastor of St. John the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis, for letting the group use the downtown faith community as its base.

"I've always been impressed by his great zeal and love for the poor," Father Nagel says about Costello. "As a young adult, he's had a steadfast commitment to the community that God called him to serve. He's had a great gift there, and I'm grateful to see how he did it all for the Lord."

Costello is thankful for the gift of these 11 years, too. He shares one more story of success and one more request.

"I cannot tell you how much a consistent commitment to Christian charity and humility can change a person's life. One of our volunteers who passed away significantly turned his life around after he got out of prison because of the love and support of his family."

"Please be open to forgiving others. That's what Christ did for us, even though we didn't deserve it." †

## ICC

continued from page 1

school stakeholders reaching out to their senators if we are to be successful.

"There is strong and vocal opposition to these efforts, and we have to provide the other side of the story if school choice expansion is going to find its way into law, whether it be in House Bill 1005 or in House Bill 1001, the budget bill."

The ICC supports the legislation and encourages the Catholic faithful to contact their elected representatives on this and other matters important to the Church and the common good.

"At this critical point in the legislative session, there are bills that need to be supported, and bills that need to be defeated," said Angela Espada, executive director of the ICC, the public policy voice of the Catholic Church in Indiana. "So we are asking everyone to make their voices heard."

A significant pro-life bill is another measure that the ICC is watching closely. House Bill 1577, authored by Rep. Peggy Mayfield (R-Martinsville), would require abortion providers to offer additional information and resources to women who are considering abortion, including an ultrasound image of their unborn child.

The most intensely debated aspect of the bill involves providing women with information about possibly reversing a chemical, or medication, abortion. This method of abortion, which is reserved for use up to 10 weeks of pregnancy, involves the ingestion of two pills within a 24- to 48-hour period. Women sometimes change their minds after taking the first pill, mifepristone, and

the legislation would require abortion providers to inform them about an option that could potentially save the unborn child—taking the hormone progesterone after that initial abortion pill is consumed.

Planned Parenthood and the American Civil Liberties Union oppose the measure, and two Indiana physicians testifying against the bill questioned both the safety and the effectiveness of abortion pill reversal. But another obstetrician, Dr. Christina Francis, argued that there is a simple principle behind the method.

"Though abortion supporters claim that this is experimental, nothing could be further from the truth," said Francis, a Fort Wayne-based physician who chairs the American Association of Pro-Life Obstetricians and Gynecologists. "The reversal of mifepristone with progesterone is consistent with a basic scientific principle that we all learned about in medical school."

The ICC also provided testimony in favor of the bill during a House committee hearing.



Alexander Mingus

human person. We also recognize that this legislation is just one piece that's necessary as we advocate for the proper support, health care, spiritual care and tender

"The Church consistently stands in firm support of pregnant women and their unborn children," said Alexander Mingus, associate director of the ICC. "We believe this bill's provisions align with the Church's vision of the dignity of the



**'During a time when the pandemic has caused untold numbers of people, through no fault of their own, to be without an income to pay rent, government entities should be compassionately working to keep people housed, not making it easier for them to be thrust into the streets.'**

—Angela Espada, executive director of the Indiana Catholic Conference

concern for vulnerable women who face the daunting challenges of abortion."

Another effort that the ICC considers pro-life has once again stalled at the Statehouse despite backing from Gov. Eric Holcomb and a host of advocates. Legislation that would have required employers to provide women with reasonable accommodations during their pregnancy—adjustments as simple as offering them more frequent breaks or access to appropriate seating—failed to gain traction.

Another disappointment for the ICC and other advocates during the first half of the legislative session was the overriding of Holcomb's veto of a landlord-tenant bill that was rushed through last year's General Assembly. Senate Enrolled Act (SEA) 148 was the result of language added to an unrelated Senate bill during the 2020 legislative session and passed with little opportunity for debate.

SEA 148 was the only bill the governor vetoed last year. The ICC and others wanted the veto to stand because the legislation placed an even greater imbalance in the relationship between

landlords and tenants, which in Indiana typically favors landlords. Ultimately, however, lawmakers overturned the veto.

"During a time when the pandemic has caused untold numbers of people, through no fault of their own, to be without an income to pay rent, government entities should be compassionately working to keep people housed, not making it easier for them to be thrust into the streets," Espada said. "As we move forward with the second half of the legislative session, we will always stand in solidarity with the most vulnerable among us and call on the Catholic faithful to do the same."

To follow priority legislation of the ICC, visit [www.indianacc.org](http://www.indianacc.org). This website includes access to I-CAN, the Indiana Catholic Action Network, which offers the Church's position on key issues. Those who sign up for I-CAN receive alerts on legislation moving forward and ways to contact their elected representatives.

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

# COVID bill OK'd without language to prevent funding of abortion

WASHINGTON (CNS)—More than a dozen nonprofit organizations, including Catholic Charities USA, praised the American Rescue Plan passed by the U.S. House early on Feb. 27 for including “several provisions of importance to the charitable nonprofit sector.”

The \$1.9 trillion relief package, which now goes to the Senate for a vote, “would provide much-needed relief to many nonprofits on the front lines of helping people in communities across this country as we continue to deal with the challenges created by the pandemic and economic downturn,” said a joint statement from the National Council of Nonprofits.

After the vote, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-California, said the measure would be “transformative” in mitigating poverty amid the pandemic. “We are putting money in workers’ pockets,” she said in a statement. “As President [Joe] Biden has said, help is on the way.”

However, on the House floor ahead of the vote—which came at 2 in the morning



Rep. Chris Smith

(EST)—Rep. Chris Smith, N.J., criticized Pelosi and the House Rules Committee for refusing to allow a vote on an amendment to add language to the bill “to ensure that taxpayers aren’t forced to subsidize abortion,” as provided

by the long-standing Hyde Amendment.

The Hyde Amendment, re-enacted every year for 45 years, outlaws federal tax dollars from directly funding abortion except in cases of rape, incest or when the life of the woman would be endangered.

The McMorris Rodgers-Fox-Walorski

Amendment—co-sponsored by 206 members—would have added Hyde language to the American Rescue Plan. The Hyde language also was rejected as what became the final bill worked its way through various House committees, said Smith and other national pro-life leaders.

“In a radical departure from all previous COVID-19 relief laws—the bill before us today mandates taxpayer funding for abortion on demand,” Smith said. He and other members allowed to address the full House were given only one minute each to speak. Smith’s longer written statement on the issue was entered into the Congressional Record, along with his delivered remarks.

“Unborn babies need the president of the United States and members of Congress to be their friend and advocate—not another powerful adversary,” he said.

