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TODAY'S CATHOLIC

Volume 95 No. 2

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The Year of St. Joseph

Dec. 8, 2020 - Dec. 8, 2021



Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades

St. Joseph, patron saint of the universal Church, is seen on the grounds of the Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration Provincialate, Mishawaka, over the weekend following ice and snow storms. Pope Francis declared 2021 to be a year dedicated to St. Joseph.

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God gives everyone the task of being peacemakers, pope says

BY CINDY WOODEN

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — As the Catholic Church celebrated World Peace Day Jan. 1, Pope Francis offered prayers for the people of war-torn Yemen, especially the nation's children left without education and often without food by years of civil war.

Reciting the Angelus from the library of the Apostolic Palace, the pope made no mention of the sciatica pain that had forced him to miss an evening prayer service Dec. 31 and the morning Mass Jan. 1 for the feast of Mary, Mother of God.

With Italy on a severe lockdown to slow the spread of the coronavirus pandemic over the holidays and with rain falling on a mostly empty St. Peter's Square, the pope livestreamed his Angelus address and prayer from inside the library.

Highlighting the connection between the feast of Mary, Mother of God, and World Peace Day, Pope Francis prayed that Mary, "who gave birth to the Prince of Peace and cuddled him with such tenderness in her arms, obtain for us from heaven the precious gift of peace, which cannot be fully pursued with human strength alone."

"Human efforts alone are not enough," he repeated, "because peace is above all a gift — a gift from God to be implored with incessant prayer, sustained with patient and respectful dialogue, constructed with an open collaboration with truth and justice and always attentive to the legitimate aspirations of individuals and peoples."

Peace, he insisted, is a gift that requires a human response and human effort.

"Each of us, men and women of this time — each person — is called to make peace happen each day and in every place we live, taking by the hand those brothers and sisters who need a comforting word, a tender gesture, supportive help," he said. "This is a task God gives us; the Lord gives us the task of being peacemakers."

Pope Francis prayed that 2021 would be a time of "human and spiritual growth, that



CNS photo/Eissa Alragehi, Reuters

A malnourished boy poses for a photo in his village of Abs, Yemen, July 17. During his Jan. 1 Angelus, Pope Francis offered prayers for the people of war-torn Yemen, especially the nation's children, left without education and often without food by years of civil war.

it be a time in which hatred and divisions — and they are many — are resolved, that it be a time to build and not to destroy, to take care of each other and of creation."

The past year, with so much suffering and death because of COVID-19, "taught us how much it is necessary to take an interest in others' problems and to share their concerns," he said.

One place that should raise particular concern and many prayers, he said, is Yemen where 25 people were killed and more than 100 injured Dec. 30 when a bomb exploded at the airport in Aden as members of the country's new Cabinet were arriving.

After nine years of war in the country, Pope Francis prayed for "peace for that martyred population."

"Brothers and sisters," he said, "think about the children of Yemen! They are without education, without medicine, starving. Let us pray for Yemen."

Pope Francis also led prayers for Auxiliary Bishop Moses Chikwe of Owerri, Nigeria, and his driver, who were kidnapped Dec. 27.

Late Dec. 28 reports began circulating on social media in Nigeria that the bishop had been killed. However, the archdiocese issued a statement saying, "This information is unconfirmed, misleading and does not come from the Catholic Archdiocese of Owerri."

"We continue to appeal that all join the archbishop in prayers for the release of Bishop Chikwe and Mr. Nduduisi Robert, his driver," the archdiocese said. The bishop was released Jan. 1, along with the driver.

Florida hospital tests medications to lessen pandemic's deadly impact

BY TOM TRACY

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (CNS) — With public health officials warning that COVID-19 vaccination rollouts won't do much to tame the immediate dangers of the pandemic, a Florida Catholic hospital is looking at medications and protocols to protect and save lives.

The U.S. continues to lead the world in the number of reported deaths attributed to the coronavirus, topping 352,000 deaths Jan. 4. Rapidly expanding hospitalization numbers are stressing health care workers and facilities in many regions.

"This is obviously, in many of our lifetimes, the most significant impact to public health, even to the point of disruption across the health care system,"

said Dr. Joshua Larned, a cardiologist with Holy Cross Medical Group in South Florida and a member of Holy Cross Hospital's steering committee on management of COVID-19, the illness caused by the coronavirus.

Larned also is a past research fellow at the Centers for Disease Control and National Center for Infectious Diseases in Atlanta.

"What we are seeing here is something that happened very quickly without a lot of initial understanding of how quickly the spread could occur; and we were a little behind in terms of processes to deal with it, in spite of other respiratory lessons from SARS or MERS. This one caught the world off guard," Larned told the Florida Catholic, newspaper of the Miami archdiocese.

"One of the problems with COVID-19 is the fact that it

doesn't just cause pneumonia. It can also be associated with a respiratory distress syndrome, a multi-inflammatory syndrome that can affect a multitude of different organ systems, including the heart. It can be associated with thrombosis where the body wants to form clots, and is associated, in its more severe form, with multi-organ failure," he said.

Holy Cross Hospital is participating in a study to understand if administering high doses of anticoagulants, or blood thinners, will safely reduce the risk of COVID-19 patients developing deadly clots.

Blood clots are one of the things that makes patients with COVID-19 severely ill, with clots forming either in the major arteries or veins leading to the lungs and other parts of the body,

Larned explained.

He said many patients with even mild to moderate symptoms who are never hospitalized and will recover may experience lingering chronic fatigue, shortness of breath, excessive heart rate or long-term damage to lungs and heart.

Holy Cross is running two clinical trials in which COVID-19 patients under intensive care receive high doses of two anticoagulants — used together — to prevent arterial and venous clots.

Another clinical trial involves patients not in an ICU but admitted to the hospital with COVID-19 who randomly receive just one anticoagulant.

"Anecdotally, I can say the risk of having a blood clot in an artery or vein is a devastating

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Pandemic focuses priorities for ICC in 2021 General Assembly

For the Indiana Catholic Conference, the 2021 state legislative session will bring unique challenges due to social distancing – along with a heightened focus on Catholic social teaching as the global coronavirus pandemic continues to take its toll.

The 122nd Indiana General Assembly opened for business Jan. 4 under new safety protocols and a tighter agenda, with fewer bills expected to be introduced and an overarching goal of crafting and passing the state's two-year budget. But as COVID-19 persists, ravaging the economy and devastating the most vulnerable, the Catholic Church and other advocates for the poor will double down on their efforts to influence the debate.

"Now more than ever, it's critically important that we seek the common good and help people who are struggling," said Angela Espada, executive director of the ICC, the public policy voice of the Catholic Church in Indiana. "We must be in solidarity with those in most need, because in the midst of this pandemic, the needs have never been greater."

Espada pointed to two long-standing priorities that she expects will come to the forefront for the ICC and its allies this year – restricting the payday lending industry and modernizing the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program.

A long-overdue updating of TANF was passed over in the 2020 legislative session, to the dismay of the ICC and other advocates for the poor. TANF is a federal government program that provides grants to the states for distribution to families in dire economic circumstances. Because of antiquated state guidelines, the \$288 maximum monthly payout for a family of three in deep poverty has not been adjusted for inflation since 1988.

"People are needier now, so modernizing this program in Indiana is more important than it has ever been," Espada said. "With 33 years of inflation, and considering that we are in the midst of an economic downturn and a pandemic, now is the time to make it happen."

With respect to the payday lending industry, the ICC and its allies have supported past legislative efforts to cap the interest rate and fees that lenders may charge to an annual percentage rate of 36%. Currently, some payday lending institutions in Indiana charge up to 391% on the short-term loans that they offer.

"We are very worried about people not being able to make ends meet and turning to payday lending more in these very challenging times," Espada said.

Other key priorities for the ICC remain constant: promoting respect for life at all stages,

INDIANA CATHOLIC CONFERENCE


BY VICTORIA ARTHUR

as well as protecting religious liberty and choice in education. One pro-life measure that Espada hopes to see back on the legislative agenda is providing reasonable accommodations in the workplace for pregnant employees, from more frequent breaks to exemptions from heavy lifting. Despite a broad base of support that included Indiana Gov. Eric Holcomb, a Senate bill designed to offer such protections stalled in 2020.

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

This year's legislative session, however, will be anything but business as usual. Due to the pandemic, social distancing will be the order of the day. Lawmakers will work both at the Statehouse in downtown Indianapolis and in adjoining government buildings.

This will be a long session of the legislature, held every two years and culminating in pas-



Public schedule of Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades

Monday, January 11: 10 a.m. — Meeting of the Bishop's Cabinet, Archbishop Noll Center, Fort Wayne
 Tuesday, January 12: 8:45 a.m. — Mass, Bishop Luers High School, Fort Wayne
 Wednesday, January 13: 8 a.m. — Mass, Bishop Luers High School, Fort Wayne
 Thursday, January 14: Meeting with Huntington Catholic School Board, St. Mary Parish, Huntington

sage of the state budget, likely in late April. Redistricting for congressional and state legislative districts also is likely to be a major agenda item, according to Espada.

The 2020 legislative session concluded in early March, just before COVID-19 drastically altered life for Hoosiers and all Americans. Last year's session also marked the final one with the longtime presence of Glenn Tebbe at the Statehouse. Tebbe had led the ICC for 16 years, advancing many of the Church's causes in the public arena before his retirement in May.

Now, Espada — an attorney who brought an extensive background in law and higher education leadership to the ICC when she was named executive director last year — will move the organization forward with a new partner. Alexander Mingus, formerly a leader of the St. Vincent de Paul Society of Dayton, Ohio, was recently appointed associate director of the ICC.

In these unprecedented times, Espada and Mingus are devising new ways to reach their various audiences. They recently hosted a series of webinars to educate the public about the ICC and engage the Catholic faithful in policy matters. Mingus has revamped the ICC website and is also launching a weekly podcast to update listeners throughout the 2021 legislative session.

"I believe that the virtual orientation of this session will open avenues of communication with Catholics around the state," Mingus said. "I look forward to working with Angela and helping to amplify the voice of the Church."

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

FLORIDA, from page 2

disease that can occur to any sick patient who is admitted to a hospital, but we know the risk of that happening goes up significantly with COVID infection," Larned said.

While the number of COVID-19 infections in Broward County, Florida, is far lower than those in Miami-Dade County, Holy Cross moved quickly in the spring to prepare for the pandemic. It managed to continue normal operations and regular patient care while also accommodating patients sick with the coronavirus.

Hospitalizations at Holy Cross peaked in June, July and August. While there is growing concern that early 2021 may see a return to those same hospitalization levels, such a scenario has not yet arrived at Holy Cross, Larned said.

There is also no universal agreement on outpatient care for COVID-19 patients who are not sick enough to be hospitalized.

Some Holy Cross patients have qualified for medical trials with the antiviral medicines and other medications.

The hospital also is studying monoclonal antibodies, which are made in a lab to mirror the body's natural immune response

to the virus. Not everyone qualifies for such treatment, Larned said, but the hospital is conducting clinical trials to determine whether every patient should receive it.

The ideal course of action for someone who tests positive for COVID-19 is to communicate with a physician, local health system or public health department to determine treatment options and eligibility for possible clinical trials.

There is no consensus on at-home treatments for the coronavirus, Larned added. That's why public health officials are urging caution to avoid the infection in the first place.

Holy Cross will follow the Operation Warp Speed national plan for vaccine rollout and distribution consistent with the Florida state plan, with various phases prioritizing nursing home residents, first responders and the elderly.

Larned said the size of both the Pfizer and Moderna vaccine trials — each with 30,000 individuals — offers encouragement that both vaccines are effective and safe, although no one can say how long they confer protection against coronavirus.

