Blessed Rother ‘an authentic light’ for church and world, says cardinal

WASHINGTON (CNS) — If the martyrdom of Blessed Stanley Francis Rother “fills us with sadness,” it also “gives us the joy of admiring the kindness, generosity and courage of a great man of faith,” Cardinal Angelo Amato, prefect of the Congregation for Saints’ Causes, said Sept. 23 in Oklahoma City.

The 13 years Blessed Rother spent as a missionary in Guatemala “will always be remembered as the glorious epic of a martyr of Christ, an authentic lighted torch of hope for the church and the world,” the cardinal said in his homily during the U.S. priest’s beatification Mass.

“The people of Mexico will need help to rebuild their lives and infrastructure after this disaster,” said Ingo Radtke, Malteser International’s Secretary General. “The Mexican Association of the Order of Malta is well positioned and equipped for emergency intervention. We are in close contact with our colleagues in Mexico and are standing ready to offer any support they would need in their relief efforts.”

About 500 volunteers from the Mexican Order of Malta’s aid service are already providing food, shelter and repairs. The magnitude 7.1 quake that hit near Mexico City Sept. 19 killed more than 230 people and injured more than 2,000 in the crumbling wreckage. The earthquake was just on the heels of the magnitude 8.1 earthquake Sept. 7 off the coast of southeastern Mexico that killed at least 90 people and destroyed thousands of homes.

Malteser International, a relief organization sponsored by the Order of Malta as well as a school run by the Order, has sent a team of volunteers to Mexico City to provide rescue and first-aid help.

“Thank you, Father Rother! Bless us from heaven!”

Church-based charities provide earthquake relief in Mexico

WASHINGTON (CNS) — In the aftermath of two earthquakes in the span of two weeks in Mexico, church-based relief agencies have been on the ground providing food, shelter and repairs.

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About 500 volunteers from the Mexican Order of Malta’s aid service are already providing humanitarian assistance to communities affected by previous earthquake.

The Sept. 19 quake destroyed many buildings in Mexico City, including the headquarters of the Mexican Association of the Order of Malta as well as a school run by the Order.
The shepherd cannot run

IN TRUTH AND CHARITY
BISHOP KEVIN C. RHODES

This past Saturday, September 23rd, I was privileged to concelebrate the Mass of Beatification of Father Stanley Rother at the Cox Convention Center in Oklahoma City. Over 17,000 people attended the celebration, filling the Center to overflowing. Two priests of our diocese, Father Craig Borcard and Father Dennis DiBenedetto, also concelebrated the Mass. Dan Koehl, one of our diocesan seminarians, also participated and sang with the beautiful schola from Mount Saint Mary’s. Father Stanley, ordained a priest in 1965, was an alumnus of the Mount. I was happy to run into many Mount alumni who came to Oklahoma City for the Beatification.

Father Stanley Rother is the first U.S.-born priest to be beatified. He is also the first U.S.-born martyr to be beatified. We can now call him “the beloved priest” Blessed Stanley Rother. It was a moment of great joy when the celebration of the Beatification Mass, Cardinal Angelo Amato, the Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints and Representative of Pope Francis, read the Apostolic Letter from the Holy Father declaring Father Stanley “Blessed.”

The “Blessed” was inspired in this letter, by virtue of his Apostolic Authority. “Stanley Francis Rother, Diocesan Priest and Martyr, who was driven by a deeply-rooted faith and a profound union with God, and by the arduous duty to spread the Word of God in missionary lands, faithfully living his priestly and missionary service until his martyrdom, should henceforth be called Blessed.”

After the reading of the Apostolic Letter, and the unveiling of a beautiful and large image of Father Stanley, the congregation erupted in applause. I noticed the image of Mount Saint Mary’s Seminary in the upper left hand corner of the banner. It seemed very appropriate since it was at the Mount that Father Stanley received the good formation that led to his living such a devoted priestly life.

The chalice that was used at the Beatification Mass was an ordination gift that Father Stanley had received from his family. At Consecration time, when the bishops approached the altar to receive the Precious Blood, I was hoping that I could receive from Father Stanley’s chalice. Fortunately the young Pope in front of me went to receive from another chalice, so I went and received the last remaining sip of the Precious Blood from Father Stanley’s chalice.

As the years passed, Father Rother tried to do some farming in the highlands. Heeding the call of Pope John XXIII, he was asked to leave the seminary as his requirement since the entire curriculum was academic by nature, young Stanley struggled with Latin, which at the time was a critical requirement for seminarians. He was accepted as a seminarian at Mount Saint Mary’s Seminary in Emmitsburg, Maryland. He was ordained a priest on May 25, 1965. Father Rother served as an associate pastor for five years in Oklahoma. Heeding the call of Pope John XXIII, he sought and received permission to join the staff at the diocese’s mission in Santiago Atitlan, Guatemala.

Father Rother’s connection with the people of Santiago Atitlan was immediate. He served the native tribe of the Tz’utujil, who are descendents of the Mayans. He not only learned both Spanish and the Tz’utujil language, but his working knowledge of Tz’utujil enabled him to help translate the New Testament.

As the years passed, Father Rother tried to live a simpler life to be in communion with his people. He was surrounded by extreme poverty, with the Tz’utujil living in one-room huts and growing what they could on their small plots of land. Father Rother ministered to his parishioners in their homes; eating with them, visiting the sick and aiding them with medical needs. He even put his farming skills to use by helping them in the fields, bringing in different crops, and building an irrigation system.

While he served in Guatemala a civil war raged between the militarist government forces and the guerrillas, with the Catholic Church caught in the middle. During this conflict, thousands of Catholics were killed. For a time, the violence was contained in the cities, but it soon came to the highlands and Santiago Atitlan. Catechists began to disappear, people slept in the church for protection and death lists began to circulate in the towns.

Eventually, Father Rother’s name appeared on a death list. For his safety and that of his associate, Father Rother returned to Oklahoma, but he didn’t stay long. He was determined to give his life completely to his people, stating that ‘the shepherd cannot run.’ He returned to Santiago Atitlan. Early on the morning of July 28, three men entered the rectory, fought with Father Rother and then executed him. His death shocked the Catholic world. No one was ever held responsible.

The people of Santiago Atitlan mourned the loss of their leader and friend. Because of the affection and veneration that the people of Santiago Atitlan displayed for their priest, they requested that Father Rother’s heart be kept in Guatemala, where it remains enshrined today. His body was returned to his family in Oklahoma for burial. In 2007, his Cause for Canonization was opened. On December 2, 2016, Pope Francis officially recognized Father Rother as a martyr for the faith.

Father Stanley’s brother Tom, who continued the operation of the farm and, his sister Marita, a Precious Blood religious, were in attendance at the Beatification Mass. I wondered how amazing it must have been for them to see their big brother beatified.

I have been inspired for many years by the life and martyrdom of Father Stanley Rother. I believe that he is a wonderful example for our priests of zeal and closeness to the people. Blessed Stanley Rother is also a great inspiration for all of us of fidelity to the Gospel of Jesus. Let us pray that one day he will be canonized. I leave you with the new prayer that was the Collect at the Mass of Beatification:

“O God, who gave your priest Blessed Stanley the heart of a pastor and the fidelity of a martyr, grant, through his intercession, that the humble flock may reach where the brave Shepherd has gone before. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.”

An overflow crowd estimated at 20,000 attended the beatification Mass for Father Stanley Rother Sept. 23 at Oklahoma City’s Cox Convention Center. Blessed Rother, a priest of the Oklahoma City archdiocese, was murdered in 1981 in the Guatemalan village where he ministered.
On Friday, Oct. 13, the miracle performed by Our Lady of Fatima and the closing of the yearlong anniversary observance of her appearances will be celebrated in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend.

The Mass, which takes place with the support and participation of the World Apostolate of Fatima, will be celebrated by Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades at 6 p.m. at St. Matthew Cathedral. As part of the Mass, Bishop Rhoades will offer a special papal blessing and a special grace to all the faithful present, as well as the opportunity to receive a plenary indulgence. A plenary indulgence is the complete remission of temporal punishment due to sin.

Why should Catholics desire to receive a plenary indulgence?

To worthily celebrate the 100th anniversary of the apparitions at Fatima, by mandate of Pope Francis, a Jubilee Year was declared, with its inherent plenary indulgence. The papal blessing, which a diocesan bishop is permitted to bestow in the name of the Holy Father on three occasions each year, carries with it a plenary indulgence for those who meet the usual conditions.

To obtain the plenary indulgence, the faithful must be truly penitent and animated with charity and must ritually fulfill the following conditions: sacramental confession, eucharistic communion and prayer for the intentions of the Holy Father. The faithful can receive a plenary indulgence once a day at most.

An indulgence is defined by the Catechism of the Catholic Church as “a remission before God of the temporal punishment due to sins whose guilt has already been forgiven, which the faithful Christian who is duly disposed gains under certain prescribed conditions through the action of the Church which, as the minister of redemption, dispenses and applies with authority the treasury of the satisfaction of Christ and the saints.” Through an indulgence, God grants the prayer of the church that the temporal penalty for sins due to some one be reduced (or possibly eliminated). By God’s grace, participation in a prayer or action that has an indulgence attached to it brings about the necessary restoration and reparation without the suffering that would normally accompany it.

Through indulgences, the infinite merits of Christ, as well as the merits of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the saints are applied to our purification in this life or in the life to come (in purgatory). It is important to note that the indulgence may be applied to oneself or to the souls of the deceased, even family members or friends.

The first three actions may be fulfilled within 20 days before or after the offering of the indulgence. However, it is most appropriate if they are all done on the same day the indulgence is offered.

The conditions for obtaining a plenary indulgence are:

1) Being truly repentant and receiving absolution in the sacrament of penance
2) Reception of Holy Communion
3) Praying for the Holy Father’s intentions
4) Total detachment from any inclination or desire to sin, even venial sins

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Closing Mass marks anniversary of the ‘Miracle of the Sun’

On Friday, Oct. 13, the Miracle of the Sun occurred at Fatima, a small town in Portugal. This was the final event of six months of Our Lady of Fatima visiting and teaching three small shepherd children. Thousands of people witnessed the miracle and believed in God again.

What said to them was a continuation of what Jesus himself taught, and Mary asked for a conversion of people’s hearts and lives.