Smith, a Catholic, who is co-chair of the Congressional Pro-Life Caucus, quoted a letter that Biden, who also is Catholic, “once wrote to his constituents explaining his support for laws against funding for abortion by saying it would ‘protect both the woman and her unborn child. ... Those of us who are opposed to abortion should not be compelled to pay for them.’”

“Most Americans agree—58% according to the most recent Marist poll,” added Smith, who was among the 212 House members who voted against the measure. All of the Republicans and two Democrats rejected the bill. It passed with 219 votes.

Allocations in the American Rescue Plan include \$17 billion for vaccine-related activities and programs and \$110 billion for other efforts to contain the pandemic; \$130 billion for public schools; \$246 billion for extending

unemployment benefits through August and increasing the federal supplemental payment from \$300 per week to \$400; and \$143 billion to expand child tax credit, child care tax credit and earned income tax credit mostly for one year.

Other provisions include \$45 billion to temporarily expand Affordable Care Act subsidies for two years and subsidize 2020 and 2021 coverage; \$50 million for family planning; \$25 billion for grants to restaurants and bars; \$7 billion to allow more loans under the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP); \$6 billion to increase nutrition assistance; and \$350 billion for states and localities.

The bill also provides for checks of \$1,400 to go to individuals who earn up to \$75,000 a year, heads of households earning \$112,500 or married couples earning \$150,000. Eligible dependents, including adult dependents, also would each get \$1,400.

The House measure also mandates phasing in a hike in the minimum wage to \$15 an hour by 2025.

The Senate is working on its version of the measure, but news reports said many in the chamber are divided over the size and scope of the bill. The minimum wage provision will not be included. The Senate parliamentarian said under budget rules it cannot be considered.

In praising the House measure, the National Council of Nonprofits also said it falls short in some areas, including the expansion of who is eligible to apply for PPP loans by including some nonprofits with more than 500 employees, but said the deadline for applying for these loans should be extended beyond March 31, so newly eligible nonprofits have time to apply.

“We call on senators to include the additional relief that more than

3,000 organizations are calling for, so nonprofits can all continue to keep our workforces intact and help people in our communities,” the organization said.

March for Life’s president, Jeanne Mancini, weighed in on the House not including a Hyde provision.

“At a time when our country is mourning the deaths of 500,000 Americans, very little [less than 10%] of the misnamed COVID relief package actually goes toward combating the pandemic,” she said.

“Pro-abortion Democrats are using this bill to push through billions of dollars in subsidies for abortions, not only here in the U.S. but also abroad.”

These lawmakers “are attempting to use the budget reconciliation process to accomplish this because they would not otherwise have the votes needed to do away with popular pro-life riders that protect Americans from funding the life-ending procedure,” she added.

Like Smith, Mancini pointed to “consistent polling” that shows “most Americans oppose their tax dollars funding abortion both here and abroad. So much for unity.”

Carol Tobias, president of National Right to Life, said some estimate that more than \$414 billion in taxpayer dollars in the American Rescue Plan “potentially could be used to pay for elective abortions or insurance plans that cover elective abortions.”

“Democrat leaders in the House are not interested in the wishes of the majority of Americans who oppose taxpayer funding of abortions,” Tobias said. “Democrat leaders are more concerned with fulfilling election-year promises made to pro-abortion groups. Those groups are interested in abortion at anytime, anywhere, for any reason and paid for by taxpayers.” †

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# Faith *Alive!*

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## Fasting can draw people out of themselves, closer to God, others

By Mike Nelson

In the beginning, fasting was no big deal—or at least it shouldn't have been.

God gave Adam and Eve all they wanted, with one stipulation: Don't eat the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden. And what happened?

Father Daniel Merz, former associate director of the Office of Divine Worship of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), suggests that when Adam ate of the forbidden fruit, he put his faith not in God but in food.

"The tragedy is not so much that Adam ate food, but that he ate the food for its own sake, 'apart' from God and to be independent of him," said Father Merz in a Lenten reflection for the USCCB.

By contrast, when Jesus was tempted by Satan with food, wealth and power in the desert after 40 days of fasting, he rejected Satan completely. Jesus knew that "one does not live on bread alone" (Mt 4:4).

"For the Christian," said Father Merz, "fasting is ultimately about fasting from sin."

"Fasting from sin" is a challenge all of us face daily, although it becomes more prominent, behaviorally speaking, for most of us during Lent. It's the season in which fasting is the second "pillar," preceded by prayer and followed by almsgiving.

Lent and its symbolism depicted in Scripture remind us that fasting from sin helps us connect to God and, in particular, to the covenant that God established with humanity in its earliest days.

The first reading for the First Sunday of Lent recounted the aftermath of the great flood of 40 days and 40 nights that covered the Earth and wiped out all but those safely aboard Noah's ark. Noah and his family had been spared because they had not engaged in the lawlessness and corruption that had gripped humanity since the original sin of Adam and Eve.

When the floodwaters subsided, God told Noah he had established a covenant with humanity, symbolized by the rainbow, and would never again permit such destruction.

"When I bring clouds over the Earth, and the bow appears in the clouds, I will recall



South Korean Cardinal Andrew Yeom Soo-jung, center, and Father Francis Kim, left, pour soup into a container at a soup kitchen in Myongdong Cathedral in Seoul on Jan. 22. Authentic fasting can draw people out of themselves to care for others and grow closer to God. (CNS photo/courtesy Archdiocese of Seoul)

the covenant I have made between me and you and all living beings" (Gn 9:14-15).

But a covenant, of course, is a two-way street. In this case, humanity's end of the bargain was that it should refrain—or, in the Lenten vernacular, "fast"—from its sinful behavior that led to the first flood. God was hoping, we can assume, that his covenant would bring a change of heart and a renewed appreciation for what he had provided.

As history has shown, humanity has often failed to live up to the terms of the covenant. It may be helpful, then, to consider and reflect on what Noah and his brood—human, four-footed, winged and otherwise—endured during their time aboard the ark.

Confinement. Isolation. Deprivation. Sound familiar?

Throughout the past year, because of the coronavirus pandemic, we have been fasting from our normal routines, including work, school, errands and social gatherings. Most of us have foregone (sacrificed) customary holiday, birthday and anniversary celebrations and much more.

But in the interest of serving the greater good—the health and welfare of all fellow citizens of our world community—many of us have developed new patterns of living. As often as not, this new behavior entails refraining from overindulgence, which is about as Lenten as you can get.

And it's understandable that with Lent 2021 at hand, many of us might feel that we've already done just fine in the sacrifice department, no ark required.

For many of us, along with the sacrifice has come a certain amount of suffering—loss of income, employment, good health and, most tragically, loss of loved ones.

So, why continue to fast in a year already filled with such difficulty and adversity? Put another way, how can we look forward to fasting rather than dread it?

