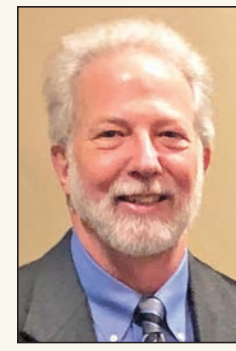




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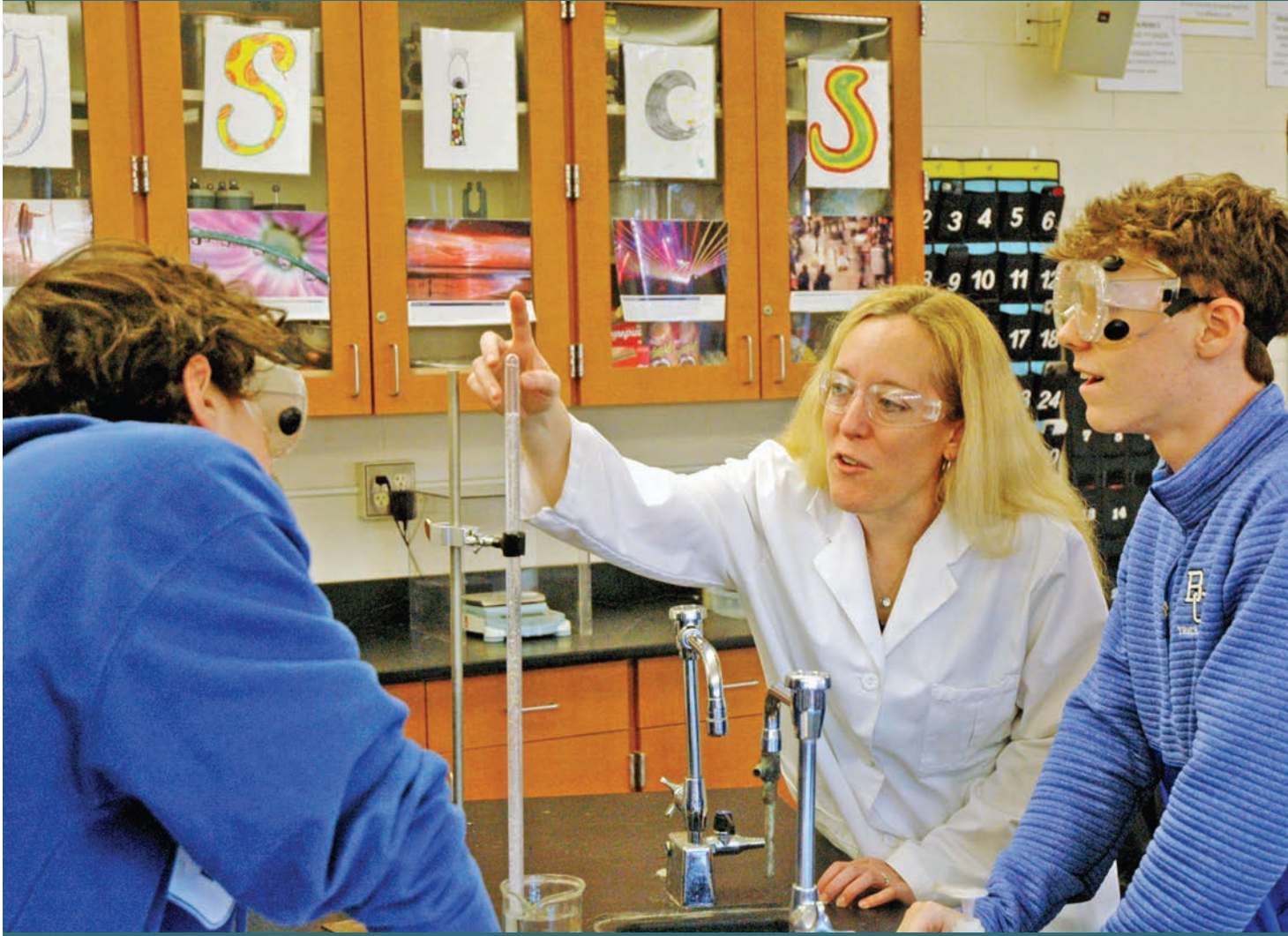
Archdiocesan Catholic helps launch worldwide *Laudato Si'* implementation guide, page 9.

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Saint Theodora Excellence in Education Award winner



Teacher finds right chemistry with God and students in times of darkness and light

By John Shaughnessy

Amanda Horan is in a self-described place of “contentment and happiness,” so it may seem unusual to start this story about her by focusing on what she calls “a dark period” in her life, a time when she was angry at God.

Still, that time offers a defining insight into Horan, who is this year’s recipient of the Saint Theodora Excellence in Education Award, the highest honor given to an educator in the archdiocese.

That dark period is such an important part of her faith journey that she shares the details of it with the students in her chemistry classes at Bishop Chatard High School in Indianapolis—and with other students when she gives her personal testimony during their spiritual retreats.

“Every day, I start class with prayer. And there’s one or two reflections that come up every year that talk about how sometimes when God doesn’t answer your prayers the way you think they should be answered, he’s actually answering

See TEACHER, page 8

Amanda Horan shows the joy that teaching brings her as she works with students during a lab in the Honors Chemistry class she teaches at Bishop Chatard High School in Indianapolis. Horan is this year’s recipient of the Saint Theodora Excellence in Education Award, the highest honor given to an educator in the archdiocese. (Photo by John Shaughnessy)

Medically changing a person’s sex characteristics to those of opposite sex ‘not morally justified,’ say U.S. bishops

WASHINGTON (OSV News)—Surgical, chemical or other interventions that aim “to exchange” a person’s “sex characteristics” for those of the opposite sex “are not morally justified,” said the U.S. bishops’ doctrine committee in a statement released on March 20.



Bishop Daniel E. Flores

“What is of great concern, is the range of technological interventions advocated by many in our society as treatments for what

is termed ‘gender dysphoria’ or ‘gender incongruence,’” it said.

The statement urged “particular care” be taken “to protect children and adolescents, who are still maturing and who are not capable of providing informed consent” for surgical procedures or treatments such as chemical puberty blockers, “which arrest the natural course of puberty and prevent the development of some sex characteristics in the first place.”

Technological advances that enable the cure of “many human maladies” today and “promise to cure many more” have “been a great boon to humanity,” but there are “moral limits to technological manipulation of the human body,” it said.

“The human person, body and soul, man or woman, has a fundamental order and finality whose integrity must be respected,” the committee said. “Because of this order and finality, neither patients nor physicians nor researchers nor any other persons have unlimited rights over the body; they must respect the order and finality inscribed in the embodied person.”

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ (USCCB) Administrative Committee on March 15 approved release

See MEDICAL, page 8

Bill allowing Indiana pharmacists to prescribe birth control raises concerns

By Victoria Arthur

A measure that would allow Indiana pharmacists to prescribe contraceptives is moving through the General Assembly amid serious objections from the Catholic Church and many health care practitioners.



House Bill 1568 would grant pharmacists the authority to prescribe and dispense hormonal contraceptives, including birth control pills and patches to women at least 18 years old who complete a self-screening.

Proponents argue that passage of the legislation would expand access to what they consider necessary health care, while

also providing conscience protection for pharmacists who object on moral grounds to prescribing and dispensing contraceptives. At the same time, the Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC) and others raise concerns regarding both moral and ethical considerations and potential risks to women’s health.

“We have concerns with this bill on a lot of levels,” said Angela Espada, executive director of the ICC, the public policy voice of the Catholic Church in Indiana. “We have objections from Catholic social teaching about contraception, along with serious concerns about a woman’s health. Pharmacists are highly educated and skilled professionals,

but they wouldn’t necessarily know a woman’s medical or family history or how these hormones would affect her. This is clearly not the same as having a personal relationship with a doctor.”

Currently in Indiana, only physicians can prescribe contraceptives. If House Bill 1568 passes the General Assembly and becomes law, Indiana would join approximately half of the states in extending prescribing rights for those products to licensed pharmacists.

The bill, authored by Rep. Elizabeth Rowray (R-Yorktown), passed the House 86-12 and at press time was scheduled for

See ICC, page 2



Angela Espada



'The Church is opposed to this legislation due to the risk to women's health, unborn life, and the false narrative behind this bill: that increased access to contraception leads to fewer abortions.'

—Alexander Mingus, associate director of the Indiana Catholic Conference

ICC

continued from page 1

a March 22 hearing in the Senate Health and Provider Services committee. The ICC has been meeting with lawmakers to request adding language to the bill requiring pharmacists to also provide information about Natural Family Planning (NFP) during their discussions with patients if the measure becomes law.

"We are working very hard to get information about NFP—natural, non-invasive, non-pharmaceutical methods—included in this legislation," Espada said. "If pharmacists can prescribe contraceptives, they can also give out information about NFP."

NFP, which is fully supported by the Catholic Church and highly effective when used correctly, encompasses several scientific methods that track a couple's fertility to help achieve or postpone pregnancy. In discussions with lawmakers, the ICC is also advocating for insurance coverage of NFP training and materials.

Kelli Lovell, a trained NFP practitioner who is also a licensed pharmacist, brings a unique perspective to the legislation before the General Assembly.

Lovell has worked as a pharmacist in Evansville, Ind., for 16 years and has witnessed growth in her profession, including the authority for pharmacists in Indiana to now prescribe diabetic testing supplies and smoking cessation products. But she has significant concerns about House Bill 1568 and its implications.

"I'm pro-pharmacist prescriptive authority in the appropriate circumstances," said Lovell, a graduate of the Purdue University College of Pharmacy. "This is not what I think is an appropriate circumstance. That's not because I don't think that pharmacists can do it, but because I don't think they should do it."

"I don't think it gives the right message

to the public that this medication is so benign and so safe that you can have somebody who doesn't even know you prescribe it to you in a five-minute counseling session."

Lovell says she is grateful that House Bill 1568 includes a conscience protection clause for pharmacists who have moral objections to prescribing and dispensing contraceptives. Still, she acknowledges the tension that this legislation poses for a practicing Catholic who also has the utmost respect for professionals in her chosen field.

"The biggest conundrum is being put in this position where you feel like you have to go against the advancement of your profession because of a moral standard, and I'm going to go with the moral standard every time," said Lovell, a member of Good Shepherd Parish in Evansville (Diocese of Evansville).

A trained practitioner in both the Creighton and Marquette models of NFP, Lovell also points to the well-established medical risks of artificial contraception, including the potential for blood clots and other side effects.

"Women's bodies are not meant to be under that level of steroid-based synthetic hormone," she said. "Simply put, contraceptives are not good for women. They go against natural law."

"The contraceptive pill when used as a contraceptive is the only time in medicine that we would prescribe a medication to disable a functioning system of the body in the absence of disease."

Dr. Andrew Mullally, a Catholic physician who operates a pro-life family practice in Fort Wayne, Ind., shares numerous concerns about both the medical and ethical ramifications of House Bill 1568.

"The lack of medical supervision is concerning just because patients do not appreciate the intricacies of many medications, and birth control in particular," Mullally said. "Birth control definitely poses risks for blood clots. It



Public Schedule of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

March 25–April 4, 2023

March 25 – 9 a.m.
Day of Prayer with Young Adult Discerners at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, Indianapolis

March 26 – 1 p.m.
Mass and dialogue at Plainfield Correctional Facility, Plainfield

March 28 – 1 p.m.
Council of Priests meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis

March 29 – 10 a.m.
Visit to St. Louis School, Batesville

March 30 – 10 a.m.
Leadership Team meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center

March 30 – 3 p.m.
Finance Council meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center

April 1 – 11 a.m.
Confirmation for youths of St. Mary Parish, Greensburg; and St. Catherine of Siena Parish, Decatur County; at St. Mary Church

April 1 – 3 p.m.
Confirmation for the youths of Holy Family Parish, Oldenburg at Holy Family Church

April 2 – 10 a.m.
Palm Sunday Mass at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral

April 4 – 2 p.m.
Chrism Mass at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral followed by reception at Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center

April 4 – 6 p.m.
Dinner with priests at Valle Vista Country Club, Greenwood

also can interact with other medications. No one would be watching for this, and it would likely get missed at other medical appointments because it's not something that was prescribed by the patient's physician."

Mullally noted similar objections to the legislation raised by the Indiana State Medical Association (ISMA).

"It's clearly bad just from a secular medical perspective," said Mullally, a member of both the ISMA and the Catholic Medical Association.

Supporters of the legislation view it as a means of serving a larger number of women in Indiana, especially in smaller communities with limited access to primary care doctors. They also argue that it would reduce the number of unwanted pregnancies, particularly following last year's legislation restricting abortion in the state.

But the ICC offers a much different view.

"The Church is opposed to this legislation due to the risk to women's health, unborn life and the false narrative behind this bill: that increased access to

contraception leads to fewer abortions," said Alexander Mingus, associate director of the ICC.

Mingus points to extensive Catholic social teaching on the subject, particularly St. Pope John Paul II's groundbreaking 1995 encyclical "*Evangelium Vitae*" ("The Gospel of Life"). This document, arguably the best-known and most-quoted affirmation of the Catholic Church's moral teaching on the sanctity of life, includes numerous arguments against artificial contraception.

To follow this and other priority legislation of the ICC, visit www.indianacc.org. This website includes access to ICAN, the Indiana Catholic Action Network, which offers the Church's position on key issues. Those who sign up for ICAN receive alerts on legislation moving forward and ways to contact their elected representatives.

(Victoria Arthur, a member of St. Therese of the Infant Jesus [Little Flower] Parish in Indianapolis, is a correspondent for The Criterion.) †

Seeking stories about the bonds between high school students and their parents

The stories of high school athletes—and other students who participate in other extracurricular activities—across the archdiocese are overwhelmingly intertwined with the stories of the parents who have supported their sons and daughters at every turn.

If any current high school student has a special story of the way a parent

has influenced their high school sports career or other extracurricular activity, *The Criterion* is inviting you to share your story with us.

If you'd like to share your story, please send an e-mail to John Shaughnessy at jshaughnessy@archindy.org or call him at 317-236-1554. †

Do you have a favorite Bible verse or a favorite quote that guides your life?

Do you have a favorite Bible verse or a favorite quote that serves as a touchstone for you—that helps guide you in your life, that centers you in your relationship with other people, or that reminds you of the presence of Christ in your life?

The Criterion is inviting you, our readers, to share your favorite Bible verse or a favorite quote with us, hoping that you will also share why that verse or quote has such a special meaning for you.

Also, while it's not necessary, if there's a story of the special meaning of your quote that you'd like to share, that would be great to hear, too.

