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# TODAY'S CATHOLIC

Volume 91 No. 8

50¢

TODAYSCATHOLICNEWS.org

## During Lent, return to God with all your heart



CNS photo/Jerry L. Mennenga

**Father Dan Rupp, pastor of Blessed Sacrament Church in Sioux City, places ashes on the forehead of sixth-grader Samir Arbizu after a Feb. 14 talk with a class at Holy Cross School-Blessed Sacrament center about the upcoming Ash Wednesday observance.**

### Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion to be celebrated in diocesan cathedrals

The Rite of Election of Catechumens and the Call to Continuing Conversion of Candidates will be celebrated in the cathedrals of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend.

These rites will take place in St. Matthew Cathedral, South Bend, at 2 p.m. Feb. 26, and in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Fort Wayne at 2 p.m. March 5.

Catechumens are those unbaptized individuals who will be entering the Catholic Church by receiving all the sacraments of initiation — baptism, confirmation and Holy Eucharist — at the Easter Vigil on the night of April 15. Candidates are those who are already baptized and are now preparing to complete their initiation or enter into full communion with the Catholic Church.

The catechumens and candidates come from parishes throughout the diocese. During the liturgy, each catechumen and candidate, as well as his or her godparent or sponsor, will be presented for recognition to Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades. All together, several hundred catechumens and candidates — along with their godparents, sponsors, families and guests — are expected to attend the liturgies.

The catechumens inscribe their names within the “Book of the Elect,” which will be presented for Bishop Rhoades to sign in an event called the Enrollment of Names. After participating in the Rite of Election, the catechumens will be referred to as the “elect” because they will have been officially declared ready to receive the Easter sacraments this year.

## Men challenged to live authentically Catholic lives

BY DAN PRYZBYLA

Every year, Mike Sumpter can count on the Rekindle the Fire diocesan men's conference to provide something he needs: spiritual adrenaline.

“This conference,” said Sumpter, a parishioner and extraordinary minister of holy Communion at St. Michael Church in Plymouth, “is a shot of adrenaline that gets us fired up and to learn ways to be better people.”

Fellow parishioner and friend Phillip Powers says the conference builds up his Catholic faith and allows him to share without judgment with like-minded men.

“Men are here to get an infusion of faith to help with the challenges in their everyday lives,” explained Powers. “By attending the conference, you see you aren't alone in your walk.”

And they certainly weren't alone on Feb. 18, as nearly 1,000 other like-minded men filled the Century Center in downtown South Bend for the seventh

annual conference. The single largest event dedicated to men in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, the Rekindle the Fire conference once again attracted some of the country's foremost Catholic speakers: Patrick Madrid, Doug Barry and Chris Padgett.

The all-day event also featured question-and-answer segments with the speakers, reconciliation, eucharistic adoration, a variety of Catholic vendors and Mass with Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades. This year's conference

theme, “Takin' it to the Streets,” was a reminder of every man's call to strive for holiness by how they live.

Emceed by Father Jacob Meyer, pastor of St. Monica Church, and Father Ben Muhlenkamp, pastor of St. Louis Besancon, the conference brought together men of all ages and backgrounds to celebrate and learn about their faith, reconnect and deepen their rela-

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## TODAY'S CATHOLIC

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

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Published weekly except second Sunday of January; and every other week from the third Sunday in June through the second Sunday of September; and last Sunday in December by the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, 1103 S. Calhoun St., P.O. Box 390, Fort Wayne, IN 46801. Periodicals postage paid at Fort Wayne, IN, and additional mailing office.

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

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News deadline is the Monday morning before publication date. Advertising deadline is nine days before publication date.

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P.O. Box 11169, Fort Wayne, IN  
46856-1169; or email:  
[editor@diocesefwsb.org](mailto:editor@diocesefwsb.org)

(ISSN 0891-1533)  
(USPS 403630)



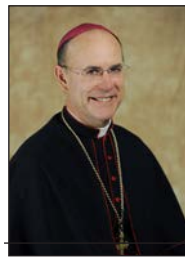
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# Living as intentional disciples of Jesus



## IN TRUTH AND CHARITY

BISHOP KEVIN C. RHOADES

*This is the third part of the talk given by Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades on Feb. 7 at St. Louis Besancon Parish. The last two issues of Today's Catholic contained the first two parts, on the observance of Sunday and on daily prayer.*

Daily prayer is essential for our growth in the Christian life and in holiness, in being a Catholic every day of the week. Yet, we must remember the important counsel of St. Teresa of Avila: that the water is for the flowers. The graces we receive in prayer help us to grow in the virtues. If our prayer is not bearing good fruit, it is not authentic. That's the only way we can judge the authenticity of our prayer is, are we growing in the virtues — especially the theological virtues of faith, hope and love?

If we're not growing in our vocations, becoming a better bishop or priest, religious or lay person, a better husband and father, a better wife and mother, a better son or daughter, brother or sister, then something is wrong. Our daily prayer helps us to grow in Christ. Growth in Christian life and holiness doesn't take place apart from or aside from our vocation. For example, the way of holiness, the path of salvation and sanctification, for a married person is not apart from marriage, but in the marriage. It is impossible for a married person and parent to be growing in holiness but not growing as a good husband and father or wife and mother.

Prayer without growth in love is not fruitful. We can't judge the goodness or effectiveness of our prayer by how we feel when or after we pray. It can only be judged by the fruits. If one spends an hour in eucharistic adoration and then goes out and curses at a neighbor, then one's heart was not really open to receive the Lord and His grace during the Holy Hour.

Prayer needs to be connected to life, especially our particular vocation. Prayer helps us to live our common vocation as disciples of the Lord and our state-in-life vocation as married, ordained or consecrated religious or as a widowed or single person. Prayer must be connected also to our personal vocation as unique individuals within our particular state in life. To live as an authentic Christian is to live as an intentional disciple of Christ in our personal life and vocation, in our family and in our work. How do we do this? I've focused on daily prayer as the necessary ingredient. But that prayer must be real. Our hearts must be open to divine grace and cooperate with that grace.

One way to articulate all this is a famous quote from Blessed Cardinal John Henry Newman. He said: "God has created me to do Him some definite service. He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another. I am a link in a

chain, a bond of connection between persons. He has not created me for naught. I shall do good, I shall do His work."

God has given each of us natural gifts that we should develop and use to their fullest potential. He gives us supernatural gifts, graces to help us, including the gift of faith. Prayer keeps us focused on this, on God's plan and His will. Otherwise, we lose sight of our purpose.

We can easily be tempted to compartmentalize our life. We won't grow in holiness if Sunday Mass is it and is separated from the realities of our daily life. We shouldn't even compartmentalize our play and recreation from our life of discipleship, any more than we should compartmentalize our family or work life from our prayer life. We are called to live an integrated life. That's the life of true discipleship! It's down to earth. It's real Christianity. It's a constant process of conversion.

Living as intentional disciples challenges us every day in our relationships, in our decisions and in our work. We are challenged by the Gospel, the words and the life of Jesus. To be an intentional disciple of Jesus Christ means living life with a purpose. That purpose, as the Catechism says, is "to know, to love, and to serve God in this life and to be happy with Him forever in the next." Our purpose should not be to accumulate wealth or to strive for fame and celebrity. When we have earthly success, it should be ordered not to ourselves, but to God and to others. A life of discipleship is a life of detachment from these lesser goods. Daily prayer helps us to live with this perspective.

We must admit that we all make mistakes along the way. We mess up. We sin. As intentional disciples, we recognize that we are sinners in need of forgiveness. We know that we need to go to confession regularly in order to grow in holiness and to receive the grace to resist temptations.

To be an authentic Catholic, an intentional disciple, in our culture today can be particularly challenging. I often tell our young people that it takes courage to be Catholic today. The vocation of the Catholic laity is to bring the truth of the Gospel into the world. Remember the question Jesus once posed to the disciples, "when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on earth?" (Luke 18:8). We should ponder this question and ask if we are doing our part.

St. John the Baptist preparing the way of the Lord is an example for us since we are called to prepare the way for Christ's second coming. This begins with our own lives and families and work. Do other people see God at work in our lives? Do they see goodness and generosity, mercy and love in us? Can they recognize that we are disciples of Jesus Christ by the way we speak?

We can ask ourselves, perhaps in prayer in the morning, what do I intend to do today to learn, to live, and to spread the teachings of Jesus Christ? How can I bring Christ's love into my home today? What can I do with my children today to help them to draw closer to the Lord? How can I bring peace to a situation of conflict or unity where there is discord? The Prayer of Saint Francis is a wonderful prayer: "Lord make me an instrument of your peace, where there is hatred let me bring love..."

A wife and mother can ask herself, how

can I be more like the Blessed Mother today? A husband and father can ask himself, how can I be more like St. Joseph today? We must not compartmentalize faith and family. I always encourage parents to be devoted to the Holy Family who show us the way to live together in faith, hope, and love.

Parents have the duty to provide for their children's spiritual, psychological, physical, intellectual, and moral growth. It's a tremendous responsibility. Most of the social ills in our country can be traced back to the family. Most of the social goods can also be traced back to the family. We certainly need more families of faith and prayer. No family is perfect, but family life is still beautiful when there is unity and peace in the Lord.

Work is also part of our lives that should not be compartmentalized from faith. The Church teaches that work honors the gifts of our Creator and the talents received from Him. Do we recognize this when we go to work or is our work something we see as lacking in meaning? What a difference it makes when we view work as the Church views human work: "as a means of sanctification and a way of animating earthly realities with the spirit of Christ" (CCC 2427).

Prayer helps us to live a unified, integrated life, not a divided, compartmentalized life. It helps us to see meaning and purpose in everything, the meaning and purpose that comes from God our Creator and Redeemer.

Our work should be a prayer. When we pray the Morning Offering, we offer all our work that day to God. Our work, however mundane it may seem sometimes, is a way to offer praise to our Creator and to grow in holiness. But we have to do our work with purpose — to serve God, to provide for our families, and to serve others. Then it truly becomes a means of sanctification for us. Every job is an opportunity for growth in holiness. A salesperson speaking kindly and helpfully to a customer. A teacher imparting knowledge to a student, with care for that student's growth. A homemaker laundering clothes or cooking a meal, with love for the members of the family being provided for. A garbage collector making the neighborhood cleaner for the community, taking care of our common home. Every work has value and dignity when done in the right spirit.

We are to be God's fellow-workers, St. Paul says. And we should never underestimate the evangelizing potential of our living as faithful disciples of Christ, as good Catholics, in the workplace.

I hope some of the reflections I have shared are helpful to you as you seek to live the Catholic faith every day, beyond Sunday. Every day we can and we should draw closer to God, through prayer, and within our families and our work. Discipleship is not a part-time job; it's a full-time life of faith. It's living life with meaning and purpose. It's living life as an adventure of faith with Jesus Christ as our leader, our shepherd, and our Savior and with the Holy Spirit as our advocate, counselor and guide. It is a life focused on giving glory to God and on salvation, our own and the salvation of others. Thus it is an intentional life and a unified life, not a compartmentalized life. It is a life in which our goal is holiness. As St. Paul wrote (which I quoted at the beginning of this talk): "For this is the will of God... your sanctification."