"It is going to be a leap of faith to take a vaccine, but you may recall the polio epidemic

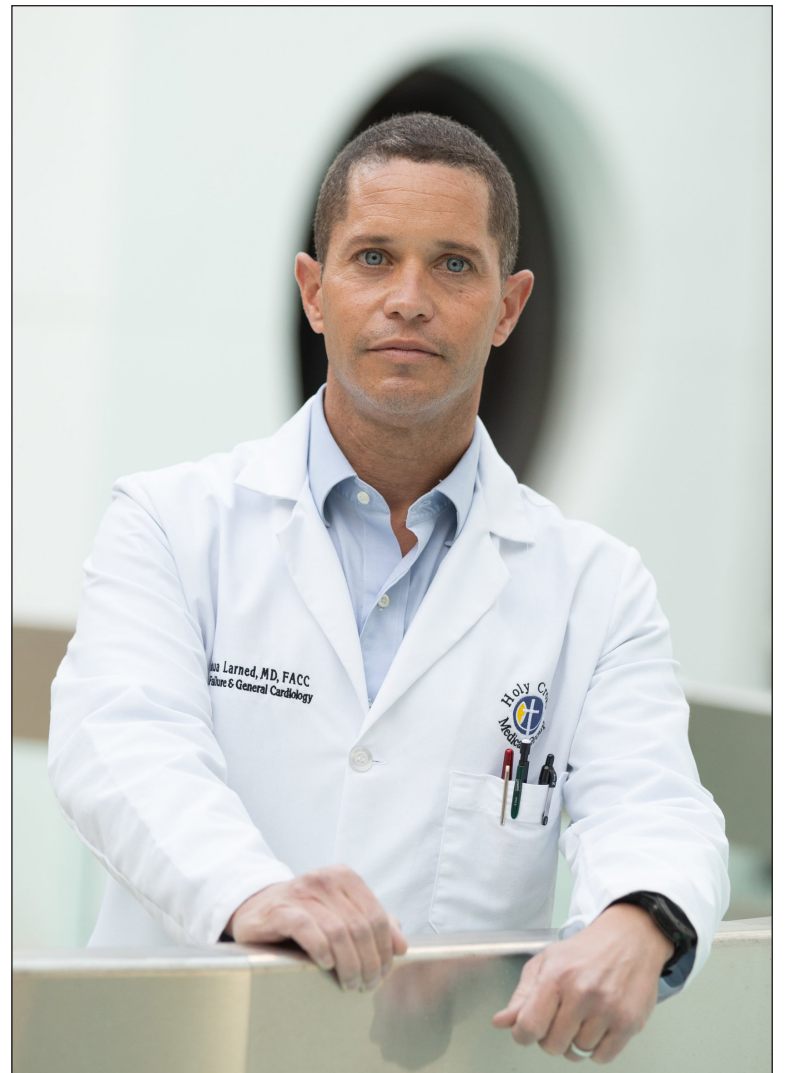
and how devastating that was to the population. With the commitment to a vaccine America took that leap of faith together and we got over that pandemic. We are going to need that commitment again," he said.

In the short term, Larned encouraged people to continue wearing masks, frequently wash hands and observe appropriate social distancing.

"We are reaching a point in the year where we are all starting to get tired of this and it is easy to let our guard down," he said, suggesting that simple things like wearing a mask and avoiding overly crowded indoor places are key to staying safe.

Tracy writes for the Florida Catholic, newspaper of the Archdiocese of Miami.

Dr. Joshua Larned is seen Dec. 8. He is the medical director of the Congestive Heart Failure program at Holy Cross Hospital in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., and a past research fellow at both the Centers for Disease Control and National Center for Infectious Diseases in Atlanta.



CNS photo/Tom Tracy



DIOCESE OF FORT WAYNE-SOUTH BEND

Report abuse

Report abuse

It remains important for our Church to protect children and young persons from the evils of abuse. The Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend remains committed to upholding and following its guidelines, policies and procedures that were implemented for the protection of children and young people. These can be reviewed on the diocese's website, www.diocesefwsb.org, under "Youth Protection."

If you have reason to believe that a minor may be a victim of child abuse or neglect, Indiana law requires that you report this to civil authorities. If you or someone you know was abused as a child or young person by an adult, you are encouraged to notify appropriate civil authorities of that abuse. In addition, if the alleged abuser is or was a priest or deacon of the Catholic Church, you are encouraged to contact Mary Glowaski, victim assistance coordinator, at (260) 399-1458 or mglowaski@diocesefwsb.org; or Rev. Mark Gurtner, vicar general of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, at P.O. Box 390, Fort Wayne, Indiana, 46801; at (260) 399-1419; or at mgurtner@diocesefwsb.org. The diocese is committed to helping prevent the abuse or neglect of children and young people and to assist those who have suffered harm as a result of such abuse.

Denuncie los abusos

Es importante para nuestra Iglesia proteger a los niños y jóvenes adultos de los actos malvados como el abuso. La Diócesis de Fort Wayne-South Bend se compromete a mantener y seguir las reglas, políticas y procedimientos que fueron implementados para la protección de niños y personas jóvenes. Estos pueden leerse en la página web de la diócesis, www.diocesefwsb.org bajo la sección de "Protección de Jóvenes" ("Youth Protection").

Si usted tiene motivo de creer que un menor es víctima de abuso o negligencia, la ley de Indiana requiere que usted reporte esto a las autoridades civiles. Si usted o alguien que usted conoce fue abusado, ya sea niño o persona joven, por un adulto, le recomendamos que notifique a las autoridades civiles apropiadas. También, si el alegado abusador es o fue un sacerdote o diácono de la Iglesia Católica, se le insta comunicarse con Mary Glowaski, coordinadora de asistencia de víctimas, al (260)

399-1458 o mglowaski@diocesefwsb.org; o con el Presbítero Mark Gurtner, vicario general de la Diócesis de Fort Wayne-South Bend, al P.O. Box 390, Fort Wayne, Indiana, 46801; al (260) 399-1419; o al mgurtner@diocesefwsb.org. La diócesis se compromete a ayudar a prevenir el abuso o negligencia de niños y personas jóvenes y ayudar a aquellos que han sufrido daño como el resultado de tal abuso.

Báo cáo lạm dụng Trẻ em.

Nếu bạn có suy luận cho rằng một đứa trẻ nào đó có lẽ là một nạn nhân đã bị lạm dụng hoặc bị bỏ bê, Pháp luật Indiana yêu cầu bạn báo cáo cho chính quyền dân sự. Nếu bạn hay người nào đó bị lạm dụng với tư cách một đứa trẻ hoặc thanh thiếu niên do người lớn, bạn được động viên đặc biệt thông báo cho chính quyền dân sự về việc lạm dụng này. Ngoài ra, nếu kẻ bạo hành bị cáo buộc là một linh mục hay phó tế của Giáo hội Công giáo, xin vui lòng liên hệ:

Mary Glowaski, Trưởng ban hỗ trợ nạn nhân. (260) 399-1458 email: mglowaski@diocesefwsb.org

Hoặc Very Rev. Mark Gurtner, Cha Tổng Đại Diện. (260) 399-1419

Email: mgurtner@diocesefwsb.org

Giáo Phận Fort Wayne South Benth

Attn: Hỗ trợ nạn nhân PO Box 390

Fort Wayne, IN 46801

Giáo phận Fort Wayne-South

Bend cam kết bảo vệ trẻ em và thanh thiếu niên từ các tệ nạn lạm dụng và hỗ trợ những người kêu nại đã bị thiệt hại do hậu quả bị lạm dụng. Lạm dụng một đứa trẻ là một tội lỗi. Chúng tôi cam kết lắng nghe, hỗ trợ, điều tra cùng thực hiện theo các chính sách và thủ tục như đã ban hành của Tòa Giám Mục.

မတရားကင်းကန့်ပုဆွကညးပန့်ခင်းတုပကောရန့်

ကလေးသူငယ်များနှင့် လူငယ်များကို မတရားကင်းကန့်ပုဆွကညးပန့်ခင်းဖြစ်တဲ့ မကောင်းဆိုးဝါးရန်များမကာကွယ်ပေးဖို့ ညည်း ကြံပတ်၍ အသင်းတော်အတိုက်အခံရဲပေးကိုင်သော အရာဖြစ်သည်။ အသင်းတော်ဂိုဏ်းအပိတ်သင်္ဘောယူပယူဖတ်ဖို့ ဝါးနန်း South Bend ဟာ ကလေးသူငယ်နှင့် လူငယ်များကိုကာကွယ်စောင့်ရှောက်ဖို့ အတိုက်အခံကောင်းအထည့်ထေ့အောင် မတရားသည့် လိမ္မော်နည်းလမ်းများနှင့် မတရားမှုများကို

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ကူညီထောက်ပံ့ဆောင်ရွက်ပေးသူတို့ Mary Glowaski ကို (၂၆၀) ၃၉၉ ၁၄၅၈ သို့မဟုတ် mglowaski@diocesefwsb.org ၊ အသင်းအဖွဲ့ဝင်များအား ရပါမည်။ အကယ်၍ သင့် သို့မဟုတ် သင့်သိတဲ့သူ တစ်ယောက်ယောက်မှာ ကလေးဘဝတိုင်းက သို့မဟုတ် လူငယ်အရပြုထက် လူငယ်တိုင်း၏ နှိပ်စက်ပုဆွကညးပန့်ခင်းခံခဲ့ရသည့် ရှိသော သို့မဟုတ် တာဝန်ရှိသူထံသို့ ပုဆွကညးပန့်ခင်းမခံပေးနိုင်ပါက အသင်းအဖွဲ့ဝင်များနှင့် ပူးပေါင်း၍ အထောက်အကူပေးနိုင်ပါသည်။

Mark Gurtner ကို လိပ်စာအမှတ် P.O. Box 390, Fort Wayne, Indiana, 46801 ၊ ဖုန်းနံပါတ် (၂၆၀) ၃၉၉ ၁၄၁၉ ၊ သို့မဟုတ် mgurtner@diocesefwsb.org သို့မဟုတ် အသင်းအဖွဲ့ဝင်များအား ရပါမည်။

သင့်အား တိုက်တွန်းပါသည်။ အသင်းတော်ဂိုဏ်းအပိတ်သင်္ဘောယူပယူဖတ်ဖို့ ကလေးသူငယ်များနှင့် လူငယ်များကို

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လူများကိုလည်း ကူညီပေးသဖြင့် မညီတူအာမခံပါသည်။



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A drive-in rally will begin at 4 p.m. at 6600 N. Clinton St., Fort Wayne. A diaper drive to benefit Compassion Pregnancy Center, Life and Family Services, A Mother's Hope, A Hope Center, and The Hope Clinic will be taken. A caravan to the downtown area will follow. **Visit marchforlifechicago.org/tour.**

Visit www.diocesefwsb.org/local-marches for a listing of all of the local pro-life events this month, as well as how to sign up for the national 9 Days for Life novena. Contact Lisa Everett at 574-234-0687 or leverett@diocesefwsb.org for information.

#IGiveCatholic —

'The generosity has been absolutely amazing'

BY JENNIFER BARTON

No matter what difficulties a year may bring, charitable organizations still have financial needs. And although people are often generous in their giving, 2020's Giving Tuesday made a particularly appreciated financial difference in Catholic parishes, schools and ministries within the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend.

Mike Shade, chief executive officer of the Catholic Community Foundation of Northeast Indiana, stated that 48 parishes, schools and ministries in the diocese participated in the #IGiveCatholic campaign on the CCFNEI platform. Of those, 42 received donations, with Our Lady of Good Hope's school in Fort Wayne receiving the highest amount. CCFNEI covered the initial startup costs for any organization in the diocese that wanted to participate.

Our Lady School opened four years ago with a curriculum based on classical education. The small enrollment size of 99 students cannot meet its every financial need.

"One school board member asked if teachers have what they need to be successful," recalled principal Beatrice Royal. She was about to answer affirmatively when she realized that many of the whiteboards in the classrooms were falling apart and the classroom technology required upgrades.

When Royal heard about the #IGiveCatholic campaign from parishioner Julie Kenny, the national director of the program, "my first reaction was, 'I don't have time for this.' Then I thought, 'No, I have to make

time.' So, I wrote a story and Julie tweaked it." That story was posted to the school's #IGiveCatholic page, giving a clear voice to the school's needs.