That morning it rained heavily for several hours: But the downpour did not deter crowds from coming to Cova da Iria, the place where the children would care for their sheep. There were an estimated 30,000-55,000 people present, with another 20,000 in the nearby area. Most were freezing and wet from the rain and their feet were soaked in thick mud.

The children arrived and Lucia asked everyone to put down their umbrellas and pray the rosary. Soon there was a flash of light and Mary appeared above the oak tree, as she had in previous apparitions — but only the visionaries saw her.

This was the first public miracle since the Resurrection that was foretold and spoken of in advance, confirming the gravity and importance of the message of Our Lady of Fatima. The children were afraid that people may not believe them, because they were children:

Our Lady explained that this miracle would let all people know that the apparitions, and thus her messages, were real.
A prayer for migrants and refugees

On Sept. 27, Pope Francis launched a global campaign to support migrants and refugees around the world. In collaboration with the campaign and the annual celebration of Respect Life Month in October, bishops in the U.S. are asking Catholics around the country to help kick off the campaign by taking part in a week of prayer and action for migrants and refugees from Oct. 7-13.

Adonai, Lord and Master,

Many are the journeys your people have taken: Abraham’s journey led from fear to understanding, searching for peace, searching for hope, searching for opportunity, searching for liberty; the disciples’ journey led from death to new life. Many are the journeys your people have taken: Abraham’s journey led from fear to understanding, searching for peace, searching for hope, searching for opportunity, searching for liberty; the disciples’ journey led from death to new life.

Lord, I know that I too am called to journey. Yet too many times, I have heard your call, and my feet have remained unmoved. Continue to call me beyond my comfort and into encounter. And when I meet a companion on the road, may we find you in each other’s embrace.

Let us share the journey. Amen

ROTHER, from page 1

The cardinal was the main celebrant of the beatification Mass, joined by Archbishop Paul S. Coakley of Oklahoma City and his predecessor, retired Archbishop Eusebius J. Beltran, who formally opened the Rother sainthood cause 10 years ago.

An overflow crowd of 20,000 packed the Cox Convention Center in Oklahoma City for the beatification of Father Rother, murdered in 1981 as he served the faithful at a mission in Guatemala, and aided by the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City. The evening before, a prayer service was held at St. Benedict Parish in Oklahoma City.

Before the Mass began, the congregation was shown a document made about his life and ministry titled “The Shepherd Cannot Run: Father Rother’s Story.” Then Cardinal Amato, Archbishop Coakley, Archbishop Beltran and about 50 other U.S. bishops, over 200 priests and about 200 deacons processed in for the start of the beatification ceremony.

Archbishop Coakley welcomed Catholics “from near and far” who traveled to Oklahoma “to celebrate the life and witness of Father Rother.” He acknowledged the ecumenical, interfaith and civic leaders in attendance and those joining the celebration by watching live coverage of it on the internet, TV and radio.

Before Cardinal Amato read the apostolic letter declaring Father Rother “Blessed,” Archbishop Beltran gave some remarks, saying that little did Father Rother know that his growing-up years on his family’s farm near Okarche “would mold him into the kind of man who would make great strides when he volunteered to go to Guatemala.”

“He struggled in seminary,” the archbishop remarked, referring to the difficulty the priest had with learning Latin. He was nearly expelled because he had such a hard time, but he went on to be ordained for the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City in 1963. Once in Guatemala to serve in Santiago Atitlan, he learned Tz’utujil, the language of the many Mayan descendants who were his parishioners. He helped translate the Bible into Tz’utujil.

He worked side by side with the people “teaching them many of the agricultural practices he learned in Okarche,” Archbishop Beltran said.

The mission was about 10 years old when Father Rother arrived in 1968 and had a staff of 10, but the number of missionaries dwindled as Guatemala’s civil war, which began in 1960 and lasted until 1996, intensified. Eventually, Father Rother’s name appeared on a death list and he returned home.

“His ways were very quiet and unassuming but eventually he began to receive death threats,” the archbishop continued. “He made infrequent visits (back to Oklahoma). On his last visit (in 1981) he felt the need to return to his people no matter what the consequences.”

Friends recalled him saying, “The shepherd cannot run. I want to be with my people.” Within three days of his return, three men entered his rectory in the dead of night and murdered him.

“His sainthood life has become well known beyond boundaries of Oklahoma and Guatemala and the faith of those familiar with his life has been greatly strengthened. How grateful we are to Almighty God this day for the beatification of Father Rother,” Archbishop Beltran said.

Cardinal Amato followed the archbishop by reading the formal letter about the priest’s beatification. When he concluded, a huge colorful banner was unfurled above the altar with a likeness of his Guatemalan mission and the coat of arms for the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City at the bottom.

The feast day will be celebrated July 26, the day when he was fatally shot in the head by masked men.

Relics of Blessed Rother, including a piece from one of his rib bones, were brought to the altar in a golden reliquary and set on a small table to the left of the main altar. Cardinal Amato venerated the relics and censed the reliquary.

Rother family members then came up to the altar to greet the cardinal: his sister, Sister Marita Rother, a member of the Adorers of the Blood of Christ, who lives at her community’s motherhouse in Wichita, Kansas; and his brother Tom and his wife, Marti, who live on the farm where the martyred priest and his siblings grew up, located three miles from the center of Okarche.

In his remarks, Archbishop Coakley said that on behalf of the local church in Oklahoma “and in communion with my brother bishops in the United States and Guatemala,” he felt “profound gratitude” for the opportunity to help celebrate the beatification of a native son.

“We are grateful for your (Pope Francis) recognition of the heroic witness of this good shepherd who remained with his people,” the archbishop said. “He gave his life in solidarity with so many suffering individuals and family who endured persecution for the sake of the Gospel. We pray the church will experience a new Pentecost and an abundance of vocations to the priesthood inspired by the witness and aided by the intercession of Blessed Stanley Rother.”

He thanked Archbishop Beltran for formally opening the Rother cause, as well as the postulator, Andrea Ambrosi of Rome, who attended the Mass, and the many men and women who worked diligently over many years to advance the cause and “make known the holiness and heroism of this ordinary priest.”
Fatima is a critical time to stop and reflect on one’s own life and salvation, perhaps by asking the following questions: Am I listening and obeying Our Lady’s words? Do I pray and fast and offer alms to the poor? Do I adore God and avoid sin? Do I have a contrite heart for my sinful choices and desire to follow God’s will in the future?

After the centennial year closing Mass, attendees are invited to stay for exposition and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, the praying of the holy rosary and Fatima prayers, a Marian procession and a social gathering in the school gymnasium.

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THE FRANCIS EFFECT: HIS IMPACT ON CHURCH AND WORLD

Projects of the Heart: Pope Francis and Micro-Economics

Monday, October 9
7 p.m.
Vander Venet Theatre, Student Center
Lecture is free and open to the public.

William T. Cavanaugh
Professor of Catholic Studies
DePaul University

BISHOP DWENGER OPEN HOUSE
November 7, 2017
6:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. Main Gym

- Tour the school
- Meet Faculty, Staff, and Administration
- Explore 10 Academic Departments
- Visit with Pastoral Ministry Representatives
- Discuss Service Opportunities
- Spend time with coaches and players
- Learn about extra-curricular clubs

Fertility & Midwifery Care Center

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260-222-7401

The Bishop of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades, will celebrate anniversary Masses at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Fort Wayne, on Oct. 15 at 11:30 a.m. and St. Matthew Cathedral, South Bend, on Oct. 22 at 11 a.m. Ticketed receptions will follow both Masses. The Fort Wayne reception will be held at St. Mary Parish — only a couple of blocks from the cathedral. In South Bend, it will be held at the St. Matthew School gym. Anniversary couples will receive two free tickets to the reception. Additional tickets for family members may be purchased before the registration deadline for $10 each.

Please register by calling Helen at (574) 234-0687 or by emailing her at haustgen@diocesefwsb.org. For those requesting extra tickets for the reception, please send a check by mail to Anniversary Masses, 1328 W. Dragoon Trail, Mishawaka, IN 46544.

When registering, please include both of your names, your home address, phone number, wedding date and the Mass you plan to attend. Fort Wayne registrations must be made by Friday, Oct. 6. South Bend registrations must be made by Friday, Oct. 13.
MEXICO, from page 1

by its aid service in the country.

Catholic Relief Services, the
overseas aid agency of the U.S.
Conference of Catholic Bishops,
has likewise been on the ground
in Mexico since the Sept. 7
earthquake providing shelter
repairs and immediate relief to
families in isolated areas. After
the country’s second earthquake
the agency is continuing to
assess the needs on the ground
and provide help with recovery,
rebuiding and support for the
survivors from both disasters.
CRS is part of the network of
Catholic charities known as
Caritas Internationalis.

Covenant House, a Catholic
agency for homeless youth,
reported that all of the children
in their care are safe, but agency
officials have been unable to
contact some staff members
since the Sept. 19 earthquake
and do not know of their condi-
tion.

Two of the agency’s seven
shelters in Mexico City have
cracks and fissures after the
earthquake and gas leaks forced
the evacuation of a shelter for
girls. Some shelters do not have
electricity.

“Food is running low and
will spoil without electricity,”
said Kevin Ryan, president of
Covenant House, in a statement.
“We need food and fuel to feed
our children, including newly
displaced children coming to
us because their homes have
been destroyed. Our emergency
response team is making do,
but it isn’t easy, and everyone
is afraid of aftershocks —
which can be damaging and
deadly.” Ambassador Mark
Green, administrator of the
U.S. Agency for International
Development, told reporters
in a Sept. 21 press briefing in
New York that USAID had sent
a Disaster Assistance Response
Team to Mexico in response to
urgent humanitarian needs.
The team includes more than
60 members and five K-9s
from the Los Angeles County
Fire Department Urban Search
and Rescue Team, which took
specialized tools and medical
equipment to conduct around-
the-clock search and rescue
operations. The team would
also be working closely with
Mexican disaster authorities to
help rescue earthquake survi-
vors and assess structures for
earthquake damage.

Green said the U.S. govern-
ment, “at the very highest lev-
els, is engaged on the humani-
tarian relief being provided to
Mexico.” He said he spoke to
White House officials Sept. 20
who were “making sure that we
provide what’s been asked for
and what’s necessary to extend
our hand. So I’m pleased to say
that the government is very
generated in taking on these fires
of humanitarian assistance that
we need to address right now.”