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

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Mercy sister who is lifelong advocate for developmentally disabled to receive Notre Dame's Laetare Medal

SOUTH BEND, Ind. (OSV News)—Mercy Sister Rosemary Connelly, former executive director of the Misericordia Home for those with intellectual and developmental disabilities and a lifelong advocate for such individuals, will receive the University of Notre Dame's 2023 Laetare Medal, the oldest and most prestigious honor given to American Catholics.

It will be presented at the university's 178th commencement ceremony on May 21 at Notre Dame Stadium.

The announcement was made on March 19, Laetare Sunday, which is the fourth Sunday of Lent. The medal has been given to Catholic leaders since 1883.

"With her characteristic tenacity, grace and genius, Sister Rosemary has ensured that the residents of Misericordia—as wonderful children of God—have the quality of life and opportunities they deserve," said Holy Cross Father John Jenkins, president of Notre Dame. "We are inspired by her vision, her leadership and her compassion and are honored to bestow the Laetare Medal on her."

When Sister Rosemary came to Misericordia as executive director in 1969, the nonprofit on Chicago's south side provided a home and custodial care for children with disabilities from birth to age 6. Though the children were well cared for, they did not have access to educational and enrichment activities—as was typical at the time.

Sister Rosemary, however, believed the children were capable of more and deserved a higher quality of life. She began seeking out special education programming for them and when she found that nothing yet existed, she developed her own.

Today, the Misericordia community has expanded to include a 37-acre campus

on Chicago's north side serving more than 600 children and adult residents, with more than 1,200 staff members and thousands of volunteers, as well as an outreach program that offers assistance to more than 140 additional families.

"It is considered a benchmark in compassionate care for individuals with disabilities, offering a wide range of vocational training and educational, social, recreational, medical and therapy opportunities," said the Notre Dame news release on the 2023 Laetare Medal recipient.

Sister Rosemary said she has felt God's presence at every turn.

"I always felt that God was with me, that God really took care of me. He even spoiled me by always making sure the right people were in the right place at the right time," she said in a statement. "And I don't think that's accidental. The Lord has been more than gracious to me. So I'm thankful to God that we have a Misericordia. It's a place where the children are respected and loved and the staff is very committed to them."

A native Chicagoan, Sister Rosemary was one of six children born to Irish immigrant parents. She joined the Sisters of Mercy at age 19 and taught in several Chicago archdiocesan schools while continuing to pursue her own education. She earned a bachelor's degree in social science from St. Xavier University in 1959, a master's in sociology from St. Louis University in 1966 and a master's in social work from Loyola University Chicago in 1969.

Sister Rosemary has received nine honorary degrees—including one from Notre Dame in 1997—and numerous awards and honors, including the Order of Lincoln Medallion, Illinois' highest award for lifelong outstanding achievements;



'The Lord has been more than gracious to me. So I'm thankful to God that we have a Misericordia. It's a place where the children are respected and loved and the staff is very committed to them.'

—Mercy Sister Rosemary Connelly

the Illinois Entrepreneur of the Year Award from Ernst & Young; and a Caring Institute award, naming her one of the most caring people in America.

Now 92, she has recently transitioned from her role as executive director to chairwoman of the board of the Misericordia Foundation, which focuses on fundraising efforts, and continues to spend as much time as she can working with the Misericordia community.

"What motivates me? I think the fact that I'm surrounded by wonderful people, including the staff and especially the residents here," Sister Rosemary said. "They challenge us to be our best. They're loving. They live life beautifully. And they can be models for us all."

The Laetare (pronounced lay-TAH-ray) Medal is so named because its recipient is announced each year in celebration of Laetare Sunday, the Fourth Sunday of Lent on the Church calendar. "Laetare," the Latin word for "rejoice," is the first word in the entrance antiphon of the Mass that Sunday, which ritually anticipates the celebration of Easter. The medal bears the Latin inscription, "*Magna est veritas et praevalabit*" ("Truth is mighty, and it shall prevail").

Established at Notre Dame in 1883, the Laetare Medal was conceived as an American counterpart of the Golden Rose, a papal honor that antedates the 11th century. The medal has been awarded annually at Notre Dame to a Catholic "whose genius has ennobled the arts and sciences, illustrated the ideals of the Church and enriched the heritage of humanity."

Previous recipients of the Laetare Medal include Civil War Gen. William Rosecrans, operatic tenor John McCormack, President John F. Kennedy, Catholic Worker co-founder Dorothy Day, novelist Walker Percy, then-Vice President Joe Biden and House Speaker John Boehner (awarded jointly), Cardinal Joseph Bernardin, labor activist Msgr. George G. Higgins, jazz composer Dave Brubeck, singer Aaron Neville and actor Martin Sheen.

The three most recent recipients are Kathleen McChesney, a former FBI executive assistant director and the first person to lead the U.S. bishops' Office of Child and Youth Protection (2020); Carla Harris, a celebrated Gospel singer and a leading U.S. financial executive (2021); and Sharon Lavigne, an environmental justice activist (2022). †

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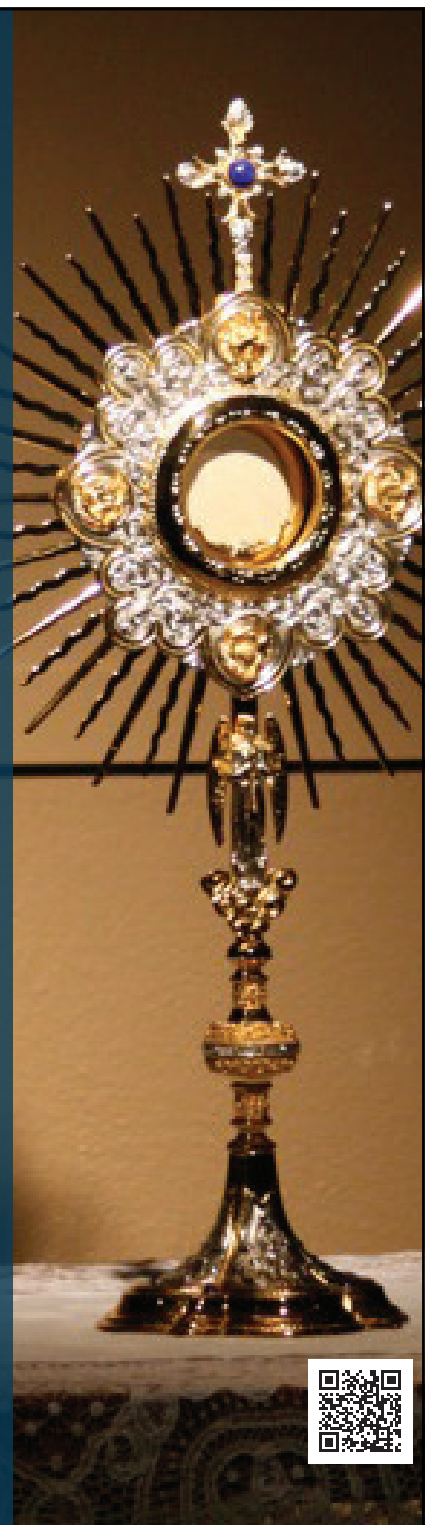
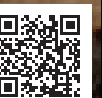
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to share HOPE.

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than that which we find
in the Eucharist.

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with the word of life
and the bread from heaven.

UNITED CATHOLIC APPEAL





Archbishop Charles C. Thompson, *Publisher*
Mike Krokos, *Editor*

John F. Fink, *Editor Emeritus*

Editorial



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson is pictured with students and administrators from Father Thomas Scecina Memorial High School in Indianapolis after the Catholic School Week Mass on Feb. 1 at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis. (Photo by John Shaughnessy)

Why do Catholic schools succeed?

Every independent research study on the effectiveness of Catholic education in the United States has shown conclusively that Catholic schools make a difference in the lives of students and families, the Church, and society as a whole. Catholic schools are a recognized success, especially in their mission to transform the lives of individuals and communities.

Many of the Catholic schools in central and southern Indiana are thriving. This is the result of several factors, including strong support from parish school commissions, parishes and the archdiocese, the excellent education provided by teachers and staff, parents who are willing to make sacrifices for their children, elected officials and donors who recognize the importance of Catholic schools. Together, these individuals and organizations are making a real difference.

Another key is the Indiana Choice Scholarship Program—also known as the “voucher” or “choice” program—where state funds help make Catholic schools a reachable reality for nearly all families.

Unfortunately, since the 1970s, Catholic school enrollment has declined nationwide. There are hopeful signs (post-pandemic) of an increase in enrollment—especially at the preschool and kindergarten levels—but the decades-long decline has taken a toll on parishes, dioceses and religious communities that sponsor Catholic schools. What is the root cause of this problem. How can it be solved?

Those who have made “growing Catholic schools” their life’s work offer the following insights:

- When sponsoring organizations begin to view their schools as burdens rather than blessings, they are less likely to seek creative solutions to the challenges facing Catholic education today.
- When parents believe that there is no way they can afford to send their children to Catholic schools, they give up. Fortunately, the opposite is also true.
- When schools are recognized as the blessing they are, and when parents see that they can afford a Catholic education, miracles of hope and transformation happen.

What constitutes a school’s Catholic identity? What are the essential elements of a transformational Catholic education?

A Catholic school must witness in a public way to the person of Jesus Christ and to his message of evangelization.

Catholic schools exist to proclaim the

Gospel. Everything in the school—its curriculum, its liturgies and retreats, its sports activities, and its service programs—should provide students (also staff and families) with opportunities to encounter the person of Jesus Christ, to become his disciples and to proclaim to the whole world our salvation in him.

The most important element in a school’s Catholic identity is its commitment to make Christ present to everyone who attends the school or who comes into contact with it.

Secondly, a Catholic school must teach the Catholic faith (catechesis). The mystery of God, as revealed to us by the life, death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, is the primary content of a Catholic education. Everything else that is taught—as part of a genuine commitment to educational excellence—is an elaboration on the wonders of God’s creation and the history of our salvation.

All of the academic disciplines reveal in partial and preliminary ways the working of the Holy Spirit in our world from the beginning of time. The more we learn about math and science, diverse languages and cultures, and the ups and downs of world history and the history of our local communities, the more we discover that the teachings of our Church, as contained in Scripture and in our Catholic tradition, represent the truth, the way things really are. Outstanding Catholic schools are vibrant learning environments that promote curiosity and an openness to new ways of living and learning.

Finally, in order to be truly Catholic, a school must teach its students and all members of the school community to reach out to others and accept responsibility for the well-being of all God’s creation (social justice). Catholic schools do not exist for their own sakes. They exist for the good of their students and the communities they serve.

Frequently, a Catholic school is an “anchor” in its neighborhood, a source of stability and moral integrity. A school that is truly Catholic serves its neighborhood and community because of its recognition that we cannot love God as we should unless we also love our neighbor. Social justice is a constitutive element of the Gospel. That means it must also be a constitutive element of the curriculum and the daily life of every Catholic school.

With the help of God’s grace, may all our Catholic schools in the archdiocese continue to transform hearts and lives.

—Daniel Conway

Reflection/Bishop Robert P. Reed, OSV News

‘Annunciation’: Salvation and the words of the air

Perhaps you’re like me: I just love Christmas and though the liturgical calendar moves on as it must, I’m always sad to see it go.

Like the reformed Ebenezer Scrooge, I try to hang on to it for as long as I can—the birth of the humble baby, told to the astonished shepherds by angels—not just ordinary angels, mind you, but herald angels—messengers charged to announce things from on high, with a big, celestial noise.

That’s what the word “annunciation” is all about. It’s the big announcement, and not about the latest deal on Amazon with free shipping, but about something bigger than our imaginings—information dropped from heaven to Earth, for our good. For our delight. For our salvation.

In March, with Christmas now feeling well-behind us, we nevertheless touch it again, for on the 25th of this month we observe the Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord as recorded in the Gospel of St. Luke.

The “announcement” is one made by the archangel Gabriel to a young woman of Nazareth—Mary, who is full of grace.

Motivated by that grace, she generously acquiesced, permitting this announcement of God’s will to change her life, and that of the entire human family, for history has been hinged upon her “*fiat*,” her “yes,” just as our salvation hinges upon our consent to being saved. In that, Mary has modeled for us the means of uttering a trusting “yes” even when it comes with a hint of fear, or a breath of doubt.

“Behold,” she said, “I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word” (Lk 1:38).

Mary was, no doubt, overwhelmed by all of this. I’m certain that these annunciations—both Gabriel’s and her own—had an immediate impact on her faith, her life, her relationship to her family and to Joseph. Despite all that, her holy response, simple and direct, changed

the history and trajectory of humankind, and of her whole being. She became the new Eve who saved us from original sin—who helped us become the children of light once more. By the working of the Holy Spirit, God enlarged our humanity without diminishing his divinity.

In the Church of the Annunciation, built in Nazareth, over the place where this history-altering encounter occurred, the inscription on the marble altar explains the mystery: “*Verbum caro hic factum est.*” That is, “Right HERE, the Word became flesh.”

In that instant of annunciation—much quieter than the angel song of Christmas—the waiting was over; the cries and hopes of God’s chosen people through centuries were fulfilled. Sacred was that child conceived in Mary’s womb, a divine person, wrapped in our human nature. Similarly sacred is every human person from the moment of conception.

Through these combined annunciations of March and December, God gave us the greatest weapon of all in our ultimate battle against Satan. He gave us his only Son, the Word of God made flesh, and our Blessed Mother, who loves us so much, and the Church that is Christ’s body. Let’s not forget that Mary has been taken up, body and soul to heaven. She literally has the ear of the One who saves.

And so, this month—today, and every day—I make this solemn announcement to you: Jesus is with us, and will be until the end of the age, as he has promised. He has fulfilled the will of his Father, gathering disciples and friends, offering us the sacraments—pre-eminently his living body and blood in the holy Eucharist, which he commended to us on the night when he made his own “*fiat*” in Gethsemane. He freely suffered and died a cruel death and is risen—a reality we will celebrate soon and very soon.

O Mary, Mother of the Word incarnate, pray for us.

(Bishop Robert P. Reed is an auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Boston, pastor of St. Patrick/Sacred Heart parishes in Watertown, Mass., and president of the CatholicTV network.) †

Letter to the Editor

Reader: Editorial on Pope Francis reminds us we must help, love and forgive others

Thank you to Daniel Conway for his editorial, “After 10 years, what do we know about Pope Francis?” in the March 10 issue of *The Criterion*.

As the editorial pointed out, Pope Francis described himself as both a sinner and “a man of the Church.”

I smiled as Conway mentioned the Holy Father noting that we all need to “get off our comfortable couches” and help with the Church in its role as a “field hospital,” caring for the wounded in body, mind and spirit. All I could think of in response was the amount of time we all spend on social media giving opinions on minutia and posting selfies.