The idea to include the school in this year's #IGiveCatholic campaign began with the parish pastor, Father Mark Gurtner, and Kenny. Royal credits Kenny for giving her the tools to create the platform and promote it at the parish level and through social media.

The items that the school needed to replace were "hampering the teachers' ability to teach on a daily basis," Royal stated. The school began to consider

what it would cost to replace the old whiteboards with interactive smartboards, but that technology was becoming outdated, Royal found out when speaking to a representative of the supply company. It was suggested that they purchase interactive flat

panels instead.

Each participating organization was allowed to set a monetary goal that it hoped to achieve. In Our Lady School's case, that number was set at \$60,000.

Royal called the day the webpage went live "the most intense day" she could remember. She worried if she had asked for too much, whether the support would come in or if it had been worth the effort she had put into it. In the end, though, she realized, "we ask for what we need and trust God for the rest." The school raised a total of \$106,000 — more than \$40,000 above its goal.

"The generosity has been absolutely amazing," Royal said. The new flat panels will be installed in January. The excess



#iGIVECATHOLIC

amount, she reported, will go toward iPad centers for the primary grades and replacing outdated devices for the teachers.

Kenny is modest about her part in Our Lady's success. "Because I'm the national director, I could see that they had the potential to do great things. ... All I did really was design the page and pointed (Royal) toward resources. ... She took it and ran with it."

Our Lady School came in 13th in the country for the total amount raised. Part of this amount came from a matching donor, which Kenny said is another great way to boost revenue in charitable campaigns such as this. She was pleased to see their efforts rewarded and hopes that more organizations will follow their example and see greater benefits from the annual day of giving in the future. "It's amazing what organizations can do, regardless of size."

"We had some organizations that thought this was the wrong year to ask for money, but who are we to limit God in what He could do through donors?"

Kenny advises organizations not to discount the importance of offline donations as well. Many people who want to give to a parish or school can and often do bring their donations to the office. Those donations count toward the total amount raised.

Although some donors may have missed the deadline for online giving, in-person giving is always a viable option, with the specification that the donation is intended for the #IGiveCatholic campaign.

Of the generosity of his parishioners, Father Gurtner professed himself to be "so surprised but very grateful for the tremendous success our school had on Giving Tuesday with the #IGiveCatholic campaign. I'm especially grateful to my staff and to school parents who did the necessary groundwork to make this campaign so successful."

The parish also took part in the campaign, earning separate funds for maintaining the parish grounds and beautifying the church itself.

For ministries to reach their

goal, it is important to write engaging stories telling where the funds are most needed and to promote the campaign through all means possible. Shade added that "there are also a number of people that, after becoming aware of the program, have given to these ministries and are not included in those numbers, since they came after the date."

Overall, the outcome of the #IGiveCatholic campaign in the diocese has been quite positive this year. Shade hopes that next year will bring even greater success and participation.

"I think for a first-time program, we did very well and there are several ministries that have indicated that they would like to participate next year."

Marian High School, Mishawaka, and Redeemer Radio both had a large number of donors, with Marian also exceeding its fundraising goal. But even smaller donations are appreciated, and ministries always have a great need for financial aid to help them fulfill their mission within the Church.

"It's amazing what organizations can do, regardless of size."

JULIE KENNY

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Christ's human condition a sign of God's love, pope says at Angelus

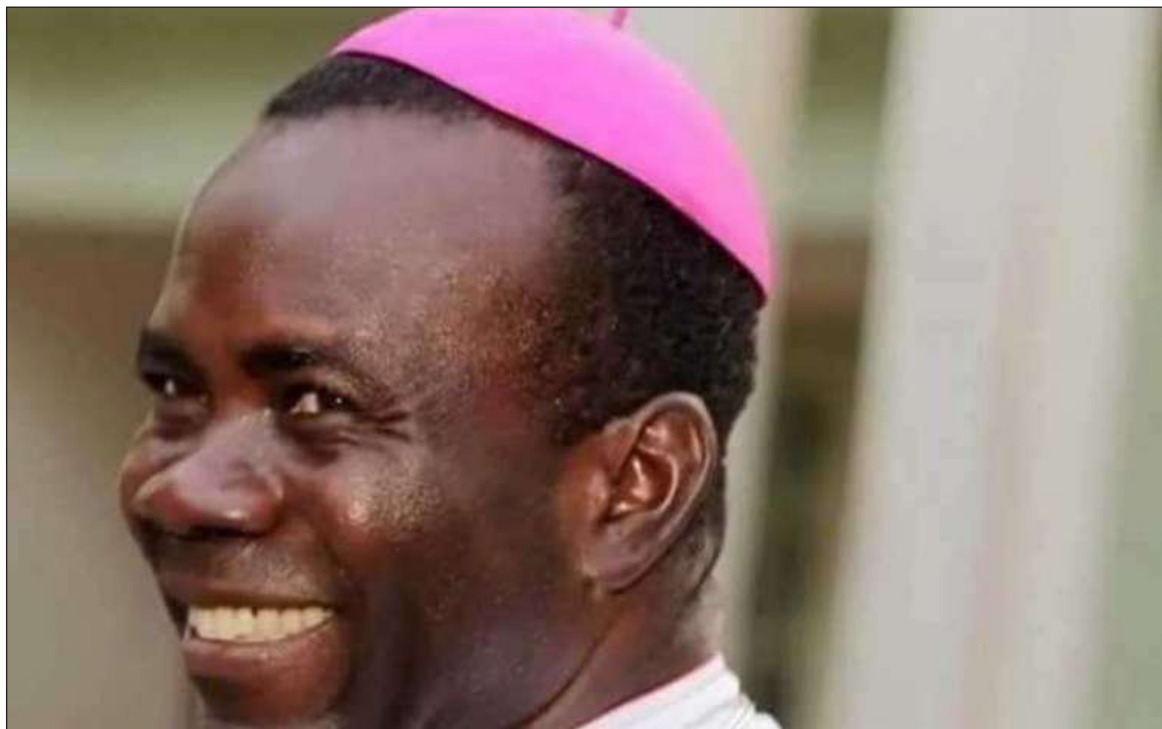
VATICAN CITY (CNS) — By taking on the frail human condition, God showed His love for humanity and His desire to share in people's joys and sufferings, Pope Francis said. During his Sunday Angelus address Jan. 3, the pope said that God made the "bold" decision to become human "to tell us, to tell you, that he loves us like that, in our frailty, in your frailty, right there, where we are most ashamed, where you are most ashamed. He enters into our shame, to become our brother, to share the path of life," he said. After praying the Angelus prayer and renewing his good wishes for the new year, Pope Francis said that Christians, without resorting to "the mentality of fatalism or magic," know that "things will improve to the extent that, with God's help, we work together for the common good, placing the weakest and most disadvantaged at the center. We do not know what 2021 holds for us, but what each one of us, and all of us together, can do is to take care of each other and of creation, our common home," he said.

Despite hardships, pope says there is much for which to be thankful

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The notable absence of Pope Francis at the final liturgical celebration of 2020 in St. Peter's Basilica capped off a difficult year for the Vatican and for the world. Yet Pope Francis, in remarks read by Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re, dean of the College of Cardinals, urged people to find meaning in the pandemic. The pope said giving thanks to God after such a year may seem "forced, almost jarring" especially for those who have lost loved ones, have fallen ill or have lost their jobs. "At times, someone may ask, 'What is the meaning of such tragedy?' We must not be in a hurry to answer this question. To our most anguished 'whys,' not even God responds by appealing to higher reasons," the pope wrote. God, he continued, is not someone "who would sacrifice human beings for a grand design," but instead a compassionate and paternal shepherd. "God is a shepherd, and what shepherd would give up even one sheep, thinking that in the meantime he has many others left? No, this cynical and ruthless god does not exist. This is not the God we 'praise' and 'proclaim Lord,'" Cardinal Re read. Earlier in the day, Vatican spokesman Matteo Bruni said Pope Francis, 84, would not preside over the traditional end-of-the-year prayer service nor the New Year's Mass the following day due to "painful sciatica."

NEWS BRIEFS

Nigerian bishop released by kidnappers



CNS photo/Public Domain

Auxiliary Bishop Moses Chikwe of Owerri, Nigeria, pictured in this undated photo, and his driver were released by their abductors Jan. 1, five days after they were kidnapped. Archbishop John Obinna of Owerri said when he visited Bishop Chikwe at his residence, the bishop was "looking and feeling very weak from the traumatic experience." The 53-year-old bishop lived and worked in Southern California from 2005 to 2017. He completed a master's degree in educational administration at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles and a Ph.D. in education at the University of California at Los Angeles. He was appointed auxiliary bishop of his home archdiocese in 2019.

Catholic advocates against death penalty urge clemency for woman on federal death row

WASHINGTON (CNS) — The execution date of Lisa Montgomery, the only woman on federal death row, is currently undecided. In late December a federal judge said the Justice Department unlawfully rescheduled her execution while there had already been a stay in effect, granted because one of her attorneys tested positive for the coronavirus. The federal government is appealing this decision while Montgomery's attorneys are appealing for clemency. Her lawyers have said that she is the only woman to face execution in America for the type of crime she committed — attacking a pregnant woman and taking the baby — stating that most prosecutors recognize that such crimes are the product of severe mental illness and trauma, which they also note that Montgomery has suffered. On Dec. 24, U.S. District Court Judge Randolph Moss, vacated an order from the

director of the Bureau of Prisons that set Montgomery's execution date for Jan. 12, noting that this could not be rescheduled while the execution had already been granted a stay.

Catholic Extension receives \$1.5 million grant for Puerto Rico recovery work

WASHINGTON (CNS) — A \$1.5 million grant awarded by the U.S. bishops' Subcommittee on Catholic Home Missions will support Catholic Extension's ongoing disaster recovery work in Puerto Rico three years after two devastating hurricanes. The money will be used for startup expenses in the six dioceses of island territory as Church officials seek funds from the Federal Emergency Management Agency to rebuild properties damaged during the 2017 storms that caused widespread damage. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops said Dec. 30 the initiative is expected to generate hundreds of millions of dollars in federal aid for rebuilding schools and churches as parishes strive to con-

tinue pastoral ministry, especially in poor and vulnerable communities. Bishop W. Shawn McKnight of Jefferson City, Missouri, subcommittee chairman, said in a statement that the USCCB "appreciates the innovative groundwork that Catholic Extension's staff has undertaken in the rebuilding efforts."

Catholic magazine highlights how people 'found God in a troubled year'

WASHINGTON (CNS) — With many so eager to put 2020 in the rearview mirror, one Catholic publication is saying: "Not so fast." It its last issue of the year, the Angelus, a weekly magazine of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, published a series called: "Saving 2020. How we found God in a troubled year." The series, updated online every few days at the end of December, at angelusnews.com, included personal essays from regular contributors and guest writers reflecting on how 2020, despite the COVID-19 pandemic, was a providential year. Pablo Kay, the

magazine's editor-in-chief, said the idea for the series was something he was thinking about for several weeks as the end of the year approached. In an email to Catholic News Service, he said that he kept thinking about the personal sufferings of this year, noting that in his own experience he lost two family members and two priests close to his family due to COVID-19 and had friends and family members lose jobs and suffer from the isolation brought on by the coronavirus restrictions.

Midwest Catholic school system adapts to remain in-person during pandemic

SALINA, Kan. (CNS) — The coronavirus pandemic has required many people around the world to develop an "adapt and carry on" attitude. That's the mantra of Geoff Andrews, superintendent of Catholic Schools for the Diocese of Salina, Kansas, as the 15 Catholic schools in the jurisdiction have continued to operate during the pandemic. "The hard part is staying current with what's going on in each community," Andrews said. "The data changes every day. Guidelines change every day. The only thing we've learned is the only constant is change." With 15 schools sprinkled across the diocese, many opened with in-person learning five days a week in late August. "The challenge for a large, rural diocese is that there is not a one-size-fits-all approach that works for all of our schools as a whole," Andrews said. "We've been able to manage change and adapt to what will fit each building because every community is extremely different."