# Border bishops call for dignity regardless of 'migration condition'

BY RHINA GUIDOS

WASHINGTON (CNS) — In a joint statement, Catholic bishops whose dioceses are along the U.S.-Mexico border spoke of the "pain, the fear, and the anguish" they're seeing in immigrants and vowed to follow the example of the pope in building "bridges, rather than the walls of exclusion and exploitation."

The Feb. 14 statement was read at the Basilica of the National Shrine of Our Lady of San Juan del Valle in Texas after a visit by the bishops to an immigration detention center as well as to a humanitarian respite center at Sacred Heart Parish in McAllen, Texas, in the Brownsville Diocese.

The statement came after two days of a gathering of bishops whose dioceses are along the U.S.-Mexico border. The apostolic nuncio to the United States, Archbishop Christophe Pierre, also attended. The meeting of about 20 bishops included Bishop Daniel E. Flores of Brownsville and Archbishop Gustavo Garcia-Siller of San Antonio.

The biannual meetings began in 1986 "to address the life and pastoral needs of our migrant brothers and sisters," the statement said, adding that "in this difficult moment in our history, we hear the cry of our migrant brothers and sisters whose voices reflect the voice of Christ Himself."

They spoke of the plight of the Holy Family as they sought refuge and a compassionate human response, and said they saw the same in immigrants they met. The suffering immigrants face is the result of "a broken immigration system caused by political structures and economic conditions that result in threats, deportations, impunity and extreme violence," they said. Migrants are the result of these conditions and also are victims of those who seek to extort them in their work and under the threat of deportations that can lead to their separation from family and friends.

"We can sense the pain of the separation of families, loss of employment, persecutions, discrimination, racism and

unnecessary deportations that paralyze the development of persons in our societies," they said. "Immigration is a global phenomenon that arises from economic and social conditions, and the poverty and insecurity that directly displaces entire populations, causing families to feel that migration is the only way to survive."

Migrants have the right to be respected "regardless of their migration condition," the bishops added, because every person has the right to dignity, yet migrants are "subjected to punitive laws and often mistreated by civil authorities both in their country of origin, the countries through which they travel and the country of their destination. It is essential that governments adopt policies that respect the human rights of migrants and undocumented residents."

In the church, they said, "there are no strangers," and vowed to continue to support services to migrant families "including spiritual, legal, and material assistance."

# USCCB leaders urge Trump to protect religious liberty

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Catholic Church leaders in a Feb. 16 statement said they were encouraged that President Donald Trump may be considering an executive order to protect religious freedom and said they would be grateful if he would move forward with the pledge that his administration would "do everything in its power to defend and protect religious liberty."

"As Christians, our goal is to live and serve others as the Gospel asks. President Trump can ensure that we are not forced from the public square," said the statement from commit-

tee chairs of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

The statement was jointly issued by New York Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan, chairman of the Committee on Pro-Life Activities; Philadelphia Archbishop Charles J. Chaput, chairman of the Committee on Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth; Baltimore Archbishop William E. Lori, chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee for Religious Liberty; and Bishop Frank J. Dewane of Venice, Fla., chairman of the Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development.

The church leaders said an executive order would "implement strong protections for religious freedom across the federal government in many of the areas where it has been eroded by the preceding administration, such as health coverage, adoption, accreditation, tax exemption, and government grants and contracts."

"We ourselves, as well as those we shepherd and serve, would be most grateful if the president would take this positive step toward allowing all

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## Collection for the church in Central and Eastern Europe reaps benefits

Most Reverend Kevin C. Rhoades,

On behalf of the Subcommittee on Aid to the Church in Central and Eastern Europe, I would like to thank you for your contribution of \$44,691.14 to the 2016 Collection for the Church in Central and Eastern Europe. Your generosity helped us to award over 200 grants last year to support clergy, religious, and lay leaders to renew the capacity of the Church in countries formerly under Soviet rule.

As you know, this work is not just a collection. While each of us may not be called to travel as a missionary to Eastern Europe, each of us can express our missionary discipleship through this collection. Every contribution made offers a helping hand to a brother or a sister, who, with limited resources, is working to rebuild faith and capacity for ministry in a region that suffered religious persecution for many decades.

This collection makes a difference today and plants seeds of faith for the future generations. For example, in Estonia support given for a summer camp has helped young people to discover their faith and to grow in it. It also leads them to engage in the Church during the year through the youth club in Tallin and supports older camp participants to return as staff members.

Without the help of your parishioners, projects like this would not be possible. As we anticipate the Lenten season, I ask you to share the importance of this collection with your pastors and staff. This collection on Ash Wednesday, March 1, provides a way for the faithful to begin the Lenten season with an act of almsgiving.

Gratefully in Christ,

Cardinal Blase J. Cupich, Archbishop of Chicago, Chairman



## Public schedule of Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades

Sunday, February 26: 2 p.m. — Rite of Election, St. Matthew Cathedral, South Bend

Sunday, February 26: 7 p.m. — Mass, Holy Spirit Chapel, Le Mans Hall, Saint Mary's College, Notre Dame

Monday, February 27: 12 p.m. — Lunch with Notre Dame Students, Coleman Morse Lounge, Notre Dame

Monday, February 27: 6 p.m. — Dinner with Notre Dame Faculty Associated with the Wilson Sheehan Laboratory for Economic Development, Legends, Notre Dame

Tuesday, February 28: 7 a.m. — Servus Omnium Lecture and Breakfast, University of Saint Francis, Fort Wayne

Tuesday, February 28: 10:30 a.m. — Groundbreaking, Divine Mercy Funeral Home, Fort Wayne

Tuesday, February 28: 6 p.m. — Catholic Legislator Dinner, Ruth's Chris Steakhouse, Indianapolis

Wednesday, March 1: 10 a.m. — Read Across America, St. John the Baptist School, Fort Wayne

Wednesday, March 1: 12:05 p.m. — Mass, Ash Wednesday, Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Fort Wayne

Thursday, March 2: 11:30 a.m. — Mass, Marian Sophomore Retreat, Sacred Heart Parish Center, Notre Dame

Friday, March 3: 7 a.m. — Mass and Talk, Catholic Business Network, St. Theodore Guerin Chapel, Fort Wayne

Saturday, March 4: 6 p.m. — Saints Alive! Dinner and Auction, Bishop Dwenger High School, Fort Wayne



## Priest appointments

The Most Reverend Kevin C. Rhoades, Bishop of Fort Wayne-South Bend, has made the following appointments.

**Reverend David Violi** to Parochial Vicar of Holy Family and St. John the Baptist Parishes, South Bend, effective Feb. 28, 2017.

**Reverend Daniel Whelan** to Parochial Vicar of Our Lady of Good Hope Parish, Fort Wayne, and Priest Chaplain, St. Joseph Hospital, Fort Wayne, effective March 10, 2017.



## St. Patrick's Day and Friday Abstinence

This year St. Patrick's Day (March 17) falls on a Friday of Lent when all Catholics who have completed their 14th year of age are obligated to abstain from meat. In response to several requests for a dispensation from the law of abstinence on March 17, 2017, I hereby decree the following for the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend:

Catholics in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend may substitute for abstinence from meat one of the following acts on March 17, 2017, the Memorial of Saint Patrick:

- 1) Attendance at Holy Mass.
- 2) The recitation of the rosary for the intention of peace in the world.
- 3) The performance of one of the seven corporal works of mercy.

This dispensation is meant to preserve the penitential spirit of a Lenten Friday while also allowing for the celebration of a great saint whose feast should be celebrated in a spiritual manner and not merely in a secular context.

+ *Kevin C. Rhoades*

Kevin C. Rhoades  
Bishop of Fort Wayne-South Bend

# Refugees now in Chicago share experiences of fleeing persecution

BY JOYCE DURIGA

CHICAGO (CNS) — The Sharifs were living contentedly in Pakistan when life turned into a nightmare in 2012.

An al Qaida-related group called BLA targeted Amir Sharif, a Catholic and a well-known professor at a university in Quetta. He was told to embrace Islam or leave the country.

Amir, 45, and his wife, Saira, 30, a high school math teacher, and their two sons, Unss, 9, and Runaan, 10, were under threat. Persecution of and discrimination against Christians in Pakistan is a common occurrence, Amir said. They, like others, lived in fear of being accused of violating the part of the country's penal code that criminalizes blasphemy against Islam, the state-recognized religion.

"When I came to know that they are after me, I discussed it with my bishop over there," said Amir, who recounted the events

on a recent Saturday morning in his family's apartment in Chicago's Rogers Park neighborhood. "My bishop said, 'It is good to save your lives. Don't think of any other thing.'"

Within a week they fled, leaving everything behind — their home, belongings, bank accounts. Later, the extremist group seized all of that.

"We were unable to move around that week," he told the Chicago Catholic, newspaper of the Chicago Archdiocese. "We left our home in the middle of the night."

For two days they hid out. Then they took a cab to Karachi for a flight to Sri Lanka. They knew a priest there and hoped he would help them find a place to stay. When they reached the priest by phone, he told them not to come, that he didn't have a place for them.

The family boarded the plane anyway and spent the flight praying that God would find a way. Their entire journey from



CNS photo/Karen Callaway, Chicago Catholic

**Members of the Sharif family share tea at their home in Chicago Feb. 4. They made their way to the United States from Pakistan 20 months ago after being targeted and threatened by a Muslim extremist group.**

Pakistan to Chicago has been paved with answered prayers, both Amir and Saira said.

"Whenever we talk about this whole process, we say this is not the story of Amir and Saira. This is the story of God's love because we have seen God everywhere," Amir said. "We have seen God walking ahead of us."

When they arrived, the priest, an Oblate of Mary Immaculate, was at the airport and took them to stay at the seminary where he lived. They stayed there for 40 days until the priest said they had to leave.

Fortunately for the family, the Oblates' provincial visited the seminary and told them not to worry, that he would arrange for them to stay somewhere. Throughout the Sharifs' stay in Sri Lanka, the congregation provided the family with food and housing.

They moved the family to another Oblate property and gave them a large room with a kitchenette and four beds in which to live. The Sharifs were grateful for the help, but it was not easy living. The room had a tin roof and was sweltering in the tropical climate.

"It was like an oven," Amir said. When it rained, which hap-

pened often in the tropical country, the noise was loud. But that wasn't all. "The issue was the snakes," he said.

The children couldn't often play outside because there were numerous snakes in the grass, many of which were poisonous. They killed 18 snakes, including three cobras, during their time there. They also had to kill scorpions inside their home.

The children couldn't attend school because public schools weren't taught in English and private schools were too expensive. Saira tutored them in mathematics and English.

There are no refugee camps in Sri Lanka, so anyone seeking asylum must support themselves and figure their way around the system.

"We were unable to work over there. If you are an asylum seeker you are not allowed to work," Amir said.

Eventually they learned they needed to visit the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees office. There was paperwork to complete and many interviews with various agencies.

"Finally after three years and three months we came over here," Amir said. "What we learned throughout the process

is the refugee doesn't have a choice. They asked us to go to Chicago, we said OK. They said World Relief (a humanitarian aid agency) will receive you. We said OK."

The family arrived in United States in May 2015 and were set up in a studio in Rogers Park. On their second night in Chicago, Saira and the boys were sick, but Amir went out walking and asked directions to the nearest Catholic church in the neighborhood. He was directed to St. Ignatius, where Mass happened to be going on.

