



TODAY'S CATHOLIC

Volume 91 No. 43

50¢

TODAYSCATHOLIC.org

Fall gathering of bishops

USCCB discusses hot-button issues, sets priorities

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Blessed Solanus Casey lived out faith, hope, charity every day, says cardinal

BY MIKE STECHSCHULTE



CNS photo/Jeff Kowalsky, courtesy Michigan Catholic

Cardinal Angelo Amato, prefect of the Congregation for Saints' Causes, concelebrates the beatification Mass of Blessed Solanus Casey Nov. 18 at Ford Field in Detroit.

DETROIT (CNS) — A humble priest and porter, Blessed Solanus Casey thanked God daily for the gift of those who came to his door in his small corner of the world.

On Nov. 18, tens of thousands of those whom he touched gathered to thank God in return for the gift of the holy Capuchin's life.

"Others, above all the poor, were seen by him not as a weight or obstacle to his climb to perfection, but as a way to the light of the splendor of God," Cardinal Angelo Amato, prefect of the Congregation for Saints' Causes, told the tens of thousands of people gathered at Detroit's Ford Field for Blessed Solanus' beatification Mass.

A congregation of more than 60,000 — young, old, clergy and laity, those of all races and ethnicities — flooded into Ford Field for the Mass, with tens of thousands more watching live on TV or the internet.

Countless others visited the Solanus Casey Center and St. Bonaventure Monastery over the weekend to pray and leave prayer intentions at the tomb of a saintly friar known for miraculous healings, intercessions and a compassionate listening ear.

True to Blessed Solanus' spirituality, a special VIP section of the main floor was set aside for those with illness and disabilities.

Father Michael Sullivan, provincial minister of the Detroit-based Capuchin Franciscan Province of St. Joseph, welcomed those in attendance, "especially those whom Father Solanus so loved — the sick and the poor."

"We gather in gratitude for all of God's blessings and for all the ways in which God moves in our lives," Father Sullivan said. "What a witness was

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SOLIDARITY in SUFFERING



A DAY OF PRAYER FOR PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS
NOVEMBER 26, 2017

A WEEK OF AWARENESS
NOV 26 - DEC 2, 2017

O God of all the nations,

the One God who is and was
and always will be,
in your providence
you willed that your Church
be united to the suffering of your Son.
Look with mercy on your servants
who are persecuted for their faith in you.
Grant them perseverance and courage
to be worthy imitators of Christ.
Bring your wisdom upon leaders of nations
to work for peace among all peoples.
May your Spirit open conversion
for those who contradict your will,
that we may live in harmony.
Give us the grace to be united
in truth and freedom,
and to always seek your will in our lives.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.
Our Lady, Queen of Peace, pray for us.

Prayer composed by
Archbishop William E. Lori, Baltimore

TODAY'S CATHOLIC

Official newspaper of the
Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend
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Fort Wayne, IN 46856

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

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

MAIN OFFICE: 915 S. Clinton St., Fort Wayne, IN 46802. Telephone (260) 456-2824. Fax: (260) 744-1473.

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

Today's Catholic may be reached at :

Today's Catholic,
P.O. Box 11169, Fort Wayne, IN
46856-1169; or email:

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(ISSN 0891-1533)
(USPS 403630)

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'Invest in love:' First World Day of the Poor

BY CINDY WOODEN

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — People have a basic choice in the way they live: either striving to build up treasures on earth or giving to others in order to gain heaven, Pope Francis said.

"What we invest in love remains, the rest vanishes," the pope said in his homily Nov. 19, the first World Day of the Poor.

Between 6,000 and 7,000 poor people attended the Mass in St. Peter's Basilica as special guests, the Vatican said. While almost all of them live in Europe, they include migrants and refugees from all over the world.

Among the altar servers were young men who are either poor, migrants or homeless. The first reader at the Mass, Tony Battah, is a refugee from Syria. Those presenting the gifts at the offertory were led by the Zambardi family from Turin, whom the Vatican described as living in a "precarious condition" and whose 1-year-old daughter has cystic fibrosis.

In addition to the bread and wine that were consecrated at the Mass, the offertory included a large basket of bread and rolls that were blessed to be shared at the lunch the pope was offering after Mass. Some 1,500 poor people joined the pope in the Vatican's audience hall for the meal, while the other special guests were served at the Pontifical North American College — the U.S. seminary in Rome — and other seminaries and Catholic-run soup kitchens nearby.

Preaching about the Gospel "parable of the talents" (Mt 25:14-30), Pope Francis said the servant in the story who buried his master's money was rebuked not because he did something wrong, but because he failed to do something good with what he was given.

"All too often, we have the idea that we haven't done anything wrong, and so we rest content, presuming that we are good and just," the pope said. "But to do no wrong is not enough. God is not an inspector looking for unstamped tickets; He is a Father looking for children to whom He can entrust his property and His plans."

If in the eyes of the world, the poor they have little value, he said, "they are the ones who open to us the way to heaven; they are our 'passport to paradise.' For us it is an evangelical duty to care for them, as our real riches, and to do so not only by giving them bread, but also by breaking with them the bread of God's word, which is addressed first to them."

Where the poor are concerned, the pope said, too many people are often guilty of a sin of omission or indifference.

Thinking it is "society's problem" to solve, looking the other



CNS/Paul Haring

Pope Francis leads grace before eating lunch with the poor in the Paul VI hall after celebrating Mass marking the first World Day of the Poor at the Vatican Nov. 19. Some 1,200 poor people joined the pope for the meal.

way when passing a beggar or changing the channel when the news shows something disturbing are not Christian responses, he said.

"God will not ask us if we felt righteous indignation," he said, "but whether we did some good."

People please God in a similar way to how they please anyone they love. They learn what that person likes and gives that to him or her, the pope said.

In the Gospels, he said, Jesus says that He wants to be loved in "the least of our brethren," including the hungry, the sick, the poor, the stranger and the prisoner.

"In the poor, Jesus knocks on the doors of our heart, thirsting for our love," he said. True goodness and strength are

shown "not in closed fists and crossed arms, but in ready hands outstretched to the poor, to the wounded flesh of the Lord."

Before joining his guests for lunch, Pope Francis recited the Angelus prayer with thousands of people in St. Peter's Square.

The previous day in Detroit, he told the people, Capuchin Father Solanus Casey was beatified. "A humble and faithful disciple of Christ, he was known for his untiring service to the poor. May his witness help priests, religious and laypeople live with joy the bond between the proclamation of the Gospel and love for the poor."

Pope Francis told the crowd that he hoped "the poor would be at the center of our communities not only at times like this,

but always, because they are at the heart of the Gospel. In them, we encounter Jesus who speaks to us and calls us through their suffering and their needs."

Offering special prayers for people living in poverty because of war and conflict, the pope asked the international community to make special efforts to bring peace to those areas, especially the Middle East.

Pope Francis made a specific plea for stability in Lebanon, which is in the middle of a political crisis after its prime minister announced his resignation. He prayed the country would "continue to be a 'message' of respect and coexistence throughout the region and for the whole world."

Mass is a time of silence and prayer, not idle chitchat, pope says

BY JUNNO AROCHO ESTEVES

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Mass is the highest form of prayer and not an appropriate moment for small talk, Pope Francis said.

At church, Catholics should spend their time in silence before Mass, preparing "to meet with Jesus" instead of engaging in "chitchat," the pope said Nov. 15 during his weekly general audience.

"Silence is so important," he said. "Remember what I told you last time: we are not going to a show. Silence prepares us and accompanies us."

The pope continued his new series of audience talks on the

Mass, reflecting on the Eucharist as a form of prayer that is "the highest, the most sublime and, at the same time, the most concrete" way of encountering God's love.

"This is the greatest grace: to experience that the Eucharist is the privileged moment to be with Jesus and, through Him, with God and with our brothers and sisters," the pope said.

In the Gospels, he continued, Jesus teaches His disciples that the first thing needed to pray "is to know how to say 'father'" and to trust in God with the humility of a child.

Christians also must allow themselves to be "surprised by the living encounter with the

Lord," he said, and not simply "talk to God like a parrot," repeating the words of prayers without thinking.

"The encounter with God is a living encounter," the pope said departing from his prepared remarks. "It is not an encounter of a museum, it is a living encounter. And we go to Mass, not a museum! We go to a living encounter with the Lord."

Pope Francis said the Mass is also a gift and a consolation where Christians discover that God's greatest surprise is that He "loves us even in our weakness."

"The Lord encounters our frailty," the pope said. "This is the environment of the Eucharist. This is prayer."



Bob List

At least 60,000 people battled inclement weather conditions to fill Detroit's Ford Field for the beatification Mass of Father Casey on Nov. 18. The electronic banner at top reads, "Beatification of Father Solanus Casey."

SOLANUS, from page 1

our beloved brother Solanus! He opened his heart to each person he met, he prayed with them, appreciated and loved them, and through him God moved powerfully again and again. Thanks be to God!"

Cardinal Amato was the main celebrant and homilist for the beatification Mass, joined by Detroit Archbishop Allen H. Vigneron; Cardinal Adam J. Maida, retired archbishop of Detroit; Boston Cardinal Sean P. O'Malley, himself a Capuchin Franciscan; Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin of Newark, New Jersey, who is a Detroit native; and Archbishop Christophe Pierre, apostolic nuncio to the United States, among others.

About 35 bishops, 400 priests and deacons and more than 200 Capuchins joined together in praise with 300 members of the Casey family, members of the Father Solanus Guild and thousands of faithful during the Mass.

The altar, placed at midfield, was created originally for St. John Paul II's visit to the Pontiac Silverdome in 1987. To the right of the altar was a large painting of Blessed Solanus. It was unveiled to thunderous applause after the beatification rite, which took place at the beginning of the Mass.

The music was provided by a 25-member orchestra and a choir of 300 directed by Capuchin Franciscan Father Ed Foley. The singers were members of parish choirs from across the Detroit metro area. The Casey family's Irish roots were reflected in the Irish hymns chosen as part of the music for the liturgy.

Reflecting the diversity of the Catholic Church in which Blessed Solanus served, readings and prayers of the faithful were proclaimed in several languages,

including English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Chaldean, Polish and Tagalog.

"His favorite sons were the poor, the sick, the emarginated and the homeless," Cardinal Amato said of Blessed Solanus, the Wisconsin-born priest with Irish roots and a whispery voice who served as a monastery door-keeper in New York, Detroit and Huntington, Indiana, over his 60 years as a Capuchin friar.

