

# TODAY'S CATHOLIC

Volume 94 No. 7

TODAYSCATHOLIC.org



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## TODAY'S CATHOLIC

(ISSN 0891-1533)  
(USPS 403630)

Official newspaper of the  
Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend  
P.O. Box 11169  
Fort Wayne, IN 46856

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Published weekly except for the last Sunday in December; and every other week from third Sunday in May through fourth Sunday in August, by the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, 915 S. Clinton St., P.O. Box 390, Fort Wayne, IN 46801. Periodicals postage paid at Fort Wayne, IN, and additional mailing office.

**POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to: Today's Catholic, P.O. Box 11169, Fort Wayne, IN 46856-1169 or email: [circulation@diocesefwsb.org](mailto:circulation@diocesefwsb.org)

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News deadline is 10 days prior to publication date. Advertising deadline is nine days before publication date.

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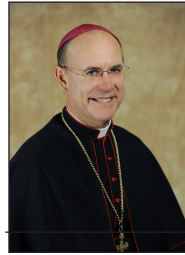
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# With Catholic Relief Services in El Salvador



## IN TRUTH AND CHARITY

BISHOP KEVIN C. RHOADES

*Following is the first of two articles recounting Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades' meeting and visit to Catholic Relief Services projects in the country of El Salvador Feb. 3-7.*

I have always wanted to visit El Salvador. At my first assignment as a priest in York, Pennsylvania, I worked part-time at a Latino parish. One of the parishioners tutored me in Spanish. He was a migrant from El Salvador who came to the United States since his life was at risk during the civil war in El Salvador. He and his family were threatened with death because of his work in the Church organizing the people to defend their human rights. He had been inspired by the preaching of Archbishop Oscar Romero, who was assassinated several months before he escaped to the United States. As he tutored me in Spanish, I learned so much about the plight of the people of El Salvador during that time when 75,000 were killed in the civil war.

During my week in El Salvador visiting several projects of Catholic Relief Services, we celebrated Mass every day in various parishes. In the middle of the trip, we had Mass in the chapel where now-St. Oscar Romero was assassinated on March 24, 1980. It was an emotional experience to concelebrate at the altar where Archbishop Romero stood when an assassin's bullet pierced his heart. Seconds before he was shot, St. Romero had prayed: "May this Body immolated and this Blood sacrificed for mankind nourish us also, that we may give our body and our blood over to suffering and pain, like Christ — not for Self, but to give harvests of peace and justice to our People."

Cardinal Gregorio Rosa Chávez, a close collaborator of Archbishop Romero, celebrated the Mass. Cardinal Chávez spoke to us about St. Oscar Romero. He was very supportive of the work of CRS, which he knew well because of the partnership of CRS with Caritas El Salvador, of which he was president for many years. It was a surprise a few years ago when Pope Francis named Bishop Chávez a cardinal since he was not the archbishop, but an auxiliary bishop of the archdiocese. By naming him a cardinal, the Holy Father recognized his many years of devoted ministry to the poor and his efforts to promote peace and justice in El Salvador, continuing the work of St. Romero.

After the Mass, I visited the little room off the sacristy of the chapel where Archbishop Romero lived for several months, and then our group visited the simple house the people built for him near the chapel. There we saw his blood-stained shirt and vestments, some of his simple possessions and photos from his life and death.

Like his close friend, Jesuit Father Rutilio Grande, who was murdered three years earlier and whose cause for beatification is advancing, Archbishop Romero was killed for his preaching of the Gospel, which included his condemnation of violence and injustice against his beloved Salvadoran people. He believed in the Church's duty to help the poor



Photos by Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades

**The words on the sanctuary wall of the Metropolitan Cathedral of San Salvador read, in Spanish, "On this altar, Msgr. Oscar A. Romero offered his life to God for his people." Archbishop St. Romero was assassinated in 1980 while celebrating Mass at the cathedral. Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades visited El Salvador Feb. 3-7 to attend meetings of Catholic Relief Services and tour CRS projects in the country; he celebrated Mass with Cardinal Gregorio Rosa Chávez, Bishop William Ernesto Iraheta Rivera and Bishop Felipe J. Estévez in the cathedral, on the same spot where St. Romero died.**

and to champion human rights. In a homily the day before his assassination, he had delivered the following stinging rebuke to soldiers in the armed forces (words that possibly provoked his murder):

"Brothers, you came from your own people. You are killing your own brothers. Any human order to kill must be subordinate to the law of God, which says 'Thou shalt not kill.' No soldier is obliged to obey an order contrary to the law of God. No one has to obey an immoral law. It is high time you obeyed your consciences rather than sinful orders. The Church cannot remain silent before such an abomination.... In the name of God, in the name of the suffering people whose cry rises to heaven more loudly each day, I implore you, I beg you, I order you: stop the repression."

Throughout the week in El Salvador, everywhere we visited, I saw images of St. Oscar Romero. Many people spoke of him, including our CRS staff in El Salvador who

are inspired by St. Romero in their service of the poor and in their peace-making efforts. During the week, I remembered the famous words spoken by Archbishop Romero a couple weeks before his assassination: "If God accepts the sacrifice of my life, may my death be for the freedom of my people. A bishop will die, but the Church of God, which is the people, will never perish. I do not believe in death without resurrection. If they kill me, I will rise again in the people of El Salvador." I believe those prophetic words are coming true, as I witnessed so much good being done by priests, lay people, and CRS staff, all so deeply committed to peace and justice. They have truly taken to heart the teaching of St. Oscar Romero that "peace is the product of justice and love." I saw several works of peace and justice throughout the week-long visit.

**EL SALVADOR, page 3**



**EL SALVADOR, from page 2**

On the first full day, we visited one of the six Agriculture and Water Projects CRS is currently implementing in El Salvador. The goals of the program are to restore soil and protect water resources through the application of low cost, high-impact conservation agriculture practices. We visited the Raices project in the western part of the country, in the department (state) of Ahuachapan. First, we celebrated Mass at the parish church in the town of Atiquizaya, where the local bishop of the Diocese of Santa Ana was the principal celebrant. The church was full as many people came to pray with us and to thank CRS for its work in their country.

After Mass, we visited one of the small farms and learned from the husband and wife who farm the land about how they have implemented the water-smart agriculture practices they learned from CRS. The soil on their farm has been restored. The increased productivity has increased their farm earnings. This couple is now leading and helping other farmers in water smart and conservation agriculture practices. This is so important in a country where farmers are adversely affected by human-induced soil degradation and are vulnerable to climate shocks. Thanks to CRS, many farmers now have more sustainable and profitable farms.

After visiting Raices Ahuachapan, we visited with participants in the Azure project, an innovative social enterprise model which provides a reliable supply of safe water and sanitation services to under-served rural households. CRS contrib-



**Farmers in the town of Atiquizaya discuss the results of agricultural practices they have learned from Catholic Relief Services. CRS is implementing six agriculture and water projects in El Salvador.**

utes money toward technical services for water service providers. This is a great need in El Salvador where about 25% of the population does not have piped water services in their home. CRS has also mobilized other funding for Azure so they are able to improve and expand water services in the country. The Catholic Church in El Salvador has been advocating for the passage of a National Water Law which would recognize water as a basic human right and in favor of the national management of water resources, against the privatization of water. The bishops of El Salvador, like Pope Francis, reject the privatization of this resource since access to safe drinkable

water is a basic and universal human right. We finished our stay in the Ahuachapan state with a visit to the El Jicaro cooperative where, together with Caritas El Salvador, CRS is working with local leaders and youth to restore land, implement good agriculture practices and stimulate local agriculture markets. It was good to see these opportunities for young people in agriculture and landscape restoration through education and training. CRS is working with these young people to prepare the next generation of farmers and community leaders.