As I understand the various judgment scenes described by Jesus in the Bible, selfies, followers, entertainment news, sports statistics and many other things are never mentioned as qualifiers for those who seek entrance into heaven; only whether a person helped, loved and forgave others. To do so to them, Jesus said, is like doing it to him.

Thank you, Mr. Conway, for the editorial. Thank you, Pope Francis. And God bless you as you continue to lead us in the right direction.

Sonny Shanks
Corydon

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.

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 access to e-mail may send letters to criterion@archindy.org. †

ARCHBISHOP/ARZOBISPO CHARLES C. THOMPSON



Christ the Cornerstone

Mary's 'yes' changes the course of history—and our lives

Tomorrow, Saturday, March 25, is the Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord, a day of rejoicing that interrupts the penitential season of Lent to celebrate the announcement of God's saving action through Mary, and her willing acceptance of God's plan for her. "Hail, Mary, full of grace," we pray, echoing the greeting of the archangel Gabriel. "The Lord is with you, and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus."

The Gospel reading for this solemn feast is the familiar story told by St. Luke of Mary's "*fiat*," her acceptance of God's Word, which changed the course of human history. Because Mary, a humble young woman in an obscure little town far removed from the seats of power and influence, said "yes" to God's mysterious and frightening invitation, the redemptive power of divine love was unleashed in the world, and God himself became a man.

Mary's "yes" was not an impulsive reaction. She had prepared for this moment her whole life and, in fact, the Jews, the chosen people of God, had been preparing for this moment throughout their entire history.

Mary's humility, her prayerfulness

and her eagerness to do whatever the Lord commanded were the results of her total immersion into the spirituality of Judaism. In Mary, the daughter of Zion, the hopes and dreams of the people of Israel were fulfilled. Her openness to the mystery of God's love incarnate made it possible for her son, Jesus, to redeem all humanity.

The first reading for the Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord (Is 7:10-14; 8:10) contains the strange, apparently contradictory prophecy: The virgin shall be with child, and bear a son, and shall name him Emmanuel, which means "God is with us!" (Is 7:14) Mary, a virgin, conceives a son by the power of the Holy Spirit and, as a result, God literally becomes one with us. In him, the enigmatic prophecy is fulfilled—not just symbolically but literally. God is with us as a human being, and his self-sacrificing love is the redemptive power that saves us from the destructive effects of sin and death.

The second reading for the Annunciation (Heb 10:4-10) discloses the only form of sacrificial offering that is acceptable to God:

Brothers and sisters: It is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats take

away sins. For this reason, when Christ came into the world, he said: "Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me; in holocausts and sin offerings you took no delight. Then I said, 'As is written of me in the scroll, behold, I come to do your will, O God'" (Heb 10:4-7).

Willingness to do God's will is what is required of us if we wish to repent of our sins and become one with the God, who made us for union with himself and with all our sisters and brothers. Mary's "*fiat*" is the model for all of us because it anticipates her Son's words in the Garden of Gethsemane: "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but yours be done" (Lk 22:42).

What we will celebrate tomorrow is God's generous, self-sacrificing love, which became God incarnate the moment Mary said, "yes." Our Catholic faith teaches us that God gives us a free choice. We can say "yes" like Mary, or we can say "no." God will not force us to do what he knows is in our own best interests. He gives us the freedom to follow our own path, come what may.

Lent is the liturgical season that

tries to help us discern the right path and to make choices that are good for us, in conformity with God's will. The disciplines of prayer, fasting and almsgiving are all designed to help us prepare for those moments when we will have to make life-changing decisions. How will we respond? Will we say, "Yes, be it done to me according to your word?" Or "not my will but yours be done"? Or will we stubbornly insist on doing things "my way"?

The holy season of Lent gives us many opportunities to practice the kind of self-sacrificing love that authentic Christian discipleship demands. Let's take advantage of this penitential time to sharpen our ability to say "no" to those things that lead us away from God's will for us.

Remember that St. Luke's Gospel tells us that Mary was "greatly troubled" when she first heard the words spoken by God's messenger. "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God" (Lk 1:30), the angel assures her. Let's take these words of consolation to heart.

Mary's "yes" has paved the way for us. Her generous acceptance of God's will gives us confidence and hope. †



Cristo, la piedra angular

El 'sí' de María cambia el curso de la historia y de nuestras vidas

Mañana, sábado 25 de marzo, es la solemnidad de la Anunciación del Señor, día de júbilo que interrumpe el tiempo penitencial de la Cuaresma para celebrar el anuncio del acto salvador de Dios por medio de María, y su aceptación voluntaria del plan de Dios para ella. "Dios te salve, María, llena eres de gracia," rezamos, haciéndonos eco del saludo del arcángel Gabriel. "Bendita eres entre todas las mujeres y bendito es el fruto de tu vientre, Jesús."

La lectura evangélica de esta solemne fiesta es la conocida historia narrada por san Lucas del *fiat* de María, su aceptación de la Palabra de Dios, que cambió el curso de la historia de la humanidad. Porque María, una humilde joven de un recóndito pueblecito alejado de las sedes del poder y la influencia, dijo "sí" a la misteriosa y aterradora invitación de Dios, se desató en el mundo el poder redentor del Amor Divino, y Dios mismo se hizo hombre.

El "sí" de María no fue una reacción impulsiva sino que se había preparado para este momento toda su vida y, de hecho, los judíos, el Pueblo Elegido de Dios, también se habían estado preparando para este momento a lo largo de toda su historia.

La humildad de María, su actitud

piadosa y su afán por hacer todo lo que el Señor le ordenaba fueron el resultado de su inmersión total en la espiritualidad del judaísmo. En María, la hija de Sión, se cumplieron las esperanzas y los sueños del pueblo de Israel. Su apertura al misterio del Amor de Dios encarnado hizo posible que su hijo, Jesús, redimiera a toda la humanidad.

La primera lectura de la solemnidad de la Anunciación del Señor (Is 7:10-14; 8:10) contiene una profecía extraña y aparentemente contradictoria: la virgen concebirá un hijo, dará a luz y le pondrá por nombre Emmanuel que significa "Dios con nosotros" (Is 7:14). Por el poder del Espíritu Santo, María, una joven virgen, concibe un hijo y como resultado, Dios en verdad está con nosotros. En él se cumple la enigmática profecía, no solo de manera simbólica sino en la realidad. Dios está con nosotros al convertirse en ser humano y su amor sacrificial es el poder redentor que nos salva del efecto destructivo del pecado y de la muerte.

La segunda lectura de la Anunciación (Hb 10:4-10) revela la única forma de ofrenda sacrificial aceptable para Dios:

Porque la sangre de los toros y de los machos cabríos no puede quitar los pecados. Por eso, al entrar en

el mundo, Cristo dijo: "No quieres sacrificio y ofrenda, pero me has dado un cuerpo. No te agradan los holocaustos ni las expiaciones por el pecado. Entonces dije: 'Mi Dios, aquí estoy para hacer tu voluntad, como está escrito de mí en el libro'" (Heb 10:4-7).

La disposición a cumplir la voluntad de Dios es lo que se requiere de nosotros si queremos arrepentirnos de nuestros pecados y llegar a ser uno con el Dios, que nos hizo para la unión con Él y con todos nuestros hermanos y hermanas. El *fiat* de María es el modelo para todos nosotros, porque anticipa las palabras de su Hijo en el huerto de Getsemaní: "Padre, si quieres, haz que pase de mí esta copa; pero que no se haga mi voluntad, sino la tuya" (Lc 22:42).

Lo que celebraremos mañana es el amor generoso y abnegado de Dios, que se encarnó en el momento en que María dijo "sí." Nuestra fe católica nos enseña que Dios nos da libertad de elección. Podemos decir "sí" como María, o podemos decir "no." Dios no nos obliga a hacer lo que sabe que nos conviene sino que nos da la libertad de seguir nuestro propio camino, pase lo que pase.

La Cuaresma es el tiempo litúrgico que trata de ayudarnos a discernir el

camino correcto y a tomar decisiones que nos hagan bien, de conformidad con la voluntad de Dios. Las disciplinas de la oración, el ayuno y la limosna están diseñadas para ayudarnos a prepararnos para esos momentos en los que tendremos que tomar decisiones que nos cambiarán la vida. ¿Cómo responderemos? ¿Diremos: "Sí, hágase en mí según tu Palabra"? ¿O tal vez "que no se haga mi voluntad, sino la tuya"? ¿O insistiremos obstinadamente en hacer las cosas "a mi manera"?

El tiempo santo de la Cuaresma nos ofrece muchas oportunidades para practicar el tipo de amor abnegado que exige el auténtico discipulado cristiano. Aprovechemos este tiempo penitencial para agudizar nuestra capacidad de decir "no" a aquello que nos aleja de la voluntad de Dios para nosotros.

Recuerden que el Evangelio de san Lucas nos dice que María "se turbó mucho" cuando oyó por primera vez las palabras pronunciadas por el mensajero de Dios. El ángel la calma diciéndole: "María, no temas. Dios te ha concedido su gracia" (Lc 1:30). Tomémonos en serio estas palabras de consuelo.

El "sí" de María nos ha allanado el camino y su generosa aceptación de la voluntad de Dios nos da confianza y esperanza. †

Project Joseph helps men on 'journey of healing' from abortion

By Natalie Hoefer

At pro-life rallies, Eric Slaughter often holds a sign that reads, "Men Regret Lost Fatherhood."

"I've had protesters tell me I don't have a wound so [abortion is] none of my business," says Slaughter.

His experience of losing a child to abortion tells him otherwise.

"You've lost this child, and you're suffering the loss, feeling regret and pain from failing to be a man and protect your family," he says. "And society says you're supposed to hold it in and not talk about it."

Consequently, says Slaughter, "You have men walking around with this pain that affects their lives and relationships. It's important to have a venue for men to acknowledge these feelings so they can heal themselves and their relationships."

This conviction led him and David Bangs—who also regrets his role in his child's abortion—to bring Project Joseph post-abortion healing retreats for men to Indiana. The retreats will alternate between the Archdiocese of Indianapolis in the fall and the Lafayette Diocese in the spring. The next retreat is scheduled for April 22-23 in Lafayette.



David Bangs

"It's a way of bringing men out of themselves and start the healing process," says Slaughter, "and a way for men to know they're not alone."

Child's abortion 'had a dramatic effect on my life'

Both Slaughter, a member of Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Parish in

Indianapolis, and Bangs, a member of St. Patrick Parish in Kokomo, Ind., in the Lafayette Diocese, have participated in and now help facilitate Rachel's Vineyard post-abortion healing retreats. While open to all, the majority of attendees are women, says Slaughter.

He notes the men who do attend are "less likely to speak, not only because they expect, as I did, that all women are going to hate [them], but men are taught to hold our feelings in and not share."

"I was pretty successful in trying to forget" about the abortion of his child, says Bangs, who was 19 at the time of his loss. "But it had a dramatic effect on my life. I was very angry, I had relationship problems, I suffered from depression. It took me 25 years to realize what was causing all that."

Slaughter says he suffered because "of my failure to live up to the responsibility of protecting my child and the child's mother."

Both men's experiences reflect two studies cited by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (cutt.ly/USCCBAbortion).

One study notes that "men tend to exert greater control over the expression of painful emotions, intellectualize grief, and cope alone; are also inclined to identify their primary role as a supporter for their partners, even after an abortion, and even if they opposed the decision; were more likely to experience feelings of despair long after the abortion than women; and are more at risk for experiencing chronic grief."

The second study reports that 40% of the men surveyed "experienced chronic post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms, occurring on average 15 years after the abortion." The men also reported experiencing grief and sadness, guilt, anger, isolation, anxiety, sexual issues and helplessness.

Recognizing the need for a post-abortion retreat geared toward men, Bangs says he and Slaughter "looked at modifying a couple other programs to adapt them."

Then Brie Anne Varick, director of the archdiocesan Office of Human Life and Dignity, told Slaughter about Project Joseph—a retreat similar to Rachel's Vineyard but intended for men. He attended a retreat in Texas and knew it was the solution he and Bangs were looking for.

'Centered around forgiveness'

The retreat uses Scripture readings, "especially about men in the Bible like St. Joseph, King David, figures that help us to reinforce and understand our purpose and responsibility as men," says Slaughter.

Bangs both attended and helped facilitate a Project Joseph retreat in Lafayette last year.

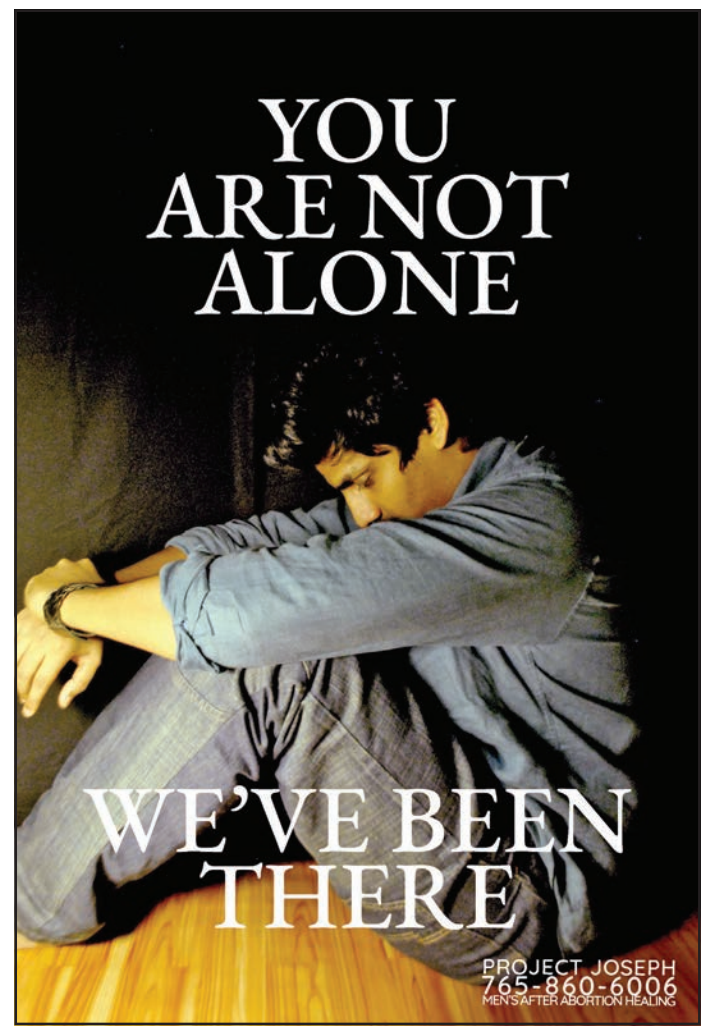
"It's very healing," he says. Compared to Rachel's Vineyard "it suits men a little better" and, at 30 hours, "is a little shorter."

