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TODAY'S CATHOLIC

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For Ash Wednesday, Vatican asks priests to 'sprinkle' ashes on heads



CNS photo/Sam Lucero, The Compass

In this 2019 file photo, a young man receives ashes on his forehead during Ash Wednesday Mass at SS. Peter and Paul Church in Green Bay, Wis. The Vatican has asked priests to take special anti-COVID-19 precautions this year when distributing ashes on Ash Wednesday, Feb. 17.

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The Vatican Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments asked priests to take special anti-COVID-19 precautions this year when distributing ashes on Ash Wednesday, Feb. 17, including sprinkling ashes on the top of people's heads rather than using them to make a cross on people's foreheads.

The congregation's note on the "distribution of ashes in time of pandemic" was published on the congregation's website Jan. 12 and directs priests to say "the prayer for blessing the ashes" and then sprinkle "the ashes with holy water, without saying anything."

"Then he addresses all those

present and only once says the formula as it appears in the Roman Missal, applying it to all in general: 'Repent and believe in the Gospel' or 'Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return.'

"The priest then cleanses his hands, puts on a face mask and distributes the ashes to those who come to him or, if appropriate, he goes to those who are standing in their places," it said. "The priest takes the ashes and sprinkles them on the head of each one without saying anything."

The usual practice would be to repeat the formula — "Repent and believe in the Gospel" or "Remember that you are dust

and to dust you shall return" — to each person as the ashes are sprinkled on the top of their head or rubbed onto their forehead.

Sprinkling ashes on the top of people's heads, rather than marking foreheads with ashes, is the customary practice at the Vatican, in Italy and across Europe. Given the spread of the novel coronavirus, the practice has the advantage of not requiring the priest to touch multiple people.

In the United States, the approach normally employed is a bare hand used to mark foreheads with the sign of the cross.

However the ashes are received, the interior repentance expressed by this exterior act is at the heart of the action.

Sprinkling ashes on the top of the head recalls the biblical practice of putting on "sackcloth and ashes" as an act of penance, reminded Brian MacMichael, director of the Office of Worship.

"For example, we read in the Book of Nehemiah: 'On the twenty-fourth day of this month, the Israelites gathered together while fasting and wearing sackcloth, their heads covered with dust.'" (Neh 9:1)

All receiving ashes in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend should keep their masks on while doing so, and social distancing should be maintained in the lines.

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File photo

Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades visited the Tigray region of Ethiopia and met some of the children living there during a tour of Catholic Relief Services programs in 2018.

Initially cut off by war, Ethiopian bishop appeals for humanitarian aid

BY FREDERICK NZWILI

NAIROBI, Kenya (CNS) — After intense fighting cut off his ability to communicate with people outside his region, Bishop Tefaselassie Medhin of Adigrat, Ethiopia, called for urgent humanitarian assistance in the country's semi-autonomous Tigray region.

Bishop Medhin had remained cut off from the rest of the Church, together with his priests and the religious — something that triggered concerns — amid the fighting in the region.

"The need for urgent humanitarian emergency response is vital to save millions of people in dire conditions," Bishop Medhin said in a statement dated Jan. 5, but made public Jan. 14. "I call on the concerned bodies to coordinate and make all necessary efforts to respond to the pressing humanitarian needs to save millions of people in Tigray." He added that many had fled to seek refuge in Sudan.

Ethiopian President Abiy Ahmed Ali launched a military offensive against the Tigray People's Liberation Front Nov. 4. He had accused the rebel forces of attacking a national army base in the regional capital, Mekele. On Nov. 28, he declared the war over after the army captured the city.



Provided by Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades

Bishop Rhoades was hosted during his visit by Bishop Tefaselassie Medhin of the Ethiopian Catholic Eparchy of Adigrat. This photo from the Cathedral of the Holy Savior in Adigrat includes Sean Callahan, CEO of Catholic Relief Services, Bishop Rhoades and Bishop Medhin, right.

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CNS photo/Mohamed Nureldin Abdallah, Reuters

Ethiopians who fled the ongoing fighting in the Tigray region wait for relief aid at a camp in Kassala, Sudan, Dec. 16.

Bishop Rhoades has sent a donation from the diocese to Catholic Relief Services for emergency relief for the people of the Tigray region. Individuals can send donations to the agency at Catholic Relief Services, P.O. Box 17090, Baltimore, MD, 21297-0303. Indicate that the donation is for humanitarian aid in the Adigrat region of Ethiopia.



CNS photo/Mark J. Rebilas, USA TODAY Sports via Reuters

A stadium security guard stands with her hand over her heart as Denver Broncos players sit in silent protest during the national anthem prior to the Aug 30, 2018, game against the Arizona Cardinals at University of Phoenix Stadium. During a virtual conference at the University of Notre Dame Nov. 17, Yuval Levin, author, journalist and political analyst at the American Enterprise Institute, said the current social and political crises in this country are due to the growing loss of trust in institutions. The solution is for those in charge to be reformed to realize they are not there for power or self-promotion, but to focus on the duties of their positions and their obligations to their neighbors.

Without faith, society has no solid foundation says archbishop

BY ANN CAREY

NOTRE DAME — A virtual conference hosted at the University of Notre Dame Jan. 12-14 featured over 40 top professionals from multiple fields discussing how to live together in unity and promote the common good.

The conference had been planned for months, but its theme — “We Belong to Each Other,” based on the words of St. Teresa of Kolkata — became even more timely after the Jan. 6 violence at the nation’s Capitol.

The virtual gathering took the place of a fall conference that is sponsored annually by the university’s DeNicola Center for Ethics and Culture but was postponed last fall by the pandemic.

While many of the speakers bemoaned the inability to meet in person, the fact that they could participate from their homes or offices likely enabled conference organizers to attract so many top experts in their fields of religion, philosophy, political science, education, medicine, economics, sociology and the arts.

Keynoting the conference was Archbishop José Gomez of Los Angeles, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. He set the tone by observing that loving our neighbor is the answer to most of the difficulties in the world. However, the “aggressively secular society” has lost the traditional Christian-Judeo principle of a loving God



CNS photo/Screen Grab

Los Angeles Archbishop José H. Gomez, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, is seen at the USCCB headquarters in Washington Nov. 17.

who creates persons in His own image and calls them to love one another as he loves them, he observed.

“Without belief in a Creator who establishes values, we have no authority higher than our own politics and procedures,” Archbishop Gomez explained. “We are left with no solid foundation for our commitments to human dignity, freedom, equality and fraternity.”

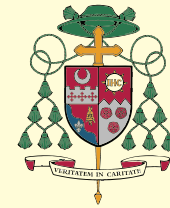
Other speakers echoed this diagnosis, even those from secular institutions, such as author and New York Times columnist Ross Douthat and Yuval Levin, author, journalist and

political analyst at the American Enterprise Institute. Both men concluded that the culture’s best chance of recovery is a resurgence in religious practice.

Levin added that the current social and political crises in this country are due to the growing loss of trust in institutions, prompted by the realization that many of the people within those entities are untrustworthy themselves. The solution is for the people working inside institutions to be reformed to realize they are not there for power or self-promotion; rather, their role is to focus on the duties of their positions and their obligations to their neighbors.

This love for one’s neighbor has the long been modeled by Catholic health care, which was discussed by three physicians in a segment on “Visit the Sick.” Kristin Collier, director of the Health, Spirituality and Religion Program at the University of Michigan Medical School, said that “relationship-centered care is best.” Thus, medical workers must be lovers of humanity who need to see their work as a gift from God that transforms the love of Christ into love for patients.

Lauris Kaldjian, director of programs in Bioethics and Humanities in the University of Iowa Carver College of Medicine, observed that “As Christian healthcare professionals, we see why health care is such a great place to be in the sense that we have this remarkable privilege and opportunity to be used by



Public schedule of Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades

Sunday, January 24: 2 p.m. — Mass for Institution of Lectors for the Permanent Diaconate, St. Matthew Cathedral, South Bend
 Tuesday, January 26: 8:15 a.m. — Mass and pastoral visit, St. John the Baptist School, Fort Wayne
 Friday, January 29: 10:30 a.m. — Mass, St. Patrick Church, South Bend
 Friday, January 29: 12 p.m. — Prayer at Right to Life Michiana Gathering, Federal Courthouse, South Bend

God to be a true blessing to those who are in this moment of crisis.”

Aaron Kheriaty, the director of the Medical Ethics Program at the University of California at Irvine School of Medicine, related that all of society has suffered during the pandemic, not just from contracting the virus, but from the lockdown that has resulted in increased suicide, depression, and alcohol and drug abuse.

While doctors can help in many ways, he stressed that even ordinary people have the ability to bring healing to suffering people by finding ways to be in solidarity with one another.

Addressing that solidarity was a conference session on mothers and children. Dr. Monique Chireau Wubbenhorst, an obstetrician/gynecologist with the United States Agency for International Development observed that right now, huge amounts of money are spent on contraception, and that is not working. Further, abortion is not health care.

The best way to help women and children, she said, is to encourage women to get into

prenatal care as soon as possible, and then to give them access to good child care. She also cited incentives such as tax breaks for marriage and childbirth as a way to rebuild a society that promotes the common good and cares for the vulnerable.

In that same session, Sister of Life Virginia Joy Cotter, director of the Respect Life Office of the Archdiocese of New York, spoke about the absence of love as the biggest reason women consider abortion because they feel alone and helpless. The Sisters of Life help heal the women by accompanying them with “a love that casts out fear,” she said.