"He always fasted in order to give them their own lunch. He spent hours upon hours patiently receiving, listening to, and counseling the ever-growing number of people who came to him," he added.

Once, the cardinal recounted, when the Capuchin Soup Kitchen — which Blessed Solanus helped start during the Great Depression — ran out of food, the friar simply prayed an Our Father, and a truckload of bread showed up.

"When the people saw this they began to cry with emotion. Father Solanus simply stated: 'See, God provides. No one will suffer want if we put our trust in Divine Providence,'" Cardinal Amato said.

"Witnesses affirmed that love, faith and trust were the three points that he always preached to people," Cardinal Amato continued. "Faith, hope and charity were for him the seal of the Trinity in our souls."

Born Nov. 25, 1870, to a family of 16 children, Blessed Solanus spent his early years as a lumberjack, street car operator and prison guard before entering the seminary. After witnessing a violent attack in Superior, Wisconsin, he resolved to devote his life to God.

Despite language barriers slowing his studies toward the priesthood, he was eventually ordained a "simplex priest," and spent the next 60 years greeting people at the monastery doors in

New York, Indiana and Detroit, where he became a warm and familiar face to thousands seeking his counsel and prayers.

Cardinal Amato laughed when he acknowledged that Blessed Solanus had "one little defect in his life: In the judgment of his fellow friars, Father Solanus was a bad musician."

"For this reason, after his first failure in the community, with simplicity and humility, in order not to disturb his neighbor, on Sunday evening he went to the chapel with his violin and played Irish religious songs in front of the tabernacle. The Lord listened to him patiently because our blessed was lacking in music, but not in virtue," Cardinal Amato said with a smile.

By virtue of his beatification, Blessed Solanus can now be publicly venerated in Detroit and in Capuchin houses worldwide. Beatification is the last step before sainthood, which would allow Blessed Solanus to be venerated by the worldwide church. His feast will be celebrated July 30, the vigil of the anniversary of the friar's death in 1957.

Among the hundreds, if not thousands, of healings attributed to Blessed Solanus during and after his lifetime, Pope Francis recognized the authenticity of a miracle necessary for the friar to be elevated from venerable to blessed after a review by the Vatican's Congregation for Saints' Causes was completed earlier this year.

The miracle involved the healing — unexplained by medicine or science — of a woman with an incurable genetic skin disease, Paula Medina Zarate of Panama. She was only recently identified publicly and she was at the Mass. As it began, she walked up to the altar with a reliquary holding a relic of Blessed Solanus — a small piece of bone taken from the friar's arm.



Public schedule of Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades

Sunday, November 26: 10:30 a.m. — Confirmation Mass, St. Michael the Archangel Church, Waterloo

Tuesday, November 28: 12:30 p.m. — Meeting of Diocesan Finance Council, Holiday Inn Express, Warsaw

Tuesday, November 28: 6 p.m. — Annual Vincentian Mass and Dinner with Saint Vincent de Paul Society, St. Pius X Church, Granger

Wednesday, November 29: 9 a.m. — Meeting with High School Principals, Wyndham Garden Hotel, Warsaw

Wednesday, November 29: 12 p.m. — Meeting with Council of Teachers, Wyndham Garden Hotel, Warsaw

Wednesday, November 29: 6 p.m. — Meeting with Diocesan School Board, Wyndham Garden Hotel, Warsaw

Thursday, November 30: 7 p.m. — Confirmation Mass, Holy Cross Church, South Bend

Saturday, December 2: 9:30 a.m. — Inauguration Mass of President of Indiana Tech, St. Mother Theodore Guerin Chapel, Fort Wayne

Saturday, December 2: 2 p.m. — Inauguration Ceremony of President of Indiana Tech, Schafer Center, Indiana Tech, Fort Wayne

Saturday, December 2: 7 p.m. — Eucharistic Adoration at "Rejoice" Women's Retreat, Ancilla Domini Chapel, Lindenwood



CNS photo/Jeff Kowalsky, courtesy Michigan Catholic

Paula Medina Zarate is escorted by two Franciscans as she carries a relic of Blessed Solanus Casey during his beatification Mass. The Panamanian woman's miraculous healing from a skin disease was the miracle needed to advance the Capuchin Franciscan friar's cause for beatification.

Zarate was visiting friends in Detroit and stopped at Father Casey's tomb to pray for others' intentions. After her prayers, she felt the strong urging to ask for the friar's intercession for herself, too, and received an instant and visible healing.

The miraculous nature of her cure in 2012 was verified by doctors in her home country, in Detroit and in Rome, all of whom confirmed there was no scientific explanation. Father Casey himself died of a skin disease July 31, 1957.

During the presentation of the gifts, baskets of food were brought to the altar along with bread and wine, symbolizing Blessed Solanus' ministry to the hungry through the Capuchin Soup Kitchen and the Capuchins' continuing ministry today.

After Communion, the congregation was invited to sing "God, Be Praised for Humble Service," a hymn commissioned in honor of Blessed Solanus writ-

ten by Benedictine Sister Delores Dufner.

In thanking Cardinal Amato and the Congregation for the Causes of Saints "for your devoted attention to the cause of Father Solanus' beatification," Archbishop Vigneron garnered loud cheers when he assured the cardinal that "the field hospital of mercy is open here in Detroit."

"Your Eminence, when next you speak with our beloved Holy Father, Pope Francis, please let him know that we are grateful beyond measure that he has judged our beloved Father Solanus worthy of the rank of blessed," Archbishop Vigneron said. "Assure His Holiness of our filial affection and loyalty and tell him that we are committed anew to imitate Blessed Solanus by witnessing to the good news of Christ's mercy."

Mike Stechschulte is managing editor of The Michigan Catholic, newspaper of the Archdiocese of Detroit.

Youth urged to remember they're 'beloved children of God, called by name'

BY NATALIE HOEFER

INDIANAPOLIS (CNS) — The sound of more than 20,000 teens screaming and singing along with raucous music of Christian hip-hop band TobyMac was loud.

The sound of the same number of youths in silent prayer was deafening.

These external and internal forms of praise formed bookends to the opening general session of the National Catholic Youth Conference Nov. 16 at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis.

After two hours of music, entertainment — including cultural dancing by the Vietnamese Eucharistic Youth Movement — and an entrance procession of banners from each diocese present, the participants were greeted by Indianapolis Archbishop Charles C. Thompson.

Although each person came “from many dioceses, many states ... and with many titles,” he said, “we are first and foremost children of God. And that God who knows us desires to be known by us. ... God wanted us to know him ... through a personal relationship with a human being, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

“We are beloved children of God, called by name, claimed by Christ,” he continued, referring to the conference theme of “Called.” “We begin this NCYC weekend by embracing that reality of who we are.”

Chris Stefanick, an internationally acclaimed author, speaker and founder of Real Life Catholic, used humor and life experience to speak about the reality of who we are and of God's love for each person.

He spoke of the “love story” upon which the Catholic faith is founded.

“When you remove the love story, what are you left with?” he asked. “Rules that we have to follow. Rituals that we're not sure why we keep them alive but they take a lot of time. Doctrines that have nothing to do with your life. That's how the world has come to see Catholicism. ... The world has forgotten the love story, and so often we've forgotten the love story.”

That story, he said, “begins very simply with the words ‘(I) believe in one God.’”

So many youths today chose not to believe, he said, including an atheist who once told him that belief that God created the universe “is as stupid as a kid coming down on Christmas morning and, seeing presents under the tree, thinks, ‘There are presents, therefore there must be a Santa.’”

“You say there's no God?” Stefanick asked. “That's like a flea not believing in the dog.



CNS photo/Natalie Hoefler, The Criterion

After the closing Mass for the National Catholic Youth Conference at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis Nov. 18, young people from different dioceses perform a dance they learned during conference. The biennial conference draws some 20,000 Catholic teenagers from across the country.

That's like a kid coming down on Christmas morning and seeing presents under the tree and saying, ‘Oh look! Presents! They must have exploded themselves here!’ ... Just so, the universe did not put itself here, and the more we learn about the universe, the more it shouts to us about the existence of God.”

And because God's love created us, he said, no other form of love will satisfy.

“We feel so small in this world,” he told the crowd that came from as far away as Hawaii and Alaska. “We feel so insignificant in this universe.

“I think God looks down from heaven and says, ‘You are huge next to all this.’ As big as a mountain is, can it know someone? As big as an ocean is, can it make a

choice? As big as a galaxy is, can it choose to love? No, but you can. ... You're a huge deal!”

But because of human rejection of God, Stefanick continued, sin and brokenness entered the world. To applause and shouts of “Amen!” he modified the words

of John 3:16 to note that therefore, “‘God so loved you that he gave his only Son.’ Whoa. ...”

This love story — which continues in the sacraments, Stefanick noted — “doesn't just show you who God is. It shows you who you are.”

“‘Who am I?’ ‘I'm precious.’ ‘What am I worth?’ ‘I'm worth dying

for,’ “ he said in a solo dialogue. “... Sin is not your name—Jesus gives you your name. And what is your name? ‘Beloved.’ I don't matter because of who I am — I

matter because of whose I am. I'm not somebody, I'm somebody's. I'm precious and I'm worth dying for. This is the best news ever.”

He encouraged the crowd to use their will to “say ‘yes’ to the love that created space and time and perpetually invites us to Himself.”

Father Joseph Esparillat, a priest of the Archdiocese of New York, who was one of the evening's emcees, led the more than 20,000 present through a period of silent prayer to close. He suggested using the word “pray” as an acronym to guide their prayer — “P” for praising God, “R” for repenting of sins, “A” for asking God for needs rather than wants, and “Y” for yielding to his will

It was this prayer time more than any of the evening's other events that most affected Abby White of the Diocese of Covington, Kentucky. “I thought it was really powerful,” she said of the quiet time. “I like saying that you're sorry to God. It's been awhile since I've been to confession, and I really want to go to confession this weekend. I felt like that [prayer time] empowered me to want to

go.”

While Abby has attended NCYC before, Garrett Randel of Seneca, Kansas, was exuberant with the joy of one experiencing the event for the first time.

“I thought it was really cool,” he said of the opening session. “The speaker was really inspiring. I thought it was one of the best experiences I've had in my Catholic faith.”

Caitlin Dusenbury of the Diocese of Lansing, Michigan, couldn't agree more. The NCYC first-timer's eyes lit up and a smile brightened her face when she spoke of her experience that evening.

