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Jeffersonville parish opens 'Blessing Box' as a gift to people in need, page 15.

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Bishops must realize seriousness of abuse crisis, Pope Francis says

ABOARD THE PAPAL FLIGHT FROM PANAMA (CNS)—The primary goal of the Vatican's February summit on clerical sexual abuse and child protection is to help



Pope Francis

bishops understand the urgency of the crisis, Pope Francis said.

During a news conference with journalists on Jan. 27 on his flight to Rome from Panama, the pope said the presidents of the world's bishops' conferences have been called to the Feb. 21-24

meeting at the Vatican to be "made aware of the tragedy" of those abused by members of the clergy.

"I regularly meet with people who have been abused. I remember one person—40 years old—who was unable to pray," he said. "It is terrible, the suffering is terrible. So first, they [the bishops] need to be made aware of this."

The pope's international Council of Cardinals suggested the summit after realizing that some bishops did not know how to address or handle the crisis on their own, he said.

"We felt the responsibility of giving a 'catechesis' on this problem to the bishops' conferences," he said. "That is why we convoked the presidents" of the conferences, the heads of the Eastern Catholic Churches and representatives of the leadership groups of men's and women's religious orders.

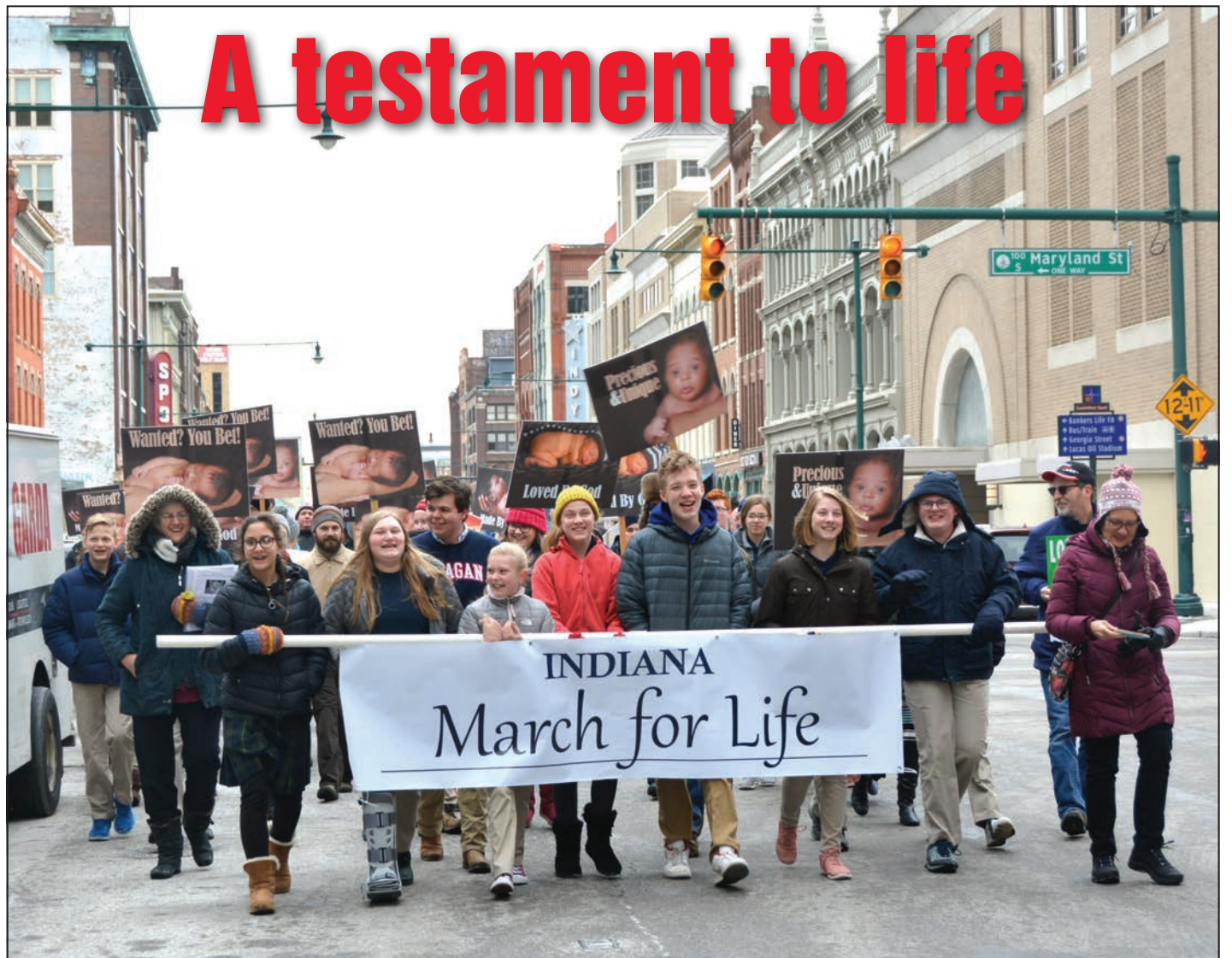
The meeting, he said, will address "in a clear way" what protocols bishops need to follow when handling sexual abuse.

Asked about the expectations for the meeting, especially the expectations of Catholics who have grown frustrated with the repeated reports of abuse and cover up by some bishops, the pope said people need to realize "the problem of abuse will continue."

"It is a human problem, a human problem [that is] everywhere," he said.

But if the Church becomes more aware of the tragedy of sexual abuse, the pope

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Students of Lumen Christi Catholic School in Indianapolis carry a banner as they process up Meridian Street in Indianapolis on Jan. 22, leading the second Indiana March for Life. (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)

Hoosiers step forward to embrace gift of life during Indiana march

By Natalie Hoefler

For more than 115 years, Lady Victory has stood atop the Soldiers and Sailors Monument at the center of Indianapolis, her constant gaze looking south down

Groups from archdiocese take part in national March for Life, page 10.

Meridian Street.

On Jan. 22, that gaze took in an historic moment. Never

before had Lady Victory witnessed roughly 700 pro-life advocates from

around the state marching up the city's main thoroughfare toward her, proclaiming their message with signs, banners and cheers.

They marched with a victory of their own in mind—the overturning of the Supreme Court's Jan. 22, 1973, *Roe v. Wade* decision that legalized abortion in the United States.

'And the saints go marching on'

Before taking to the streets of Indianapolis in the cold January climate,

a number of marchers participated in a rally at the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis. Some stayed on for a rose ceremony commemorating the more than 60 million lives lost to abortion since the controversial decision.

Most participants, however, worshipped at a Mass across the street in St. John the Evangelist Church.

"Our gathering today involves the two-fold Christian call to contemplation and action, Mass and march,"

See PRO-LIFE, page 8

Be engaged in world now to ensure better tomorrow, Holy Father encourages World Youth Day pilgrims

PANAMA CITY (CNS)— In the early morning hours, pilgrims were awakened by sounds of upbeat music as the hot Panamanian sun rose. Despite the heat, the pilgrims danced and sang along, awaiting Pope Francis' arrival.

In his homily at the closing Mass for World Youth Day on Jan. 27, Pope Francis encouraged young Catholics to be engaged

See related stories, page 16.

in the world today to ensure a better tomorrow.

"You, dear young people, are not the future but the now of God. He invites you and calls you in your communities and cities to go out and find your grandparents, your elders; to stand up and with them to speak out and realize the dream that the Lord has dreamed for you," he said.

See PILGRIMS, page 2



Pilgrims cheer before Pope Francis' celebration of Mass for World Youth Day pilgrims at St. John Paul II Field in Panama City on Jan. 27. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)



Pilgrims carry the World Youth Day cross as Pope Francis joins them in the Way of the Cross at Santa Maria la Antigua Field in Panama City on Jan. 25. (CNS photo/Carlos Jasso, Reuters)

POPE

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said, it can help others face the crisis of abuse, especially in families “where shame leads to covering up everything.” Speaking with journalists for nearly an hour, the pope was asked whether he would consider a general acceptance of married men into the Latin-rite priesthood in a way similar to the practice of the Eastern Catholic Churches.

“In the Eastern rite, they can do it. They make the choice between celibacy or marriage before they’re ordained into the diaconate,” he explained. “When it comes to the Latin rite, a phrase said by St. Paul VI comes to mind: ‘I would rather give my life than change the law on celibacy.’”

The pope said he personally believes that “celibacy is gift to the Church,” and that while the prospect of married priests could one day be considered in remote areas that lack priests, he did not agree “with allowing optional celibacy.”

“My decision is: no optional celibacy,” the pope said. “I will not do this. I don’t feel like I could stand before God with this decision.”

Pope Francis also was asked about his response to the political crisis in Venezuela as well as the Vatican’s seemingly neutral stance despite widespread belief that the election giving a second term to President Nicolas Maduro was rigged.

Earlier in the day, while visiting a Catholic-run hospice in Panama, the pope prayed for the people of Venezuela and expressed his hope that a “just and peaceful solution may be sought and achieved to overcome the crisis.”

Official Appointment

Effective Immediately

Rev. Joseph M. Feltz, pastor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in New Albany, appointed dean of the New Albany Deanery while remaining pastor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish.

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

Although the United States and several European countries have recognized National Assembly President Juan Guaido as the country’s legitimate head of state, the Vatican has not.

Pope Francis told journalists that while he fully supports the suffering people of Venezuela, picking a side in the crisis “would be pastoral imprudence on my part and would cause damage.”

“That is why I had to be—I don’t like the word ‘balanced’—I must be a shepherd to all and if they need help, then they must come to an agreement and ask for it,” he said.

The pope said that he thought carefully about his words to the people of the country because “I suffer for what is happening in Venezuela in this moment.”

“What is it that scares me? Bloodshed,” the pope said. “And that is why I ask for generosity from those who can help resolve the problem.”

Pope Francis also addressed the issue of abortion, which was among the themes of the *Via Crucis* at World Youth Day on Jan. 25.

During the 14th Station—Jesus is laid in his tomb—a young pilgrim read a reflection on all the tombs where those who have died violent deaths have been laid. “However,” the reflection said, “there is one tomb that cries to heaven and denounces the terrible cruelty of humanity: it is the tomb that opens in the wombs of mothers who rip out innocent life.”

Asked how the words could be in harmony with his calls for mercy, including for women who have had abortions, Pope Francis said that the “message of mercy is for everyone, including the human being that is gestating.”

Forgiving women who have had abortions is not the problem, he said. Rather, it is learning to accompany women who have understood and regret what they have done.

People do not understand the trauma women go through after an abortion, the pope said. Often those who regret their abortions “feel the need to reconcile and rejoice their child.”

“I tell them, ‘Your child is in heaven, talk to him, sing them the lullaby you were never able to sing to them,’” Pope Francis said. “There, a path of reconciliation can be found between mother and child. Forgiveness with God is already there. God always forgives.” †



Public Schedule of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

February 3 – 19, 2019

Feb. 3 – 2 p.m.
Annual Scout Awards Ceremony at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, Indianapolis

Feb. 7 – 10 a.m.
Leadership Team Meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis

Feb. 7 – 5:30 p.m.
Celebrating Catholic School Values Dinner at Crowne Plaza, Indianapolis

Feb. 10 – 2 p.m.
Marriage Day Celebration Mass at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral

Feb. 11 – 6:30 p.m.
North Deanery Catechists’ Evening Reflection at Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, Indianapolis

Feb. 14 – 8 a.m.
Judicatories Meeting at Indiana Interchurch Center, Indianapolis

Feb. 14 – 10 a.m.
Leadership Team Meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center

Feb. 16 – 11 a.m.
Confirmation for youths from the Batesville Deanery parishes of St. Mary, St. Catherine of Siena, St. Maurice and St. John the Baptist at St. Mary Church, Greensburg

Feb. 19 – 1:30 p.m.
Mass with students and staff of the Oldenburg Academy of the Immaculate Conception, in Sisters of St. Francis Chapel, Oldenburg

(Schedule subject to change.)

PILGRIMS

continued from page 1

The pope reflected on the Sunday Gospel reading from St. Luke in which Jesus begins his public ministry by proclaiming in a synagogue that “this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

Proclaiming the Good News of God’s promise to free captives and the oppressed was an important moment in Jesus’ life, the pope said.

Nevertheless, he continued, many of those in the synagogue were incredulous and not prepared “to believe in someone they knew and had seen grow up.”

“The same thing can also happen with us. We do not always believe that God can be that concrete and commonplace, that close and real, and much less that he can become so present and work through somebody like a neighbor, a friend, a relative,” the pope said.

Young people, he warned, risk looking at their mission, vocation and even their lives as something far off in the future and

“having nothing to do with the present” while adults can fall into the trap of inventing a “hygienically sealed future without consequence where everything is safe, secure and ‘well insured.’”

“The Lord and his mission are not a ‘meantime’ in our life, something temporary. They are our life,” Pope Francis said. “Do you want to live out your love in a practical way? May your ‘yes’ continue to be the gateway for the Holy Spirit to give us a new Pentecost for the world and for the Church.”

Lisbon, Portugal, will open its doors to the world’s young people in 2022 for the next World Youth Day.

The announcement of Portugal was made by Cardinal Kevin Farrell, head of the Vatican’s Dicastery for Laity, the Family and Life, at the final Mass. World Youth Day officials confirmed the year and city.

Upon hearing the location of the next celebration, Portuguese erupted in cheers, waving their country’s flag and chanting “We are the pope’s youth!”

Pope Francis then greeted Portuguese President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, who attended the Mass. †



Pope Francis’ prayer intention for February



• **Human Trafficking**—For a generous welcome of the victims of human trafficking, enforced prostitution, and violence.

(To see Pope Francis’ monthly intentions, go to www.archindy.org/popessintentions.) †



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NEWS FROM YOU!

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Panel hears testimony on reform of payday lending industry

By Victoria Arthur

One by one, they described the devastation that they believe one industry has inflicted on the most vulnerable people in Indiana.



They represented churches, veterans' groups, social service organizations and community coalitions

from across the state. And when they met at the Indiana Statehouse last week, these advocates were united around one goal: supporting Senate Bill 104, which would place limits on the payday lending institutions that charge consumers an annual percentage rate (APR) of up to 391 percent on the short-term loans that they offer.

The Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC) supports the bill, which would cap the interest rate and fees that a payday lender may charge to 36 percent APR, in line with 15 other states and the District of Columbia. Among those called to testify during the more than three-hour Senate committee hearing on the bill was Glenn Tebbe, executive director of the ICC, the public policy voice of the Catholic Church in Indiana.