"Also some of the more emotional . . . parts of the Rachel's Vineyard retreat are not part of [Project Joseph]."

Each retreat includes a licensed therapist and a deacon familiar with post-abortion ministry, and a priest offers Mass and the opportunity for confession.

"The retreat is centered around forgiveness," Bangs explains. "A lot of times, we will see the sin of abortion as an unforgivable sin. The Project Joseph retreat brings [men] to understand that God can forgive anything and helps them believe they can be forgiven and learn to forgive themselves."

Men also have an opportunity to unlock their silence and tell the story of their own



experience with losing a child to abortion and the impact it had on their life.

"Each man's story told at the retreat is important not only for themselves, but for the healing of the others present," says Slaughter, who shared his story in a 2021 book he co-authored called *The Aftermath: Stories of God's Grace and Freedom After Abortion*.

"A man who has lost a child to abortion feels alone, because of the feelings he may not be able to express or share with anyone. Hearing the stories of other men helps each to understand that they are not alone, and together at this retreat they begin their journey of healing."

(For more information on Project Joseph post-abortion healing retreats for men or to sign up for the one scheduled in Lafayette on April 22-23, contact David Bangs at 765-860-6006 or dllbangs1@gamil.com, or search for Project Joseph Indiana on Facebook.) †



'A man who has lost a child to abortion feels alone, because of the feelings he may not be able to express or share with anyone. Hearing the stories of other men helps each to understand that they are not alone, and together at this retreat they begin their journey of healing.'

—Eric Slaughter

Catholics challenged to assist Ukraine, mothers and children post-Roe

WASHINGTON (OSV News)—U.S. Catholics should urge their lawmakers to continue to help the people of Ukraine fend off Russia's invasion of their country, Metropolitan Archbishop Borys Gudziak of the Ukrainian Catholic Archeparchy of Philadelphia told attendees of the 18th annual National Catholic Prayer Breakfast on March 14.

"Every time there is Russian occupation in Ukraine, the Catholic Church is strangled," Archbishop Gudziak said, citing prior conflicts in the 19th and 20th centuries.

The annual breakfast was launched in 2004 in response to St. John Paul II's call for a "new evangelization" and has been held annually with the exception of a virtual event during the COVID-19 pandemic, organizers said. It draws religious leaders, elected officials and laypeople working in a variety of fields in the nation's capital.

In addition to Archbishop Gudziak, the 2023 event also featured O. Carter Snead, director of the de Nicola Center for Ethics and Culture, a professor of law and concurrent professor of political science at the University of Notre Dame, who called on Catholics to help build a culture of life and love post-Roe.

Archbishop Gudziak has received recognition for his advocacy for the people of Ukraine during the war and for his humanitarian efforts in the country. He told attendees of the breakfast that they "should talk to politicians and tell them we should continue helping, we need to be there."

Not only are Ukraine's young people giving their lives, Archbishop Gudziak said, "they're stopping tyranny."

In the 21st century—when everything is seemingly up for grabs, when we've deconstructed almost everything,

when truth is transactional in media, politics, diplomacy and popular culture, conditioned by a post-truth anti-ethnic—Ukrainians have been saying no, not so fast," Archbishop Gudziak said. "There's good and there's evil. There's truth and there's lies. And they are doing it at the risk of their own lives, consciously, deliberately, freely looking into the face of the risk."

While the Biden administration has committed more than \$31.7 billion in security assistance for Ukraine since the start of Russia's 2022 invasion, there has been bipartisan support for these efforts.

However, some Republicans have balked at this funding.

But Archbishop Gudziak argued on March 14 at the National Catholic Prayer Breakfast that U.S. support of Ukraine's efforts is not only moral, but practical.

"The Russian invasion has affected each of your pockets and the pockets of every single person on Earth,"

Archbishop Gudziak said. "And Ukrainians are resisting that which is affecting your economy. Our economy."

Also at the March 14 event, Snead noted that it is the first National Catholic Prayer Breakfast since the U.S. Supreme Court's *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* decision in June. The decision overturned prior rulings by the high court, including the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision, that previously found abortion access to be a constitutional right.

Providing an overview of the legal background of *Roe* and its downfall, Snead explained Catholics now have a crucial role in promoting the dignity of human life through active support to mothers and children.

"The context in which the question of abortion arises is not a conflict of isolated strangers," Snead said. "It is a crisis involving a mother and her child. And any decent society, any decent person, if you hear that there's a crisis involving a mother and her child, you don't ask, 'Who has the right to the body?' You stop, you say, 'Let's go help. Let's rush to the aid of that mother and that child.'"

"So our imperative is to come to the aid of those in need, before and after the child is born," he said, arguing that the role of the law should be to facilitate those efforts.

"And when help, support, and protection are not forthcoming, [we must] step in and provide it directly," he said. "The success or failure of the law, our success or failure, will be understood through this lens."

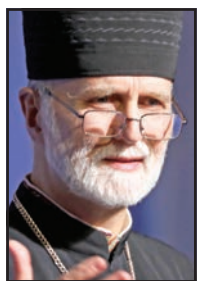
Bishop Andrew H. Cozzens of Crookston, Minn., the chair of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis, also spoke at the event to tout the upcoming National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis on July 17-21, 2024.

Bishop Cozzens said the congress will be the "high point" of the U.S. Church's ongoing Eucharistic Revival.

The congress is expected to draw more than 80,000 people, and organizers have compared the event to World Youth Day, with prayer and liturgies, catechesis for individuals and families, and a festival-like atmosphere.

"Brothers and sisters, I invite you to be part of this revival, and I hope to see you in Indianapolis," he said.

(Registration for those who want to attend the National Eucharistic Congress can be done at www.eucharisticcongress.org.) †



Archbishop Borys Gudziak



Bishop Andrew H. Cozzens

TEACHER

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your prayers in a way you don't expect," she says as she sits in her classroom on a sunny March morning.

"Whenever that reflection comes up every year, I always pause to talk about the years I prayed that I would have a baby and I was angry at God because he wasn't doing what I thought should be done or the way I thought things should be."

She then shares with the students how that heartbreaking time of infertility for her and her husband of 16 years, Loren, led to their life-affirming decision to adopt two children who have added so much love to their lives.

"I tell them that now, looking back, I would go through it all again to be a parent to the two kids that I get to be a parent to. I share that they might be feeling like there's something in their life that isn't going the way they think it should. I tell them I hope that someday they'll be able to look back on times like that—like I can now—and realize that God was answering their prayer and preparing them for something they didn't even anticipate in their life."

'The coolest thing happened'

The study of chemistry is often measured in exact numbers, and numbers support Horan's success as a teacher. In her tenure teaching Advanced Placement (AP) Chemistry, she has doubled the number of students taking the college-level course. And the students in the course pass the challenging, comprehensive, end-of-year test at a rate of 89%.

The study of chemistry is also often touched by elements of wonder and beauty, and those qualities can also mark a different definition of chemistry—the relationships that connect people in a special way.

The chemistry between Horan and her Advanced Placement students showed when the class celebrated her selection as the Saint Theodora Award recipient by having a breakfast party in her honor.

"They had a griddle in here, and they were cooking pancakes," she says, smiling. "They all contributed food and threw a party for me. Of all the recognition for the award, that breakfast meant so much to me. All of my other classes were very excited when they heard I won, too."

"She makes all of her kids feel welcomed," says Jackson Herrera, a senior AP Chemistry student and a member of St. Thomas Aquinas Parish in Indianapolis who has been accepted to Harvard University. "She knows the stuff we're learning is really hard, and she is very good at explaining it to us in a comprehensible and understandable way."

"She's genuinely a highlight of everyone's day," says Maci Knoll, a senior AP Chemistry student and a member of St. Pius X Parish in Indianapolis. "She helps kids realize what they're interested in, and she cultivates questions and curiosity."

"Chemistry is a class that is sometimes really difficult, and there are classes that when they're difficult, they're not enjoyable," says Claire O'Gara, a senior AP student from St. Pius X Parish. "But she's such an amazing teacher that I'm always looking forward to learning the material, and I'm excited to go to class."

Horan approaches her teaching from a combination of caring about her students and challenging them—reflecting St. Theodora's approach to "Love the children first and then teach them." She has a special fondness for her sophomore chemistry students, especially the ones "who don't have that confidence and belief in themselves."

"My most significant accomplishment is the

countless students who have entered my class believing that they are bad at science or do not like science, but leave loving science and believing in their own ability," she notes. "I believe in my students until they come to believe in themselves."

A moment later, Horan's face glows as she says, "The coolest thing happened this year." She then shares the story of a young woman who took Horan's Academic Chemistry class as a sophomore, followed Horan's encouragement to take AP Chemistry as a senior last year, passed the AP test, and is now taking a freshman chemistry class as a student at Purdue University.

"She sent me several notes saying she was so prepared, but the coolest thing was that one day the guest lecturer for her freshman chemistry class was another one of my students—a senior there doing chemistry research. I got some pictures that day. That was one of the coolest moments, seeing two of my kids being so successful."

'They have taught me so much'

Beyond the Saint Theodora Award, her impact as a teacher has also led to the recent announcement that she has been chosen as one of Indiana's three finalists for the Presidential Award for Excellence in Science and Mathematics Education—with the winner from each state receiving \$10,000 and a visit to the White House.

Still, fans of Horan believe there's another part of her involvement at Bishop Chatard that is just as impactful as her teaching.

The two children that she and her husband adopted—Sybil, 7, and Collin, 4—are Black. That choice has led to another choice that Horan made five years ago when the teacher who served as the moderator for Bishop Chatard's Black Student Union left the school. Horan, who is white, stepped into the role, motivated "by my faith and the love of my two children."

"I want my kids to have positive Black role models in their lives," says Horan, a member with her family of St. Joan of Arc Parish in Indianapolis. "And I want the school to be a place that affirms the value, yes, of all people. But sometimes we have to be a little bit more intentional about affirming Black students. There's no one they can look to and say, 'I can be just like that person,' because we don't have any Black adults in this building."

"I want to give them a sense of community in their club. I want them to also feel it's a place where they feel like their voice can be heard, and they're the majority. They have taught me so much. We do things together as a club to learn about Black history here in Indianapolis. I love being part of the group. I love them accepting me and welcoming me into their culture."

The appreciation is mutual, says Samantha Byrd, a junior who is one of the three presidents of the school's Black Student Union.

"She understands that, being a white woman, she can never understand what it's like to be a Black person. With having Black kids, she definitely advocates for us and uses her voice to try to advocate for Black people," Samantha says. "Being a Black person in the world we live in, knowing there's a person who's willing to fight



As the mother of two Black children that she and her husband Loren have adopted, Amanda Horan, left, wants positive Black role models in their lives. Here, she shares a moment of joy with Samantha Byrd, one of the three presidents of the Black Student Union at Bishop Chatard High School in Indianapolis. Horan is the moderator of the group. (Photo by Kelly Lucas of Bishop Chatard High School)

for your rights and fight for you is important. It means a lot."

Another reason to smile, another nod from God

Horan never strays from being positive as she leads a lab experiment for the sophomores in her Honors Chemistry class on this morning.

As she flits from one station of students to another—helping them, guiding them, answering their questions—it's hard to imagine she didn't always set out to be a teacher. The story of how she became one leads to another smile from her and another nod to God's guidance.

After graduating from Purdue with a degree in chemical engineering, she worked for five years with Eli Lilly & Co., doing good work and making good money. But there was always the thought in her mind about teaching—a thought reinforced by two moments of providence.

First, when she previously was a parishioner and a lector at St. Monica Parish in Indianapolis, she heard a homily that, she says, "made me think this was God speaking to me, telling me I should be a teacher."

"Shortly after that homily, a man comes up to me in Home Depot and he says, 'You lector at St. Monica, don't you?' I said, 'Well, yeah.' And he said, 'With a voice like that, you must be a teacher.' It was like, 'Whoa!' It felt like God saying, 'Amanda, you should be a teacher.'

"I gave my two-week notice to my bosses, which was terrifying because I was leaving this good-paying job to go to a not-so-good paying job, and it seemed like a crazy idea, but I did. Now I feel like I'm doing what I should be doing with my life. It gives me a lot of contentment and happiness."

That contentment and happiness grows every time she helps her students overcome their fears and challenge themselves, lets them know she cares about them, and helps them move closer to an understanding of how God touches their lives.

Now, in her 12th year of teaching, she has found those touches of beauty and wonder—of a chemistry with God—in her own life.

"I would like to hope that God would look down and be proud of all the chances I've taken in my life and be proud of what I'm doing. Because I think I've responded correctly to all the calls in my life."

"I feel this sense that I'm where I'm supposed to be, that I'm doing what God made me to do." †

MEDICAL

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of the 14-page statement by its Committee on Doctrine, chaired by Bishop Daniel E. Flores of Brownsville, Texas.

The doctrine committee acknowledged that "many people are sincerely looking for ways to respond to real problems and real suffering."

"Certain approaches that do not respect the fundamental order appear to offer solutions. To rely on such approaches for solutions, however, is a mistake," it said. "An approach that does not respect the fundamental order will never truly solve the problem in view; in the end, it will only create further problems."

"Any technological intervention that does not accord with the fundamental order of the human person as a unity of body and soul, including the sexual

difference inscribed in the body, ultimately does not help but, rather, harms the human person," the committee added.

It noted that "a range of pastoral issues" needs to be addressed regarding "those who identify as transgender or nonbinary," but said these issues "cannot be addressed in this document."

Catholic health care services, the committee said, "are called to provide a model of promoting the authentic good of the human person."

"To fulfill this duty, all who collaborate in Catholic health care ministry must make every effort, using all appropriate means at their disposal, to provide the best medical care, as well as Christ's compassionate accompaniment, to all patients, no matter who they may be or from what condition they may be suffering," it continued. "The mission of Catholic health care services is nothing less than to carry on the healing ministry

of Jesus, to provide healing at every level, physical, mental and spiritual."

Medical intervention that uses available technology to repair defects in the body, "usually when it has been affected by some injury or ailment ... shows respect for the fundamental order of the body, which is commendable," the committee said. "In fact, each of us has a duty to care for our bodies."

The benefits of such intervention also must be "proportionate to the burdens involved," it said, and must be undertaken "with the correct intention and in the correct circumstances."