“I really like it so far,” she told *The Criterion*, newspaper of the Indianapolis archdiocese. “It's impacted me a lot. I've never seen so many Catholics together.

“The highlight for me was Chris speaking. ‘It's not who you are, but whose you are’ — that quote stuck with me.”

Natalie Hoefler is a reporter at *The Criterion*, newspaper of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.

“This love story — which continues in the sacraments — doesn't just show you who God is. It shows you who you are.”

CHRIS STEFANICK

Puerto Rico archbishop sees spiritual rebirth after storm's wrath

BY CAROL ZIMMERMANN

BALTIMORE (CNS) — Almost two months after the devastating winds and rains of Hurricane Maria pummeled the island of Puerto Rico, there is still no clear path to recovery.

Although some power and phone service have been restored and relief supplies are slowly filtering in, the cleanup and rebuilding is only just beginning.

"You go day by day, but it's overwhelming and traumatic," said Archbishop Roberto Gonzalez Nieves of San Juan, Puerto Rico.

The archbishop, who attended the U.S. bishops' fall assembly in Baltimore, is acutely aware of the storm's initial and ongoing impact. Since Maria, he has visited 57 parishes in his archdiocese and has 100 more to go. Every parish in this archdiocese in the northeast corner of the island was impacted by the hurricane from minimal to extensive damage.

And as Puerto Rico's Catholics find their way through the wreckage and mud-soaked parish buildings and roofless homes while coping with minimal electricity, food and water, he said they have not lost their faith. For many, their faith has only deepened.

"Tragedies and adversities have a way of reinforcing our faith and our sense of spirituality, our dependency on God," which also goes hand in hand with an "intensified spirit of sharing, generosity and solidarity," he said.

Archbishop Gonzalez, who lived in Puerto Rico as a child and has led the San Juan Archdiocese for 18 years, said he has noticed at some recent Masses that "the choirs continue to sing the hymns they were singing before but with much more vigor and joy."

"We are in a sense being rejuvenated," he told Catholic News Service Nov. 13.

He isn't surprised by the way people are taking care of each other or as he put it — "the enormous amount of sharing that took place and is still taking place" — as people make meals for neighbors, for example, on gas-powered stoves.

He also has experienced this care firsthand in the calls and emails — once they could come through — from other bishops, along with donations and offers of rebuilding help. At the Baltimore meeting, he said a number of bishops told him:



CNS photo/Bob Roller

Archbishop Roberto Gonzalez Nieves of San Juan, Puerto Rico, listens to a speaker Nov. 14 during the fall general assembly of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in Baltimore.

"We're with you and we'll be sending help."

Archbishop Gonzalez and Bishop Herbert A. Bevard of St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands — another region hard hit by

Hurricane Maria — were both invited as observers to the bishops' fall meeting and were introduced by Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Puerto Rico, a U.S. commonwealth, has its own Catholic bishops' conference and participates in the Latin American bishops' council, known as CELAM.

During the Baltimore gathering, Dominican Sister Donna Markham, president of Catholic Charities USA, told the bishops that the relief agency had given \$2 million in early November to Father Enrique Camacho, director of Caritas Puerto Rico, the Catholic Charities affiliate on the island, and she had just presented Bishop Bevard with \$1 million for recovery needs.

The funding has been dis-

tributed for emergency housing, food, water, cleaning supplies, clothing, bedding, diapers and other baby needs. The agency also has deployed 150 case managers in storm-battered areas to assist people in navigating the unfamiliar task of seeking assistance.

In an unscheduled discussion about recent natural disasters at the close of the bishops' public session Nov. 14, Bishop Frank J. Dewane of Venice, Florida, chair the U.S. bishop's Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development, urged fellow bishops to think of what more could be done to help Puerto Rico. He wonders if there had been donor fatigue since the hurricane followed other natural disasters.

"We should, as a body, think of how we can help. They are destroyed," he said.

Archbishop Gonzalez doesn't deny the island can use monetary help, but he said it also needs prayers.

"We believe in the immense power and efficacy of prayers. We have felt it. I have felt the impact of so many prayers. They make a difference," he said.

"Today we're still in an emergency mode. We need water, food, clothing, basic necessities of life. In the long term, we'll need assistance rebuilding homes, churches, schools, roofs."

"You go day by day, but it's overwhelming and traumatic."

ARCHBISHOP
ROBERTO GONZALEZ NIEVES



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- Panic Disorders • Depression
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NEWS BRIEFS

Chinese officials pay to swap religious images for portraits of Xi

HONG KONG (CNS) — Officials in China's eastern Jiangxi province have replaced religious images displayed by Christian families with portraits of the country's leader, Xi Jinping. Ucanews.com reported that, on Nov. 12, pictures were uploaded to the popular social messaging service WeChat account of Huangjinbu town government, showing officials removing images of the cross and other religious subjects in Yugan County. The message from officials said the Christians involved had "recognized their mistakes and decided not to entrust to Jesus but to the (Communist) Party" claiming the Christians voluntarily removed 624 religious images and posted 453 portraits of Xi. The officials also claimed they were "converting" Christians to party loyalty through poverty alleviation and other schemes to help the disadvantaged. Nearly 10 percent of Yugan County's largely impoverished 1 million people are Christian.

New museum tells the story of the Bible — chapter and verse

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Hey, Smithsonian, there's a new kid on the block. It's the Museum of the Bible, just a few blocks from the National Mall in Washington. On its opening to the public Nov. 18, it told visitors how the Bible — both Old Testament and New Testament — has intersected society and at times even transformed it. The people behind the museum say that if visitors were to read the card behind every artwork, saw every video, heard every song and took part in every interactive experience — including a Broadway-style musical called "Amazing Grace" about the song's writer, John Newton, and the biblical inspiration behind the abolitionist movement — it would take them 72 hours to do it all. But visitors can take their time, because there is no admission charge to the museum. The museum was the brainchild of Steve Green, chairman of the museum's board of directors and president of the Hobby Lobby chain of arts and crafts stores. "It's exciting to share the Bible with the world," Green said at a Nov. 15 press preview of the museum.

Supreme Court to hear case on free speech and crisis pregnancy centers

WASHINGTON (CNS) — The Supreme Court has decided to hear a case examining freedom of speech at crisis pregnancy centers. The case, accepted Nov. 13, will consider if a California law that went into effect in 2016 violates the Constitution by requiring the state's 200 crisis pregnan-

Sister Mary Antona Ebo dies



CNS/Beltman/Corbis/PBS



CNS Photo/John Feister, St. Anthony Messenger

Franciscan Sister Mary Antona Ebo, a Franciscan Sister of Mary whose courageous words during the 1965 march in Selma, Alabama, became a rallying cry for many in the civil rights movement, died Nov. 11 at a retirement community outside St. Louis. She was 93. "We will miss her living example of working for justice in the context of our Catholic faith," St. Louis Archbishop Robert J. Carlson, who celebrated her funeral Mass Nov. 20 at St. Alphonsus Liguori Church in St. Louis, said in a statement. The archdiocesan Peace and Justice Commission said in another statement that Sister Antona's "courage and work to end the injustice of racism provided the inspiration and guidance" the commission's members needed in their work. Sister Ebo received an honorary doctorate from Notre Dame for her civil rights efforts. She is pictured during the 1965 protest, left, and in a 2005 photo, right.

cy centers to inform their clients, in specific detail, about the availability of free or low-cost abortion and contraceptive services and provide a referral number for them. The law in question, called the Reproductive FACT Act, says centers must post such notices in areas where they will be clearly seen on paper that is "at least 8.5 inches by 11 inches and written in no less than 22-point type." Centers also are required to disclose in their advertisements if they have medical personnel on staff. Some centers provide counseling and offer supplies of diapers, formula, clothes and baby items. Centers that fail to comply are subject to fines of \$500 for a first offense and \$1,000 for subsequent offenses. Three pregnancy centers challenged the law in court saying it infringed on their First Amendment rights to freedom of speech and free exercise of religion. The pregnancy center law was upheld last October by a panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit that said the state could regulate professional speech because of its interest in safeguarding public health and to

ensure that "citizens have access to and adequate information about constitutionally protected medical services like abortion."

Bishop asks for prayers after shooting tragedy in California

BALTIMORE (CNS) — Bishop Jaime Soto of Sacramento, California, asked his brother bishops meeting in Baltimore to pray for the victims of the nation's latest shooting tragedy. The bishops were gathered for the second day of their annual fall assembly Nov. 14. Early that morning in Northern California, a gunman opened fire at random locations, including near a grade school, in a rural area, leaving at least four people dead and at least 10 others injured. AP reported that sheriff's deputies fatally shot the gunman, who was later identified as Kevin Neal, 43. He was the fifth fatality in the incident. At least two children were among those being treated for injuries. The Tehama County Sheriff's Office said that it was dealing

with seven crime scenes, according to AP. Tehama County is one of several counties that comprise the Sacramento Diocese. California Gov. Jerry Brown in a statement said he and first lady Anne Gust Brown "are saddened to hear about today's violence in Tehama County, which shockingly involved schoolchildren. We offer our condolences to the families who lost loved ones and unite with all Californians in grief."

Priest mediates between Zimbabwe generals, Mugabe

CAPE TOWN, South Africa (CNS) — A Catholic priest is mediating between Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe and generals who seized power. Father Fidelis Mukonori, parliamentary liaison officer for Harare Archdiocese, is trying to mediate a graceful exit for the 93-year-old president, who has led Zimbabwe for 37 years. Father Frederick Chiromba, secretary-general of the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference, told Catholic News Service Nov. 16

that, through his work, Father Mukonori knows Mugabe and the senior military officers well. He said Father Mukonori was not at a Nov. 15 meeting of the Zimbabwe Heads of Christian Denominations, who called for an interim government to be formed to "oversee the smooth transition to a free and fair election." The church leaders, including Father Chiromba, said they wanted to make it clear to the military "that it is their responsibility to ensure that human dignity and rights are respected."

Care for the dying does not mean obstinately resisting death, pope says

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — People who are dying must be accompanied with the love of family members and the care of medical professionals, but there is no requirement that every means available must be used to prolong their lives, Pope Francis said. "Even if we know that we cannot always guarantee healing or a cure, we can and must always care for the living, without ourselves shortening their life, but also without futilely resisting their death," the pope said in a message to the European members of the World Medical Association. "This approach is reflected in palliative care, which is proving most important in our culture, as it opposes what makes death most terrifying and unwelcome: pain and loneliness," the pope said. The European members of the medical association met at the Vatican Nov. 16-17 for a discussion with the Pontifical Academy for Life on end-of-life care.