Perhaps nowhere in Scripture, apart from Jesus' own fast in the desert, is there a more compelling argument for fasting than in the Book of Isaiah, in which the prophet decries those who would fast for their own sake: "Do not fast as you do today to make your voice heard on high" (Is 58:4).

Authentic fasting, Isaiah suggests, is much more: setting free the oppressed, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, caring for the sick, sheltering the homeless.

"Then," he declares, "your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your wound shall be quickly healed. Your vindication shall go before you" (Is 58:6-8).

Our minds and hearts, Isaiah suggests, cannot be fixed solely on ourselves. Our fasting can lead us to something more than a desire to replenish our own bodies.

It can lead us to a renewed appreciation and desire for God in our lives, to build a stronger relationship with Jesus, whose fast in the desert anticipated his sacrifice on the cross that gave us our greatest gift: eternal salvation. A gift worth fasting from sin for, indeed.

Yes, the rain still comes—but so does the rainbow. God has not reneged on his promise.



A woman wearing a protective mask prays during Mass at the Church of the Sacred Heart in Amman, Jordan, on Dec. 6, 2020. Although the coronavirus pandemic has deprived people of many things, fasting in Lent in 2021 can still lead Catholics to better relationships with other people and with God. (CNS photo/Muhammad Hamed, Reuters)

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

Amid the Fray/Greg Erlandson

## In marriage and life, them's fighting words!

When Father Angelo Bianchi, a wonderful Pontifical Institute for Foreign Missions missionary, married my wife and me, he gave us some bad advice.



Oh, it sounded good at the time. "Don't ever go to bed angry," he told us in front of many witnesses.

What my wife and I learned through many years of marriage was just the opposite: When

you are angry, go to bed. The odds are, things will look different after a good night's sleep. And if there is still an argument to be had, it will likely be at a lower volume.

Maybe this advice won't work for everybody. Maybe I'm the only husband who gets cranky when he's tired, but I doubt it.

I've been thinking about anger and fights lately. We don't seem to do it very well in our Church. We don't seem to do it very well in our society. Clergy and laity throwing shade. Politicians calling each other names. Our arguments rarely seem truly constructive.

The snark and the bile, the public smack downs and the passive aggressive digs remind me more of middle school

boys fighting on a playground. The past four years we saw a lot of this, but it certainly didn't start or end there.

Maybe a few lessons that happily married couples have learned over the years might help.

Like avoid the kitchen sink arguments. That's when you bring up all the things that really tick you off. You start out arguing about the housework, and you end up arguing about the vacation and the car and the kids and the dog. Don't try to settle every score, or you won't settle any.

And while you're at it, don't re-litigate all the old fights from days gone by. Keep focused on the matter at hand that needs addressing.

Pay attention to what your spouse is saying rather than just thinking of the quick putdown in response. When nothing else works, try listening.

Always avoid generalizations that begin with "you always" or "you never." They're probably not true and certainly not helpful if you really are hoping to win your partner over.

It is particularly helpful to keep the gloves on, which most certainly doesn't seem to be a rule for politics these days. Savvy spouses know when to shut up and when not to stab at a sore spot with a little dig. It might feel good in the moment, but

it almost always comes back to haunt you.

And if the couple is fortunate enough to be parents, always remember who is watching when you argue. On the one hand, it's not good if you act as if a marriage never has conflict and you suppress your differences.

What you want to do is model for your children how arguments and disagreements can be had without going nuclear, and how to make up after the disagreement is vented. When they are in their own relationships someday, they will thank you for it.

Maybe this advice won't be that useful in society as a whole these days. A lot of what passes for debate and argument in our public life is really just sound and fury anyway, signifying very little of substance. It's talk radio. It's social media. It's the fury of the self-righteous.

On the other hand, there have got to be adults somewhere who know how to have a civil disagreement, even over very important issues, without bringing the house down on top of them.

Of course, my wife had an alternative solution to handling our marital disputes. "Just admit I'm right," she said.

Yes, dear.

(Greg Erlandson is director and editor-in-chief of Catholic News Service.) †

For the Journey/Effie Caldarola

## Forced labor and what we buy

One morning, I discovered that a sheet on my bed had ripped during the night. I thought they were good quality sheets.



How could they shred?

Then I did the math. I bought them 10 years ago and they were my favorites. I slipped them into the rotation far more than the other sets. Stuff wears out.

But in this time of globalization, my

sheet set took my thoughts a world away.

In China, an ethnic Muslim minority called Uighurs (pronounced "WEE-gurs") is suffering incredible persecution, facing ethnic and cultural cleansing. Separated from their families, subjected to "re-education," torture and rape, they've been herded into work camps and forced labor. Qurans have been seized and worship suppressed. It's reminiscent of the gulags of Josef Stalin.

So what does this have to do with my desire for a new set of cotton sheets?

Bloomberg reports that many very prominent American companies are suspected of relying on forced labor in China's Xinjiang region, where the Uighurs are detained. Many of these companies deny that they use textiles produced in the area. They insist that they do not use forced labor in their supply chains. However, it's a tricky, complicated subject.

*The Guardian* reports that China is the biggest supplier of cotton products in the world. And 84% of the country's cotton output comes from Xinjiang region. So even if a company does not have a factory in Xinjiang or purchase cotton and other textiles directly from the region, what about the suppliers who do, and who eventually produce for your favorite brand? How carefully does a big company follow this chain? Or does the bottom line often turn a blind eye to abuse?

In my closet, I note a favorite sweater, produced by a well-known American brand, with the familiar "made in China" tag. I put the sweater down, wondering if it could be related to the horrors of Xinjiang province. The next sweater I pick up is "made in Vietnam." Is that better, or was the cotton sourced from Xinjiang province, and how careful is that American label in making sure their sources of labor are not enslaved people?

Bloomberg reports that the U.S. House of Representatives almost unanimously passed the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act that seeks to cut imports from the region. The Senate has yet to vote on the bill.

By Googling Uighur camps and American retail, you can read much about this subject and find lists of American companies who may be implicated.

It occurs to me that a good Lenten practice would be to write to some of these companies and let them know we care about this issue. I have also written to my senators urging them to support the House bill.

On a related subject, *The Atlantic* had a recent article called, ominously, "Ultra-fast Fashion is Eating the World." In 1984, the majority of clothes bought in the U.S. were produced domestically. Today, overseas cheap labor dresses us.

The result of this cheap supply: Americans buy a piece of clothing every five days on average. Cheaply made products are viewed as disposable. Mounds of discarded garments overwhelm landfills and pollute the environment.

So here's another Lenten practice: Don't buy new clothes this season. "Shop" in your own crowded closet. Visit secondhand stores.

Learn about the Uighurs and pray for them. Take action for a world where justice trumps profit.