Other sessions on racism, poverty, hospitality, the disabled and the anthropology of the human person echoed the message Archbishop Gomez gave in his keynote address: that every person is called to love and care for others, particularly the weak and vulnerable.

As he told conference attendees, “We can change our country and we can change the world. We can help our neighbors to know this God, and to know His love.”

ETHIOPIA, from page 2

Since the government’s announcement of an end to the conflict, humanitarian response to people has been limited, with agencies reporting persistent insecurity and clashes between the army and the liberation front.

According to the bishop, the people, including Eritrean refugees, have run out of food items, basic life-saving medicines, water and have no access to essential services like shelter, electricity, banking, telephone or internet connection, transportation and health care.

“It is a daily reality to hear people dying due to the consequences of the fighting, lack of food, insulin and other basic medicines,” said Bishop Medhin, while explaining that millions of people — most of them women and children — are displaced

from their homes because they fled to escape heavy artillery shelling and airstrikes.

The bishop’s concerns came amid reports by the United Nations that nearly three months after the start of the conflict in Tigray, hundreds of thousands of people are yet to receive assistance.

The U.N. estimates that 2.3 million people in the region need lifesaving assistance. It said the situation is more critical for the newly displaced and refugees in camps, who remain inaccessible.

“Aid workers have been able to deliver assistance in some areas, mainly in cities, where access has been granted by authorities. However, the number of people reached is extremely low,” said a U.N. spokesman.

Catholic Church agencies — including Caritas and Catholic Relief Services — are moving humanitarian aid in the region.

Lisa Montgomery put to death after Supreme Court reversal

BY CAROL ZIMMERMANN

WASHINGTON (CNS) — After a flurry of court decisions, the Supreme Court reversed a pair of rulings from federal appeals courts that had put death-row inmate Lisa Montgomery's execution on hold, and it denied two other last-minute requests to postpone the execution.

Montgomery was put to death by lethal injection at the federal prison in Terre Haute, Indiana, soon after the court's decision at 1:31 a.m. (EST) Jan. 13. She was the first woman to be put to death in federal prison since 1953.

After the court's decision, Sister Helen Prejean, a Sister of St. Joseph of Medaille and longtime death penalty opponent, tweeted: "In yet another after-midnight ruling, the U.S. Supreme Court has allowed the federal government to proceed with Lisa Montgomery's execution immediately. This decision will forever be a scarlet letter for

the SCOTUS — a complete failure to protect our most vulnerable citizens."

Kelley Henry, Montgomery's attorney, said in a Jan. 13 statement: "The craven bloodlust of a failed administration was on full display tonight. Everyone who participated in the execution of Lisa Montgomery should feel shame."

Catholic leaders have been pleading for an end to the death penalty and urging leaders to stop this practice, particularly with three executions having taken place Jan. 12-15.

On Jan. 12, a federal judge for the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia halted the executions scheduled for Corey Johnson and Dustin Higgs Jan. 14 and Jan. 15, respectively, due to their risk of increased suffering because of COVID-19 lung damage, but a federal appeals court Jan. 13 sided with the government and vacated the stay of executions.

The two inmates tested positive for the coronavirus in



CNS photo/Bryan Woolston, Reuters

Demonstrators gather to protest the execution of Lisa Montgomery Jan. 12. She was put to death by lethal injection at the federal prison in Terre Haute, Indiana, soon after the U.S. Supreme Court lifted a hold on her execution at 1:31 a.m. (EST) Jan. 13. She was the first woman to be put to death in federal prison since 1953.



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December. The previous day the American Medical Association urged Acting Attorney General Jeffrey Rosen and the Justice Department to postpone the federal executions scheduled for the second week in January, saying recent executions have turned into COVID-19 super-spreader events.

In 2004, Montgomery attacked and killed a pregnant woman, cut her open and took the woman's baby. In a nearly 7,000-page clemency petition submitted in early January to President Donald Trump, Montgomery's lawyers detailed their client's claims of physical abuse, rape and torture as well as being sex trafficked by her mother.

"Everything about this case is overwhelmingly sad," the petition said. "As human beings we want to turn away. It is easy to call Mrs. Montgomery evil and a monster, as the government has. She is neither."

On Jan. 10, Holy Cross Father John Jenkins, president of the University of Notre Dame, said Montgomery's upcoming execution was "particularly troubling" because it "illustrates some of the many systemic failures in our system of capital punishment. The victim of severe child abuse and sexual violence herself, Montgomery committed a



CNS photo/Paul Haring

Sister Helen Prejean, a Sister of St. Joseph of Medaille is seen in this 2016 file photo.

crime so heinous and bizarre that it raises serious questions about her mental state."

In a statement, he urged President Trump to stop her execution. He stressed that the "most fundamental objection to the death penalty, though, is that it undermines our commitment to the sanctity of all human life — healthy or infirm, talented or ordinary, good or bad. Death-row inmates have been convicted of some of the most awful crimes imaginable, yet even their lives do not lose that dignity."

The Catholic Mobilizing Network also spoke out against Montgomery's execution, along

with scheduled federal executions of Johnson and Higgs. It conducted virtual prayer vigils on the afternoon of each scheduled execution and Jan. 12, hours prior to Montgomery's execution.

The group launched an online petition campaign asking President Joe Biden to make it a priority to end federal executions once he was sworn into office, urging the incoming administration to "uphold the sacred dignity of every person" and make good on its promises to dismantle the federal death penalty system.

The petition names several possible avenues toward abolition the president-elect could pursue, including declaring an official moratorium on federal executions, commuting the death sentences of all those currently on federal death row and advocating to end the death penalty in law.

The last suggestion was taken up in late afternoon Jan. 11 when Sen. Dick Durbin, D-Illinois, the incoming chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, and Rep. Ayanna Pressley, D-Massachusetts, announced plans to introduce legislation seeking an end to the federal death penalty.



Church encourages use of vaccines, masks for the common good

As the new COVID-19 vaccines gain more widespread use, they are provoking debate among Indiana lawmakers and the public while also prompting questions by the Catholic faithful.

At the same time, even face masks — nearly universal in their presence since the global coronavirus pandemic began — proved to be a source of contention at the Statehouse in Indianapolis earlier this month.

Dozens of people who gathered there to testify in favor of a vaccination-related bill on Jan. 14 defied Statehouse guidelines by refusing to wear a mask once inside the building, causing others — mostly opponents of the potential legislation — to leave before having a chance to testify. Senate Bill 74 would prohibit Indiana companies from requiring employees or prospective employees to receive immunizations of any type if doing so would compromise their health or violate their conscience.

The Indiana Catholic Conference emphasizes that Catholic social teaching on the common good should underscore decision-making in all of these areas.

“While the COVID-19 vaccines cannot be mandated, the

Catholic Church has made it clear that it is not only morally acceptable to receive the vaccines but encouraged as a means of turning the tide on this deadly pandemic,” said Angela Espada, executive director of the ICC, the public policy voice of the Catholic Church in Indiana.

As has been widely reported, Pope Francis and Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI — both at high risk for complications from the virus because of their age — received their first doses of the vaccine earlier this month.

Espada also pointed to the recent statement on ethical considerations related to the vaccines by the U. S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, co-authored by Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend. Bishop Rhoades serves as the chairman of the Committee on Doctrine for the USCCB.

In the document, he and Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann of Kansas City, Kansas, chairman of the USCCB’s committee on pro-life activities, addressed the moral concerns that stem from the three COVID-19 vaccines having some connection to cell lines that originated with tissue obtained from abortions.

“In view of the gravity of the current pandemic and the lack

INDIANA CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

BY VICTORIA ARTHUR

of availability of alternative vaccines, the reasons to accept the new COVID-19 vaccines from Pfizer and Moderna are sufficiently serious to justify their use, despite their remote connection to morally compromised cell lines,” the bishops’ statement reads. “Receiving one of the COVID-19 vaccines ought to be understood as an act of charity toward the other members of our community. In this way, being vaccinated safely against COVID-19 should be considered an act of love of our neighbor and part of our moral responsibility for the common good.”

The bishops found the third COVID-19 vaccine, developed by pharmaceutical giant AstraZeneca and not yet approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, to be “more morally compromised” than the others and concluded that it “should be avoided” if

alternatives are available. In all cases, the bishops urged Catholics to remain “on guard so that the new COVID-19 vaccines do not desensitize us or weaken our determination to oppose the evil of abortion itself and the subsequent use of fetal cells in research.”

Espada praised Bishop Rhoades for his leadership on this issue.

“It is wonderful that one of Indiana’s own is at the forefront of these important ethical discussions,” Espada said.

With regard to the use of masks — at the Statehouse and elsewhere in public — Espada says the matter is even more straightforward.

“We encourage people to wear masks in this time of global crisis to protect themselves and others because it’s the right thing to do,” she said. “If anyone wants to testify during this legislative session on issues important to the ICC — and we certainly encourage people to do so — they should always wear masks.”

It was an uneventful week on the legislative front. All government offices were closed Monday for Martin Luther King Jr. Day. In addition, the Indiana General Assembly cancelled all legislative activity for the entire week and Gov. Eric Holcomb closed the state government complex for most of the week. This was out of an abundance of caution surrounding threats to state capitols related to the Jan. 6 assault on the U.S. Capitol and Wednesday’s inauguration of President Joe Biden. The General Assembly is expected to resume its business on Monday, Jan. 25.