Longing for peace: Pope to preach dialogue in Bangladesh, Myanmar

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — While the ongoing crisis of Rohingya refugees fleeing Myanmar for Bangladesh will draw much attention during Pope Francis' visit to the two countries in late November, the pope also is expected to focus on inter-religious dialogue, poverty and climate change. Although lively and growing, the Catholic communities in both countries make up less than 1 percent of the population. The vast majority of people in Myanmar are Buddhist, while the overwhelming majority in Bangladesh are Muslim. Both countries have been plagued by political and ethnic tensions that have found religion to be an easy difference to exploit for political gain. Differences are exacerbated by poverty and the difficulty of accessing very limited resources; the situation is further worsened by climate change, which is evident in the droughts, flooding and increased power and frequency of cyclones that move in from the Bay of Bengal. Pope Francis is scheduled to arrive in Myanmar Nov. 27.

USF announces 'Pay It Forward' Scholarship

FORT WAYNE — The University of Saint Francis has announced a new scholarship available to incoming students who exhibit a commitment to service and helping others.

Pay It Forward is a renewable scholarship that ranges from \$2,000 to full tuition. First-time and transfer students seeking their first undergraduate degree at the Fort Wayne and Crown Point locations are eligible. Three recipients will be chosen for larger awards, with two students awarded half tuition and fees, and one student to receive full tuition and fees. Scholarship recipients will be announced in February.

The Pay It Forward Scholarship is unique in that USF is the only university in the country offering service-based scholarships without limiting the number of awards or applying economic thresholds or ethnic-origin requirements, as evidenced by the university's primary research into university-sponsored service scholarships.

To be considered for a Pay It Forward Scholarship, applicants must write a compelling essay explaining how they help others. The deadline to apply for the service scholarship is Jan. 1.

"The University of Saint Francis has a long tradition of producing graduates with a deep sense of community and a dedication to serving others," said President Sister M. Elise Kriss, OSF. "The Pay It Forward Scholarship has a direct connection to our Franciscan values. Rewarding applicants who are already living that value is the way we desire to pay it forward as a university." USF students together complete a total of more than 25,000 hours of service each year through various community projects and campus initiatives.

More information about the University of Saint Francis Pay It Forward Scholarship can be found at go.sf.edu/sf-scholarships. More information about USF can be found at sf.edu.

Experience 'Holy Darkness' at Advent retreat

HUNTINGTON — Victory Noll Center will offer an Advent retreat, "Holy Darkness," on Dec. 1-2, which will provide an opportunity to slow down during this busy season. All are invited to this time of prayer, reflection and solitude.

The retreat begins Friday, Dec. 1, at 7 p.m. and ends Saturday, Dec. 2 at 1 p.m. The theme of "Holy Darkness," comes from the prophet Isaiah: "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light." Facilitated by Sue Wilhelm and Tina Brown-Eckart, this retreat will allow participants to engage in prayerful stillness and creative reflection in preparation for the light of Christ at Christmas.

AROUND THE DIOCESE

St. Vincent de Paul Society Care Van drivers honored



Provided by Jim Andrews

The men and women who drive the Care Van for the St. Vincent de Paul Society in Fort Wayne drive a total of almost five weeks per year, at 45 hours per week, and average 400 to 500 miles per week. They are dedicated to the cause of transporting clients to and from doctor's appointments and hospital visits. Recently, the organization honored them with a special dinner. From left to right are drivers Jackie and Paul Moreau, Joe and Shirley Weldon, Fran and Paul Braun, Annette and Ed Richardson, Ed and Kathleen Jarboe, Carol and Carl Ehinger and Jim Andrews. Other drivers are Deb Andrews, Margie and Dennis Foote, Mel and Gloria Vachon, Randy and Bobbi Lauer and Bill and Carolyn Ellison.

There is a cost to attend. Overnight accommodations and meals are included. Participants can choose to commute.

Victory Noll Center is located at 1900 W. Park Drive in Huntington. For more information call 260-200-1740, email info@victorynollcenter.org or visit www.victorynollcenter.org.

Victory Noll Center extends the charism and legacy of Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters by inviting all people to discover and develop their capacity for God's mission.

Earthworks to host winter wildlife camps for children

DONALDSON — Wondering how to occupy the children during the upcoming holiday break? Earthworks has a creative solution. Reserve a spot now for "Fun in the Wild: Searching for Wildlife in Winter." From Tuesday, Jan. 2, through Friday, Jan. 5, students ages 6-10 will explore the natural world through art, music and intergenerational activities to gain a greater understanding of a world that is anything but frozen and desolate. Here, they'll learn to live in harmony with nature and reflect God's character of caring for creation.

Located at Lindenwood Retreat and Conference Center, Earthworks' aim is to educate children about wildlife, habitats and nature using a multidisciplinary, fun approach that makes sustainable living second nature.

It's not too early to start planning for spring break and summer vacation either. Earthworks will offer two spring break sessions, March 26-30 and April 2-6, and six weeks of summer programs are also planned. Those are scheduled from June 11-15, June 18-22, June 25-29, July 9-13, July 16-20 and July 23-27. Plan to enroll now in these educational opportunities.

For more information, contact Cheri Ringer, coordinator of Earthcare Education, at earthworks@poorhandmaids.org or 574-935-1746. Earthworks, a part of The Center at Donaldson, is sponsored by The Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ.

USF to discuss icons in the Catholic Church

FORT WAYNE — The University of Saint Francis welcomes Sister Jeana Visel, OSB, as a special guest in the 2017-18 Philosophy and Theology lecture series on Monday, Dec. 4, at 7:30 p.m. in the Historic Woman's Club/USF Business Center, 826 Ewing St.

Sister Visel, from the Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in southern Indiana, will present "Recovering Beauty and Iconography in Catholic Churches Today." She will discuss how icons are not just decorations limited to Eastern Orthodox Church, and how they could play a central role in the Western Church that goes beyond mere decoration. A theologian and iconographer, she will speak about her recent book, "Icons in the Western Church: Toward a More Sacramental Encounter," which argues that the post-Vatican II Roman Catholic Church needs to give greater respect to the Eastern tradition of icons.

This lecture is free and open to the public. Copies of Sister Visel's book will be on sale after the lecture. For additional information contact Angie Springer, 260-399-8066 or aspringer@sf.edu.

Novena to stop abortion planned in South Bend

SOUTH BEND — The Apostolate of Divine Mercy in Service of Life, Marriage, and the Family will offer a perpetual adoration novena, asking the intercession of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Patroness of the Unborn, that an application for a new abortion clinic in South Bend be denied. Join them in praying night and day from Dec. 4-12 at The Life Center Chapel, 2018 Ironwood Circle, South Bend. For more information visit <http://www.divinemeracyforlife.com>.

Reading time



Provided by Karen Lohmuller

Stan Liponoga, principal of Most Precious Blood School, Fort Wayne, is shown reading with third-grade students in the south stairwell of the school for the Principal Challenge during National Young Readers Week, Nov. 11-15. This was Liponoga's third year to participate in the challenge, which is promoted by the Pizza Hut BOOK IT! program.

USCCB OBSERVES A

U.S. bishops take on immigration, racism at fall assembly

BY CAROL ZIMMERMANN

BALTIMORE (CNS) — At the start of their annual fall assembly in Baltimore Nov. 13, U.S. Catholic bishops faced some big issues — immigration and racism — straight on and zeroed in on how to raise the national level of discussion on these topics starting in the church pews.

They acknowledged the current polarization in the country and divides within the Catholic Church and stressed their responsibility as church leaders to promote immigration reform, educate parishioners on justice issues and listen to those affected by “sins of racism.”

On immigration, Bishop Joe S. Vasquez of Austin, Texas, who is chairman of the Committee on Migration of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, said there needs to be a “path to legalization and citizenship for the millions of our unauthorized brothers and sisters who are law-abiding, tax-paying and contributing to our society.”

The bishops responded with applause and an agreement by voice vote to issue a statement calling for comprehensive immigration reform.

The bishops were keenly aware that their defense of immigrants was not necessarily the view of the U.S. church at large. For example, Chicago Cardinal Blase J. Cupich spoke of dangers of Catholics falling prey to and believing “poisoning rhetoric” about immigrants that demonizes them.

“There’s something wrong in our churches, where the Gospel is proclaimed, and yet people leave our worship services, our Masses on weekends, with that rhetoric still echoing in their hearts,” he said.

Several bishops also brought up the notion of prudential judgment — referring to the view Catholics could take on immigration that differs from the bishops — since it is not a specific matter of church teaching.

The bishops who spoke on the floor didn’t buy that argument and said Catholics can’t use it to push aside the need to care for immigrants. Archbishop Salvatore J. Cordileone of San Francisco took this a step further saying prudential judgment can’t be “taken lightly” on a “justice issue like immigration.”

Archbishop Thomas G. Wenski of Miami said the bishops’ defense of immigrants, as brothers and sisters, not problems, is not only right for immigrants but “for our society as a whole.”

“We can make America great,



CNS photos by Bob Roller

Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, gives his presidential address Nov. 13 during the fall general assembly of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in Baltimore.

but you don’t make America great by making America mean,” he added, referring to a slogan of President Donald Trump without naming him.

On racism, Bishop George V. Murry of Youngstown, Ohio, head of the bishops’ Ad Hoc Committee Against Racism, said the church must recognize “and frankly acknowledge” its failings. He said the issue has found a “troubling resurgence” in recent years, referring particularly to a white supremacist rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, this year where he said racial hatred was “on full display.”

“Racism isn’t going to be conquered by speech but by actions,” said Archbishop Wilton D. Gregory of Atlanta, adding that this was a watershed moment where the church could play a leadership role.

He spoke about discussions happening at diocesan and par-

ish levels, and several bishops commented about them as well noting that these discussions are not easy, but so necessary to bring about healing.

Other key issues of the day where church leaders are responding include health care, taxes and abortion, mentioned by Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston in his first address as USCCB president. He took office at the close of last year’s fall assembly.

“We are facing a time that seems more divided than ever,” Cardinal DiNardo said. “Divisions over health care, conscience protections, immigration and refugees, abortion, physician-assisted suicide, gender ideologies, the meaning of marriage and all the other headlines continue to be hotly debated. But our role continues to be witnessing the Gospel.”

He explained that the

He told them to be adventurous in the “new frontier of faith” and to make a strong effort to accompany young people who often question their faith.