*Continued in next week's edition of Today's Catholic.*



**Public schedule of Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades**

Monday, February 17: 5:15 p.m. — Mass and Lecture, Moreau Seminary, University of Notre Dame  
 Tuesday, February 18: 9:30 a.m. — Mass and Pastoral Visit, Marian High School, Mishawaka  
 Wednesday, February 19: 12:30 p.m. — Meeting of Diocesan Finance Council, Wyndham Garden Hotel, Warsaw  
 Thursday, February 20: 10:30 a.m. — Meeting of Presbyteral Council, Sacred Heart Rectory, Warsaw  
 Saturday, February 22: 3:30 p.m. — Question and Answer Session, Rekindle the Fire Men's Conference, Allen County War Memorial Coliseum, Fort Wayne, with Mass at 4:30 p.m.  
 Saturday, February 22: 7:30 p.m. — Talk and Holy Hour for Diocesan World Youth Day, Bishop Luers High School, Fort Wayne



**Many in the country of El Salvador continue to look to St. Romero for hope and inspiration. Next to a mural of the archbishop, Bishop Rhoades stands with Azdrubal Corvera, director of the Jovenes Constructores program that gives youth a third alternative to joining gangs or migrating.**



**The crypt containing the body of St. Romero is located in the basement of the Metropolitan Cathedral.**



**Following the same route Archbishop Romero once walked, Bishop Rhoades gets a view of Soyapango — a suburb of the capital city of San Salvador. Although the situation is improving, Soyapango has a reputation as the most dangerous city in Central America due to gang violence.**



**The bishop visits the home of one of three young people who are obtaining a post-secondary education thanks to four-year scholarships provided in the name of St. Romero.**



# Love of the Eucharist draws grandfather to reconciliation

BY JENNIFER BARTON

After being away from the Catholic Church for 40 years, one man's return to the faith was simply a matter of listening to the still, small voice speaking within.

"You shouldn't have done that."

At a first Communion celebration for his grandchild in 2007, Steve Till thought little of following everyone else in the church up to receive Communion, even though he hadn't been to Mass in a long time. Throughout the following week, however, that voice continued to speak the same words within him. He came to understand that he should not have received Communion that day without first receiving absolution in the sacrament of reconciliation.

Till stopped practicing the faith he was raised in after graduating high school in 1966. "I realize now, in retrospect, that my falling away from the Church was because I never really knew about the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist." For decades he lived a very worldly lifestyle, including indulging in pornography addiction he developed in the seventh grade.

He had long searched for hap-



Jennifer Barton

**Because of his fervent love of the Eucharist, Steve Till, a parishioner at Most Precious Blood Parish, Fort Wayne, received the sacrament of reconciliation and began practicing his Catholic faith after 40 years away. He now finds God working through him to bring others home.**

piness in the world. He had even visited other Christian denominations, yet he had not considered returning to the Catholic Church.

Heeding the voice that would not be silent, Till began speaking to a priest about his life experiences and about his questions

regarding the Catholic Church. One meeting became two, and two became more. Till found speaking with the priest effortless, and he never felt pushed into returning.

Confession still terrified him at the time, especially with the baggage of his past weighing heavily on him. He thought himself too far gone for God's forgiveness, that it was not meant for someone as sinful as he. He was wrong.

Till finally decided it was time for reconciliation and headed to the confessional. "That first time was like I took a shower and it was all washed away. It was a rebirth, a burden lifted off of me; a burden I didn't realize I was carrying." Afterward, the same priest warmly welcomed him home.

Of confession, Till said, "To approach it is difficult, but once you've been through it ... what an experience. What a gift God has given us to get rid of that burden. Confession and Communion — two of the greatest things in the world."

Now Till was able to receive that which his heart most longed for: the Eucharist. "Once I realized that I needed the Body of Christ, coming back to the Church was a piece of cake. I'd have torn down walls to get to it. Once I felt the presence of Jesus Christ, I couldn't

do anything else."

For Till, conversion did not end at the confessional door. He still had an addiction to fight, and said that it took six to eight months to finally overcome it. His love of the Eucharist was the weapon he picked up to fight against pornography.

"I was so enamored of the Body of Christ that I had to make a choice. Which am I gonna have? My pattern, for a while was I'd go to confession, I'd go to Communion and back to where I was." He knew he couldn't continue such a vicious cycle.

After Mass one Saturday evening, he heard a presentation by Father John Ricardo on true repentance. "My resolve at that point was, the only way I was going to defeat this was to receive the Body of Christ every day."

And so he did. Every day for over three years, Till went to Mass and received holy Communion, no matter where he was. Throughout this time, he became amazed at how God made Communion available to him. Once, when working in Warsaw, he realized he could not make it back to Fort Wayne in time for Mass. He discovered that Sacred Heart Parish had an evening Mass, and he was able to attend.

"God made it available to me

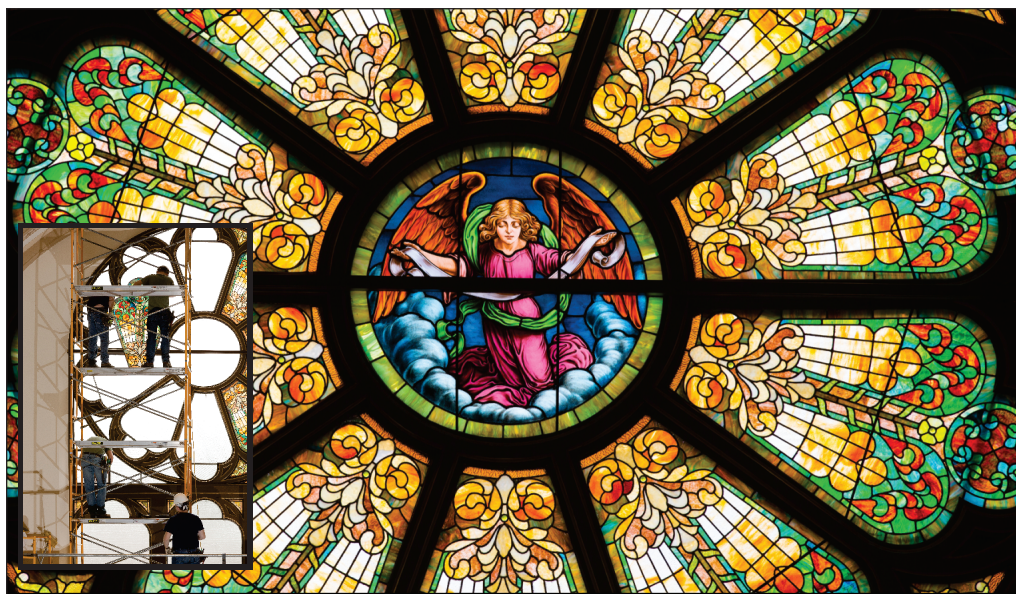
because he knew I needed it. Wherever I was at, it was always there."

His love for Communion led Till to become an extraordinary minister of holy Communion at his parish, Most Precious Blood. Through ministry at St. Joseph Hospital in Fort Wayne, he also felt the life-changing power of bringing Communion to those who may be receiving Jesus for the last time.

Bringing people to God has become his mission. God already has used Till to help bring others back into the Church, beginning with a woman who had similarly left the Church for nearly 40 years. One day, she borrowed Matthew Kelly's book "Resisting Happiness" from Till, then called to ask if she could attend Mass with him, to which he enthusiastically agreed. After going to Mass a few times, she told him of her wish to receive the Eucharist.

Till was adamant that she should not until she went to confession. Strongly opposed to the idea, she refused. So when Till received a Dynamic Catholic CD called "The Seven Pillars of Catholicism" — one of which is confession — he gave it to her.

**RECONCILIATION, page 5**



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# Bill aims to help the homeless by removing residency requirement

During his nine years as a township trustee, Jack Sandlin was on the front lines of serving the most vulnerable in his community, including the homeless.

The more than 1,000 township trustee offices across Indiana are often considered a last-resort source of help for those in the community who are in need of the most basic necessities, such as food and shelter. But like other trustees, Sandlin often found his hands tied from providing desperately needed help to those without a place to call home. That's because, by the very nature of their situation, they were lacking one basic requirement: proof of residency in the township.

Now, as a state senator, he wants to change that. His proposed legislation, Senate Bill 67 — which unanimously passed the Indiana Senate — would allow a township trustee to assist homeless people who cannot establish their township of residency.

"It all goes back to the origin of the township trustee, providing emergency assistance to those in the community," said Sen. Sandlin, R-Indianapolis, who served as trustee of Perry Township on the city's south side for nearly a decade. "People living in the township can fill out an application and are entitled to receive help if they fall within certain income guidelines. But the key is that they have to be a resident of the township. Everything hinges on proving that residency."