People carry caskets Sept. 20 of victims who died in an earthquake in Atzala, Mexico. The magnitude 7.1 earthquake hit Sept. 19, killing hundreds.
TODAY'S CATHOLIC

With prayer, Catholics in Puerto Rico deal with Hurricane Maria's wrath

BY RHINA GUIDOS

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Father Urbano Vasquez, of the Shrine of the Sacred Heart in Washington, who studied in Old San Juan, Puerto Rico, and others he knows on the island, said prayer helps fortify the courage and resilience of those whose lives have been altered, he said, listening to the radio of nature's wrath, he prayed for the earth that had been, which in addition to supplying diocesan programs has helped it maintain the buildings and grounds.

"Most usually every year we will discover a need to update and repair. This year, as time goes on, will certainly be no different," Father Sullivan said.

The annual Bishop's Appeal is a wonderful opportunity to touch the wider church,” said Father Sullivan. "We hope that our faithful will want to continue to support the diocese in this time of great need for our brothers and sisters in what is said in the annual video, as it has been hit repeatedly by the successive hurricanes."

"In a Sept. 22 statement, he noted the catastrophic effects of Hurricane Maria were visited on Puerto Rico and elsewhere in the Caribbean "just as we begin to assess the material and emotional damage of hurricanes Harvey and Irma."

"Cardinal DiNardo said: "Casting aside any temptation to despair, and full of hope in the loving providence of God, we pray that our Father may receive unto his loving presence those who have lost their lives, may he comfort the grieving, and may he fortify the courage and resilience of those whose lives have been uprooted by these disasters. May he extend the might of his right hand and bid the sea be 'quiet' and still' (Mark 4:39)."

Most of Puerto Rico remained without communication and little information had been gathered about conditions. "Our telecommunications system is partially down," Puerto Rico Gov. Ricardo Rossello told the news agency, "I'm hoping... Our emergency infrastructure is completely down."

The Society of Jesus in Puerto Rico posted on a website a message and a photo of a cross bent by the hurricane’s wind, but which is still anchored to a tower at Colegio San Ignacio de Loyola in San Juan, a Jesuit college preparatory school that Jesuit order operates on the island’s capital city.

"With gratitude, we have learned that the Jesuits, faculty and staff are safe," said the message from Father Flavio Bravo, Jesuit superior of his order’s Puerto Rico community. "Communication from the island remains limited, so we await news on our school families and members of our parish."

On the website jesuitscentralosouth.org, he posted a link for donations to help with recovery efforts, but much like the Capuchins, it’s too early to take in the enormity of damages. Father Reyes said the damage to Puerto Rico isn’t just material but also psychological for those who lived through the experience of Hurricane Maria and he worries for the most vulnerable in the population.

"This leaves behind a lot of damage," he told CNS. "But we hope for goodwill... the worries and necessities are great... but we can learn a lot from these experiences, that we have to find the good among the bad. In the middle of all of this, faith strengthens us."

Annual Bishop’s Appeal —

Diocesan campaign directly benefits parishes

BY MICHELLE DONAGHEY

"For the past four years our community has been fortunate enough to meet and exceed its Annual Bishop’s Appeal goal; on occasion, we have gone way above, while other times the goal was reached with some room to spare," said Father Bill Sullivan, who gives accolades to his New Haven parish of St. John the Baptist.

Father Sullivan is thankful for the blessings bestowed on the parish that have come as a result of each and every Annual Bishop’s Appeal. He is amazed at how giving the parishioners at St. John the Baptist have consistently been, which in addition to supporting diocesan programs has also allowed for many projects and programs to take place at the parish level. "I applaud this parish community — faith-filled members of the diocese since 1859," he said with a smile.

Every year, parishes in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend have a set Annual Bishop’s Appeal goal they attempt to reach: a specific amount of funds that are used in support of designated diocesan programs and outreachs. Any amount collected above and beyond a parish’s set goal, however, is not retained by the diocese but rather returned in its entirety to the parish where the overage was raised.

Since the inception of the Annual Bishop’s Appeal, these overages have funded a number of building projects and other priorities in parishes across the diocese.

The money that came back from the previous set goal has gone a long way for St. John the Baptist parish, enriching parish life. Among other applications, the funds have been used wisely," he said.

1. Helping to reconstruct structures, not just walls.
2. Helping to help his parishioners fully understand how the appeal works at the parish as well as the diocesan level and why they should try to give to it. Father Sullivan noted that he always reinforces the point that those who have been fortunate in life should be grateful for all they have been given and return the favor to those who have not been as fortunate.

"This leaves behind a lot of damage," he told CNS. "But we hope for goodwill... the worries and necessities are great... but we can learn a lot from these experiences, that we have to find the good among the bad. In the middle of all of this, faith strengthens us."

"Although there is a direct benefit for parishes who surpass their appeal goal, contributing to the work of the diocese should continue to be the primary motivation for prayerful participation, he encouraged. The focus point for this year’s ABA, "One Body in Christ," helps all Catholics in the diocese feel like they are a part of the campaign, he added.

"It should motivate everyone — especially our younger generations — to find a way to participate in their own faith formation by volunteering, by learning more about the faith, by attending Mass, and by sharing their faith with others."

"We are truly blessed to have such a diverse array of diocesan programs and services," he said. "And we really need the support of our parishioners to keep these programs going."

"With gratitude, we have learned that the Jesuits, faculty and staff are safe," said the message from Father Flavio Bravo, Jesuit superior of his order’s Puerto Rico community. "Communication from the island remains limited, so we await news on our school families and members of our parish."

On the website jesuitscentralosouth.org, he posted a link for donations to help with recovery efforts, but much like the Capuchins, it’s too early to take in the enormity of damages. Father Reyes said the damage to Puerto Rico isn’t just material but also psychological for those who lived through the experience of Hurricane Maria and he worries for the most vulnerable in the population.

"This leaves behind a lot of damage," he told CNS. "But we hope for goodwill... the worries and necessities are great... but we can learn a lot from these experiences, that we have to find the good among the bad. In the middle of all of this, faith strengthens us."
Encuentro process aimed at meeting needs, fostering sense of mission

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Most dioceses and archdioceses around the country are holding their diocesan Encuentros throughout the fall, highlighting what contributions Hispanic Catholics bring to the Catholic Church and their faith communities. Anticipation of those gatherings comes as communities celebrate this year’s annual National Hispanic Heritage Month, highlighting Hispanics’ contributions to their communities and to society. The observance began Sept. 15 and runs through Oct. 15. U.S. census estimates show that about 29.7 million Hispanics/Latinos in the United States identify as Catholics, which represents nearly 59 percent of the total Hispanic population in the country. Among millennials, Hispanic Catholics represent 54 percent of U.S. Catholics born in 1982 or later, U.S. Catholic officials say.

News Briefs

Frances Cabrini, minister to immigrants

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Francis has endorsed an approach of “zero tolerance” toward all members of the church guilty of sexually abusing minors or vulnerable adults. Having listened to abuse survivors and having made what he described as a “serious effort” in approving a more lenient set of sanctions against an Italian priest abuser, the pope said he has heard, however, that “having guilt of abuse has no right to an appeal, and he will never grant a papal pardon.” Simply because the person who does this (sexually abuses minors) is sick, it is a sickness,” he told his advisory commission on child protection during an audience at the Vatican Sept. 21. Members of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors, including its president — Cardinal Sean P. O’Malley of Boston — were present in Rome Sept. 21-25 for their plenary assembly. Because the problem of cases and allegations of abuse are “grave” and because it is also grave that some have not adequately taken stock of the problem — it is important the doctrinal congregation continue to handle the cases, rather than turn them over directly to Vatican tribunals, as some have suggested, he added. However, he noted, the doctrinal congregation will need more personnel to work on cases of abuse in order to expedite the “many cases that do not proceed” with the backlog. Pope Francis told commission members he wants to better balance the work of the doctrinal team dealing with appeals filed by clergy accused of abuse. He said the majority of members are canon lawyers, and he would like to balance out their more legalistic approach with more members who are diocesan bishops and have had to deal with abuse in their diocese.

Renowned investigator of Marian apparitions dies at 99

ROME (CNS) — Msgr. Rene Laurentin, who spent a lifetime studying Marian apparitions, died Sept. 10 at the age of 99 in Evry, France. Msgr. Laurentin had published more than 160 books and 1,000 articles about Mariology, including the “Dictionary of the Apparitions” of the Virgin Mary.” The 1,200-page volume lists more than 2,400 alleged apparitions of Mary all over the world and provides details about the church’s investigations of them. To this day, only a handful of the claims are recognized by the Catholic Church. “The apparitions are not seen with the most benign eye by the church,” he had said, emphasizing how seriously the church investigates the claims and citing the long approval process of even the most popular visions. “Apparitions are the least scientifically studied, the most hidden of all theological subjects,” the French priest said.

Affirmation of peace is commitment to justice, says St. Louis archbishop

ST. LOUIS, Mo. (CNS) — Archbishop Carlson highlighted the Church’s role in social justice and other faith leaders in St. Louis called for a commitment to peace and justice in St. Louis in what he described as a time of “deep hurt and disappointment.” More than 500 people gathered at Kiener Plaza Park Sept. 19 for an Interfaith Prayer Service for Peace and justice. Following the nearly one-hour service, almost 300 people marched from the plaza to City Hall, where they held a peaceful demonstration. As Catholic and Jewish communities gather together as one human family this afternoon to both pray and reflect,” Archbishop Carlson said. “We remember that we are not a divided humanity but one human family. Here in St. Louis, we have walked together, we have rejoiced together and we have cried together. Today, it is no exception. “We must continue our walk committed to the higher vision that holds us accountable to our truest identity as children of God — capable of bringing God’s peace to every corner, where division and violence seek the upper hand.” The prayer service took place four days after a not guilty verdict in the trial of former St. Louis Metropolitan Police Officer Jason Stockley. He was charged with first-degree murder in the shooting death in 2011 of Anthony Lamar Smith, an African-American. St. Louis Circuit Judge Timothy Wilson issued the ruling after Stockley, who is white, waived his right to a jury trial.