The committee's statement quotes numerous Second Vatican Council documents, other Church documents and the teachings of several popes, including Pope Francis and his encyclical "*Laudato Si'*" and apostolic exhortation "*Amoris Laetitia*," on the goodness of the natural order of men and women being created

differently, the importance and the meaning of sexual difference "as a reality deeply inscribed in man and woman."

"In our contemporary society there are those who do not share this conception of the human person," the committee said. "Pope Francis has spoken about an ideology that promotes 'a personal identity and emotional intimacy radically separated from the biological difference between male and female.'"

The committee referenced Pope Francis' teaching that "young people in particular need to be helped to accept their own body as it was created, for 'thinking that we enjoy absolute power over our own bodies turns, often subtly, into thinking that we enjoy absolute power over creation. ... An appreciation of our body as male or female is also necessary for our own self-awareness in an encounter with others different from ourselves.'" †

Archdiocesan Catholic helps launch worldwide *Laudato Si'* implementation guide

By Sean Gallagher

John Mundell walked with his two grandsons along the banks of the White River in Indianapolis picking up trash earlier this year.

He reveled in seeing the young boys making a game of it, calling the trash “treasure” and taking it to the “treasure store”—a nearby trash can.

It's little stories of hope for the care of creation like this that motivate Mundell, in his work as the director of the Vatican's *Laudato Si'* Action Platform to encourage leaders in the Church, education, health care and business around the world to do the same.

Founded a little more than a year ago, the platform is the Vatican's initiative to encourage the implementation of the principles of Pope Francis' 2015 encyclical letter on the environment, “*Laudato Si'*: On Care for Our Common Home.”

The platform is part of the Vatican's Dicastery for Integral Human Development, led by Canadian Cardinal Michael F. Czerny.

On Feb. 14, Mundell took part in an online press conference to launch the platform's “Our Common Home: A Guide to Caring for Our Living Planet,” which offers practical suggestions for protecting the environment and ways to reflect on the spiritual nature of this work.

During the press conference, he

reflected on the time he spent along the White River with his grandsons.

“I was overwhelmed by their enthusiasm and recognized in these simple actions the root of the ecological conversion we all need to undergo to make a difference,” Mundell said, “a difference that responds not only to the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor as ‘*Laudato Si'*’ reminds us, but also to the cry of our children, our grandchildren and all future generations that follow.”

The future of his grandchildren, their generation and those that follow led Mundell to call for action now in caring for creation.

“The time for polite conversations and speeches is past,” said Mundell in the press conference. “Only dramatic changes beginning today, right now, in both our personal lifestyles and choices as well as our communal policies and governance will head off the rising temperatures and their devastating consequences.”

Although only about a year old, the platform already has thousands of members, from individuals and families to parishes, dioceses, schools, hospitals and businesses that have millions of people connected to them.

The platform's newly launched guide will help its members and all who read it to formulate achievable plans to care for the environment in their own particular corner of creation.

“We're trying to encourage people to take those steps and be more concrete,” said Mundell, a member of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Indianapolis in a recent interview with *The Criterion*. “We've done a good job as a Church of talking about what we think is important. But we haven't been as good at making the commitment to do the [work to achieve them].”

Mundell has worked in environmental matters for decades, first helping large corporations clean up pollution, then, for the last 28 years, operating his own environmental consulting firm based on Indianapolis' east side.

He's also had decades of experience collaborating with Catholics and Church leaders around the world through his involvement in Focolare, a lay movement



John Mundell, center, a member of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Indianapolis, poses with Brian Henning, left, and Cardinal Michael F. Czerny in a recent event at Gonzaga University in Spokane, Wash., to help launch “Our Common Home: A Guide to Caring for Our Living Planet.” Mundell is the director of the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform, a part of the Vatican's Dicastery for Integral Human Development, which is led by Cardinal Czerny. Henning is a professor of philosophy and environmental studies at Gonzaga. (Submitted photo)

in the Church founded in 1943 in Italy.

Mundell describes all this background as the “golden thread” that he sees as God's providential way of preparing him for his current worldwide ministry in leading the platform.

“Over time, I've seen that my business experiences have been very valuable—project managing, budgeting, lots of practical things and the environment part, cleaning up pollution and working with agencies,” he said. “And that whole openness toward other cultures in work in Focolare globally has been brought in, too.”

Seeing all these providential connections is helpful for Mundell as he meets—online and in person—with people around the world in promoting the work of the platform.

“It's incredibly challenging, but also totally fulfilling. It's something I feel called to do, like a vocation,” he said. “I think we're living in one of the most exciting times in the Church's history.”

During the next year, Mundell hopes

to see more individuals and organizations joining the platform and submitting plans that the guide and other online resources can help them formulate.

“A year from now, I hope that this will be in the hands of most of the bishops,” he said. “The environment is a moral issue, not just a political issue. Hopefully, in the United States especially, we can make some headway in communicating with parishes, schools and the hierarchy about why they should have this as part of their program.”

Through it all, Mundell will keep in mind the image of his two young grandsons picking up trash along the White River.

“I'm going to work my tail off because I'm doing this for them.”

(To learn more about the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform and view its guide, visit laudatosiactionplatform.org. Links to the guide in various languages can be found at bit.ly/LaudatoSiGuide.) †



Lenten penance services are scheduled at archdiocesan parishes

Parishes throughout the archdiocese have scheduled communal penance services for Lent. The following is a list of services that have been reported to *The Criterion*.

Batesville Deanery

March 28, 6-8 p.m. at St. John the Baptist, Osgood
 March 28, 7 p.m. at St. Catherine of Siena, St. John Campus, in Decatur County
 March 29, 6:15 p.m. at St. Vincent de Paul, Shelby County
 March 29, 6-8 p.m. at Immaculate Conception, Millhousen
 March 30, 7 p.m. at St. Louis, Batesville

Additionally, recurring opportunities for reconciliation in the Batesville Deanery are as follows:

Wednesdays 5-6 p.m. at St. Charles Borromeo, Milan
 Fridays 6-7 p.m. at St. Nicholas, Ripley County
 Saturdays 4-5 p.m. at St. Charles Borromeo, Milan
 Before and after weekend Masses at St. Maurice, Napoleon
 Half-hour before daily Masses at St. Lawrence, Lawrenceburg, and St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, Bright

Bloomington Deanery

March 28, 7 p.m. for St. Mary, Mitchell, and St. Vincent de Paul, Bedford, at St. Vincent de Paul

March 29, 6 p.m. at St. Martin of Tours, Martinsville
 April 5, 6 p.m. for St. Charles Borromeo, St. John the Apostle and St. Paul Catholic Center, all in Bloomington, at St. Paul Catholic Center

Connersville Deanery

March 26, 1 p.m. at St. Elizabeth of Hungary, Cambridge City
 March 31, 5:30 p.m. at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Holy Family Campus, Richmond

Indianapolis East Deanery

Recurring opportunities for reconciliation in the East Deanery are as follows:
 Sundays 9 a.m. (except Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday) at Our Lady of Lourdes

Indianapolis South Deanery

March 24, 6:30-7:30 p.m. for St. Ann and St. Thomas More, Mooresville (Indianapolis West Deanery), at St. Ann

Indianapolis West Deanery

March 24, 6:30-7:30 p.m. for St. Ann (Indianapolis South Deanery) and St. Thomas More, Mooresville, at St. Ann
 March 29, 7 p.m. at Holy Angels

Additionally, recurring opportunities for reconciliation in the West Deanery are as follows:

Wednesdays 6-7 p.m. at Mary, Queen of Peace, Danville
 Fridays 3:30-4:30 p.m. at St. Christopher and 5:30-6:30 p.m. at St. Gabriel the Archangel
 Saturdays 4-6 p.m. at St. Gabriel the Archangel

New Albany Deanery

March 27, 7 p.m. at St. John the Baptist, Starlight
 March 28, 7 p.m. at St. Mary, Navilleton
 March 29, 7 p.m. at St. Anthony of Padua, Clarksville
 March 29, 7 p.m. in English and Spanish at St. Michael, Charlestown
 March 30, 6:30 p.m. at St. Francis Xavier, Henryville

Terre Haute Deanery

April 1, 10-11 a.m. at Annunciation, Brazil
 April 2, noon-3 p.m. at St. Paul the Apostle, Greencastle

Additionally, recurring opportunities for reconciliation in the Terre Haute Deanery are as follows:

Thursdays 7-8:30 p.m. at St. Joseph University, Terre Haute
 Saturdays 3:30-4:30 p.m. at St. Joseph University, Terre Haute †

Pope Francis' 'anything but dull' decade as pope 'has charted a bold new course' for the Church

(March 13, 2023, marked the 10th anniversary of Pope Francis' election to the papacy. Here is a perspective from OSV News.)

(OSV News)—For the biographer of Pope Francis, 10 years into the current papacy, “the Church is in a very different place,” with “less anger and defensiveness.” Commentators add that Pope Francis is a pope “who is not afraid to spark controversy” and are certain he’s a “daring” pope “full of surprises.”

Austen Ivereigh, author of Pope Francis' biographies *The Great Reformer* and *Wounded Shepherd*, told OSV News that “everybody feels” the change Pope Francis has brought to the Church in the last decade.

“I think Francis enjoys being pope. It gives him life. He knows that’s what he should be doing. So I think he brings to it a kind of a joy, a peace, a freedom, which I think is really important,” he said.

What Pope Francis has done, Ivereigh argued, is reconnect the Church with grace and with the Holy Spirit.

“So we have a Church which is much humbler, much more dependent on grace, and therefore feels different, feels more joyful. And so there’s perhaps less anger and defensiveness in the Church, I think, as a result.”

He said there’s been a “shift of focus” in the Church. “And I think that shift of focus has been toward the Holy Spirit and also in many ways toward the people.”

Pointing to the bishops’ Synod on Synodality, the first session of which will convene in October, as a key example of this shift, Ivereigh emphasized that the “people of God are not just being consulted, but are the subjects of the process itself.” The drive for synodality in his papacy comes from Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio’s experience, Ivereigh argued.

“Before he became pope, he was, of course, a Jesuit for many, many years and was also the key player as cardinal archbishop in probably the most synodal event in the modern Church, which was the meeting of the Latin American bishops at Aparecida, Brazil, in May 2007.”

Aparecida was a synodal experience, the pope’s biographer added, “in the sense that the bishops arrived very divided and perhaps discouraged and in a state of desolation, and two weeks later emerged confident, united with a much clearer vision about how the Church needed to evangelize. And he was key to that process.”

The synod for him is “structured listening space in which you’re really trying to understand the responses of your own heart to what is being said. And in those responses, you discover where the Spirit is at work.”

But the Jesuit spirit of discernment for many means a headache for the Church.

“He’s not afraid to spark controversy,” Francis Rocca, Vatican correspondent for *The Wall Street Journal*, told OSV News. “On the unified side, the pope is very popular. He’s drawn a lot of people to him. But he has certainly courted controversy and of course many

conservatives are distressed,” he said.

From restriction of the use of the Mass according to the 1962 *Roman Missal* to synodal discussions on moral teachings, Pope Francis is at the center of criticism for many Catholics, especially in the United States.

Especially in the area of marriage, “he has obviously been very controversial,” said Rocca. “It hasn’t, as we know, changed really anything. Theologically, it’s very subtle. But the message has been very clear that being divorced and remarried is not as grave a situation as it was before.”

For John Allen, editor-in-chief of *Crux*, “the single most controversial decision that Francis has made over the past decade” was “*Amoris Laetitia*,” the apostolic exhortation on love in the family, debating the possibility of allowing Communion for the divorced and civilly remarried.

“It marked a sort of crossing of the Rubicon,” Allen said. “Prior to 2016, it was possible for Catholic conservatives to insist that Pope Francis was simply misunderstood, that he was being spun by a liberal media and by secular public opinion, but that in reality, you know, his heart was in the same place that John Paul and Benedict’s had been.”

“After ‘*Amoris Laetitia*,’ that became a much more difficult argument for many Catholic conservatives to make. And I think, from that point forward, many Catholic conservatives began becoming outspokenly critical of Francis.”

For Allen, that moment “probably crystallized tensions that had already been building, but I think they really burst into their present form at that time.”

Rocca added that in the area of moral teaching “in regard to homosexuality—which we’ve been hearing a lot about, especially these days with the German synod—he hasn’t changed the teaching, but he has really emphasized compassion. And that has caused a lot of anxiety for people who think it’s very important to uphold the traditional teachings and that the Church calls everyone to be chaste.”

For Ivereigh, the restriction on what is popularly called the traditional Latin Mass—the topic currently being debated throughout the Church from parish pews to social media posts—“was the result of a very long consultation of the bishops worldwide.”

Ivereigh argued that “what Benedict thought wouldn’t happen did happen, which is that this had become a movement that was undermining the unity of the Church, that it was opposed to Vatican II in many cases, and that it



Pope Francis smiles during an audience with members of *Confindustria*, the General Confederation of Italian Industry, and members of their families, in the Vatican audience hall on Sept. 12, 2022. (OSV News photo/Yara Nardi, Reuters)

had been caught up with all kinds of ideologies.” He added, “Francis didn’t suppress the preconciliar Mass. He regulated it.”

Allen said he thinks that “in Catholic debate, the Latin Mass is sort of the third rail. Clearly Pope Francis felt that something enormously important was at stake because he was willing to do that despite knowing that it was going to generate enormous criticism.”

Pope Francis also was one who brought hope that he would bring visible change to the Church’s response to the abuse crisis.

For his biographer, “just looking at the number of regulations that have been introduced, the way bishops are now held accountable in the way that they weren’t” proves he has done a lot to clean up the Church. “However, there is still much to be done,” he said.

“And the reason that there’s still much to be done is that the institution remains in many ways geared toward the protection of the innocence of the priest. And I think, yes, he’s made mistakes,” Ivereigh continued. “I think, frankly, it’s impossible not to make mistakes in this area because you’re trying to balance two things. You’re trying to protect, defend the principle of innocence until proven guilty. But at the same time, you have to start by believing victims and giving them credibility.”

For Rocca, it’s Pope Benedict that “remains the high water mark for rigor and zeal in disciplining priests who abuse.” But it’s also true, Rocca argued, “that Francis, after some very, very grave missteps with regard to Chile, gave a new emphasis and promulgated some legislation, had a big global meeting and drew attention to the topic.”

Allen added that “the verdict on Pope Francis in the sex abuse crisis is that it is a mixed bag.

“It is fair to say that although Pope Francis has said that there should be accountability not just for the crime, but for the cover up—that is, bishops and superiors who covered up abuse should be held accountable—there are almost no cases of that actually happening,” he said. “There is legislation on the books now, thanks to Pope Francis, but it really has not been used in any meaningful way. And so I think a lot of people would give him a grade of ‘incomplete.’”