"Lending practices that either intentionally or unintentionally take unfair advantage of one's desperate circumstances are unjust and violate moral principles," Tebbe said during the Jan. 23 hearing of the Senate Insurance and Financial Institutions committee. "We also believe that the state's purpose and the state's duty is to protect and facilitate the common good. The weakest members of our society should be helped to defend themselves against what one might consider usury.

"We cannot continue to allow forms of predatory lending to exploit the poor and vulnerable among us."

Senate Bill 104, co-authored by Sen. Greg Walker (R-Columbus), targets the fee structures and finance charges that enable the payday lending industry to reap exorbitant interest-rate payments from consumers. A similar bill proposed by Walker last year did not receive a hearing, so advocates were eager in this session to state their cases against payday loans, also known as cash advances.

Erin Macey, senior policy analyst for the Indiana Institute for Working Families, described the consequences of the payday lending industry once it was cleared to operate by the state legislature in 2002.

"Following the passage of this legislation, lenders quickly set up shop in our communities, offering what they marketed as emergency short-term credit," Macey said. "We now have 300 storefronts in Indiana, and in 2017, they made 1.2 million loans and drained \$60 million in fees from Hoosiers' bank accounts. Seventy-five percent of those fees were from borrowers taking 10 or more loans in a year."

Macey characterized the industry's business model as having a "perverse incentive" to target the working poor. She explained that payday lenders are allowed direct access to a borrower's checking account as security for the loan, and they know the date that a borrower will be paid. A person living paycheck to paycheck or relying on Social Security or disability payments can quickly become entrapped in an endless cycle of debt.

"Close to 50 percent of borrowers will eventually default on these loans, and upon default they will experience aggressive collection tactics and damaged credit," Macey said. "This will lead to barriers to jobs, housing and other affordable [loan] products in the future."

The payday loan industry would be "effectively eliminated" by passage of Senate Bill 104, Macey said. But she and other supporters of the bill emphasized that there are many alternatives for needy individuals and families, and that in states that have enacted similar bans on payday loans, most consumers do not miss them.

Steve Hoffman, president and CEO of Brightpoint, a community action agency serving northern Indiana, described how his organization offers loans of up to \$1,000 at 21 percent APR. The monthly payment on the maximum loan is \$92.

"That is a key figure, because families that are in financial distress are not suddenly going to be able to repay a payday loan in two weeks," Hoffman said. "They get caught in a trap, and they get out of this trap by getting help—from family, friends, churches, and organizations like my own. This bill is important for all Hoosiers. Polling shows that 90 percent of Hoosiers, both Republicans and Democrats, want a 36 percent rate cap. More than nine out of 10 of our low-income families at Brightpoint say they never want to use these loans again. Public opinion doesn't come much stronger than that."

But a handful of opponents—all lobbyists representing the payday loan industry—spoke out against the bill. Presenting on behalf of Check Into Cash, Brian Burdick said that eradicating the industry would not solve the dilemma of people in financial distress needing quick access to money. He also emphasized that the payday loan industry is regulated, and that in the absence of that option, consumers often turn to unregulated loan sources—such as Internet lenders—with even higher fees.

"You have to look at the laboratory of the marketplace," Burdick said. "Several

'Lending practices that either intentionally or unintentionally take unfair advantage of one's desperate circumstances are unjust and violate moral principles.'



— Glenn Tebbe, executive director of the Indiana Catholic Conference

states have passed these bills, and the payday lending industry has effectively left those states. That did not solve in any capacity the demand for those loans. In fact, in those communities people went to online lenders, the 'tribal' lenders, the guy out in the parking lot. In Oregon, when a similar bill passed, consumer complaints against unregulated Internet lenders doubled. But that is where the market goes."

In concluding the lengthy hearing, Sen. Eric Bassler (R-Washington), chairman of the committee, stated that the status quo regarding the payday industry cannot remain indefinitely.

"I would challenge both sides on this issue to figure out a good, appropriate and just solution," Bassler said.

No further hearing or vote on the bill has been scheduled to date.

To follow Senate Bill 104 and other priority legislation of the Indiana Catholic Conference, visit www.indianacc.org.

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

Pope Francis invites young people to join global prayer network online

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope Francis helped launch a new mobile app and online platform connecting people around the world in prayer.

The pope presented "the official platform of the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network: Click To Pray," on Jan. 20 after praying the *Angelus* with visitors gathered in St. Peter's Square.

Joined by Jesuit Father Frederic Fornos, head of the international prayer network, holding a tablet displaying the platform, the pope said it would be "here that I add my intentions and prayer requests for the Church's mission."

The prayer network, formerly called

the Apostleship of Prayer, is a Jesuit-run outreach that has given Catholics the pope's monthly prayer intentions since 1890. The global prayer network started offering the prayer intentions on video over social media in 2016.

"I above all invite you, young people, to download the app, Click To Pray," the pope said, asking them to keep "praying together with me the rosary for peace ..."

The website www.clicktopray.org and the mobile app—available for Android and iOS—are offered in six languages: Spanish, English, Italian, French, Portuguese and German. †

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Editorial



Carole Tessier, left, rides with her birth mother Margaret Teece Nagella to the March for Life in Washington on Jan. 18. Tessier met her birth mother for the first time almost a year ago. A few weeks after abortion became legal in the United States on Jan. 22, 1973, Nagella, then 18, realized she was pregnant with Tessier. The oldest in a Catholic family of nine from Ravenna, Ohio, she knew from the beginning that she would carry her child to term and find an adoptive family. (CNS photo/Zoey Maraist, Arlington Catholic Herald)

Birth mother, daughter remind us that adoption is a loving option

Our faith teaches to value all human life—from conception to natural death.

That's why it hard for us to comprehend how more than 60 million children in their mother's womb have been killed since the U.S. Supreme Court's *Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton* decisions legalized abortion on demand in 1973.

That's also why many of us, Catholics and people of all ages and various faith traditions, march in Washington each January to offer our heartfelt prayers through the pro-life movement. This year, crowds estimated at 100,000 or higher let their voices be heard.

It's also why our hearts ached last week when we learned that on Jan. 22—the 46th anniversary of the high court's action—New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo signed the Reproductive Health Act, legislation that effectively removed restrictions on abortion in New York. The new law allows abortions to be performed by any licensed medical personnel throughout the duration of a pregnancy “when necessary to protect a patient's life or health.”

Many of us cannot comprehend New York's decision to expand abortion rights that, in effect, offer no protection to an unborn child. Despite the tragic news, we must continue to pray for the conversion of those who think this law is a necessity.

But while we offer those petitions, we also must take the time to rejoice and offer thanks to God for the times birth mothers in unexpected or challenging pregnancies have chosen life.

Chances are, you won't hear these stories in many secular media venues, but Catholic press publications and others who embrace life are eager to share them with readers.

We learned of one such example thanks to a Catholic News Service article written by Zoey Maraist, which shared the story of Carol Tessier participating in the national March for Life on Jan. 18 with her birth mother, Margaret Teece Nagella. The two met almost a year ago after Margaret gave Carol up for adoption nearly 45 years before.

A few weeks after abortion became legal in the United States, 18-year-old Margaret, a high school senior, realized she was pregnant. The oldest of a Catholic family of nine children, she knew from the very beginning that she would carry her child to term.

“There was no question in my mind.

I really didn't even consider abortion,” she said. “I knew it was an option, but it wasn't an option for me.”

Because she was hesitant to tell her parents, Margaret went to Birthright, a pregnancy resource center, who then brought her to Catholic Charities. With the support of a woman from adoption services, she told her parents about the pregnancy. Her parents came with her the day she formally signed the papers to place her baby for adoption.

Margaret got married a few years later and had three sons, but she thought about her firstborn child often.

It was Carole who took the steps to find her birth mother. In 2017, she was doing some online shopping when she saw a deal for [Ancestry.com](#). Knowing her adoptive mom was interested in testing her own DNA, Carole bought her a kit. Then she bought one for herself. In addition to her heritage, she found the name of her birth mother and grandmother. Carole soon found their addresses and sent them each a letter and photos. Then she waited.

“A few years before all of this happened,” said Margaret, “I had a feeling in my spirit that one day my daughter might try to find me, and it would happen through my mother.”

“One day at work, my mother calls me and she was beside herself with excitement. I went to my mom and sat in her kitchen with her. She had the letters and photos that Carole sent.”

Margaret and her mother, Irene Teece, reached out to Carole to let her know they would get in contact soon. First Irene sent a letter. Then Margaret.

They met in person last March, and their relationship has continued, including riding together on a bus and taking part in the March for Life.

In an interview, Carole said she was always thankful for her birth mother. “She chose life for me when many others in her shoes might not have. I have always felt so incredibly blessed because of her selfless act and have always felt this previously unknown mother was a hero. Now, God has given me this most amazing gift by allowing me to finally know and love her.”

We hope and pray abortion proponents are made known of this story and its powerful message: where life is concerned, adoption is a beautiful gift.

—Mike Krokos

Making Sense of Bioethics/Fr. Tad Pacholczyk

The welcome outreach of perinatal hospice

During the course of pregnancy, receiving an adverse prenatal diagnosis can be a tremendously jolting experience for parents. In severe cases, physicians may tell them that their unborn child has a condition that is “incompatible with life.”

While some children with this diagnosis may still receive helpful treatments and manage to live or even thrive for years, in other cases, no realistic treatment options exist and they may live only a matter of minutes or hours following their birth, particularly when they are born with severely damaged or missing vital organs. Sometimes it can be preferable to refer to the situation as one in which the unborn child is “affected by a lethal condition.”

Prior to the development of prenatal screening technologies and genetic testing, doctors who delivered stillborn or terminally ill babies would often shuttle them away from their mothers to die, leaving the parents and family without a sense of closure or resolution. These losses were basically viewed and treated as “non-events,” and the emotions and grief experienced by the family received little attention or notice. In recent years, there has fortunately been a growing awareness of the grief associated with all forms of perinatal loss, whether from miscarriage, stillbirth, newborn death or direct abortion.

The prenatal diagnosis of a lethal anomaly creates a challenging and unusual situation for many families when they are informed of their baby's terminal condition weeks—or even months—before their child's death. What was once a surprise miscarriage or a surprise loss after birth becomes an anticipated and foreseen event.

In the wake of the diagnosis, medical professionals will sometimes recommend and pressure parents to abort their unborn child. This unsatisfactory choice often relegates them to never reaching meaningful closure with respect to the difficult pregnancy they have traversed. It also tempts them to act contrary to every protective parental instinct they have, and deny the reality of their newest family member, as if he or she can simply disappear through the termination.

Many hospitals and obstetrics programs, however, are now offering an improved alternative known as “perinatal hospice.” This approach seeks to set up a particular supportive environment within the hospital or another setting in which all the members of the family can receive the child following delivery, hold and name the newborn, and fully acknowledge his or her brief but meaningful life.

Letter to the Editor

Father Kenneth Taylor will be missed, Criterion reader says

I have never written to a newspaper before and I thought I probably never would, but this time I feel like I need to.

The date of Dec. 19, 2018, sticks in my mind and won't leave.

That is the day the archdiocese and everybody else lost a great priest; Father Kenneth Taylor passed away. Not only was he a great priest, but also a wonderful person.

Rest in peace, Father KT. You will be missed greatly.

P.L. Greene
Indianapolis

Perinatal hospice support staff will typically inquire as to what the parents and family would like to see happen, and try to tailor the experience accordingly. Families can invite a religious leader into the room. They can make arrangements for baptism. They can take a mold of their infant's footprints in clay. They can take photos of the child in the arms of other family members. If their baby will be born with a significant physical defect, like a tiny skull from microcephaly, the staff can arrange for a small winter's cap to cover the child's head if the family prefers. They can sing lullabies and pray together. Perinatal hospice staff remain nearby and available to provide emotional support or pain medication for a baby who appears uncomfortable, even as the child may shortly yield the breath of life and pass on.

In some cases, infants will have conditions that are not immediately fatal, and they may be able to go home to be with family for a few days or weeks before passing on. Hospice care continues during this time, with ongoing input and support from the neonatal team.

Drs. Nathan Hoeldtke and Byron Calhoun, two pioneers in the field of perinatal hospice, sum up this supportive and consoling form of care this way: “Perinatal hospice differs in emphasis, though not necessarily in kind, from other modes of perinatal health care. It focuses on the persons involved, rather than on the fetal pathology, and places the family in the central arena of care. It provides a continuum of support for the family from the time of diagnosis until death and beyond. It is marked by a cognizance that ‘dying involves real people, even unborn fetuses; [and that] significant relationships are disrupted and familiar bonds are severed.’ Hospice allows time—time for bonding, loving, and losing; time so that the entire course of living and dying is a gradual process that is not jarringly interrupted. ... We believe that a structured and compassionate approach, such as that embodied in perinatal hospice, can be woven into the mainstream of pregnancy care to best facilitate the challenging, yet rewarding, task of helping these families cope with the death of their youngest member, in comfort and with dignity.”

Perinatal hospice offers an invaluable model of medical and interpersonal outreach, one that hopefully will continue to expand in the context of modern neonatal care.

(Father Tadeusz Pacholczyk, Ph.D. earned his doctorate in neuroscience at Yale University and did post-doctoral work at Harvard University. He is a priest of the Diocese of Fall River, Mass., and serves as director of education at The National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia. See www.ncbcenter.org.) †

Letters Policy

Letters from readers are welcome and every effort will be made to include letters from as many people and representing as many viewpoints as possible. Letters should be informed, relevant, well-expressed and temperate in tone. They must reflect a basic sense of courtesy and respect.

The editors reserve the right to select the letters that will be published and to edit letters from readers as necessary based on space limitations, pastoral sensitivity and content (including spelling and grammar). In order to encourage opinions from a variety of readers, frequent writers will ordinarily be limited to one letter every three months. Concise letters (usually less than 300 words) are more likely to be printed.

Letters must be signed, but, for serious reasons, names may be withheld.

Send letters to “Letters to the Editor,” The Criterion, 1400 N. Meridian Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367. Readers with send letters via e-mail to critterion@archindy.org. †



Christ the Cornerstone

The child Jesus is consecrated to his Father

“Sion, adorn your bridal chamber and welcome Christ the King; take Mary in your arms, who is the gate of heaven, for she herself is carrying the King of glory and new light. A Virgin she remains, though bringing in her hands the Son before the morning star begotten, whom Simeon, taking in his arms announced to the peoples as Lord of life and death and Savior of the world.” (Traditional antiphon for the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord)

Tomorrow, Feb. 2, is the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord. This is our remembrance of the day on which Mary and Joseph, who were devout Jews, actively embraced the rituals of their religious tradition and humbly fulfilled their obligation to consecrate their newborn son to the Lord.