"This is an attempt to modernize the law and give trustees the opportunity to provide temporary housing assistance and other help when the person cannot provide that proof of residency in the township."

The Indiana Catholic Conference supports the bill, in keeping with its commitment to helping the most vulnerable in society.

"This bill is important

because the nature of homelessness may very well make it difficult, if not impossible, for a person to establish residency," said Angela Espada, executive director of the ICC, the public policy voice of the Catholic Church in Indiana. "Without this law, the very reason a person needs assistance would prevent a township trustee from providing that much-needed assistance."

Senate Bill 67 provides for Indiana townships with more than 10,000 residents to give aid to the homeless who may not be from their township or who cannot prove their legal residence. It also requires trustees to compile and publish a list of all available resources for the homeless in their area by March 1 of each year.

That list would include services offered by not-for-profit organizations and religious entities such as the Catholic Church.

"I have a great appreciation for the many nonprofits that address this issue, including churches," Sandlin said. "My encouragement to them is to keep doing what they're doing."

Among the resources Sandlin knows well is the Holy Family Shelter, which opened in 1984 as the first emergency shelter specifically for homeless families in Indianapolis. The near-westside facility, a program of Catholic Charities within the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, can house up to 22 homeless families a night, according to its director, Bill Bickel. In addition to providing the basics of food and temporary housing, the shelter offers residents comprehensive social services to assist them with life skills and job training, ultimately with the goal of securing employment and permanent housing.

"Serving the poor and the homeless is a very complex endeavor," Bickel said. "At the core of who we are is establishing a plan to address what is ideally the one and only time a family will be homeless."

In turn, Bickel and other staffers at the Holy Family Shelter often work closely with township trustees on individual cases and share the common goal of leading people toward self-

back to Church." He realizes now the pain his leaving had caused his parents, and he felt additional pain over his sons not having been raised in the faith.

He stresses the importance of committing one's life to Christ and believes that it's a necessary step.

"Everyone I know is looking for something to fill their heart with love. And until I came back to the Church, I was trying to find that out there. It's not there. I have all the things now that I

## INDIANA CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

BY VICTORIA ARTHUR

sufficiency.

"That partnership between us and the trustee's office is central to what we do," said Bryan Chatfield, associate director at the shelter. He and Breanna Klink, manager of residential services, spoke of the current roadblocks that many of their residents face under current laws.

"We see so many people who are lacking the essential documents to prove not only their residency but even their identity," Klink said. "We are constantly referring people to the trustee's office (for various matters), but this lack of documentation is a real barrier."

One person who can attest to that is Ben Jackson, a Columbus, Indiana, township trustee, who recently spoke to state lawmakers in support of Senate Bill 67. His testimony included a vivid and literal example of the difficult road that the homeless often face.

Just last month, a man was found walking barefoot along U.S. 31 near Columbus when he was brought to Jackson's office by the local sheriff. The man said he was on his way from Chicago to his sister's home in Atlanta. Although this case was well outside his jurisdiction, Jackson stepped up to help, providing the man with a Greyhound bus ticket to Atlanta when a phone call confirmed that there indeed was a place for him at his sister's house.

"I became a trustee with an eye toward how I could best help the poor in my community," Jackson told the Senate committee on local government. "It quickly became apparent to me that one of the areas most in need of my attention was the assistance we were giving the homeless." He added that the trustee's office is "uniquely

looked for."

It was in the arms of the Church that Till found true fulfillment and peace. The joy he experiences through his re-found Catholic faith is something he wants to bring every fallen-away Catholic to.

"The door is open; come on back. It's easy. And the biggest thing is, it's for eternity. We are going to live forever. And what we do here will determine how we spend eternity. It's not easy, but it's forever."

sued to address homelessness in our community."

Partnerships between local government and the nonprofit sector can be even more effective, according to Jackson, and Columbus offers a shining example. Brighter Days, an emergency shelter in Columbus, is a joint effort between Jackson's Columbus Township Trustee's Office and Love Chapel Ministries, the ecumenical assembly of Bartholomew County churches. That assembly includes St. Bartholomew Parish in Columbus.

This partnership had come to the attention of Sandlin as he was preparing Senate Bill 67, and he invited Jackson to share his experiences and results with

Senate lawmakers. Now that this short session of the General Assembly has reached the crossover point, the bill will move to the House of Representatives for consideration following its 50-0 vote in the Senate.

"I think it will be well received," Sandlin said.

**To follow Senate Bill 67 and other priority legislation** of the ICC, visit [www.indianacc.org](http://www.indianacc.org). This website includes access to I-CAN, the Indiana Catholic Action Network, which offers the Church's position on key issues. Those who sign up for I-CAN receive alerts on legislation moving forward and ways to contact their elected representatives.



SEN. JACK SANDLIN

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## Inviting neighbors to say rosary together leads to community of prayer

OVERLAND PARK, Kan. (CNS) — It was an invitation Erin Joerger never expected to receive from a neighbor: “We’re going to watch the Super Bowl and pray the rosary before. Come over.” “I kind of thought they were joking,” she said. “I’ve never been invited to someone’s house to pray a rosary.” But Jennie and Kevin Punswick, members of Holy Spirit Parish in Overland Park, were completely serious. Around two years ago, the Punswicks felt moved to ask Erin, her husband, Tom, and their children to pray the rosary with them in their home. The Joergers had recently moved into the neighborhood and were pleasantly surprised by the invitation. “Being new to the neighborhood, it was nice to have that faith component in common,” Erin told *The Leaven*, newspaper of the Archdiocese of Kansas City. Since then, the Punswicks have continued reaching out to their neighbors to invite them to pray the rosary on Sunday evenings — and often to stay after for a drink and conversation. “At one point this summer, there were 39 people in our living room,” said Jennie. Because so many families participate, couples on other streets in the neighborhood have begun leading their own rosary groups. Two factors, explained the Punswicks, have helped make it so successful: intentionality and accessibility.

## Human Rights Watch says deportees killed after return to El Salvador

MORELIA, Mexico (CNS) — At least 138 Salvadorans have been murdered after being sent back to their violent Central American country from the United States, according to a report from Human Rights Watch. The report, released Feb. 5, also documented “more than 70 others, who were beaten, sexually assaulted, extorted or assaulted” by perpetrators ranging from gangsters to intimate partners to police and security personnel. None of the findings surprised Catholic officials in the country, long a source of migrants because of civil war and later gang-driven violence and poverty. Church workers say deportees return to the same dangerous situations that forced them to flee in the first place. “We know this is very real, and I knew of cases,” said Rick Jones, adviser on migration for Catholic Relief Services in El Salvador. “It is sending a lot of people back into harm’s way,” he said of deportations to El Salvador. “We still have a homicide rate of 32 for

## Ghana clinic blessing



CNS photo/Damian Awevor

Bishop Emmanuel Kofi Fianu of Ho, who is in charge of health issues for the Ghana Catholic Bishops’ Conference, blesses the St. Pauline Clinic with holy water after commissioning it in Accra Feb. 7. The clinic was built by Novo Nordisk, a Danish global health care company and world leader in diabetes care, in partnership with the National Catholic Health Service. World Day of the Sick was celebrated Feb. 11.

every 100,000. ... So people are still at risk.”

## Restorative justice, healing circles aim to address trauma caused by abuse

ST. PAUL, Minn. (CNS) — Father Dan Griffith has held the stone. He has felt the emotional weight and lifting of that weight in a healing circle where people are invited to take turns holding a stone or other “talking piece” and tell their story as others respectfully listen. “It’s humbling and you’re vulnerable,” Father Griffith said of sharing in a healing circle his story of secondary trauma from the Church’s clergy sexual abuse crisis. The priest is quick to point out that his secondary

trauma cannot be compared with the deep and long-standing harm done to those directly traumatized by a priest. It is vitally important to have the Church acknowledge the harm done, foster accountability and offer roads to healing, he said. In an official capacity with the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis, he is helping to spread the concept of healing circles and restorative justice both in the archdiocese and beyond in hopes others impacted by the crisis — particularly those directly harmed by sexual abuse in the Church — can begin to heal. Father Griffith’s story includes being a safe environment delegate in the archdiocese in 2013 and 2014 and reading files about priests accused of sexual abuse. The stress and the deep sadness he felt one evening came back when he talked about it in a healing circle. But sharing helped

ease the weight, and even while a delegate, in the midst of that pain, Father Griffith was blessed with Christ’s healing light.