(Effie Caldarola writes for Catholic News Service.) †

It's All Good/Patti Lamb

## This Lent, give grace—and receive it—when necessary

Recently, we encountered a milestone at the Lamb household. After multiple increments of online training, six hours of driving with a certified instructor, 50 hours of deliberately recorded practice driving (Thanks, Dad/David) and passing a "road-



ready" test, our son got his driver's license. We celebrated with Chick-fil-A. ("This calls for Chick-fil-A," has become one of my go-to celebratory statements.)

But the months leading up to receiving his license weren't all rosy for Henry. When he received his permit, I bought three giant magnets to affix to each side of the car. They were reflective, fluorescent yellow with a cautionary message in bold red and black:

"PLEASE BE PATIENT. STUDENT DRIVER." I wanted other drivers out there to understand that Henry is learning, and to be extra careful and allow him grace on the road.

What Henry doesn't know until he reads this column is that the magnets I originally had in my cart said, "CAUTION: STUDENT DRIVER ... AND SCREAMING PARENT."

After Henry became a bit more comfortable with driving, he pleaded with me to remove the signs from the car when he was in the driver's seat. I explained that my motive was to protect him by using signage to signal to others that he's a newbie, so they would be more understanding if he made a mistake or drove at exactly the speed limit. He conveyed his embarrassment and asked me to dial down the attention factor.

He made a strong case, and I acquiesced to his request. I allowed him to finish his practice driving without the magnets. I ran across them in the garage the other day when I was looking for a snow shovel. I'm saving the cautionary magnets for the time when Margaret receives her driving permit. (Shocking.)

When I looked at the car magnets that afternoon in the garage, a thought flashed in my mind. What if we looked at

others with a spirit of transparency, and we could read the "signs" they carry?

What would those look like?

"I'm mourning and it feels like this sense of grief will break me."

"I can't believe what's happening in my life right now. I feel like an exposed nerve—completely raw."

"I didn't get the job/make the team/get selected for the scholarship."

The acknowledgment that we all carry crosses and wear invisible signs led me to consider a new Lenten resolution this year.

Simply stated: Give grace—and receive it, when necessary.

Later that week, a peculiar thing happened. I had an agreement with two friends about how we would enroll our children in an extracurricular activity and share the associated, time-consuming and expensive responsibilities. Uncharacteristically, one friend decided to partner with a different group of moms, and never responded to our outreach about our agreed-upon division of labor and carpooling.

Baffled, my friend and I decided to share the responsibility between the two of us, agreeing that we'd give grace to the friend who behaved out of character. This was much easier to bear when each of us admitted that we both need grace ourselves.

A quote, attributed to author Lysa TerKeurst, comes to mind: "It's easier to give grace when I remember how much I need grace."

We all need that undeserved favor at times. God grants it to us and we, in turn, are called to extend it to others.

Lent is an especially meaningful time to practice this approach. Consider what signs and crosses others carry—the baggage that's invisible to our eyes.

Give grace. Receive grace. Repeat.

(Patti Lamb, a member of St. Susanna Parish in Plainfield, is a regular columnist for The Criterion.) †

Guest Column/Richard Etienne

## Creation reminds us that 'God is good'—all the time

Are you familiar with aroma therapy? I like to apply it when I am walking in the forest.



Do you recognize the scent of a freshly picked pine needle? Can you detect the smell of honey suckle in the surrounding bush? Do you know the aroma of sassafras sap? Do you stop to really savor these experiences?

Do you pause to listen when you are walking in the woods—to the wind in the trees, to the flowing water of a nearby brook, to the rustling of small animals in the leaves? God's creation is everywhere!

During eucharistic liturgies, we sing or recite the words, "Heaven and Earth are

full of your glory." Said another way: the Earth is full of God's glory!

How often do you regularly carve out time to reflect on this reality? When was the last time you took the time to truly observe a sunrise, sunset or the majesty of the night sky? Are you a cloud watcher?

It is my fear that too often, focused on the task at hand, we pass by many wonderful experiences.

In the popular hymn "How Great Thou Art," we hear: "Consider all the worlds thy hands have made. I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder, Thy power throughout the universe displayed," as well as, "When I look down from lofty mountain grandeur and hear the brook, and feel the gentle breeze."

And during the *Gloria* at every Sunday liturgy—except during Lent and Advent—we say or sing, "We give you thanks for

your great glory!"

In the book of the prophet Jeremiah we read, "You, O Lord, know me, you see me, you have found that at heart I am with you" (Jer 12:3). In the early chapters of Genesis in the story of creation, we read about the world that God created. Several passages end with "and God saw that it was good."

Think about that: in God's creation story, everything was found to be good.

Make a mental note to become more aware of God's creation all around you. Or better yet, plan a venture into the "wild" to seek out a quiet place in nature to engage your senses in the wonder all around you.

And don't forget—God is good—all the time.

(Richard Etienne is a member of St. John the Baptist Parish in Newburgh, Ind., in the Evansville Diocese.) †

Third Sunday of Lent/Msgr. Owen F. Campion

# The Sunday Readings

Sunday, March 7, 2021

- Exodus 20:1-17
- 1 Corinthians 1:22-25
- John 2:13-25



The Book of Exodus is the source of the first reading at Mass this weekend. This book is about the Hebrew people, enslaved and dreadfully mistreated in Egypt. Eventually they escaped from Egypt and found their new homeland.

None of this good fortune happened as a result of coincidence, luck or human strategy. Rather, God's power led the Hebrews to a successful escape from Egypt. Moses, their leader in this endeavor, was God's representative, chosen by God for the task.

As the flight was underway, and as the people wandered across the bleak Sinai peninsula in search of the land God had promised them, Moses received from God what has long been called the Ten Commandments. He then gave them to the people.

By observing these commandments, the people fulfilled their obligations under the covenant and also found the path to peace and justice in life given by God, a path that they themselves could not have devised.

St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians supplies the second reading. For people living in the first century, the proclamation that a convicted felon was divine was hard to accept.

The Jews, suffering under Roman oppression and enduring so much, were not so apt to revere Roman law or to see profound wisdom and justice in the system established to enforce Roman law.

Corinth's Christians, however, many of whom had been pagans, regarded Roman jurisprudence to be supremely wise. Yet, a Roman court convicted Jesus of high treason. The consequence of treason for non-Roman citizens, again as set forth in Roman law, was death by crucifixion.

Paul asserts that Jesus, the convicted felon, is the key to salvation. He admits that this reality is a "stumbling block for the Jews, and an absurdity for the Gentiles" (1 Cor 1:23). It was glorifying a condemned convict!

For its Gospel reading, the Church this weekend furnishes us with a passage from St. John's Gospel.