We know, of course, that this child did not need to be given back to the Lord. He *was* the Lord, and his very existence was a form of oblation or “giving back” to the Father in heaven.

Similarly, Jewish law required that the child’s mother be ritually purified. Mary did not need this. She was already pure and spotless by virtue of her Immaculate Conception, a gift

of God’s grace that allowed her to become the new Eve, the mother of all the living.

The fulfillment of the Law, which we call the Presentation of the Lord, was undertaken not out of necessity. It was a symbolic action that was meant to convey three things: 1) This newborn child, who was proclaimed by the heavenly hosts as the Savior of humankind, has not come to abolish the law but to fulfill it; 2) Mary, the new Eve, shares in her son’s glory, but she will also share in his “perfect and unique oblation on the cross” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #529); and 3) all of us, children of God, are consecrated to the Lord by the intercession of Mary our mother.

Traditionally on this feast, the Church invites us to bless the candles that are used throughout the Church year. When this solemn blessing is accompanied by a procession into the church, the congregation is invited to sing: “A light for revelation to the Gentiles and the glory of your people Israel,” which is then followed by the opening line of the Cantic of Simeon: “Lord, now you may let your servant go in peace, in accordance with your word”

(cf., Lk 2:22-40). These acclamations connect us to two major themes of Luke’s version of the Christmas story: God’s salvation is for everyone, and the prophecy of Simeon concerning the sword that will pierce Mary’s heart.

We are rightly humbled by these events. On the one hand, the story is quite simple. A young couple brings their firstborn son to the Temple and, as prescribed by the law, they consecrate him to the Lord and offer sacrifice.

On the other hand, this is a complex, deeply layered story that is rich in symbolism and prophetic wisdom. Simeon and Anna are ordinary people, advanced in age and ready to return to the Lord, but they, too, are more than they appear.

Both are prophets, which means that they have been called by God to witness to the extraordinary miracle that will bring about the salvation of all God’s people—Jews and gentiles alike. To them, God has given the gift of foresight. They can see what others cannot, and they don’t hesitate to speak about what they have seen “to all who were awaiting the redemption of Jerusalem” (Lk 2:38).

The gift that Anna and Simeon received on the day that Jesus was

consecrated to the Lord in the Temple has also been given to us by virtue of our baptism. We, too, are witnesses to the light of Christ, and we are called to testify by our words and our example to the salvation that is ours by the mercy and goodness of God. The candles that we will bless tomorrow are sacramental signs of the *lux Christi*, the light of Christ, which is now available to everyone regardless of religion, race, sex, or economic or social status.

As Pope Francis reminds us, we are called to be missionary disciples of Jesus Christ. Like Simeon and Anna, our vocation is to give thanks to God and share the Good News of our salvation with everyone (including family, friends, co-workers, neighbors, strangers and enemies).

We are meant to be living candles that burn brightly with the light of Christ and that are renewed daily through God’s grace experienced in prayer, the sacraments and our communion with other missionary disciples in the Church.

May the light of Christ shine in our hearts in a special way tomorrow as we thank God for the gift of our salvation. †



Cristo, la piedra angular

El niño Jesús es consagrado a su Padre

“Embellece tu trono, Sión, y recibe a Cristo Rey: Abraza a María, la puerta del cielo, pues ella conduce al Rey de la gloria revestido de nueva luz. Permanece Virgen llevando en sus manos al Hijo nacido antes del lucero del alba. Simeón lo tomó en sus brazos y proclamó ante los pueblos que es el Señor de la vida y de la muerte y Salvador del mundo.” (Antífona tradicional de la Fiesta de la presentación del Señor)

Mañana, 2 de febrero, es la Fiesta de la Presentación del Señor en la que conmemoramos el día en el que María y José, quienes eran judíos devotos, acogieron activamente los ritos de su tradición de fe y humildemente cumplieron con su obligación de consagrar a su hijo recién nacido al Señor.

Por supuesto, sabemos que no era necesario devolver a este niño al Señor porque él era el Señor, y su existencia era en sí misma una forma de oblación o de “retribuir” al Padre celestial.

Del mismo modo, la ley judía exigía que la madre del niño fuera purificada mediante un ritual. María no necesitaba esto. Ya era pura y sin mancha en virtud de su inmaculada concepción, un don de la gracia de Dios que le permitió

convertirse en la nueva Eva, la madre de todos los vivos.

El cumplimiento de la ley, que llamamos la Presentación del Señor, se realizó no por necesidad sino como un acto simbólico cuyo objetivo era transmitir tres mensajes: 1) que este recién nacido, proclamado por los anfitriones celestiales como el salvador de la humanidad, no había venido a abolir la ley sino a hacerla cumplir; 2) María, la nueva Eva, forma parte de la gloria de su hijo, pero también comparte con él su “otra oblación, perfecta y única, la de la Cruz” (*Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica*, #529); y 3) todos nosotros, hijos de Dios, estamos consagrados al Señor por intercesión de María, nuestra madre.

Tradicionalmente en esta fiesta la Iglesia nos invita a bendecir las velas que se usarán a lo largo del año litúrgico. Cuando esta bendición solemne va acompañada de una procesión a la iglesia, la congregación canta: “Luz para iluminar a las naciones paganas y gloria de tu pueblo Israel,” seguido del cántico de Simeón: “Ahora, Señor, puedes dejar que tu servidor muera en paz, como lo has prometido” (cf., Lc 2:22-40). Estas aclamaciones nos conectan con dos de los principales temas de la versión de la Navidad según

san Lucas: La salvación de Dios es para todos y la profecía de Simeón con respecto a la espada que atravesará el corazón de María.

Estos eventos nos presentan una verdadera lección de humildad. Por un lado, el relato es bastante sencillo: una joven familia lleva a su primogénito al templo y, según lo prescribe la ley, lo consagran al Señor y le ofrecen sacrificios.

Por otro lado, se trata de una historia compleja, compuesta de muchas capas y rica en simbolismo y sabiduría profética. Simeón y Ana son personas comunes, de edad avanzada y listas para regresar a su hogar celestial, pero ellos también son más de lo que aparentan.

Ambos son profetas, lo que significa que Dios los ha llamado a dar testimonio del extraordinario milagro que producirá la salvación de todo el pueblo de Dios, judíos y paganos por igual. Dios les ha dado el don de la premonición. Pueden ver lo que otros no y no dudan en hablar de lo que han visto a “todos los que esperaban la redención de Jerusalén” (Lc 2:38).

En virtud de nuestro bautismo nosotros hemos recibido también el don que recibieron Ana y Simeón el día en que Jesús fue consagrado al Señor en el Templo. Nosotros también

somos testigos de la luz de Cristo y a través de nuestras palabras y ejemplo estamos llamados a dar testimonio de la salvación que nos pertenece por la misericordia y la bondad de Dios. Las velas que bendiciremos mañana son signos sacramentales de la *lux Christi*, la luz de Cristo, que se encuentra a disposición de todos sin distinción de religión, raza, sexo o estatus socioeconómico.

Tal como nos lo recuerda el papa Francisco, estamos llamados a ser discípulos misioneros de Jesucristo. Al igual que Simeón y Ana, nuestra vocación es dar gracias a Dios y compartir la Buena Nueva de nuestra salvación con todos (incluyendo familiares, amigos, compañeros de trabajo, vecinos, extraños y enemigos).

Estamos llamados a ser velas vivas cuya llama brilla intensamente con la luz de Cristo y que se renueva todos los días mediante la gracia de Dios que sentimos en la oración, los sacramentos y nuestra comunión con otros discípulos misioneros en la Iglesia.

Que la luz de Cristo brille en nuestros corazones de una forma especial mañana mientras damos gracias a Dios por el don de nuestra salvación. †

Events Calendar

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

February 5

Mission 27 Resale, 132 Leota St., Indianapolis. **Senior Discount Day**, every Tuesday, 30 percent off clothing, 9 a.m.-6 p.m., ministry supports Indianapolis St. Vincent de Paul Society Food Pantry and Changing Lives Forever program. Information: 317-687-8260.

St. Charles Borromeo Parish, 213 Ripley St., Milan. **Praying the Scriptures**, hosted by Loved by Love Ministries, four consecutive Wednesdays (Feb. 12, 19, 26), 7-8:30 p.m., freewill offerings accepted. Register by Feb. 1: 812-654-7051. Information: st.charleschurch@yahoo.com, lovedbylovehimself@gmail.com

February 6

Archbishop O'Meara Catholic Center, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. **Solo Seniors**, Catholic, educational, charitable and social singles, 50 and over, single, separated, widowed or divorced. New members welcome. 6 p.m. Information: 317-243-0777.

February 8

St. John the Evangelist Parish

(Pam Am Plaza Building parish hall), 126 W. Georgia St., Indianapolis. **Pro-Life Film Series**, viewing of the documentary *#Big Fertility*, followed by panel discussion, sponsored by St. John the Evangelist and Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary parishes in Indianapolis, light supper served, freewill offerings accepted. Information: Sheryl Dye, smdye1@gmail.com, 317-407-6881.

St. Michael Parish, 11400 Farmers Ln., Greenville. **WinterBash Prime Rib Dinner and Dance**, 5:30-11 p.m., \$25 advance sale tickets only, must be 21 to attend. Tickets: Pattie, 812-734-5590; Nadine, 812-472-3931. Information: 812-734-5590, st.michaels@mw.twcbc.com.

February 10

St. Thomas Aquinas Church, 4625 N. Kenwood Ave., Indianapolis. **Mass in French**, 12:30 p.m. Information: 317-627-7729 or acfadi2014@gmail.com.

St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) Church,

4720 E. 13th St., Indianapolis. **Class of '63 monthly gathering**, 6 p.m. Mass, optional dinner afterward. Information: 317-408-6396.

SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, 1347 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. **Mass and Reception for Married Couples**, sponsored by the archdiocesan Office of Marriage and Family Life, Archbishop Charles C. Thompson celebrating, 2 p.m., followed by reception in Assembly Hall of the Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center with special recognition for couples married 60 years and longer, free. Registration required by Feb. 5: www.archindy.org/weddingcelebrations. Information: Keri Carroll, 317-236-1521, kcarroll@archindy.org.

February 10-17

Our Lady of Lourdes Church, 5333 E. Washington St., Indianapolis. **8-Day Festival of Prayer**, Sun. 10 a.m. Mass and Girl Scouts' World Thinking Day; Mon. 6-7:30 p.m. Anointing of

the Sick and Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament; Tues. 5:30 p.m. rosary, 6 p.m. Mass, 7 p.m. concert; Wed. 8:15 a.m. Mass and rosary; Thurs. 5:30 p.m. rosary, 6 p.m. Mass; Fri. 7:30 a.m. rosary, 8:15 a.m. Mass, 1:45 p.m. Living Rosary presented by school children; Sat. 5 p.m. Mass; Sun. 10 a.m. Mass, 11:30 a.m. Feast and Faith presentation on Jewish Spirituality. Information: 317-356-7291 or www.ollindy.org.

February 12

Church of the Immaculate Conception, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Monthly Taizé Prayer Service**, 7-8 p.m., silent and spoken prayers, simple music, silence. Information: 812-535-2952, provctr@spsmw.org.

February 13

Catholic Charities Bloomington, 803 N. Monroe St., Bloomington. **Valentine Open House**, tours, activities for children, refreshments, 6-8 p.m. Information: 812-332-1262 or Cheri Bush, cbush@archindy.org.

February 15-18

Providence Spirituality and Conference Center, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Used Book Sale sponsored by Linden Leaf Gifts**, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., books not pre-priced but donations accepted. Information: 812-535-2932 or lindenleafgifts@spsmw.org.

February 16

Sisters of St. Benedict, St. Gertrude Hall, 802 E 10th St., Ferdinand (Diocese of Evansville). **Oblates of St. Benedict Informational Meeting**, 1-3 p.m. Information: www.thedome.org/get-involved/oblates/, Benedictine Sister Brenda Engleman, 812-367-1411, ext. 2827, bengleman@thedome.org.

February 17

Providence Spirituality & Conference Center, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Sundays at the Woods: An Afternoon of Art**, discover works of art by the Sisters of

Providence and other artists, 2-4 p.m., free will offering, registration not required. Information: 812-535-2952, provctr@spsmw.org or www.spsmw.org/event.

February 18

St. Mark the Evangelist School, 541 E. Edgewood Ave., Indianapolis. **Caregiver Support Group**, sponsored by Catholic Charities Indianapolis, open discussion for family and friends caring for adults age 60 and older, 5:30-7 p.m. Information: Monica Woodsworth, 317-261-3378, mwoodsworth@archindy.org.

February 19

Mount St. Francis Center for Spirituality, 101 St. Anthony Dr., Mt. St. Francis. **"Abide" Adoration Service**, sponsored by New Albany Deanery Catholic Youth Ministries, 7-8 p.m., every third Thurs. of the month, featuring guest speaker, praise band, silence and confessions, child care available. Information and child care reservations: Chris Rogers, chris@nadyouth.org, 812-923-8355. †

Marian University to host lecture on work of Catholic Relief Services in Sri Lanka

"Rebuilding Refugees' Lives in Sri Lanka" is the title of a lecture by Sajith Silva, Catholic Relief Services (CRS) program coordinator for Sri Lanka, at the Michael A. Evans Center, on the campus of Marian University, 3200 Cold Spring Road, in Indianapolis, on Feb. 21 at 7 p.m.

Sponsored by CRS and the Center for Interfaith Cooperation, the lecture is part of The Richard G. Lugar Franciscan Center for Global Studies speaker series at Marian University.

Decades of civil war forced many to flee Sri Lanka. When the war ended in 2009, people returned to their villages and cities, unsure of what they would

find. Although returning home should be a reason to rejoice, for many being back meant starting from scratch. Silva's desire to bring hope to vulnerable people brought him to CRS where he works with communities to rebuild their lives as the program coordinator for the Assistive Devices Project.

Additional information about the Global Studies Speaker Series, including the registration link to this event, can be found at goo.gl/g3qZzb (case sensitive).

To learn more about the work of CRS in Sri Lanka, go to www.crs.org/our-work-overseas/where-we-work/sri-lanka. †

Retreats and Programs

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

February 15-17

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guest House and Retreat Center, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Beyond First Impressions: A Couples Retreat**, Benedictine Father Noël Mueller presenting, \$425, married couples only.

Information: 812-357-6585 or mzoeller@saintmeinrad.edu.