Tradition of Epiphany door blessing with chalk is symbol of hope

BALTIMORE (CNS) — The ancient Christian tradition of marking doorways with blessed chalk on the feast of the Epiphany will carry new meaning for many Catholics in 2021. Following a year that saw families shaken by the coronavirus pandemic, the traditional home blessing will serve as a special symbol of hope and a visible reminder of faith. "Many have fought COVID-19 and lived to tell about it," said Michael Carnahan, a parishioner of Sacred Heart of Mary Church in Baltimore, who has practiced the chalk blessing since he was a child. "However, many people have suffered the loss of a loved one to this virus. The chalk, along with other symbols, will be an even stronger reminder of how important God is to us and of what an important factor Jesus is in our daily lives," he said. The blessing involves taking simple chalk, usually blessed by a parish priest, and scrawling doorways with symbolic numbers and letters — this year: "20+C M B 21."

Alpha Online begins Jan. 18

MISHAWAKA — Alpha Online is a series of small-group discussions for young adults that features the highly acclaimed Alpha film installments, exploring Christian faith in an engaging, contemporary style. Inspiring stories and interviews from all around the world will be shared.

The program takes place Monday evenings Jan. 18 to March 22, from 7:30 to 9 p.m., over Zoom. All young adults who desire to deepen their own relationship with Jesus or introduce someone else to what life in Christ looks like are welcome.

Register for free at diocesefwsb.org/alpha/. For more information contact the Secretariat for Evangelization and Discipleship at 574-234-0687.

Online spring Retrouvaille

FORT WAYNE — The constant arguing. It's no fun. Retrouvaille can help.

Retrouvaille can help couples work through struggles in their marriages, difficult situations that seem impossible to repair. Since 1977, this program's tools

AROUND THE DIOCESE

We Three Kings



Jennifer Miller

Children dressed as the three Magi are pictured with Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades following Mass on Epiphany at St. Matthew Cathedral, South Bend. The children processed with the bishop at the beginning of the Mass, which was candlelit due to a power outage caused by snow and ice storms over the weekend.

have helped strengthen and improve the marriages of tens of thousands of couples throughout the world. Retrouvaille couples have experienced marital difficulty at all levels, including disillusionment and deep misery.

Indianapolis Retrouvaille will hold its next weekend virtually, March 4-7 via Zoom. The weekend introduces couples to important communication tools. In the privacy of home, participants will examine their life together in a new and positive way. After the weekend, they will attend six follow-up sessions — also via Zoom. Post-weekend topics focus on specific issues, including conflict management.

Begin again. Learn more and register today at www.helpour-marriage.org or email retrouvaille@gmail.com for confidential registration information.

At Christmas in Steuben County, 'food is love'

BY JENNIFER BARTON

The churches in Steuben County brought a bit of comfort to residents who found themselves alone on Christmas Day this year. Thanks to a collaboration between them and Caruso's restaurant, box meals were provided to anyone who wished to partake on a first-come, first-served basis from 1-3 p.m. Christmas Day at two locations in the county.

Father Robert Showers, OFM Conv., is pastor of St. Anthony of Padua Parish and St. Paul Chapel in Fremont. He explained that the idea came about from the deep sense of community that makes Steuben County special.

"A coalition of three churches in Pleasant Lake has held a Thanksgiving dinner every year for many years," he said. "They bill it as a community dinner, to which everyone is invited, whether they can afford it or not. That is to emphasize that it's not a handout to poor people."

Last year, that same group of churches extended this hospitality into the holiday and revived a lost tradition of hosting a sit-down meal at a local public school for Christmas. "It worked out really well. About 125 people came. ... We had agreed

then that we're definitely doing it again for Christmas 2020," Father Showers said. But COVID-19 changed those plans and the churches had to rethink the meal plan, making it a take-home meal instead.

Liat Peters and Lisa Aldrich, along with their brother, Dan Caruso, own Caruso's restaurant, the business their own parents started more than 40 years ago. The family members are longtime parishioners at St. Anthony ever since they moved to the area from Fort Wayne.

With so many Christmas plans canceled this year, the siblings were "looking for a way we could contribute, because that left a hole," said Aldrich.

When they heard about the idea to provide a box lunch in lieu of an in-person dinner, they jumped aboard.

"Our motto in our family has always been 'food is love' ... so to provide meals for the needy on Christmas Day seems like the perfect way to show love," Peters continued. "We feel fortunate to be in this county, where it's such a faith-filled community."

Steuben County has numerous churches and three separate ministerial associations for the cities of Angola, Fremont and Pleasant Lake. As the only Catholic church in the county, St. Anthony is involved in all three.

Father Showers said that as a collective group, the churches "have found over the years that ... we have been very interested in doing things together that reach out and help society."

One of these projects is Cahoots Coffee Café, a nonprofit café in Angola that provides a safe environment for young people to meet and socialize: "Because when you're there, you're in cahoots," Father Showers joked. This joint effort has grown over the years and is now run by a board made up of five churches.

With these partnerships already in place, finding volunteers to help with things like the Christmas meals is never an issue. Father Showers said. "If anything, we have an embarrassment of riches." Because less volunteers are required for a carryout dinner than a dine-in event, this year's dinner yielded an overabundance of helpers.

Peters told of one participating church that had budgeted money early in the year for community-building projects that were put on indefinite hold due to the pandemic. Since the members had been looking for a way to spend the budgeted money, the Christmas meal project was a godsend.

FOOD, page 10

Donations for St. Joseph Mission



Provided by Lois Widner

Lisa Fabian, executive director of St. Joseph Mission, holds baskets of items collected by St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School, Fort Wayne, during Advent. The donations were given to St. Joseph Mission, a shelter in Fort Wayne for homeless, single women. Students, parents and teachers in each grade brought in specific items that were on the mission's most-needed list. The school also collected donations for the Ave Maria House to help Abby Kurek, an alumna of the school, with a service project.

A month-by-month spiritual guide Saints to pray with in 2021

BY JENNIFER MILLER

Each new calendar year offers a fresh start in several ways. This can be true regarding the spiritual life as well. The year 2021 is an opportunity to live one's Catholic faith in a manner "worthy of the vocation to which you are called," as described by St. Paul in Ephesians 4:1.

There are baptized people who have already done this well and "have competed well; have finished the race; have kept the faith," as it is said in 2 Timothy 4: the saints. The Church remembers these friends and holy heroes already in heaven with God forever for their Christian witness and example of a life lived in discipleship of Jesus Christ.

Here are a few suggestions of saints to walk with in the new year. They are waiting to support the faithful here on earth, as modern Catholics travel roads similar to those the saints took years before. As intercessors, they can pray for those on earth and be good spiritual friends for the journey through 2021; helping us, as St. Teresa of Avila said, "to have courage for whatever comes in life — everything lies in that."



January

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton

An American convert, wife, mother and later religious sister, was born in 1774 in New York City and died in 1821 in Emmitsburg, Maryland, where she founded the first Catholic girls school in America and the first American congregation of religious sisters, the Sisters of Charity. Her home in New York City is still a place of pilgrimage on the southern tip of Manhattan by the Statue of Liberty. She also lived in quarantine and dealt with great sickness and death. Her husband died of tuberculosis, leaving her to care for their five children. She started an academy for young ladies to support her family. Her already rich prayer life grew, and she became Catholic in 1805.

February

Sts. Louis and Zelig Martin

This married couple lived lives of true charity and Christian witness to love through the vocation of marriage. In a month focused on romantic love, they both demonstrated a variety of human love while focused on God, who is love. Together they had eight children, four of whom died as infants or young children. They parented well through difficult times and their youngest daughter, Therese, was canonized a saint.

March

St. Rita of Cascia

Lent this year might be a good time to reach out and resolve any disagreements with others that may be left over from 2020 and repair those relationships. St. Rita of Cascia can be a guide in that endeavor. A peacemaker from Italy in the late 1300s, she dealt with her husband's murder because of a vendetta. Her medieval community struggled with a tit-for-tat tradition of vengeance that devalued human life. She prayed her sons would never commit a mortal sin. St. Rita recognized these sins for what they are and strove to live a life of harmony and peacemaking, despite difficult social and familial issues. She became an Augustinian nun toward the end of her life, after her sons and husband had died.



April

St. Philip Neri

St. Philip Neri was a popular Italian layperson who lived during post-Renaissance times of clergy issues, corruption in Rome and malaise in parishes. He used his social circles for Christ, gathering people for prayer and discussions and serving the poor. With a good sense of humor and charity, he encouraged people to be their true selves and live holy lives. After his spiritual director encouraged him to become a priest, Neri complied. He founded an oratory in his name, a religious institute of priests who lived in community with daily afternoons of education and music. His work, both in his own life of holiness and for Rome, were essential during the Counter-Reformation.



May

Blessed Carlo Acutis

As a young teenager, Blessed Carlo Acutis had a profound love for the Eucharist. In a month when many children receive the sacrament of first holy Communion, Acutis' intercession can support this step on the spiritual journey. Even as child, he had such a love for Jesus in the Eucharist that every time his little family would pass a church building, he would beg to go inside and say hello to Jesus. His witness to God inspired his mother to learn more about the Catholic faith and lead to both his parents returning the faith. He knew well the temptations and challenges of modern life but chose every day to stay focused on God and God's will for his life.

June

St. Therese Martin

St. Therese Martin of Lisieux spent much time at home, but her faith life still flourished. In the late 1800s, she stayed at home in Alençon (with her parents, Sts. Louis and Zelig Martin) and later Lisieux, France. As a young adult and Carmelite nun, she lived in convent, praying for the world and sanctification of all people from her cell. Creatively she embraced modern ideas, such as the new invention of an elevator, to contemplate deeper ways of understanding God.



July

St. Benedict

St. Benedict was an Italian monk and mystic who lived during the 500s. He wrote the Rule of St. Benedict and founded the Benedictine order. A homebody, St. Benedict stressed extending Christian hospitality to all guests equally. The order does not move its religious members from place to place but instead values staying in one physical location and deepening relationships of service there. This was a challenge for many people in 2020, but perhaps it could be seen as a blessing in 2021.



September

St. Theresa Benedicta

A brilliant, young academic woman, St. Theresa Benedicta of the Cross was born on Yom Kippur, the Jewish Day of Atonement, in the early 1900s into a Jewish German family in Poland. Her birth name was Edith Stein. She was the youngest of 11 children. As a teenager she became an atheist. An excellent student, she studied philosophy and metaphysics at university, combining the philosophies of St. Thomas Aquinas, Dun Scotus and Husserl. She converted to Catholicism and entered a German Carmelite convent in 1933 as the Nazi threat was growing. Pro-life, her writings emphasized the feminine genius: "The soul of woman must be expansive and open to all human beings, it must be quiet so that no small weak flame will be extinguished by stormy winds; warm so as not to benumb fragile buds ... empty of itself, in order that extraneous life may have room in it; finally, mistress of itself and also of its body, so that the entire person is readily at the disposal of every call," she wrote. She calmly and in faith offered her life to the heart of Jesus for the atonement of true peace before she was deported to Auschwitz concentration camp, where she died.



November

St. John Henry Newman

A British convert to Catholicism, St. John Henry Newman was a priest, brilliant academic theologian and poet in the 19th century. He strove with consistency and pastoral care for the true faith and a deeper life in Christ, despite personal cost to his professional academic life and teaching seat at Oxford University. An Anglican priest, he converted to Catholicism after much prayer and study. The consequences were great for him and included the loss of close friends and broken relationships with his family during an anti-Catholic period in England. During this month, when the universal Church remembers the souls of the faithful departed, St. Newman's words continue to ring true: "Life passes, riches fly away, popularity is fickle, the senses decay, the world changes. One alone is true to us; One alone can be all things to us; One alone can supply our need."