The bishops also heard from the Vatican secretary of state, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, at a

Nov. 12 Mass where he was the main celebrant and the homilist, and at a dinner celebrating the USCCB’s 100th anniversary.

The cardinal told the U.S. bishops that the church needs them today to “bring not only material assistance but also the spiritual balm of healing, comfort and hope to new waves of migrants and refugees who come knocking on America’s door.”

He also urged them to follow the pope’s call to accompany the modern Church.

Prior to the Mass at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, a few protesters held placards or placed them on the sidewalk, calling on the U.S. bishops to embrace pacifism.

Also in the lobby of the hotel where the bishops were meeting, a protester sought dialogue with church leaders to urge them to offer sanctuary to immigrants facing deportation, and another voiced displeasure with church leaders he said support war.

The second public day of meetings did not tackle major



Dominican Sister Donna Markham, president and CEO of Catholic Charities USA, speaks Nov. 13 during the assembly.

CENTURY OF SERVICE



Bishop William A. Wack of Pensacola-Tallahassee, Fla., smiles Nov. 13 during the gathering of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Encuentro," next September in Grapevine, Texas, and World Youth Day Jan. 22-27, 2019, in Panama City.

The bishops identified key issues they are addressing with Congress, including health care, the federal budget and tax reform, and concluded their assembly by mentioning the impact of recent disasters such as hurricanes and wildfires.

Bishop Curtis J. Guillory of Beaumont, Texas, a region hard hit by Hurricane Harvey, said often when tragedies occur, "you just feel very much alone and wonder how you are going to move forward."

He thanked the bishops for their support, in prayers, phone calls and donations, which he described as a "wonderful sign of solidarity" and sign of unity of our faith. This will be a long and costly recovery, he noted, but added that "people have deep, deep faith."

Contributing to this story were Rhina Guidos, Dennis Sadowski, Mark Pattison and Julie Asher.

societal issues but examined ways the bishops can continue to uphold the Catholic faith from specific wording in the baptismal rite, a review of catechetical materials and a pastoral plan for marriage and family life that will give Catholic couples and families resources to enable them to live out their vocation.

They also voted to move forward the sainthood cause of Nicholas W. Black Elk, a 19th-century Lakota catechist who is said to have introduced hundreds of Lakota people to the Catholic faith.

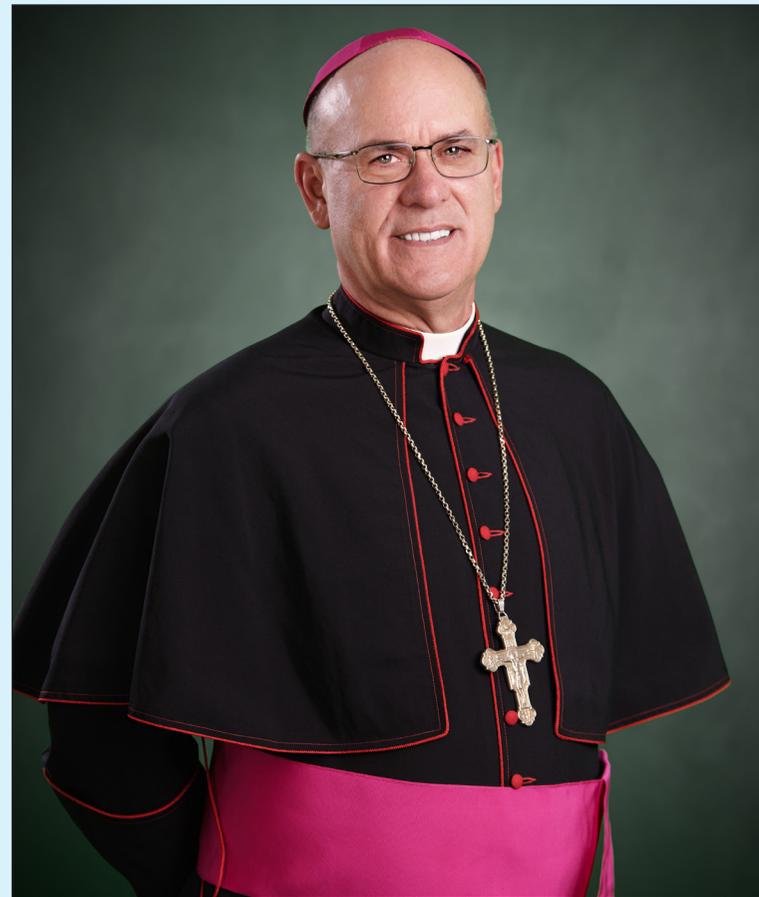
As part of the business side of the meeting, the bishops elected Archbishop Allen H. Vigneron of Detroit as the next secretary of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. He'll take office next November. Votes also were cast for a new chairman of the bishops' Committee for Religious Liberty and chairmen-elect for the committees on Communications, Cultural Diversity in the Church, Doctrine, National Collections and Pro-Life Activities.

They highlighted past events such as the Convocation of Catholic Leaders in Orlando, Florida, this summer and spoke about tapping into the energy that came from that national gathering at diocesan and parish levels.

They also previewed upcoming events such as the U.S. Catholic Church's Fifth National Encuentro, or "V



Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state, prays during Mass Nov. 12 at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Baltimore on the eve of the fall general assembly of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.



Bishop Rhoades elected chairman of USCCB Committee on Doctrine, re-elected to CRS board

FORT WAYNE — At the fall general assembly of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Most Reverend Kevin C. Rhoades, Bishop of Fort Wayne-South Bend, was nominated and elected chairman of the Committee on Doctrine; he was also re-elected to the board of directors of Catholic Relief Services. The assembly took place Nov. 13-14 in Baltimore, Maryland.

The Committee on Doctrine assists the bishops, both collectively and individually, in areas of faith and morals of the Church. It collaborates with the committees of the conference, providing expertise and guidance concerning the theological issues that confront the Church in the United States. The committee particularly addresses the relationship to science, human values, and health care, and supports the bishops' efforts in the area of development and review of Scripture translations.

Among other responsibilities, members of the committee study issues of significance, evaluate theological and moral trends of concern to contemporary society, and communicate and promote the teachings of the Church in support of the Holy See and the Church in general.

Bishop Rhoades was also elected, during the gathering, to serve another term on the board of directors of Catholic Relief Services. He is joined by Bishop Edward J. Burns of Dallas, Bishop Felipe J. Estévez of St. Augustine, and Archbishop Thomas G. Wenski of Miami, who were also re-elected. Archbishop Bernard A. Hebda and Bishop Shelton J. Fabre were elected new members of the board, and George Mason University law professor Helen Alvaré was selected as a new lay member. Their three-year terms begin Jan. 1.

Catholic Relief Services carries out the commitment of the bishops of the United States to assist the poor and vulnerable overseas. The agency is motivated by the Gospel of Jesus Christ to cherish, preserve and uphold the sacredness and dignity of all human life, foster charity and justice, and embody Catholic social and moral teaching. It acts to promote human development by responding to major emergencies, fighting disease and poverty, and nurturing peaceful and just societies; and to serve Catholics in the United States as they live their faith in solidarity with their brothers and sisters around the world.

The St. Bryce Missions: global outreach, local link

BY JILL A. BOUGHTON

When one listens to the Holy Spirit, one thing can lead to another.

When she started a young adult prayer group because she needed support after graduating from a Catholic college, Colleen Mitchell didn't anticipate meeting her future husband there. When she and Greg lost their 3-month-old son, Bryce, to sudden infant death syndrome, she had no idea God would channel the energy of their grief into founding an international mission in Bryce's name. When she began studying the women of the New Testament, Colleen had no intention of writing a book. And when people from Fort Wayne began making short-term mission trips to Mitchell's Costa Rica ministry, the Louisiana residents had no plans to move to that city.

As they set their sights on Myanmar, who knows what adventures lie ahead?

Living in Lafayette, Louisiana, the Mitchells were involved in door-to-door evangelizing, outreach to the poor and short-term foreign mission trips. They had five sons, who now range in age from 10 to 19. In September 2009, they were devastated when they found their sixth son dead in his crib with no prior warning.

As she prayed, Colleen realized God wouldn't ask them to endure such suffering unless he wanted to bring some good out of it. She begged not to get stuck asking "Why?" but to move forward to "What now?"

Self-employed in sales, Greg found the beginning of their answer on a business trip to Costa Rica. At prayer in the Basilica of Our Lady of the Angels, site of a Marian apparition, he met two missionary priests. They invited him to visit their mission among a remote, rural indigenous people, the Cabecar. As soon as he got home, Colleen realized her husband had left part of his heart with the mostly pre-Christian people.

Within six months the family had opened their hearts to the possibility of moving to Costa Rica as full-time missionaries. They sold everything and arrived in Turrialba in January 2011.

The original vision of the St. Bryce Missions was to build chapels, then to assist in evangelizing and catechizing as their mastery of Spanish grew. However, they soon became aware of another need. Although there is a hospital in Turrialba, the Cabecar can only access it after an eight-hour walk and a long bus ride. As a result, the rate of infants dying before their first birthday was five times Costa Rica's national average, which the government declared a national emergency. Colleen remembered how complicated



Photos provided by Colleen Mitchell

Greg and Colleen Mitchell and their five sons have experienced a Spirit-led journey that took them to Costa Rica, where they founded St. Bryce Missions.

it had been to take care of one sick child in the U.S., even with America's abundance of economic, educational and medical resources. She began to pray about opening a maternity home where pregnant women could come at 37 or 38 weeks and stay until they were strong enough to return home after being released from the hospital.

The cost of building and staffing such a facility seemed daunting, until she realized they already had a place with beds, food, available transportation and Christian love: their own home. "Our doors are open, our soup pot is full, our prayer times are set; but we never know who will show up," said Colleen. "Whomever God sends, we serve."

In 2013 the Mitchells began welcoming mothers, moving several times as the work expanded. They also wound up caring for children with disabilities and preparing both mothers and infants for baptism, according to the diocesan catechetical plan.

Rather than provide a paternalistic alternative, the St. Francis Emmaus Center cooperates fully with the Costa Rican government, the medical system and the local Catholic diocese, providing a safety net to address gaps in those systems. Many of the mothers it welcomes have never encountered Christian love in such a tangible form or realized that they could develop a personal relationship with Jesus. Emmaus goes beyond simply receiving hospitality, to encountering Jesus during this stop on their road.