Ivereigh blamed slow action in some areas on clericalism—in the pope’s own words, the “ugly perversion” that the Holy Father has tried to fight from day one of his papacy.

“From the very beginning of his

pontificate, he has declared war on clericalism in a way that I think has been very uncomfortable for a lot of people,” Ivereigh said.

“I think when clericalism is very deep seated, then it’s a form of corruption. And in general, corrupt people do not change unless they are forced to, unless there is some major crisis or calamity,” Ivereigh added.

Some of the changes in this area, Rocca said, include the appointment of “a number of women to relatively high positions in the Vatican. ... He has sent a message that the laity should have a bigger voice with respect to bishops and to clergy.”

What the pope came to realize, Ivereigh said, “was that the only way we can move on from being a clerical Church is when we have a Church in which the people of God are taking part in the life of the Church, you know, as missionary disciples in which we are all responsible and we can all take part in the decision-making processes of the Church, that we are going to move on from this.”

Rocca added that as much as the pope “has probably played down the authority of bishops and priests with respect to laypeople,” on the other hand, “he certainly is not shy about using his own power as pope. So we have a perhaps more powerful pope, a more commanding pope than we did in the previous pontificate. So you could look at it both ways.”

For Rocca, the 86-year-old pontiff celebrating 10 years of papacy is “unstoppable.”

“I mean, it’s quite astonishing to see how busy he is, how many meetings he has in a day, how many speeches, how many trips he takes.”

Allen added that “the past decade has been dramatic, dizzying, daring, divisive. In fact, I think the only word that starts with ‘D’ that you can’t use is the word ‘dull,’ because the only thing it hasn’t been is boring.

“Pope Francis is one of those once-in-a-generation leaders who comes into office with an extremely strong sense of where he wants to take the Church. And his vision is a dramatic change from what had come before. And he is not intimidated by opposition. And so he has charted a bold new course,” Allen argued.

Asked what’s next for the pope he said, “I wish I knew. If I have one certainty about Pope Francis after covering him for 10 years, it is that you never know what this guy is going to do next.” †



‘Pope Francis is one of those once-in-a-generation leaders who comes into office with an extremely strong sense of where he wants to take the Church. And his vision is a dramatic change from what had come before.’

—John Allen, editor-in-chief of *Crux*

SIMPLY CATHOLIC

Cultural trends have affected practice of sacrament of confession

By Russell Shaw

Part one of two

(OSV News)—When Dr. Bernard Nathanson died of cancer in February 2011, obituary writers dutifully recorded that he'd become a Catholic in 1996. Some even recalled the reason he gave for taking that step.

In the 1960s and 1970s, Nathanson, a New York OB-GYN, had been a national leader in the campaign to legalize abortion. Then he saw the light, turned against abortion, and became a pro-life crusader. Joining the Catholic Church was another stage in his conversion process.

But why become a Catholic? Because, Nathanson explained, the Catholic Church has the best developed system for seeking and receiving God's forgiveness. And as someone who'd performed 5,000 abortions himself and shared responsibility for many thousands more, he had much need to be forgiven.

Following conscience

It's a moving story. But most of us aren't sinners on that scale and so, we may reason, perhaps we don't have as much cause as Nathanson to worry about sin and forgiveness.

Tempting as it may sometimes be to think like that, it clashes head-on with the First Epistle of St. John: "If we say, 'We have no sin,' we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we acknowledge our sins, he [God] is faithful and just and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say, 'We have not sinned,' we make him a liar, and his word is not in us" (1 Jn 1:8-10).

Today powerful forces in the surrounding culture encourage people to ignore or downplay their sins and, if they're Catholic, to skip the sacrament of penance. Confused ideas about conscience often have much to do with that. "I do what my conscience tells me," people say, "and that's good enough."

People said the same thing in St. John Henry Newman's time. But the distinguished English convert sharply criticized the idea of conscience that attitude implied. Calling it a "counterfeit" of genuine conscience, Newman wrote in 1875:

"When men advocate the rights of conscience, they in no sense mean the rights of the creator nor the duty to him. ... They demand what they think is an Englishman's prerogative, for each to be his own master in all things and to profess what he pleases, asking no one's leave and accounting priest or preacher, speaker or writer unutterably impertinent who dare to say a word against his going to perdition ... in his own way."

Risky business, you might think. Especially in view of a point made by another British convert-author, Msgr. Robert Hugh Benson, concerning serious sins we may culpably ignore: "We need ... the pardon that descends when we are unaware that we must have it or die. ... Only God, who knows all things, can forgive us effectively."



A priest hears confession from a World Youth Day pilgrim in 2016 at Park Jordana in Krakow, Poland. Various cultural trends during the past half century have led to a decline in the number of Catholics regularly going to confession. (OSV News photo/CNS file, Bob Roller)

Dramatic drop-off

Some years ago, a much-discussed book by the social critic Christopher Lasch argued that our society is dominated by a "culture of narcissism." The label seemed

to fit. Narcissists, though notorious for self-absorption, steer clear of self-examination in any meaningful sense. This makes narcissism the deadly enemy of contrition and confession, considered as elements of a virtuous life.

Whether you accept or reject Lasch's social analysis, the numbers leave no doubt that a serious problem does exist these days where the sacrament of penance is concerned. To such an extent, in fact, that it's often said to be a sacrament in crisis.

There is a crisis here all right, but it isn't really with the sacrament—it's with the people who need it, but ignore it.

In one recent survey, only about 40% of those identifying themselves as Catholics said they went to confession at least once a year. Nearly 30% said they never go.

The problem isn't new. Sacramental confession has been in steep decline for years.

In the 1950s and 1960s, about 80% of America's Catholics went to confession at least once a year. A study in the early 1960s found that 70% had been to confession in the previous month. But by 1986, confession in the previous month had fallen to 23%. Among Catholics aged 18-30, it was 14%.

Down and down. By 2005, fewer than half the Catholics reported confessing their sins as often as once a year.

(Russell Shaw is the author of *American Church*, *The Life of Jesus Christ*, and other books. Next week's article will explore why there has been a drop off in people availing themselves of the sacrament of penance and how to draw people back to it.) †



A mosaic image of St. John Nepomucene hearing confessions is displayed inside St. John Nepomucene Church in New York City. The 14th-century Czech saint is considered the first martyr of the seal of confession. (CNS photo/Chaz Muth)

Senior Standing/Lisa Hendey

The challenges and gifts of caregiving and learning to lean

Lately I note a trend on social media among my peers of a certain age. Amid the cute grandbaby pictures at Christmas, there were pleas for intercessory prayer for their aging parents. Going home for the holidays can be a real wakeup call as we realize that—seemingly overnight—our strong, independent parents need our help.



This topic hits home for me. After years of caregiving during their protracted illnesses, I've recently bid farewell to both of my parents. Unexpected waves of grief and moments of regret hit me like a gut punch when I least expect them. In a very real sense, caregiving for my parents was my life's greatest privilege, but it came with a price and trials that very nearly did me in spiritually, emotionally and physically.

I'm part of the new generation of seniors who—while only just adjusting to our own aging—are being asked to care for our parents while often serving as caretakers for our grandchildren, as well. Their parents, our children, often need two incomes just to make ends meet, so some of us are now packing school lunches for our grandchildren while arranging medical appointments for our parents.

In some ways, we are not unique, but Mom didn't jump on Instagram to vent about the challenges of taking in her

elderly mother while still actively parenting my youngest sibling. In those years, I unthinkingly added to her load by having her watch my then-toddler so I could enjoy a "Mom's Night Out." Looking back, I realize now that she never refused, even though her stress was undoubtedly getting the better of her. Without words, she modeled for me the caregiver's journey.

I won't pretend to have any wisdom about how one should answer an unexpected (but vocational) call to caregiving, but now—as I walk alongside my husband as he takes on the care of his parents—I realize one great lesson I learned with Mom and Daddy that is helping me to be a better partner to him in this process: the importance of a trusted companion. It is a gift just to have an assurance that someone can be trusted to walk this path, full of so many unknowns.

While re-reading my journals from those long days of caretaking, I came across an apt quote I'd transcribed from Rosalynn Carter. "There are only four kinds of people in the world. Those who have been caregivers. Those who are currently caregivers. Those who will be caregivers, and those who will need a caregiver." Every family will have to address distinctly challenging logistics for themselves. But if we have a loved one in need of care, we are caregivers.

My instinct is to be unwilling to be a bother to others, and I too often try to cope with stressful circumstances on my own, but when taking care of my parents

I worked overtime to communicate with my siblings and my husband. It made a difference to know that I was not alone in the process. Still, early in my caregiving journey, I recognized the very real impact my new role was having on our marriage. Now, accompanying my husband as he enters a more intense phase of parental care, I am there for him, because I see how much his support meant to me.

Along with his companionship, I relied upon the compassion of friends and learned hard lessons about patience and trusting God's perfect will. I often prayed over the passage of John's Gospel where Jesus entrusted John with the caregiving of his own mother (Jn 19:26-27), because the caregiver's path is one best walked in the company of others. Our Lord must have known that, when he gave his mother into the care of his beloved disciple, and him into hers.

My darkest days came when I allowed myself to succumb to the isolation that can so easily imprison caregivers. Light and hope finally returned when I learned to graciously ask for and accept help. It is the great takeaway lesson of caregiving: Never be afraid to ask for help from heaven or to lean into the support of your companions on Earth.

(Lisa M. Hendey is the founder of CatholicMom.com, a best-selling author and an international speaker. Visit her at LisaHendey.com or on social media @lisahendey.) †

Guest Column/Gretchen Crowe

Why I'm learning to grow in habitual living

I have never been good at keeping a routine.

I stay up too late, sneaking every scrap of sleep I can in the morning. I start and stop, flutter and falter more than I'd like. I can change plans at a moment's notice with relatively little disruption, which is helpful when working in a deadline-driven environment, but I am also not driven to achieve an existence of overall steadiness or stability.

This is one of the reasons I try to embrace Lent. These six weeks call out for structure—for a rhythm of prayer, for deliberate pacing, for consideration about what we consume and when. Lent helps me pull the lens back from the breakneck pace of a busy, full life and refocus on the Lord and what I am doing to draw closer to him (or what gets in the way).

I was thinking about routine as I was flipping through the beautiful new pages of my husband's most recent book—his long-awaited biography of Cardinal Francis E. George, the late archbishop of Chicago—that he poured so much time, thought and prayer into, and which was released in paperback earlier this month.

In *Glorifying Christ: The Life of Cardinal Francis E. George, O.M.I.*, Michael recounts how a friend had asked Cardinal George how he remained so connected to Christ and the Church despite all the challenges that he had faced. "George thought for a while and then answered that it was simply 'habit'—a practice of living the faith, day in and day out," Michael wrote.

Religion, Cardinal George said once, "is not so much a matter of choice as it is a matter of habit.

"When people build their lives, they make choices at times, but much of it is simply habitual," Cardinal George said at another time. "If you have good habits, you'll be saved from your own individual, evil inclinations at times. If you don't have those good habits, [if] each time [you are] faced with good and evil, you have to make a choice, too often you won't choose what is truly good. People live their lives, they live their faith, they go to Mass regularly, they do their best to build up their family and contribute to society. Catholicism is a way of life, a way of thinking, and a way of loving that incarnates a vision uneasy with itself if it is not finally, truly global."

He wanted to "remind people that there are customs that identify a Catholic way of life" and how, "if we've lost them, the Church becomes a debating society instead of a Church." How familiar does that sound in our social media-fueled era?

Cardinal George was so passionate about this topic that he wanted to write on it to develop it more fully, but his illness prevented him from doing so. What a loss for the Church. But these few nuggets Michael highlights in *Glorifying Christ* are well worth reflecting upon. What are our habits, good and bad, and how do we allow them to define us? Around what structure do we build our days? How do we develop our routines and our habitual practices to help ensure we make the right choice when we are inevitably presented with a fork in the road?

The answer can be found, as Cardinal George points out, within the Church. He argued that in Catholicism, we find the key to a way of life that nurtures vocations and develops disciples.

As he told the U.S. bishops in 2003: "There is a way of life that is bound up with being a disciple of Christ in



Journeying Together/Hosffman Ospino

How to successfully accompany young Hispanic Catholics

After many years of doing research on Hispanic Catholics, one question emerges almost invariably in conversations and speaking engagements: What can our Church do to accompany young Hispanic Catholics better?



Not a new question. Church documents and reflections dating back to the 1970s asked the same question. Yet, we ask it today with a renewed sense of urgency. About 60% of all Catholics younger than 18 are Hispanic. So is the case of nearly half of all young adult Catholics (roughly ages 18 to 39).

Let's say it: Our outreach to young Hispanic Catholics could be much, much better and more dynamic. Barely 2% to 3% of school-age Hispanic Catholic children are enrolled in Catholic schools. Few dioceses and parishes have strong ministerial programs serving this important population.

Some pastoral leaders ask the above question with frustration. "We have tried it all," they say. "We translate materials into Spanish." Or "We adjust programs that have worked well for other young Catholics but young Hispanics do not respond," say some others. I hear many versions of these statements.

Often, the questions are asked in despair. About four in 10 Hispanic adults—more than 20 million—have stopped self-identifying as Catholic. A 2014 study by the Pew Research Center suggested most Hispanics made that decision prior to age 24.

A problem I see among pastoral leaders, educators and others asking how to better serve young Hispanic Catholics while standing in a stasis of frustration or despair is that often they fail to understand this population.

When someone says that they cannot serve young Hispanic Catholics well because they do not speak Spanish, or have come to realize that a translated program does not yield the same results with a Hispanic population as it did with another group—or feel paralyzed before the exodus of young Hispanics from Catholicism—I get the feeling that we need to change gears.

Instead of starting from a position of frustration or despair, asking why what worked in the past is not working today, we must change the question: What is working successfully in the process of accompanying young Hispanic Catholics? The answer is actually very hopeful. Many great initiatives, most of them unsurprisingly led by creative Hispanic Catholic pastoral leaders who are themselves young adults, are proving effective.

Boston College just released the preliminary results of a national study "Ministry with Young Hispanic Catholics: Towards a Recipe for Growth and Success" (February 2023). I had the privilege of serving as the principal investigator for this study.

This report follows a line of reports emerging from research studies conducted by Boston College's School of Theology and Ministry looking closely at how Hispanics are transforming the entire U.S. Catholic experience. This last report does not disappoint. It documents how much creativity and energy Hispanic pastoral leaders bring into the world of Catholic youth ministry.

There is a treasure of insights in the report, which I recommend studying and discussing attentively in Catholic faith communities and organizations. The study focused on 12 Catholic organizations throughout the country who are identified as doing creative and effective work in accompanying young Hispanic Catholics.