August

Venerable Father Augustus Tolton

Father Augustus Tolton was the first African American priest in the United States of America. Born a slave during the start of the Civil War in Missouri, he lived a life of dedicated service to God's people, dying very young in the summer of 1897 in Chicago. His mother led him in a life of faith, despite numerous racist attacks. His life was marred by racial injustice, both in and outside of the Catholic Church. No American seminary would accept him, despite letters of support from his parish priest and bishop, so Tolton traveled to Rome to study for the priesthood. There he learned fluent Latin, German and Italian, as well as Greek and African dialects. He expected to be sent on mission to Africa but instead after ordination was assigned a parish in Quincy, Illinois. Because of the many challenges presented him by Christians who did not accept or welcome him due to his race and religion, Tolton struggled; but he succeeded in living a life of holiness during a tumultuous time in America.



October

St. Kateri Tekakwitha

St. Kateri Tekakwitha was a young Native American woman who followed Jesus instead of the customs of her Mohawk tribe in the mid-1600s. Her parents died of smallpox when she was little. Her uncle took care of her and tried to have Kateri married. She had been catechized by the missionary Jesuit priests, the black-robed descendants of Sts. Isaac Jogues and Jean de Brebeuf, and desired to only be with Jesus, so she went to live alone in the woods, intrinsically understanding the concept of Christian consecration to virginity. This choice did not sit well with the culture of her tribe. Her decision to follow Jesus led her to leave her birthplace in upper New York and flee to a mission in Canada. Despite these difficulties, her faith in God remained strong.



December

St. Joseph

The foster father of Jesus was a Jewish carpenter of the house of David. He lived an ordinary life of simplicity, poverty and obedience in present-day northern Israel during the Roman occupation. Following God's call, as expressed to him through an angel messengers in his dreams, he heard an unexpected message to take Mary into his house, care for her child and name Him Jesus. No recorded words of St. Joseph are mentioned in Scripture, except the name of his adopted Son, Jesus. Uncertain, he nevertheless followed the angel's command and was unflinching in his faithfulness and simplicity as he protected the Holy Family, living out his vocation as husband and father. Joseph played a unique role in salvation history and the Incarnation. Pope Francis dedicated this year to St. Joseph, encouraging the faithful to find inspiration in his model through daily prayer and conversion.

St. Anthony de Padua School grateful for lunchtime help

BY JILL A. BOUGHTON

On a typical school day, the kitchen staff at Marian High School, Mishawaka, prepares lunch for the students of both Marian and St. Anthony de Padua School, South Bend. When the food arrives at St. Anthony around 10:40 a.m., the elementary school's lunch staff, directed by Shelly Coughlin, keep it warm, divide it into individual portions and deliver them to the students, who this year are all entitled to eat for free. Then, the kitchen has to be thoroughly cleaned.

On Dec. 1, St. Anthony principal Karen Bogol realized that too many key personnel for the lunch program and custodial staff were now in quarantine, along with several other members of the faculty and staff. With a heavy heart, she called Marian principal Mark Kirzeder to tell him St. Anthony would likely have to cancel its hot lunch program for the rest of the term.

Kirzeder immediately reached out to Marian's food service director, Cami Whitten. Within hours, they had a plan in place to ensure St. Anthony students would continue receiving lunch and also breakfast.

A team from Marian came to St. Anthony every day Dec. 2-18 to prep and package the meals and then sanitize the kitchen. They also continued the school's program of offering drive-up meals to families whose children were learning virtually.

In turn, St. Anthony staff members gave up their breaks and enlisted additional volunteers to help pass out the lunches within the building. Many, including the business manager, took on custodial responsibilities.

As far as the students were concerned, everything was operating as usual.

St. Anthony has had many pandemic-related challenges this year, including a two-week period of all-virtual learning before Thanksgiving and lengthier periods of remote learning for the entire junior high. However, through the efforts of both Marian and St. Anthony workers, the elementary students continued to receive a hot lunch even when they couldn't study in-person at school.

The entire staff has been very creative and generous, said Bogol. School nurse Maureen Vervaet serves on the school's COVID-19 planning team and has done extensive contact tracing and talking through challenges with school staff and families. She has even coordinated resources for families, like meal delivery and tools and supplies for remote learning. Her partici-



Provided by Teresa Thompson

Breakfast bags put together by Marian High School, Mishawaka, await delivery to St. Anthony de Padua School, South Bend, this fall. When most of St. Anthony's kitchen staff and custodial crew were forced to quarantine due to COVID-19 exposure this fall, many selfless brothers and sisters in Christ stepped in to ensure that the students would continue to receive breakfast and a hot lunch every school day.

pation and assistance have been an absolute blessing, according to Bogol.

The school has done its best to stay open, but the staff is also developing a plan with the local YMCA to potentially provide after-school and other programming. The Y will help St. Anthony school families with child care and e-learning if a particular grade can't come to school.

Sending members of its own staff and school community to St. Anthony left Marian "a little short-handed, but we could handle it," according to Whitten. "We need to take care of each other during this time." Bogol is grateful to now have St. Anthony's kitchen and custodial staff back, but "we continue to be humbled by the graciousness of our friends at Marian, our nurse and those within our St.

Anthony community who have stepped up and accepted new challenges to ensure we can offer families both in-person and remote instruction."



Provided by Patti Webster

Volunteers package homemade cookies at Caruso's restaurant in Angola Dec. 22 to be included in meals that St. Anthony of Padua Parish helped distribute on Christmas Day.

FOOD, from page 7

Churches were not the only organizations involved in the Christmas meals. Miller Poultry in Orland donated a large number of chickens for the meals. Another of St. Anthony's parishioners who works for Stanz Foodservice in South Bend brought the company on board to help defray the costs, and Caruso's salesman from Gordon Food Service also enlisted his company's aid to donate to the dinner. Three hundred meals were prepared, with 215 meals given away on Christmas Day and 85 left for local shelters in Angola.

The hardest part for Father Showers was that the meal was not intended to be strictly about food, but about giving those who have no one else a sense of home life, at least for one day.

"I wish we could have a sit-down. Part of the beauty both at Thanksgiving and Christmas is to sit together and be together, including people who maybe don't get together with other people very often, or who don't feel welcome very often. So it isn't quite the same, just handing things out."

It was decided that, while they could not offer conversations and camaraderie, they could offer messages of encouragement in the forms of handwritten Christmas cards. These will be included in the packages that will be handed out to those who receive a meal. Father Showers emphasized that, "We're hoping those cards help and this is a promise of better things to come. Even if we can't be together in one big room, we don't want to forget people."

Aldrich added, "We want these people who are receiving a meal to feel like they are connected in some way. ... And the amount of people coming forward saying, 'I'll help, I'll help' is really awesome."

Peters and Aldrich provided a location to prepare the food prior to distribution and hands to help cook it. Some of their employees have given their own time to assist in this process. The sisters have even gone so far as to make homemade cookies to add to the packages.

"In the past," Father Showers emphasized, "we've done things in Angola: For this project, we're trying to also include a bigger part of the county. That's why we wanted to make sure the Fremont churches and the Pleasant Lake churches were also involved. "We can do a whole lot more together than each one by ourselves."

Father Showers found other methods of keeping the spirit of Christmas alive for his parish and the local community, as well. Drive-by Nativities, story time with Santa and jingle bells for Christmas Masses are all fun ways the parish has found to provide cheer amid the pandemic.

None of these measures are ideal, of course, and the churches are sincerely hoping that by next year they are able to host the Christmas meal in person.

"We don't want to make it 'the churches' helping 'the unchurched' or anything like that," said Father Showers. "We're all here together, and now we're going to share something together."

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BEST OF HOME CARE LEADER
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Teacher Kurtis Homan —

Preparing students for life

BY JENNIFER BARTON

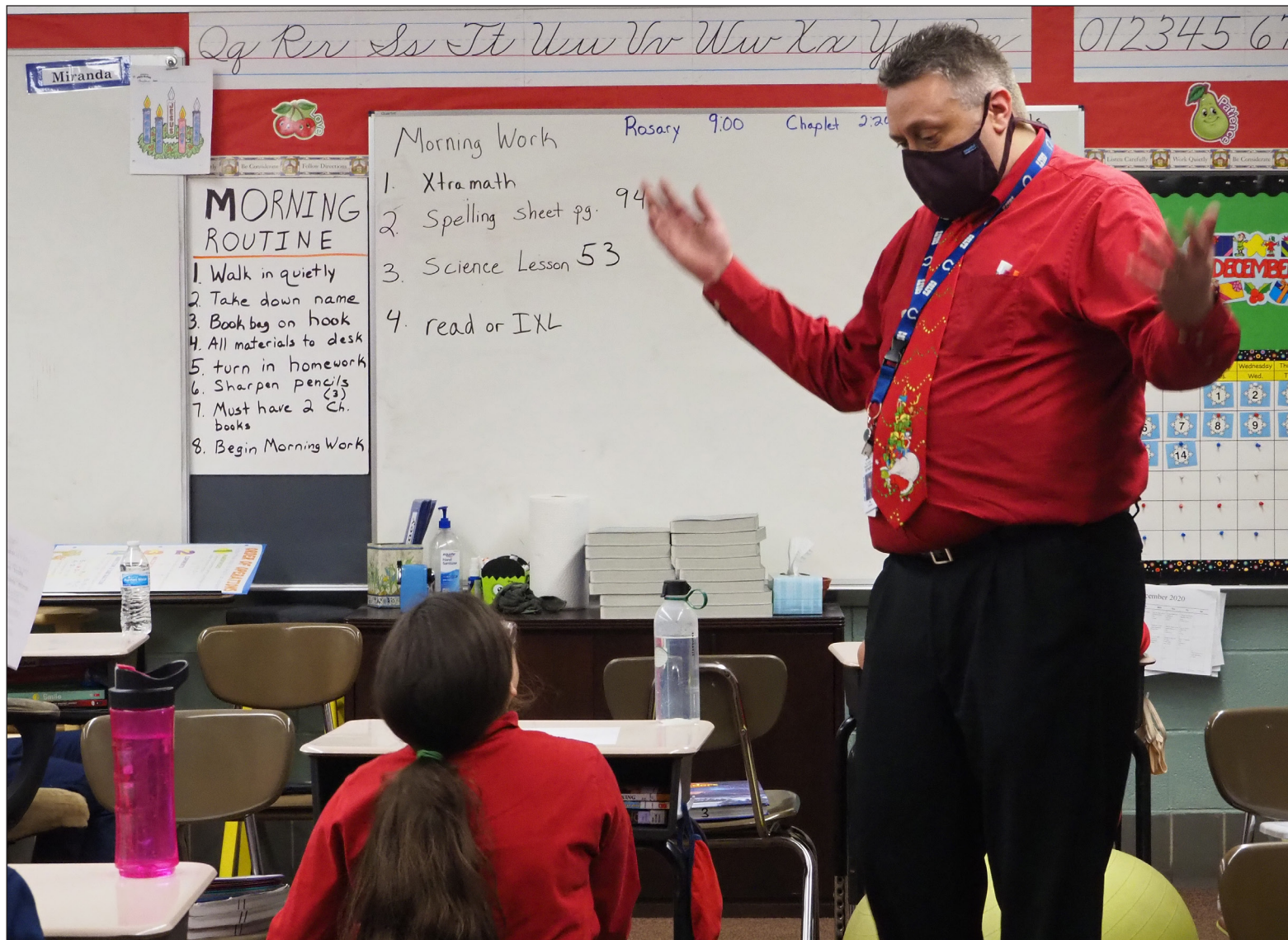
Teaching in Catholic schools was something Kurtis Homan said he kind of fell into as a young graduate of the University of Saint Francis. He never expected to spend nearly 20 years in two Catholic schools in Fort Wayne, nor to see his efforts earn him the schools' Light of Learning Award not once, but three times. This year marks the fourth time he has been given the now-renamed Christ the Teacher Award, this time as a fifth grade teacher at St. Joseph - Hessen Cassel. He remains humble through it all.