With 600 women in and out of their home each year, the ministry soon outgrew the largest house in town. The Bishop of Cartago donated a piece of

property with a structure that could be remodeled to provide bed space for 30 women at a time, as well as housing for staff and volunteers, including doulas to accompany mothers through the labor and birth process. They have funds and ecclesial permission to build a eucharistic chapel on the grounds as soon as building permits come through. This will be a further step in fulfilling Pope Francis' vision of "a poor Church for the poor," founded on Christ's eucharistic presence.

During the past year, Greg and Colleen became aware that their primary vocation should be the growing needs of their own family. As they prayed about where to relocate, close friends from a group of Catholic families who had come to work in Turrialba every summer made a proposal. This fall the Mitchells moved to Fort Wayne and St. John the Baptist Parish so that Colleen could teach Spanish and language arts to junior high students at St. Joseph School, where 90 percent of the students are of Mexican origin. Their oldest son started college at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, the second is a sophomore at Bishop Luers High School and the other three attend St. Joseph. Greg still spends most of his time in Costa Rica, working to make the mission self-sustaining, although the Mitchells intend to remain closely involved in training, spiritual and financial support.

They also desire to replicate the maternity home model among other peripheral peoples. At the invitation of the papal nuncio, their next exploration involves Myanmar, which also has a very high maternal and infant mortality rate.

Colleen didn't set out to be a

writer, either; but in her lonely early days in Costa Rica, she was led to reflect on the women of the Gospels — mining their stories in an attempt to discover her own identity. Her journaling resulted in "Who Does He Say You Are?: Women Transformed by Christ in the Gospels," published by Franciscan Media/Servant in 2016. A second book is due before the end of the year: "When We Were Eve: Uncovering

the Woman God Created You to Be."

As Colleen's editor, Heidi Hess Saxton became intrigued by St. Bryce Missions. She, her husband, Craig, and their two teenagers accepted the Mitchells' invitation to visit St. Francis Emmaus Home last May and June. In preparation for the trip, Heidi reached out to her parish, Queen of Peace in Mishawaka. The parish women's Jubilee Society raised \$200 to refurbish the center's labor room with paint, equipment and a sound system. The youth group sponsored an event to make 40 baby blankets for new Cabecar moms. Queen of Peace Pastor John Eze called the Saxtons forward after Mass and gave them a blessing before they left on their trip.

Several Queen of Peace parishioners are interested in volunteering in Costa Rica next summer, and blanket making was so much fun it will probably happen again — perhaps for a local pregnancy center, they say. In Heidi's words, "getting involved in a missionary project like this really provides an opportunity to use the gifts God has given us in ways that stretch our faith. My daughter got an unforgettable lesson about how other people live. They have so little, and yet they do so much with it. I know it was a blessing and a real, personal challenge for me and my family to respond to the call to do more than write a check — to give a piece of ourselves. And I know our friends at Queen of Peace felt the same."



Heidi Hess Saxton holds Axel, one of the indigenous babies staying at the St. Francis Emmaus Center in Costa Rica, a home for expectant mothers founded by the Mitchell family of Fort Wayne and supported in part by Queen of Peace Parish, Mishawaka.

'We are all God's children:' Couple advocates interfaith dialogue, compassion

BY MARIAM SCHMITZ

Steven Shaikh was born and raised in India. As a Muslim, he witnessed violence in the name of religion and consequently became an atheist. While he knew there must be a higher power, his anger caused him to deny God's existence.

In 1986, 24-year old Shaikh was hiking through the mountains, unaware that his faith journey was about to leap forward. As he walked through a long tunnel, a thundering sound suddenly came from the other side. Leaving the tunnel, he came upon a cloud-filled valley and realized a turbulent waterfall had just begun from high above. It was monsoon season, and heavy rains had caused the waterfall to form in a spot that had been peaceful just moments before. The water was showing its strength and causing the thunderous sound.

Reflecting back on that moment, Shaikh said his thoughts were, "Any of this will kill me in an instant." "My ego was destroyed, in a sense. That's when I felt the presence of God." He had reached a turning point, and this new direction would lead him to the Catholic Church, a new life in the United States with a loving wife and daughter, and challenges that he had unknowingly been preparing for his whole life.

Shaikh's father was raised Catholic, but converted to Islam to marry Shaikh's mother, a Muslim. They settled in the Indian city of Pune and opened their own business, a grocery store. Shaikh and his siblings were sent to Christian schools. Ultimately though, he said it was his Muslim mother who provided the best example of Christian discipleship.

When he was 9 years old, there was an outbreak of violence between Hindus and Muslims. One day, he said, their family was warned by friendly Hindu neighbors that their grocery would be attacked. Around midnight, "people came with axes, swords and sticks and destroyed the store." The next day, police officers arrived and asked Shaikh's mother if she knew who did it. Even though the culprits were milling around the store at the time, she did not identify them. Instead, she said, "the people who broke into our store are right around here, but they are my brothers. I forgive them. I'll re-build the store. They can come and break it again. I'll keep on re-building." Shaikh said he took note of his mother's compassionate response, but still attributed this incident of violence in the name of religion as a major reason why he became atheist.

During this period, Shaikh said he felt called to search for answers. "Even though I didn't believe in God, I traveled to a lot



Nate Proulx

Steven and Susan Shaikh of Fort Wayne are parishioners at St. Jude. They have witnessed and experienced, throughout Steven's lifetime, the effects of religious discrimination and violence. The couple continues to respond with understanding and compassion.

of different places to see where I could find peace." Ultimately, it was his hike in the mountains at the age of 24 that gave him the peace he had been searching for. When he returned, he met with a visiting priest and family friend. Shaikh said the priest emphasized that, "Catholicism is all about love. Focus on that, and everything will fall into place." Shaikh soon became Catholic.

Susan Shaikh was born and raised in Fort Wayne. Steven's sister, who was also living in Indiana, thought Susan would be a good match for her brother. She connected the two, and the couple began writing letters and talking on the phone, and they eventually met in India. They were married 13 days later, in January 1997: The priest who baptized Steven presided over their Catholic wedding. The next day there was a Muslim celebra-



Provided by Steven and Susan Shaikh

The Shaikhs married in the Catholic Church in India in 1997.

tion, too. They eventually settled in Fort Wayne where Steven, now an Indian immigrant, would face some unexpected, but all too familiar, challenges.

During the first year Steven said he noticed the occasional disapproving glance, but after 9/11 it became more open and more frequent — with yet another uptick after last year's election. Susan recounted a day when Steven was mowing their lawn, and a van started slowly driving back and forth in front of their home. After four or five passes, Susan advised Steven to come inside the house.

Steven remembered when he was called an "Islamic terrorist" by a stranger as he walked down a Fort Wayne street. A similar incident happened at a mall, with their daughter present. Another time, it was at a local restaurant. And yet again, about a month ago, the day a terrorist drove a truck down a busy bicycle path in Manhattan and killed eight people in the name of ISIS, Steven was stared down by a stranger driving an adjacent car.

Steven was once again experiencing unfair treatment, this time because of his skin color and Muslim last name. However, just as Steven's mother forgave the vandals who destroyed their family store, Steven and Susan reacted with compassion — even though there were times when their initial reaction was, understandably, anger.

Noting his recent encounter with the stranger who stared him down after the Manhattan attack, Steven said he "got angry and stared back. That is where I failed. That's when Jesus should have hit me on the head and said 'Steven, you're not my follower if you do that.' In retrospect, there's remorse." Susan added, "We try to remember for that one person who hates him because of his skin color or who he is, or his last name, there are 99 other people who love and adore him. We need to focus on those 99."

Steven and Susan hope to share their experiences as a way to build bridges and ease racial and religious tensions. When they heard the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend had partnered with the newly formed ecumenical group Northeast Indiana Congregation Action Network, or NE-ICAN, they were thrilled. They had been hoping for an organized interfaith dialogue to begin, and that is one of the aims of NE-ICAN. Steven is grateful the diocese is playing a part in the group, and said, "Do you see why I love being Catholic? That's the reason."

As NE-ICAN continues to grow and evolve, the Shaikhs are brainstorming ways they can best assist, including ways to educate people of all ages so others don't have to experience what they do. Susan said, "No matter if you're Muslim, Christian or Hindu, people just want to live the best lives they can." To which Steven added, "We are all God's children."

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Take action against gun violence

I was in sixth grade when two gunmen entered Columbine High School and mowed down 12 of their fellow students and a teacher before taking their own lives. By the time another madman decided to shoot up his own campus of Virginia Tech, killing 32 students and faculty members, I was halfway through college.

What had become immediately clear was the lesson that classrooms had the potential to become battlefields — a reality that the generation following mine knows in even more painful and immediate ways.

Since then, that battlefield has extended to concert venues, airports, movie theaters and churches. By one count, there have been 739 victims of mass shootings in the United States since 1987, the year I was born.

This year alone, over 13,000 people have died as a result of gun violence in this country. And according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, an average of 93 Americans are killed by guns each day based on data from the past five years.

It's for this reason that the U.S. bishops have recently called for a national debate on this country's gun policies. Following the latest shooting in Sutherland Springs, Texas, where a 26-year-old gunman killed 26 individuals in a Texas church, Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, the president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, urged the nation to reckon with the "fundamental problem in our society," that leads to such violence.

"A culture of life cannot tolerate, and must prevent, senseless

gun violence in all its forms," he added.

As both the nation and the U.S. Church attempts to address this crisis, Pope Francis is also encouraging that conversation — and also action.

In one of the questions addressed to America in the preparatory document for the upcoming synod on young people, the Holy Father asks, "How does your community care for young people who experience extreme violence ... and accompany them in various ways in their life?"

Violence takes a range of forms, through gangs, drug addiction, sexual abuse and otherwise, but in the backdrop of recent national events, gun violence should rank high in that listing, too.

"Being close to young people who are living amid great poverty and hardship, violence, war, disease, disability and suffering is a special gift of the Spirit that can truly manifest a proper manner of acting by a Church that is going out," as Pope Francis says in that same document.

In preparation for the next synod, the U.S. Church would do well to ponder what that "going out" might look like in the case of gun violence.

It should entail special initiatives like Cardinal Blase J. Cupich's anti-gun violence program in Chicago, which involves parishes getting involved in the fight to get guns off the street and greater attention to prison ministry. Or talking openly about the wounds and the healing experienced from tragedy like Jennifer Hubbard, who contributes reflections to "Magnificat"



CHRISTOPHER WHITE

IN LIGHT OF FAITH

about losing her daughter at Sandy Hook Elementary School.