February 16

Mount St. Francis Center for Spirituality, 101 St. Anthony Dr., Mt. St. Francis. **"Marriage in Christ" Day of Reflection for Married Couples**,

Franciscan Father Vince Peterson facilitating, 9 a.m.-7 p.m., includes Sunday Vigil Mass, reconciliation, lunch and dinner, \$75 per couple. Information and registration: 812-923-8817, www.mountsaintfrancis.org/registration. †

Free concerts planned at St. Bartholomew Church in Columbus through May

The music ministry of St. Bartholomew Parish, 1306 27th St., in Columbus, is hosting a series of concerts in the coming months as follows:

- Feb. 16: Young Musicians Concert, 7 p.m.
- March 23: Meditations on the Passion, featuring vocal ensemble and baroque instrumentalists Echoing Air, 7 p.m.
- April 27: Easter Celebration Concert, featuring St. Bartholomew Choir, Brass Choir and

Children's Choir, 7:30 p.m.

• May 11: Clara and Robert Schumann: Life at Four Hands, by the Minut Piano Duo, featuring Mirabella and Bogdan Minut, 7 p.m.

All concerts are held in the church. There is no charge for admission, although freewill offerings will be accepted.

For additional information, contact Bogdan Minut at 812-379-9353, ext. 237, e-mail bminut@stbparish.net, or go to bit.ly/2RQA5PO (case sensitive). †

Two Retrouvaille retreats for marriages in crisis planned in February

Do you feel alone? Are you frustrated or angry with each other? Do you argue, or have you stopped talking to each other? Do you wonder if your marriage might end? Consider attending one of two Retrouvaille retreats for marriages in crisis that will take place near central and southern Indiana in February.

Retrouvaille (pronounced REH-tro-vai) is a worldwide program that offers tools needed for hurting couples to rediscover a loving marriage relationship. For more than 30 years, the program has helped hundreds of thousands of couples heal their hurting marriages.

The main emphasis of the program is on communication in marriage between husband and wife. It gives spouses the opportunity to rediscover each other and examine their lives together in a

new and positive way.

Information for the upcoming retreats is as follows:

• Feb. 15-17 in Louisville, Ky. (location disclosed with confirmation of registration). Registration and \$200 deposit per couple required by Feb. 7, register at bit.ly/2sQnJaJ (case sensitive). For more information call 502-479-3329 or email 3012@retrouvaille.org. Sponsored by Retrouvaille of Louisville.

• Feb. 22-24 at St. Joseph Retreat & Conference Center, 1440 W. Division Road, in Tipton, Ind. (Lafayette Diocese). Deposit per couple is \$150, and scholarships are available. Register at goo.gl/9RrJ54 (case sensitive). For more information call 317-489-6811 or e-mail Retrouvaille@gmail.com. Sponsored by Indianapolis Retrouvaille. †



Warriors win it!

The fourth-grade Warriors boys' basketball team of St. Barnabas School in Indianapolis won the Catholic Youth Organization City Championships in Indianapolis on Jan. 23, finishing their season with a 21-0 record. Posing with the trophy are, front row: Brennan Pierle, left, Brady Mosburg, Mitchell Hunt, Ryder Douglas, Maddox Novotney and Dominic Dozier, and back row: Coach Brad Mosburg, Luke Roeder, Will Hegwood and Coach Mike Hegwood. (Submitted photo)

Church leaders call Philippine church attack 'heinous and evil'

MANILA, Philippines (CNS)—Church leaders condemned bomb explosions that killed at least 20 people and injured about 100 others inside a Catholic church in the southern Philippines on Jan. 27. They called the attack a "heinous and evil" act of terrorism.

[Ucanews.com](http://ucanews.com) reported the Islamic State claimed responsibility for the bombing, which occurred during Mass at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Mount Carmel in the city of Jolo.

Islamic State, which often claims responsibility for acts of terrorism, issued a statement claiming two suicide bombers detonated explosive belts inside the church and near its entrance. Shortly after the first blast left bodies strewn on the floor amid destroyed pews, a second explosion near the entrance killed at least five soldiers trying to help the wounded.

The attack, one of the deadliest in recent years in Mindanao, occurred less than a week after a voters referendum was held on expanding and strengthening an existing Muslim autonomous region in the area.

The bishops' conference condemned the attack and called on Christians "to join hands with all peace-loving Muslim and indigenous communities in combating violent extremism."

Pope Francis also expressed his sorrow over the attack.

"I raise my prayers for the dead and wounded," the pope said in Panama, where he was attending the World Youth Day celebration.

"May the Lord, Prince of Peace, convert the hearts of the violent and give the inhabitants of that region a peaceful coexistence," added the pope.

House members introduce bipartisan measure to ban abortions at 20 weeks

WASHINGTON (CNS)—U.S. Rep. Chris Smith, R-New Jersey, was joined by more than 100 other members of the House on Jan. 24 in introducing the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act of 2019, a measure that would ban abortions after 20 weeks of gestation.

Smith, a Catholic, who is co-chairman of the House Pro-Life Caucus, is the lead sponsor of the bill, which cites research showing that unborn babies "can feel agonizing pain" at 20 weeks of development.

"The majority of Americans—some 59 percent according to a recent poll—support legal protection for pain-capable unborn children," Smith said in introducing the bill. He was referring to results of an annual poll of Americans' views on abortion conducted by the Marist Poll at Marist College and sponsored by the Knights of Columbus.

The poll also showed that 75 percent of respondents want "substantial" restrictions on abortion access even as more than half of respondents describe themselves as



U.S. Rep. Chris Smith, R-N.J., speaks during the annual March for Life rally in Washington Jan. 18. (CNS photo/Tyler Orsburn)

Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, and Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio, chairman of the U.S. bishops' Committee on International Justice and Peace, said U.S. bishops stood in solidarity and prayer with the victims and "join the bishops of the Philippines in condemning such senseless acts of violence. We invite Catholics and all men and women of good will to do the same."

Father Romeo Saniel, apostolic administrator of Jolo, said those who perished "died for their Christian faith."

"They bravely stayed in Jolo in spite of the threats and insecurities," said the priest. "No words can describe the sorrow and pain that we feel these days."

In a joint statement, Cardinal Orlando Quevedo and Archbishop Angelito Lampon of Cotabato described the bombing as "the most heinous desecration of a sacred place."

Cardinal Quevedo, who retired as archbishop of Cotabato in November, once served as a parish priest in Jolo. Until he was named the cardinal's replacement, Archbishop Lampon was apostolic vicar of Jolo.

"As former religious leaders of Jolo, we totally condemn the criminal bombing of Jolo cathedral," their statement said.

The attack "on a sacred day and at a sacred moment of worship" was "the action of evil people with utter disregard for the sacredness of human life and of human dignity," they said.

They appealed to the security forces to swiftly bring perpetrators to justice.

"pro-choice." The poll was conducted on Jan. 8-10, and the results were released ahead of the Jan. 18 national March for Life.

"Today we know that unborn babies not only die but suffer excruciating pain during dismemberment abortion—a cruelty that rips arms and legs off a helpless child," Smith said. "This tragic human rights abuse must end."

Smith's bipartisan bill contains additional provisions to ensure that two physicians are present to provide care for an unborn child who survives an abortion, and states that the baby must be transported and admitted to a hospital.

"These are very developed babies—these babies are capable of feeling pain and are considered by the medical profession to be a second patient," said Jennifer Popik, legislative director for National Right to Life.

Similar laws are on the books in 17 states and three more states ban abortion after 20 weeks for other reasons.

The legislation would punish doctors who perform an abortion after 20 weeks, except in cases of rape, incest or if the life of the mother is threatened. Women seeking abortions would not be penalized under the bill.

"This legislation has saved lives, driving abortionists out of states who are performing abortions on these babies," Popik said in a statement supporting the measure. "And this legislation has the power to speak to the people of this country, highlighting that where this bill is not law, it is legal to kill these very developed unborn children."

The House passed the bill in October 2017, but in January 2018, the Senate failed to pass its version of the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act.

President Donald J. Trump had said he would have signed the measure if it had passed both houses of Congress.

"The Senate's rejection of this common-sense legislation is radically out of step with most Americans," Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan of New York said in a statement as then-chairman of the U.S. bishops' Committee on Pro-Life Activities. †



A Philippine army member inspects damage inside the Cathedral of Our Lady of Mount Carmel following a bomb blast in Jolo on Jan. 27. The explosion, during morning Mass killed at least 20 people and wounded dozens of others. (CNS photo/Armed Forces of the Philippines via Reuters)

The predominantly Muslim province of Sulu has long been a hotbed of groups claiming allegiance to Islamic State and al-Qaida terrorist networks.

Authorities said the bombing was in retaliation for the death of a leader of the al-Qaida-linked Abu Sayyaf group last year.

Lt. Col. Gerry Besana, military spokesman, said investigators had recovered closed-circuit footage of the bombers just before the attack.

Mujiv Hataman, governor of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, told ucanews.com only Abu Sayyaf, a small militant group associated with the Islamic

State, had the means to carry out the attack.

The Moro Islamic Liberation Front, which entered into a peace deal with the government in 2014, said it would conduct its own investigation.

"We are not dividing people. In fact, we are uniting Muslim and Christian people," said Hadji Murad Ibrahim, the group's chairman.

The Philippine government vowed to hunt down the perpetrators.

"We will pursue to the ends of the Earth the ruthless perpetrators behind this dastardly crime," said Salvador Panelo, presidential spokesman. "The law will give them no mercy." †

Of the 125 nursing homes in the Indianapolis/Carmel metropolitan area, only 7 received an Overall Top Performing rating from U.S. News & World Report.

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Having processed by the Indianapolis' Soldiers and Sailors Monument, participants in the Indiana March for Life on Jan. 22 round a corner to start processing around the Indiana Statehouse. (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)

PRO-LIFE

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said Archbishop Charles C. Thompson during the homily he delivered to about 900 people. "Both are necessary for a truly integrated commitment to missionary discipleship, and that's what our march will be—a mission for the sanctity of life ... from the moment of conception to natural death."

Bishop Timothy L. Doherty of the Diocese of Lafayette, Ind., and more than a dozen priests from both dioceses were concelebrants at the Mass. The two dioceses and Right to Life of Indianapolis sponsored the day's events.

Archbishop Thompson prompted that "we must never lose proper perspective of uniting ourselves to the way of God rather than trying to conform God into our way of thinking. That's when things start to break down in our society."

He called to mind not just the babies aborted since 1973, "but also mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers, society itself, the family" as victims to the culture of death.

He said society should rather cultivate a culture of life. Those embraced by such a culture should include "the immigrant, the refugee, those who may have different color of skin or creed, nationality, ... those who may be on death row, or addicted, or abused."

Ultimately, the archbishop said, "We know the outcome. ... The cross gives way to the resurrection, and the saints go marching on with Jesus as the way, the truth and the life."

When it came to literally marching, "I'll be the first to admit, out in that cold air, it's hard for me to exude joy," he said, receiving a wave of laughter from the

congregation. "But we'll do this together," he added.

'Where the rubber meets the road'

And so they did, the archbishop along with the crowd of adults, priests, religious, seminarians and students from 13 elementary schools, high schools and colleges from both sponsoring dioceses.

"The fact that so many, young and old, braved the weather in solidarity with the unborn is a testament to their commitment to upholding the sacredness of life ...," Archbishop Thompson told *The Criterion*.

This year's route extended beyond last year's inaugural march. The one-mile trek included the city's main thoroughfare, Meridian Street, a portion of Monument Circle, and a three-quarter circuit around the Indiana Statehouse grounds.

The march ended at the south steps of the Statehouse. Inside, lawmakers were busy meeting and voting during the Indiana General Assembly. But several of them, along with others active in the pro-life movement, took time to address the cheering crowd.

The hourlong rally included 12 legislators and leaders speaking on behalf of pro-life institutions and organizations. Each of them, as well as Bishop Doherty in his opening prayer and emcee Marc Tuttle, president of Right to Life of Indianapolis, thanked the participants for braving the 22-degree wind chill.

"The Supreme Court makes all sorts of decisions in June. Why they couldn't have made this [*Roe v. Wade*] decision in June, I don't know!" Tuttle quipped.

He explained why choosing to rally at the Statehouse steps was no random decision.

"We're gathered here because ultimately abortion is a local issue,"



Danielle Cramer and her daughter Kinley, members of Annunciation Parish in Brazil, brave the cold in front of the Clay County Courthouse during the Brazil Stand-for-Life event on Jan. 20. (Submitted photo by Tom McBroom)

said Tuttle. "Our gathering here, our work at pregnancy centers, our work for pro-life legislation, all of that trickles up to Washington D.C. And really that's where the rubber meets the road, because for 46 years our pro-life efforts have been blocked by an unjust Supreme Court ruling in *Roe v. Wade*."

'This blight on our country'

The first speaker he introduced was from the "trickle up" site, U.S. Sen. Todd Young of Indiana. He noted the need to not only speak for the unborn, but to also "elevate those mothers in particular who make the right choice during a difficult time," and to "support and promote the importance of adoption. It's consistent with our pro-life agenda."

Tuttle noted that Indiana isn't sending pro-life lawmakers just to Washington, but also to the state's Capitol.

"We're blessed to live in a state that is one of the top 10 pro-life states because of our number of pro-life legislators," he said.

Among the many state legislators whom he introduced was Rep. Christy Stutzman of Elkhart County in northwestern Indiana. Even as a freshman lawmaker, she has already co-authored House Bill 1211 to ban dismemberment abortions.

She said each year when the solemn observance of *Roe v. Wade* comes around she is "reminded of how old I am. ... Because you see, I was born in August of 1973, and I could've been legally aborted that year. It reminds me to speak up for my generation, 30 percent of which is not here because of this blight on our country."

Stutzman implored the crowd to

Continued on the next page



During a memorial service at the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis on Jan. 22 prior to the Indiana March for Life, Right to Life of Indianapolis director of programming Mary Dougherty holds a basket of roses as individuals display signs representing the number of abortions per year since it became legal in 1973. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)



At a rally on the Statehouse steps following the Indiana March for Life in Indianapolis on Jan. 22, U.S. Sen. Todd Young of Indiana holds a microphone to a crowd of about 700 to catch their shouts after asking, "Do we love babies, Hoosiers?" (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)

"cover us [legislators] in prayer, because we feel your prayers every single day." Several other legislators also referenced faith. State Sen. Jim Tomes of Evansville called for more pastors and clergy to preach about abortion, noting that the killing of babies in the womb "is current events, it's happening." "We want God to bless America," he said. "But until we stop killing the most precious gifts God gives to us, folks, that's not going to happen so easily." Sen. John Crane of District 24 in central-western Indiana echoed those sentiments, noting the need to "treat people the way God would have us treat people, the golden rule." "We [legislators] often hear, 'We have a right to this' and 'We have a right to that,'" he continued. "But the fact of the matter is this: you can have no rights at all as a person if you do not have the right to life."