"I grew up on a farm in Jay County and I was always going to farm," Homan stated. His family were farmers, and his parents did not have college degrees. When he realized, as a high school junior, that farming meant working full-time with his father, his plans turned to teaching. "It was always teaching."

He chose the University of Saint Francis partly for the football program the university was forming at the time. After he completed his student teaching, Marsha Jordan, then the principal of Queen of Angels School, called the university to ask if they had a recommendation for a long-term substitute teacher to cover middle school math for a teacher preparing for maternity leave. Homan took the job.

Once that substitute position ended, another teacher at the same school took leave due to an injury. Homan took over third grade. The same teacher decided to take the next year off, so he continued in the position. When that teacher decided to retire, his future at Queen of Angels was sealed. "So, I went from Friday student teaching to Monday middle school math at Queen of Angels. It was no days off, nothing. I did have one day off between middle school math subbing and the third grade."

He spent 14 years at that school before taking a position at St. Joseph - Hessen Cassel, where he has taught for the last five years.



Jennifer Barton

Kurtis Homan teaches fifth grade students about U.S. history at St. Joseph - Hessen Cassel School, Fort Wayne, in December. Homan's focus has always been squarely on his students: Everything he does is for them, he says.

Jay County, where Homan grew up, does not have a Catholic school. Homan was a product of public education and once-a-week religious education classes. So, taking over third grade provided an interesting challenge when it came to teaching religion.

"I was just amazed at how much third graders knew about the Catholic faith compared to me, who just went to my hour-a-week CCD."

He took it upon himself to learn more about his Catholic faith. He started by studying the class textbook. For increasing

his knowledge, he credits Jordan with implementing retreats that helped teachers deepen their faith. He also received the assistance of the parish pastors where he has taught.

"I always say God put me right where He wanted me and He has not let me leave ever since," Homan remarked.

He feels blessed to have worked in smaller schools with family environments. "Honestly, I don't know how I could go teach in a public school now, because for me, everything we do is part of ... even when we're doing math, somehow Jesus comes up all the time, no matter what. When we're doing science, when we're doing social studies - everything."

Giving of himself as a teacher included continuing his duties even when stricken with COVID-19. He called March 13, the day the schools shut down, "one of those dates that will live in infamy for me." He relates how he contracted the virus around that time but made voice recordings of his lessons for the students' use. He made a full recovery and is pleased to report that the school has continued throughout the fall semester without any missed days.

One of the more memorable moments of his teaching career

was when he received a thank-you note from a student at Queen of Angels. This student was one of his more "difficult" pupils, and Homan pushed him hard to accomplish what he needed to do.

The student left the note at church to be delivered to Homan, which said "how much he respected and ... appreciated" what Homan did for him. "I still have that note; it's kind of a neat thing. I wish it happened more often."

His preferred subjects to teach are math and social studies, and he enjoys teaching both Indiana history in the fourth grade and U.S. history in fifth. His classroom is set up with stability balls instead of regular desk chairs, and students look forward to that. Over his many years of teaching, he has had to change the style and methods he uses to keep students engaged.

"I run my classroom like this is my business; I'm the fifth grade teacher, you're the fifth grade student," Homan explained. "So, I have a class economy and I have a class money system and they earn money and they can spend money and all those kinds of things. Because that's really what I'm preparing them for. ... I'm preparing them for life; I'm

preparing them for when they're out of school."

Even the COVID-19 outbreak was a teaching opportunity. Together, they studied the polio epidemic of the early 20th century, comparing the high numbers of children who were impacted by polio to the relatively low numbers of children who have come down with COVID-19.

Homan's greatest concern during the pandemic is the emotional well-being of his students. He is grateful to be back in the classroom environment, where he believes students need to be.

Working and learning together is something that Homan is a big advocate of and, while he only has a class of 13 pupils this year, it has been a struggle for him not to utilize those small group activities that he feels are an immense benefit to the students.

To Homan, the greatest reward for his effort is being able to help students. "It's the kids - it has always been the kids. Which is the biggest reason why I'm wanting to be in the classroom with them; it's not the same virtually. ... But they're the reason I come every day and they're the reason I put in the work that I put in, they're the reason I do whatever I need to make them successful."



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'Dominion,' the values of the West and the cross of Christ

The popular historian Tom Holland has written an extraordinary book called "Dominion: How the Christian Revolution Remade the World." The subtitle sums up his argument. Holland is deeply impatient with the secularist ideology that reigns supreme in the academy and that tends to regard Christianity as a debunked, outmoded religion, a holdover from a primitive, pre-scientific age, a block to progress both moral and intellectual. In point of fact, he argues, Christianity has been and continues to be the most powerful shaper of the Western mind, though its influence is so pervasive and so deep that it is easily overlooked.

His very effective strategy for bringing this out into the open is first to de-familiarize Christianity through a brutally realistic accounting of what crucifixion meant in the ancient world. To be put to death on a Roman cross was just about the worst fate that anyone at that time could have imagined. The very fact that our word "excruciating," which designates the most agonizing kind of pain, comes from the Latin "ex cruce" ("from the cross") fairly gives away the game. But more than the awful physical suffering of the cross was its unsurpassed humiliation. To be stripped naked, nailed to two pieces of wood, left to die in the course of several hours or even days, while exposed to the mockery of passersby, and then, even after death, to have one's body given over to be devoured by the birds of the

air and the beasts of the field was just about as degrading an experience as possible.

That the first Christians, therefore, proclaimed a crucified criminal as the risen Son of God could not have been a more comical, unnerving and revolutionary message. It turned upside down all of the ancient world's assumptions about God, humanity and the right ordering of society. If God could be identified with a crucified man, then even the lowest and most forgotten members of the human family are worthy of love. And that the earliest followers of Jesus not only declared this truth but concretely lived it by caring for the homeless, the sick, the newborn and the aged made their message even more subversive.

Though he explores many other ways that the Christian philosophy influenced Western civilization, Holland identifies this idea, radiating out from the crucified Jesus, as the most impactful. That we take for granted that every human being is worthy of respect, that all people are bearers of equal rights and dignity, that compassionate love is the most praiseworthy ethical attitude is, quite simply, a function, whether we acknowledge it or not, of our Christian cultural formation. Proof of this can be found by looking back to ancient civilization, where none of these notions held sway, and by looking, even now, at societies unshaped by Christianity, where these values are by no means unquestioningly revered.

The bulk of Holland's book



WORD ON FIRE

BISHOP ROBERT BARRON

is taken up with analyses of key moments in Western history, which reveal the influence of the master idea of the cross. I would put special stress on his reading of the Enlightenment, whose political values are unthinkable apart from the Gospel, and of the contemporary "woke" movements, whose preoccupation with the suffering of victims and the marginalized is the fruit of a culture at whose heart, for two thousand years, has been a crucified and unjustly condemned man. I particularly appreciated his coverage of the Beatles' famous 1967 Abbey Road recording of "All You Need is Love" in front of a live audience. The sentiment conveyed by that iconic song is one with which neither Caesar Augustus nor Genghis Khan nor Friedrich Nietzsche would be the least bit sympathetic, but which in fact is deeply congruent with the thought of St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Francis of Assisi, and St. Paul the Apostle. Like it or not, the Christian revolution massively shapes the way that we in the West continue to see the world.

With this part of Holland's

BARRON, page 13

The faith of Violet Jessop

When Violet Jessop set out to be a maritime stewardess, she wasn't driven by some starry-eyed desire to see the world. She was moved by necessity.

Her Irish father, a sheep farmer, had died of complications from surgery, and then her mother's health deteriorated. Violet, 17, the firstborn of nine, resolved to become the breadwinner. She was a devout Catholic, formed by a convent school and committed to prayer. She was also a striking beauty. With her auburn hair swept back her grey-blue eyes sparkled, set off by a petite nose and regal cheek bones.

Violet logged 17-hour days as a cabin stewardess for the White Star Line – making beds, sweeping, picking up clothes and tending to sick passengers. She kept a rosary in her apron and remained guided on a daily basis by her Catholic faith.

In 1911, she was on board the Olympic, the largest civilian luxury liner at the time, when it collided with a British warship. Despite holes in its hull, the Olympic managed to return to port. Violet was undeterred.

She was reassigned to the White Star's newest ship, the Titanic, and set sail less than a year later. The 24-year-old befriended crew members and passengers. On the fourth night, she noticed a chill in the air and retired early, hunkering down with a batch of British fashion magazines.

Just then, she recalled a



TWENTY SOMETHING

CHRISTINA CAPECCHI

Hebrew prayer given to her by an old Irishwoman who had urged her to pray it. It was a prayer for protection against fire and water.

Why had she taken so long to pray it?

"My conscience smote me," Violet later wrote.

She pulled out the prayer card and earnestly prayed it. Then she began drifting off to sleep, until she was jolted by a loud crash.

Violet knew it was ominous.

Her job was to appear calm, reassuring passengers they would be fine. An officer ordered her into Lifeboat 16 to show others it was safe. As the boat was lowered, he shouted, "Look after this, will you?" A bundle was dropped on her lap. A baby!

Violet comforted the crying baby and prayed, icy air blasting her face "like a knife."

Eight hours later, when they were rescued by the Carpathia, a woman grabbed the baby and ran off. Violet never heard from her again.

Safe on land, Violet didn't debate her next step. "I knew that if I meant to continue my

CAPECCHI, page 13

Listen to the Lord, that you may have life



THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

MSGR. OWEN F. CAMPION

Feast of the Baptism of the Lord Mark 1:7-11

This weekend, the Church invites us to celebrate the great feast of the Baptism of the Lord, great because it commemorates a very important event in the life of Jesus and in the unfolding of salvation but also draws our attention to marvelous and fundamental aspects of our salvation.

Jesus, the Son of God, the Redeemer, very much is the centerpiece of all three readings, although of course the Book of Isaiah, from which comes the first reading, only prefigures

Jesus. The Lord was not yet born as a human when this first reading was written.

Isaiah mentions no one by name, but the reading describes a faithful servant of God who, although suffering unjustly and greatly, will be steadfastly faithful to God.

Over the centuries, several passages from Isaiah, similar in literary construction and in reference to the figure that Christians have called the "Suffering Servant," has been very popular among the pious. Believers through the ages have seen in them a description of Jesus. These passages also provide readings for Holy Week, precisely for Good Friday.

In the second reading, from the Acts of the Apostles, Peter stands as the principal figure. He appeared before Cornelius, whose name indicates Roman origins. In itself, this encounter is greatly revealing. Peter did not limit his interest to Jews, whose heritage Peter shared.

Rather, Peter preached the Gospel to pagans, and indeed

to the despised Romans, who were responsible for the military conquest and occupation of the Holy Land, a circumstance detested by the Jews.

Peter's message was crisp but profound. Salvation is in Jesus. The Holy Spirit anointed Jesus as the Savior. God was with Jesus as the Lord went about "doing good works" and healing the sick.

This point too is crucial. The pagan Cornelius yearned for what is good and perfect and thus wholeheartedly accepted Christ. Union with God fulfills every human's need.

St. Mark's Gospel furnishes the story of the Lord's baptism in the River Jordan by John the Baptist.

Ritual washings, or baptisms, were popular in certain Jewish circles in the first century A.D. Homes were built with ceremonial baths. A person could visibly state the desire to be rid of sin, as if sin literally soiled the body, by washing in water.

John the Baptist acknowledges Jesus as the Redeemer. John insists that he himself is not the Savior. John

confesses that he is "not worthy to loosen" the sandal-straps of the Savior.

The Gospel is clear. Jesus is the perfect, innocent and utterly sinless Lord. Still, and critically, Jesus assumes the sinfulness of humankind. Then God identifies Jesus as the Savior, and moreover as the Son of God. To make this declaration clear, God speaks, and gestures, in ancient Old Testament words and symbols that no Jew would have misunderstood.

Reflection

This feast is great because it clearly and expressly reveals to us the Lord's identity. He is the Son of God. Not even a prophet of John's holiness and tenacious faith was the Lord's equal.