The Church should also consider the ways in which it can harness the energy of the thousands of young people who are motivated by recent tragedies who have grown up with such violence but refuse to accept this as simply "normal." Perhaps they could find practical ways to work together with legislators to reinstate the assault weapons ban, which the bishops have long supported.

There's a lot of goodwill and much momentum coming from young people working to build a culture of life, as is evidenced by the remarkable crowds that gather in Washington, D.C. every January for the March for Life.

This moral energy isn't finite. Perhaps the lesson in all of this, looking both ahead to this synod, but also, beyond, is that it's time we maximize its potential.

Christopher White is national correspondent for Crux. Follow him on Twitter @CWWhite212.

Mass murder and our culture of death

On Nov. 14, Kevin Janson Neal paced about a remote elementary school in the small Northern California community of Rancho Tehama Reserve, apparently looking for children to shoot during a killing spree that left five dead and at least 10 wounded in seven different locations.

Thanks to the quick actions of a school secretary, the shooter was unable to enter the classrooms and was left firing a semi-automatic rifle through windows and walls, seriously injuring one child.

When the news broke during the bishops' fall assembly in Baltimore that same day, Bishop Jaime Soto of Sacramento, California, took the microphone to ask his brother bishops to pray the Hail Mary for those victims of the shooting in his diocese.

That the shooting did not engender further discussion at the bishops' assembly, nor a great deal of coverage in the media, may be a sign of how desensitized we are all becoming to the terror of mass gun violence. Five years after the Newtown, Connecticut, massacre of 20 children, even the targeting of a school no longer surprises.

The bishops did release a statement Nov. 7 in the wake of recent mass shootings in Las Vegas (where 59 died and at least 440 were injured) and the First Baptist Church of Sutherland Springs, Texas (27 died and 20 wounded).

In that statement, Bishop Frank J. Dewane of Venice,



GREG ERLANDSON

AMID THE FREY

Florida, chairman of the U.S. bishops' Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development, urged "a real debate about needed measures to save lives and make our communities safer."

Bishop Dewane said the U.S. bishops continued to urge a "total ban on assault weapons," as well as universal background checks, limitations on high-capacity magazines and "improved access to mental health care for those who may be prone to violence."

Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, the president of the U.S. bishops' conference, also issued a forceful appeal: "We must come to the firm determination that there is a fundamental problem in our society. A culture of life cannot tolerate, and must prevent, senseless gun violence in all its forms."

A report by *The New York Times* that compared the United States with other countries in terms of mass shootings came to the conclusion that "the only variable that can explain the high rate of mass shootings in

ERLANDSON, page 13

The Lord is our shepherd, protector, judge and king



THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

MSGR. OWEN F. CAMPION

Feast of Christ the King Matthew 25:31-46

Next week, a new year will begin with the First Sunday of Advent. This weekend, the Church concludes its liturgical year of 2017 with an excited and fervent proclamation of Christ as the king of all.

The first reading comes from the ancient Book of Ezekiel. In this reading, God speaks in the first person, promising protection of the flock — in other words, the people of God. He is the shepherd, seeking the lost, caring for the injured, rescuing the imperiled. Also, God will distinguish between the sheep and

others who assume other identities because of their voluntary unfaithfulness.

St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians provides the second reading. This selection is a proclamation of the Resurrection, and of the role of the Lord as redeemer of humankind. He is the risen Lord, the first of those who will rise to everlasting life. Those who will follow Jesus in being raised from the dead are "those who belong" to Christ; in other words, those persons who have admitted God, through Jesus, into their lives, and who have received from the Lord the gift of grace, eternal life and strength.

The reading frankly admits that at work in the world are forces hostile to God. These forces cannot be dismissed as insignificant or timid, however, they are by no means omnipotent. In and through Jesus, the power and life of God will endure. God will triumph over all evil. No one bound to God should fear the powers of evil, although all must

resist these powers.

For its final reading on this great feast, the Church offers us a passage from St. Matthew's Gospel. It is a glance forward, to the day when God's glory will overwhelm the world; to the day when Jesus will return in majesty and glory.

This expectation was a favorite theme in the early Church, in the community that surrounded and prompted the formation of the Gospels. The reading repeats the description given in Ezekiel. In Ezekiel, God the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, the good from the unfaithful. In this reading from Matthew, Jesus promises a final judgment to separate the faithful from the sinful.

Beautifully, in this reading, the Lord defines who will be judged as faithful and who will be seen as unfaithful. The faithful will not be those who only give lip service to their belief in God, but those who, in the model of Jesus, give themselves totally to the will of God.

Reflection

A popular motion picture a few years ago, and a true story at that, was "The King's Speech." It was about Britain's King George VI (1895-1952), on the throne from 1936 until his death, and focused on his determined efforts to overcome a serious speech defect.

The king and his wife — known for decades, until her own death in 2002, as Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother — were great figures as the British struggled against enormous odds in World War II. At the height of the war, with German "blitz," or bombing, relentlessly tearing British life apart, the rumor spread that the royal family, as well as the government, would flee the country.

One day, arriving on the scene of a horrendous bombing attack, Queen Elizabeth was confronted with the question of whether or not she and her husband would send their young daughters to Canada. Indeed, would she and

the king flee?

The queen answered, "My daughters will not leave without me. I shall not leave without the king, and, the king will never, ever, ever leave you!"

For us Christians, our king will never, ever leave us. He is with us now and always, guiding, healing and strengthening us.

READINGS

Sunday: Ez 34:11-12, 15-17 Ps 23:1-3, 5-6 1 Cor 15:20-26, 28 Mt 25:31-46

Monday: Dn 1:1-6, 8-20 (Ps) Dn 3:52-56 Lk 21:1-4

Tuesday: Dn 2:31-45 (Ps) Dn 3:57-61 Lk 21:5-11

Wednesday: Dn 5:1-6, 13-14, 16-17, 23-28 (Ps) Dn 3:62-67 Lk 21:12-19

Thursday: Rom 10:9-18 Ps 19:8-11 Mt 4:18-22

Friday: Dn 7:2-14 (Ps) Dn 3:75-81 Lk 21:29-33

Saturday: Dn 7:15-27 (Ps) Dn 3:82-87 Lk 21:34-36

Destroying my freedom — in the name of freedom?

In an August 2015 column in *The Washington Post*, George F. Will argued in favor of physician-assisted suicide, summing up his perspective this way: “There is nobility in ... affirming at the end the distinctive human dignity of autonomous choice.”

His conclusion, however, raises several important questions: Shouldn't death-dealing actions directed against ourselves be seen as a deep repudiation of our autonomy, insofar as suicide eliminates our personal freedom once and for all? If our ability to freely make choices is among the highest of our human faculties, isn't it a radical contradiction to mount an attack on that autonomy through suicidal acts? Isn't there a certain absurdity to marshaling our freedom to obliterate our freedom?

Autonomy is often described as being able to do what we want, being “self-governing” and “self-directing.” Authentic freedom, though, doesn't actually mean the ability to do whatever we want; it means the ability to do what we ought, in accord with who we are. To grow in freedom and autonomy means acting in such a way that we attend to, and respect the designs written into our nature. Otherwise, autonomy collapses into a caricature of its real meaning, or worse, into raw violence and forcefulness against ourselves or others.

We can consider a simple example: Exercising autonomy with respect to our car doesn't mean doing whatever we want with it, like pouring milk in the gas tank, and orange juice in the oil reservoir. If we intentionally sideswipe other vehicles as we drive along, and strike pedestrians on the sidewalk, these would be acts of violence, not acts of “autonomy” or “free choice.” Authentic freedom with an automobile implies using it in an ordered way to get from A to

B, driving safely and legally, and even doing the right maintenance and upkeep on it, maintaining respect for the way the vehicle was designed and intended to be used.

Freedom and autonomy regarding what we eat and drink, to consider another example, doesn't mean we can consume anything at all. We can legitimately choose between apples and oranges, but not between milk and drain cleaner. If, in the name of autonomy, we were to declare that we're free to do whatever we want with our bodies, and we ingested drain cleaner on purpose to make ourselves ill, we would actually undermine and surrender our personal autonomy. We would no longer be able to do what we might wish to do, as our body rebelled and constrained us to a stretcher on our way to the emergency room or poison control center.

Looking at a misguided choice of this kind reminds us how our autonomy is never absolute. This kind of choice would also raise doubts in the minds of those who cared about us regarding our mental and moral sanity. To deem self-inflicted sickness to be desirable would itself be a sickness, a kind of lie, spoken in the name of a perverted sense of being free to do whatever I want, even to the point of self-harm or self-annihilation.

The decision to intentionally end our own life by an act of suicide (whether alone or with the assistance of others) pivots our uniquely human power to make sound choices into a seditious power directed against our own good. To self-inflict death in collusion with a physician would constitute a profoundly disordered decision, and a radically corrosive attack on our autonomy. Rather than something dignified, this abuse of freedom is ethically indefensible.

If sane people can recognize



MAKING SENSE OF BIOETHICS

FATHER TAD PACHOLCZYK

that drinking poison to get ourselves sick is wrong, how can we feign that ingesting drugs or using other means to kill ourselves is somehow right and noble? Abusing our own freedom or autonomy isn't free or autonomous; instead, it enslaves and diminishes us. When medical professionals pivot in their role of healing and curing, and instead become accomplices in terminating the sick and vulnerable, they, too, undermine their own autonomy and corrupt their own professional freedom to genuinely care and “first do no harm.”

True autonomy is not limitless or absolute, but is necessarily conditioned by the truth of who we are and the way we function. Properly exercised, our personal freedom manifests a genuine nobility, and a real dignity. We should never will that our final “autonomous choice” be directed against that noble dignity. Rather, we must flee the tyranny of false autonomy if our lives are to be authentically marked by human freedom in its full splendor.

Father Tadeusz Pacholczyk, Ph.D. earned his doctorate in neuroscience from Yale and did post-doctoral work at Harvard. He is a priest of the diocese of Fall River, MA, and serves as the director of education at The National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia. See www.ncbcenter.org

ERLANDSON, from page 12

America is its astronomical number of guns.”

Americans make up 4.4 percent of the world's population, but the *Times* said we own 42 percent of the world's guns. Only Yemen has a higher rate of shootings, and it has the second-highest rate of gun ownership.

America also leads in gun suicides: 21,175 suicides by gun in 2013, almost twice as many deaths as by homicide. As an addiction counselor recently told me, the availability of a gun makes the suicide impulse more likely to be

successful, especially for men.