## Forum examines religious persecution 75 years after Auschwitz liberation

WASHINGTON (CNS) — As the world recognizes the 75th anniversary of the liberation of the Nazis’ infamous Auschwitz concentration camp, the vows of “never again” after the Holocaust’s horrors became known threaten to be swallowed up by religious persecution against Christians, Muslims and other groups, said panelists at a Feb. 5 forum at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. “The unthinkable is

possible, and everyone must act,” said Naomi Kikoler, director of the museum’s Simon-Skjoldt Center for the Prevention of Genocide and panel moderator. Omer Kanat, chairman of the World Uyghur Congress’ executive committee, said the crisis for Uighur Muslims began in 2017 as China’s crackdown on the minority ethnic group intensified, calling the “eradication of Uighur culture” an “extermination.” There are 1.8 million to 3 million Uighurs in “concentration camps,” Kanat said. “The statements of government officials are going in this direction: ‘We cannot sustain the weeds among the crops. We have to spray a chemical, and kill all of them.’” He added not only are Uighurs within China traumatized by the ongoing repression, but Uighurs living outside China are despondent over “their inability to help their family back home.” Bob Fu, president of China Aid, a Texas-based aid organization for Chinese Christians, blasted the nation’s leader as “Emperor Xi Jinping,” and called the government’s campaign against Christians “a comprehensive, systematic and state-engineered war.”

## With visit to Cuba’s Madonna, New York cardinal begins six-day trip

CAMAGUEY, Cuba (CNS) — In his first stop of a six-day visit to Cuba, Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan walked in without fanfare Feb. 8 into the Shrine of Our Lady of Charity in the town of El Cobre, likely the most popular sacred space in Cuba, joining the hundreds of citizens and tourists of this island nation who crowd in to visit a statue of the Madonna, some hoping for a miracle through her intercession. If he had a wish in his heart, New York’s archbishop didn’t say it aloud as he got his first glance at her, walking in as any other pilgrim toward the statue inside the shrine. Some stopped to ask if they could take a photo with him or of him with their children. Bishop Dionisio Garcia Ibanez of Santiago, the city closest to the shrine, had told him earlier to walk in “discreetly,” though smiling and saying, “If that’s possible,” because in a cassock and his tall frame, Cardinal Dolan towered above everyone, except the figure of the tiny Madonna perched high above the altar. In his role as a high-ranking U.S. Church leader visiting during a time of tense political waters in his country toward Cuba, he offered during the homily the only things he could to other Catholics and visitors gathered for Mass there that day: his presence, his gratitude, solidarity as a Christian and trust that God, along with Jesus and Mary, is with them.



# Every parish, one night: The Light Is On For You

FORT WAYNE — “A man is repaired in an instant by divine grace,” said St. Thomas Aquinas.

How long has it been since you felt all the pieces were in place?

Be made whole again. The Lord is waiting to embrace those who seek reconciliation with Him, which is why a special invitation is extended to those who have been away from the sacrament of reconciliation to take advantage of “The Light Is On For You,” a Lenten opportunity to obtain the graces of the sacrament.

The Light Is On For You is a diocesanwide initiative that exists in addition to penance services scheduled in individual parishes through the period of atonement that is Lent. It will take place from 6-8 p.m. Tuesday, March 10 in all 14 counties of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend. During that time, all 81 Catholic churches will be open and prepared to receive those who wish to make a confession or sit in quiet reflection.

For many Catholics, both those brought up in the Church and those formerly of Protestant or non-Christian faiths, the sacrament of reconciliation can seem a bit frightening. For some it may have been a long time since they have made a confession. Perhaps they struggle with disbelief, despair, human weakness, addictions, lingering resentment or grief. And yet, how wonderful it is to be free from these chains.

The Lord longs for all people to seek reconciliation with Him, the Bible says, which is why a particular Light Is On For You invitation is extended to everyone who hasn't received the sacrament for months or years. After all, these are the days of a renewed evangelization, for proclaiming glad tidings anew. Jesus says, “Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest” (Mt 11:28) — which is the very essence of the Good News. Within the sacrament, the most merciful, loving, forgiving God will be waiting.

When a person goes to confession, Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades said in 2018, “we are making straight the way of the Lord in our lives. And then what happens? We experience joy, the joy of God's mercy and forgiveness.”

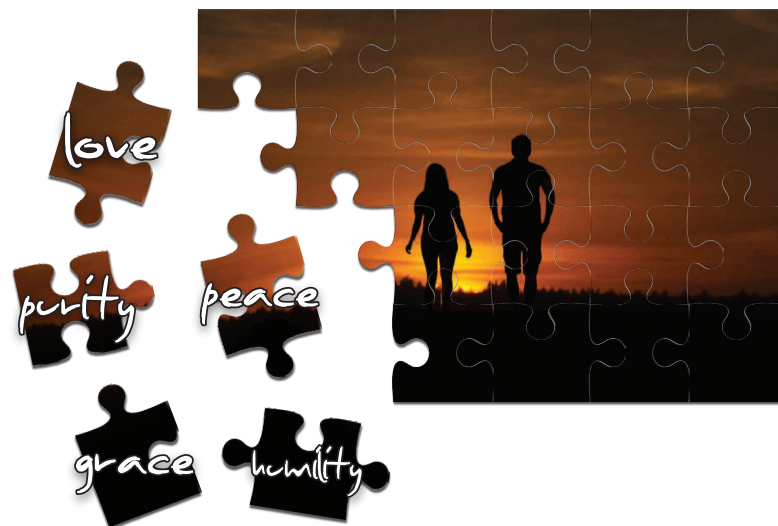
Guides on how to make a good confession, examinations of conscience and prayers used during the Rite of Reconciliation will be available in the parishes for anyone unsure of how to participate in the sacrament.

All Catholics within the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend are also encouraged to attend a parish reconciliation service during Lent and to reach out and invite others to come back home on March 10.

For more information visit [www.diocesefwsb.org/light](http://www.diocesefwsb.org/light). Those who wish to obtain the sacrament but require special assistance to do so should contact Allison Sturm, ministry specialist in pastoral care, at [asturm@diocesefwsb.org](mailto:asturm@diocesefwsb.org) or 260-422-4611 ext. 3384.

*Be made whole again...*

**Confession available at every Catholic parish Tuesday, March 10, 6-8 p.m.**



## The Light Is On For You!

ONE NIGHT • EVERY PARISH • EVERY CONFESSIONAL

[diocesefwsb.org/light](http://diocesefwsb.org/light)

### BEFORE CONFSSION

1. **Pray** for the grace to make an honest confession. Remember: this is between you and God.
2. **Reflect** on ways you may have harmed your relationship with God, others, or even yourself.
3. Consider using an **examination of conscience** to guide your reflection.

### DURING CONFSSION

1. **If it has been a while** and you are unsure what to do, tell the priest. He will gladly guide you through what to say when.
2. Tell your sins aloud to the priest, who is standing **in the person of Christ**. He does not take notes and does not judge.
3. Make an **Act of Contrition**, an expression that we are sorry for our wrongdoings.

### AFTER CONFSSION

1. **Go in peace.** God's grace is outpoured in the sacrament in a unique way that will remain with as you go forth.
2. **Make your penance.** This is a prayer or an action given to you by the priest.
3. **Resolve** to leave sin behind and to return to the forgiveness and grace of sacrament when needed.



## Burial service for aborted fetal remains

SOUTH BEND —Five months have passed since 2,411 aborted fetal remains were discovered at the property of Ulrich Klopfer, a former abortionist in South Bend, after he passed away in September. On Wednesday, Feb. 12, they were laid to rest at Southlawn Cemetery.

A prayerful memorial service in remembrance of the children will take place Sunday, Feb. 23, at 3 p.m. at the cemetery, 61300 U.S. 31 in South Bend. Right to Life Michiana, Lake County Right to Life and Right to Life Northeast Indiana will host the service.

For more information contact Right to Life Michiana at [prolifemichiana.org](http://prolifemichiana.org) or 574-232-5433.