The family was embraced by the parish and the boys are now altar servers.

Later, the family was given a one-bedroom apartment. All four of them sleep together in the same room. They've met some volunteers who have helped them with things such as furniture and other household items.

Amir has three master's degrees and Saira has two, but finding employment comparable to what they had in Pakistan has been difficult.

They arrived in May and Amir found a job on his own in September with the Heartland Alliance working with unaccompanied immigrant children.

"In those three, four months, we were just running around. All of the time I was running to the library spending the whole day there trying to find a job," he said.

Saira just started working as a substitute teacher at Sacred Heart Schools in Chicago. One son attends Northside Catholic Academy. There wasn't space for the second son, so he attends the public school.

It hasn't been easy since coming to Chicago, but God has been there every step of the way, Amir and Saira said.

"We always say that it is God's love," Amir said. "God knows what we need."

**Joyce Duriga** is editor of the *Chicago Catholic*, newspaper of the Archdiocese of Chicago.

## Volunteer for Sharathon



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## Soup's On!

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Bring a friend for a lunch of soup and bread on

**Ash Wednesday, March 1, 2017**

to St. Mary Mother of God Parish

at Lafayette and Jefferson in Fort Wayne

11:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

(Lenten prayer service with ashes at 11:00 a.m.)



## TRUMP

Continued from Page 3

Americans to be able to practice their faith without severe penalties from the federal government," they said.

A draft version of the executive order was leaked in late January called "Establishing a Government-Wide Initiative to Respect Religious Freedom." When it failed to appear on the president's desk, rumors were circulating that a scaled-back version might appear at his desk but there has been no word about it from the Trump administration.

The U.S. bishops posted an

online letter for Catholics to send to the president urging him to sign the order after the draft version was leaked.

The Feb. 16 statement said the order would restore "the federal government's proper relationship with the First Amendment and other laws protecting conscience and religious freedom will enable us to continue our service to the most vulnerable of Americans."

The statement stressed that U.S. Catholic bishops have long supported religious liberty, adding that during the last several years "the federal government has eroded this fundamental right," most notably with the Affordable Care Act's contraceptive mandate for religious employers who do not fit the mandate's narrow exemption

including the Little Sisters of the Poor.

The USCCB leaders urged Trump to keep his promise and put an end to regulations and other mandates by the federal government "that force people of faith to make impossible choices."

"We express our fervent hope that with new leadership in the executive branch, basic protections for religious practice may be restored and even strengthened," they said.

The statement said an immediate remedy to the threats against religious freedom is needed and without it the church's freedom to serve others "will remain in jeopardy and needless conflict between the faith community and the federal government will continue."

# ICC celebrates a victory: Payday lending expansion defeated

INDIANAPOLIS — The Indiana Catholic Conference celebrated a legislative victory after a bill to expand payday lending practices in Indiana was defeated Feb. 16, by members of the Senate Insurance and Financial Institutions Committee and a 4-5 vote.

Glenn Tebbe, executive director for the Indiana Catholic Conference, who joined 18 other organizations to testify before the panel in opposition to the proposal, called the defeat of the bill “a victory.” He said, “There are better ways to help low income persons cover needed expenses rather than expanding a payday loan product with a 216 percent annual percentage rate.”

The proposal, Senate Bill 245, authored by Sen. Travis Holdman, R-Markle, was amended in committee to make it more palatable. Holdman said, “If we don’t get the bill to a place we are all comfortable with, it won’t move past second reading.” He added, “We are not going to push this over the goal line until everyone is comfortable with the language.” Some of the key changes of the amendment include: lowering the monthly interest rate from 20 percent to 18 percent; reducing the loan maximum from \$2,500 to \$1,750; removing late penalties; and reducing the payback time.

Tebbe told the panel members during his testimony that even in its amended form, the church remained concerned about the bill because it would encourage lower income persons to get trapped in debt and a process of recycling the loans. “We see

this as a moral issue because it takes advantage of the distress that these families are in,” said Tebbe. “The Catechism of the Catholic Church says the seventh commandment is violated when people do things such as taking or keeping the property of others. This also includes business fraud, paying unjust wages or forcing up prices and taking advantage of ignorance or hardships of another. Taking advantage of someone and exploiting them is wrong,” said Tebbe. “I know that is not your intent here, but in our view, it is realistically the effect.”

Kathy Williams, representing Indiana Community Action Coalition, said while she appreciated efforts to reduce the interest rate of payday loans, the interest rate would still be 18 percent per month and 216 percent APR, a rate that is far too high for lower-income lenders to shoulder. Williams said research on low-income borrowers by the Pew Research Center, a nonpartisan think tank based in Washington, D.C., indicates loans should not exceed 5 percent of a person’s monthly income, but this proposal would translate to 20 percent.

Marcie Luhigo, representing The Creek Christian church, a 4,000-member church on the southeast side of Indianapolis, told the panel, “Every year our church gives \$200,000 that I’m in charge of distributing to those in financial need in our community. I can tell you that in my five-year tenure that hundreds have come to us with payday loans that they are unable and incapable of repaying. We would

## INDIANA CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

BRIGID CURTIS AYER

oppose any expansion of payday lending,” said Luhigo.

Jim Bauerle, a retired brigadier general who served 32 years, said one of the biggest problems in the military is financial hardship experienced by young soldiers and those returning from deployment. He said that many of them experience unemployment and homelessness and some get themselves into debt by these types of high interest loans. Bauerle said his parish on the north side of Indianapolis takes in needy veterans and they contribute 10 percent of their weekly collections to help those needing financial assistance or to pay for household repairs.

Representatives of several other organizations testified in opposition to the bill, including the Indiana Institute of Working Families, United Methodist Church, Christian Legal Aid, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Indiana Synod Evangelical Lutheran Church of America and several veterans groups.

Heather Willey, representing payday loan providers, testified in support of the bill, saying the proposal has retained safety procedures that includes lending to the employed with bank accounts, and that loans may

not exceed 20 percent of the borrower’s gross monthly income.

Lawmakers on the panel were not convinced the bill was prudent or needed. Two lawmakers who supported the bill did so to give the author an opportunity to work on the bill, but were not convinced of the bill’s merits. Five members who voted against the bill recognized the negative effects of these loans on families. Sen. Eddie Melton, D-Merrillville, said he felt the industry needed “more transparency” and voted no. Sen. Roderick Bray,

R-Martinsville, said while he appreciated the efforts to make a good product, he has not detected a “human cry” for this product. Sen. John Ruckelshaus, R-Indianapolis, also voted no saying he was “not comfortable going forward.”

Tebbe said even though this bill has been defeated, the topic could be resurrected and amended to another bill before the General Assembly adjourns. “The ICC and others plan to work toward stopping it if necessary,” Tebbe said.

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## Diocesan phase of Fatima visionary's sainthood cause completed

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The Diocese of Coimbra concluded its phase of the sainthood cause of Carmelite Sister Lucia dos Santos, one of the three children who saw Our Lady of Fatima in 1917. Bishop Virgilio Antunes of Coimbra formally closed the local phase of investigation into her life and holiness Feb. 13 in the Carmelite convent of St. Teresa in Coimbra, where she resided until her death in 2005 at the age of 97. The ceremony included the sealing of 50 volumes — 15,000 pages — of evidence and witness testimonies detailing the life of Sister Lucia. The documents sealed at the ceremony were to be shipped to the Congregation for Saints' Causes at the Vatican. After a thorough review of the materials and a judgment that Sister Lucia heroically lived the Christian virtues, her cause still would require the recognition of two miracles — one for beatification and another for canonization — attributed to her intercession. The Marian apparitions at Fatima began on May 13, 1917, when 10-year-old Lucia, along with her cousins Francisco and Jacinta Marto, reported seeing the Virgin Mary. The apparitions continued once a month until Oct. 13, 1917, and later were declared worthy of belief by the Catholic Church.

## Michael Novak, noted theologian, philosopher and author, dies at 83

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Michael Novak, a Catholic philosopher, theologian and author who was highly regarded for his religious scholarship and intellectual independence, died Feb. 17 at his

## Sister Lucia's life reviewed



CNS photo/Paulo Carrico, EPA

Sister Lucia dos Santos, one of the three children who saw Our Lady of Fatima in 1917, is pictured in a 2000 photo. Bishop Virgilio Antunes of Coimbra, Portugal, formally closed the local phase of investigation into her life and holiness Feb. 13 in the Carmelite convent of St. Teresa in Coimbra, where she resided until her death in 2005 at the age of 97.

home in Washington. He was 83. His daughter Jana Novak told *The Washington Post* the cause of death was complications from colon cancer. No funeral arrangements were announced. Since last August, Novak had been a faculty member of The Catholic University of America's Tim and Steph Busch School of Business and Economics in Washington. He joined the business school's

Arthur and Carlyse Ciocca Center for Principled Entrepreneurship last year as a distinguished visiting fellow. He taught special topics in management and gave a series of lectures on campus on the topic of human ecology. Novak studied at Catholic University in 1958 and 1959 and had lectured at the university several times prior to last year's appointment. John Garvey, the

university's president, remembered him as "a man of great intellectual honesty. Unlike some scholars, Michael Novak made it a point to reflect on new and different topics, always with a fresh and dynamic perspective," Garvey said in a statement. "We are immensely grateful that he could end his academic life as he began it, as a member of our community."

## Rallies held nationwide call on Congress to defund Planned Parenthood

CHICAGO (CNS) — The organizers of rallies held across the country Feb. 11 to call for defunding Planned Parenthood said their message to Congress is to redirect taxpayer's money to facilities that "do a better job meeting the real health care needs of women and families without specializing in abortion." More than 15,000 people attended 229 rallies held in 45 states. Average attendance was around 75, but in some cities, crowds numbered as high as 600, according to a new release issued after the rallies. Eric Schiedler, executive director of the Pro-Life Action League in Chicago, was the national organizer of the rallies, or #ProtestPP. Other groups coordinating the events included Citizens for a Pro-Life Society, Created Equal, 40 Days for Life and the Susan B. Anthony List. "This is a nationwide event, but at the same time, it is a local community concern," Schiedler said in a statement. In rallying to tell "Congress to quit sending money to an organization that specializes in killing children," participants also declared "that they do not want Planned Parenthood to continue operating in their neighborhoods." According to its 2014-15 annual report, Planned Parenthood receives \$553.7 million annually in government health service grants and reimbursements, which is 43 percent of its overall revenue. Federal money is allocated to the organization through Medicaid and public family planning services. Planned Parenthood performs 34 percent of U.S. abortions.

# Pope's tip for becoming a saint: Pray for someone who doesn't like you

BY CINDY WOODEN

ROME (CNS) — A practical first step toward holiness — as well as for assuring peace in one's family and in the world — is to pray for a person who has caused offense or harm, Pope Francis said.

"Are you merciful toward the people who have harmed you or don't like you? If God is merciful, if he is holy, if he is perfect, then we must be merciful, holy and perfect as he is. This is holiness. A man or woman who does this deserves to be canonized," the pope said Feb. 19 during an evening parish Mass.

"I suggest you start small," Pope Francis told members of the parish of St. Mary Josefa on the extreme eastern edge of the Diocese of Rome. "We all have enemies. We all know that so-and-so speaks ill of us. We all

know. And we all know that this person or that person hates us."