Pope urges politicians to be models of service in fight against Mafia

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — When politics becomes all about partisan interests and secret deals, it leaves behind its true vocation and becomes susceptible to the same influences of corruption that allow the Mafia to flourish, Pope Francis said. Authentic politics is “an eminently form of charity,” which strives to ensure a future of peace and full dignity for every person, whereas “a deviated politics” no longer listens to the conscience, but “banalizes evil, confuses truth with lies and profits from the role of public respon-

VATICAN signs treaty to ban nuclear weapons

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The Holy See ratified and signed the new U.N. Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, and the high-level Vatican diplomat who signed the treaty told a U.N. conference that the Catholic Church supports efforts “to move progressively toward a world free of nuclear weapons.” Archbishop Paul Gallagher, Vatican foreign minister, signed the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons at the United Nations Sept. 20. More than 60 other countries signed it as well. The treaty would enter into force 90 days after at least 50 countries both sign and ratify it. Also at the United Nations, Archbishop Gallagher addressed the 10th Conference on Facilitating Entry into Force of Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, a treaty the Vatican adhered to in 1996. The text of his speech was released at the Vatican Sept. 21. He said, believes “a nuclear test ban, nuclear nonproliferation and nuclear disarmament are closely interlinked and must be achieved as quickly as possible under effective international control.”

St. Frances Xavier Cabrini is depicted in a stained glass window at St. Patrick Church in Smithtown, N.Y. Although she died 100 years ago, the patron of immigrants is a shining example of “love and intelligence” in ministering to the needs of immigrants and helping them become integral members of their new homelands. In the New World, Cabrini’s mission was to help Catholic immigrants, setting up orphanages, schools and hospitals in nine U.S. cities. Responding to “the great migrations underway today” the same way Mother Cabrini did “will enrich all and generate union and dialogue, not separation and hostility,” she stated.

CNS photo/Gregory A. Shemitz

St. Frances Xavier Cabrini, minister to immigrants

Family Heritage Month, highlighting contributions Hispanic Catholics make to the church's Encuentro process are celebrated this year. Among millennials, Hispanic Catholics represent 54 percent of U.S. Catholics born in 1982 or later, U.S. Catholic officials say.

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Registration open: Rejoice! Women’s Retreat

PLYMOUTH — Women of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend are invited to attend the Rejoice! Women’s Retreat Dec. 1-3 at Underwood Retreat and Conference Center.

At this year’s retreat, Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades will lead a guided meditation during adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. Speaker Sister Ann Shields, SGL, will communicate God’s desire that faith become living and fruitful for God’s glory and for the salvation of many.

Sister Shields is an internationally noted conference and retreat speaker, and the author of numerous books on Catholic spirituality, including “Deeper Conversion,” “To Be Like Jesus,” and “More of the Holy Spirit.” She currently hosts the popular daily radio program “Food for the Journey.” She is part of Renewal Ministries’ leadership team and a member of The Servants of God’s Love, a charismatic religious community established in the Diocese of Lansing, Michigan.

Brochures may be available in church narthexes, or go to www.diocesefwsb.org/rejoice. Registration is open through Oct. 16. After that, space permitting, women from outside the diocese may register. For more information call 574-707-3381, email jthepartment@msn.com or contact Cecilia Aguilar-Tussey in the Office of Evangelization, 260-399-1447 or caguilartussey@diocesefwsb.org.

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School receives counseling award

FORT WAYNE — St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School’s Counseling Program Portfolio, developed through the Redesigning School Counseling process, was recently approved by Indiana Department of Education. With this authorization, the school was awarded the Indiana Gold Star School Counseling Award.

In order to qualify for this honor, a team consisting of school staff and parents developed a comprehensive school counseling program that addressed all of the Indiana State Standards for guidance. This committee was tasked with the challenge of creating a plan that would incorporate these standards into the school curriculum. It devised a strategy that will allow for focus on the academic, social, and emotional well-being of all St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic School students.

Gold Star candidates normally have one year to complete and fulfill the requirements needed to obtain this status, however, the team completed the process in only six months. St. Elizabeth Ann Seton’s Gold Star group was spearheaded by school counselor Tara Wahliuk, Principal Lois Widner, kindergarten teacher Karen Tippmann and school parents Sarah Stefan and Lisa Vance. The team also worked closely with an advisory committee of 15 people comprised of community members, parents, students, teachers and mental health providers.

Afternoon of Prayerful Remembrance and Intercession

FORT WAYNE — On Sunday, Oct. 8, the University of Saint Francis' Campus Ministry and Project Rachel Post-Abortion Ministry will host a prayer service that acknowledges abortion’s universal impact on parents, grandparents, siblings, family members, friends, medical personnel, clergy and others.

During “An Afternoon of Prayerful Remembrance and Intercession,” those present will pray for all who have been wounded by an abortion decision and consider how they can spread God’s message of love and mercy. Created by Therese Bonapartis and the Sisters of Life, an Afternoon of Prayerful Remembrance and Intercession is, as the name suggests, a prayer service for the entire local community, created in the spirit of the New Evangelization. Acknowledging abortion’s universal impact through reflections and testimonies offered as part of the day, the service offers the opportunity to come together in an extended period of prayer, contemplation and intercession in the context of the church’s sacraments and to seek forgiveness and healing for the entire nation. The Fort Wayne event begins at noon with testimonies and intercessory prayer, followed by eucharistic adoration at 1 p.m. The sacrament of reconciliation and pastoral support will be available during this second hour. Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades will celebrate Mass at 2 p.m. and the event will conclude with a light reception. All are welcome to attend any part of the event. For more information contact Father David Metznich at 260-399-7700 ext. 6701 or dmetznich@sf.edu, or Allison Sturm, Project Rachel coordinator, at 260-399-1452 or asturm@diocesefwsb.org.

Eight given Spirit of Holy Cross Award

NOTRE DAME — To mark the Solemnity of Our Lady of Sorrows on Sept. 15, the Congregation of Holy Cross, United States Province of Priests and Brothers, named eight recipients for the 2017 Spirit of Holy Cross Award. In conjunction with the feast of the special patron of the congregation, the award is given annually to lay collaborators who faithfully serve the Province. The 2017 recipients are:

• Nancy Conroy, who began service at Holy Cross House as a nursing assistant in 1991. In 2005, she assumed the duties of coordinating doctors’ appointments, seeing to transportation needs and advocating for the residents with great compassion and understanding until her retirement in August.

• Brian Doyle, whose connection with the Congregation of Holy Cross spanned over 40 years, until his passing in the spring. He graduated from the University of Notre Dame in 1978, and after positions with U.S. Catholic and...
Red Masses slated for Oct. 2-3 in South Bend, Fort Wayne

In 2013, through the collaboration and efforts of several legal professionals in the Fort Wayne area, Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades approved the establishment of the first St. Thomas More Society in the diocese. This year, in response to growing interest, a second chapter of the St. Thomas More Society has been created in South Bend.

Officially recognized and introduced this past Aug. 15 by Bishop Rhoades, the new chapter is led by attorney Stephen Judge. Judge indicated that the formation of the St. Thomas More Society of South Bend became a reality through the efforts of numerous individuals in the local area, as well as from the guidance and direction of Bishop Rhoades. He shared that “given the distance between the two ends of the diocese, discussions arose concerning whether South Bend should have its own society chapter to better serve the needs of legal professionals in the local area. We organized a team and began drafting the bylaws based upon what had been composed in Fort Wayne. Bishop Rhoades approved the establishment, and those who participated in the formation process continue to serve as leading members of the organization.”

Fellow officers include Vice President Chris Godfrey, Treasurer Patrick Murphy and Secretary Ellen Reilandt. Each is also a member of the Board of Governors, along with Danielle Campbell, Fred Everett, Kari Gallagher, Paul Harold, Patrick Murphy, Laura Seng and Eric Thomason.

The society’s first major event will be the celebration of a Red Mass on Monday, Oct. 2, at Notre Dame’s Basilica of the Sacred Heart. This will be followed by the Inaugural St. Thomas More Lecture by Professor Stephen Smith, Ph.D., dean of faculty at Hillsdale College.

Judge indicated that the Red Mass is a key event for the St. Thomas More Society, since it centers on the numerous members of the legal profession around the truth of the Gospel and the core of the Catholic faith, the Eucharist. Through the creation of the society in South Bend, Judge seeks to strengthen fellowship and deepen Christian commitment, Judge expressed his hope that many would choose to attend this year’s Mass and consider joining the society.

The fundamental mission of the St. Thomas More Society of South Bend is to be “a Catholic professional association that advocates the use of both faith and reason in promoting the common good and the welfare of its members and society.” This will occur most often through liturgical celebrations, communal days of reflection, and opportunities to attend continuing education classes, which attorneys throughout Indiana are required to take on a yearly basis. Judge shared that his hopes for the society included “building community among local Catholics in the legal profession, providing opportunities for education on issues affecting them, offering spiritual enrichment, and providing mentorship for young lawyers, aspiring law students, and future legal professionals.”

In upholding St. Thomas More as their patron, the society seeks to identify with a man who, in the words of St. John Paul II, “bore witness to his Catholic Faith in his search for truth, his defense of conscience, and his commitment to the dignity of the person, the sanctity of marriage, and justice in civil society. Martyred for his religious convictions, he is venerated as an imparable example of moral integrity” and acknowledged, even outside the church, as a witness to the “inalienable dignity of the human conscience” and the “privacy of truth over power.”

To learn more, as well as stay up-to-date on events or connect with other members, visit https://stthomasmoresb.wordpress.com/.

In the upcoming days, Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades will once again celebrate the annual Red Masses for the diocese, an ancient tradition commemorating the ever-relevant necessity of upholding faith and virtue within all areas of the legal and judicial systems.

This year’s Red Masses will be celebrated in South Bend on Monday, Oct. 2 at 5:15 p.m. at the Basilica of the Sacred Heart, University of Notre Dame, and in Fort Wayne on Tuesday, Oct. 3 at 5:30 p.m. at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception.

The history of the Red Mass dates back to the 13th century, when European nations chose to honor the opening of the judicial year with a celebration of the Eucharist. From its origin, the Mass has been attended by various members of the legal profession who gathered in prayer to seek divine guidance and inspiration as a way of preparation for the challenges ahead.