## Ege parish mission scheduled for March

EGE — Immaculate Conception Parish in Ege will host a parish mission March 15-18. All are invited to attend, and to “be renewed and worship the Father in spirit and in Truth.” (Jn 4:23)

On Sunday, Mary Jo Parrish of St. Vincent de Paul Parish, Fort Wayne, will present “Turbulent Times for Faith.” Monday, Deborah Baum of Bishop Luers High School, Fort Wayne, will present “We are treasures and gifts of the Holy Spirit.” Tuesday, the parish will welcome Father Jonathan Norton, Sacred Heart Parish, Warsaw, and his talk, “Renewed by the Sacraments.” On Thursday, Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades will celebrate the Mass.

All presentations and the liturgy will begin at 7 p.m. For more information contact Paul Sade at [sadep@sgcs.k12.in.us](mailto:sadep@sgcs.k12.in.us) or 260-609-5607.

## Catholic Schools Week service project



Provided by Sister Colleen Bauer

Sister Colleen Bauer's second grade class at St. John the Evangelist School, Goshen, displays some of the items they collected for a “baby shower” for Right to Life Michiana during Catholic Schools Week Jan. 26-Feb. 1. Each grade level at the school did a different service project during the week.



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# Couple visits holy places, sites of miracles

BY BARB SIEMINSKI

**D**ave Domenico and his family have traveled to the far parts of the world looking into miracles that have happened, and in the process been blessed with each impression.

Domenico and his wife, Cindy, are the parents of David, 23; Josh, 18; Alex, 15; and Dominic, 11; all of whom are members of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church in Fort Wayne. The family enjoys traveling and educating themselves about the miracle locations and Catholic theology.

They began their eucharistic miracle search while on vacation several years ago.

"We were in Italy visiting family in the Abruzzo region, and my sons Alex and Dominic were with me," remembered Dave. "We literally stumbled upon the first eucharistic miracle in Lanciano. We just so happened to walk into the church, and there it was ... The church was absolutely beautiful, and on the altar was the beautiful display of the Miracle of Lanciano."

Downstairs, there was a large display of the scientific findings, and the findings revealed the innermost layer in the human heart.

"It was truly life-changing, and for both Cindy and me, this was our 'aha moment.'"

Dave has not been to the Holy Land, although he has been throughout the Middle East.

Cindy's goal became one of eventually seeing all of the eucharistic miracles that had taken place in Italy, as well as the one that occurred in Tixia, Mexico, in 2006. To date, the couple has also seen the crypts of St. Therese of Lisieux, Padre Pio and a few others.

"The feeling I had visiting these hallowed places was reinforcement that Jesus is alive and

well, even at times in our faith when we have doubts," said Cindy. "These miracles have the scientific data to make us not be doubting Thomases."

What miracle thus far made the greatest impression on the couple?

"We absolutely loved The Holy Face, il Volto Santo di Manoppello, which is not a eucharistic miracle, just a miracle in itself," said Dave.

Cindy agreed. "Ironically, every site we visited was just by chance. One of my very favorites was the Veil of Manoppello in Italy — truly breathtaking."

According to the couple, there were actual physical changes to the veil, in the transference of bodily properties and blood, even though the veil had been under a wax seal for more than 1,200 years. What surprised them was that in 1970-71, Pope Paul VI permitted scientists from France, Germany and Switzerland who were non-Catholic to do an independent study of the precious relic to verify its nature, with interesting results.

"They did DNA studies and compared that blood to the blood on the Shroud of Turin, and it was a perfect match," said Dave.

In the book "Miracle of Lanciano," Dr. Odoardo Linoli, professor of anatomy and pathological histology, chemistry and clinical microscopy, and head physician of the hospital of Arezzo, recounts the study he conducted on the eucharistic miracle of Lanciano, assisted by Dr. Ruggero Bertelli, professor emeritus of human anatomy at the University of Siena.

In 1981, using more advanced medical technology, Dr. Linoli conducted a second histological study; he not only confirmed the findings but also gathered new information.

"The major findings from this research include the following:

The Flesh, yellow-brown in color, has the structure of the myocardium (heart wall) and the endocardium, the membrane of fibrous-elastic tissue lining all the cardiac cavities. These have the same appearance as in the human heart. No traces of preservatives were found in the elements.

"The blood was also of human origin with the type AB. Proteins in the clotted Blood were normally fractioned with the same percentage ratio as those found in the sero-proteic make-up of normal, fresh human blood. The blood contained these minerals: chlorides, phosphorus, magnesium, potassium, sodium, and calcium."

Professor Linoli asserted that the blood, if taken from a cadaver, would have deteriorated rapidly. Given that these samples were centuries old, free of preservatives, and never hermetically sealed in the reliquaries,



manoppello.eu

The reliquary of the Holy Face has the form of a monstrance made of solid silver with an addition of gemstones and gold in which there is a walnut wood frame with crystal panes.

they should have deteriorated. However, he underscored that the samples had the same properties as fresh human blood and flesh.

Moreover, the doctors both concluded that only the skill of a trained pathologist could have obtained such a sample, a tangential cut of the heart; a round cut, thick on the outer edges and lessening gradually and uniformly to the central area.

The Domenicos continue to spread excitement over the sites they have visited whenever they have the opportunity.

"We will hopefully be traveling to Italy this year to visit family," said Dave. "When we are there, Cindy and I will bring our Vatican-approved eucharistic miracle book with us and wing it. Paradoxically, this is how we have stumbled upon a majority of the places we have visited.

"I guess you could say we let God guide us."

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# Convenient grace

Profiles in the CCD/Religious Education setting

## Confirmation candidates inspired to serve, evangelize

BY TAMI DELUCENAY

The February issue of Catechist magazine features St. Katharina Kasper, whose feast day is Feb. 1. In the article, author Patricia Mathson gives readers a glimpse into Katharina's life. Mathson writes that St. Katharina (also spelled "Catherine") loved God with all her heart and shared that love with people living in poverty.

Katharina knew that God was calling her to help others. Her example of service reminds Catholics today that they, too, are called by God to serve other people.



Tami DeLucenay

**Knotting prayer shawls is one way catechist Lori Richards, left, introduces St. Therese, Little Flower confirmation candidates to the practice of Christian service. The ministry of religious education is a "wonderful calling," said the South Bend parish volunteer.**

Catechist Lori Richards exemplifies this same attribute of St. Katharina by dedicating her life to the career of pediatric nurse and also answering the call to share God's love to the children of St. Therese, Little Flower Parish in South Bend.

"I first became a catechist out of necessity," stated Richards. "Our youngest son was in the sixth grade religious education class and there was no catechist, so I volunteered to teach his class. I followed his class through to their confirmation and then just continued teaching confirmation.

"I always tell my students it's not about what I teach you but what you teach me," said Richards.

Lori and her husband, Steve, are celebrating 33 years of marriage and have five grown children. They have been parishioners of Little Flower for 25 years.

"I originally coordinated our children's liturgies, for 15 years, as well as singing and organizing the music for those liturgies," remembered Lori. "After we no longer offered this ministry, I became a catechist. I love kids and feel it's a wonderful calling."

Lori begins each new year of religious education by asking the students if they are ready to be transformed.

"I like to focus on the phrase, 'Called by Name.' I give the students a journal my daughter and I developed that works like a cell phone. Complete with texts from God. I ask, 'Who's in your contacts? What applications (gifts) do you have?'"

We use these journals throughout the year, and then I send them home with the kids at the end of the year to see how they have answered God's call."

"I like to use real-life stories to help the students understand what we are learning," stated Lori. "Through my life experiences I help them understand that our purpose in life is to be a witness to our faith."

"One of the exercises I give to the students is to write down three things they would share

with someone who didn't know about Jesus. These students are not social people, so it's very difficult for them to be a witness. I ask them to stay after Mass to talk with a parishioner about the things they wrote on their list, to help them be able to have the courage to witness to someone."

Confirmation student Michael Loughran shared, "When I look at the questions from last year's class, I think I know these things! Mrs. Richards has tons of experience and shares real-life stories with us to help us relate to what we are learning."

A large part of the process of preparation for confirmation is teaching students about using their gifts to serve others. "I love helping the students with their service projects," explained Lori. "I want them to have a better understanding of what it means to be the hands and feet of Jesus. So we offer many service opportunities throughout the year."