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

Gomez: As Rev. King urged, meet forces of hate, ignorance ‘with power of love’

WASHINGTON (CNS) — In the spirit of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., “we must meet the forces of hate and ignorance with the power of love,” the president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops said in a statement for the Jan. 18 federal observance of the slain civil rights leader’s birthday.

“This year as we commemorate the legacy of this great American, we remember especially Rev. King’s belief in non-violence and the power of love,” Los Angeles Archbishop José H. Gomez said.

Rev. King, who was assassinated in 1968 at age 39, would have turned 92 Jan. 15. Martin Luther King Jr. Day is observed on the third Monday of January each year.

“For much of the past year, America has been reckoning with the legacy of slavery and the persistence of racial injustice in our country. Sadly, it is still true that the ‘color of our skin’ often matters more in our society than the ‘content of our character,’” the archbishop said, quoting the words of Rev. King from 50 years ago.

Violent protests over the summer and the violence that took place inside the U.S. Capitol Jan. 6 show “our country has become



CNS photo/Tyler Orsburn

The Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial is seen in Washington Jan. 17, 2020.

too angry, too bitter and too divided,” Archbishop Gomez said.

“As we confront our deep divisions, we face the same choices that Rev. King and the civil rights movement faced. For us, too, the question is how will we struggle against the injustices in our society, what means will we use?” the archbishop asked in his statement, released late Jan. 15.

The challenge “for every one of us believes in the promise of America and seeks to renew the soul of this great nation,” he said, can be found in words Rev.

King wrote in 1958: “Along the way of life, someone must have the sense enough and the morality enough to cut off the chain of hate. This can only be done by projecting the ethics of love to the center of our lives.”

“We must learn again the wisdom of the Gospel and love our enemies and bless those who oppose us,” Archbishop Gomez said. “In this moment, Rev. King would counsel everyone in public

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Federal appeals court continues hold on Arkansas laws restricting abortion

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (CNS) — A federal appeals court reaffirmed a hold on an Arkansas law that bans abortions 18 weeks into pregnancy and another banning an abortion from being performed when a fetus is detected to have Down syndrome. The Jan. 5 ruling from a three-judge panel of the 8th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals keeps in place a federal judge's 2019 ruling that temporarily blocked the state from enforcing the law. The court said the Arkansas statutes are governed under established case law that restricts undue burdens on women to seek an abortion. Its decision cited outcomes of previous cases including those settled by the U.S. Supreme Court. Arkansas Attorney General Leslie Rutledge has defended the laws in court. She said she planned to seek further review of the decision. "The Supreme Court must limit and ultimately overturn Casey and I plan to do everything in my power to see that they do," Rutledge said in a statement referring to the Planned Parenthood v. Casey decision in 1992 that prohibited regulations that created an "undue burden" on women seeking an abortion.

Daily podcast that leads listeners through Bible's narrative is No. 1 in U.S.

ST. PAUL, Minn. (CNS) — If great minds had brainstormed how to create a podcast that would jump to No. 1 in Apple's podcast rankings, they never would have landed on "The Bible in a Year," joked Jeff Cavins, a Bible scholar and creator of the Great Adventure Bible Timeline. Yet, two weeks into 2021, "The Bible in a Year" with Father Mike Schmitz tops the charts — and has since 48 hours after its Jan. 1 launch. With the backing of Ascension, a multimedia Catholic publisher, Cavins and Father Schmitz, a priest of the Diocese of Duluth, Minnesota, and popular Catholic speaker and author, created "The Bible in a Year," a daily podcast that leads listeners through the Bible's narrative. The aim is for listeners to understand how God's plan for mankind's salvation undergirds biblical events and the lives of its central figures. Each episode is about 20 minutes and includes Father Schmitz reading several chapters from Scripture, often from different books, and then giving a short reflection on the readings. "The Bible in a Year" is available on Apple Podcasts, Spotify and other podcast platforms, and through Hallow, a Catholic prayer App.

NEWS BRIEFS

Irish inquiry: Families mistreated unmarried moms; others complicit



CNS photo/Clodagh Kilcoyne, Reuters

Denise Gormley and her 7-year-old daughter, Rosa, pay their respects at a cemetery in Tuam, Ireland, where the bodies of nearly 800 infants were uncovered at the site of a former Catholic home for unmarried mothers and their children. The photo was taken Jan. 12, the day an Irish government commission investigating the treatment of women and their children in such homes released its findings. The report reviewed 18 institutions from 1922 to 1998 and said the blame for their "harsh treatment" in the state-funded Church homes rests primarily with their families, but that both the Church and state condoned it.

Supreme Court says abortion drugs must be obtained in person, not by mail

WASHINGTON (CNS) — The Supreme Court Jan. 12 reinstated a federal requirement that women who are seeking abortion-inducing drugs must do so in person, not by mail, as a federal judge had allowed last year due to the pandemic and the high court had let stand. In its 6-3 order, the justices said women must follow previous Food and Drug Administration requirements that they had to visit a doctor's office, hospital or clinic in person to obtain Mifeprex, the brand name for mifepristone, also called RU-486, which is used to end pregnancies during the first 10 weeks. FDA regulations initially required patients to receive the drug in person after signing a form acknowledging risks associated with it. "We welcome the Supreme Court's reinstatement of the FDA's ability to enforce impor-

tant and long-standing health and safety requirements related to chemical abortion drugs," said Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann of Kansas City, Kansas, chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Pro-Life Activities. Using mifepristone received by mail order for an abortion, he said, is a "dangerous, painful and emotionally bleak process" that results "in the death of innocent unborn lives and often has lasting negative impacts on women."

Pope: King's 'vision of harmony, equality for all' remains timely

ATLANTA (CNS) — With "social injustice, division and conflict" threatening the common good, people need to rediscover and recommit to the vision of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. to work nonviolently for harmony and equality for all, Pope Francis said. "Each one of us is called to be an artisan of peace by uniting and not dividing, by extinguish-

ing hatred and not holding on to it, by opening paths of dialogue," the pope, quoting his encyclical on global fraternity, said in his message to the Jan. 18 "Beloved Community Summit." The summit was an online event marking the King holiday and promoting his vision of a community where differences are resolved through dialogue and where people work together to perfect equality and to end injustice. The pope's letter was sent to the Rev. Bernice King, daughter of the slain civil rights leader and CEO of the King Center in Atlanta. "In today's world, which increasingly faces the challenges of social injustice, division and conflict that hinder the realization of the common good, Dr. King's vision of harmony and equality for all people, attained through nonviolent and peaceful means, remains ever timely," the pope wrote. What is essential, he said, is to see each other as neighbors "in the truth of our share dignity as children of Almighty God."

'A failure' of love and solidarity creates societal divisions, says archbishop

SOUTH BEND, Ind. (CNS) — Love is the solution to the deep divisions that trouble societies, Archbishop José H. Gomez of Los Angeles, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, said in his Jan. 12 keynote for a virtual conference at the University of Notre Dame. The archbishop focused on migrants and the global refugee crisis. But he also alluded to "the violence last week at our nation's Capitol, and the deep polarization and divisions in our country." His address came six days after the storming of the Capitol in Washington by supporters of President Donald Trump. All of these problems are more than a failure of politics or diplomacy, he said: "It's a failure of human fraternity and solidarity. It's a failure of love." Archbishop Gomez's keynote "What Do We Owe the Immigrant?" reflected the conference theme: "We Belong to Each Other," a quotation from St. Teresa of Kolkata. He related that he has worked for over 20 years on immigration reform and advocating for migrants and refugees, and he has come to realize these issues are part of deeper questions about God and the human person, namely that God is love and has created humans in his own image "that calls us to form one human family and to live together in love as brothers and sisters."

CRS official opposes Trump's action to seek foreign spending cuts

CLEVELAND (CNS) — President Donald Trump's decision to ask Congress to rescind billions of dollars in foreign aid spending is "extremely ill-advised," said a senior Catholic Relief Services official. Bill O'Keefe, the agency's executive vice president for mission, mobilization and advocacy, said cuts the president seeks in food aid, health care and vaccinations for the coronavirus would harm children and vulnerable people around the world. "We've got throughout East Africa a locust infestation. Drought in some places and floods in others. Plus there's endemic climate change-induced problems and the COVID pandemic. So this is not the time to be cutting," O'Keefe told Catholic News Service. Trump in a Jan. 14 letter to congressional leaders explained that he is seeking to rescind \$27.4 billion in spending that already had been approved for 73 programs. The action came six days before Trump was to leave office. While the president can propose the cuts, Congress has the final authority to act on the request. Congress is not scheduled to return to work until Jan. 19 and it is expected his request will be ignored.



Unsplash.com

The Marriage Course Online — 'We're having great conversations after all these years'

BY JEANNIE EWING

In the information age, Catholic married couples sometimes say they feel a sense of isolation and loneliness in their vocation. Although technology has played a pivotal role in the way people communicate and interact with others, a creeping separateness seems to be encroaching on couples' primary relationship.

To maximize the benefits of technology, the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend Office of Marriage and Family Life offers a free, eight-week marriage enrichment course on Zoom. Deputy Secretary Lisa Everett said The Marriage Course Online is a subset of a larger nondenominational evangelization resource called Alpha, the purpose of which is to introduce people of all walks of life to the message and person of Christ.

Originally developed at Holy Trinity Brompton Church in London, England, Alpha consisted of 10 sessions on various Christian topics intended to draw in both nonbelievers and those interested in deepening their Christian faith. Current Alpha curate Nicky Gumbel and his wife began a marriage and family ministry around the same time Alpha became a common evangelization tool, in the late 1970s.