The first Red Mass held in the United States was celebrated in 1928 at New York’s old St. Andrew’s Church, located in the shadow of the state and federal courthouses. Today, the tradition is most prominently upheld at the Cathedral of St. Matthew in Washington, D.C., where members of the U.S. Supreme Court, Congress, diplomatic corps, the cabinet and even the president himself, on occasion, have come together in prayer to ask for God’s assistance and blessing as a new term for the court begins. It is also customary for non-Catholics, even non-Christians, to be in attendance as a show of commitment to preserving truth, goodness and virtue within their professions.

Deriving its name from the red vestments worn by the celebrant and scarlet robes worn by the high justices of the Middle Ages, the Red Mass also signifies the invocation of the Holy Spirit, from whom flows the sevenfold gifts of wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety and fear of the Lord. While these gifts are most often associated with the sacrament of confirmation, they are also meant to be cultivated on a continual basis, ensuring that the principles of faith are not silenced or overshadowed by the noise and influence of contemporary culture.

Since 2013, an additional venue for Fort Wayne legal professionals to connect their Catholic faith with practical living has included the opportunity to become involved with the St. Thomas More Society, an organization designed to bring together people of faith and elected officials to promote education in Catholic church doctrine. Now, to further strengthen and aid legal professionals throughout the diocese, a second chapter of the St. Thomas More Society has been newly formed in South Bend. Modeled after the chapter in Fort Wayne, Bishop Rhoades officially established the society in South Bend on Aug. 15.

This chapter, overseen by a board of governors and led by President Stephen Judge, a South Bend attorney, will celebrate its first major event with this year’s Red Mass, followed by an inaugural St. Thomas More Lecture.

The speech will be given by Professor Stephen Smith, Ph.D., dean of faculty, at St. Thomas More Lecture.

The Red Mass

A time for prayer and reflection on the meaning of responsible leadership and justice.

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South Bend, Fort Wayne

Hillsdale College, who will present “St. Thomas More on ‘Leading Citizenship:’ Developing the Leaders Needed for Stormy Times.” Smith is a graduate of both the University of Notre Dame and the University of Dallas, where he also served as the assistant director of the Center for Thomas More Studies. Having joined the faculty at Hillsdale College as professor of English in 2001, he now serves the Temple Family Chair in English Literature. Additionally, he is the editor of the forthcoming books, “The Essential Works of Thomas More” and “The Fire of Life: Wonder and Education in Late Shakespeare.” His talk will take place at 7 p.m. at the Eck School of Law at Notre Dame following the Red Mass; a buffet reception will be provided.

The following evening in Fort Wayne, Robert J. Muise, Esq., co-founder of the American Freedom Law Center, will speak on “Reproductive Rights: A Pro-Life Perspective.” Muise, an expert in constitutional law, has dedicated his practice to defending religious liberties, freedom of speech and the right to life in state and federal trial and appellate courts all across the country. A graduate of the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Massachusetts, Muise then served 15 years as an office in the United States Marine Corps. While a captain on active duty he attended law school at the University of Notre Dame, graduating summa cum laude in 1997. He then served several years as a Marine judge advocate before resigning his commission. His personal military decorations include the Meritorious Service Medal, the Navy Commendation Medal and the Navy Achievement Medal. His presentation will take place at the Archbishop Noll Center after the Red Mass; dinner will be served afterward to those who have previously registered.

Attendance at either talk will provide legal professionals the opportunity to receive a one-hour continuing legal education credit.

All are welcome!
Parish builds relationships with intentionality

BY CLAIRE KENNEY

Led by Father Glenn Kohrman, its ninth pastor, Holy Family Parish leans on the members of its faith community as a cornerstone for demonstrating what the Catholic faith calls its children to do — live out the Gospel.

Holy Family’s Parish Life webpage states, “A deeper understanding (of the faith) can lead to a more intimate relationship with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and through the Trinitry to the Church and our family, friends, neighbors, parish, and community.” The South Bend parish’s mission mirrors this idea. “Holy Family Parish, following the example of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, will create a welcoming environment to foster a deeper understanding of our mission as followers of Christ, where we gather to worship God, aspire to learn all that can be so impactful” and bring a community together. Jim Niespodziany, who has witnessed firsthand the benefits of fostering community among parish members. One recent event is particularly cemented in his mind.

When the teenage son of a family within the parish passed recently, Holy Family offered a tremendous sense of support to that family.

“Thousands of people came to support the family and it was decided to have the vigil service while people were visiting the family,” Father Kohrman said. “So many people were comforting the family, praying for the young man and the family for their profound loss. It was a very moving experience for me.”

Father Kohrman described it as an example of “how tragedy can be so impactful” and bring a community together.

Holy Family has been a diocesan parish for nearly 75 years. It was named a parish in 1945, and the present structure of the church was built in 2000. The year 2020 will mark the 20th anniversary of that building, and the parish plans to celebrate the anniversary with some updates.

Provided by Holy Family Parish

This statue of the Holy Family visualizes the importance that Holy Family Parish puts on family relationships, as well as on the relationships between parishioners and with members of the local community.

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A diverse parish that gives back to the community

BY CLAIRE KENNEY

Described in its mission statement as a “multi-racial faith community, rooted in the African-American tradition,” St. Augustine Church in South Bend was originally formed in the late 1920s as a parish dedicated to African-American Catholic evangelization and worship. The movement to build the church was led by Father George O’Connor, a Caucasian Holy Cross priest who was raised by African-American parents after his own family died tragically when a tornado ripped through their farm.

Between 1961 and 1972, during the height of the Civil Rights movement, Father Dan Piel served as the parish’s pastor. Father Piel is well-known for his work as chairman of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Indiana University South Bend Heritage Center has referenced the parish as one with “a diverse congregation with a long-running commitment to human and civil rights.”

Today the parish is led by Father Leonard Collins, CSC, who has served as the pastor for nearly a decade.

“An interesting thing in my life is that, in 1968, I served as deacon at St. Augustine’s with Father Dan Piel and I am now just turning 75,” Father Collins said. “Isn’t there something about the circle being unbroken?”

Deacon Mel Tardy also ministers to the parish. He is known for his dynamic preaching, leadership in youth ministry and creative community gatherings, including themed Bible studies.

Deacon Mel Tardy, left, and Father Leonard Collins serve St. Augustine Parish in South Bend, a Spirit-filled parish that was originally founded as a worship space for African-Americans.

“Father Tolton is known for his dedicated service to poor, oppressed blacks on the streets of Chicago and for breaking down the racial barrier for African-Americans to become priests; but really, he inspired and evangelized many whites, too,” Annie Tardy, president of the society, said. “The society seeks to honor and continue this broad legacy of Father Tolton and to promote his worthy cause for canonization to sainthood.”

One can attend this diverse parish of 130 families for Mass each Sunday at 8:15 a.m., which is a cantored Mass, and at 10:30 a.m., at which time the gospel choir accompanies the liturgy.

The Tolton Society is another of the ministries hosted by St. Augustine. The society is named after Father Augustus Tolton, a former African-American slave who later became the first recognized black priest in the U.S.

“The choir focuses on gospel music. St. Augustine’s website reads, “The choir has in the past, as well as currently, delivered a soulful sound as traditional gospel songs are sung, as well as current selections. This focus has made this vibrant and uplifting music a signature of the parish. Many of the songs are reminders of how God walks his people through their struggles. “We are blessed to have our gospel choir of gifted musicians adding so much to our heritage of African-American culture,” Father Collins said.

St. Augustine is active in the surrounding community. It supports St. Vincent and has set up its own independent soup kitchen that serves lunch to those in need three days out of the week. “Our many volunteers in the soup kitchen and the St. Vincent de Paul Society continue to help the neighborhood,” Father Collins said.

The parish also hosts coffee after Sunday Mass as a way to offer an opportunity for parish members to enjoy each other’s company. “Eating while sharing fellowship after each Mass at coffee is another community-building activity,” Father Collins said.
Cursillo men challenged to develop lives of conviction

BY RON BUSCH

The Cursillo movement is a lay movement within the Catholic Church. Spanish for “a little course,” it was originally designed to assist in the training of the pilgrim guides who led believers along a pilgrimage path leading to the burial place of St. James in Spain.

Involvement in Cursillo took on new meaning when a zealous Catholic evangelist, Eduardo Bonnin Aguilo, got involved in the 1940s and vigorously promoted the Cursillo retreats, in time enabling them to flourish throughout the world. Bonnin’s involvement is viewed as the foundation of the current movement. His mentality was based on three principles: the love of God, friendship and the person.

From the beginning the movement has been interested in looking for the “faraways” who exist at the peripheries of the church, and including them in the Catholic faith. This can be tied to Pope Francis’ emphasis on the need to reach those Catholics found on the peripheries.

The website explains that “Cursillos in Christianity is a Movement which, by its own Method, attempts from within the Church, to give life to the essential Christian truths in the singularity, originality and creativity of the person. In discovering their potential and accepting their limitations, they will direct their freedom with their conviction, reinforce their will with decisiveness and direct their friendship with the virtue of constancy in their day-to-day life, personally and with others.”

The Cursillo movement is typically introduced over a Thursday evening to Sunday three-day weekend. Religious and lay personnel present a series of talks to the candidates and the group calls upon the Holy Spirit for enlightenment and guidance.

The series of talks are discussed in small groups as the team and candidates live as a small Christian community. The talks and discussions cover topics including: the layperson’s role within the church, the meaning of grace and sacraments, the importance of prayer, and the study of God. Living in a Christian community is a vital component of the experience, so the participants learn how to bring Christ to others, how that can transform one’s living environment and the importance of supporting one another as we attempt to live a Christian life.

Typically the candidates pray together, attend daily Mass and can receive the sacrament of reconciliation. By weekend’s end the candidates experience a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ and a better understanding of the Holy Spirit’s power. They leave the weekend knowing that they have been called to spread God’s Word.

A Cursillo weekend was recently completed by a group of men within the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend. The weekend, led by Father Drew Curry of St. Robert Bellarmine in North Manchester, concluded with a Mass celebrated by Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades at St. Felix Catholic Center in Huntington.

The bishop’s homily focused on the life and death of Blessed Father Stanley Francis Rother, the first U.S.-born priest to be beatified or named “blessed.”

Bishop Rhoades spoke of Father Rother’s Oklahoma farm upbringing and discernment into his farming skills to assist the people of the region and was killed by rebels.