One of the hands-on service projects she asks her students participate in is the making of prayer shawls for the sick and the dying.

"My father-in-law received a prayer shawl while he was battling terminal cancer, and it really touched him. The students can say prayers as they knot the prayer shawls, along with placing a cross on the fleece. The shawls are then given to our parishioners in need of the prayers and comfort."

On the second Saturday of the month, Little Flower serves breakfast to the homeless at Our Lady of the Road Drop-In Center in downtown South Bend. "I invite our class to participate in this outreach by serving breakfast to the guests. The students help with the preparation, the serving and the clean-up. This is truly being the hands and feet of Christ," she said.

Lori lives out the two great Commandments each day, to love God and to love others. To foster her own spiritual growth, she spends time in front of the Blessed Sacrament, and her favorite prayer is the Memorare.

"My profession as a pediatric nurse allows me to care for medically and mentally fragile children in the home, and teaching religious education to children — these are wonderful callings and a wonderful way to witness the love and the joy of Christ Jesus."

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# St. Monica parishioners 'Valentine' former pastor

BY JENNIFER BARTON

**M**aking a nearly two-hour drive to visit a former pastor is a thoughtful gesture that demonstrates gratitude for the vital role priests play in the lives of the Catholic faithful. That's what a handful of parishioners at St. Monica in Mishawaka did for Father Bill Sullivan, now pastor of St. John the Baptist, New Haven, on Feb. 8.

It was not the anniversary of his ordination or his birthday. He was not ill or hospitalized. It was just an average Saturday evening Mass for Father Sullivan. But members of St. Monica wanted to recognize the efforts of their former pastor, who served at the parish for 12 years, from the late 1980s until the late 1990s.

Will and Kathy Braniff were the heart behind the idea that they call "Valentine Your Priest," which began last year when seven couples went to St. Louis, Missouri, to visit a retired priest who had previously been active at St. Monica. "They're there for us, so we wanted to acknowledge them," Kathy said. "Too often we don't recognize what they do."

The Braniffs had no idea how many people would make the drive to Fort Wayne with them on a wintry Saturday. They wanted to keep the event low-key and make their visit a surprise for Father Sullivan, although Kathy did contact the parish secretary at St. John ahead of time to ensure that everything was set on the New Haven side for their visit.

Will and Kathy have been members of St. Monica for many years; from 1985 until 2010, when they moved to Indianapolis, and again more recently when they returned to Mishawaka. The idea to show appreciation to their priests came



Jennifer Barton

**Members of St. Monica Parish in Mishawaka reach across the diocese Feb. 8 to show appreciation and support to former pastor Father Bill Sullivan, now serving as pastor of St. John the Baptist, New Haven. They call the initiative "Valentine Your Priest."**

to Kathy when the death of their pastor in Lebanon, Indiana, impressed on her the importance of honoring the men while she had the chance. "The 'be kind' movement, I believe, should be a 'give honor' movement. We honor all the things our priests do for us. This is an act of honor."

Boxes were placed at St. Monica, along with St. Thomas the Apostle Parish in Elkhart, weeks in advance so parishioners could drop off cards. Father Sullivan served at St. Thomas after leaving St. Monica. Kathy picked up the boxes on the Thursday before the scheduled trip.

Katie Rohrer, St. Monica parish secretary, agreed that it was important to take time to honor

the contributions of their former pastor. She wrote a card and joined the group headed south-east to visit Father Sullivan,

whom she credits for helping to bring her husband, Wendell, into the Church.

"It was a very timely letter

from Father Bill that encouraged him to give it a try and come to RCIA," Katie said. Though there were other "divine signs," urging Wendell in that direction, it was the letter that she said "sealed the deal."

Kathy recalled the times in her life that priests were present to share her life's joys or to comfort her in sorrow. For many of her 39 years of marriage, she has sent a card to the priest who presided at their wedding.

Aside from sending cards, she knows that prayer is the most powerful gift she can give priests. "I say a decade of the rosary every night for our priests."

About a dozen St. Monica parishioners braved the snowy weather to attend the Saturday evening liturgy at St. John. At the end of Mass, unaware of what was to come, Father Sullivan asked the group to stand and be recognized by his current congregation. When Mass was over, the group approached him with a festive basket and announced that they were there to "Valentine your priest." Joy shined on Father Sullivan's face as he accepted the basket of cards and well-wishes from former parishioners. He professed himself "stunned" at the outpouring of love.

Father Sullivan delighted in the company and admiration of the group, speaking individually with each member. He asked them about aspects of their life that he remembered from many years ago, sharing in their life stories. At the same time, Katie gave them a gift to thank them for coming. "He deserves this," she said happily.

And what better time than Valentine's Day to show love to priests who have made an impact in one's life? St. Valentine was said to be a Roman priest who was martyred for his faith under the reign of Emperor Claudius II. It is believed that he secretly performed marriage ceremonies for Christian couples.

One worshipper Saturday night recalled that it was Father Sullivan who married her and her husband. "It's something you don't forget," she said.



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## Lent: another step toward 'enough'

**“W**hat is enough for you?” was a question posed to my husband and me by our financial adviser.

Many factors competed for consideration: the desire to not be a burden on our kids, people living longer, the enormous cost of health care, diminishing social safety nets, ability to travel and a certain standard of living.

The list goes on and, with our graduate statistics background, we can engage in some rigorous discussion of probabilities and risk minimization. Without getting too heavy into the exercise, it just seems that “more” is better.

“What is enough?” is the question that permeates all arenas of decision-making and raises its head implicitly or explicitly as we on a personal level determine how much to give to charity, or on a societal level address whether immigrants are draining our resources, whether we can afford food assistance for low-income populations, how fast we are willing to raise the minimum wage to \$15, how much safety Boeing is willing trade away to grow profits beyond the 2018 level of \$10.5 billion, or what we are willing to pay for a low-carbon environment.

For David and me, getting to “enough” poses a tug between the Gospel call to other-centeredness and radical generosity, and the pragmatic drive for control and the reserve that insures against life’s vicissitudes.

We are conditioned by the virtue of being responsible and unnerved by the uncertainties of

the future and disregard for the common good in our policies and society.

At the same time, we recognize that sin often emanates from a good thing, an appropriate desire that loses balance and assumes disproportionate dominance.

We know we should relinquish such idols, mind the teachings that worry has not added a day to any one’s life, that building bigger barns is a foolish enterprise, and that we are so much more than the lilies and birds crowned with God’s glory.

But ... We all know the “Yes, but ...” We all have scary tales that make us shudder and lead us to prioritize security above all else. Within those parameters, we ration how much we can give back to God. This accommodation yields implicitly to the power of fear and the harshness of an impersonal economy over the power of God.

Our actions indicate that we put our trust in our own planning, effort, self-sufficiency rather than in God. We proclaim our faith in songs and prayers, but where it counts, we cannot let go of the tethers that give us the illusions of safety and certitude.

We should not be surprised with our halfhearted faith, as it is impossible for us to really comprehend the capaciousness of God’s love. Our failure to live up to the Gospel message may cause us to wonder how much we merit God’s generosity or how we score in God’s counting.

We follow many others, saints included, with the same



### OUR GLOBAL FAMILY

CAROLYN WOO

struggles to fully surrender to the mystery of God starting with the father who begged Jesus for a cure for his son, “I do believe, help my unbelief!” (Mk 9:24)

We may be timid and unsure but we do know that our limitation is no match for God’s grace, mercy and presence; that God wills us to recognize divine goodness at work in us and others. In the end, it is not just what we can do, but what God can do to help us claim our birthright as His children.

For this Lent, perhaps you can join me in turning over to God our “Yes, but ...”

**Carolyn Woo** is the distinguished president’s fellow for global development at Purdue University. She served as the CEO and president of Catholic Relief Services from 2012 to 2016.

## What I learned on the pond: Reckoning with winter



### TWENTY SOMETHING

CHRISTINA CAPECCHI

**T**he snow has begun. It is expected to last 18 hours, piling 9 inches high and crippling weekend plans. The streets are emptying, the collective dash to the grocery store completed.

But here in our cul-de-sac, the party is about to begin.