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson delivers a homily in St. John the Evangelist Church in Indianapolis on Jan. 22 prior to the Indiana March for Life. (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)

'The abortion industry is lying'

Promoting the right to life includes offering help to women in crisis pregnancies. Many of these women are on college campuses, which Tuttle identified as "one of the strongest battlegrounds of this cultural war."

He introduced two speakers familiar with this battle, including Monica Richel. She is president of the Students for Life of America's Indiana University chapter in Bloomington, as well as coordinator of the national organization's Pregnant on Campus program at the university.

"Women on college campuses are the target of the abortion industry," said Richel. "The abortion industry is lying to these women, telling them that they cannot be a mother and accomplish their goals and dreams. This is a lie."

Reality proves the lie, she continued. She told the story of a woman who had just graduated from college and started a career in the hotel industry.

"She found herself pregnant," Richel said. "She wasn't married, and she was scared. She was pressured to have an abortion."

"She defied that pressure, and 22 years later, I, the baby girl of that woman, am here telling you how important it is to support those women in those hard situations."

'Like a house of cards'

One of the final speakers was Sue Swayze Liebel, vice president of public affairs for Indiana Right to Life and coordinator of the National Pro-life Women's Caucus of the Susan B. Anthony List, located in Arlington, Va.

She said the national organization's mission is "to get pro-life women elected to Congress, to state houses, to positions where in those roles they will make pro-life laws. Our goal is to be a special interest for life in the big game of politics."



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson and Diocese of Lafayette-in-Indiana Bishop Timothy L. Doherty smile during a rally on the Statehouse steps following the Indiana March for Life in Indianapolis on Jan. 22. (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)

Swayze Liebel is an Indiana native and current resident. She lauded the state legislature for its pro-life leadership, including a 2011 law defunding Planned Parenthood in the state that was partially blocked by federal courts, and a 2015 law mandating an ultrasound be performed no less than 18 hours before an abortion. A legal challenge to the latter is awaiting a hearing by the Seventh Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals.

Another pro-life Indiana law is also awaiting a possible hearing—by the U.S. Supreme Court. The 2016 law bans abortion based on gender, race and disability. It made Indiana "the first state in the country to call the abortion of babies because of their race or their sex or their disability 'discrimination,'" said Swayze Liebel.

"We're waiting any day" for the Supreme Court to decide whether or not to hear the case, she said, "and that will take a huge chunk out of *Roe v. Wade* and be its demise—from right here in Indiana!"

The laws, the efforts in crisis pregnancy centers and on campuses, the support of women who choose life for their babies and the promotion of adoption, all are chipping away at legalized abortion, she said.



Despite the cold winter rain on Jan. 19, Greg Aldrich, a member of St. Patrick Parish in Terre Haute, stands as one of several pro-life advocates peacefully raising awareness of the impacts of abortion during Terre Haute's solemn *Roe v. Wade* observance in front of the Vigo County Courthouse. (Submitted photo by Tom McBroom)

"It's kind of like a house of cards," said Swayze Liebel. "You pull one out, and you pull another out, and sooner or later *Roe v. Wade* will just topple." †



A panoramic shot from the south steps of the Indiana Statehouse captures a portion of the roughly 700 people attending a rally after completing the Indiana March for Life in Indianapolis on Jan. 22. (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)

'I wanted to stand up for life': Groups from across the archdiocese participate in national March for Life

By John Shaughnessy

The invitation—and the emotional stories that followed—came shortly after their group boarded the bus for the long ride home to Indianapolis from the national March for Life in Washington on Jan. 18.

One of the adult chaperones on the Indianapolis North Deanery bus asked the 29 high school students if they wanted to come to the front and use the microphone to share their thoughts about their journey to stand up for the rights of the unborn.



Mary Claire Cooke

When seconds passed, Mary Claire Cooke made her way from the back of the bus to take the microphone.

First, she thanked her youth minister at Christ the King Parish in Indianapolis—Ann Collins—for organizing the trip and for inspiring her passion for being pro-life. Then the 18-year-old senior at Bishop Chatard High School in Indianapolis shared how this was her third trip to Washington for the March.

"I spoke about the feeling I get when I see so many people at the march—and how when I'm back home, it's easy to get discouraged," Mary Claire recalls. "But when I come to the event, I'm reminded that this—life—is the most important right you're fighting for. And it's inspiring to see all the people fighting for it, too."

The emotional stories from other youths soon followed.

"A lot of people in the group talked about knowing someone who had been touched by abortion," Mary Claire says. "A couple of people had siblings who had abortions and regretted it—or thought about it and didn't. They talked about how that baby could have died. And how that kid was their favorite person in their life right now. They couldn't imagine not having that person in their life."

"It was one of the most moving parts of the whole trip."

'I wanted to stand up for life'

The journey to the March for Life created similar lasting memories for the groups from across central and southern Indiana who traveled to Washington.

At 14, Michael Weisbrod considers it an honor that he had the opportunity to help carry his school's banner that proclaimed, "Behold: Children are a gift from the Lord."



With the U.S. Capitol as a backdrop, a group from the Indianapolis North Deanery pose for a photo during the March for Life in Washington on Jan. 18. (Submitted photo)



Seventh- and eighth-grade students from St. Nicholas School in Ripley County in southern Indiana walk with a banner that declares, "Behold: Children are a gift from the Lord," during the March for Life in Washington on Jan. 18. (Submitted photo)

But what stood out to him even more was seeing "all these banners from different schools and different organizations across the country. There were hundreds of thousands of people there."

"It made me feel like this was something way bigger than my school and my parish," says Michael, who marched along the streets of Washington with about 50 of his fellow students from St. Nicholas School in Ripley County in southern Indiana.

"I wanted to stand up for life and be part of something that unites everybody who wants abortion to be illegal."

"I've never taken part in something that big with mostly Catholic people. It made me know that there are a lot of Christians out there."

Embracing the gift of life

At 17, Austin Jones has volunteered to help single mothers and families who struggle to provide the necessities of life for their children.

He's seen the challenges they face. He's seen the love they give in tough situations.

So he viewed the opportunity to participate in the March for Life as an extension of his support for people who embrace the gift of life.

"I've always felt strongly about the pro-life movement," says Austin, a member of the pro-life group at Roncalli High School in Indianapolis. "Not just from my belief, but it's been proven scientifically that a baby is human at conception."

Austin was part of an Indianapolis South Deanery group of about 50 students who had a whirlwind, 36-hour travel experience to Washington—leaving the evening of Jan. 17 and returning in the early morning of Jan. 19. The group attended three Masses during that time.



Austin Jones



Students McKenzie Liegibel, left, and Savannah Mays of Roncalli High School in Indianapolis show their support for the pro-life movement during the March for Life in Washington on Jan. 18. (Submitted photo)

"It was a lot more people than I expected," Austin says about the march. "There were even schools from Sydney, Australia. It shows that there is more than our country in this fight. It was a good experience to get our voices heard and to have our faith grow."

The essence of the March

It was just before midnight on Wednesday, Jan. 16, when Carol Wagner boarded a bus with the 29 high school students and five other adults bound for Washington from the Indianapolis North Deanery.

A grandmother, Wagner knew the trip to the March for Life would be a challenging one physically, but her spirits soared at that moment because the group had just emerged from participating in eucharistic adoration at St. Lawrence Church in Indianapolis.

She was also buoyed by the opportunity to lead the students into a better understanding of their Catholic faith and a deeper relationship with God—the goal that has motivated her during her nine years of involvement in campus ministry at Bishop Chatard High School.

And that's exactly what happened, she says, for the students who made the journey from the Indianapolis parishes of Christ the King, St. Lawrence, St. Matthew the Apostle and St. Luke the Evangelist.

Still, the most poignant moment for Wagner—a moment that was at the core of the march for her—came when some of the students saw families marching in the parade and then asked her about being a mother.

"With tears in my eyes, I told them that the day our first child was born God told me it wasn't about me anymore," she says. "That was the day I became unselfish. When I held my baby in my arms, it was no longer about me." †



Carol Wagner

According to statistics, 50% of marriages end in divorce.



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

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

Homilies should focus on ‘message of the Scriptures for today’s world’

By Fr. Herbert Weber

There is very little that a priest does each week that requires so much attention as the Sunday homily. The homily can be a source of inspiration, or it can be a stumbling block for many in the congregation. For the one who prepares and delivers it, it may be a unique opportunity for strengthening the call to discipleship.

Like the proverbial person looking at a painting in a museum, people often don’t know a lot about homilies, but they know what they like. What they like can vary, thus causing even more challenge to the homilist. As a priest, I have discovered both the preparation and the delivery of each homily have to be taken seriously.

Every Tuesday morning, I lead a Bible study group right after the morning Mass. These days, about 30 or 35 people show up. We read through the readings of the upcoming Sunday and then discuss both the background of these readings and their message for us today. This becomes the beginning of my weekly homily preparation.

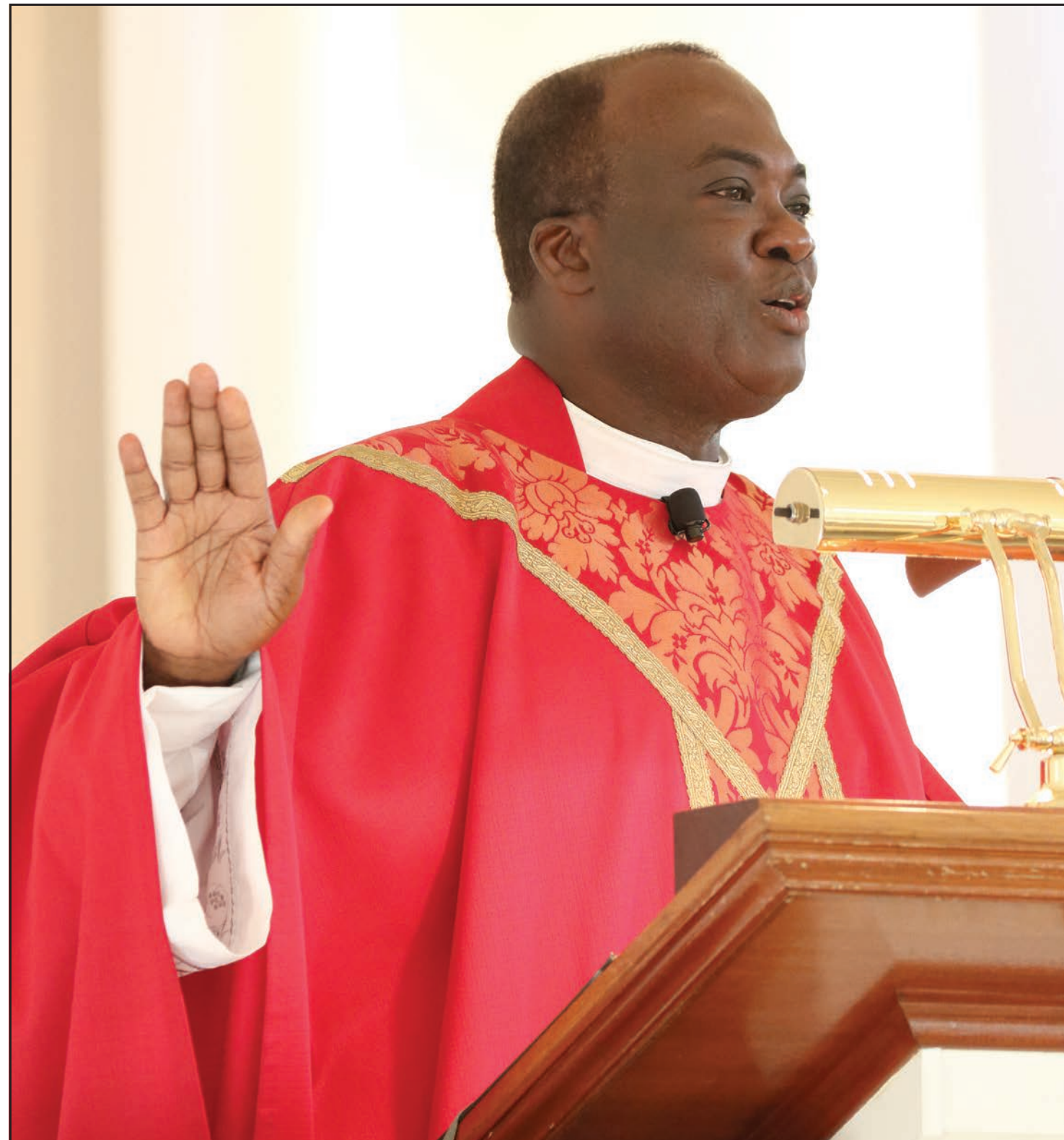
Starting my homily work with a group of faithful laity helps me go beyond the textbook analysis of a passage. Members of the group readily find application for each Scripture passage. I appreciate this bottom-up homily building. Furthermore, the very purpose of a homily becomes clear, namely, to help articulate the message of the Scriptures for today’s world.

These sessions emphasize that a homily is to be a bridge—a bridge between the message of the Scriptures and their meaning in the 21st century. It’s not that the words of Jesus change, but the way they need to be translated into everyday life always has to be renewed.

One of the finest compliments that can be given for a homily is that the preacher helps the listener deal with current issues in his or her life in the light of the Gospel. Often there is the component of hope even when the readings challenge people to overcome dark forces in their lives.

After the Bible study group has given feedback and shared their thoughts on the readings, there are other opportunities each Tuesday to read the readings aloud, specifically at a Tuesday evening meeting of people participating in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults and during the recording of our weekly podcast. Each time the reading of the passages opens up the central theme a little bit more.

Then comes Wednesday! I call it my day off, and it is a day for hiking (or cross-country skiing, depending on the season), working in my garden or inside the house, and reading. I always keep a notebook nearby. Most of the time,



Father Joseph Baidoo delivers a homily during Mass at Queen of the Most Holy Rosary Church in Roosevelt, N.Y. Both the preparation and the delivery of each homily have to be taken seriously. (CNS photo/Gregory A. Shemitz)

prayerful free-floating thoughts allow me to find the right focus for each week’s homily. By Wednesday night, I know where I am heading.

Both Thursday and Friday mornings are times for detailed outlines of the homily. I may be sitting at a local coffee shop where many people come and go, but for me it is a time to put my thoughts, along with examples and images, into an order that may make sense.

The homily, I have learned, has to provide imagery. Sometimes I feel like I am painting verbal pictures; sometimes a small anecdote does the job. Stories can be very helpful, but I rarely use canned stories. Rather, many of my examples come from the many little events recorded in the journals I have kept over the years.