Rother was assigned, at his own request, as a missionary priest in the rural highlands of southwest Guatemala. He was able to use his farming skills to assist the people of the region and was known as a very loving and caring priest.

Civil War broke out and eventually spread to the mountainous region. Father Rother reluctantly returned to Oklahoma when his name appeared on a “death list,” but he felt compelled to continue his ministry in Guatemala, reasoning that, “a shepherd cannot run at the first sign of danger.” Shortly after arriving back in Guatemala, on July 28, 1981, Father Rother was killed by rebels.

Bishop Rhoades upheld Blessed Father Rother as a model for priests and those in religious life. “Are we willing to suffer for Christ? Are we willing to dedicate our life to Him?” he asked. The bishop concluded that “we are all called, no matter the difficulty or situation,” issuing the same spiritual challenge to the men of the Cursillo retreat who were gathered before him.

Instruments of peace

St. Mary of the Assumption new principal Andy Adams, left, joined the school staff and students in kicking off the school’s annual Instruments of Peace Program at the beginning of the academic year. Those in attendance pledged to share God’s love with others while nurturing and strengthening their faith to grow in virtue and transform the world.

Students harvest for charity

The Student Council at St. Joseph School in Garrett picked vegetables from the parish garden in mid-September to donate to a local charity, the St. Martin Soup Kitchen.
TODAY'S CATHOLIC

Bishop celebrates Mass with homeschool families

BY CLAIRE CAPDEVIELLE

On Tuesday, Sept. 19, Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades offered the sacrifice of the Mass for Catholic Homeschoolers of Michiana, a group of families who connect to socialize and to share information about Catholic education in the home. The bishop referred to the event as his “school visit” for homeschoolers.

He is inviting homeschoolers in his round of visits to Catholic schools in the diocese. Although these children are not enrolled in a formal school together, the Mass made it possible to gather a large group of Catholic homeschoolers to celebrate the beginning of the school year.

The Mass was celebrated at the usual 5:30 p.m. weekday time at St. Matthew Cathedral, South Bend. The liturgy of the bishop’s Mass was beautifully formal. Bishop Rhoades and his concelebrants wore red vestments in honor of the martyr St. Januarius, as the bishop explained at the opening of the Mass. The altar servers were children of homeschooling families, and cantor Mark Hoipkemier sang in formal. Bishop Rhoades and his concelebrants wore red vestments in honor of the martyr St. Januarius, as the bishop explained at the opening of the Mass.

The bishop expressed his surprise at the number of small children present. Later, just before dismissing the congregation, he joked that it was highly unusual for him to celebrate a Mass at which more than half the congregation was under the age of 7.

Though CHS Michiana’s activities are focused mainly on school-aged children, many of these families also include little ones who haven’t yet started school. John Sikorski, one of the organizers of the event, said that there are many Catholic homeschoolers in the diocese, even beyond the membership of the Catholic homeschoolers’ association. But according to John Adamson, who currently leads CHS Michiana with his wife Hollie and a third co-coordinator, longtime homeschooling mom Alisa Hubbard, CHS Michiana is growing rapidly: “In the past five years, the group has gone from 37 families to 90 families. As Adamson pointed out, if each family has an average of five children, that adds up to 450 kids! As one might expect, however, the number of children in homeschooling families varies widely, from single-child families to large families with six or more children. Adamson himself is the father of two elementary-aged homeschoolers and a new baby boy.

According to the co-coordinator, the largest number of homeschoolers in CHS Michiana come from three parishes: St. Pius X in Granger, St. Matthew Cathedral and St. Stanislaus Bishop and Martyr. At St. Stanislaus, Msgr. John C. Fritz oversees a parent-run homeschooling co-op that offers opportunities for children to meet weekly in a classroom setting to learn certain subjects that would best be studied in a group, such as drama and book discussion. “Most people think the bad thing about homeschooling is you don’t see your friends, but that’s not true,” said Angela Philpott, age 11, who attends the St. Stanislaus co-op. Susan Greuman, serving as prefect, ensures a balance between academic and social activity among the students.

After Mass the group proceeded to the St. Matthew’s school gym, graciously lent to them for the event. Sister Gianna Marie Wehler, principal of St. Matthew School, was there to supervise. Older children made use of the space by playing a lively game of basketball, while younger children ran up and down a raised stage. As well as this Mass and potluck celebration, which looks to become an annual event, homeschoolers organize a big back-to-school picnic and a well-attended All Saint’s Day party each year, and numerous smaller events.

When asked what he finds special about saying Mass for children, Bishop Rhoades responded, “I love celebrating Mass with children, their happiness, their joy in praying… and especially their devotion.” Though they are learning in different environments than other Catholic school children, their fundamental beliefs are the same. As Bishop Rhoades said in his homily, “God still visits his people. He visits us today in the holy Eucharist. He comes to us through his Son’s body and blood, and we give thanks. … We must teach this especially to our children.” To learn more about the Catholic Homeschoolers of Michiana, contact Jon and Hollie Adamson at jhadamsen@gmail.com.

Claire Capdevielle is a 7th-grade Catholic Homeschoolers of Michiana student.

Support for seminarian education

Provided by the Father Solanus Casey Vocation Society

Father Solanus Casey Vocation Society President Darren Schortgen presents a check for $2,800 to Father Andrew Budzinski, director of the Office of Vocations, on behalf of the group. The recently donated funds will be applied to the education of seminarians of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend.

Grandparents visit St. Joseph School

Provided by St. Joseph School

St. Joseph School in South Bend celebrated Grandparents Day on Friday, Sept. 8, in pre-kindergarten through sixth grade. Close to 115 grandparents attended. Pictured is Claire McBride with her grandparents.

‘Fatima: Then and Now’

FORT WAYNE — The faculty of the Department of Philosophy and Theology at the University of Saint Francis invites the public to the upcoming lecture in its 2017-18 fall lecture series.

Sister Jacinta Krecek, OSF, assistant professor of theology, will give the lecture, “The Message of Fatima: Then and Now,” on Wednesday, Oct. 11, at 7 p.m. on the campus of the University of Saint Francis, Brookside Ballroom, 2701 Spring St. Admission is free.

St. John Paul II said, “Fatima is more relevant now than ever.” With this year marking 100 years since Our Lady of Fatima delivered her message, Sister Krecek will examine what is so significant about it for Catholics to take to heart today.

For information or parking accommodations contact Angie Springer at 260-399-2700 x8100 or aspringer@sf.edu, or visit philosophy.sf.edu/lecture-series.
Is this bloodshed really necessary?

BY DAVID MCCLAMROCK

From my first year in law school, I remember the excellent advice of Irving Younger, who said that points you need to make, and “then stop. Stop. Stop!” This advice should have been taken, but was not, by Edward Feser and Joseph M. Bessette, the authors of “By Man Shall His Blood Be Shed: A Catholic Defense of Capital Punishment.” The authors do make, and effectually support, many points worthy of serious consideration. Among them: Catholics are not required to favor the abolition of the death penalty. The church has consistently taught that capital punishment is legitimate in principle, while often pleading for mercy in practice. Death is a deserved and proportionate punishment for the worst murderers. The credible prospect of the death penalty prevents crimes and saves lives—possibly by deterrence, but who would otherwise commit murder, and certainly by inducing deserving murderers to plead guilty, and accept longer sentences than they would otherwise receive. No other penalty appears to be adequate for those whom imprisonment has not restrained from killing, or escaped from killing. Numerous arguments for abolition of the death penalty are weak, ill-founded or even downright stupid. For example, some say the death penalty should be abolished because it’s too similar to kidnapping. If only the authors had stopped after making points like these. Alas, they didn’t. Not satisfied with saying that death may be a suitable punishment for the worst crimes, they assert that no punishment less than death would be severe enough as retribution for such crimes. The authors provide no support for this claim, however. Despite many references to the teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas, they ignore the parts of St. Thomas’s teaching that contradicts their claim. If an offender deserves death, why does it make any sense for church leaders to plead for mercy in depriving the offender of what is deserved? St. Thomas explains why, in Part I, Question 21 of the “Summa Theologica” — which Feser and Bessette acknowledge that they often use — and also in St. Thomas, justice toward the offender, in imposing deserved and proportionate retribution, sets the minimum to their appropriate punishment—not a minimum. That’s why mercy is entirely consistent with justice: “God acts mercifully, not indeed by going against his justice, but by doing something more than justice: this is not to pay an offender two hundred pieces of money, though owing him only one hundred, does nothing against justice, but is liberal and mercifully. The case is the same with one who pardons an offense committed against him, for in remitting it he may be said to bestow a gift. Even in the damnation of a sinner, if by God’s mercy is seen, which, though it does not totally destroy the sinner, it avails, in punishing short of what is deserved.”

For an offender who may deserve death, keeping more — as in mercifully letting the offender live when he deserves death. What merits the minimum appropriate punishment for an offender who may deserve a more severe punishment? Basically, it’s the need to safeguard the common good — to protect human society and the innocent people who compose it from harm and danger. If not for this need, it would be unlawful for an offender who may deserve death to live. By man shall his blood be shed.

Hurricane Harvey and the kayaking priest

HURRICANE HARVEY stranded Father David Bergeron in his pickup the night it ripped through Houston. The 38-year-old priest had been visiting his brother and had to pull over on an overpass three miles from where the flooded road ended. He couldn’t make it any farther or go back, so he curled up in his truck and slept as thunder and sirens alternated — rain pounding, wind howling, his beloved city churning in despair. The next morning was eerily quiet.

Father David’s kayak was in the back of the truck — he’d used it just the day before — and he was compelled to venture out in search of wine so he could celebrate Mass with some families stranded in a nearby apartment building.

It made quite a sight: a red kayak slithering through the gray flood waters, a handsome man in his baseball cap and kayak cap, paddling through the dark, curly hair. There had been no sun for three days, and here was a smiling priest rowing down Buffalo Bayou.

“It was a surprise to see a kayak in the street,” Father David told me. “It brought a smile to everyone’s face.”

He explained that his request for wine came from a couple in Buffalo Bayou. “They told me, ‘We’ve been interested in what alleviates, in punishment short of what is deserved.’”