One of the dads will start shoveling. Another will join in, and soon the pond will be packed. Kids will skate. Adults will hover around the fire pit. And our neighborhood will hum, knit together in a timeless winter scene.

By virtue of being a journalist in Minnesota, I’ve picked up the cold-weather beat. It’s a simple story that never gets old. Year after year, on the most frigid days, editors call from New York asking how people here are coping.

How are the mail carriers? The homeless shelters? The commuters waiting at the bus stop? The babies shuttled off to daycare?

I bundle up and head out, removing my mittens just long enough to scribble in my legal pad. I look for new angles: the priest who still celebrated

morning Mass at the cathedral, the frozen holy water.

I cover the cold for parenting magazines, offering “25 winter activities for toddlers” and “5 mama-tested hats.” Reviews of outdoor gear (hand warmers, neck gaiters, Yaktrax, Gore-Tex) are interspersed with survival tips for weary parents (the easiest boots for preschoolers, mittens connected by a string).

There is, however, a winter story I’ve never before written, and it’s my favorite one: the tale of our neighborhood pond.

Most of the year, the small pond at the foot of our cul-de-sac goes unnoticed. Rimmed by poplars and coated by algae, it is

**CAPECCHI, page 13**

*The pond smells like bonfire*

*and sounds like Nick Drake’s*

*song “Northern Sky,”*

*and it feels good.*

## The Lord asks us to follow God’s law



### THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

MSGR. OWEN F. CAMPION

### Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time Matthew 5:17-37

**T**he Book of Sirach, the source of this weekend’s first reading, is part of a collection of biblical writings that in their very origin teach an important lesson.

As various fortunes — political, economic, and individual — changed and changed again among God’s people in the decades after the Babylonian Captivity, and as new alien empires seized the Holy Land, Jews emigrated from the homeland of their ancestors to other places.

Understandably, many went

to places where opportunities were more plentiful.

While certainly some of these emigrants not only survived, but possibly did well in their new surroundings, something important was lacking. They were living in a society ignorant, and even disdainful, of the God of Israel. To record their ancient religious beliefs, and very importantly to pass these beliefs along to oncoming generations, Jewish scholars composed books such as Sirach.

The essential point in Sirach was that human reason and honoring God are not ideas at odds with each other. Obeying God, logic can prove, is the way to order, peace, justice and reward in human life.

St. Paul’s First Epistle to the Corinthians is the source of the second reading. Paul would have been no stranger to this notion of a compatibility between divine revelation and human wisdom, because he was so well trained in Judaism and also exposed to Greek philosophy. This adds a new dimension to the story. Revelation is of a reality that

human knowledge often cannot comprehend.

Paul refers to “hidden wisdom” and “mystery.” Bluntly, humans simply cannot understand all. In great love, God therefore has revealed to us what otherwise we would never know.

The Gospel reading is from St. Matthew. Speaking of the Commandments, familiar to every Christian today as they were familiar to the Jews who heard Jesus, the Lord expounds on the meaning of several of these rules for life given by God to Moses on Sinai.

This process reveals two important factors. The first is that God’s law is permanent and unchanging. This is logical. The law touches basic instincts and conditions among humans. It is attached deeply and intrinsically to human nature itself, and as such it is not open to qualifications or to exemptions that humans might wish to make.

Secondly, here the Lord speaks with authority. He defines and explains the law of Moses. Jews did not regard

the law of Moses as merely a set of principles composed by Moses. Rather, Moses was the medium through which God revealed the divine law to humanity. God is the author of the divine law. He is the author of the Commandments. He is the lawgiver.

By defining and making more precise this law, the Lord acts as God. It is an important revelation of the identity of Jesus.

### Reflection

This weekend looks to the past weeks and feasts as background, and it looks ahead. In both cases, it confronts us with the realities of our nature. It places us in relationship with God. It shows us that God loves us with a divine love.

At Christmas, the Epiphany and at the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River by John the Baptist, the Church celebrated the events of salvation achieved for us by Christ, but it also told us about the Lord. It identified the Lord.

In these readings, the Church

tells us that to wander away from God’s law and follow our instincts or our limited reasoning is folly. It does not make sense. Humans, impaired by original sin, always have trouble in understanding this.

Soon, the Church will lead us into Lent, a time in which we strengthen ourselves to know our limitations and conform ourselves to what we are, human beings, but humans destined for eternal life with God, in Jesus.

### READINGS

**Sunday:** Sir 15:15-20 Ps 119:1-2, 4-5, 17-18, 33-34 1 Cor 2:6-10 Mt 5:17-37

**Monday:** Jas 1:1-11 Ps 119:67-68, 71-72, 75-76 Mk 8:11-13

**Tuesday:** Jas 1:12-18 Ps 94:12-15, 18-19 Mk 8:14-21

**Wednesday:** Jas 1:19-27 Ps 15:2-5 Mk 8:22-26

**Thursday:** Jas 12:1-9 Ps 34:2-7 Mk 8:27-33

**Friday:** Jas 2:14-24, 26 Ps 112:1-6 Mk 8:34—9:1

**Saturday:** 1 Pt 5:1-4 Ps 23:1-6 Mt 16:13-19



# Christian girls and abortion

When Mother Teresa visited New Bedford, Massachusetts, in June 1995, she told those of us gathered at St. Lawrence Martyr Church: "Abortion is the greatest evil of today." Never one to mince words, St. Mother Teresa's courage, truthfulness and charity were palpable. Parents today need similar fortitude, honesty and love to be able to discuss the hard topic of unplanned pregnancies and abortion with their children.

Parental input and advice are critical when these situations arise. Even as children profess independence, parents exercise influence over them, whether for good or for ill. If a mother says to her daughter, for example, "You can't have a kid now, because you've got your studies, your career and your whole future ahead of you, so I'll give you money for an abortion," she is not merely offering advice, but being coercive and taking away any real choice her daughter might have had.

Likewise, when a boyfriend learns that his girlfriend is pregnant and informs her he doesn't want to be a father right now, and will drive her to the abortion clinic, he abandons both his child and the mother of his child in their moment of greatest need.

To read testimonies of young women who have had abortions is heart-wrenching. Many times they seem to have less responsibility for the abortion than their parents or others close to them.

One woman described being only 12 years old when she had an abortion: "When Saturday came my mom drove me back across town, walked me in, paid for the abortion with money my boyfriend gave her, and left the building. I didn't know it then, but they wouldn't allow her to stay. The nurse told her I would be ready about 3 p.m., so I was there alone ... It's been 35 years since my baby was aborted and I still think about it every day. It wasn't a quick fix and it wasn't

a solution to my pregnancy. It was a panicked response to our fears."

Fear often stands behind the decision to abort. Young women are understandably frightened when they discover they are pregnant: "I'm afraid I'm not ready and I won't be a good mother." "I'm fearful my boyfriend won't stand by me and support me — he's just a kid himself." "What will Mom and Dad think of the fact I've been having sex?" "My friends are people of faith and I'm afraid they'll look down on me for this if they find out."

Whenever we let fear direct our moral thinking, we tend to make bad judgments and poor choices that can haunt us long afterward. Even good people who believe in love, life and family can make panicked choices when they feel cornered by shame and guilt. Major decisions are better made when emotions have calmed and the order of reason can once again fill our minds. This happens most readily when a person is surrounded by an abundance of loving support.

Wendy Bonano serves as the director of several pregnancy support centers in North Carolina. She regularly works with students from area universities and colleges, and in a recent article in the Family NC magazine, challenged parents to reflect on what their own sons and daughters are really up against in today's society:

"I imagine you are thinking, 'This would never be my daughter.' I beg you to think again. More often than not, 'good' Christian girls in relationships are determined to abstain from intercourse and therefore are not actively using contraception. Therefore, it takes just one poor decision by either your son or daughter to create an unplanned pregnancy, regardless of all you've taught them."

So why are good Christian girls getting abortions? Those who should be at their side in



## MAKING SENSE OF BIOETHICS

FATHER TAD PACHOLCZYK

a moment of crisis may not be present. Mothers and fathers may not have fostered close relationships with their daughters. They may have never discussed the possibility of an unplanned pregnancy to let them know ahead of time that, even if they act contrary to their advice and conceive a child, they will still be there for them.