Because of their experience with both the program and with marriage ministry, the Gumbels believed both could work in tandem to enrich married couples' lives.

"The film series approaches marriage from a Christian perspective, with the intention of helping couples develop good life skills and deepen their intimacy," Everett explained. "It func-



tions as a discipleship tool, as well, which is why our diocese is promoting both the discipleship and marriage courses."

She is confident that many Christians may consider themselves to be devout but have not necessarily developed a deeper relationship with Christ. Mishawaka married couple Eric and Michelle Szajko agreed.

"This course on marriage would have benefited us tremendously in the earlier years while we were parenting our kids. It's still fruitful after being married this long," Michelle shared. "We were having great conversations after all these years when we didn't know how to get communication started. The extra nudge from this program really enriched our marriage."

The marriage course is structured in weekly, two-hour increments beginning Feb. 4 and concluding March 25. Everett will begin each session by introducing the evening's topic from a specifically Catholic standpoint, then share the engaging video

session.

What's unique about this course is that the Alpha creators have built in 30 minutes of reflection and discussion time so that each couple has the opportunity, in the moment, to share their hearts with each other. A supplement to the course, a journal that includes prompts and questions as well as suggestions for continuing conversations between spouses, aids the couple in exploring their relationship on a deeper level.

Everett said that the crux of the course intends to assist married couples in building and maintaining good relationship skills with each other. "It's very in-depth. I want to be clear that there is no small-group discussion. The course is for each couple to share with each other privately."

Eric Szajko was grateful his wife suggested they participate in the marriage course the first time it was offered.

"People need to realize that the vocation of marriage is

sacred, from God. We are one. When couples fight, it's mostly because they are tugged toward their individualistic tendencies rather than remembering the one-flesh union," he shared.

With beautiful cinematography and testimonies from real-life couples all over the world, both Everett and the Szajkos said the accessibility and vulnerability of the hosts make this marriage course a powerful tool for any married couple, regardless of how long or short they've been married. "Those participating will know they are not alone, because they have the inspiration of other couples who are leading and sharing their own stories on the films," Everett explained.

She herself spends time praying for each couple participating in the marriage course during the 30 minutes when private discussion is to take place between them. She believes that the hard truths explored in the Alpha marriage course are a deep, but necessary, dive into

mutual understanding, healing, and ultimately a stronger bond between spouses.

The Szajkos, who have been married for 22 years and have two older children, feel that the marriage course was easy to understand and nonthreatening. "It was more about looking forward in your marriage instead of looking back to what had already happened," Michelle said.

In addition, she explained that the course shifted her perspective. "I wasn't just thinking about my side of the story anymore. I thought more about Eric and what his needs are. I wanted to be more considerate to him in our day-to-day interactions," she concluded.

Everett believes there are two fundamental obstacles in marriages today: that couples don't have adequate time to invest in connecting with each other and God, and also that the cultural understanding of what marriage is has become skewed and misguided.

"The Church has a responsibility to provide a good presentation of what marriage is, beginning with marriage preparation, but also assuring couples of the reality of grace," she shared. "The course does not shy away from the spiritual. When we give our time to our spouse, we are giving time to God, especially when we foster mutual prayer time together."

"Guys, I would encourage you to join with your wives," said Eric. "It's not girly or feminine in any way. It's a really great way of connecting better with your spouse and create a stronger marriage. Just man up and do it."

Teacher MaryAnn Hinora —

Marian teacher reminisces on 25 years of service

BY JENNIFER BARTON

Teaching in a Catholic school means much more than ensuring good grades in the classroom; as MaryAnn Hinora knows, it also means personifying Christ's self-giving love to one's students and school community. At Marian High School in Mishawaka, Hinora has lived out a 25-year teaching vocation through acts of service to others.

A graduate of Marian herself, Hinora enjoyed her educational experience so much that she came back to teach theology in 1995 and has remained. She was influenced in her decision to return to her alma mater because "I knew how much the teachers really cared for their students. I knew it would be a good fit."

She is proud of the multitude of service projects she has been involved with at Marian over the years, including hurricane relief after both Katrina and Rita and attending the annual March for Life in Washington, D.C., with her students. Additionally, she has taken part in food and diaper drives for the Women's Care Center, Hannah's House and the St. Vincent de Paul Society.

"When we say, 'Once a Knight, Always a Knight,' we mean it," Hinora said. "It is not just word play. I have seen the school come together to do incredible things, whether it be for a student, parent, teacher, staff member or the community in general."

The most memorable of these projects was a mission trip to New Orleans. Hinora explained that some families displaced by Hurricane Katrina in August of 2005 moved to the South Bend area and sent their children to Marian. According to Hinora,



MaryAnn Hinora, center, a theology teacher at Marian High School, Mishawaka, leads students on a mission trip to New Orleans in 2005 after the devastation of Hurricane Katrina. Hinora lives her faith most vibrantly through service to others.

Sister Marie Morgan, head of the theology department at Marian, then organized an effort to bring students to New Orleans to help clean up two Catholic high schools there that sustained damage in the hurricane, St. Augustine High School and St. Mary's Academy. Marian's principal at the time, Carl Loesch, and the diocese both granted permission for the mission trip. Then, the planning hit a snag. "Everything was going well until one month before we were

going to leave for New Orleans," Hinora said. At the last minute, their projected host family informed the school that their home rebuild was behind schedule and they could not host the students.

"As soon as we let people know we needed help, the funds came pouring in. Parents, teachers and many others were donating money and even food for the trip."

The trip was amazing, Hinora said. She expressed her admira-

tion for the students who desired to help others in desperate need. One of the families that had temporarily transferred to Marian soon returned to New Orleans and "made us part of their family."

One night, the mission group had an authentic New Orleans meal with a group of families, who shared their stories of the storm.

"The students learned a lot about faith, family and courage. This made the students want to do even more. What they found out was that the more they helped, the more they received."

Hinora knew she was called

The destruction from Hurricane Katrina was widespread throughout the Gulf Coast states, causing extensive damage to homes and other property in places like New Orleans.

to teaching when she attended World Youth Day in Denver in 1993. "During the event, I had one of those deep conversations with God, and I asked Him what He wanted me to do with all my gifts and talents. Through a series of events, I was led to the University of Dayton's program for teachers of high school religion and I was on the road to a master's degree in theological studies and a career."

When it comes to teaching the Catholic faith, Hinora comes from a long line of storytellers. She shares the faith through her own stories and by allowing her students to share their stories with her.

"I am blessed to be able to pray for and with my students. I tell them that every night since I have started teaching, I have prayed for all my students — past, present and future."

For Hinora, service to others is not limited to Marian. She cares for her elderly parents, who celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary in September. Along with her parents, she is also an active member of St. Jude Parish in South Bend.

When Marian principal Mark Kirzeder announced at Mass in December that Hinora had earned the Christ the Teacher award, she said she was "surprised and humbled." Of his school's awardee, Kirzeder said: "MaryAnn Hinora is the true embodiment of Marian High School's mission statement in that she 'strives to live the example of Jesus Christ as teacher and servant' at all times."

"Ms. Hinora is always seeking new opportunities to further her own education so that she can better pass on the Gospel message to Marian students," Kirzeder said. "She is respected by her colleagues and is a vital part of the Marian family. We are blessed to call her a Marian High School teacher."

For the foreseeable future, Hinora has no other plans than remaining at Marian, continuing to teach and guide young people in their faith journeys.



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Experiment in access to science successful at St. Adalbert

BY JENNIFER BARTON

St. Adalbert School in South Bend has long had a family-like relationship with students at the University of Notre Dame. Students at Fisher Hall dormitory make time to tutor students at the elementary school, and their annual regatta boat race financially benefits the children as well. Recently the university partnered again with St. Adalbert, this time to provide needed science materials.

Familiarity with scientific processes is a highly sought-after skill in today's job market. Teaching hands-on lessons can become costly, though, especially in schools where resources are already stretched. With 70 percent of St. Adalbert School comprised of English language learners, principal Joseph Miller admitted "we don't always give science the attention it deserves." The school is small and attended by a number of lower-income families.

Dr. Cara Ocobock is a professor of anthropology at Notre Dame. She took interest in collecting supplies for scientific experiments when her niece, Ruby, developed an interest in the subject. To meet her niece's hunger for knowledge, Ocobock gathered materials and information into a kit that came into huge demand after going viral on her professional website and Twitter account.

Morgan Munsen, community director of the Science Policy Initiative at Notre Dame and lead organizer of the Michiana Science Café, is a colleague of Ocobock's and learned about the science kits from her.

"With all that buzz, she had started to get an idea about trying to make this lab manual accessible for students in the South Bend area, and we immediately started running with the project," Munsen explained. The lead team included Munsen



Provided by Jennifer Miller

Backpacks full of at-home science experiments elementary students can perform are delivered to a beaming group of St. Adalbert students in December. Several members of the University of Notre Dame community came up with the idea, obtained funding, compiled the kits and identified recipient schools like St. Adalbert, where students could use assistance in obtaining more access to scientific ideas and experimentation.

and Ocobock as well as the co-presidents of Michiana Science Café, Robert Stanley and Sasha Padilla-Coley.

Eventually, the team had to decide with which school or schools they wanted to work. "We wanted to focus on where these materials could hopefully do the most good — which is why we wanted to focus on students from diverse and/or low-income backgrounds," Munsen said. Her husband teaches middle school religion at St. Adalbert, so she immediately thought the school would be a good fit for the mission. "We were delighted that the principal, Joe Miller, had an immediate, positive reaction and was willing to partner with us."