When that happens, the pope said, "I suggest you take a minute, look at God (and say), 'This person is your son or your daughter, change his or her heart, bless him or her.' This is praying for those who don't like us, for our enemies. Perhaps the rancor will remain in us, but we are making an effort to follow the path of this God who is so good, merciful, holy, perfect, who makes the sun rise on the evil and the good."

The day's first reading included the line, "Be holy, for I, the Lord, your God, am holy," and in the Gospel reading, Jesus said, "Be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect."

"You might ask me, 'But, father, what is the path to holiness?' 'What is the journey needed to become holy?' Jesus explains it well in the Gospel. He

explains it with concrete examples," the pope said.

The first example, he said, is "not taking revenge. If I have some rancor in my heart for something someone has done, I want vengeance, but this moves me off the path of holiness. No revenge. 'But he did this and he will pay.' Is this Christian? No. 'He will pay' is not in the Christian's vocabulary. No revenge."

In people's everyday lives, he said, their squabbles with their relatives or neighbors may seem a little thing, but they are not. "These big wars we read about in the papers and see on the news, these massacres of people, of children, how much hatred! It's the same hatred you have in your heart for this person, that person, that relative, your mother-in-law. It's bigger, but it's the same hatred."

Forgiveness, the pope said,

is the path toward holiness and toward peace. "If everyone in the world learned this, there would be no wars."

Wars begin "with bitterness, rancor, the desire for vengeance, to make them pay," he said. It's an attitude that destroys families and neighborhoods and peaceful relations between nations.

"I'm not telling you what to do, Jesus is: Love your enemies. 'You mean I have to love that person?' Yes."

"I have to pray for someone who has harmed me?" Yes, that he will change his life, that the Lord will forgive him," the pope said. "This is the magnanimity of God, of God who has a big heart, who forgives all."

"Prayer is an antidote for hatred, for wars, these wars that begin at home, in families," he said. "Think of how many wars there have been in families because of an inheritance. "

"Prayer is powerful. Prayer defeats evil. Prayer brings peace," the pope said.

As is his custom for parish visits, Pope Francis began this three-hour visit to St. Mary Josefa by meeting different parish groups, including children, who were invited to ask him question.

One asked how he became pope and Pope Francis said when a pope is elected "maybe he is not the most intelligent, perhaps not the most astute or the quickest at doing what must be done, but he is the one who God wants for the church at that moment."

Pope Francis explained that when a pope dies or resigns, like Pope Benedict XVI did, the cardinals gather for a conclave. "They speak among themselves, discuss what profile would be best, who has this advantage and who has that one. But, above all, they pray."

## Schools reach out to SJC students

The University of Saint Francis, Fort Wayne, and Marian University in Indianapolis are among the area colleges and universities reaching out to help those affected by the recently announced suspension of operations at Saint Joseph's College in Rensselaer, Ind.

In an attempt to assist as many students as possible and, in many cases, match their previous SJC tuition costs, USF is offering assistance through two special transfer awards designed specifically for Saint Joseph's College students. These funds will be granted over and above the university's existing transfer awards.

Marian University is offering what it calls a "seamless transfer process," including financial assistance that will guarantee current students pay the same out-of-pocket tuition that they are paying currently.

Marian University will honor all transfer credits earned with a minimum grade of C-. It will also offer financial assistance guaranteeing that students pay the same out-of-pocket tuition costs that they are currently paying at Saint Joseph's College. Marian University officials stated there will be a few exceptions, notably student-athletes and students receiving tuition remission.

## Students receive Dwenger scholarships

FORT WAYNE — Bishop Dwenger High School is pleased to announce the results of the James E. Robinson ninth-grade Merit Scholarship Exam. The following eighth-grade students took part in this exam last December and will be awarded scholarships towards future attendance at Bishop Dwenger High School.

Those students are: Ellis

# AROUND THE DIOCESE

## Bishop celebrates Mass at St. Paul Senior Living Community



Jennifer Miller

Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades preaches a homily, during Holy Mass, to the seniors living at St. Paul Senior Living Community, South Bend on Sunday, Feb. 19. He spoke of the Gospel of the day, highlighting how Jesus asks us to love our enemies and pray for our persecutors — a difficult but important choice as Christians.

Conrad, homeschooled; Andrew Filler, St. Jude; Jacob Schroeder, St. Elizabeth; Kate Rashevich, St. Charles; Grace Salzer, St. Charles; Sarah Cisz, St. Jude; Adam Yaggy, St. Jude; James Johnson, St. Vincent; Jack Knight, St. John, New Haven; Samuel Pesa, St. Charles; St. John, New Haven; and Angelina Musco, Queen of Angels.

## St. Therese to offer parish mission

FORT WAYNE — St. Therese Catholic Church, 2304 Lower Huntington Road, will hold a parish mission Sunday, March 5 through Wednesday, March 8.

The theme of the mission is

"Be Thankful in All Things." The four-evening event will feature local guest speaker Robert Rogers, faith-sharing talks, reconciliation and a closing Mass homily by Father Ben Muhlenkamp, pastor of St. Louis Besancon Parish, New Haven. Child care is available for children age 10 and under on March 5 and 6. Anyone need-

ing transportation should call the parish office at 260-747-9139.

The mission will begin in the Parish Hall on Sunday evening with an opening prayer at 6:30 p.m., followed by a free soup entree. At 7:15 p.m., Rogers, founder of "Mighty in the Land Ministry," will speak about "Being Thankful in All Things," knowing God and living a life of no regrets with words and through original music at the piano.

On Monday at 7 p.m., three lay people will address the congregation with short, faith-sharing talks based on sacred Scripture. Each talk will be followed by an appropriate hymn. The evening will close with prayer.

On Tuesday a reconciliation service will be held by Father Lawrence Tete, CSSp, pastor, at 7 p.m., followed by an opportunity for individual confession.

The parish mission will close on Wednesday with a Mass at 7 p.m. by Father Tete, celebrant, Father Muhlenkamp, concelebrant.

## High school theology institute

NOTRE DAME — Holy Cross College is now accepting registrations for its Saints & Scholars Summer Theology Institute for high school students. Participants can register for the week of July 16 or July 23. The program involves a small seminar experience in which youth choose one of seven tracks and explore how theology relates to public health, human rights, sustainability, media, science, sports or business. Each seminar is led by Holy Cross faculty and involves community-based learning experiences. Participants reside for the week on the Holy Cross campus. Total cost is only \$225 for youth from the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend. More information and registration is at [www.hcc-nd.edu/ssi](http://www.hcc-nd.edu/ssi).

# Fort Wayne-area young adult ministry welcomes Kopecky

BY MOLLY WYNEN

"I view my role at the diocese as an opportunity to better serve our communities by connecting people, providing resources and establishing touch points to our Catholic faith for those that are seeking communion," said Jennifer Kopecky, of her new position as coordinator of Young Adult and Campus Ministry in the greater Fort Wayne area. She has a deep passion for her faith and a great enthusiasm for the city of Fort Wayne — two qualities that will aid her in the task of connecting people with each other and with their faith.

Kopecky grew up in Fort Wayne, attending schools in the Southwest Allen system and graduating from Homestead High School in 2004. She went on to obtain an economics degree from Depauw University,

where she also played basketball for two years, and an MBA from Indiana University. Currently she is furthering her education even more, studying for a master's degree in public policy at IPFW. When she is not busy with work or school, Kopecky enjoys quality time with family and friends, watching college basketball and football and relaxing over brunch.

It was in college that Kopecky found her personal call to faith. Although she was baptized as an infant, she did not make the faith her own until later in life. She participated in the RCIA program and was confirmed at St. Jude Fort Wayne in 2009. Since then she has been actively working through various ministries to connect and support young people in faith.

"I am most interested in learning about the lived experiences of young people, sharing



JENNIFER KOPECKY

in their journey, and connecting their perspectives to our Catholic faith," she said. Kopecky continues to live her life based on the idea of "pursuing sainthood"

and hopes to help others to do so as well.

As someone who has moved several times, Kopecky understands on a personal level the disconnectedness that can come with a new place. Not knowing anyone or not having a place to go for fellowship can leave people alone or turning away from God. She wants to help create that open door for connection in her community, especially for newcomers. Luckily, Kopecky radiates excitement for her city and is eager to draw people there in communion. Among her friends and family Kopecky even describes herself as the "unofficial mayor of Fort Wayne" because of her exuberant promotion of the city. Although she has spent much of her life in Fort Wayne, there is still a lot to be learned of the area and what will be the most beneficial for connecting the community.

"I am in the discovery phase of my new role right now, trying to get sense of what's currently available for young people and how I can best connect those that are moving to the area, or those that are looking to connect to their Catholic faith," she said. To help with this discovery, Kopecky is eager to develop a young adult council that can help better serve our communities with their ideas and talents. She feels that with more people contributing, the training, service and formation aspects of the ministry can grow stronger and reach more people in the community.

"I am only one person; but with many hands to serve, we can accomplish so much!" Kopecky can be reached by phone at 260-422-4611 or email at [jkopecky@diocesefwsb.org](mailto:jkopecky@diocesefwsb.org).

# Holy Father's Message for Lent 2017

*The following is the full text of the Holy Father Francis' message for Lent 2017, on the theme "The Word is a gift. Other persons are a gift."*

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Lent is a new beginning, a path leading to the certain goal of Easter, Christ's victory over death. This season urgently calls us to conversion. Christians are asked to return to God "with all their hearts" (Joel 2:12), to refuse to settle for mediocrity and to grow in friendship with the Lord. Jesus is the faithful friend Who never abandons us. Even when we sin, He patiently awaits our return; by that patient expectation, He shows us His readiness to forgive (cf. Homily, 8 January 2016).

Lent is a favorable season for deepening our spiritual life through the means of sanctification offered us by the Church: fasting, prayer and almsgiving. At the basis of everything is the word of God, which during this season we are invited to hear and ponder more deeply. I would now like to consider the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (cf. Lk 16:19-31). Let us find inspiration in this meaningful story, for it provides a key to understanding what we need to do in order to attain true happiness and eternal life. It exhorts us to sincere conversion.

## 1. The other person is a gift

The parable begins by presenting its two main characters. The poor man is described in greater detail: he is wretched and lacks the strength even to stand. Lying before the door of the rich man, he fed on the crumbs falling from his table. His body is full of sores and dogs come to lick his wounds (cf. vv. 20-21). The picture is one of great misery; it portrays a man disgraced and pitiful.

The scene is even more dramatic if we consider that the poor man is called Lazarus: a name full of promise, which literally means "God helps." This character is not anonymous. His features are clearly delineated and he appears as an individual with his own story. While practically invisible to the rich man, we see and know him as someone familiar. He becomes a face, and as such, a gift, a priceless treasure, a human being whom God loves and cares for, despite his concrete condition as an outcast (cf. Homily, 8 January 2016).