This weekend's reading recalls the time when Jesus, shortly before Passover, entered the temple precincts and found a brisk traffic underway in the things needed for ritual sacrifice.

Furious, as described by this Gospel, the Lord drove the merchants away.

He then predicted that the temple would fall, in itself a virtual blasphemy, and then made the astonishing announcement that he would rebuild the colossal structure in three days. (It had taken many people many years to build the temple in the first place.)

Scholars and leaders later used this occasion to argue that Jesus was a blasphemer and a troublemaker.

The reading establishes Jesus as God's voice and agent. As bystanders watched this happening unfold, they were reminded of God's word in the Scriptures. The Lord's actions reminded them of God.

They do not fully comprehend the Lord's words and actions because they are humans, nothing less, but nothing more.

## Reflection

Lent reminds us of our humanity. At the same time, it is always hard for humans to admit their limitations. Admitting them frightens us and puts us in our place.

To compensate, we celebrate our human accomplishments. We congratulate ourselves, for example, on the brilliant insights into the workings of the human body. Then COVID-19 bluntly shows us that we are not as smart as we might wish to be.

Despite our knowledge, we are at the mercy of storms, earthquakes and evil decisions.

In less critical moments, we are shortsighted and foolish.

But God loves us, nonetheless. Amid our inadequacies, he forgives and redeems us. He gives us Jesus, his Son, as our Savior. How do we attain this blessing? In the Ten Commandments, God gave us the pattern of our lives. Obey the Commandments with the help that God always provides. †

## Daily Readings

### Monday, March 8

St. John of God, religious  
2 Kings 5:1-15b  
Psalm 42:2-3; 43:3-4  
Luke 4:24-30

### Tuesday, March 9

St. Frances of Rome, religious  
Daniel 3:25, 34-43  
Psalm 25:4-5b, 6, 7bc, 8-9  
Matthew 18:21-35

### Wednesday, March 10

Deuteronomy 4:1, 5-9  
Psalm 147:12-13, 15-16, 19-20  
Matthew 5:17-19

### Thursday, March 11

Jeremiah 7:23-28  
Psalm 95:1-2, 6-9  
Luke 11:14-23

### Friday, March 12

Hosea 14:2-10  
Psalm 81:6c-11b, 14, 17  
Mark 12:28-34

### Saturday, March 13

Hosea 6:1-6  
Psalm 51:3-4, 18-21b  
Luke 18:9-14

### Sunday, March 14

Fourth Sunday of Lent  
2 Chronicles 36:14-16, 19-23  
Psalm 137:1-6  
Ephesians 2:4-10  
John 3:14-21

Question Corner/Fr. Kenneth Doyle

## Rogation Days are a way the Church prays for good weather for farmers

Years ago, our parish in a northern Wisconsin farming community celebrated Rogation Days.



If I remember correctly, these were the three days before Ascension Thursday, which often came during or right after planting time.

At Mass, we would pray for good weather and a bountiful harvest. The priest would even visit the farms and bless the fields. I'm no longer in farming, but I was wondering if the Church still observes Rogation Days? (Wisconsin)

The marking of Rogation Days, set aside to bless the fields, has a long history in the Church. Rooted in the Latin verb meaning "to ask" and traditionally tied to the spring planting, the days were first instituted in the fifth century by a bishop in France whose diocese had suffered greatly from pestilence and other natural disorders. By the ninth century, the observance had been extended to the universal Church.

In 1969, when the Church's liturgical calendar was revised, the celebration of Rogation Days became optional, at the discretion of national conferences of bishops—primarily due to the fact that the Western world had become increasingly industrialized, with the primary focus no longer on agriculture and the changing of the seasons.

In some rural communities, though, the celebration continues to be observed, particularly in certain parts of Europe. A recent posting by the bishop of the Diocese of Harrisburg, Pa., suggested that this might be an opportune time to revive the Rogation Days, given the plight of so many farmers who are struggling to make a living.

My wife gave birth to a beautiful healthy baby boy about five months ago. He has not been baptized yet, due to concerns around COVID-19. Our current plan is to wait until grandparents, godparents, immediate family members and spouses, as well as ourselves have had the opportunity to be vaccinated—which may still not happen until the summer or later.

Has the Church made a statement on how to handle situations like this or have an opinion? Does our approach make sense, or should we consider changing it? (Kentucky)

I congratulate you on the birth of your new baby boy. This is surely an exciting time for you and your wife—and for all of your family. I can well understand your desire to have everyone together to celebrate the good news. But I suggest that you have the child baptized soon and not wait for months until everyone has the chance to be vaccinated.

Here's the Church's teaching on this: The *Code of Canon Law* says, "Parents are obliged to take care that infants are baptized in the first few weeks" (#867).

Several months is just too long to wait for the child to be missing the graces and blessings that come with the sacrament.

You should contact your parish's pastor to discuss the possibility of having your child baptized with measures taken to ensure the safety of all involved. Going forward with the baptism can be a source of hope for you and your family in this difficult time.

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

## My Journey to God

# When God Doesn't Heal Now

By Thomas J. Rillo

We hear a sorrowful voice speaking with lament  
Is this the world condition for which Jesus was sent?  
Is this the same world that Jesus is fervently grieving?  
Throughout the world voices are raised lamenting.

Is it within this world Jesus strives to save human souls?  
Behold his love for everyone whom he faithfully holds  
He continues from his Sacred Heart a plea for world change  
To press on to heaven and so break earthly chains.

Why doesn't God with His power heal the world now?  
Healing first begins within us, if our pride will allow  
It is within our hearts that all the healing should begin  
God will help us if we first address the healing from within.

Healing will come when it begins within the human heart  
God allows bad things to happen so that healing may start  
Bad things will continue to happen with each generation  
But God gives the gifts and grace needed for our own resurrection.

(Thomas J. Rillo is a member of St. Charles Borromeo Parish in Bloomington and is a Benedictine oblate of Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad. Photo: Msgr. William F. Stumpf offers prayers over a woman after a healing Mass at St. Mark the Evangelist Church in Indianapolis on Sept. 15, 2020.) (File photo by Natalie Hoeffler)



# 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.

**BAKER, Joan**, 92, St. Jude, Indianapolis, Jan. 26. Aunt and great-aunt of several.

**CONNOLLY, Claire A.**, 88, Holy Spirit, Indianapolis, Jan. 28. Mother of Mary Baumer, Patti Connolly-Bedwell, Kathleen Hagemeyer and Susan Wolf. Sister of Evelyn Griffin and Robert Hopkins. Grandmother of 11. Great-grandmother of three.

**COPELAND, Betty F.**, 95, Prince of Peace, Madison, Jan. 27. Wife of F. Wood Copeland. Mother of Jane Blair, Carter, Mark and Robert Copeland. Grandmother of nine. Great-grandmother of seven.