Miller was more than receptive to the idea, in fact. He stated, "It was a great way to get hands-on experience for our students."

Munsen applied for grants from the Center for Social Concerns at Notre Dame and the National Science Policy Network to purchase materials. She then made a deal with the campus bookstore to acquire backpacks in which the materials could be stored, at a reasonable cost. But before the kits could get into the hands of students, the manual, which had initially been written in English, needed to be translated into Spanish for families at home who were fluent in that language.

After the translation was completed, the kits were assembled at the university and taken to St. Adalbert. One hundred and

twenty-five backpacks filled with science kits and experiment manuals were delivered for students to use at home.

The backpacks arrived just before Christmas, which worked out phenomenally, as the students were able to take them home over the break. St. Adalbert began the new semester in virtual mode, so teachers are able to have the children use the materials at home during virtual lessons taught through Google Learn.

According to Munsen, students in grades one through 6 were the first ones to receive the kits, because of the age-appropriateness for the experiments in the manual as well as the funding they had received. She and the rest of the team hope to secure more grant money to create kits for the seventh and eighth graders so that every student at the school has access to the experiments.

The group hopes to continue with this program, partnering with additional schools each year so more and more students might benefit from it.

The kits themselves are comprised of items not typically found in the home, but often needed for science experiments, such as earth magnets, petri dishes with agar, bean seeds, liquid starch and borax. The remainder of the necessary items would be typical household items.

"We're super-grateful," Miller said. He told of "how excited our kids were to get these" and the gap that the kits will help fill in their education.

Theology on Tap

Winter Series: "Who Is My Neighbor?"
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 Mardi Gras! - Feb 16th, 6pm @St Pius Granger

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March for Life Chicago rallies in Fort Wayne



Photos by Joshua Schipper

Advocates parked at Concordia Lutheran Theological Seminary Jan. 16 and participated from their vehicles in a pro-life rally and caravan organized by We Dignify, a pro-life group from Chicago that is bringing its event to cities around the Midwest this winter. Those in their cars at the Fort Wayne event tuned to Redeemer Radio to listen to various speakers.



Indiana Sen. Liz Brown, above, speaks to those present about the work being done in the Indiana Assembly with regard to the protection of life from conception to death. Below, a rally attendee contributes to a diaper drive that took place in conjunction with the rally.



“THE CONFLICT
is between a culture that
affirms, cherishes, and celebrates the gift of life,
and
a culture that seeks to declare entire groups
of human beings - the unborn, the terminally ill,
the handicapped, and others considered ‘unuseful’
to be outside the boundaries of legal protection”
-Pope John Paul II
ST. LOUIS, BESANCON

*“Each of us is the result of
a thought of God.
Each of us is willed, each of us is loved,
each of us is necessary.”*
Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI

God, author of all life,
bless, we pray, all unborn children;
give them constant protection
and grant them a healthy birth
that is the sign of our rebirth one day
into the eternal rejoicing of heaven.
Adapted from the rite of blessing of a child in the womb

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GOMEZ, from page 5

life to seek reconciliation and reject the easy temptation to reprisals and recrimination.”

He continued: “We do not love those who oppose us because they are lovable, or even likable, Rev. King once said. We love them because God loves them. And by our love, we seek their conversion and friendship, not their humiliation.

“This is our Christian duty in this moment — to be healers and peacemakers, to overcome evil and lies, not by more of the same, but with words of truth and works of love.”

Archbishop Gomez concluded by asking Mary, the Queen

of Peace “to guide us in this moment of transition and uncertainty in our country. May she help us to keep believing in the power of love.”

Other statements issued for the King holiday included one from the new bishop of Buffalo, New York — Bishop Michael W. Fisher, who was installed Jan. 15.

On the day “when all lovers of peace” honor Rev. King’s memory and legacy, the bishop said, “let us recommit ourselves to cherishing and promoting the dignity of every person; to defeating what Pope Francis defines as the ‘sin of racism,’ whether in mind or in action and however blatant or subtle; and to demonstrating in these days of conflict and tension

the desire for dialogue, understanding and mutual respect.”

Quoting Rev. King, Bishop Fisher added: “People fail to get along because they fear each other; they fear each other because they don’t know each other; they do not know each other because they have not communicated with each other.”

The bishop prayed the civil rights leader’s memory will “inspire us always and in every place to discern the good in others and, by our actions, reveal the grace and goodness of God himself.”

Alveda King, the niece of Rev. King, who is the founder of Alveda King Ministries, issued a statement reiterating her uncle’s words about love — he said he would “stick with love,” because “hate is too great a burden to bear,” she said, quoting her uncle.

She urged people to remember the King holiday should be a day of service. “We can all find something constructive to do in our communities, even if it’s just shaking the hand of the neighbor who supported a different candidate. Anything we can do to increase the peace is more than worth our efforts,” King said.

“When we learn to value the human personality, and understand that we are one blood and one human race, we can learn to live together as brothers and sisters and we won’t perish as fools,” she added.

*It was you who created
My inmost self; and put
Me together in my
Mother’s womb; for all
These mysteries I thank you,
For the wonder of myself, for
The wonder of your works.*

Psalm 139, 13-14

Corpus Christi Catholic Community
SOUTH BEND

Heavy security in D.C., ongoing pandemic mean March for Life will be virtual

BY KURT JENSEN

WASHINGTON (CNS) — For the first time since 1974, when it first began, the message of the national March for Life to participants is: Stay home.

Like the satellite events connected to the annual National Mall rally and march to the Supreme Court, including the Rose Dinner, a youth conference and the Mass for Life, the rest of it will be online only.

March organizers had already hired a production company to make a livestreamed event possible in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, and to enforce mask wearing and social distancing.

But the plan was still to have as large a live rally as could be arranged. Many of the bus caravans from the Midwest, long a staple of the event, were canceled last fall as a result of the pandemic, and the assault on the U.S. Capitol Jan. 6 and threats of subsequent violence by domestic terrorist groups, as reported by the FBI, made security impossible.

"The protection of all of those who participate in the annual March, as well as the many law enforcement personnel and others who work tirelessly each year to ensure a safe and peaceful event, is a top priority of the March for Life," Jeanne Mancini, president of the March for Life Defense and Education Fund,

said in a statement issued late Jan. 15.

"In light of the fact that we are in the midst of a pandemic which may be peaking, and in view of the heightened pressures that law enforcement officers and others are currently facing in and around the Capitol ... the annual rally will take place virtually and we are asking all participants to stay home and to join the march virtually."

There will still be a small in-person presence. "We will invite a small group of pro-life leaders from across the country to march this year," Mancini said.

"These leaders will represent pro-life

Americans everywhere who, each in their own unique ways, work to make abortion unthinkable and build a culture where every human life is valued and protected," she added.

Marches in recent years had drawn at least 100,000 participants, and last year's event,



CNS photo/Tyler Orsburn

People walk up Constitution Avenue headed toward the U.S. Supreme Court while participating in the 47th annual March for Life in Washington Jan. 24, 2020. The 2021 March for Life in Washington will be take place virtually because of the coronavirus pandemic and ongoing political unrest in the nation's capital.

when President Donald Trump spoke at the rally, was believed to have had the largest attendance in its history. The smallest March for Life previous to this was in 1987 during a snowstorm, and drew an estimated 5,000.

The march is held on or near the anniversary of the Supreme Court's 1973 Roe v. Wade decision, which legalized abortion on demand.

The National Park Service closed "core areas" of the National Mall Jan. 15. They will remain closed at least through Jan. 21.

Most marches and prayer

vigils affiliated with the March for Life at state capitols are still planned, and some have already taken place. State marches have been postponed in Arkansas and Oregon, and an online alternative has been announced in Oregon.

Editor's Note: For more information, visit the website www.marchforlife.org.

The annual rally will take place virtually and we are asking all participants to stay home and to join the march virtually.

JEANNE MANCINI

"THE COMMANDMENT
"You shall not kill!"
always requires respecting and promoting human life, from its beginning to its natural end."

John Paul II



ST. VINCENT DE PAUL CHURCH
FORT WAYNE

RESPECT LIFE

"Even the weakest and most vulnerable, the sick, the old, the unborn and the poor, are masterpieces of God's creation, made in his own image, destined to live forever, and deserving of the utmost reverence and respect."

—Pope Francis

St. Patrick Church
ARCOLA



"You formed my inmost being; you knit me in my mother's womb."

Psalm 119:13

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST
NEW HAVEN, IN

March for Life

Federal Courthouse, South Bend
January 29 12-1 PM

St. Thomas Catholic Church, Elkhart
January 30 12-1 PM

County Courthouse, Goshen
January 30 12-1 PM

prolifemichiana.org/march



Considering the danger of concussions

When I was a sophomore in college, I participated in a flag football league. Even though it was flag football, it got physical at times. If you could not pull the flag, a tackle was acceptable.

I was a running back and toward the end of a game they called my number. I broke into the clear and thought I was about to be the hero as I sprinted toward the goal line. The next thing I remember is waking up face down choking on the turf in my mouth. By the time I began to regain consciousness both teams had circled around me, hoping I would begin to move. I had been tackled from behind and evidently hit my head hard enough on the ground to be knocked out.

That night, I had the worst headache of my life as I tossed and turned in bed, fighting back nausea. It was days before I thought I had all my faculties again. I had no clue at the time, but I had just experienced a significant concussion.