Lazarus teaches us that other persons are a gift. A right relationship with people consists in gratefully recognizing their value. Even the poor person at the door of the rich is not a nuisance, but a summons to conversion and to change. The parable first invites us to open the doors of our heart to others because each person is a gift, whether it be our neighbor or an anonymous pauper. Lent is a favorable season for opening the doors to all those in need and recognizing in them the face of Christ. Each of us meets people like this every day. Each life that we encounter is a gift deserving acceptance, respect and love. The word of God helps us to open our eyes to welcome and love life, especially when it is weak and vulnerable. But in order to do this, we have to take seriously what the Gospel tells us about the rich man.



## 2. Sin blinds us

The parable is unsparing in its description of the contradictions associated with the rich man (cf. v. 19). Unlike poor Lazarus, he does not have a name; he is simply called "a rich man." His opulence was seen in his extravagant and expensive robes. Purple cloth was even more precious than silver and gold, and was thus reserved to divinities (cf. Jer 10:9) and kings (cf. Jg 8:26), while fine linen gave one an almost sacred character. The man was clearly ostentatious about his wealth, and in the habit of displaying it daily: "He feasted sumptuously every day" (v. 19). In him we can catch a dramatic glimpse of the corruption of sin, which progresses in three successive stages: love of money, vanity and pride (cf. Homily, 20 September 2013).

The Apostle Paul tells us that "the love of money is the root of all evils" (1 Tim 6:10). It is the main cause of corruption and a source of envy, strife and suspicion. Money can come to dominate us, even to the point of becoming a tyrannical idol (cf. *Evangelii Gaudium*, 55). Instead of being an instrument at our service for doing good and showing solidarity towards others, money can chain us and the entire world to a selfish logic that leaves no room for love and hinders peace.

The parable then shows that the rich man's greed makes him vain. His personality finds expression in appearance, in showing others what he can do. But his appearance masks an interior emptiness. His life is a prisoner to outward appearances, to the most superficial and fleeting aspects of existence (cf. *ibid.*, 62).

The lowest rung of this moral degradation is pride. The rich man dresses like a king and acts like a god, forgetting that he is merely mortal. For those corrupted by love of riches, nothing exists beyond their own ego. Those around them do not come into their line of sight. The result of attachment to money is a sort of blindness. The rich man does not see the poor man who is starving, hurting, lying at his door.

Looking at this character, we can understand why the Gospel so bluntly condemns the love of money: "No one can be the slave of two masters: he will either hate the first and love the second, or be attached to the first and despise the second. You cannot be the slave both of God and of money" (Mt 6:24).

## 3. The Word is a gift

The Gospel of the rich man and Lazarus helps us to make a good preparation for the approach of Easter. The liturgy of Ash Wednesday invites us to

an experience quite similar to that of the rich man. When the priest imposes the ashes on our heads, he repeats the words: "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return." As it turned out, the rich man and the poor man both died, and the greater part of the parable takes place in the afterlife. The two characters suddenly discover that "we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it" (1 Tim 6:7).

We too see what happens in the afterlife. There the rich man speaks at length with Abraham, whom he calls "father" (Lk 16:24,27), as a sign that he belongs to God's people. This detail makes his life appear all the more contradictory, for until this moment there had been no mention of his relation to God. In fact, there was no place for God in his life. His only god was himself.

The rich man recognizes Lazarus only amid the torments of the afterlife. He wants the poor man to alleviate his suffering with a drop of water. What he asks of Lazarus is similar to what he could have done but never did. Abraham tells him: "During your life you had your fill of good things, just as Lazarus had his fill of bad. Now he is being comforted here while you are in agony" (v. 25). In the afterlife, a kind of fairness is restored and life's evils are balanced by good.

The parable goes on to offer a message for all Christians. The rich man asks Abraham to send Lazarus to warn his brothers, who are still alive. But Abraham answers: "They have Moses and the prophets, let them listen to them" (v. 29). Countering the rich man's objections, he adds: "If they will not listen either to Moses or to the prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone should rise from the dead" (v. 31).

The rich man's real problem thus comes to the fore. At the root of all his ills was the failure to heed God's word. As a result, he no longer loved God and grew to despise his neighbor. The word of God is alive and powerful, capable of converting hearts and leading them back to God. When we close our heart to the gift of God's word, we end up closing our heart to the gift of our brothers and sisters.

Dear friends, Lent is the favorable season for renewing our encounter with Christ, living in His word, in the sacraments and in our neighbor. The Lord, who overcame the deceptions of the Tempter during the forty days in the desert, shows us the path we must take. May the Holy Spirit lead us on a true journey of conversion, so that we can rediscover the gift of God's word, be purified of the sin that blinds us, and serve Christ present in our brothers and sisters in need. I encourage all the faithful to express this spiritual renewal also by sharing in the Lenten Campaigns promoted by many Church organizations in different parts of the world, and thus to favor the culture of encounter in our one human family. Let us pray for one another so that, by sharing in the victory of Christ, we may open our doors to the weak and poor. Then we will be able to experience and share to the full the joy of Easter.

*From the Vatican, 18 October 2016, Feast of St. Luke the Evangelist*



# Steuben County parishes begin Lenten journey

BY MARILYN KARPINSKI

**W**hat are you giving up for Lent this year? This is a question Catholics, young and old, often ask one another as Ash Wednesday approaches and they make plans for their Lenten journey.

In solidarity with one another, all Catholics are asked to give up meat on Fridays during Lent, and to strictly fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. Beyond these minimum requirements, however, Catholics are also encouraged to personalize their Lenten journey by choosing other works of mercy and acts of personal sacrifice.

Just as each person decides how he or she will observe Lent, so too does each parish. As part of its Lenten journey this year St. Anthony Parish in Angola is offering a three-night mission in the church titled *Growing Pains: The Demands of Our Lenten Journey*, led by Carol and Kristen Kurivial, co-founders of Luminous Ministries.

Father Bob Showers, pastor of St. Anthony's and of St. Paul Chapel at Clear Lake in Fremont, believes Lent is an ideal season to explore our own pain and how God is calling us to respond; and said the mission will address both. The first night, April 2, *The Demands of Truth*, begins with a dramatic interpretation of Christ's Passion from the eyes of Claudia Procula, the wife of Pontius Pilate. The second night, *The Demands of Courage*, follows Mary Magdalene from walking alongside Jesus during Palm Sunday to kneeling beneath him at the foot of the cross. The mission ends with *The Demands of Love*, where Mary, the Mother of God reflects over the events of her life — from her "yes" at the Annunciation and to the joy she felt the first time she held Jesus in her arms to the horror of Simeon's message and the passion and crucifixion.

The theme of suffering will continue at St. Anthony with a live Passion Play presented in English and Spanish on Good Friday at 3 p.m. on the parish grounds, 700 W. Maumee St. Members of the Hispanic Ministry spend countless hours each year in preparation for this event and offer it to parishioners and the public alike as a reminder of how Jesus suffered and died for us that we may have eternal life.

Another stop on the Lenten Journey takes place Holy Saturday morning, when the Eastern European tradition of blessing Easter Baskets is cel-



Provided by Marilyn Karpinski

**On Good Friday, St. Anthony of Padua, Angola, presents a live, bilingual Passion Play on the parish grounds. The reenactment of Christ's death is a recurring way in which the parish and that of St. Paul Chapel, Clear Lake, explore the theme of suffering during Lent.**

ebrated. Families fill baskets with items for their Easter dinner and bring them to the altar, where Father Bernie Zajdel, associate pastor, blesses the food. Each food is symbolic of Easter: an egg symbolizes new life; sausage, victory over death; bread represents life; and a lamb of molded butter represents the Pascal Lamb, Christ.

Stations of the Cross, eucharistic Adoration, Sunday liturgies, times of reconciliation, prayers for healing and special events for children are also regular stops for Steuben County Catholics along the journey that is Lent.

Of course, people on a journey require nourishment of body as well as soul. To that end, members of St. Anthony of Padua Church and St. Paul

Chapel will prepare a fish fry each Friday during Lent. The dinners alternate between the two parishes beginning Friday, Feb. 17 at St. Anthony's and continue the following week at St. Paul Chapel, 8780 E. 700N, Fremont. The rotation continues through April 7.

It is the belief of Father Bob and the parishioners of St. Anthony de Padua and St. Paul parishes that joy is multiplied when shared with others. To that end, they extend an invitation to anyone who wishes to come join them on their Lenten journey. With the exception of the fish fries, all events are free of charge. More information is available on the parish websites: [www.stanthonyangola.com](http://www.stanthonyangola.com) and [www.stpaulcatholic-chapel.org](http://www.stpaulcatholic-chapel.org).

## It's been too long...

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## Text messages from priests offered daily through Lent

The Knights of Columbus will once again be sponsoring the Lenten Pastoral Text Messaging program. The inspirational texts from diocesan priests will be sent out Monday through Friday during the Lenten season. Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades will provide the text messages for Holy Week.

Simply text the word "lent" to 30500 and your phone will automatically be enrolled.

## Lenten lecture series The Book of Exodus: A Spiritual Journey at Notre Dame

NOTRE DAME — "Sin, Mercy, and the Vision of God in the Book of Exodus" will be presented by Professor John Cavadini as the first in a three-part Lenten lecture series that expounds on

the spiritual, theological and liturgical themes in Exodus. The series begins Wednesday, March 8, at 7 p.m. in the Eck Visitors Center.

The second lecture, "What Makes You Beautiful: The Aesthetic Pedagogy of the Book of Exodus" will be presented by Professor Leonard DeLorenzo and recounts the Hebrew people's delivery from enslavement in Egypt and illumines the journey of the church and of each Christian through Lent to Easter and will take place Wednesday, March 22, at 7 p.m. in the Eck Visitors Center.

"Re-Creation and the Exodus: A Pattern of Liturgical Remembering," will be presented by Professor Timothy O'Malley as the final lecture in the series and will expound on the spiritual, theological and liturgical themes in Exodus on Wednesday, April 5, at 7 p.m. in the Eck Visitors Center at the University of Notre Dame. The lecture is free and open to the public. For more details, visit <http://icl.nd.edu/events/exodus/>

## Fasting and abstinence during Lent

Abstinence from eating meat is obligatory for all Roman Catholics 14 years of age and older on Ash Wednesday, Good Friday and all Fridays during Lent.

Fasting is obligatory for all Roman Catholics from ages 18 to 59 on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. The law of the fast means that only one full meal may be eaten. Two smaller meals are also permitted, but they should not equal one full meal.

Members of the Eastern Catholic Churches are to observe the particular law of their own *sui iuris* Church.

If possible, the fast on Good Friday is continued until the Easter Vigil, on Holy Saturday night, as the "paschal fast" to honor the suffering and death of the Lord Jesus and to prepare ourselves to share more fully and to celebrate more readily His Resurrection.

# Our Lady of the Road Drop-In Center oratory blessed

BY JENNIFER MILLER

Ten years ago the South Bend Catholic Worker ministry began to care for guests, often homeless, at Our Lady of the Road Drop-In Center, located off of Main Street just south of the bus station. Since then, what began as a natural outpouring of the living works of mercy from the Catholic Worker House on St. Joseph Street has become a balance of Catholic active and contemplative life. After the building and blessing of the new chapel, visitors in future decades will experience a fuller presence of God with them.