Secondly, Jesus assumed the sinfulness of us all. As stated elsewhere in the Scriptures by St. Paul, Jesus is the new Adam, a new and perfect representative of the human race. Unlike Adam, Jesus causes union with God, not estrangement from God. Jesus

brings life, not death; holiness, not fault.

Common human nature unites all people with the Lord. He confirms this union by freeing us all from the consequences of human sin.

We are sinners, but in Jesus, we find reconciliation with God. Our reconciliation through Jesus is perfect, unbroken and absolute. In it is eternal life.

READINGS

Sunday: Is 42:1-4, 6-7 Ps 29:1-2, 3-4, 9-10 Acts 10:34-38 Mk 1:7-11

Monday: Heb 1:1-6 Ps 97:1, 2b, 6, 7c, 9 Mk 1:14-20

Tuesday: Heb 2:5-12 Ps 8:2ab, 5-9 Mk 1:21-28

Wednesday: Heb 2:14-18 Ps 105:1-4, 6-9 Mk 1:29-39

Thursday: Heb 3:7-14 Ps 95:6-7c, 8-11 Mk 1:40-45

Friday: Heb 4:1-5, 11 Ps 78:3, 4bc, 6c-8 Mk 2:1-12

Saturday: Heb 4:12-16 Ps 19:8-10, 15 Mk 2:13-17

'Ite Ad Joseph': Brother Andre Bessette, CSC

On United States Postal Service stamps, New York Times headlines or ESPN sidelines, one can spot them. Well-known and well-educated, the priests, brothers and sisters of the Congregation of Holy Cross receive honor and fame around the world. They began many schools in our diocese, the University of Notre Dame, Holy Cross College and Saint Mary's College among them. But the congregation's first and to date only saint, desired to be quite unknown and was rather uneducated. He regularly advised people who would come to him to rather, "Go to St. Joseph."

Jan. 6 is the feast day of St. Brother Andre Bessette, CSC, the day he entered eternal life in 1937. Humble, obedient and relatable, the petite saint was often found in prayer or in service to another person. A brother of the Congregation of the Holy Cross, he was born into a faith-filled, poor French Canadian family southwest of Montreal in 1845. The eighth of 12 children, he was born sickly and quickly baptized that evening. The Bessettes lived in a happy and poor one-room home, often singing or praying the rosary together on their knees at night. When he was 9, his father was suddenly killed in the forest by a falling tree and his beloved mother died of tuberculosis a few years later. An uncle and aunt took him in, as other townspeople did later on, but Bessette's poor health limited his physical work productivity, which was needed in the late 1800s for survival. He failed at trade after trade, unable to stay at a job. During the American Civil War, he even migrated to New England to work in the booming Union factories, where he learned English for the first time.

Returning to Canada in 1867, he learned about the Congregation of Holy Cross. This new order from France had come to Canada to educate and support the many French Canadian Catholics who previously been legally persecuted by the British-supported government for many years.

On Dec. 8, 1870, Pope Pius IX declared St. Joseph of the Universal Church, a year dedicated to St. Joseph. That year also, on Dec. 27, Alfred Bessette was accepted as a novice and entered of the Congregation of Holy Cross, which at that time was known as the Josephites.

But even that endeavor, Bessette almost failed as a novice due to his lack of formal education and poor health. Through the intercession of St. Joseph and the support of a holy bishop, Bessette was finally accepted into the mainly teaching order and took his beloved pastor's name. His novice master said of him, "If this young man becomes unable to work, he can at least pray. Dear

Confreres (Brothers of Holy Cross), we are all dedicated to teaching people to pray. This man teaches mainly by his example."

Five years into his vocation as a brother, miracles of healings began. Brother Andre was given the simple task of a porter, to open the door and welcome visitors to the College Notre-Dame in Montreal, as well as many other smaller duties. He had a gentle manner and pleasant disposition, which people could relate to and he set them at ease. Also, his knowledge of English was now quite helpful. Next to the main, front door, his bedroom was small, only 6 feet of space, with a wooden plank bed, crucifix on a bare wall and a window with a statue of St. Joseph looking out over the large, forested mountain, Mount Royal across the street. It didn't matter much for him, as Brother Andre was known for praying on his knees all night anyway.

People heard about healings, of sick and ill students and priests at the college and came to Brother Andre to ask for his help. With a sensitive nature and heart full of charity, he listened to them, often rubbed oil from a votive lamp next to a statue of St. Joseph or gave them a medal of St. Joseph and recommended them to pray for St. Joseph's intercession. Healings, large and small, were often quick and obvious. Always demur and self-effacing, Brother Andre always reminded people that it was St. Joseph who heals, not him.

Brother Andre would allow himself to be interrupted during the day to speak with visiting sick or those asking for prayer. He welcomed people as they came to him, never preferring those with power or wealth to those who did not. Each day, after his duties at the school, he would visit the homes of those who were sick or needed help and pray with them.

Brother Andre's life was marked by extreme suffering -- failures, poor health, misunderstandings, great losses, criticisms. But this suffering did not cause him to turn away from Christ, to sin and miss the mark, but rather St. Andre chose to embrace suffering, to turn closer to Christ, to unite his pain with that of Christ's own passion. "People who suffer have something to offer the good God," he often said. With hope and encouragement, Brother Andre advised, "Do not seek to be spared trials, ask instead for the grace to bear them well."

"God takes care of His friends and His best servants by sending them the cross," Brother Andre explained. "Suffering is of such great value that it can be fully rewarded only in Heaven."

His dream was to do God's will, short and sweet. Part of doing God's will, Brother Andre believed, was building a shrine, a



LIVING THE LITURGICAL LIFE

JENNIFER MILLER

pilgrimage spot to St. Joseph, on Mount Royal, the highest, famed spot in Montreal. Beginning with only 200 dollars, saved for years, a few coins at a time for cutting the student's hair, Brother Andre was 60 years old when he encouraged the building of the Oratory, or small chapel. Now the third-largest dome in the world, over 2 million people now visit the largest church in Canada each year. In front of the huge Oratory, is a statue of St. Joseph holding the child Jesus in his arms, with the Latin words, "Ite Ad Joseph." below. Inside that building though are thousands of thanksgivings, tokens of gratitude for graces received, such as crutches left behind. Brother Andre after praying with a handicapped person, often said, "Get up and walk," not unlike Christ did Himself. St. Andre's prayer was familiar and direct. His ability to lead people came from the fruit of his own continual, hourly prayer life.

When asked how he talked to St. Joseph or how he should be invoked, Brother Andre often repeated, "When you invoke Saint Joseph, you don't have to speak much. You know your Father in heaven knows what you need; well, so does his friend Saint Joseph."

On Dec. 8, the 150th anniversary of the declaration by Pope Pius IX of St. Joseph as Patron of the Universal Church, Pope Francis also dedicated this year to St. Joseph. Filled with incredible opportunities for prayer, penance, conversion and grace, this coming year invites us to come to know Our Lord better through the strong and silent saint, his foster father. What small mustard seeds of our spiritual life might be planted this year? What journeys of deep faith, unwavering hope and charitable love might be traveled this year? What ailment prevents us from serving God better, which we desire to be healed from?

Let us turn to the humble saint of the Congregation of Holy Cross, Brother Andre, and his best friend, St. Joseph, to take our hand, walk with us and lead us ever closer to God, who is love and mercy itself.

SCRIPTURE SEARCH®

Gospel for January 10, 2021

Isaiah 42: 1-4, 6-7/ Mark 1:7-11

Following is a word search based on the Gospel reading for the feast of the Baptism of the Lord, Cycle B: the Messiah's traits. The words can be found in all directions in the puzzle.

CHOSEN ONE	HEARD	STREET
BRUISED	REED	DIMLY BURNING
EARTH	COASTLANDS	TEACHING
LIGHT	EYES	BLIND
PRISONERS	DUNGEON	I AM NOT
WORTHY	TO STOOP	THONG
SANDALS	BAPTIZED YOU	SERVANT

NO REED OR WICK

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

BARRON, from page 12

argument — and it takes up 90% of the book — I am in complete agreement. The point he is making is not only true; it is of crucial importance at a time when Christianity is, so often, put down or set aside. That said, for me, the entire book unraveled at the end, when the author admitted that he believes neither in God nor, obviously, in the divinity of Jesus or His resurrection. The revolutionary ethic that flowed from those beliefs he finds compelling, but the convictions themselves are, he feels, without warrant.

CAPECCHI, from page 12

sea life, I would have to return at once," she wrote in her memoir. "Otherwise, I would lose my nerve."

And so she did. But life looked different. "I saw people and their aims with extraordinary clarity," Violet wrote. "Famous names and possessions no longer moved me."

She trained as a nurse for the Red Cross, and four years after the Titanic crash, she found herself on its sister ship, the Britannic. An explosion sank the ship within an hour. Violet made it into a lifeboat but came close to dying when it was nearly sucked underwater by the Britannic's propeller blades. She jumped into the water to escape the vortex, and her head was struck by the ship's keel. A doc-

tor later diagnosed it as a skull fracture. Violet continued to work on the sea until her 1950 retirement, when she could finally enjoy a quiet life in a thatched cottage in the English countryside. She died of natural causes in 1971 at age 83. Her story speaks to us now as we look back at 2020, a year that delivered more than one crisis in succession. As we process the fear and the loss, may we follow Violet's lead: May we pray, trust and sail again.

We try to make our corner of the ship a little better by being faithful and kind. And we hope that God is directing us to calmer waters.

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



CNS photo/Kacper Pempel, Reuters

A coal-fired power plant is seen in this illustration photo.

Creighton University plans to divest from fossil fuels within a decade

OMAHA, Neb. (CNS) — Creighton University plans to divest from fossil fuels over the next decade and turn toward investments in renewable energy and energy efficiency.

School officials announced the plan Dec. 31, saying it marks a commitment to its Jesuit Catholic mission while continuing to manage investments to provide for the university's operations, academic programs, scholarships and other needs.

The plan calls for withdrawing from ownership of public securities of fossil fuel corporations within five years and exiting from holdings in private fossil fuel investments within 10 years.

"This modified policy signifies our strong commitment to sustainable investing — and sustainability in general across the university — and according to our investment advisers, it can be accomplished without a negative impact on the strength and overall performance of our endowment, which greatly serves the mission of the institution," Jesuit Father Daniel S. Hendrickson, Creighton's president, said in a statement.

Michael R. McCarthy, chairman of the university's board of trustees, acknowledged Father Hendrickson's leadership in encouraging board members to review the school's investment policies.

The university said it will continue to vote shareholder proxies

during corporate annual meetings in favor of carbon-reduction resolutions while pursuing opportunities to partner with organizations that engage companies on environmental issues, such as the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility and the Jesuit Committee on Investment Responsibility.

The move comes as school officials have incorporated sustainability and care for creation campuswide. Among the steps the university has taken is a comprehensive composting pro-

gram and stronger adherence to Pope Francis' 2015 encyclical on environmental responsibility, "Laudato Si", on Care for Our Common Home."

"We have intensified and sharpened our efforts and focus and allocation of resources around sustainability, including hiring a new director of sustainability," Father Hendrickson said. "This a significant issue for our world and I hope that in many ways Creighton can lead the discussion and identify creative solutions."

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Catholic Kid's Corner

"Let the little children come to me." Mt. 9:14

This week, I will follow Jesus by:

Monday
Tuesday
Wednesday
Thursday
Friday
Saturday

Write your commitment in the box above then color in the footprint each day you take that step to walk with Jesus!

Find other faith-based activities and printables posted at the beginning of each month at todayscatholic.org/kids

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WHAT'S HAPPENING?

WHAT'S HAPPENING carries announcements about upcoming events in the diocese. View more Catholic events and submit new ones at www.todayscatholic.org/event. For additional listings of that event, please call the advertising sales staff at 260-399-1449 to purchase space.