The initiatives highlighted in the study are led primarily by Hispanic young people, and their ministry is sustained by what is presented as pillars of success in ministry with young Hispanic Catholics. These organizations are a true example of joyful ministry that brings much hope.

The Holy Spirit is at work in our Church as tens of thousands of young Hispanic Catholics rekindle their faith in Jesus Christ thanks to creative ministry. Let no frustration and despair win the day as we accompany young Hispanic Catholics.

(Hosffman Ospino is professor of theology and religious education at Boston College.) †

Guest Column/Claire Henning

Parish life is not always easy, but it is always our 'home'

Back when I worked as a pastoral associate, I especially enjoyed worshipping at different parishes while on vacation. It felt like the beginning of a romance—the parishioners seemed nice, and all I knew about the community came from the church decor, the celebrant's homily and the bulletin. Vacation Mass experiences were



carefree because I didn't see how their "sausage was made," so to speak, as I did at home. When the holidays ended, the romance was over, and off I'd go, never to see them again.

A parish is like an organism—a living, breathing thing. Like all complex organisms, it has its visible and invisible parts. We can see the buildings, programs and staff. We can't see varying degrees of faith and doubt, or institutional memory.

Like other organisms, parishes must constantly adapt to their environment and be responsive to economic downturns,

changing neighborhoods, secularism and pandemics. As Pope Francis once said: "If a parish proves capable of self-renewal and constant adaptivity, it continues to be 'the Church living in the midst of the homes of her sons and daughters.'"

Above all else, though, a parish is its people. For my parish, community is the living organism that communicates the Gospel message. "Now, you are the body of Christ, and individually members of it" (1 Cor 12:27). For most of us, the parish

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Fifth Sunday of Lent/Msgr. Owen F. Campion

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, March 26, 2023

- Ezekiel 37:12-14
- Romans 8:8-11
- John 11:1-45

The Book of Ezekiel provides the first reading for Mass this weekend. Even a quick reading of the history of ancient



Israel shows that there were precious few periods of prosperity and calm. Indeed, only the reigns of David and Solomon might properly be considered as truly good times.

Some times were more trying than others. Certainly, generations endured miserable times in Babylon, confined in wretchedness, taunted and abused as a minority. Understandably, the Jewish exiles yearned for the day when they could return to their homeland.

Ezekiel built upon this theme of hope and expectation. As did all the prophets, he saw a release from Babylonian bondage not as an accident or a happy turn of events. He saw it as a result of God's mercy and of fidelity to God. Thus, in this reading, the Lord speaks, promising to breathe new life into the defeated, dejected people.

St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans furnishes the second reading. Rome was the absolute center for everything in the first-century Mediterranean world, the political, economic and cultural heart of the vast, powerful empire. It was a sophisticated city.

Rome's inhabitants came from everywhere, having brought with them a great variety of customs and beliefs.

Paul wrote to the Christians in Rome, among whom eventually he would die as a martyr. Many of them also would be martyred.

This reading stresses two spiritual realities. The Christian is linked with God in Christ. So, the Christian possesses the life of the Holy Spirit, a life that will never die.

For its third reading, the Church this weekend presents a passage from the Gospel of St. John. Jesus went to Bethany—then a separate community, now a part of greater Jerusalem—summoned by Martha and Mary who were anxious about their brother Lazarus, the Lord's friend.

When Jesus arrived, Lazarus was dead. In fact, he had been dead for several days. Putrefaction had begun. Responding to the sisters' faith, the Lord restored Lazarus to life.

Several important themes are present in the passage. First, of course, is the active, life-giving love of Jesus. In the mystery of the incarnation, Jesus felt and expressed human love. Secondly, the faith of Martha and Mary is unqualified.

John saw a parallel between the resurrection of Jesus and the restoration of earthly life to Lazarus. In each account, mourning women are essential parts of the story. A stone closed the tomb. The body was dressed, and a face cloth (customary in Jewish burials of the time) covered the face. Finally, in each story, faith and human limitation had important roles.

Reflection

Next week, on Palm Sunday, the Church will invite us to learn and to worship in the most intense liturgical days of its year. Calling us to Christ, and with ancient drama and the most compelling symbolism, it will proclaim Jesus as Savior and as Risen Lord.

This weekend, the Church prepares us for this experience, giving us the beautiful and wondrous story of Lazarus.

Echoing the Lord's own resurrection, today's message is clear. If we are united with Jesus, as Lazarus and his sisters were united, then, in God's power, we will have everlasting life.

However, this eternal life will occur only if we seek Jesus, and if we seek Jesus with the faith uncompromisingly displayed by Martha. Nothing daunted her faith.

The other readings reinforce this theme. Life can be taxing for everyone. Death awaits all. Ezekiel assures us that God will give us true life. It will be a life of joy and fulfillment, a life that never ends.

St. Paul insisted that this divine, unending life abides only in Jesus. So, lovingly, as Lent progresses, as Lent anticipates its culmination, the Church calls us to Jesus, the Lord of life. †

Daily Readings

Monday, March 27

Daniel 13:1-9, 15-17, 19-30, 33-62
or Daniel 13:41c-62
Psalm 23:1-6
John 8:1-11

Tuesday, March 28

Numbers 21:4-9
Psalm 102: 2-3, 16-21
John 8:21-30

Wednesday, March 29

Daniel 3:14-20, 91-92, 95
(Response) Daniel 3:52-56
John 8:31-42

Thursday, March 30

Genesis 17:3-9
Psalm 105:4-9
John 8:51-59

Friday, March 31

Jeremiah 20:10-13
Psalm 18:2-7
John 10:31-42

Saturday, April 1

Ezekiel 37:21-28
(Response) Jeremiah 31:10-13
John 11:45-56

Sunday, April 2

Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord
Matthew 21:1-11 (procession)
Isaiah 50:4-7
Psalm 22:8-9, 17-18, 19-20, 23-24
Philippians 2:6-11
Matthew 26:14-27:66
or Matthew 27:11-54

Question Corner/Jenna Marie Cooper

Church has no formal law regarding penitential practices on Sundays in Lent

Q I understand that the 40 days of Lent do not include Sundays, because every Sunday is a "little Easter" when we remember and celebrate Jesus' resurrection.



I hear people say it is "cheating" if one doesn't abstain on Sundays from whatever one gives up during Lent. But I wonder why one would fast on the

happy day of Sunday?

A The time of Lent is not meant so much to provide us with a literal 40 days of penance, but rather to recall Jesus' 40 days of fasting in the desert.

But let's take a look at the math. From Ash Wednesday to the Wednesday of Holy Week we have six full weeks plus one day. This adds up to 43 days. If we count the Paschal Triduum—that is, Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday—as part of Lent rather than as its own mini liturgical season (which is a bit more technically accurate), this adds another three days, bringing our total up to 46.

But if we subtract the six Sundays of

Lent from this total, that leaves us at 40 days even. In that sense, Sundays do not numerically count toward the days of penance preceding Easter.

However, Sundays during Lent are still very much a part of this liturgical season. At Mass on Lenten Sundays, the priest is still vested in penitential violet. The readings each year are specifically chosen to help draw us into the mystery of Christ's saving passion and death.

At the same time, Sundays retain their character as a day of joy and rest in the Lord. As you note, Sunday is a day which has always been set aside each week specifically to recall Easter. As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states: "Jesus rose from the dead 'on the first day of the week.' Because it is the 'first day,' the day of Christ's resurrection recalls the first creation. ... For Christians it has become the first of all days, the first of all feasts, the Lord's Day" (#1166).

In the *Code of Canon Law*, while canon 1247 reiterates the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays, it also pointedly directs the faithful to "abstain from those works and affairs which hinder" the "joy proper to the Lord's day."

And, notably to those of us who pray the Liturgy of the Hours, the Scripture reading for Morning Prayer on Sundays throughout the Lenten season exhorts us: "Today is holy to the Lord your God. Do not be sad, and do not weep; for today is holy to our Lord. Do not be saddened this day, for rejoicing in the Lord must be your strength!" (Neh 8:9, 10).

Practically, should we take a break from our Lenten sacrifices on Sundays? The answer—like so many things related to the spiritual life—is that it depends on our own individual situation and spiritual needs. Aside from the relatively few required days of fasting and abstinence from meat, our personal Lenten sacrifices are not strictly required by the Church's law to begin with.

So, if we prayerfully discern that God is calling us to enter into the joyful spirit of Sunday more fully—or that we will be better able to make our sacrifices with love and devotion if we refresh ourselves with a weekly break—then no, it's not "cheating" to relax our Lenten penances on Sundays.

But it's also perfectly reasonable for other people to discern that keeping up their Lenten sacrifices throughout the time of Lent will be more spiritually fruitful for them in their own life.

(Jenna Marie Cooper, who holds a licentiate in canon law, is a consecrated virgin and a canonist whose column appears weekly at OSV News. Send your questions to CatholicQA@osv.com.) †



Shelterbration

Supporters of Becky's Place shelter for women and children in Bedford pose for a photo at the organization's Shelterbration fundraiser event on March 4. Becky's Place, which is affiliated with Catholic Charities Bloomington, provides shelter, meals, case management, support services, counseling, educational resources and life skills assistance for women and children who are experiencing homelessness and moving toward a life of self-sufficiency. For more information or to donate, go to cutt.ly/BeckysPlace. (Submitted photo by Corrina Hayes, Timeless Images Photography)

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.

BALENTINE, Norma Jean, 85, St. John Paul II, Sellersburg, March 3. Mother of Shirley Baumann, Kathy Montgomery and Sandy Wilson. Sister of Martha Lozier and Joanie Worrall. Grandmother of eight. Great-grandmother of 13. Great-great-grandmother of one.

BANICH, Jo Ann, 62, St. Michael the Archangel, Indianapolis, Feb. 21. Sister of Joseph Banich. Aunt and great-aunt of several.

BENNETT, Mary K., 75, St. Jude, Indianapolis, March 6. Mother of Laura Memmer and Barbara Raymond. Sister of Donald Kilmack. Grandmother of two.

BLUE, James E., 70, St. Paul, Tell City, Feb. 26. Son of Jean Blue. Brother of Patty Dixon and Jeff Blue. Uncle and great-uncle of several.

BRINKSNEADER, Norma Jean (Genet), 87, St. Paul, Tell City, March 8. Mother of Vicki Schaefer and Mark Brinksneider. Sister of Clarence, Doyle and Jerry Genet. Grandmother of four. Great-grandmother of five.

BUCKLER, Karolyn, 73, St. Gabriel, Connorsville, March 1. Mother of Christopher Buckler. Sister of Kristine Reed and Kathy

Sanford. Grandmother of two.

DARLING, Patricia M., 79, St. Pius X, Indianapolis, March 11. Mother of Joe and Thomas Darling. Sister of Carol Walker and James Patterson. Grandmother of four. Great-grandmother of one.

ENDRES, David, 80, SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi, Greenwood, Feb. 28. Husband of Eileen Endres. Father of Darleen Rivas and Erik Endres. Brother of Maryann Gosda, Marlene Sveum-Rutz, Carol, Kenneth, Leo, Paul and Richard Endres. Grandfather of several.

GLENN, Barbara, 95, Holy Spirit, Indianapolis, March 11. Mother of Kathleen Rogers. Stepmother of Robert Glenn. Grandmother of 10. Great-grandmother and great-great-grandmother of several.

GRAF, Marcella L. (Kirchgessner), 89, St. John Paul II, Sellersburg, March 4. Mother of Becky Mayfield, Ray and Rick Graf. Sister of Millie Fessel, Martha Rhoades and Al Kirchgessner. Grandmother of 10. Great-grandmother of eight.

KOENIG, Marcella, 101, St. Luke the Evangelist, Indianapolis, March 3. Mother of Beth Hernly and Abbe Hohmann. Grandmother of two.

MEYER, Elisabeth A., 95, St. Mary, Greensburg, March 11. Mother of Dorine Bruns, Carol Efron, Virginia Gordon, Richard and Stephen Meyer. Grandmother of eight. Great-grandmother of 11.

MILLER, Marcella E., 92, St. Louis, Batesville, Feb. 28. Mother of Pam Nordmeyer, Tom and Scott Miller. Grandmother of five. Great-grandmother of two.

MOLLAUN, Marian, 93, St. Louis, Batesville, March 13. Mother of Kim Mollaun-Smith, Pam and Sam Mollaun. Grandmother of five. Great-grandmother of 11.

REINHARDT, Marge L., 74, St. Luke the Evangelist, Indianapolis, Feb. 28. Mother of Marriann and Kenneth Reinhardt. Sister of Patricia Kapinski. Grandmother of one.

Honoring Blessed Michael McGivney



Franciscan Sister Olivia Rico, who serves in the vocations office of the Diocese of Lubbock, Texas, prays before a relic of Blessed Michael McGivney on March 8 at Christ the King Cathedral in Lubbock. Blessed Michael was the founder of the Knights of Columbus. He was beatified in 2020. In the first week of March, his relic was taken to three dioceses in Texas for veneration. (OSV News photo/Lucas Flores, Diocese of Lubbock)

RUTLEDGE, Mary, 90, St. Michael the Archangel, Indianapolis, March 9. Mother of Kathy Crecelius and Steve Rutledge. Grandmother of two.

SIDEREWICZ, William F., 87, St. Martin of Tours, Martinsville, March 7. Husband of Marilyn Siderewicz. Father of Suzie Lipps and Joseph Siderewicz. Brother of Kathy

Rochowiak and Thomas Siderewicz. Grandfather of four. Great-grandfather of two.

TOSICK, Michael J., 78, St. Paul, Bloomington, Jan. 17. Husband of Janet Tosick. Father of Anna, John and Michael Tosick. Brother of Marianne Udagama and Bill Tosick. Grandfather of five.

TURNER, Mildred A., 92, Holy Spirit, Indianapolis, Feb. 28. Mother of Anne Massing, Mary Moore, Rose, Brett, Dave, Ric and Tim Turner. Grandmother of 16. Great-grandmother of 18.

WHEELER, Janet, 81, St. Paul, Tell City, March 8. Mother of Jennifer Simpson, Chris, Jeffrey and Jerry

Wheeler. Sister of Steve Wills. Grandmother of six. Great-grandmother of four.

WILHELM, Adele F., 88, St. Louis, Batesville, March 8. Wife of Arthur Wilhelm. Mother of Amy Lawson and Jeffrey Wilhelm. Sister of Margretta Huster and Charlotte Wittekind Schoenberger. Grandmother of two. †

HENNING

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is our entry point for living out what St. Paul means by being the Body of Christ.