On Wednesday, Feb. 8, Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades blessed the Oratory of the Holy Spirit and celebrated the first Mass in the new space. The daily Mass readings of the feast of St. Josephine Bakhita, former slave, convert and Canossian nun, were most appropriate in their references to new beginnings, the Holy Spirit and humble hearts. The chapel

was packed with families with young babies, friends, Catholic Worker community members, seminarians, staff and others sitting, standing, singing, praying and feeling the Holy Spirit's presence in the space.

"It is beautiful that the Blessed Sacrament will now be reserved here," Bishop told the worshippers. "People can come here to be with the Lord, to pray and to be strengthened at Mass by the graces of the holy Eucharist. Here you are strengthened for your mission of charity, of outreach to the poor and needy of our community. I thank you for your witness of love here in South Bend."

He focused on the concept of purity of heart, explaining the scriptural phrase from Mark 7 in historical context and in light of the upcoming season of Lent. "He (Jesus) explains clearly to them (disciples) that what defiles a person is not what food he or she eats, but what is in the heart. Clearly, Jesus is rejecting the legalistic teaching



Photos by Jennifer Miller

After the Mass and blessing Bishop spent time with, from left, Maria Surat, spiritual coordinator of the chapel; Margie Pfeil, co-founder of the St. Peter Claver Catholic Worker community and secretary of the OLR board of directors; and Biff Weidman, Pfeil's husband and Catholic Worker community member.

of the Pharisees who were so preoccupied with ritual laws and dietary prescriptions, but whose hearts were far from God. Jesus explains that nothing that enters one from outside, like food, makes one unclean. ... Our Lord focuses on the condition of our hearts. He says that it is what comes from within that can defile us, make us unclean. It's what comes from within that can separate us from God, like evil thoughts and intentions."

He continued, "This Gospel made me think about the Beatitude of Jesus: 'Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God.' A heart that is pure is open to God and His will. In a few weeks, we will begin the season of Lent. Our external penances should all be ordered to the purification of our hearts, to rooting out what keeps us distant from God. A pure heart is a loving heart that seeks to serve and obey Jesus."

The physical design of the new chapel offers such an avenue to open one's heart to God. The hustle and bustle of the Drop-In is not present; rather, there is a peace-filled quiet. In the nave a wooden staircase ascends, reminiscent of many Old Testament Scripture passages. Much like the spiritual life, from the main floor one cannot see the final destination, as the main chapel is not visible from the entrance. But, always mindful of hospitality and welcoming the stranger, a wheelchair lift was installed beside the cedar stairs.

Located on the second level

of the former warehouse is the simple oratory. Facing east, the altar and candlestick holders are made from spiraled cedar wood. Underneath the altar is a thick red rug designed to remind those present of their unity through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. All around the walls are the warehouse bricks and metal piping, reminding visitors of the human realities in which they live.

Each piece of decor, both aesthetically pleasing and functionally useful, was chosen by the staff of the Catholic Worker over the past few years.

Margie Pfeil, co-founder of the St. Peter Claver Catholic Worker community and secretary of the board of directors of Our Lady of the Road, was the keeper of the dream of creating an on-site chapel.

"I have been dreaming of a chapel space since we first opened Our Lady of the Road 10 years ago. That upper room was in great disrepair, with an open hole in the west wall that had caused significant water damage and the death of more than a few trapped birds. So we first started repairing the brick in 2009.

"A married couple ... took interest in our work there and said they would like to support renovation of the space as a chapel. We began restoring all the brick, removing the pulley system that had been suspended from the ceiling and putting on a new roof. We insulated the ceiling and Holy Cross seminarians helped to install wood paneling. All this work happened over the

course of about four years — 'little by little,' as Dorothy Day advised. In the last year and a half, we raised more money to pay for the architectural plan and began framing out the new stairway and fire exit corridor on the first floor. ... We installed a fire alarm system, the steel fire exit exterior stairs, the electrical wiring, the chair lift, lighting, heat and an accessible concrete ramp. We also reinforced the floor of the chapel with steel."

Parishioners of Sacred Heart of Notre Dame sponsored the handcrafting of two wooden side tables for the presider and the gifts. Sacred Heart Parish of Lakeville helped pay for the new chairs. Holy Cross College donated the tabernacle and Father Austin Collins, CSC, donated a wooden altar set and ambo that he handcrafted for a church in Arizona.

Maria Surat, spiritual ministry coordinator at OLR, explained why the creation of a place to pray the chapel at the Drop-In was vital. "Pope Francis, in 'Laudato Si' laments how we as a people are surrounded by noise, lights, streets ... how we all need to experience a space for stillness and silence, for quiet and reflection, a place where we can encounter our God and ourselves. Here we are pursuing the spiritual roots of the works of mercy ... as well as grounding the good work done in their true source, the Eucharist."

Surat shared how what the balance of the Catholic active and contemplative life looks like. When the staff and volunteers are actively working, mopping floors, making breakfast in the kitchen, cleaning toilets, sitting in conversation and coffee with guests, one person is also in a back room praying, focused and quiet. All are aware of what the others are doing — praying for the work being done as well as caring for the immediate needs at hand. She finds this most consoling and supportive, especially when the heaviness and brokenness of the world are experienced at the OLR Drop-In.

"To know that another person is taking a pause to pray for the work we are doing is incredibly supportive," she reflected. "And now, they can pray in the chapel."

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Introduction: Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades

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## Contributing to a good night's rest



Provided by Suzie Jordan

As part of Catholic Schools Week Queen of Angels School, Fort Wayne, donated more than 155 new bed-size pillows to the Mustard Seed Furniture Bank's Beds4Kids Program. Beds4Kids provides a new mattress, foundation and pillow, along with a set of sheets, blankets and a bed frame, to children ages 2-17 who do not have a bed of their own. The Mustard Seed Furniture Bank assists families and individuals in Allen and the six surrounding counties who have experienced a catastrophic situation or personal tragedy. A few Queen of Angels third graders, who helped coordinate the pillow drive, are pictured.

## Plate sales for Sisters of St. Agnes



Provided by Libby Alberding

The eighth-grade students at St. Joseph School in Decatur, along with art teacher Jana Bloom, created ceramic plates to be auctioned off during St. Joe's recent pancake and sausage breakfast fundraising event. This silent auction raised over \$400, which will be sent to the Sisters of St. Agnes — a religious order that taught for many years at St. Joe. Above, students Audrey Ehinger, Josi Burke and Avery Sonnenberg display the plates they made for the auction.

## St. Pius X celebrates Catholic Schools Week

GRANGER — Deeply moved by the events of Dec. 15, when a fire at Holy Cross Catholic Church in South Bend did major damage to the food pantry of the St. Vincent de Paul Society of St. Joseph County, Holy Cross Conference, Student Council members of St. Pius X School organized a food collection that continued during Catholic Schools Week to help restock the pantry for Holy Cross Church. When students learned

that all food in the pantry was destroyed, including the recently collected Christmas food drive from students of Holy Cross Catholic School, they took action to help a neighbor. To date, St. Pius School students collected over 2,200 items of food.

While St. Pius students were primarily motivated by the desire to serve others in the community, a second motive encouraged action: a grade level competition. The grade-level that collected the most food was crowned the winner and received a special dress-down day.



Denise Fedorow

St. John the Evangelist pastor Father Anthony Steinacker prepares to pray with members of the Mary Thul family during a blessing of a space dedicated Jan. 31 as the Mary Thul Learning Center. Seated is Tom Thul, holding a picture of his late wife, Mary. Standing clockwise from left is their daughter, Mary Kay Longacre, holding granddaughter Lucy Gerke; Dan Longacre; Tom and Mary's sons Tim Thul and Kelly Thul; and Mary Kay and Dan's daughters Rachel Longacre and Katie Gerke.

## Mary Thul Learning Center blessed

BY DENISE FEDOROW

During National Catholic Schools Week, the Mary Thul Learning Center at St. John the Evangelist School, Goshen, was blessed by pastor Father Anthony Steinacker. Members of the Thul family were present for the blessing and dedication of the study area just outside the door to the school library.

Mary Thul started the mentoring program at St. John's

School in 1999 and was the coordinator of the program for many years. The mentoring program matches willing volunteers from the parish to the different grade levels, and teachers choose students who could use some extra one-on-one time to work with the mentors. Typically one hour a week is asked of the volunteers.

"That's one of the gifts of a small school — everyone coming together for one common cause — the children," she was once quoted as saying.

Thul was an inspiration to many in the parish, and besides starting the mentoring program was involved in many ministries. She was a Eucharistic minister, minister to the homebound, an active member of the Altar Rosary Society and on the leadership committee for RCIA. She also served the school in many capacities over the years, including as substitute teacher, playground monitor and mentor. She lost a battle with cancer on June 30.



## The Passion through the Shroud of Turin

with Dr. Thomas McGovern

Thursday, March 9

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Doors open at 5:30 pm, Lenten dinner of soup, bread and water at 6 pm, talk at 7 pm  
Dr. Tom McGovern, renowned Fort Wayne physician, will use the Shroud of Turin as a guide to the wounds of Christ and speak to the death process from medical view point.

GRAPHIC CONTENT. May not be suitable for young children.

## St. Anne valentines



Provided by Rose Worman

Members of the Student Council of St. Joseph Hessen Cassel School, Fort Wayne, spent time with residents at St. Anne's Home for Valentine's Day. The students brought carnations and balloons for the residents and spent time talking with them.

Parishioner, St. Aloysius



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# WHAT'S HAPPENING?

**WHAT'S HAPPENING** carries announcements about upcoming events in the diocese. Send announcements at least two weeks prior to the event. View more Catholic events and submit new ones at [www.diocesefwsb.org/bulletin](http://www.diocesefwsb.org/bulletin). Events that require an admission charge or payment to participate will receive one free listing. For additional listings of that event, please call the Today's Catholic advertising sales staff at 260-399-1449 to purchase space.

**Day of Reflection**

**MISHAWAKA** — A day of reflection will be held at St. Francis Convent Wednesday, March 1, from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. The theme for the day is "Change my heart." Bring a Bible. The cost of the day is \$20 and includes lunch. Register by Feb. 24 to

Sister Barbara Anne Hallman at 574-259-5427.

**Dinner and auction planned**

**MONROEVILLE** — St. Rose of Lima School and Parish will have a dinner and auction on March 4, at The Hayloft, 15112 Brunson Rd., in Hoagland. Doors

open at 5:30 p.m. Dinner served at 6:30 p.m. Cash bar. Tickets are \$15 in advance and \$20 at the door. For information contact St. Rose School at 260-623-3447.

**Catholic Business Network meetings**

**FORT WAYNE** — The next Catholic Business Network meet-



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## Head of School Position (begins July, 2017)

Candidates should have a strong personal Catholic faith life. Prior experience in Montessori education is preferred but not required.

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Cincinnati is an established community for Montessori and Catholic education. The Head of School position is being vacated by the school's founder, who will remain on staff as a collaborator for the incoming Head of School.