After more than 10 years of helping single mothers at her clinics, Bonano makes precisely this point:

"Quite often there's a piece missing from the 'talks' parents have with their daughters and sons. Without knowing it, we are leaving no doors open for our children to come back to us should they stray. We are making good, strong cases for purity until marriage and yet neglecting to communicate the message of grace: that we are there for them no matter what, and should they make a mistake — in this case, get pregnant — it is safe for them to come to us for help and support."

Today more than ever, Christian children need to hear those supportive and reassuring words from their Christian parents.

Rev. Tadeusz Pacholczyk, Ph.D., serves as the director of education at The National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia.

learned to skate in the same pair of size 6 skates. They climb snow mounds, making potions out of berries.

As the sun drops, it casts long purple shadows through barren branches. Some nights we turn on a movie projector and cook hot dogs. Once, a sled turned into a platter for Cheetos, gobbled up by young skaters.

The pond smells like bonfire and sounds like Nick Drake's song "Northern Sky," and it feels good. Together, we have learned to not just endure the winter but embrace it. We have discovered what happens when everyone comes out to pitch in, that the sum is greater than the parts.

Our rink operates only on the darkest, coldest days, when we most need community. We gather not in spite of the

chill but because of it. The ice connects us.

There is a metaphor here for Christian fellowship. God introduces us to others when we are in the greatest need. We bond in places we do not want to be: a long line at the DMV, a hospital waiting room, a support group.

Together we find a way to make do, to keep moving while others freeze. And we trust that winter has its purpose, that beneath the snow, God is doing big and mighty things.

Christina Capecchi is a freelance writer from Inver Grove Heights, Minnesota.

## SCRIPTURE SEARCH®

Gospel for February 16, 2020

Matthew 5:17-37

Following is a word search based on the Gospel reading for the Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle A: warnings to be careful. The words can be found in all directions in the puzzle.

- |            |            |              |
|------------|------------|--------------|
| ABOLISH    | HEAVEN     | LETTER       |
| KINGDOM    | LIABLE     | ANGRY        |
| BROTHER    | FOOL       | GIFT         |
| ALTAR      | COURT      | GUARD        |
| LAST PENNY | ADULTERY   | TEAR IT OUT  |
| DIVORCE    | THE LORD   | DO NOT SWEAR |
| FOOTSTOOL  | GREAT KING | BLACK        |

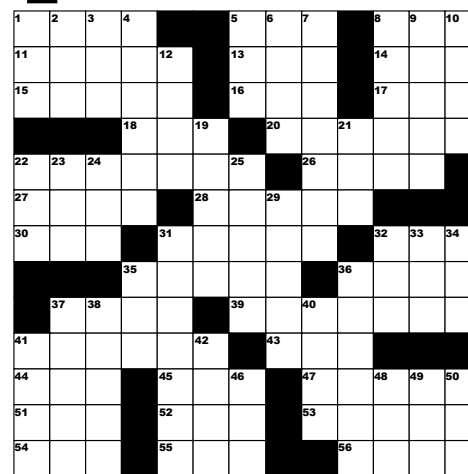
### CAUTIONS

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 L D I V O R C E D A I U  
 A B O L I S H K T F R A  
 C N A N G R Y L T O X R  
 K W L J O E A U K O A D  
 F O O T S T O O L L D R  
 Y N N E P T S A L L U E  
 C E T K I E D W M M L H  
 O V R R P L W K E B T T  
 U A A K U I K N A A E O  
 R E M O D G N I K R R R  
 T H G T H E L O R D Y B

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## The CrossWord

February 16 and 23, 2020



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Sunday readings: Sir 15:15-20; Mt 5: 17-37 and Lv 19: 1-2, 17-18; 1Cor 3: 16-23; Mt 5: 38-48

### ACROSS

- 1 Royal treasury
- 5 Escape button
- 8 Tree
- 11 Romance
- 13 # of testaments
- 14 Popular papal name
- 15 Where we bring gifts
- 16 California (abbr.)
- 17 Overweight
- 18 \_\_\_ the Father
- 20 Youthful (male)
- 22 \_\_\_ of God
- 26 Gentleman
- 27 " \_\_\_ for those who
- 28 Big cats
- 30 \_\_\_ you! (get attention)
- 31 To play sweetly
- 32 Imitate
- 35 Fruit paste
- 36 Alter
- 37 Cabbage cousin
- 39 Fill in
- 41 Hyde's alter ego
- 43 Neither's partner
- 44 "I believe in \_\_\_ God"
- 45 Charged particle
- 47 Evil one
- 51 An \_\_\_ for an eye

### persecute you"

- 52 Crafty
- 53 Climb up
- 54 Sweet potato
- 55 Tender loving care
- 56 Sword handle

### DOWN

- 1 Future Farmers (abbr.)
- 2 Queasy
- 3 Be seated
- 4 Mountainous
- 5 And so forth
- 6 Mop
- 7 Where Magi are buried
- 8 Mischievous
- 9 Ruler breaker is \_\_\_ in the Kingdom
- 10 Night flyer
- 12 Walked
- 19 Sorrow (Latin)
- 21 Affirmation
- 22 Kilometers per hour
- 23 Anger
- 24 Congressional vote
- 25 "Go two \_\_\_"
- 29 Sea
- 31 Fighter
- 32 Also known as (abbr.)
- 33 Cat or dog
- 34 Ram's mate
- 35 Layer
- 36 Jewish scribe
- 37 African country
- 38 Arabic name meaning "wise"
- 40 Flip
- 41 Baby kangaroo
- 42 Lounge
- 46 New York City
- 48 Thai
- 49 Give it your \_\_\_
- 50 Fishermen use

### CAPECCHI, from page 12

unremarkable, beyond our scope. Turtles sunbathe on the edge. Mallards dive down the middle. We drive on by, distracted, to get the mail, to get home, to get on with the day.

But when winter arrives and the temperature plunges, the pond freezes over, creating a communal gathering space. Tending to our hockey rink becomes a joint endeavor. Matt hooks up the lights, and Curt, in the closest house, covers the tab. John carries down his hose, spraying hot water to smooth the ice. We all take turns shoveling.

Hockey nets, benches and a fire pit emerge. It is shared property, with hockey sticks and shovels left on the snow, at the ready. Multiple toddlers have





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**Creighton Model introductory session**  
**FORT WAYNE** — Learn to chart the Creighton Model to assist in taking care of your gynecological health and knowing times of fertility. An introductory session will be Saturday, Feb. 22, from 11 a.m. to noon, at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish, 10700 Aboite Center Rd. Contact Anne Stephens at 262-527-2364 or [atsihm@yahoo.com](mailto:atsihm@yahoo.com).

Feb. 22, from 6-10 p.m. at the Auburn Cord Duesenberg Museum, 1600 S. Wayne St. The evening will feature a catered hors d'oeuvres buffet, dessert bar, as well as a live and silent auction. Tickets are \$50 per person and can be purchased in the school office or reserved online at [www.stmaryavilla.org](http://www.stmaryavilla.org). Must be 21 to attend. Call 260-897-3481 for more information. Proceeds will benefit the mission of the St. Mary of the Assumption Parish operational and capital projects funds.

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## The Crossword

February 16 and 23, 2020



## REST IN PEACE

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 Kevin L. McBarnes, 66, St. Mary of the Assumption

Thomas Feely, 85, St. Vincent de Paul

Sister Ruth Ellert, OLVM, 92, Archbishop Noll Memorial Chapel

**Elkhart**  
 Barbara Helman, 81, St. Thomas the Apostle

Mary C. Foley, 65, Queen of Angels

**Mishawaka**  
 Theresa VanNevel, 91, St. Monica

**Fort Wayne**  
 Elaine Beckman, 61, St. Joseph - Hessen Cassel

Marjorie M. Motherwell, 98, Queen of Angels

**South Bend**  
 Gertie Jaworski, 90, St. Hedwig

Andrew Dietsch, 47, St. Vincent de Paul

Donald R. Sordelet, 85, Queen of Angels

Dr. Jamie L. Kazmierzak, 40, St. Jude

Greg Dillon, 31, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton

**Granger**  
 Joseph Stackowicz, 98, St. Pius X

**Huntington**  
 Helene M. Craig, 96, SS. Peter and Paul

Kathy Niedbalski, 75, Christ the King

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