**DECRAENE, Geraldine A.**, 87, St. Luke the Evangelist, Indianapolis, Jan. 23. Wife of Robert Decraene. Mother

of Diane Brown, Suzanne Fore, Daniel, James, Michael and Robert Decraene. Grandmother of 14. Great-grandmother of four.

**DIETZ, Ralph B.**, 89, Holy Name of Jesus, Beech Grove, Jan. 29. Father of Maureen Klekar, Janice Self and Kathy Westerfield. Brother of Thomas Dietz. Grandfather of four. Great-grandfather of nine.

**GESWEIN, Joseph H.**, 97, St. Augustine, Jeffersonville, Jan. 22. Father of Fred Geswein. Brother of Marie Huth and Francis Geswein. Grandfather of two. Great-grandfather of one.

**GIUFFRE, Lucille**, 87, Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Jeffersonville, Jan. 22. Mother of Melanie Collins, Dawn Smith, Laurianne, Corey, Keith and Kyle Giuffre. Sister of Marie Giuffre and Louie Castagliola. Grandmother of six. Great-grandmother of two.

**GORE, Patricia A.**, 73, St. Vincent de Paul, Bedford, Dec. 19, 2020. Mother of Rebecca Godsey, James, John and Thomas Gore. Stepmother of Jeff Gore. Sister of Julia Dawkins. Grandmother of eight. Great-grandmother of one.

**GOYERT, Marian A.**, 97, St. Louis, Batesville, Jan. 24. Sister of Gerri Wintz. Aunt, great-aunt and great-great-aunt of several.

**HALL, Benjamin**, 32, St. Bartholomew, Columbus, Jan. 25. Husband of Dimple Hall. Father of Oliver Hall. Son of Gordon and Teresa Hall. Brother of Alex and Jared Hall. Grandson of Luella Bogenschutz.

**HARNETT, Jane T.**, 84., St. Charles Borromeo, Bloomington, Jan. 25. Mother of Kathleen Barker, Cary, Christopher and Kevin Harnett. Grandmother of four. Great-grandmother of two.

**HOLLAND, C. Warren**, 93, St. Lawrence, Indianapolis, Nov. 23, 2020. Husband of Hellen Holland. Father of Gretchen Etling, Cecil Hanley, Dan and Mike Holland. Grandfather of 14. Great-grandfather of four.

**HOLTKAMP, Adam J.**, 34, St. Mary, Greengburg, Jan. 27. Husband of Jamie Holtkamp. Father of Lennon Holtkamp. Son of Dennis and Joyce Holtkamp. Brother of Lisa Kreuzman. Grandson of Ella Mae Holtkamp.

**HOPP, James J.**, 88, St. Luke the Evangelist, Indianapolis, Jan. 22. Husband of Bernice Hopp. Father of Theresa Stark, Jeffrey and Michael Hopp. Brother of Barbara Curtis and John Hopp. Grandfather of two.

**HOTTOIS, Regina L. (Pflanz)**, 47, Holy Family, New Albany, Jan. 22. Wife of Ryan Hattois. Mother of Sophia and Gavin Hattois. Sister of Allison Kelly and Rick Pflanz.

**KENNETT, Alexander**, 14, Prince of Peace, Madison, Jan. 30. Son of Bobby and Mary Kennett. Brother of Lillian, Montana, Daniel, Gabe, Hunter, Tyler and Walker Kennett. Grandson of Pete Gross.

**KNIGHT, Christine**, 94, St. Malachy, Brownsburg, Jan. 27. Mother of Mary Hornbuckle, Margaret Leap, Jean Raney, John and Paul Knight. Grandmother of 10. Great-grandmother of 18.

**KONRAD, Nancy D.**, 81, Christ the King, Indianapolis, Jan. 27. Wife of Jerry Konrad. Mother of Kara Gin, Mike and Tim Konrad. Grandmother of four.

**LUX, Patricia A.**, 84, Holy Spirit, Indianapolis, Jan. 30. Mother of Christy Ayers, Bobby and Ronny Lux. Sister of Bill Stamm. Grandmother of four. Great-grandmother of four.

**MCADAMS, Doris E.**, 77, St. Lawrence, Lawrenceburg, Jan. 22. Mother of Traci Corns, Teri Sherman and Troy McAdams. Sister of Linda Bradley, Tina Lewis, Rogeann Lewis-Sanchez and Cathy Stowe. Grandmother of five. Great-grandmother of two.

**MORRIS, Betty Ray (Delaisse)**, 83, St. Paul, Tell City, Jan. 25. Mother of Gayla Goetz, Ginger and Dean Morris. Sister of Janice Davis and Lynda Gordon. Grandmother of two. Great-grandmother of four.

**MULL, Connie E.**, 50, St. Francis Xavier, Henryville, Jan. 26. Wife of Craig Mull. Mother of Cassidy and Carson Mull. Daughter of Gary and Mary Liz Cooper. Stepdaughter of Betty Hayes. Stepsister of Tony Lewis. Granddaughter of Gladys Cooper.

**MURPHY, Mary Anne**, 81, St. Mark the Evangelist, Indianapolis, Jan. 25. Wife of Don Murphy. Mother of Theresa Page, Mark and Mike Murphy. Grandmother of 10. Great-grandmother of 13.

**POPP, James C.**, 89, St. John Paul II, Sellersburg, Jan. 25. Husband of Juanita Popp. Father of Mary Lou Adams, Laura Frey, Diane Graf and Alan Popp. Brother of Barbara

# Sunset in France



A power-generating windmill turbine is pictured during sunset in Bourlion, France, on Feb. 23. (CNS photo/Pascal Rossignol, Reuters)

Beaven, Joan Renn, Esther Wheatley, Kenneth, Maurice, Merlin and William Popp. Grandfather of 11. Great-grandfather of 16.

**RICHARDSON, Martin E.**, 80, Most Precious Blood, Middletown, Jan. 30. Husband of Elizabeth Richardson. Father of Lisa and Marc Richardson. Brother of Leland, Ronald and Russell

Richardson. Grandfather of two.

**STAPP, Charles**, 72, Holy Family, New Albany, Jan. 24. Husband of Dr. Emily Stapp. Father of Jennifer Stapp Sparks, Alex, Dr. David and Terry Stapp. Grandfather of 10.

**STENGER, Earl J.**, 93, All Saints, Dearborn County, Jan. 28. Father of Susan Dietz, Christy Eckstein, Andrea Hartman, Sandy Whitehead, Earl, Jr., Jeff, John and Mike Stenger. Brother of Joan Oesterling and Jake Stenger. Grandfather of 22. Great-grandfather of 21.