To apply, contact: Dan Teller  
The Good Shepherd Catholic Montessori  
4460 Berwick St., Cincinnati, Ohio 45227  
513-271-4171 | [dteller@gscmontessori.org](mailto:dteller@gscmontessori.org) | [www.gscmontessori.org](http://www.gscmontessori.org)

## REST IN PEACE

**Decatur**

Matheu A. Walchle, 21, St. Mary/Assumption

J. Michael Beery, 69, St. Mary/Assumption

**Fort Wayne**

Patricia Ann Elward, 78, St. Vincent de Paul

Daniel A. Johnson, 75, St. Joseph

Oscar Quintero, Sr., 95, St. Joseph

Robert R. Berghoff, 94, Queen of Angels

Hedwig Perkins, 91, Our Lady/Good Hope

**Geneva**

Paul J. Mehling, 72, St. Mary of the Presentation

**Huntington**

Marie F. Campbell, 88, SS Peter and Paul

**Mishawaka**

Linda K. Johnson, 69, St. Bavo

**New Haven**

Anna Mae Thatcher, 90, St. Louis Besancon

John David Kidd, 77, St. John the Baptist

**Notre Dame**

Sr. Patricia Burke, CSC, 97, Church of Loretto

Eugene A. Campanale, 89, Basilica of the Sacred Heart

Barbara V. Szewczyk, 80, Basilica of the Sacred Heart

Constance Julia Froning, 88, Our Lady Chapel

**Roanoke**

Samuel B. Armstrong, 81, St. Joseph

Maxine M. Avila, 87, St. Joseph

**South Bend**

Frederick P. Crowe, 89, St. Joseph

Charles W. Dyczko, 79, Christ the King

Robert Myers, Jr., 94, St. Patrick

**Warsaw**

Paul David Dwyer, 82, Sacred Heart

ing will be Friday, March 3, with Mass in the Guerin Chapel at 7 a.m. followed by fellowship in the Cathedral Center at 7:30 a.m. Guest speaker will be Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades, speaking on the topic: "Remembering Our Persecuted Brothers and Sisters During Lent" Refreshments provided by Today's Catholic.

**Lector training offered**

**SOUTH BEND** — The diocese will offer a Lector Training Workshop on Saturday, March 4, from 9 a.m. to noon at St. Jude

Church, 19704 Johnson Rd. Pre-registration is required by March 1 to ensure materials are available. Email name, parish and contact information to [kfitzpatrick@diocesefwsb.org](mailto:kfitzpatrick@diocesefwsb.org).

**Vocation society meeting announced**

**FORT WAYNE** — The Father Solanus Casey Vocation Society will meet March 3, at St. Joseph Hospital beginning with Mass at 11:30 a.m. in the chapel followed by lunch and guest speaker Joseph Ryan, Chief Financial Officer for the diocese.



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## Fasting and Abstinence

There are few practices that seem as distinctively Catholic as fasting and, in particular, abstinence. Fasting may be broadly defined as partially or completely refraining from eating, while abstinence means more strictly refraining from particular types of foods altogether (e.g., meat and meat products). Fish on Fridays was, for many years, very much a part of the fabric of Catholic life. It is important to remember that the church, in the wake of the conciliar reforms of the 1960s, while allowing a relaxation of the abstinence laws on Fridays throughout the year, intended nevertheless that every Friday of the year be marked by some form of sacrifice or penance. The incipient season of Lent prompts some remarks on the history and theological significance of fasting and abstinence.

Perhaps the earliest post-biblical reference to fasting comes from the Didache, (c. 110 A.D.), a very early summary of Christian moral life and liturgical practice. In a very conscious effort to distinguish Christians from their Jewish roots, the Didache advised believers to fast on Wednesdays and Fridays (Monday and Thursday being days of fast in Judaism) — this is probably at the origins of the later practice of ember days and rogations days (days of fasting particularly associated with the time of harvest). Further, the Didache urges candidates for baptism, as well as the baptizer and any other member of the community who can, to fast for at least a couple of days prior to the celebration. This is

remote origin of the Lenten fast, and this practice is advocated as well by Justin Martyr, (c. 155 A.D.), and Hippolytus of Rome (c. 220 A.D.). Each year during the season of Lent, the entire church is in solidarity with those preparing for Easter sacraments, and one of the most common expressions of this solidarity is the practice of fasting.

While fasting clearly can become a means of strengthening one's will through self-discipline, it has always been something more than a mere solipsistic exercise in self-denial. An obscure second-century text entitled "The Shepherd of Hermas" makes fasting purposeful: in fasting, one is to deny oneself in order to become more generous to those in need. When fasting, the author suggests, it is appropriate to calculate what one would have spent on food and offer it to "a widow, an orphan, or one in need," echoing the Old Testament idiom for the most vulnerable in society. Ideally, fasting places us in solidarity with those in need and prompts us to act on their behalf from our surplus. The slight annoyance we might feel at not enjoying some treat or in foregoing a meal is but a small twinge that reminds us from the inside out that there are many each day who would gladly feast of what we so blithely throw away. Fasting is fruitless if it simply makes us irritable or self-absorbed. It is a concrete means both of self-discipline (it's always dangerous to see this as a demonstration of our moral or spiritual prowess) and a tangible reliance upon



### THE HUMAN CONDITION

MSGR. MICHAEL HEINTZ

God's grace and the growth in charity that it engenders, rather than as an end in itself.

John Chrysostom (+ c. 407), priest of Antioch and later patriarch of Constantinople, was deeply committed to what we would call today "social justice" — he had a vivid sense of the enormous disparity between rich and poor that existed in his day, and, living an austere life himself, preached continually on the moral responsibility of the "haves" to assist the "have nots." Chrysostom saw fasting as part of a larger process, expressed in almsgiving but rooted in eucharistic communion. He repeatedly criticizes his congregations for their failure to reverence "Christ" as He lay in the gutters of Antioch — their respect for the eucharistic presence of Christ on the altar was not carried over to see Him in the poor. Fasting, issuing in almsgiving, was a practical extension of eucharistic communion. Fasting, then, is purposeful not only as a means of personal development, but also permits us more effectively to reverence Christ in the poor and needy, and as the natural expression and

HEINTZ, page 13

## What does it mean to encounter others?

This Lent you are invited to encounter your brothers and sisters around the world through participation in Catholic Relief Services Rice Bowl. Throughout our diocese, over 70 parishes, schools and community organizations will encounter their neighbors through this experience of prayer, fasting and almsgiving. For the duration of Lent I will provide you with a weekly reflection based in CRS Rice Bowl. My hope is that these reflections will help all of us to encounter ourselves, our neighbors and our God.

As we begin the journey of Lent, it is important to remember what we are called to do in this liturgical season. Lent is a journey of preparation marked by prayer, fasting and almsgiving. We can deepen our relationship with God through our prayer, which helps us to do some self-reflection. Our practice of fasting helps us to remove any obstacles that exist between us and God. Jesus's message of love comes to life in our almsgiving which challenges us and helps to serve those who are in need.

CRS Rice Bowl has been a faith-in-action program for families and faith communities for more than 40 years. Through Rice Bowl we hear stories from our brothers and sisters around the world. These stories move us to pray and fast to transform the lives of those who are in need. CRS Rice Bowl can serve as a guide through which the stories of communities around the

### CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES: RICE BOWL

MELISSA WHEELER

world are shared as an invitation to go deeper to help change lives.

This year, during the first week of Lent, we will meet the Singh family from India. They are involved with a program to provide kitchen gardens and better seeds for planting, which demonstrates the Catholic social teaching principle of option for the poor and vulnerable. In week two we journey to Zambia to meet Evelina, who is a beneficiary of an initiative that teaches mothers good nutrition for their children, guided by the principle of the dignity of the human person. Week three will take us to El Salvador, where we will encounter Fernando, who dreams of becoming a businessman. Through a CRS program that trains young people for business development, the principle of the dignity of work and the rights of workers are recognized in the story of Fernando.

The story of Maria, in week four, will bring us to Mexico, where the community is involved in a greenhouse project that empowers women with meaningful work and supports the

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## Our Heavenly Father will always provide for our needs



### THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

MSGR. OWEN F. CAMPION

### Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time Matthew 6:24-34

For its first reading this weekend, the church presents a rather short selection from the final part of the Book of Isaiah.

By the time this passage was written, the Jews, long trapped in exile in Babylon, had returned home. The conquest of Babylonia by Persia and the resulting collapse of the Babylonian empire enabled them to go home.

It was a bittersweet return, however, additionally so since few of the exiles, if any, were old enough to remember the

homeland. But their parents and grandparents surely had told them about it. Everything was good, so they longed to leave Babylon and rediscover pride in their own identity. In a way, they thought that, indeed, they were going to the Promised Land.

The bubble burst when they actually arrived. The homeland was desolate. Life was miserable. The prophets had to cope with the people's great disappointment, bewilderment and anger with God. The reading reasserts God's promise to protect and sustain the Chosen People.

St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians is the source of the second reading. In the first century A.D., Corinth was Las Vegas and New York City rolled into one. Converts to Christianity lived in Corinth but, assuming from Paul's two letters, they constantly were lured away from the Gospel.

Evidently and not surprisingly, pagans mocked and tantalized the Christians, leading these Christians to ask themselves if living chastely and keeping the quest for material

gain in check made any sense at all. Paul had to fortify their faith and resolve.

The third reading, from St. Matthew's Gospel, is part of a rather long discourse given by the Lord to his disciples about life. It is not startling, but simple logic. He says that no one can serve two masters, and true followers must choose to serve only God.

Probably no time in history, anywhere, were people utterly without material concern. If it is not the task of making a living, or of maintaining a constant and fulfilling relationship, it is a question of health.

For Jews at the time of Jesus, things were extraordinarily bad. The temptation was to enter a "dog-eat-dog" world just to survive. Hanging over everything was the Roman occupation, with its hedonism, materialism and vicious injustice. The temptation was to join them if you could not beat them, and no one beat the Romans.

Understandably, the Jews questioned their traditional beliefs. Where was God, their

protector, in all this? Whatever did their status as Chosen People mean? Many were tempted to answer these questions by saying God was not there, that being God's people meant nothing.

Jesus is quite frank in this reading. Not so much condemning the things of the world — certainly not the necessities of life — Jesus instead reminds the audience that for genuine disciples only attention to God and to God's will suffice.

God must be the only master. Jesus then reassures the disciples: Worry not about incidentals, but be concerned about what actually is important. Judge by God's standards, not by the world's.

### Reflection

In three days the church will call us to observe Ash Wednesday and to begin Lent. Lent, this ancient season of penance and renewal so identified with the Catholic faith, is a liturgical opportunity for every believer to search her or his soul,

to reform by rejecting sin and to recommit to the Lord. In this will be new life: So on Easter, if they have taken advantage of Lent, Christians will experience for themselves a revival of life.

Before any spiritual undertaking in Lent can succeed, we must look at the criteria by which we judge ourselves. Who is our master? If God is not our master, we are foolish.

### READINGS

**Sunday:** Is 49:14-15 Ps 62:2-3, 6-9 1 Cor 4:1-5 Mt 6:24-34

**Monday:** Sir 17:20-24 Ps 32:1-2, 5-7 Mk 10:17-27

**Tuesday:** Sir 35:1-12 Ps 50:5-8, 14, 23 Mk 10:28-31

**Wednesday:** J1 2:12-18 Ps 51:3-6b, 12-14, 17 2 Cor 5:20—6:2 Mt 6:1-6, 16-18

**Thursday:** Dt 30:15-20 Ps 1:1-4, 6 Lk 9:22-25

**Friday:** Is 58:1-9a Os 51L3-6am 18-19 Mt 9:14-15

**Saturday:** Is 58:9b-14 Ps 86:1-6 Lk 5:27-32

# A lesson learned and a life in pink

I want to share something very personal and, in my mind, significant and relevant to readers, but I don't want to come off as braggory or know-it-all. In fact, there are so many things I don't know that I hesitate to share this for fear of it being misconstrued in some way: but gosh darn it, it's a good lesson for all of us, I think. If in some small way it helps someone feel encouraged in his or her own life of raising children and making ripples, then it will have been worth the risk of oversharing. But I'm getting ahead of myself, so let me just begin.