A concussion is a traumatic brain injury. The estimate is that 4 million of these occur in the United States every year. If you are male, your best opportunity to have a concussion is in football, hockey, lacrosse and rugby. Girls have their best chance playing soccer. I have a godchild who took a full year to recover from a concussion that occurred during a competitive soccer game.

If you watch the NFL, you no doubt have seen many concussions occur. If the player experiences loss of consciousness even for a few seconds, the diagnosis

of a concussion is clear. Getting knocked out, though, is not necessary to be diagnosed with a concussion.

The symptoms of a concussion include headache, dizziness, confusion, amnesia, slurred speech, forgetfulness, nausea, drowsiness, insomnia, photophobia and blurred vision; but the list does not stop there. Allow me to go a little deeper into the pathophysiology of what happens to the brain.

After the trauma, some of the brain neurons develop abnormal activation. Affected areas of the brain can have accumulation of a harmful substance called lactic acid, the same chemical that builds up in the muscles of marathon runners. Reduced blood flow to the brain can occur for days or weeks after a traumatic brain injury.

The brain is fed by glucose carried in the blood, and if there is reduced blood flow there may not be enough "food" for the brain to function properly. This is one suspected cause of the cognitive dysfunction that may occur following a concussion.

There are protocols designed to treat concussions that occur during sports. The NFL has an extremely strict protocol for diagnosis and treatment before a player can return to game play. All protocols include an immediate suspension of participation in the sport.

Studies have shown that some level of activity during the first few days post-concussion such as walking or stretching exercises is a good thing. Students usually are counseled



DR. DAVID KAMINSKAS

THE CATHOLIC DOCTOR IS IN

to take a few days off from school, but if they return to school and experience recurrent symptoms and difficulty concentrating, they need more time off. It is recommended to avoid loud music, avoid video games and minimize screen time, even though your child may not appreciate the importance of this.

When to allow a player to return to his or her sport can be a difficult decision. Once the original symptoms resolve, the athlete can begin light exercise. It turns out using a stationary bike is a good place to start, then proceeding with more vigorous exercise is allowed. The next step is to practice with the team and, if that goes well, then back to full competition.

If there is another concussion in the weeks to come the medical team, and usually a neurologist or sports medicine specialist, will be more aggressive in protecting the athlete and he or she will not be cleared to participate again for a long time.

There have been multiple high-level athletes who have been advised to quit their sport because of multiple concussions, which can lead to long-term

KAMINSKAS, page 13

Vox Populi: The voice of the people

Francis Galton was a Victorian scientist with an interest in social Darwinism. It may have been his views on breeding that moved him to attend the West of England Fat Stock and Poultry Exhibition in 1906. The show featured a weight-judging competition: People were asked to guess what a particular ox would weigh after it had been slaughtered and dressed.

Galton published an account of the contest ("Vox Populi") in the journal *Nature*. About 800 people took part. The median of all their guesses was 1,207 pounds, just 0.8% off the true weight. This surprised Galton because, as he said, "The average competitor was probably as well fitted for making a just estimate of the dressed weight of the ox as an average voter is of judging the merits of most political issues." The voice of the people was wiser than Galton had been inclined to think.

I've been reflecting on the wisdom of crowds since a group of President Donald Trump's supporters stormed the U.S. Capitol Jan. 6, intent on disrupting the work of Congress as it certified the Electoral College results. I don't mean the wisdom of crowds like that one, whose members influence one another like a herd of sheep or cattle — or a lynch mob. I mean large crowds with a diversity of opinions whose members decide independently of one another, like markets, or in this case, like voters.



JOHN GARVEY

INTELLECT AND VIRTUE

Consider the 2020 election. Apart from the issue of character, there was much to be said in President Trump's favor. A strong economy is a good predictor of reelection for an incumbent president. Going into the election, the Dow Jones Industrial Average was up 40% in Trump's time, and the Nasdaq composite had more than doubled. Before COVID-19 arrived, unemployment had hit a 50-year low.

But the American people chose Joe Biden by a margin of 7 million votes. President Trump, they rightly judged, was someone who cared almost entirely for himself — that, in addition to the philandering and boorishness they knew about when they first elected him. His character unsuited him for the office.

There has been a tendency for several decades to think that character doesn't really matter; that what's important is a politician's support for issues we care about. Democrats argued this when President Bill Clinton's sexual infidelities came to light. He was a progressive advocate for women's rights, they said.

GARVEY, page 13

Jesus calls each of us to discipleship



THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

MSGR. OWEN F. CAMPION

Third Sunday In Ordinary Time Mark 1:14-20

The Book of Jonah is the source for the first reading. Scholars believe that it was written sometime after the Babylonian Exile of the Jews.

The reading speaks of Jonah's visit to Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian Empire, located roughly in the region of modern Syria. He went there at God's command, to call the people to conversion.

The Jews who first heard this reading had a definite mindset about Nineveh and its inhabitants. By the time that this book

was written, foreigners already had subjected God's people time and again to conquests, but of all these conquerors, none was more brutal than the Assyrians. Brutality and viciousness were their hallmarks.

As a result, the Jews regarded Assyrians as utterly evil, not just as threats to the Jewish population. By possibly annihilating the Jews, they were upsetting the worship of the One God of Israel. Nineveh was the capital of Assyria, the heart of this inhumane empire.

Yet, Jonah succeeded in converting the people of the city. The lesson is clear. Anyone, even someone with the hardest heart, can repent. God wants all people to repent.

This weekend's second reading is from the First Letter to the Corinthians. Paul had a challenge in leading the Corinthian Christians to a fully devout Christian life. The city was, for its time — the first century A.D. — what Nineveh was imagined to have been. Corinth was depraved, utterly engulfed in

paganism and wickedness.

St. Paul calls upon the Christians of Corinth to remember that time passes quickly and that life is short. They have before them two options. The first is life in Jesus, a life that is everlasting, but it requires fidelity to the Gospel and the Gospel's values. The other option is eternal death, awaiting those who spurn the Gospel. In this comparison, Paul obviously urges the Corinthians to be holy.

The Gospel of Mark provides the last reading. It is the story of the Lord's calling of Andrew, Simon Peter, James and John to be apostles. The Apostles were simple men. Yet, Jesus called them, and they responded in the affirmative.

All the early Christians found stories of the Twelve especially important. The Apostles were key in learning the Gospel of Jesus. Going far and wide, the apostles were the links with Jesus. Imposters, maybe well-meaning, also came and went among the early Christians. Knowing who was an authentic apostle was

imperative in order to know the genuine teaching of Jesus.

The authentic apostles possessed the credentials of having been personally called, taught and sent by Christ. Thus, the Gospels carefully report their names and callings.

Reflection

The Church called us to celebrate the birth of Christ. Two weeks later, it led us to the celebration of the feast of the Epiphany of the Lord. Then it offered us the feast of the Lord's baptism by John in the Jordan River.

All these celebrations, among the greatest of the Church's year of worship, taught critical lessons about Jesus. He is human, the Son of Mary. He is also the Son of God. He is the Savior, assuming our sins even though He was sinless.

Now the Church moves into the process of asking us to respond. To an extent, we all live in Nineveh and in Corinth. Sin surrounds us. God is rejected,

but no one is beyond redemption.

Jesus forgives us, heals us and calls each of us to discipleship. We simply must choose to heed the call by being faithful to the Gospel. It is to our advantage to respond affirmatively. Death is the other option.

We might not altogether depart Nineveh or Corinth in this life, but the Lord guides us to the peace of heaven.

READINGS

Sunday: Jon 3:1-5, 10 Ps 25:4-9 1 Cor 7:29-31 Mk 1:14-20

Monday: Acts 22:3-16 Ps 117:1-2 Mk 16:15-18

Tuesday: 2 Tm 1:1-8 PS 96:1-3, 7-8A, 10 318: Mk 3:31-35

Wednesday: Heb 10:11-18 Ps 110:1-4 Mk 4:1-20

Thursday: Heb 10:19-25 Ps 24:1-4b, 5-6 Mk 4:21-25

Friday: Heb 10:32-39 Ps 37:3-6, 23-24, 39-40 Mk 4:26-34

Saturday: Heb 11:1-2, 8-19 (Ps) Lk 1:69-75 Mk 4:35-41

Exhaustion meets new beginnings

During these first weeks of the year 2021, I have spent a significant amount of time in conversation with colleagues, students, family and friends. We talk work, life, our children, politics, the pandemic, our woes, our joys and our hopes, among other things.

I can tell that many of them feel exhausted by how they look and sound. Although I tend to be upbeat, I feel my own share of exhaustion. The start of a year is supposed to signal fresh beginnings and instill some new energy, yet millions and millions of people in our nation are simply exhausted.

The feeling is justifiable. We cannot hide the effects of the tumultuous year 2020 in our lives. We are still in the midst of a pandemic that seems relentless. Even with the excellent news of having several vaccines available, each day we learn about more infections and more deaths; then new waves and new strains of the virus.

Our current political climate is perplexing and, frankly, disappointing. Since its inception, our nation has withstood diversity of opinions and divisions. Fine. Yet, when those divisions become instruments to dismantle or distort the social, political and even legal principles that are supposed to make us one decent society, then we must wonder what has gone awry.

The cavalier use of racist language in our public discourse, the rise of an emerging nationalism built upon anti-immigrant sentiments and the disdain for people who struggle with poverty, among other sociocultural misfits in our day, demand a communal examination of conscience.

It is here where people of faith

and religious institutions could exercise much needed leadership. Yet, we cannot go to our churches as we used to since we need to adhere to important restrictions that aim at controlling the pandemic. Religious education and spiritual support efforts, even when done online, are running half steam.