Opportunities to stand for life

FORT WAYNE — Jan. 22 marks the 48th anniversary of Roe v. Wade, the Supreme Court decision that legalized abortion on demand in the U.S. There are many opportunities in the diocese to witness to life this January and to pray for an end to abortion: prayer gatherings, a peaceful protest, a downtown march and even a drive-in rally. Visit www.diocesefwsb.org/local-marches for a listing of all of the local pro-life events this month, as well as how to sign up for the national 9 Days for Life novena. Contact Lisa Everett at 574-234-0687 or leverett@diocesefwsb.org for information.

use of selected Scripture readings and time for personal prayer. Contact Deacon Frederick Everett at 574-234-0687 or email feverett@diocesefwsb.org for details.

Pancake and sausage breakfast

DECATUR — A pancake and sausage breakfast Sunday, Jan. 31, is sponsored by the Knights of Columbus, 1703 High St. in Decatur and will be a drive-thru event this year. Tickets \$6. See an eighth grade student for tickets or contact Stephanie Woodworth stefwoodworth@yahoo.com.

Ava's Grace support group for those grieving the loss of a baby
MISHAWAKA — Anyone who has experienced miscarriage, stillbirth or infant loss may consider attending a monthly online support group sponsored by Ava's Grace, the diocesan ministry that offers spiritual, emotional and practical support to families who have lost a baby before or after birth. The support group meets over Zoom on the third Wednesday of the month from 8-9:30 p.m. Email Lisa Everett at leverett@diocesefwsb.org for the Zoom meeting link and password. Visit www.diocesefwsb.org/avasgrace for details.

Disciple series begins

MISHAWAKA — Disciple is a 10-session course over Zoom beginning Monday, Jan. 18, from 7:30-9 p.m. to help committed Christians put Jesus more at the center of their lives and daily decisions. Each session will look at a different aspect of discipleship as well as practical guidance in building up a life of prayer. Daily homework assignments of 15 minutes will make

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Auburn Joseph Jolin, 61, Immaculate Conception	Mary J. Klenoski, 70, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton	Mary A. McTigue, 93, St. Pius X
Mary A. Jolin, 89, Immaculate Conception	Ruth A. Madru, 97, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton	Huntington Thomas E. Eckert, 91, SS. Peter and Paul
Donna L. Varhola, 83, Immaculate Conception	Carol Mauch, 85, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton	Marilyn M. Morris, 88, SS. Peter and Paul
Decatur Arthur Mendez, Sr., 58, St. Mary of the Assumption	Carol McNabb, 87, St. Charles Borromeo	Mishawaka Elsie Boenne, 98, St. Bavo
Joan C. Tinnel, 80, St. Mary of the Assumption	Clarita Miller, 89, St. Charles Borromeo	New Haven Francis A. Gentile, 92, St. John the Baptist
Fort Wayne William L. Belleville, 78, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton	Joseph Ochoa, 84, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton	Martha S. Kelsey, 97, St. John the Baptist
James R. Custodio, 72, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton	Irma Perez, 84, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton	Notre Dame Father Thomas F. Carten, CSC, 78, St. Joseph Chapel
	Mary E. Rajchel, 89, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton	Warsaw Gilbert L. Kotas, 83, Sacred Heart
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St. Mary Church and St. Joseph School in Decatur are looking for a day shift Custodian to take the lead and partner with the Maintenance Committee on custodial projects.

Full or part time hours will be considered. Interested applicants should send resumes to AWilder@SJDecatur.org.

Employment conditional on completing a background and reference check.

Pro-life ministry built on prayer

BY JENNIFER BARTON

A year after the death of abortionist Ulrich Klopfer, a ministry group located next door to his former South Bend clinic continues its mission of saving unborn babies and caring for mothers.

The Apostolate of Divine Mercy in Service of Life, Marriage and the Family began with the idea that a perpetual adoration chapel should be located next to the Women's Pavilion, where Klopfer performed abortions three days a week.

Shawn Sullivan was the driving force behind the apostolate. Its members claim 102 victorious "saves" in the seven years since Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades dedicated the chapel's altar. Sullivan explained how the idea first came about.

"I had a conversion in 2000 and it slowly escalated. Then I got into pro-life work ... and it started climaxing into the call that God was asking me to build an adoration chapel next to the abortion clinic."

The Life Center is born

Prior to the chapel's existence, he said volunteers would set up a tent and engage in sidewalk counseling "before we even had a sidewalk." Eventually, they were able to get permission to pour a sidewalk that contained the words "life begins at conception" inset in wooden letters. Klopfer ran over the letters the day after they were installed, but the words remain imprinted in the pavement.

Sullivan had begun spending much time in prayer at the convent of the Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration in Mishawaka, so he understood the power of prayer in helping end the sin of abortion. He was unsure if he would get approval to begin such a large undertaking, but he began to pray. On Sept. 4, 2012, Bishop Rhoades gave his approval.

The difficulty came in finding a viable building and funding the construction. At first, Sullivan was unable to find a building in close proximity whose owner was willing to sell to him. Unsure of how to tell the bishop about this apparent failure, he turned to prayer again. Miraculously, he feels, he received an email from a bank that was foreclosing on the building directly next to the clinic, stating that if he could close in 40 days, the building was his.

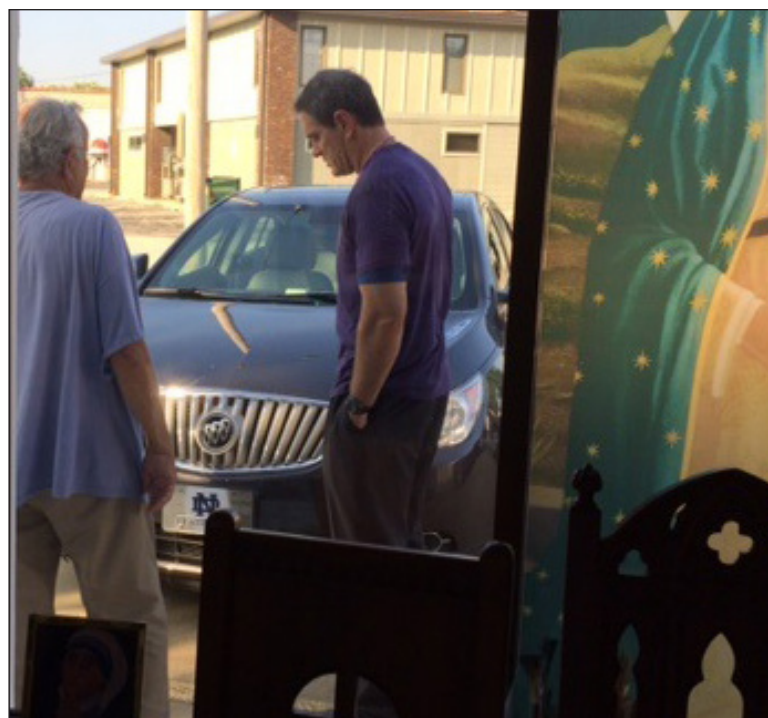
Forty is a significant number in the pro-life movement, due to the 40 Days for Life campaigns in which Sullivan was already involved. "And the closing date would be Nov. 1, All Saints' Day," Sullivan remembered.

With the building lined up, the next step was obtaining the \$250,000 needed to purchase the



Jennifer Barton

Shawn Sullivan felt called to build a chapel next door to an abortion facility that was located in South Bend, forming the Apostolate of Divine Mercy in Service of Life, Marriage and the Family. In its seven years, the ministry has helped 102 mothers choose life for their unborn children.



Provided by Shawn Sullivan

Sullivan said abortionist Ulrich Klopfer eventually began to warm up to his pro-life adversaries, and toward the end of his days would sometimes visit The Life Center, holding discussions with members of the apostolate.

property. Word of the potential new chapel got around, and a television news crew came to the clinic to interview clinic staff about it. Sullivan was outside and told the media they should also interview him to balance the story.

The story broke on the day of the St. Joseph County Right to Life banquet, where he met a gentleman who wanted to fund

the project. The building came to be known as The Life Center.

Focused, urgent prayer

A chapel is the main feature of The Life Center. A large window covered with the image of the Divine Mercy faces the clinic, and renovations included providing a place where volunteers could see women going into

the clinic and offer prayers for them before the monstrosity. If a counselor spoke with a woman, runners were able to take the woman's name to those inside, who could then pray for her specifically.

Even before the chapel was complete, the apostolate was saving unborn lives. Sullivan shared the story of a volunteer who had a "save" during construction. The volunteer noticed that women were walking up to the yet-unfinished window — sans the Divine Mercy image — to look inside, leaving their footprints in the snow outside. She told Sullivan and "sure enough, we're in here working and you see this girl come to our front door." He met her, asked if she was here for her appointment and walked her over to the Women's Care Center located across the drive. Ultimately, the young woman chose life for her child.

Similar stories of women assisted by the apostolate are numerous and "all of them have their own unique flavor to them," Sullivan remarked. Domestic abuse victims, women with medical conditions, women who feared losing their boyfriends all still live in Sullivan's heart and memory. He remains in contact with a number of the mothers his apostolate has aided, checking in on them and hearing their success stories. One of them even became a sidewalk counselor and reaches out to women in similar situations to hers.

A victorious imperative

Adoration hours were set to match those of Klopfer's working hours at the clinic. When abortion facilities in Niles, Michigan, and Ohio closed, pregnant women were sent to South Bend. Eventually Klopfer's clinics in Fort Wayne and Gary both closed as well, flooding the South Bend office with mothers in crisis.

In the time between consecration of the chapel in October of 2013 and the Women's Pavilion closing its doors, 102 women chose life for their unborn babies. In the first year of the chapel's existence, abortions dropped from roughly 1,300 to 500.

Sullivan recalls the bishop telling him that they were going to have saves, but even Sullivan had not expected numbers that high.

"We didn't think that we had a chance of making that kind of dent. ... It was mainly as issue of reparation. We had to do something."

At one time, the apostolate hosted an adoption agency, a natural family planning office and what Sullivan calls "TOBIT," or Theology of the Body Intensity Training or Intellectual Training. He stated, "It's got all these different levels of Theology of

the Body. You go from the little capsule (of discussion) you'd use with somebody maybe at a coffeehouse where you're just having a small conversation and you hand him a little brochure ... to super advanced intellectual study of the matter and getting into (Pope St. John Paul II's) works. Also because Tobit was one of the books that Luther took out of the Bible, it's a great evangelical tool."

The closure of Klopfer's clinic did not automatically eradicate the apostolate's mission. "What we've been doing is branching out and going to the other abortion clinics." Since Planned Parenthood of Mishawaka does not perform abortions, dedicated members of the apostolate travel as far as Merrillville, where they are performed.

Ongoing mission

With the opening of Whole Woman's Health of South Bend about 15 minutes away — a facility that offers chemical abortions — the team has gone into action with the same type of advocacy as before.

Prayer has always been at the heart of the apostolate's mission. In 2015, when Sullivan helped file 42 complaints against Klopfer for health and safety violations, the group began a perpetual adoration novena.

"We ended it at 4 a.m. on a Friday morning, and then we're all out there gearing up and notice no one's coming to Klopfer's place. He doesn't open. We were floored." According to Sullivan, Klopfer never missed a day of work. But that day, a letter came in the mail stating the complaints were substantiated and his license had been terminated.

Though he appealed and remained open until that November, the Women's Pavilion was eventually closed for good. Surprisingly, Klopfer still came to the location and was known to speak to apostolate members and even pray in the chapel.

Sullivan and his team have chosen several saints as their patrons. St. Mother Teresa is their main patroness. On Sept. 4, 2016, her canonization date and the anniversary of the founding of the apostolate, Bishop Rhoades officially entrusted the ministry to her. "We were probably the first apostolate in the world entrusted to Mother Teresa. That's an official, canonical thing," Sullivan noted.

As a lawyer, he has made enemies in legal fights against abortion. He also knows he could make more money on other cases. "But all the miracles, though — that kind of helps propel you. When every day something was happening to let you know that God was pushing the buttons, he was orchestrating it — it just made it possible."