In the midst of all this, I also try out some of my examples on other people, including staff members. Once in a while, I will tell a brief story to someone I trust, asking if it conveys the message I want. And while driving alone, I will recite parts of the homily aloud to see if I can say it as I wish.

Finally, late on Friday or early on Saturday, I type the entire homily, word for word, into my computer. I type as quickly as I can, causing me to look for transitions and coherence of message. It often amazes me how some of my best ideas from the outline no longer fit when I write it out. And some very good stories have ended up on the cutting room floor!

By the time weekend Mass arrives, I no longer need notes. In fact, I can stay true to what I have written, guarding myself against any unhelpful tangents.

Even here, however, the homily partnership with the listeners is not over. Since I often celebrate the Saturday evening Mass, I get feedback from others. Since we stream all of our Masses through

the parish website, I may watch and critique myself after the evening Mass. There have been some helpful changes made between Saturday evening and Sunday morning.

The Sunday homily does not end on Sunday, however.

Through our parish

disciple groups and the discussion questions that I prepare for their weekly meetings, the word of God remains a significant part of people’s lives throughout the subsequent week.

Just as people have reviewed the Gospel passage before coming to Mass, they also continue to internalize it throughout the week. My homily is only a part of the total picture.

(Father Herbert Weber is founding pastor of St. John XXIII Parish in Perrysburg, Ohio. His weekly podcast, as well as videos of his weekend homilies, can be found at 23.church.) †

‘The homily can be a source of inspiration, or it can be a stumbling block for many in the congregation.’



Andy Park looks up a Scripture passage during a Bible study at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Parish Bible study groups can help pastors craft their homilies to meet the needs and answer the questions of their parishioners. (CNS photo/Karen Callaway, Catholic New World)

Guest Column/Susan Israel

Faith-based book club guides participants to holiness and truth

(Editor's note: Book clubs that focus on spiritual reading and discussion can help participants grow in faith. Susan Israel, a member of St. Luke the Evangelist Parish, shares the impact that reading and discussing faith-based works have had on her and the members of the group she is part of, the BMV Book Club.)



The BMV Book Club evolved under unique circumstances, when a friend was loaned a verified-authentic relic of the Blessed Mother. The club, which meets monthly except during the summer months, named itself after the markings on the relic, "Blessed Mary Virgin."

During the meetings, ideas and questions are shared, and members offer their favorite quotes or inspirational pages.

Books are selected based on purposeful recommendations from ongoing spiritual themes. One book, *The Screwtape Letters* by C.S. Lewis, was a suggestion from Msgr. Joseph Schaedel, the pastor of St. Luke the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis, who has led a gathering.

The Screwtape Letters was an inspirational book for club member Molly

Evans. "After reading this, I can see how, today, the evil one is deceiving his way into many entities of our culture," she said. "It's just as timely today as it was when Lewis wrote it."

"One of the most inspirational books we've read, for me, was *He Leadeth Me*" by Jesuit Father Walter Ciszek, she added. "This author brought a clear understanding about redemptive suffering."

The most inspirational book I have read to date was *The Diary of Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska: Divine Mercy in My Soul*. What I loved about it was reading the bold text recorded by St. Faustina as the words of Jesus spoken and heard during her life.

Teresa Schutzman, who started the book club, noted, "Being with women who seek holiness and truth is a huge blessing. Having a book for a basis of spiritual discussion and as a common resource assists all of us to prepare for book club."

Book club member Beth Wehlage agreed, noting, "I think it is a beautiful way to share our faith and make small communities of like-minded, faithful people."

Wehlage added, "Our Church and its future could be in trouble. The younger generation isn't coming to Mass. The

mainstream media and especially social media are relentless in disparaging our faith and our morality."

Like others, Evans said the book club "has helped me create a faith-filled, loving community of like-valued, like-moraled people."

In his 2003 encyclical "*Ecclesia de Eucharistia*" ("Church of the Eucharist"), St. John Paul II affirmed that the Eucharist is the source and summit of our faith.

"We draw strength from the Eucharist and from each other in the book club during troubled times," Schutzman said. "It is good to affirm each other in our loyalty to the traditions and the doctrines of the Catholic faith."

"We are living in troubled times. Being with my sisters in Christ is extremely valuable. Standing up for Jesus Christ socially and even within our families can be trying."

"When we read, study and pray as a group, it affirms what we know is truth and light," Schutzman added, even though some books have opinions or views the group finds contrary to the faith. "Recognizing these opinions generates discussion and challenges us to discuss the true teachings of Jesus Christ and the Church." †

It's All Good/Patti Lamb

Remain connected with our Creator during life's highs and lows

My fifth-grade daughter recently took up a new sport she knows nothing about: volleyball.



She's playing on a CYO team, along with many other girls who've never played the sport or even held a volleyball.

On a recent blustery winter afternoon, CYO leaders graciously organized an opportunity for less experienced teams to play each other. It provided a chance to learn how the sport works before the first game of the season. Our team was beat four consecutive times that afternoon. I've conveniently forgotten the final scores.

The gym was silent with each whistle. The girls gave each other awkward stares as the serves came at them and landed in the space between them. Repeatedly. It wasn't easy to watch.

Then there were failed serves, time-outs for shoe tying and other newbie hiccups.

Although the scoreboard indicated differently, we were not entirely defeated that day.

One of our girls finally made contact with the ball. Even though she shanked it, the crowd cheered.

"That's it," parents yelled.

"Atta, girl!" I heard myself saying, over and over.

Then, several of our girls got their underhanded serves over the net!

Seeing the joy on their faces was priceless. The girls slowly improved with each point won and lost. They high-fived each other for trying. The players gave all team members a nickname to encourage one another.

Next came a moment I won't soon forget.

The momentum picked up and the opposing team hit the ball back to us, and it would have been out. But one of our determined fifth graders appeared to have touched the ball before it hit the ground. It was hard for the line judge to determine, so she asked her: "Did you touch the ball?"

The player took a deep breath and looked at the coach, "Yes, I did." The other team took possession and soon won the game.

In that moment, however, I saw character forming on the court. How easy it would have been to say "no" and get a point to keep the momentum going.

The girls gave their required "good game" hand slap to the opposing team at the end. After talking with the coaches, they returned to their parents when one girl suddenly squealed, "Aleia's auntie brought cookies!"

They were from a delicious bakery I'd never heard of, and they were wrapped festively with our team colors.

Sometimes the learning process can be painful to bear and painful to watch. Whether it's learning a new sport or witnessing your child's first serious disappointment, vulnerability and disappointment often come with uncharted territory.

I'm still learning that myself. I'm navigating how to communicate with a tricky teenager and how to compromise with my spouse during the stressful process of selling a house.

Growing and stretching can be uncomfortable and sometimes feel quite punitive, but I've got to believe that if we remain determined and if we stay connected with our Creator during the highs and lows of any new experience we're facing, those moments will bear fruit and lead to something greater.

You won't always see it. But if you're lucky, you'll get glimpses—perhaps in the form of 11-year-old girls helping each other take off their sweaty knee pads and trading cookies and hugging before leaving the gym. It was a gift to witness new friendships blossoming.

And you'll realize that God meets us where we are, with only what we've got, and in his infinite grace, he makes that enough.

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

Amid the Fray/Greg Erlandson

Children's visit leads to parents' Christmas survival ritual

"Your children like young olive plants around your table" (Ps 128:3).

I have discovered a new post-Christmas parenting ritual that you may not have heard about. You remember Christmas, right? That's the feast where the kids come back home, open the gifts, dine like there's no tomorrow, sleep in like there's no today—all for a week or more.

The way this ritual goes, sometime during the days that follow Christmas, you get together with other empty nesters. You can be anywhere—at the watercooler, on your cellphone, sprawled out exhausted on your bed. You gather with your parent peers, and you marvel about these children you have sired and suckled and launched on their way.

You marvel that they are fully functioning members of society. Independent. Self-reliant. Employed! And you marvel that, when they return to the family manse, they immediately lose all of those social skills.

These children perform great feats out in the world, caring for the sick, teaching the ignorant, building buildings, earning real money. But when they come home, that high-functioning self-reliance goes right out the window.

Their clothes suddenly are overcome by the gravitational pull of the bedroom, bathroom and living room floors and collapse in heaps. Their suitcases are not emptied so much as disemboweled. Glasses and cups wander into bedrooms and cannot find their way out again.

Downstairs, chargers and wires are suddenly protruding from every outlet. Phones and tablets and laptops multiply like mushrooms after a rainstorm. Bodies slump

on Barcaloungers or collapse on carpets, watching a video on their phones and keeping an eye on the football game on TV.

And while you or your spouse, or both you and your spouse, are laboring in the kitchen over turkey or ham or cookies or pancakes or whatever food is in demand, your olive plants are binge watching "Parks and Rec" or the newest Amazon series.

And the beloved offspring whose arrival you looked forward to so ardently forget all that you taught them: that dishes need to be washed and clothes folded and trash taken out. The details of family life you instilled in them for 20 years are erased as if the guys from *Men in Black* showed up and wiped their memories clean.

And in puppy-like innocence, they look up at you when you raise your voice in an appeal for help, enjoying how your face is turning red, but apparently having no understanding of the words that are

See ERLANDSON, page 14

For The Journey/Effie Calderola

'Why I send my children to Catholic school'

When the ground shifts beneath your feet, you fall back on faith.

Sometimes, it's a small earthquake that jolts you from deep slumber. Your spouse may not even stir unless it's a really good slammer.

Other times, you're hauling the laundry up the stairs and it rolls in slowly. Or a desk lurches slightly and your co-workers ask the familiar question, "Was that an earthquake?"

That's life in Alaska. Part of the Ring of Fire that stretches through Japan and up the west coast of the U.S., Alaska is one of the most seismically active places in the world. Consider this: By Dec. 27, 52,146 earthquakes had been recorded in Alaska in 2018, according to the Alaska Earthquake Center at the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

Of course, Alaska is huge, most of those quakes were relatively small, many in unpopulated areas. But during the more than 30 years I lived in Alaska, I can't begin to count the number of tremblors I experienced.

So I felt fortunate to miss the magnitude 7.0 quake that hit on the morning of Nov. 30, 2018. Infrastructure was damaged, a few fires broke out, one public school may remain closed for the year, but the damage was minimized by stringent building codes.

So when I called the little Catholic elementary school, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, that my children had attended in Anchorage, I was curious to see how everyone had weathered the quake. I was doing a story for the archdiocese's *Catholic Anchor* newspaper on Catholic Schools Week, Jan. 27 to Feb. 2.

But I quickly found out that if you wanted to boast about Catholic education, my kids' alma mater's response to the earthquake was the best advertisement.

The quake began just as school was about to open for the day. The before-care students were lined up. Their supervisor quickly had them gather by an inside wall. Aside from broken glass, there was no damage.

After the rolling stopped, frightened little kids regrouped in the hallway.

Staff offered calm. Then, from the church upstairs appeared three priests: the pastor, his assistant and a visiting priest. Along with them was the parish deacon, himself a dad. Four ordained ministers to console 169 terrified kids: a good ratio.

My friend Lisa has taught first grade at St. Elizabeth for years. In an interview, she told me that when school resumed a few days later, she had a lot of very anxious students. One little girl wore her mom's school sweatshirt, the note from home explaining, "She wants to have a part of me with her."

To assuage fears, Lisa went to the church and brought holy water for a bowl on her desk.

"If you feel frightened or worried," she told her class, "just come up and put your fingers in the holy water, bless yourself, and thank God that you are safe and that God is in control."

Some children made several trips to the holy water.

Catholic sacramentals can be powerful, consoling. We are a tactile faith, an earthy faith that uses all of our senses in worship. We consume the body and blood of our Savior. We want the comfort of touch and ritual.

When one of the parents heard about Lisa's holy water, he posted it on Facebook with the notation, "This is why I send my children to Catholic school."

With Catholic Schools Week here, I recalled how much money we spent sending three kids to that school. But how, I pondered, could you possibly put a price tag on that?

(Effie Calderola writes for Catholic News Service.) †

Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time/Msgr. Owen F. Campion

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, February 3, 2019

- Jeremiah 1:4-5, 17-19
- 1 Corinthians 12:31-13:13
- Luke 4:21-30



The Book of Jeremiah is the source of the first reading for Mass this weekend. Regarded as one of the major Hebrew prophets because of the extent of his recorded writings and the brilliance with which he wrote, Jeremiah descended from priests. He was from a small village, Anathoth, only a few miles away from Jerusalem.

As was usual for prophets, Jeremiah was, to say the least, not universally popular among his contemporaries. His prophecies drew sharp rebukes. Critics accused him of blasphemy, a crime that had death as its punishment in the Hebrew code of law. (It was this tradition that centuries later led to some of the demands for the crucifixion of Jesus.)

Despite the rejections and denunciations based on falsehoods, Jeremiah never paused in his prophetic mission of insisting upon faithfulness to God as a personal and national imperative. Furthermore, despite all the criticisms, he never doubted that he was on a mission from God.

When God called Jeremiah to his prophetic mission during the reign of King Josiah, who ruled the Kingdom of Judah from 640 to 609 BC, Jeremiah was told to be prepared for hostile responses to his prophesying.

As its second reading for this weekend, the Church offers us a passage from St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians. It is one of the loveliest and best known sections of the entire corpus of Pauline literature. There are few more beautiful explanations of love or definitions for it in human literature.

Paul reveals what happens when a person embraces the Gospel. Imperfections fade away. Knowledge increases. Maturity is reached. The insecurities and smallness of youth pass.

St. Luke's Gospel is the source of the

last reading. Jesus, as the story states, appears in the synagogue in Nazareth. In earlier verses, not part of this weekend's reading, Jesus stands to read a section of the Book of Isaiah. In this section, Isaiah recalled his own calling to be a prophet and details as to the meaning of this calling. It meant that he was God's spokesman, sent by him to bring liberty to the oppressed, hope to the poor and sight to the blind.

Then, continuing, in the passage read this weekend, Jesus declares that this prophecy has now been fulfilled. In other words, Jesus is the long-awaited spokesman of God.

At first, the audience is impressed, but then Jesus recalled an incident mentioned in the Old Testament in which God showed mercy upon gentiles. This mention of divine favor for anyone outside the chosen people infuriated the audience in the synagogue so much that they tried to murder Jesus. He, of course, escaped.

Reflection

These readings very much put us as humans in our place. It is a place that we do not readily acknowledge. We are quite limited, as a human race, and as individual humans, in our ability to perceive and to judge. Thus it was with the contemporaries of Jeremiah. Thus it was with the people in the synagogue offended by Jesus.