Many people of faith are hurt and disconcerted, many actually disillusioned, at witnessing religious leaders from different traditions and philosophical persuasions placing politics and ideology above truth and the message of love at the heart of the Gospel. More worrisome is the irresponsible use of the Christian message and whatever standing our faith institutions may have in society to justify the unjustifiable.

Put all these together: a fierce pandemic, divisive politics, institutions threatened at their core, widespread prejudice and the manipulation of religion for ideological gain, among other challenges. It is easy, indeed, to understand why people in our society are exhausted.

Where do we go from here? The promise of new beginnings remains. Every crisis brings along its own hopes and opportunities.

As Christians, we believe that life, good, order and love prevail over death, evil, chaos and hate, respectively. We know this because God spoke decisively in Jesus Christ, and in him our sense of hope finds its foundation.

Jesus' words resound strongly: "Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest." (Mt 11:28) This is still a young year and we must remain attentive to any signs of hope before us. Pandemics come and go. Regimes rise and fall.



JOURNEYING TOGETHER

HOSFFMAN OSPINO

Errors stand to be corrected.

In the midst of the widespread feelings of exhaustion, Catholics must redouble our efforts to be beacons of hope in our society. The challenges are big and complex, and they will escape any facile or simplistic response. We must try, nonetheless; and try hard.

Whether in the White House or Congress, churches or schools, offices or businesses, factories or fields, homes or the public square, this is a time for Catholics to instill hope inspired in the best of our faith.

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

chiefs of staff, press secretaries — at the first hint of disagreement.

He cared more for himself than his country, and when the election went against him, he could not bear to leave the pool that reflected his own image. The voters were wise to foresee this. Let's hope the Republican Party renews its commitment to the importance of character when it chooses its next presidential candidate.

John Garvey is president of The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C.

takes prayer and some help from the Holy Spirit.

Dr. David Kaminskis is a board-certified cardiologist and member of the Dr. Jerome Lejeune Catholic Medical Guild of Northeast Indiana, www.fortwaynecma.com.

GARVEY, from page 12

Let's not conduct a moralistic plebiscite over the actions of two consenting adults.

I was upset then about the example President Clinton set for our children, who couldn't help but hear about his "private" conduct of affairs in the Oval Office. The lesson they learned was that if such a man was fit to serve as president of the United States, maybe his transgressions were no big deal.

Republicans waived the character issue in President Trump's case in 2016 because he promised to support things they

KAMINSKAS, from page 12

brain dysfunction. Some of the retired NFL players who have sustained multiple traumatic brain injuries — not necessarily just concussions — before the current strict protocols were developed have gone on to develop Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy. This can lead to depression, dementia and suicide.

cared about. And he delivered on many of them — support for the unborn, religious freedom, conservative judges, deregulation, economic growth, progress in the Middle East, and new directions with NAFTA and China, to name just a few.

But like Ovid's Narcissus, he was in love with himself. He sought the affirmation of his base but wrote off the rest of America. He cultivated Twitter followers like a TV audience for his own reality show. He turned on people who had served both him and the country — Vice President Mike Pence, Bill Barr, James Mattis, Jeff Sessions,

Participation in school sports has been shown to have great value for children. They make friends, learn about teamwork, get physically conditioned and learn how to gracefully win and lose. But there are also risks that must be considered. Parents have a great responsibility in making this decision. Guiding your children to make the best choices

SCRIPTURE SEARCH®

Gospel for January 24, 2021

Mark 1:14-20

Following is a word search based on the Gospel reading for the Third Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle B: the father and hired hands left behind. The words can be found in all directions in the puzzle.

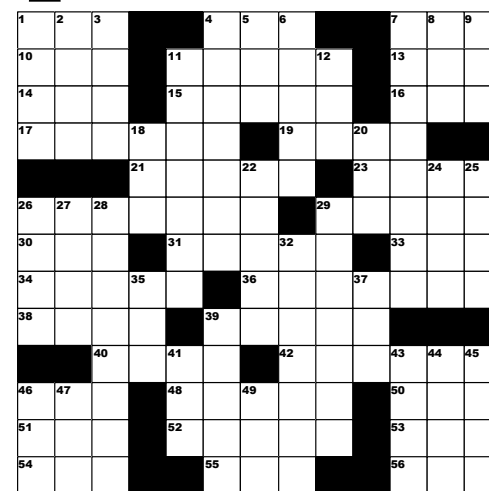
JOHN	JESUS	GALILEE
PROCLAIMING	TIME	KINGDOM
REPENT	BELIEVE	SIMON
CASTING	FISHERMEN	NETS
FOLLOWED	FARTHER	JAMES
ZEBEDEE	IN A BOAT	MENDING
LEFT	FATHER	HIRED MEN

THEY LEFT

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

The Cross Word

January 17, 24 and 31, 2021



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Readings: 1 Sm 3:3b-10, 19; 1Cor 6:13c-15a, 17-20; Jn 1:35-42 and Jon 3:1-5, 10; 1Cor 7:29-31; Mk 1:14-20 and Deut 18:15-20; Mk 1:21-28

ACROSS

- 1 Grain
- 4 A small amount
- 7 Eat
- 10 Not against
- 11 "Last Supper" image city
- 13 Sign language
- 14 Snaky fish
- 15 Japanese city
- 16 Light from heaven
- 17 Trainees
- 19 Looked over
- 21 One's place

23 Sins by words

- 26 Steal
- 29 Door joint
- 30 Volume (abbr.)
- 31 Short musical piece
- 33 Charged particle
- 34 Thoughts
- 36 "Your ___ is listening"
- 38 Cloth colorer
- 39 Afloat (2 wds.)
- 40 Rind
- 42 Blue-blooded
- 46 Winter sport
- 48 Jeweled headdress

- 50 "___ Maria"
- 51 A mountain peak
- 52 Pool shot
- 53 Least amount
- 54 Easter symbol
- 55 Blue air above
- 56 Deli order

DOWN

- 1 Oil producers
- 2 Location
- 3 Spoke
- 4 Disagree
- 5 Wing
- 6 Made altar bread
- 7 Italian island
- 8 United States
- 9 Wooden sheet
- 11 Family sayings
- 12 No
- 18 Computer key
- 20 Temple priest
- 22 Burned
- 24 Ancient Greek contest
- 25 Temple veil was
- 26 Eager
- 27 "Not for immorality"
- 28 Samuel was in Temple
- 29 Samuel's answer (3 wds)
- 32 "Come to ___ us?"
- 35 "Blessed ___ you"
- 37 Tub
- 39 Assumed name
- 41 And so forth
- 43 "The ___ of God"
- 44 "Repented of the ___"
- 45 Car crease
- 46 South by east
- 47 Beer container
- 49 Kept in Temple



St. John the Baptist School in Fort Wayne provides a faith-based environment for students to grow in, along with other Catholic schools in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend. The Catholic school system is strong in the city, says principal Mary Keefer.

Catholic schools 'shine bright'

BY GEORGIA LIEB

"The worth and the value of a Catholic education gives me hope."

— Mary Keefer, principal

Mary Keefer, principal at St. John the Baptist School in Fort Wayne, has been in teaching for many years and so has experienced the inner workings of the Catholic schools in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend. "I'm a product of Catholic schools," she said. "My children went to Catholic schools. I've worked in Catholic schools for 40 years."

And according to her, "Catholic schools shine bright."

Keefer's hope for the future of Catholic schools is based on the unique education and experience they provide. "Catholic schools exist to assist parents in that awesome task of teaching their children about the faith," she said. "We work our faith into all of our teachings, into our curriculum. The worth and the value of a Catholic education gives me hope."

At St. John the Baptist School, students have the chance to grow academically and have integrated faith lessons such as Church history or the writings of the saints. They receive sacraments and observe the seasons of Advent and Lent with school-wide activities. They also pray the rosary and practice a devotion to Our Lady of Guadalupe, and staff and students pray for each other when someone has a hard day or needs some support.

"So many leaders in our city have gone to Catholic schools and sent their children to Catholic schools and believe in the Catholic school system," Keefer said. "Our Catholic school system is strong in Fort Wayne and in South Bend, and that



Photos by Georgia Lieb

Principal Mary Keefer of St. John the Baptist School in Fort Wayne poses with students. Keefer came out of retirement to lead the Catholic school community: She calls her service "a labor of love."

gives me hope. People are still applying to work here. They went to Catholic school, so they want to work in Catholic school, or they went to Catholic school, so they want to send their children to Catholic school."

Keefer noted the holy work of Catholic school teachers and their dedication. "They're on a mission to fulfill their vocation which is to teach these kids."

Keefer taught seventh and eighth grade at St. John the Baptist School for nearly 10 years. Following that, she served at Bishop Luers High School — also in Fort Wayne — as the head of the theology department. She became assistant principal at a public school and then principal at Bishop Luers, where she worked for 20 years.

After four years of retirement,

Keefer received a phone call from Father Andrew Budzinski, pastor at St. John the Baptist Parish, asking her to be principal at St. John the Baptist School.

"This is my parish. My children went here and I had taught here, and so I said yes," Keefer reflected. "It's a labor of love." This is Keefer's second year.

Giving back is important to her. "I've been so blessed in my

life. It's a calling, a vocation," she said. "People who work in Catholic schools love it. I love school, I love the kids, I love the process. It's a good place to be."

When asked what graduating students leave Catholic schools with, Keefer said: "They take away relationships, first and foremost. They take relationships, they take values, they take virtues. They take the knowledge that this was a good place to be and turn around and send their children here or to another Catholic school."