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The Lord stands ready to forgive us, if we repent

The Sunday Gospel

Twenty-Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Matthew 21:28-32

The Book of Ezekiel provides this weekend’s first reading. Pivotal in Jewish history was the time spent by Hebrew captives, and by their descendants, in Babylon, the capital of the then-powerful Babylonian Empire. This empire was taken the Promised Land forlorn, in the process forever ending the two Hebrew independent kingdoms. Many scribes were taken to Babylon. Occurring in the sixth century B.C., this is called the Exile. For the Hebrew people, the Exile was a heartbreaking time. They were so far from their homeland. The Exile seemed as if it would last forever. Indeed, it lasted for four generations. Quite likely many Jews fell away from the traditional religion of their ancestors.

These people were like people in any other time. Religion seemed for many to have failed. God had failed them.

Ezekiel wrote during this time. He had to respond to the fury and despair of the people. The prophet turns the tables, confronting the people with their own sinfulness. Where is their devotion to God? How faithful have they been in being God’s people? No one realistically could have argued that there had been no sin. Who deserted whom?

The Epistle to the Philippians is the source of the second reading. We are always reading the Epistle to the Philippians, at least by birth. Many of these Jews, such as Paul himself, had been pious in their religious practice, while others were more casual in Judaism. Many early Christians were from pagan backgrounds. In many Christian communities, persons of both these traditions lived side by side.

Such was the case in Philippi. Jewish symbols and references appear in the epistle, but the city in no sense was Jewish. Jews were there, but Philippi was thoroughly pagan, an important military base in the Roman Empire, situated in what now is Greece. Considering that Christians were in the minority, the epistle had to reinforce their commitment to the Lord and challenge them to withstand paganism.

This epistle magnificently proclaims Christ, the Lord, the Savior. This weekend’s reading is an example. Scholars think that this passage was actually an ancient hymn, sung by early Christians when they met for worship.

St. Matthew’s Gospel furnishes the third reading. It recalls an encounter with the priests and elders. Since religion was a favorite topic for everyone at the time, even priests and persons learned in Judaism would have been interested in what Jesus said.

God is the father in the parable. The vineyard represents the people of Israel, God’s own, God’s chosen, borrowing a well-known image from the prophets. Scholars suggest several possible applications, but one suggestion is that the first son represents Israel, the other son represents gentiles and sinners.

The second son, not the heir, is true to God. Gentiles and sinners, represented by the second son, can hope for salvation. No one is beyond God’s love. Every sinner can repent.

Reflection

The readings this weekend very much are in the stream of readings heard during the week-ends of late summer and now early fall. The church is calling us to discipleship.

We all hear this call realizing that we are sinners. Our sin shames us, convincing us that we are strangers in God’s kingdom, weeds in God’s garden.

We feel overwhelmed, trapped by our weakness in a state of sin and estrangement from God. Still, we can repent. We first must recognize that our volun-

The Lord stands ready to forgive us, if we repent.

Christina Capecci

Then came the newsman from ABC 13 reporting from the wet outskirts. He squatted beside the kayak and held up a microphone.

Father David identified himself and chronicled his morning. The phone in his life vest began ping- ing. He knew what that meant. Here was his chance.

“I guess we live,” Father David said, “and the Lord is always with us.”

Before long the interview wrapped, and Father David rode off. He helped rescue a frail old priest from a hotel. He celebrated Mass. And he ministered to dozens of stranded Texans in his midst — greeting children, leading prayer and listening to their harrowing tales. He had just preached about Our Lady, Star of the sea. He spent the Lenten season teaching about the mystery of the kayaking priest went viral, and Father David gave 17 interviews in the following 24 hours. The chapel at his residence, the Catholic

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READINGS


Monday: Zec 8:6-17 Ps 54:1-4, 6-9, 11-12 95-67-86

Tuesday: Mt 22:11-14 Ps 52:1-6, 11-12 95:1-12

Wednesday: Neh 8:1-8 Ps 137:1-6 Lk 95-67-62

Thursday: Neh 8:1-4a, 5-6, 7b-12 Ps 98-11:1, 12-24 10:10-16

Saturday: Bar 4:5-12, 27-29 Ps 69:33-37 Lk 10:17-24

The Lord stands ready to forgive us, if we repent.
Sex in accord with reason

An article published in 2012 in The Atlantic [36x36] noted the sexual practices of the Aka and Ngandu people, who live in the tropical forests of central Africa. Researchers Barry and Bonnie Hewlett, anthropologists from Washington State University, found that married Aka and Ngandu men and women consistently reported having sex multiple times in a single night. They also discovered that practices of, and even the concepts of, homosexuality and masturbation appeared to be largely unknown to the groups.

In both cultures, men and women view sexual intercourse as a kind of “work of the night.” The purpose of this work is the production of children — a critical matter in a society with a very high infant mortality rate. Semen is understood by the Aka and Ngandu to be necessary not only to conceive children but also to fertilize the womb; in both cultures women and men are inclined to remain with the children after the birth of a child.

Meanwhile, a Ngandu woman confessed, “after losing so many infants I lost courage to have sex.” She is the only one to focus on sex as a reproductive tool the reason masturbation and homosexual practices seem to be virtually unknown to the Aka and Ngandu. That isn’t clear. But the Hewletts did find that their informants — whom they knew well from years of field work — were not aware of these practices, did not have terms for them; and, in the case of the Aka, had a hard time even understanding about what the researchers were asking when they asked about homosexual behaviors.

Modern-day Western societies, meanwhile, have adopted an alternative understanding of sexuality, one that leans heavily on adjectives like “pleasure-seeking” or even “recreational,” ones distinct from the category of a “search for children.” They feature practices of contraception, male and female sterilization, abortion, and the sanctioning of homosexual, masturbatory, and other non-procreative sexual behaviors. In earlier times, however, Western views more closely resembled those of the Aka and Ngandu, especially in recognizing the fundamental orientation of sexuality toward the good of offspring. The Catholic Church has long affirmed that married love has a twofold significance, being ordered both toward the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of offspring. St. Thomas Aquinas on this point intends, in broad strokes, not only the generation of children, but also their “carrying forth and promotion all the way to the perpetuation of state of man” — in other words, both the engendering and conscientious raising of children. Recognizing this natural ordering towards “mature offspring” also points to certain natural inclinations that prompt men and women to protect and care for their children: we are inclined to have sexual relations; we are inclined to be certain that the child we are going to be committed to is our own, and to care for that child continually; and we are inclined to remain with the other parent, to share a life of mutual assistance marked by true friendship in the commitment of marriage. Nature has given us these inclinations to serve the good of the species and our personal good.

If human sexuality is properly understood as directed toward bringing forth and then caring for offspring, this raises the possibility that other nonprocreative uses of the generative power of man would continue to exist. Thus, it is impossible to understand the Christian faculty, something the Christian tradition has affirmed and commonly taught. Certain types of sexual activity have always been seen, to borrow the Latin phrase, as “contra naturam” (against nature). This view can be given in such a way that generation cannot follow. Among such practices would be masturbation, homosexuality, infidelity. Certain other types of sexual activity, while not contrary to nature in that sense, are still opposed to the order of reason, because the act is done in a way that the due care and education of children is not provided for. This is implied, for example, when men and women who are not married to each other engage in sexual relations, as in situations of adultery, fornication, incest, or sexual assault.

St. Thomas noted that the sexual act is one to which we humans, like all animals, are naturally inclined, and as such it would be a grave error to assert that the act could be evil in itself. Nevertheless, the manner in which the act is carried out and the details surrounding it are essential to determining whether the act occurs in an authentically human way, that is, in such a way that is “secundum naturam” (in accord with nature) and in accord with the dictates of reason.

Father Tadeusz Pacholczyk, Ph.D., earned his doctorate in neurosurgery-Neurosurgical Sciences from Harvard and did a post-doctoral work at St. Louis University. He is a priest of the diocese of Fall River, MA, and serves as director of the Catholic Medical Association and the Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia. See www.ncbcenter.org

SCOTUS/W-defense

CAPECCHI, from page 16

Charismatic Center, which managed to avoid flooding, became his operating base. He rose early for a BBC interview, slipping out of the chapel to speak then returning to prayer.

The parallel was not lost on him, told reporters: “The New World was evangelized through the waters, while the flood of the Old World was through the waters, and the New World came here by the waters, and the Old World came here by the waters.”

Father David is still busy helping victims of the flood find and reflect on the experience.

“My greatest pupil was the kayak,” he said. “Evangelization

McCLAMROCK, from page 16

to kill any man, no matter how sinful; this need, therefore, is the only justification St. Thomas gives for the death penalty, as ST II-II, Q99 teaches. But the punishment is to be placed on two propositions: 1. There is a strong moral presumption in favor of capital punishment for grave crimes such as murder.

2. This presumption can be overridden only when resorting to capital punishment would fail to provide the common good as well as a lesser punishment that would.

This so-called “Catholic case for capital punishment” is exactly as in favor as compared to the teaching of St. Thomas. Thomas, according to which the moral presumption is against capital punishment, since “we ought to love the nature which God has made” in every man, however sinful. This presumption can be

overridden only if it is necessary to execute a deserving offender for the common good (ST II-II, Q46).

But what about the command expressed in this text? “By Man Shall His Blood Be Shed,” to which the authors refer in no fewer than 18 passages of the book? This wording of God’s commands to Noah and his family after the flood, recorded in Genesis 9:6, is, “Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed: for God made man in his own image.” Feser and Bessette maintain that “[i]t is possible to understand this passage as being a moral condemnation of all forms of capital punishment”.

David McClamrock is a Catholic convert, Thomas Aquinas College and Notre Dame Law School graduate, and Hoosier deputy prosecutor. Any opinions expressed in this article are his own and not those of the Office of the Prosecuting Attorney.

Unfair?

S E T U T I S O R P X
N C H O F I R S T M E S
O J O M M K T R I P S
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O J O N P J M T U M D N
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S C O G T O N D I E
100 years after Russian revolution, Christianity faces new challenges

BY ROBERT DUNCAN

MOSCOW (CNS) — A few blocks from Moscow’s Lubyanka Building, which for decades served as the headquarters of the Soviet Union’s KGB security agency, the Russian Orthodox patriarch recently consecrated a church memorializing those martyred during communism’s reign.

“We while were in procession around the church, people were standing with portraits of those martyred and those condemned to death” by the communist regime, said Orthodox Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, who heads the church’s department for external affairs.