We also occupy another place, a place of intimate bonding with Jesus, of receiving eternal life through him. The mysteries revealed in the liturgies of Christmas, Epiphany and the Lord's Baptism proclaimed that God has not left us to our doom. He supplies what we lack because of our limitation. He gives us strength. He gives us Jesus, the light of the world.

As the Gospel says, no one is beyond God's mercy, but we must do our part. With the help of God's grace, we must choose to love others, with love as pure as that described by Paul.

Salvation is not imposed upon us. We must accept Jesus into our hearts. †

Daily Readings

Monday, February 4

Hebrews 11:32-40
Psalm 31:20-24
Mark 5:1-20

Tuesday, February 5

St. Agatha, virgin and martyr
Hebrews 12:1-4
Psalm 22:26b-28, 30-32
Mark 5:21-43

Wednesday, February 6

St. Paul Miki and companions, martyrs
Hebrews 12:4-7, 11-15
Psalm 103:1-2, 13-14, 17-18a
Mark 6:1-6

Thursday, February 7

Hebrews 12:18-19, 21-24
Psalm 48:2-4, 9-11
Mark 6:7-13

Friday, February 8

St. Jerome Emiliani
St. Josephine Bakhita, virgin
Hebrews 13:1-8
Psalm 27:1, 3, 5, 8b-9c
Mark 6:14-29

Saturday, February 9

Hebrews 13:15-17, 20-21
Psalm 23:1-6
Mark 6:30-34

Sunday, February 10

Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Isaiah 6:1-2a, 3-8
Psalm 138:1-5, 7-8
1 Corinthians 15:1-11
or 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, 11
Luke 5:1-11

Question Corner/Fr. Kenneth Doyle

Blessings for engaged couples are available in the Church's liturgy

QI have heard that the "rite of betrothal" is becoming popular in certain young Catholic circles. What does this rite entail? Was it more common prior to the Second Vatican Council? Would



you recommend that an engaged couple seek out this rite? (Washington)

AThe rite of betrothal was a little-known but long-standing service of prayer in which a couple had their engagement formally blessed by a priest. The 1906 edition of *The Catholic Encyclopedia* notes that the ritual was more common in other countries than in the United States. An English version is still available, as an addition to Father Philip Weller's translation of the 1962 Roman Ritual (although the rite did not form part of that ritual itself.)

There is no prohibition against using that rite today, although it has largely been replaced in the contemporary church by the "Blessing of an Engaged Couple" from the Church's *Book of Blessings*, published in 1989. That newer rite celebrates in prayer a newly engaged couple and asks the Lord to guide them as they prepare for marriage; it can be celebrated by a priest, deacon or lay minister (sometimes by a parent of the future bride or groom).

It includes scriptural readings—frequently from the 13th chapter of Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians ("Love is patient, love is kind ..."). An engagement ring may be blessed during the ceremony, and the celebrant prays:

"Lord God, the source of all love, the wise plan of your providence has brought these young people together. As they prepare themselves for the sacrament of marriage and pray for your grace, grant that, strengthened by your blessing, they may grow in respect for one another and cherish each other with a sincere love."

The Church also offers "The Order of Blessing of an Engaged Couple" in the appendix of the second edition of the *Order of Celebrating Matrimony*.

I would recommend that a couple use one of these newer blessings.

QDuring the eucharistic prayer, our diocese prays by name both for our current bishop and also for our retired bishop. Yet I have never heard our pope

emeritus (Pope Benedict) mentioned during the eucharistic prayer. Is there a reason why he cannot be mentioned along with Pope Francis? (New York)

AIt's a good question, and I understand the sentiment you express. According to liturgical norms of the Church, neither a retired pope nor a retired bishop is to be mentioned at that part of the eucharistic prayer—the reason being that they no longer exercise pastoral authority.

That question was answered in the March 2013 newsletter from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Divine Worship. That article explained that a retired pope or bishop, "while they retain their episcopal dignity and their standing within the order of bishops, they no longer symbolize, express or are responsible for the communion of the local or universal Church."

The same article does permit mention of a retired pope or bishop in the prayer of the faithful or in the "commemoration of the living," which is part of one of the four main versions of the eucharistic prayer.

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

My Journey to God

Birds and Dogs

By Linda Abner

My little dog and I
Go tromping through the snow
He wags his tail at everyone
And everywhere we go.

The birds are singing in the snow
Singing in a winter world
Heedless of adversity
Lovely, lilting song unfurled.

Help me be like birds and dogs
Seeing not tomorrow's face;
But happy for each given day
Abiding in my Maker's grace.



(Linda Abner is a member of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Indianapolis. Photo: A robin perches on a bench at Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House in Indianapolis.)

(Photo by Natalie Hoefler)

Readers may submit prose or poetry for faith column

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

Seasonal reflections also are appreciated. Please include name, address, parish and telephone number with submissions.

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

Rest in peace

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

BARMORE, Mildred E., 93, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, New Albany, Jan. 16. Mother of Judy Douglas and Bob Barmore. Sister of Ruth Davis, Pat Haub and Melvin Baumann. Grandmother of three. Great-grandmother of four.

BAYT, Michael T., 53, Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary, Indianapolis, Jan. 19. Brother of Gina Battiston, Concetta DeFabis, Hazel Lorah, Theresa Mascari, Betty McColgan, Toni Short, Antonia Zunarelli, Mary Anne Hawkins, Jack Hawkins, Mary, Demetrio, Hank, Jack, Phillip and Tony Bayt. Uncle and great-uncle of several.

BOWLES, Charles R., 87, St. Lawrence, Indianapolis, Jan. 15. Husband of Carol Bowles. Father of Chadd, Gregg, Jeff, Matt and Todd Bowles. Grandfather of 12.

DELEHANTY, Michael, 61, St. Pius X, Indianapolis, Jan. 15. Husband of Ann Howard. Father of Caitlan Delehanty. Son of Meryl Delehanty. Brother of Patrick and Tim Delehanty.

FRANCESCON, Quentin B., 90, Christ the King, Indianapolis, Dec. 28. Husband of Mary Lou Francescon. Father of Carol Bennett, Marlene Blackwell, Andrea Broderick, Mark, Quentin and Thomas Francescon. Grandfather of 10. Great-grandfather of one.

GARRIGUS, Christine (Alig), 84, St. Benedict, Terre Haute, Nov. 3. Mother of Deborah Sanchez Bauermeister, Elizabeth, Marlene, James and Robert Sanchez. Stepmother of Rebecca. Sister of Theresa Dowling, Sarah Alig Mauro, Mary Ellen Alig Schmitteckert, George, Matthew and Michael Alig. Grandmother of two.

GEORGESCU, Peter, 83, St. Jude, Indianapolis, Jan. 16. Husband of Ruth Georgescu. Father of Beth, Mark and Steve Georgescu. Brother of Paul Georgescu.

KOETTER, Mary E., 82, St. Louis, Batesville, Jan. 18. Mother of Andy and Mike Koetter. Sister of Louise Koch. Grandmother of five.

KOPP, Warren C., 74, St. Vincent de Paul, Bedford, Jan. 19. Husband of Darlene Kopp. Father of Missy Shelton and David Kopp. Brother of Tim Todd. Grandfather of six. Great-grandfather of four.

MATTINGLY, Anita J. (Wheat), 60, St. Joseph, Corydon, Jan. 11. Wife of Christopher Mattingly. Mother of Roxanne Lenfert and Shawn Mattingly. Sister of Barbara Whitman. Grandmother of two.

NAVARRA, Janett, 94, St. Mary, Greensburg, Jan. 19. Mother of Debra Dinsmore, Cindy, Greg and Mark Navarra. Sister of Mary Weston. Grandmother of 12. Great-grandmother of 11.

NORRIS, Glenn H., 60, Prince of Peace, Madison, Jan. 19. Father of Ray Norris. Son of Beatrice Norris. Brother of Gary and Gregg Norris. Uncle of several.

OTTO, David L., 81, St. Martin of Tours, Martinsville, Jan. 15. Husband of Linda Otto. Father of Teresa Bowman, Sally Lee Webb, David and Paul Copenhaver, Elizabeth and Michael Otto. Brother of Donna Adams and Diana Otto. Grandfather of 13. Great-grandfather of five.

RIGGS, Terry W., 65, St. Joseph, Shelbyville, Jan. 15. Husband of Sheila Riggs. Father of Terilyn Weaver, Kevin Prickett and Casey Riggs. Brother of Kathy Downing, Sue Harding, Cindy Huber, Debbie Montgomery and Rick Riggs. Grandfather of six.

ROSS, Mary P., 100, St. Vincent de Paul, Bedford, Jan. 8. Sister of Frances Fish and Lena Woodward. Aunt of several.

SPRINGMEYER, Vincent J., 84, St. Mary, Greensburg, Jan. 22. Father of Janet Freeman, David and Joe Springmeyer. Brother of Juanita Scheidler, John and Wayne Springmeyer. Grandfather of seven. Great-grandfather of three.

STRATTAN-HOLMES, Pamela J., 72, St. Jude, Indianapolis, Jan. 15. Wife of Jerry Holmes. Mother of Noel Holmes Irwin, Chris and Scott Roberts, Gabriel and Ryan Holmes. Sister of Jan Rahn and Michael Strattan. Grandmother of 23. Great-grandmother of 10.

THOMAS, Dolores L. (Goley), 92, Prince of Peace, Madison, Jan. 20. Mother of Linda Francisco, LuAnn Wise and Diane Young. Grandmother of seven. Great-grandmother of two.

TOTTEN, Charles A., 76, St. Joseph, Crawford County, Jan. 18. Father of Pauline Breedlove, Lisa Panozzo and Thomas Totten. Brother of Arlene Napper, Pam Sibal and Kenneth Totten. Grandfather of 11.

UHLMAN, Harold L., 71, St. Lawrence, Lawrenceburg, Jan. 18. Husband of Patricia Uhlman. Father of Adam, Steve and Troy Uhlman. Brother of Grace Murakamie and John Uhlman. Grandfather of seven. Great-grandfather of six.

WILLIAMS, Mary E., 88, St. Roch, Indianapolis, Jan. 20. Mother of Cathy Henninger, Patty Luttrell, Anne Okerson and John Williams. Grandmother of five. †

Massgoers pray for conversion of hearts as New York expands abortion

NEW YORK (CNS)—On the 46th anniversary of the *Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton* decisions which legalized abortion on demand, more than 500 people gathered at St. Patrick's Cathedral to give thanks for the gift of life and pray for an end to abortion.

The Jan. 22 Mass and a Holy Hour that preceded it were timed to coincide with Gov. Andrew Cuomo's signing of the Reproductive Health Act, legislation that effectively removed restrictions on abortion in New York.

The new act allows abortions to be performed by any licensed medical personnel throughout the duration of the pregnancy "when necessary to protect a patient's life or health."

Auxiliary Bishop Peter J. Byrne of New York was the principal celebrant of the Mass. Auxiliary Bishop James Massa of Brooklyn concelebrated with eight priests. The Sisters of Life organized the cathedral event, which drew a diverse cross section of New Yorkers. The Franciscan Friars of the Renewal provided music and reflection for the Holy Hour.

Father Richard Veras, director of pastoral formation at St. Joseph Seminary in Yonkers, N.Y., was the homilist. He characterized the Mass as one of penance for abortion and said it is important to stay close to "Mary, Our Lady of Mercy, Our Lady of Hope."

He described "the victories of mercy" that brought three prominent people into the pro-life movement. Former abortionist Dr. Bernard Nathanson, former Planned Parenthood clinic director Abby Johnson and Norma McCorvey, the "Jane Roe" of the *Roe v. Wade* legal case were moved by the

faith, charity and mercy of peaceful abortion protesters, he said.

"Our culture doesn't understand mercy. It's from another world. Mercy's name is Jesus," Father Veras said.

The Catholic bishops of New York vigorously opposed the Reproductive Health Act.

Referencing Jesus' words from the cross, Father Veras said, "This is a hard night to say, 'Father forgive them for they know not what they do'" (Lk 23:34).

"The serpent thinks he leaves us in despair, but Jesus comes to us. ... His mercy endures forever," he concluded.

At the Mass, prayers of intercession asked for a conversion of heart for legislators and sought repentance for all laws that fail to protect children in the womb.

As the worshippers filed out of the warmly lit cathedral into the January chill, Mother Agnes Mary Donovan, superior general of the Sisters of Life, told Catholic News Service: "It's tremendous to gather a crowd to pray together on a night like this to remind ourselves of our great purposes and that victory will come in the Lord Jesus."

In a Jan. 22 statement, the New York State Catholic Conference, which represents the bishops in public policy matters, said that with the new law—fully supported by Cuomo, a Catholic—"our beloved state has become a more dangerous one for women and their unborn babies."

"Let us all pray for the conversion of heart for those who celebrate this tragic moment in the history of our state," it said. "And we pray in a special way for the lives that will be lost, and for the women of our state who are made less safe under this law." †



Lunar eclipse

The moon glows red over the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception during a lunar eclipse on Jan. 21 in Wichita, Kan. (CNS photo/Kevin J. Connelly, *Catholic Advance*)

Providence Sister Louise Schroeder served in Catholic schools for 46 years

Providence Sister Louise Schroeder died on Jan. 19 at Lourdes Hall in Saint Mary-of-the-Woods. She was 93.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Jan. 11 at the Church of the Immaculate Conception at the motherhouse in Saint Mary-of-the-Woods. Burial followed at the sisters' cemetery.

Margaret Ann Schroeder was born on Nov. 4, 1925, in Jasper, Ind. She entered the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods on Jan. 5, 1943, and professed final vows on Aug. 15, 1950.

Sister Louise earned a bachelor's degree in education from Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College in St. Mary-of-the-Woods, and a master's degree in education from Indiana State University in Terre Haute.

During her 76 years as a member of the Sisters of Providence, Sister Louise ministered for 46 years as an educator in Catholic schools in California, Illinois and Indiana. Returning to the motherhouse in 1991, she served in the order's transportation office, mailroom and phone room. Beginning in 2016, she dedicated herself entirely to prayer.

In the archdiocese, Sister Louise served in Catholic education at St. Joan of Arc School in Indianapolis from 1959-62 and at the order's motherhouse.

She is survived by her sister, Providence Sister Marie David Schroeder.

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. †

Franciscan Father Leon Reuter ministered as a priest for 56 years

Franciscan Father Leon Reuter, a member of the St. Louis-based Sacred Heart Province of the Order of Friars Minor, died on Dec. 20, 2018, at St. Vincent Hospice in Indianapolis. He was 83.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Dec. 27, 2018, at St. Joseph Church in Shelbyville. Burial followed at the priest's circle at St. Joseph Cemetery in Shelbyville.