**STEVENS, Phyllis**, 90, St. Lawrence, Indianapolis, Jan. 25. Mother of Sheri Jeffers, Vicki, James II and Thomas Stevens. Grandmother of five. Great-grandmother of six.

**STEWART, Mark W.**, 51, Prince of Peace, Madison, Jan. 23. Father of Abigail and Zachary Stewart. Son of Michael L. Stewart. Brother of Mike Stewart.

**STILLER, Kenneth R.**, 88, St. Mary-of-the-Knobs, Floyd County, Jan. 28. Husband of Marilyn Wheatley Stiller. Father of Terri Canning, Jodi Meier and Tony Stiller. Brother of Vonda Morgan. Grandfather of six.

**TEKULVE, William F.**, 63, St. Louis, Batesville, Jan. 25. Husband of Helen Tekulve. Father of Miranda, Darrin and Dustin Tekulve. Brother of Bev Wehr, Steve Spencer and Jon Tekulve. Grandfather of three.

**THOMAS, Waverly**, 93, St. Roch, Indianapolis, Jan. 27. Mother of Michael Thomas.

**VARBLE, Stephen M.**, 84, St. Augustine, Jeffersonville, Jan. 29. Father of Stephanie, Christopher, Patrick and Travis Varble. Grandfather of one.

**WATSON, Bernard**, 85, St. Barnabas, Jan. 28. Father of Carol and Thomas Watson.

**WHITTEN, Mary Ann**, 64, St. Jude, Indianapolis, Jan. 28. Wife of Phillip Whitten. Mother of Amy Whitten. Daughter of Alice Springman. Sister of Chuck and Mike Springman. Grandmother of one. †

## Providence Sister Ruth Ellen Doane served in Catholic schools for 36 years

Providence Sister Ruth Ellen Doane, a member of the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods in St. Mary-of-the-Woods, died on Feb. 5 at Gibson Family Center for Hospice Care in Terre Haute. She was 84.

Because of the coronavirus pandemic, a virtual funeral service was held on March 1. Burial followed at the sisters' cemetery.

Sister Ruth Ellen was born on April 19, 1936, in Jasper, Ind. She entered the Sisters of Providence on Jan. 4, 1954, and professed final vows on Aug. 15, 1961.

Sister Ruth Ellen earned a bachelor's degree in mathematics at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College, a master's degree in mathematics at Cornell University in Ithaca, N.Y., and a master's degree in theology at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad.

During her 67 years as a member of the Sisters of Providence, Sister Ruth Ellen

ministered as a music teacher for 36 years in schools in Illinois, Indiana, Massachusetts and at the American International School in Dusseldorf, Germany. In 1993, she began serving in parishes, first in Ferdinand, Ind., and then in Iowa. From 2007-16, she volunteered in Indianapolis in several ministries of her religious community. In 2016, Sister Ruth Ellen returned to the motherhouse where she assisted at the Providence Spirituality and Conference Center. Beginning in 2020, she dedicated herself entirely to prayer.

In the archdiocese, Sister Ruth Ellen served at the former St. Patrick School in Indianapolis from 1961-68 and at Our Lady of Providence High School in Clarksville from 1970-77.

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. †

## Providence Sister Suzanne Smith served as an educator, in business office of her order

Providence Sister Suzanne Smith, a member of the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods in St. Mary-of-the-Woods, died on Feb. 3 at Mother Theodore Hall on the campus of her religious community's motherhouse. She was 86.

Because of the coronavirus pandemic, a virtual funeral service was held on Feb. 22. Burial followed at the sisters' cemetery.

Sister Suzanne was born on Feb. 26, 1934, in Washington, D.C. She entered the Sisters of Providence on Jan. 30, 1954, and professed final vows on Aug. 15, 1961.

Sister Suzanne earned a bachelor's degree in chemistry at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College, a master's degree in mathematics at the University of Notre Dame in northern Indiana and a master's degree in business administration at Indiana State University in Terre Haute.

During her 67 years as a member of the Sisters of Providence, Sister Suzanne ministered as a teacher for 20 years in schools

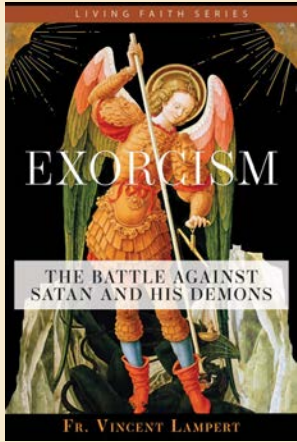
in Illinois, Indiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Washington, D.C. In 1977, she began serving in the general business office at the motherhouse. After retiring from that office, Sister Suzanne volunteered in several offices at the motherhouse and at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College.

In the archdiocese, Sister Suzanne served at the former Ladywood School in Indianapolis from 1959-65; at the motherhouse as a business office assistant from 1977-79, as comptroller from 1982-93, director of finance from 1993-99 and the coordinator of the Our Lady of Providence Shrine from 2006-14; and at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College as an administrative assistant and adjunct instructor from 2001-03.

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. †

### Fr. Vincent P. Lampert, MDiv

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### 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:

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- 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](mailto:carlahill@archindy.org)

# Retire? At age 102, California deacon says he's not ready

SAN DIEGO (CNS)—Deacon Albert Graff, who turned 102 on Jan. 23, explains the secret to his longevity in two words: "Never retire."

An engineer by profession, he had scarcely retired after 25 years at General Atomics when he began his more than 30 years of ministry as a permanent deacon.

"I retired from General Atomics in April of 1983 and was ordained a deacon in May of 1983," said Deacon Graff, who ministered to the St. James-St. Leo Catholic Community in Solana Beach, 22 miles north of San Diego.

He continued in active ministry well into his 90s, retiring for good only after suffering a stroke five years ago. He still attends Mass at the parish, including Friday school Masses.

Born in North Dakota, Deacon Graff grew up in Los Angeles, where he attended Catholic schools through high school.

His family was far from affluent,

and his Catholic secondary education was made possible through a unique arrangement: His pastor said the parish would pay his tuition if he cleaned the church every week.

Deacon Graff went on to earn a degree in mechanical engineering from University of California, Berkeley.

In 1947, he married his wife, Marion, who died in 2000. The couple settled in San Diego in 1958, becoming members of St. James Parish.

In the late 1970s, at a time when there were already two deacons serving the St. James-St. Leo Community, he remembers asking his pastor, "Can you use a third?" Emboldened by the priest's response—"I can use a dozen"—he entered the San Diego Diocese's deacon formation program.

Among his duties as a deacon, he had a particular love for preaching and was committed to serving the poor of nearby Tijuana, Mexico, and San Diego.