In this age of global connectivity and deep division, what other organization or chat group can you belong to that includes Democrats and Republicans, rich and poor, sick and strong, newborns and the dying, the immigrant

Online Lay Ministry Formation

The Archdiocese of Indianapolis has partnered with the University of Notre Dame and Catholic Distance University (CDU) to offer not-for-credit online theology classes:

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and the mayor, the deeply committed and those whose faith is hanging on by a thread? As James Joyce wrote, “Catholic means ‘here comes everybody.’”

All that diversity is good; all the division, however, can sometimes make it feel like we don’t all belong to the same Church. Traditionalists long for the “pre-Vatican II Church.” Progressives are frustrated at how long it can take the Church to change. Proudly ethnic Catholics rely on cultural traditions and advocate for their inclusion. Christmas and Easter Catholics just want to know when to stand and when to kneel. There also are Catholics who no longer practice but—unable to resist the gravitational pull of the Church—are still orbiting the parish, but from a distance.

Members of a parish do not assemble because they like each other. Rather, we gather together around the person of Christ, and do our best. Being part of a parish challenges us to grow in faith and charity by overriding our egos and opinions. That can mean hanging in there when you and the new pastor don’t see eye-to-eye, or the Mass schedule changes and your preferred time disappears.

Then again, sometimes belonging to a parish means hot dishes delivered to your door by people you barely know, but who are praying for you.

Forming his first faith community, Jesus chose a hothead, a tax collector, a traitor, a doubter, a fanatical

nationalist, and various thickheads and pessimists. Like the Apostles, each of us have stories of being graced and wounded. None of us is whole, nor fully mature. Hence, there will always be a great variation in the commitment and participation of people in a parish.

We are all so different, and yet, miraculously, here we are, 2,000 years later, still gathering around the Scriptures and the Eucharist, as Jesus asked of us at the Last Supper. We’re doing it, even if sometimes it’s with a heavy sigh. And whether celebrating with stranger-Catholics while on vacation or in the comfort of our most familiar pew spots, we have a home in our parishes.

I always think of that when my holiday has ended. Working in parish ministry sometimes drew me deeply into the lives of fellow parishioners. At Mass, I would glance about, knowing a little of the personal struggles of the people around me—marriage troubles, loneliness, health concerns—and I would silently pray for their intentions.

That meant I wasn’t just invested in the liturgy—I was invested in the lives of the people of my parish. I had moved from “attending” to “belonging.” It is not always easy, but it is always “home.”

(Claire Henning, D. Min., worked as a pastoral associate in her home parish for many years before leaving to co-found parishcatalyst.org. She currently writes at catholic-conversations.com.) †

CROWE

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his Church, a common way of life not constructed by individual choice. It has a common calendar. It has penitential practices. It has common prayer. It has common devotion. It has a common vocabulary. It is a way of life which tells me every moment of my life that the Church can make demands upon me and must make demands

because she is the body of Jesus Christ, to whom all authority has been given in heaven and on earth.”

What a gift we have in the Church—a built-in way to structure our days and to develop habits that, centered around prayer and the sacraments, can help even those of us who, when it comes to building lives of routine, still have a long way to go.

(Gretchen Crowe is editor in chief for OSV News. Follow her on Twitter at @GretchenOSV.) †

REPORT SEXUAL MISCONDUCT NOW

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

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



The renovated Community Pump House Art Studio sits on the grounds of the Conventual Franciscans in Mount St. Francis. Conventual Franciscan Father Vince Petersen and Louisville, Ky., artist Chris Chappell painted the *Laudato Si'* mural on the studio. (Submitted photo)



The Franciscan Arts Initiative hosts an arts sale event at the Community Pump House Studio on the grounds of the Conventual Franciscans in Mount St. Francis. (Submitted photo)

Conventual Franciscans open renovated art studio for events

Criterion staff report

The Conventual Franciscans at Mount St. Francis had a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Feb. 14 for its renovated Community Pump House Art Studio that

is part of its Franciscan Arts Initiative. The studio in the past hosted painting classes and photography workshops. Its renovation will now expand the programs that can be offered there. They will include music instruction, dance

classes, poetry and writing workshops. Situated on the Franciscans' 400-acre nature sanctuary, those taking part in programming at the studio can be inspired by the beauty of creation all around them.

For more information about the Community Pump House Art Studio and its programming, visit cutt.ly/conventual, send an e-mail to Debbie Nichols at d.nichols@franciscansusa.org, or call 812-923-5250. †

Brownsville's Bishop Flores named to synod preparatory commission

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Cardinal Mario Grech, secretary-general of the Synod of Bishops, has named Bishop Daniel E. Flores of Brownsville, Texas, and six others to be members of the preparatory commission for the general assembly of the Synod of Bishops in October.

According to the apostolic constitution for the synods, the secretary-general establishes the commission "for further exploration of the theme and for the redaction of any

documents that may be issued prior to the Synod Assembly."

The names of the seven commission members were released by the Vatican on March 15.

Mercedarian Sister Shizue "Filo" Hirota from Tokyo was the only woman named to the preparatory commission. She is a consultant for the Catholic Council for Justice and Peace of the Japanese bishops' conference of Japan.

The other members are: Jesuit Father Giacomo Costa, who will serve as coordinator; Archbishop Timothy Costelloe of Perth, president of the Australian bishops' conference; Bishop Lucio A. Muandula of Xai-Xai,

Mozambique; Father Dario Vitali, a professor of theology at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome; and Polish Msgr. Tomasz Trafny, a member of the synod secretariat staff, who will serve as secretary of the commission. †

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Interested parties should contact Daniel Herbertz at dherbertz@archindy.org or 317-236-1473.

Food Services Manager Needed

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House is seeking a full time Food Services Manager to be responsible for all aspects of the daily food service operational needs at Fatima Retreat House. This position involves maintaining food cost and labor cost budgets; menu planning and ordering; inventory control; supervising, training and scheduling of kitchen staff; and cooking. With a team of part-time cooks, the Food Services Manager presents Fatima meals and refreshments attractively and in a spirit of hospitality. The successful candidate must be available for a flexible schedule of at least 40 hours per week. Days may vary throughout the week, Monday through Sunday, depending on the Retreat House schedule.

The successful applicant must have institutional foodservice experience, supervisory and management experience, have good time management and communication skills and be attentive to detail. Also, they must have a heart for ministry and the mission of Fatima Retreat House.

Compensation is commensurate with experience. Benefits include Comprehensive Health plan, Employer contributed HSA for medical plan participants, Dental Insurance, Paid Vacation, Sick, and Personal Days, Life and Disability Insurance and 403(b) matching.

Persons may send a letter or email of interest to:

Georgene Beiriger, Director
Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House
5353 East 56th Street
Indianapolis, IN 46226
gbeiriger@archindy.org

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Experts see hope for pastoral inclusion of Catholics with disabilities

(March is National Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month.)

(OSV News)—At his home in Saginaw, Mich., 45-year-old John Kraemer spends hours each day at his craft and vocation—building elaborate models of Catholic churches, then filling them with figures for display at various parishes.

His materials are simple ones: brightly colored LEGO plastic building blocks (about 25,000 of them) that have delighted children for decades.

But the message offered by Kraemer—who has a mild form of cerebral palsy, along with visual and hearing impairments—is a profound one.

“My work is a prayer,” Kraemer told OSV News. “I’m sharing my passion for the faith through the [LEGO] bricks. And the figures in the church include people in wheelchairs, power chairs ... older people, service dogs.”

The point, said Kraemer, is to show that “all are welcome in this church. ... People often see themselves sitting inside the project, [which] ... is not a reflection of the past, but a prayer for the future.”

And those seeking to better include persons with disabilities in the life of the Church say the horizon is a hopeful one, despite lingering challenges.

“We’re going in the right direction,” Charleen Katra, executive director of the National Catholic Partnership on Disability (NCPD), told OSV News. “There has been a lot of movement [forward] over the last couple of decades.”

“I feel like we are making pretty good progress, and what makes my heart happy is to see parishes [aware] that this effort to include people with disabilities is part of the everyday mission for the Church,” said Immaculate Heart of Mary Sister Kathleen Schipani, director of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia’s Office for Persons with Disabilities and former chair of the NCPD board of directors.

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), some 26% (or 1 in 4) of adults in the U.S. have some type of disability. Overall, 11.1% have serious difficulty with mobility, 10.9% experience significant issues with cognition, 5.7% are deaf or hard of hearing, 4.9% have a vision disability and 3% have a self-care disability that impedes dressing or bathing.

Both Katra and Sister Kathleen told OSV News the continental phase of the 2021-2024 Synod on Synodality, with its various listening sessions, helped to highlight the concerns and insights of this significant demographic within the Church.

“The synod was a good first step,” said Sister Kathleen. “The process was particularly helpful, especially listening to the stories of people with disabilities and how they see the efforts of the Church. The only way we make progress is by listening to the stories.”

When voices of persons with disabilities are heard, pastoral approaches move “from inclusion to belonging,” said Katra.

She has submitted a proposal to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops asking them to embrace that perspective by issuing a new pastoral statement on persons with disabilities, one that updates the bishops’ original document in 1978.

“My suggestion for the new one is to focus more on abilities than disabilities, and ... a sense

of belonging, at every level of human feeling and experience,” said Katra.

Instead of being an initiative for a few qualified specialists, pastoral ministry to persons with disabilities should involve “every member of the Church [so that] ... all people have access, feel welcome and specifically know they belong within the Church and have access to the life of the Church,” said Sister Kathleen.

From that viewpoint, persons with disabilities can be seen as “agents of evangelization, not a subject of evangelization,” said Katra. “Their vocation is to serve the Church, not to be served.”

Both she and Sister Kathleen pointed to several areas where pastoral ministry to those with disabilities requires greater investment.

Catechetical and faith formation materials still need to be made more accessible, said Sister Kathleen, who is 2017 developed and released the “Religious Signs for Families” app to help deaf children and family members learn to pray in American Sign Language (ASL).

“We still see that some prominent publishers don’t caption their multimedia,” she said, adding that simply relying on adaptive technology to bridge the gap is insufficient.

“Ask someone who is actually using adaptive technology,” said Sister Kathleen. “For people who are deaf, you can use automatic captioning, but it doesn’t do a good job with the religious terms. So taking that extra step expresses that we’re keeping in mind people who are deaf and hard of hearing, and that they’re cherished members of our community.”

The Word on Fire Institute’s creation of the Venerable Jerome Lejeune Fellowship—designed to raise awareness of the importance of those with intellectual disabilities in both the Church and the culture—was a positive sign from a key provider of faith formation content, she said. Named after the French scientist who identified the genetic cause of Down syndrome, the inaugural fellowship is currently held by Mark Bradford, founding president of the U.S. branch of the Paris-based Jerome Lejeune Foundation and the parent of an adult son with Down syndrome.

Making Catholic schools “more inclusive for children with intellectual disabilities” also is vital, said Sister Kathleen. “A fully segregated school for special education is not a trend that has a future, and research bears that out.”

A 2018 study by the National Council on Disability titled “The Segregation of Students with Disabilities” found that “inclusive education results in the best learning outcomes.”



John Kraemer, 45, is pictured with one of his church models made from LEGO blocks at his home in Saginaw, Mich., in a March 13, 2020, photo. He spends hours each day at his craft and vocation—building elaborate models of Catholic churches, then filling them with figures for display at various parishes. (OSV News photo/Danielle McGrew Tenbusch, courtesy Diocese of Saginaw)

Offering welcome to those with mental illness, Alzheimer’s and dementia is increasingly important, especially as the number of affected individuals grows across the nation, said Katra.

From 2019-2020, close to 21% of U.S. adults—more than 50 million—were experiencing a mental illness, according to the nonprofit Mental Health America. The CDC estimates that by 2060, the number of cases of Alzheimer’s disease, the most common form of dementia, will rise in the U.S. from 5.6 million to 14 million.

“The parish can be and should be a place of hope,” said Katra. “It behooves the Church to be that safe place, that home for people to come and be accepted where they are, so we can as Pope Francis says so beautifully ... journey with them to a better place.”

Kraemer said that is the goal of his brick-by-brick labor of love.

“As I’m building, I’m praying on the life of the Church, of our parish communities ... especially after COVID, when we took major hits,” he said. “I pray that people would make the Mass a priority, that more people would be willing to explore their talents, and use them as a way of evangelizing like I do.” †

Wyoming becomes first state to ban use or prescription of abortion pills

(OSV News)—Wyoming became on March 17 the first state in the nation to specifically ban the use or prescription of abortion pills.

Gov. Mark Gordon, R-Wyo., signed the law with a ruling by a federal judge in Texas still outstanding that could potentially implement a nationwide ban on the drug mifepristone amid a legal challenge brought by pro-life groups.

The state’s legislature passed two pieces of legislation in March that would restrict abortion in the state, but the governor allowed the other bill to become law without his signature.

The other bill prohibits most

abortion in the state with narrow exceptions for cases of rape or incest, risks to the mother’s life, or “a lethal fetal anomaly.”

Local media reported that Gordon, a Republican, told reporters in a March 7 press conference he was weighing the bills’ constitutionality and wanted to ensure there is an understanding of “how they interplay with one another; how they interplay with existing law.

“And then also whether there are any unforeseen consequences that could be problematic,” he said.

State law gives Gordon 15 days to veto legislation if he so chooses, otherwise it becomes law without his signature after approval by the legislature.

Gordon announced a list of his recently signed bills on March 9, including legislation to boost the state’s tourism economy and efforts to protect the state’s

Native American cultures, but the abortion bills were not among those he signed at that time.

The ACLU of Wyoming had called on Gordon to veto the bills, circulating a petition arguing that “deeply private, personal and unique decisions about abortion should be made by pregnant people in consultation with their doctors—who should be able to treat their patients according to their best medical [judgment].”

Students for Life Action (SFL), the lobbying arm of Students for Life of America, had urged Gordon to sign both bills, which the group characterized as important efforts to protect mothers as well as the preborn.

“Preborn children in Wyoming needed their representatives to step up to bat for them, and that’s exactly what we saw play out through a grueling amendment

process thanks to principled leaders who boldly defended the preborn,” Dustin Curtis, SFL Action vice president of political affairs and operations, said in a statement.

Adam Schwend, Susan B. Anthony (SBA) Pro-Life America’s western regional director, said in a statement that the legislation sent to Gordon’s desk “values all human life, born and unborn, and the well-being of women.

“SBA Pro-Life America applauds every lawmaker who played a role in advancing safeguards against dangerous chemical abortion drugs, extending medical coverage for moms to a year after childbirth and protecting unborn children of all ages,” Schwend said. “We applaud legislators for being champions for the most vulnerable among us and advocates for the health, safety and security of mothers.” †



Gov. Mark Gordon