Since the start of the coronavirus pandemic, St. John the Baptist School stayed open after coming back from the initial shutdown.

"It's been incredibly challenging, but we're so lucky we didn't have to close again," Keefer said. "That's our biggest accomplishment, that we have been able to not close our doors."

She hopes the coming years will see robust involvement in Catholic school systems.

"There's something traditional about a Catholic education. It involves the deep care that our teachers have for our students. Catholic schools are families, they're communities — and that's an asset."

Keefer is proud of the sustainability of Catholic schools, too. She said, "In spite of the ups and downs and the societal influence on our families and our children, we're still here, we're still working hard, we're still viable, we're still an awesome alternative for families and I think we shine bright. We offer the opportunity to receive the sacraments and to go to Mass, and have kids grow and thrive."

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.

Christ Child Society celebrates virtually SOUTH BEND — Angelo DiCarlo will emcee the gala Let Love Shine, a virtual event in support of the Christ Child Society of South Bend on Thursday, Feb. 11, from 7-8 p.m. Included will be a silent auction and an opportunity to see the new Clothing Center as it transformed from an empty store to a vibrant center of philanthropy. Visit www.christ-childsb.org for more information.

Day of Prayer and Fasting for the Protection of the Unborn
FORT WAYNE — Our Lady of Good Hope, 7215 Saint Joe Rd., will offer opportunities for prayer and fasting for the unborn on Friday, Jan. 22. A 9 a.m. Mass with exposition of the Blessed Sacrament; 3 p.m. Divine Mercy Chaplet; at 6 p.m. all the mysteries of the rosary will be prayed; 6:45 p.m. Benediction; and 7 p.m. Mass for the legal protection of the unborn. Contact Father Daniel Whelan at 260-485-9615 or padredww@yahoo.com for information.

Little Flower Holy Hour
FORT WAYNE — Little Flower Holy Hour for Vocations will be Tuesday, Feb 2, from 7-8 p.m. at the St. Mother Theodore Guerin Chapel, 1102 S. Clinton St. The February holy hour will be led by Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades. Contact Christine Nix at 260-422-4611 or cbonahoom-nix@diocesefwsb.org.

Mass for Life with Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades
SOUTH BEND — Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades will celebrate a 10:30 a.m. Mass on Friday, Jan. 29, to offer students and families an opportunity to gather and pray for the defense of human life at St. Patrick Parish. Space is limited and advance reservation is highly encouraged. RSVP to John

Pratt at jjpratt@diocesefwsb.org with the number of seats needed for your school, parish or family. Total capacity is limited to the first 100 reservations. For more information on this, as well as the noon pro-life event hosted by the Right to Life Michiana, visit diocesefwsb.org/local-marches.

Theology on Tap
Winter Series: "Fraternity & Social Friendship"
 Tuesdays, Jan 19th - Feb 16th, 7:15pm
 St. Charles Church, Fort Wayne
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The CrossWord
 January 17, 24 and 31, 2021

O	A	T		D	A	B		S	U	P		
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REST IN PEACE

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| Angola
Richard Daugherty, 87, St. Anthony of Padua | Granger
Margaret Frailey, 95, St. Pius X

Geraldine Hojnacki, 79, St. Pius X

Jessica Spenner, 75, St. Pius X | Monroeville
Gregory A. Galligher, 79, St. Rose of Lima

Gerald T. Reuille, 80, St. Rose of Lima |
| Arcola
Mary A. Johnson, 89, St. Patrick | Mishawaka
Ralph Bourell, 86, St. Joseph

Sandra Boyer, 84, St. Joseph

Al Gerstbauer, 88, St. Joseph

John Heintzberger, 57, St. Monica | Notre Dame
Father William E. Wickham Jr., CSC, 81, Basilica of the Sacred Heart |
| Decatur
Roy E. Bohlander, 91, St. Mary of the Assumption | Fort Wayne
Madeline M. Noll, 80, St. Jude

Marjorie Schrader, 88, St. Charles Borromeo

Alice A. Ulman, 83, St. Joseph - Hessen Cassel

Darrell L. Will, 72, St. Joseph - Hessen Cassel | South Bend
Elizabeth Rejer, 97, St. Matthew Cathedral

Linda Wiczorek, 73, St. Matthew Cathedral |
| | | Warsaw
Arthur C. Marose, 89, Sacred Heart |

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Popes Francis, Benedict receive first doses of COVID-19 vaccine

BY CAROL GLATZ

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Both Pope Francis and retired Pope Benedict XVI have received the first dose of the vaccine against COVID-19 after the Vatican started vaccinating its employees and residents Jan. 13.

Matteo Bruni, director of the Vatican Press Office, confirmed the news Jan. 14.

While it was reported widely that Pope Francis received the vaccine Jan. 13, the retired pope's secretary, Archbishop Georg Ganswein, told Vatican News that Pope Benedict received his shot the morning of Jan. 14.

The archbishop had told the German Catholic news agency KNA Jan. 11 that the 93-year-old pope, who lives in a converted monastery in the Vatican Gardens, and his entire household staff wanted to be vaccinated as soon as the vaccine was available in Vatican City State.

He told Vatican News that the retired pope has been following the news "on television, and he shares our concerns about the pandemic, about what is happening in the world, about the many people who have lost their life because of the virus."

"There have been people he knows who have died because of COVID-19," he added.

Archbishop Ganswein said the

retired pope is still very sharp mentally but that his voice and physical strength have weakened. "He is very frail and only can walk a little with a walker."

He rests more, "but we still go out every afternoon, despite the cold, in the Vatican Gardens," he added.

The Vatican's vaccination program was voluntary. The Vatican health service was giving priority to its health care workers, security personnel, employees who deal with the public and older residents, employees and retirees.

In early December, Dr. Andrea Arcangeli, director of the Vatican health service, said they would begin with the Pfizer vaccine, which was developed in conjunction with BioNTech.

Pope Francis had said in a television interview broadcast Jan. 10 that he too would be vaccinated against the coronavirus as soon as it was available.

He said that he believed that from an ethical point of view, everyone should take the vaccine because those who did not would not only put their own lives at risk, but also the lives of others.

In a press release Jan. 2, the Vatican's health services department said it purchased an "ultra-low temperature refrigerator" for storing the vaccines and said it expected to receive enough doses



CNS photo/Vatican Media

The Vatican health service began vaccinating employees, residents and retirees with the COVID-19 vaccine Jan. 13 in a makeshift clinic set up in the atrium of the Vatican audience hall. Pope Francis and retired Pope Benedict XVI have both received an initial dose of the vaccination.

to cover "the needs of the Holy See and Vatican City State."

The Vatican reported its first known case of infection in early March, and since then there have been another 25 reported cases — including 11 Swiss guards in

October.

Pope Francis' personal doctor died Jan. 9 of complications caused by COVID-19. Fabrizio Soccorsi, 78, had been admitted to Rome's Gemelli hospital Dec. 26 because of cancer, according

to the Italian Catholic agency SIR, Jan. 9.

However, he died because of "pulmonary complications" caused by COVID-19, the agency said, without providing further details.

Bishops applaud HHS rule change that aids adoption, foster care providers

WASHINGTON (CNS) — A Department of Health and Human Services modified rule that helps ensure that faith-based social service providers will not be excluded from certain federally funded programs was met with approval by the chairmen of three U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops committees.

The rule modification affects agencies that provide adoption and foster care services in particular. It allows faith-based social service providers "to continue partnering with the government to assist children in need," the chairmen said in a Jan. 15 statement.

Welcoming the change were Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan of New York, chair of the Committee for Religious Liberty; Archbishop Paul S. Coakley of Oklahoma City, chair of the Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development; and Bishop David A. Konderla of Tulsa, Oklahoma, chair of the Subcommittee for the Promotion and Defense of Marriage.

The rule modification affects a 2016 regulation put in place by President Barack Obama's administration. The change allows faith-based adoption and foster care agencies to continue receiving federal funding for



CNS photo/Sarah Webb, CatholicPhilly.com

Cecilia Paul, right, a foster mother through Catholic Social Services of the Philadelphia archdiocese for more than 40 years, is pictured in her Philadelphia home in this 2015 file photo with daughter Taylor and son Jamil, both of whom she cared for as a foster mother before adopting them. A Department of Health and Human Services modified rule that took effect Jan. 19 helps ensure faith-based social service providers will not be excluded from certain federally funded programs.

their work that follows their religious beliefs.

The chairmen noted how Catholic and other faith-based

agencies annually serve thousands of families through adoption and foster care. "Many of these agencies have been doing

this work long before the government became involved," their statement said.

"It is a sad reality that state

and local government agencies in multiple jurisdictions have already succeeded in shutting down Catholic adoption and foster care providers who operated in accordance with the teachings of the Catholic Church," the chairmen said. "With over 400,000 children in foster care, we need to work together to take steps to increase — not decrease — opportunities for children to be placed with safe and loving families."

"We appreciate the finalization of these rule modifications," they added.

The U.S. Supreme Court heard arguments Nov. 4 in the case of *Fulton v. Philadelphia*, which centers on the city of Philadelphia's 2018 exclusion of the foster program of Catholic Social Services of the Philadelphia archdiocese because of the agency's policy of not placing children with same-sex couples or unmarried couples because such unions go against Church teaching on traditional marriage.

The justices seemed willing to find a middle ground in the case, which pits the rights of religious groups against state anti-discrimination laws.

The HHS rule took effect Jan. 19.