In 1985, he co-founded Esperanza

International, a nonprofit that has constructed more than 1,000 homes for poor families in Tijuana.

"While other charitable groups were building 'homes' from discarded garage doors that were really little more than glorified shacks," recalled Msgr. Richard Duncanson, pastor of St. James-St. Leo from 2001 to 2006, "Deacon Al developed a system by which the families built their own homes using interlocking concrete blocks, which they made and assembled on-site."

In 1988, Deacon Graff co-founded Community HousingWorks, which provides affordable apartments for the working poor in San Diego.

Three years later, he co-founded the St. Leo Medical-Dental Clinic in Solana Beach, which treats patients who cannot afford health insurance.

"Deacon Al has always had a heart for the poor," Deacon Peter Hodsdon, who has served the St. James-St. Leo Catholic Community since 2006, told *The Southern Cross*, San Diego's diocesan newspaper. "In the days when it was unclear what a deacon was supposed to do, Al had a ready answer—to serve the folks on the margins."

Deacon Graff also has been a benefactor of St. James Academy, the parochial school where four of his five children were students. The Deacon Al Graff Scholarship Fund was started in January 2019 to help make Catholic education accessible to parishioners with limited financial means.

St. James Academy Principal Christine



Deacon Albert Graff is seen after Mass at St. James Church in Solana Beach, Calif., on Jan. 29. He turned 102 on Jan. 23. (CNS photo/Denis Grasska, The Souther Cross)

Lang, who praised the centenarian's devotion to God and service to others, said: "If we all shared a fraction of the compassion, mercy, faith and love Deacon Al has provided to others, the world would be a better place."

For his own part, Deacon Graff's message to fellow Catholics is a simple one: "Stay involved with your Church. ... You need to practice your faith." †

## GUEST

continued from page 4

time to recognize ourselves as the body of Christ, to support one another and to reflect God's concern for all people, especially for the most vulnerable. This direction will move society toward a better future.

One of the major challenges of my generation is the loss of faith. After seeing so much suffering, especially in the current pandemic, many millennials have questions. Their spiritual leaders don't have answers to these questions. The future looks alarming to this generation.

If we are willing to repair our common home, we will need young minds who are animated by their faith in God and care for creation. We care for creation not only because we live in it, but also because it reveals who God is. Millennials are in great need for spiritual leadership and discipleship in order to see creation the way God sees it! The Church cannot neglect this responsibility.

A recent document published by the Pontifical Academy for Life, "Old

Age: Our Future. The elderly after the pandemic," highlights the role played by the elderly in the preservation and transmission of the faith to young people.

I believe that our role as young believers and scientists is to make the most of our faith and gifts, "for we are his handiwork, created in Jesus Christ for the good works that God has prepared in advance" (Eph 2:10).

Young people can serve as a voice of peace and reassurance and have the energy and passion to repair what has been damaged, both to the planet and to the fabric of human solidarity.

Scripture says, "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power. He went about doing good and healing all those oppressed by the devil, for God was with him" (Acts 10:38). This is how young people, infused with faith, should seek the transformation Pope Francis dreams of for our world.

*(Sandra Azab is a pharmacist, international health specialist and a researcher at St. Joseph Institute for Family and Life in Egypt. She is a member of the Pontifical Academy for Life.) †*

## Employment

### Human Resources Specialist, Employee Relations and Staffing

The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Indianapolis is seeking a full-time Human Resources Specialist to provide proactive, on-site guidance and assistance to our parishes, schools, and agencies. The Human Resources Specialist will ensure compliance with legal requirements and Archdiocesan policies, assist with posting and interviewing for job openings, and offer a high level of service in collaboration with other Human Resources team members. Duties include job description preparation and review, human resources policy administration, performance management consultation, parish human resources assessments, employee recruitment and selection, misconduct investigations, and serving as a back-up for other human resources team members. This position will report to the Associate Director of Human Resources.

The position involves proactively scheduling consultative visits to parishes, schools, and agencies and travel to those locations up to two to three days per week and office hours at the Catholic Center for the remainder of the workweek. There is a high degree of collaboration with other Human Resources team members as well as with other Archdiocesan agencies. Excellent communications skills, organizational ability, and knowledge of employment law are essential. The position requires a bachelor's degree in human resources, business administration, or a related field. Designation as a Professional in Human Resources (PHR) or Certified Professional in Human Resources (SHRM-CP) is preferred. The ability to communicate in Spanish is a plus. At least 5 years of human resources experience is required, preferably involving coaching leaders in effective human resources practices.

Please e-mail cover letter, resume, and list of references, in confidence, to:

Andrea Wunnenberg  
Associate Director, Human Resources  
Archdiocese of Indianapolis  
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### Employment

#### DIRECTOR OF ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT

St. Theodore Guerin High School, located in Noblesville, Indiana, is accepting applications for a full-time **Director of Enrollment Management.**

The Director of Enrollment Management is a full-time exempt salaried position reporting to the President and is an integral part of the school's leadership team. The Director of Enrollment Management is responsible for planning and implementing a strategic program to market St. Theodore Guerin High School to prospective students and their families; and, ultimately, for enrolling new students in numbers sufficient to meet annual goals. The Director will provide a creative vision and energetic oversight for all admissions and recruitment operations and retention efforts. The successful candidate will have demonstrated ability to coordinate an enrollment management program that will effectively attract, enroll, and retain students who desire to be a part of a dynamic faith based high school.

The qualifications for the position:

- A Bachelor's Degree is required, and a master's degree preferred.
- Experience in educational enrollment management preferred.
- Have a collaborative leadership philosophy that works well in a team atmosphere.
- Be a practicing Catholic in good standing and personal witness to the Catholic faith by living in accordance with the doctrines and morals of the Roman Catholic Church.

For a detailed job description, please visit [GuerinCatholic.org](http://GuerinCatholic.org). Qualified candidates should email a current résumé and cover letter to [apply@guerincatholic.org](mailto:apply@guerincatholic.org). Please include at least three references as part of the résumé.

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# Legacy Gala

Keeping in Step  
with the Spirit

"If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit." Galatians 5:25

## JOIN US VIRTUALLY

Friday, April 16, 2021 | 6:30 pm

EVENT LINK:

[www.archindy.org/LegacyGala2021](http://www.archindy.org/LegacyGala2021)



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### So, what is this event all about?

In an effort to be good stewards of its people, resources and our donors' time, the Archdiocese of Indianapolis has made the decision to combine the Celebrating Catholic School Values and Spirit of Service events. In doing so, we are establishing the inaugural Legacy Gala as a way to garner support among the Catholic community for three vital archdiocesan ministries: Catholic Charities, Catholic Schools and Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary.

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Celebrate with us as we honor Mickey Lentz for her 60 years of service to the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.



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