Father Leon was born on Feb. 3, 1935, and grew up on his family's farm in Shelby County. He attended St. Joseph School as a child before attending the former St. Joseph Junior High School in Oakbrook, Ill.

He later joined the Franciscans, professing

solemn vows on July 5, 1959, and being ordained a priest on June 13, 1962, in Teutopolis, Ill., by Bishop Henry A. Pinger.

In his 56 years of priestly ministry, Father Leon served in parishes and schools in several states. He regularly returned to Shelbyville, where he assisted in parish ministry. In later years, he lived in retirement at St. Joseph Parish and provided sacramental assistance there and at several other parishes.

Father Leon is survived by sisters Eileen Blatz of Indianapolis, Angela Miner of Shelbyville, Rosann Schonfeld of Fairland, and brothers Alfred Reuter of Shelbyville and Francis Reuter of Indianapolis. †

ERLANDSON

continued from page 12

tumbling out of your mouth. Or if they do, they each look at the other and ask why he or she is not doing her share because after all, "I just emptied the dishwasher three nights ago."

They do have the strength to make pronouncements, however. Like the son who uses the holiday reunion to announce to his very religious mother that there is no God. Or the daughter who observes that milk is an abomination of nature because of how cows are treated and that plastic straws are just evil.

And as this parenting ritual proceeds,

as you gather with your friends, and laugh over each story and sympathize over the utter exhaustion of being a parent in the early 21st century, you remember that maybe you did some of this stuff to your own parents. And you remind each other that you do love these kids, and now that they're gone, you are missing them already. But next time, you all promise, it will be different.

And then you excuse yourself to go mail the phone charger they left behind.

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

Parish opens 'Blessing Box' as a gift to people in need

By John Shaughnessy

Father Doug Marcotte believes "there's no better way to change a community than one small act of kindness at a time."

So the pastor of Most Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish in Jeffersonville embraced a plan from one of the parishioners to help individuals and families in the community when they don't have enough food for their next meal.



Fr. Doug Marcotte

The parishioner's idea involved making a "Blessing Box"—a small, stand-alone structure that would be filled with non-perishable food items and toiletries that anyone in need could access at any time of day.

The plan would also include placing the "Blessing Box" in a discreet setting on the parish grounds so no one would feel uncomfortable taking items from it.

"Everyone thought it was a great idea," says Father Marcotte about the parish council's approval of the plan. "It is an easy way to do one of the corporal works of mercy—to feed the hungry."

"One of the things that's a reality is that there are always people who slip through the cracks. We're not trying to be a food pantry. We're hoping to provide for people

who need a meal for their family today. It's a need we regularly experience."

The "Blessing Box" is one more way to help people in the community in Clark County, a county where 12 percent of the population and nearly 16 percent of children younger than 18 worry about their next meal, the pastor says.

Set up on Jan. 18, the "Blessing Box" was built by a parishioner and has been stocked by donations that include rice, pasta, canned goods, cereal and macaroni and cheese. Personal items such as socks, toothbrushes and deodorant have also been donated.

"People are excited about helping," says Father Marcotte, who notes that people "often feel overwhelmed by the injustices of the world" that are presented in media reports and social media. "I think it's important to let people know there's a way to make a difference. If everyone took responsibility for their neighbors, there wouldn't be as many problems in the world."

Students in the parish school are also excited about contributing to the effort, says Father Marcotte, who is also pastor of St. Augustine Parish in Jeffersonville.

"One of the nice things is that this is a way everyone can be involved. If someone needs help, it's available 24-7. And if someone wants to help, they can do it 24-7."

"The Blessing Box is a reminder to people that there's something we can do." †



Parishioners of all ages at Most Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish in Jeffersonville are excited to help individuals and families in need through the "Blessing Box" on the parish grounds. Hadly, left, and Hays Nickell pose by the stand-alone structure that is filled with non-perishable food items and toiletries that anyone in need can access at any time of day. (Submitted photo)

Bishop tells Covington Catholic High School community he stands with them

COVINGTON, Ky. (CNS)—You could literally hear a pin drop as the faculty, staff and student body of Covington Catholic High School waited in the gym on Jan. 23 for the arrival of Covington Bishop Roger J. Foys.

The bishop was there to address the students about the events that took place on Jan. 18, after the national March for Life in Washington, where a student standing face-to-face with a Native American elder was captured on video and ignited a firestorm on social media—making headlines around the world.

Bob Rowe, principal, opened with a prayer and introduced Bishop Foys, who said: "These last four days have been a living hell for many of you, for your parents, for your relatives, for your friends, and it certainly has been for me."

He told the assembly they are "under all kinds of pressure from a lot of different people, for a lot of different reasons."

The bishop then spoke of how impressive the March for Life had been, especially the Mass celebrated at St. Dominic Church in Washington just before the march when he told the diocesan group of students that when they marched, "they represented what was best about the Church and what was best about the Diocese of Covington; that

we were sending out our best to stand up for life.

"It was a wonderful day, filled with real grace. That night I slept peacefully. It was the last night I've slept peacefully," he added.

The following morning, he said, he and diocesan staff members began to receive calls and e-mails from news stations and people from all over the world commenting about the situation. By the next morning, on Jan. 20, the diocesan website, he said, was receiving more than 200,000 hits per hour and more than 10,000 e-mails per hour—which crashed servers. Staff phones rang persistently for days until voicemail boxes were full with calls from media or those who wished to comment on what happened.

"Soon, my brother bishops began to text me worrying about my welfare and yours. People care about you. People love and care and are concerned about the Church, and they are concerned about you," he told the group.

Bishop Foys also spoke about the current investigation into what happened and called it a "no-win situation."

"We are not going to win," he continued. "No matter what we say, one way or another, there are going to be people who are going to argue about it, people who will try to get into people's

heads and say, 'This is what he meant. This is what they meant when they were doing this and doing that.'

"The best we can do is, first of all, to find out the truth, to find out what really went on, what really happened," Bishop Foys said. "So we do have investigators who are here today—a third-party who are not associated with our diocese, not associated with me or with the school—who are working on this investigation to find out what happened."

He said as Covington's shepherd he has to present the facts not only to the diocese but to the world.

"Not the facts that someone has imagined or the facts that someone thinks or facts that people might determine from seeing a video," he explained. "I encourage all of you, especially the students who were there at the march, to cooperate with the investigators. This is with the permission of your parents."

"We're not going to have you do anything without the permission of your parents. And the teachers and chaperones who were there, I am asking you, too, to be cooperative with this."

He said he hoped the students learned that "perception can become reality."

"A person can be doing something that is absolutely innocent, but if he gives the slightest hint, the slightest perception, that this is something wrong that is what people are going to remember, and then for them that becomes their reality," he added.

"I'm going to ask you, as your bishop, to stay off social media in regard to this situation at least until it is resolved. Because the more you say—pro or con—the more you exacerbate the situation. You have to help, especially yourself, by getting off social media. Right now, anything we say—you or I—anything we say is questioned."

He also addressed the initial joint diocesan and school statement about the incident, and the criticism it received for being too strong.

"In my mind with what we saw and what we heard at the time, we had to say what we said and we meant it. If that behavior is genuine, then we have to condemn it." He added that a second statement was issued on Jan. 22.

"Regardless of what you heard or what you've read or what you think, I am on your side. I want you to come out of this in a positive light," he said.

In the updated diocesan statement, he asked people "to pray that we will arrive at the truth," he said. †

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Outdoor altar recalls popular novena

A portable altar for outdoor use appears in this photo taken at the former Monastery of the Resurrection in Indianapolis. The altar was used by the Carmelites for their annual novena to Our Lady of Mount Carmel, which was held on the monastery grounds each July for nearly 30 years, beginning in 1939. Thousands of Catholics from the Indianapolis area attended the outdoor novena each year. The Carmelites moved in 2008 to the campus of the Sisters of St. Francis in Oldenburg. The former Monastery of the Resurrection is now the site of Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary.

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

In World Youth Day's 'Garden of Forgiveness,' pilgrims find grace

PANAMA CITY (CNS)—As she welcomed World Youth Day pilgrims to the "Garden of Forgiveness," Ileana Madrid of Panama City said she saw volunteering at the park as "an opportunity to show that God loves us a lot."

"[Jesus] is on the cross because he loves us," she said. "His greatest gift is he forgives our sins."

During the "Renew Me" experience, pilgrims were guided through a journey of reflection, confession and celebration.

As pilgrims moved past the "Draw Near" section of the garden, where volunteers welcomed them on Jan. 25, they had a moment to stop in the "Review" area to examine their consciences in front of a statue of Mary, as a volunteer played music on the guitar and sang in Spanish.

Once they were prepared to go to confession, volunteers guided them to a

priest who spoke their language. They titled this stage of the journey "Open," because, "God walks with us to pour out mercy to the open and well-disposed heart," the pilgrim guidebook said.

"It was really cool seeing all the people [and] how they have it for everyone so they can speak in their own language," said Brianna Jacobson, a sophomore at St. Mary's University in Winona, Min.

Kirsten Rotz, the campus minister with the group from St. Mary's, said the experience was "another reminder of the universal Church," because it is the same sacrament as at home.

Though she was nervous to go at first, Daisy Aviles, 20, of Houston, said afterward, "It feels like a relief being able to have confessed."

After the pilgrims received absolution, they walked through the "Rejoice" section, past volunteers cheering "*felicitades!*" (congratulations). Some volunteers gave the pilgrims hugs, and others took pictures with them to celebrate.

"It is a joy to reconcile with the Lord," said Miriam Nieto, a volunteer from Panama City. "Some of them come with a broken heart, [but] after they go to reconciliation, they become a new person. Then we give them a hug to celebrate."

Meanwhile, near the entrance of the park, the Hindu Community of Panama City gave the World Youth Day pilgrims a different type of grace—a free cold bottle of water in the midst of the 90-degree heat.

"We want to be a part of the great event happening in Panama," said Vipul Patel, one of the volunteers from the community, who noted that Pope Francis values harmony, peace and love, and "Hinduism has the same thinking."

"We are giving water, because we know Panama is hot," he said. "We want to give a small gift to the pilgrims [of World Youth Day]." †



Estefania Villamizar Espinoza, a World Youth Day pilgrim from Colombia, in red, receives a hug from a volunteer after confession in Forgiveness Park in Panama City on Jan. 25.

(CNS photo/Jaclyn Lippelmann, Catholic Standard)



Pilgrims pray during Pope Francis' World Youth Day vigil at St. John Paul II Field in Panama City on Jan. 26. (CNS photo/Jaclyn Lippelmann, Catholic Standard)

Like Mary, be 'influencers' for God, pope urges at World Youth Day vigil

PANAMA CITY (CNS)—Although Mary would not be considered an "influencer," like many social media personalities, she still became the most influential woman in history by trusting "in the love and promises of God, the only force capable of making all things new," Pope Francis told young people at the World Youth Day prayer vigil on Jan. 26.

"Are you willing to be an 'influencer' like Mary, who dared to say, 'Let it be done'?" he asked. "Only love makes us more human and fulfilled; everything else is a pleasant but useless placebo."

Despite sweltering temperatures in Panama City, hundreds of thousands of young men and women made their way to St. John Paul II Park on the penultimate day of World Youth Day. They brought sleeping bags and tents, prepared to spend the night at the field—praying the rosary, making new friends—before celebrating Mass with Pope Francis at 8 a.m. on Jan. 27. The pope did not spend the night, but returned later in the evening to the apostolic nunciature.

Arriving in his popemobile, Pope Francis made his way through a sea of colorful flags and banners people waved excitedly.

After the pope took his place on the stage, young adults from Panama and the Palestinian territories gave their experiences of finding faith and hope amid doubt, sickness and addiction.

Erika de Bucktron, a 42-year-old mother of four from Panama, spoke of the fear and difficulties she faced when doctors said her pregnancy was at high risk after diagnosing her unborn daughter with Down syndrome.

Throughout her pregnancy, she said, she and her husband abandoned themselves into God's hands and, after the birth of their daughter, decided "to love her with all our hearts, without making any difference with our other children, who also welcomed her with so much love."

Panamanian Alfredo Martinez Andrión, 20, recalled his experience of falling into a life of drugs and crime. His addiction, he said, ultimately led to a 12-month prison sentence. Despite attempts to reform following his release, he fell back again into drug use.

Ultimately, he found help at a Catholic-run halfway house that helped and encouraged him "in my path toward reintegration."

"I want to tell the young people of the world that God loves us and never abandons us. We are the masters of our own actions, but if we are with God, everything will be OK," Martinez said.

Nirmeen Odeh, a 26-year-old Palestinian woman, gave the final testimony of the evening, recalling that despite being born and raised in the Holy Land, she was apathetic to Christianity, especially coming

"from a place where many of my simple rights are violated."

"I thought it was better to be distant from Christianity so as not to be bothered by others," Odeh said. "With all the struggles and weariness of daily life, I wasn't interested in faith. However, I was curious about the idea of God! It fascinated me."

After participating in World Youth Day 2016 in Krakow, Poland, Odeh said she took a "leap of faith" and began receiving the sacraments.

"And here I am today, three years later in Panama, excitedly praying for him [God] to lead me on my next journey," she said.

After listening to their experiences, Pope Francis addressed the youths, saying that their experiences reflected the risk Mary took to say "yes" to God.

The salvation that God wishes to give his children, he said, isn't a file in the cloud waiting to be downloaded or the latest app, but rather an invitation to be "part of a love story interwoven with our personal stories; it is alive and wants to be born in our midst so that we can bear fruit just as we are, wherever we are and with everyone all around us."

However, Christians can only obtain this salvation by placing their trust in God, especially in moments of uncertainty, doubt and trial.

Recalling the experience given by de Bucktron, the pope said the fears and difficulties the couple faced with the birth of their daughter meant embracing life, even "in accepting things that are not perfect, pure or 'distilled,' yet no less worthy of love," he said.

"Is a disabled or frail person not worthy of love?" the pope asked. "Is a person who happens to be a foreigner, a person who made a mistake, a person ill or in prison, not worthy of love?"

God begins to write his great love story precisely through people's problems, frailties and flaws, the pope said. Just as he embraced Peter after his denials, Jesus helps Christians stand up when they have fallen, the pope added.

Thanking Martinez for his testimony, Pope Francis said the experience of the young Panamanian shows that, without strong roots that are firmly grounded, "it is impossible to grow."

Older people, he continued, must ask themselves what foundations they are providing to help young people grow instead of lobbing criticisms against them.

"It is easy enough to criticize and complain about young people if we are depriving them of the jobs, education and community opportunities they need to take root and to dream of a future," he said.

"Without education, it is difficult to dream of a future; without work, it is very difficult to dream of a future; without a family and community, it is almost impossible to dream of a future." †