Last weekend our daughter competed in a large dance competition in a major city. In this particular competition there are two divisions: classical and contemporary. Classical means a variation from a classical ballet is danced; contemporary can include classical music not from a ballet or other kinds of music — from drums to lyrical, pop to instrumental. Having attended this particular competition for many years, my husband and I have noticed that a number of the contemporary selections increasingly tend toward what we would classify as dark, negative, and somewhat depressing, and sometimes the costumes on the young girls are tight and skimpy; immodest in our opinion.

When the time comes around for our daughter to choose a piece, the question always comes up, "What can showcase your skills?" Even more importantly, we ask, "What is uplifting?" "What brings joy?" And most of all, "What gives hope and reveals true beauty, representing the art form in a way that is pleasing to God?"

Several years ago an older ballerina from our daughter's dance studio chose an "Ave Maria" arrangement and vocal to which to dance in the contemporary division of the competition. It was so lovely. The dancer even earned a Top 12 designation. This inspired my daughter, and

she has enjoyed trying to find pieces to which to perform that are similarly stirring and authentically beautiful.

One day my husband was playing Andrea Bocelli on his iPod and he had the idea that his song "La Vie En Rose" might be a nice piece to which our daughter could dance in competition. He suggested it to her and she immediately liked the idea. Another daughter, who also danced ballet for many years, is an aspiring choreographer, and she committed to working with her sister to create a piece that would showcase her sister's talents, while aiming to express hope and beauty.

The girls spent many hours upstairs in our school room playing the Bocelli music over and over, working on combinations and moves until it seemed just right to them: joyful, full of love and hopefulness. Then, they went to the artistic director in order to get permission to enter it in the competition. The girls were nervous approaching the director because they were both so young, and typically only experienced choreographers work with the dancers to create an entry piece.

At the end of the nerve-wracking demonstration of the ballet piece, the two sisters, dancer and choreographer, turned to their studio's artistic director hopefully to see what she thought. Neither could read her face: It was blank. Suddenly it turned to a smile and the director exclaimed, "I loved it!" She said they could enter the piece.

For months afterward our daughter worked diligently on her piece; alone, with her sister and under hours of instruction with her dance teacher. She chose a feminine, rosy, skater dress and a French beret as a costume. Finally, the date of the competition arrived.

Our daughter positioned herself on stage and when the music started she floated across the stage, performing the advanced choreography to the



## EVERYDAY CATHOLIC

THERESA A. THOMAS

beautiful melody. She seemed to have everything going for her; just a sequence of difficult turns at the end and she would be finished. But alas, in the middle of a complicated turn, she fell flat.

As heartbroken as she felt inside, our daughter stood up and finished her dance. Surprisingly, despite the fall, the piece earned a Top 12 designation. There was something there the judges liked. Still, she was not happy with her mistake.

That was last year. This year she wanted to bring the piece back and execute it perfectly. For many more months she worked under the expert supervision of a new artistic director, who helped her tweak certain moves and improve her technical skills. She rehearsed over and over.

The competition was this past weekend and I'm happy to say this time she did not fall. In fact, she won. Out of more than 100 entries, she didn't just make Top 12, she came in first! Obviously this made me happy for her, on account of her hard work. Having fallen the year before, she came back and succeeded — something that made me pleased.

You see, little girls — the auditorium was full of them — saw our daughter win in a modest, lovely dress, performing to music that was uplifting and about love and joy. This will likely, I hope, impact their choices of music next year and maybe even years after. Maybe other girls never thought music like this would work at such a competition, or they just never considered it. Maybe they did consider it, but dismissed it because they weren't used to seeing it and seeing it move the judges and

## SCRIPTURE SEARCH®

Gospel for February 26, 2017

Matthew 6:24-34

Following is a word search based on the Gospel reading for the Eighth Sunday of Ordinary Time, Cycle A: to focus on God first and not worldly things. Words can be found in all directions in the puzzle.

NO ONE	CAN SERVE	TWO MASTERS
OTHER	WORRY	WILL EAT
DRINK	YOUR BODY	FOOD
CLOTHING	BIRDS	REAP
HEAVENLY	FATHER	SOLOMON
GRASS	FIELD	OVEN
LITTLE	KINGDOM	TOMORROW

## GOD'S CARE

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

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win. At any rate I would like to think this little outcome may help in just one small way change some of the competition entries for the better. I hope and pray my daughter inspired other little girls, just as an older girl once inspired her.

We all can help bring about a positive change in culture. We are all called to make ripples, positive ripples, ripples in the little ponds in which we reside, if even for a moment. We must keep trying, encouraging and aiming to be good examples, even not knowing the outcome.

Mother Teresa once said, "God has not called me to be

successful. He has called me to be faithful." We need to leave the outcomes to Him and concentrate on doing what we know is right. But I wanted to share something I experienced this weekend very personally — sometimes God will surprise us, and we find that faithfulness and success can beautifully meet. For that, and for those moments, I am grateful.

Theresa Thomas is the wife of David and mother of nine children.

## HEINTZ

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fruit of eucharistic communion. Pope Benedict, in his first encyclical, made it clear that the entire social mission of the church is rooted in Christ's sacrifice, and any attempt at social activism dislocated from that source becomes fruitless and feckless.

It was not until relatively modern times, perhaps as late as the eighteenth century, that fasting and abstinence came to be distinguished. Before that time, fasting had always implied abstinence. In some places and at some times in the history of the church, abstinence involved more than simply refraining

from meats: It often was understood to mean abstaining from wine, eggs, milk and other milk products (called lactinia) as well. Today, the church's fast days (Ash Wednesday and Good Friday) are days of abstinence, though other days of abstinence (Fridays of Lent) are not necessarily fast days.

As we begin our Lenten observance, it is important to see the value and purpose of fasting and abstinence. They are means: means of heightening our awareness of those who go hungry, as well as our own sense of gratitude for what we so often take for granted, in addition to assisting us as we grow in discipleship, for it is not "by bread alone" that believers "live and move and have their being." Further, particular days

of fast should be seen as a way of sanctifying time, in much the same way that the Lord's Day, Sunday, is treated as a special day in the course of the week dedicated in particular to praise of God for what He has done through Christ, His Son. As Christians, we profess that Christ is the Alpha and the Omega of human history, and so our sense of time should consequently be transformed; that is why we celebrate particular days as feasts, fasts, commemorations, etc. As believers, our sense of time and our pace of daily life are better formed by the church's liturgical life than by Hallmark or the Wall Street Journal.

Msgr. Michael Heintz is on the faculty at Mount Saint Mary's Seminary, Emmitsburg, Md.

## CRS

Continued from Page 12

local economy. Here we will see the principle of the call to community, family and participation that emphasizes the gifts we can share with one another that help our communities to grow. Dita's story, then, will teach us about the drought in Ethiopia and how local farmers are learning sustainable techniques that will help to feed a whole community. Finally in week six, we encounter our brothers and sisters here in the United States who are able to use CRS Rice Bowl resources to practice the virtue of solidarity. Each year 25 percent of the monetary donations to

CRS Rice Bowl stay here in the U.S. to fight hunger.

You can join this journey of global solidarity in several ways. Obtain a Rice Bowl in your parish to use daily: Each Rice Bowl contains a calendar that gives daily reflections and challenges on the Lenten journey. You can also visit [www.crsricebowl.org](http://www.crsricebowl.org) to watch videos about featured families and programs. If technology is your preference, you can download the CRS Rice Bowl app to get Lenten inspiration directly on your phone. Resources for CRS Rice Bowl in Spanish can be found at [www.crsplatodearroz.org](http://www.crsplatodearroz.org).

Melissa Wheeler is the diocesan director for Catholic Relief Services.



The seventh annual Rekindle the Fire men's conference took place Feb. 18 at the Century Center in South Bend. Above, Father Ben Muhlenkamp introduces one of the day's speakers while Father Jacob Meyer looks on; at top right, Catholic radio personality Patrick Madrid addresses the crowd of about 1,000; at bottom, participants wait in lines to take advantage of the opportunity for reconciliation.



Photos by Kevin Haggenjos

## REKINDLE

Continued from Page 1

tionship with Christ and develop and strengthen friendships with other men.

"It's our hope and prayer that every man returns to their home fed with new insights into their faith, a renewed joy to serve their family, parish and community and the knowledge that God who loves them unconditionally is at work in them," said Rekindle the Fire conference committee chairman Greg Ketcham.

Patrick Madrid, author and host of the radio program "The Patrick Madrid Show,"

got things started by emphasizing the need for Catholic men to live, speak and suffer for the truth.

"I would say because it's the most challenging time to be Catholic, it's the best time to be Catholic," said Madrid. "The power of our testimony as Catholic men is amazing. We need to be willing to say yes to God's grace."

In his typically fiery but uplift-

"We are facing a home invasion from the devil, who wants to devour us, our wives and our children," he said. "We must be alert and ready to defend our homes and families. We must put on the armor of God because we're in the thick of the fight."

That means praying the rosary daily, attending Mass frequently and living authentic lives in accordance with the truths of the Catholic faith.

Musician and author Chris Padgett shared a revealing, yet inspiring message.

"As men, we're good at pretending — wearing masks — because deep down we're afraid of our brokenness, emptiness and wounds. But can we be honest with ourselves?" he asked. "We

are broken and weak, but God is bigger than our weaknesses, and we aren't trapped by our past. He can heal us and fill our emptiness. God is a God of new beginnings and He loves us when we feel we are unlovable."

As is the tradition, Bishop Rhoades concluded the day by celebrating Mass. As always, his message was a call to action.

"The world, and I would say our culture today, considers much of the Christian faith and the authentic Christian life as foolishness," said Bishop Rhoades. "The question and the challenge for you and for me is: 'Do we have the courage to be fools for Christ?' If we wish to be holy and perfect, as our heavenly Father is holy and perfect, we have to have the courage to be considered fools and to be treated as such. May we not be afraid to be fools for Christ!"

*"Can't we be honest  
with ourselves?"*

CHRIS PADGETT

More photos are available at [www.todaycatholicnews.org](http://www.todaycatholicnews.org).



ing approach, Doug Barry, host of EWTN's "Life on the Rock," reminded men that we're in the midst of a spiritual battle that has eternal ramifications.

## Join us for the blessing and groundbreaking of the new Divine Mercy Funeral Home

Tuesday, February 28, 10:30 a.m.  
Catholic Cemetery • 3500 Lake Avenue

We invite you to the blessing and groundbreaking ceremony of Divine Mercy Funeral Home on the grounds of the Catholic Cemetery. In attendance will be The Most Reverend Kevin C. Rhoades, Bishop of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Fort Wayne Mayor Thomas Henry, and several other local dignitaries. The public is welcome to witness this most holy event.



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