President Putin, who was a former KGB agent, as well as government officials and church leaders, were in attendance for the ceremony May 25.

Patriarch Kirill’s consecration of the Church of the New Martyrs and Confessors of the Russian Orthodox Church was one of the ways his church is commemorating the centenary of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, which ushered in the communist era and led to the persecution of Christians.

The 100th anniversary of the communist takeover of Russia coincides with the 100th anniversary of the final apparition of Our Lady of Fatima to three shepherd children in Portugal. The children said the lady “dressed in white” asked them for prayers and penance, otherwise Russia “will spread her errors throughout the world, causing wars and persecutions of the church.”

The Russian Orthodox Church formally has recognized “glorified” more than 1,500 bishops, priests, monks, nuns and deacons who died for their faith under communist rule, which lasted from 1917 until 1991.

While the Orthodox Church was never legally suppressed like most Protestant churches were, communist authorities worked vigorously to encourage atheism, closing thousands of Orthodox monasteries and churches, sending clergy and religious to the gulags or to psychiatric hospitals, and making it extremely difficult for any regular churchgoer to hold a decent job or get into a university.

The Roman Catholic Church suffered even more. Long considered by Russians to be part of the West, under communism, it was seen as having a foreign allegiance. By the end of the 1930s, only two of the 150 Catholic parishes in Russia were still functioning. And, with the establishment of the Soviet Union — and its incorporation of neighboring republics — the impact on parents, grandparents, siblings, family members, friends, medical personnel, clergy, and others.

Do you know someone wounded from a past abortion?

An Afternoon of Prayerful Remembrance & Intercession acknowledges its universal impact on parents, grandparents, siblings, family members, friends, medical personnel, clergy, and others.

Sunday, October 8, 2017 12 noon
Trinity Hall, University of Saint Francis
(Park in “West Campus” lot off Spring St.)

12 noon – Testimonies & Intercessory Prayers
1pm – Prayerful Reflection (Sacrament of Reconciliation & Pastoral Support will be available)
2pm – Mass celebrated by Most Reverend Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades with reception following

University of Saint Francis Campus Ministry
Contacts: Fr. David Meinzen at 260.399.7700 ext. 6701 or dmeinzen@sf.edu

Project Rachel Post-Abortion Healing Ministry
Allison Sturm at 260.399.1452 or asturm@diocesefwsb.org

Russian Orthodox bishops celebrate the Divine Liturgy at the Cathedral of Christ the Savior with Patriarch Kirill of Moscow May 24, the feast of the Ascension. The cathedral, once destroyed by the Soviets, was reborn in 1999 after being rebuilt following the collapse of communism.

persecution grew. The Ukrainian Catholic and other Eastern Orthodox churches were outlawed, and their bishops imprisoned. Priests caught celebrating Mass were arrested and either executed or sent to prison or to work camps.

After the Soviet Union began breaking up in 1990 and communist rule came to an end, all of the churches experienced a revival. In Russia, even government officials are now embracing Orthodoxy in public,nlcune Christianity and art are being transformed with new Christian influences.

Svятослав Схербаков, a Moscow-based sculptor, recently completed a massive statue of Russia’s first Christian emperor. The towering St. Vladimir sculpture was prominently placed in Borovitksaya Square, just outside the walls of the Kremlin.

“We are coming back to our roots,” Scherbakov said. “We still do not understand these roots well enough; it is a kind of a new search for identity.”

Despite the collapse of communism and the renewed prominence Christianity enjoys in Russian society, Metropolitan Hilarion sees a host of new challenges facing the Orthodox Church today.

The challenge of secularism, of secular identity, of consumerism, is among the biggest threats facing his church in Russia today, Metropolitan Hilarion said.

Other Orthodox believers identify different risks to the faith in modern Russia. Chief among their concerns is the increasing collaboration between church and state.

For example, some politicians defend religious traditions along side the values of Soviet communism as part of a wider patriotic celebration of Russia’s past, said Sergey Chaplin, the former editor of the Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate.

“You have this merging, a kind of melting pot. We have a Christian tradition and Soviet tradition being put together, and this is a kind of post-Soviet civil religion,” Chaplin said.

Chaplin described this “civil religion” as one that emphasizes Orthodoxy as a marker of national identity, rather than “the life of the real church.” Even if it also stresses “traditional values,” the concept is too nebulous to reflect the actual teachings of the church, Chaplin said.

Legislation promoting the family and pro-life causes may be examples of traditional values, “but when we are trying this stuff as state policy or the political program of the ruling party, we face serious problems because people are not ready” to accept these teachings, Chaplin said, noting that the number of weekly Orthodox churchgoers in Russia’s country roughly is smaller.

According to a recent study from the U.S.-based Pew Research Center, only 6 percent of the Orthodox population in Russia attends church weekly.

Yet some observers argue that such statistics do not adequately reflect the true extent of religious commitment in Russia.

“Going to church in Russia is very different from going to church in America,” said Mother Cornelia Rees, an American Orthodox nun who has lived in Russia since 2008.

“Going to church is not just a Sunday morning thing for an hour or so,” but involves a three-hour vigil the night before, going to confession, fasting, and dairy products and reciting pre-communion prayers as prerequisites for receiving the Eucharist.

“So if you take a survey, you’ll probably get a lot of people who identify as Orthodox but say they are not churchgoers, Mother Rees said. “They go to church every now and then, and they consider themselves an Orthodox Christian, but they are not doing all these various things.”

Church attendance among self-identifying Roman Catholics in Russia is much smaller, according to the country’s most senior archbishop.

“In our diocese there are 20,000 Catholics,” said Archbishop Paolo Pezzi of Moscow, though “in Russia, like anywhere else, there is a difference between those who call themselves Catholics and those who really practice the faith.”

“I suppose that the number of practicing Catholics is 10 to 20 percent of all nominal Catholics in Russia,” he said.

Today, the Catholic Church in Russia enjoys cordial relations with the Orthodox, and “our relations are improving on all levels,” Archbishop Perz said, pointing out that he is regularly invited to join the Orthodox patriarch of Moscow at Christmas and Easter liturgies.

“Today, we can call each other not only partners, but also friends and even brothers, though we understand that we still lack full communion in the sacraments,” Archbishop Perz said. “There is still a long road ahead of us.”

Notwithstanding the challenges believers face in Russia today, many Orthodox faithful are optimistic about Christianity’s future.

Soskina Lubov Stepanova, 68, who has lived her entire life in Nizhniye Pryski near the famous Optina Pustyn Monastery, remembers the decades when going to church was illegal.

“Now life is better: We can pray, ask God for help and he listens to our prayers and helps us,” she said.

Mother Rees said that, despite the progress made since the fall of communism, the country still suffers “ills” left from its atheist past, reflected in high rates of abortion, prostitution and drug addiction.

“We are talking about a society that for 70-odd years, the church was under severe repression,” she said. “Things don’t happen all at once.”
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.todayscatholic.org/event. 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.

Sign up at www.fopwalk.org to provide emergency food, helping individuals and families. Conferences of the Fort Wayne Society of St. Vincent de Paul are helping individuals and families to provide emergency food, help with utilities and avoid eviction. Sign up at www.fopwalk.org/event/183. Contact 260-456-3561 for information.

Memorial for the Unborn
FORT WAYNE — A Memorial for the Unborn will take place at Catholic Cemetery, 3500 Lake Ave., from 2-4 p.m. on Sunday, Oct. 1, to remember the 289 babies in Allen County that were the victims of abortion in 2016. This is the only funeral these babies will have. Contact 260-471-1849 for information.

Archbishop Gomez of Los Angeles to visit Holy Cross School
SOUTH BEND — Most Reverend José H. Gomez, Archbishop of Los Angeles, will visit Holy Cross School, 1020 Wilber St., Tuesday, Oct. 3. Archbishop Gomez will be a guest reader to the pre-K classes from 10-11 a.m., and then he will celebrate Mass at 11 a.m.

Pancake and sausage breakfast
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FORT WAYNE — A Memorial for the Unborn will take place at Catholic Cemetery, 3500 Lake Ave., from 2-4 p.m. on Sunday, Oct. 1, to remember the 289 babies in Allen County that were the victims of abortion in 2016. This is the only funeral these babies will have. Contact 260-471-1849 for information.

Archbishop Gomez of Los Angeles to visit Holy Cross School
SOUTH BEND — Most Reverend José H. Gomez, Archbishop of Los Angeles, will visit Holy Cross School, 1020 Wilber St., Tuesday, Oct. 3. Archbishop Gomez will be a guest reader to the pre-K classes from 10-11 a.m., and then he will celebrate Mass at 11 a.m.

FATHER SOLANUS CASEY VOCATION SOCIETY
FORT WAYNE — The next Father Solanus Casey Vocation Society meeting will be Friday, Oct. 6 at St. Joseph Hospital, 700 Broadway, with Mass at 11:30 a.m. in the chapel followed by lunch. Guest speaker will be Msgr. Owen Campon.

St. Anthony of Padua Catholic Church
NOW HIRING — MAINTENANCE & GROUNDSKEEPER
St. Anthony of Padua in Angola, IN has a part-time (15-20 hours per week) Maintenance & Groundskeeping position available. The applicant should have 2-4 years of Building/Grounds general maintenance experience, and must be flexible with hours. Interested candidates should send a resume to Katie Waltke at katie@stanthonyangola.com.

Friends of the Poor Walk to support St. Vincent de Paul Society
FORT WAYNE — Join the walk on Sunday, Oct. 8, at Parkview Field, 1301 Ewing St., with registration at 1 p.m. and the walk starting at 2 p.m. The Friends of the Poor Walk is a national event to raise awareness and funds for the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. Members of the 22 parish conferences of the Fort Wayne Society of St. Vincent de Paul are helping individuals and families to provide emergency food, help with utilities and avoid eviction. Sign up at www.fopwalk.org.
What’s down the road?

This issue of Today’s Catholic is the last complimentary issue of the newspaper that will arrive in your mailbox. If you have already mailed in a subscription form and payment to continue the paper, or subscribed to the free digital edition, the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend and the staff of Today’s Catholic thank you and appreciate your continued readership. We look forward to continuing to provide our faithful readers with the quality content Today’s Catholic has featured for over 90 years, and to serving you in print and on our new media platforms for many more to come.

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