The recent statements by U.S. church leaders, like the hand-wringing expressions of sympathy by politicians whenever a new massacre happens, does

firing up to 100 rounds in seven seconds, even pro-gun politicians said they should be restricted. Six weeks later, no action has been taken and one manufacturer of the device has resumed sales.

Regardless of the political paralysis, however, the church reminds us that choosing a culture of life not only means addressing abortion and physician-

assisted suicide, but also the proliferation of weapons that contribute so terribly to the suicide, homicide and mass shooting rates that are plaguing our society.

That the shooting did not engender further discussion at the bishops' assembly, nor a great deal of coverage in the media, may be a sign of how desensitized we are all becoming to the terror of mass gun violence.

not necessarily lead to legislative change, however.

After the Las Vegas slaughter, in which the killer used a device called a bump stock to turn his rifle into a weapon capable of

SCRIPTURE SEARCH®

Gospel for November 26, 2017

Matthew 25:31-46

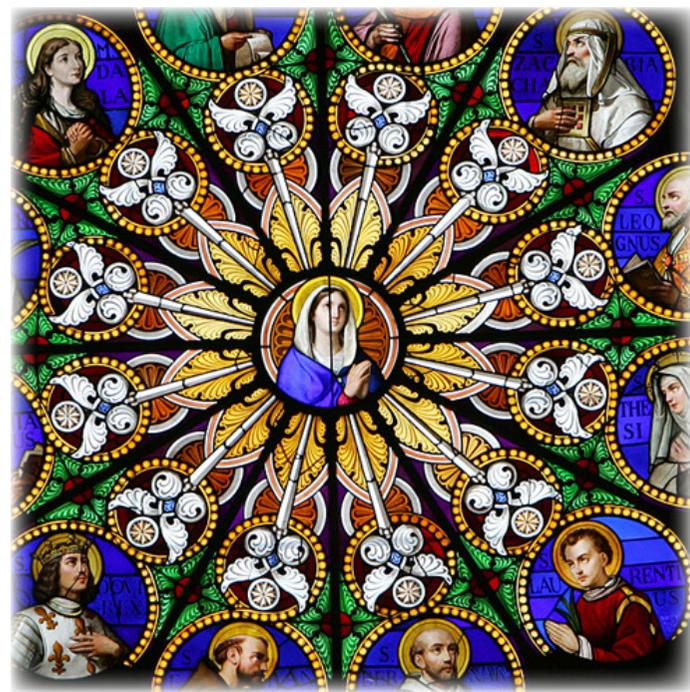
Following is a word search based on the Gospel for the Solemnity of Our Lord, Jesus Christ, King of the Universe, Cycle A. The words can be found in all directions in the puzzle.

SON OF MAN	GLORY	ANGELS
THRONE	NATIONS	SHEPHERD
SHEEP	GOATS	FATHER
KINGDOM	FOUNDATION	HUNGRY
FOOD	STRANGER	NAKED
IN PRISON	ANSWER	LORD
THE LEAST	ACCURSED	DEVIL

WHEN DID?

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

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Blessed Bernadino of Fossa

1420-1503

Feast November 27

Born to a noble family at Fossa, Italy, Blessed Bernardino received his early education at nearby Aquila. Then he studied canon and civil law at Perugia. There a Lenten sermon attracted him to the Friars Minor. And he joined a strict community of Franciscans in 1445. Like his namesake, St. Bernardino of Siena, he became widely known in Italy for his preaching. In the mid-century Bernardino also served as provincial in his local area. In 1464 his superiors sent him to Bosnia and Dalmatia, where nationality differences were causing conflict among the brothers. He succeeded in restoring peaceful relationships in the communities. Later the pope allowed Bernardino to refuse appointment as a bishop so he could continue his ministry of preaching.

'The Star' delivers faithful message of the Gospels

BY JOHN MULDERIG

NEW YORK (CNS) — A holiday treat suitable for all but the tiniest, "The Star" (Sony) is a delightful animated version of the Christmas story told from the perspective of some of the animals present in the manger.

Director Timothy Reckart and screenwriter Carlos Kotkin skillfully balance religious themes such as the importance of prayer and the value of forgiveness with a more secular message about pursuing your dreams. They also throw in a healthy dose of straightforward entertainment.

They work their way into the biblical narrative of Jesus' birth through the adventures of a gentle donkey from Nazareth named Bo (voice of Steven Yeun). Curious about the world beyond the grain mill where he carries out his monotonous work, Bo yearns to exchange his life of drudgery for the fame and prestige to be gained by joining the storied royal caravan.

Bo's best friend, a lively dove by the name of Dave (voice of Keegan-Michael Key), shares this ambition. And the pals get their chance to fulfill their aspirations when Bo successfully escapes his



CNS/Sony Pictures

Animated characters appear in the movie "The Star." The Catholic News Service classification is A-I, general patronage. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG, parental guidance suggested.

confinement, though he injures his leg in the process.

Bo is tended to by no one less than Mary (voice of Gina Rodriguez), after which his quest takes a detour. Despite the mild disapproval of Joseph (voice of Zachary Levi), Mary adopts her patient as a pet. Bo, in turn, becomes dedicated to protecting

the parents-to-be, as they journey to Bethlehem, from the murderous scheming of King Herod (voice of Christopher Plummer).

Bo is aided in this endeavor not only by Dave but, eventually, by an affectionate sheep called Ruth (voice of Aidy Bryant) whom the pals encounter along the way. Together, the critters

do what they can to thwart the unspeaking hulk of a soldier Herod has dispatched to slaughter the Holy Family and the pair of ferocious-seeming but not entirely evil dogs, Thaddeus (voice of Ving Rhames) and Rufus (voice of Gabriel Iglesias), accompanying him.

As a range of characters

rely on prayer for guidance and strive to do God's will, Mary and Joseph present the image of a well-balanced marriage by being strong for each other in moments of trial or doubt. Though some liberties are taken with the scriptural account — Catholic viewers will especially notice the absence of the phrase "Hail, Mary" from the Annunciation scene — overall, the script is faithful to the Gospels.

The inclusion of lighthearted humor, moreover, does nothing to detract from the appropriately reverent treatment of the movie's sacred subject matter. Though a couple of silly guano-themed lines designed to make little ones giggle might have been dispensed with, overall this is a very solid choice for family viewing. All the more so, as it may serve as the starting point for a discussion of faith in general and of the Incarnation in particular.

The film contains scenes of peril and a bit of very mild scatological humor. The Catholic News Service classification is A-I — general patronage. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG — parental guidance suggested. Some material may not be suitable for children.

'Wonder' presents ordinary life and lasting impact of choices

BY JOHN MULDERIG

NEW YORK (CNS) — "Wonder" (Lionsgate) is a beautiful film about ugliness. Its protagonist is August "Auggie" Pullman (Jacob Tremblay), a 10-year-old boy born with facial deformities whose misshapen visage becomes a moral Rorschach test for the people around him.

This gentle, moving drama centers on Auggie's struggle to win acceptance from his peers as he transitions from being educated at home to attending the fifth grade of his local middle school. But it also explores the lives of his supportive parents, Nate (Owen Wilson) and Isabel (Julia Roberts), and his loving older sister, Via (Izabela Vidovic).

Via gives Auggie unstinting affection despite the fact that his emotional needs have left her feeling overlooked by Mom and Dad.

Though reluctant to subject

Auggie — who usually goes out in public wearing an astronaut's helmet that conceals his face from view — to the potential ordeal of school life, Nate and Isabel know it will be the best thing for him in the long run. They find an ally in Auggie's principal, Mr. Tushman (Mandy Patinkin), a rabbi-like figure who serves as the movie's ethical core.

As for Auggie's fellow students, their attitudes range from the open friendliness displayed by easygoing Summer (Millie Davis) to the cruel hostility embodied by would-be top dog Julian (Bryce Gheisar). Somewhere in the middle is Auggie's on-again, off-again pal, Jack Will (Noah Jupe).

Though fundamentally kind and, eventually, genuinely fond of Auggie, Jack is case study in subtle variability and the negative effects of peer pressure. When circumstances enable Auggie to overhear some heart-



CNS photo/Lionsgate

Jacob Tremblay and Julia Roberts star in a scene from the movie "Wonder."

less remarks about him that Jack makes simply in order to fit in with the crowd, the effect is devastating. A later scene in which Julian comes to recognize the full impact of his bullying also carries a wallop.

Subplots involving Via's best friend, Miranda (Danielle Rose Russell), and newfound love interest Justin (Nadji Jeter) reinforce the idea that all of us are potential heroes or villains. Though some of the people in

Auggie's world are wholly good — his parents and Justin, for example — no one is presented as irredeemably wicked.

In adapting R.J. Palacio's 2013 best-seller, director and co-writer (with Steven Conrad and Jack Thorne) Stephen Chbosky has created a winning and memorable film about the significance of ordinary life and the lasting impact of everyday choices. Despite a few mature elements, the movie's valuable lessons make it appropriate fare for most teens.

The film contains a scene vaguely referencing married sexuality, fleeting scatological material, a couple of fistfights, one use of profanity and a single mildly crass term. The Catholic News Service classification is A-II — adults and adolescents. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG — parental guidance suggested.

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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.

Holiday craft bazaar

SOUTH BEND — A holiday craft bazaar will be Saturday, Nov. 25, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Our Lady of Hungary School Gym, 735 W. Calvert St. Crocheted items, handcrafted jewelry, handmade soaps and much more. A small lunch will be available for purchase. Call Edie Leemreis for more information at 574-289-2143.

Youth ministers' gathering

FORT WAYNE — A gathering for youth ministers who want to build community, share ideas and learn from one another's experiences will be Monday, Nov. 27, from 3:30-5 p.m. at Fortezza Coffee, 819 S. Calhoun St. Anyone who works or volunteers in youth ministry is welcome. Meet with other area youth ministers, hear updates from the Office of Youth Ministry and assist with the direction of youth ministry collaborative efforts in the diocese.

Christmas bus trip to Chicago

FORT WAYNE — A bus trip to downtown Chicago will depart from St. Peter's Catholic Church, 518 E. Dewald St., Wednesday, Nov. 29, at 7 a.m., and return approximately 10 p.m. Luxury bus will drop off and pick up guests along the Miracle Mile. Cost includes a boxed meal on the return trip and coffee, juice and donuts prior to departure. Contact Karen at 260-744-2765 for information.

Catholic Business Network First Friday breakfast

FORT WAYNE — The next Catholic Business Network breakfast will be Friday, Dec. 1, at the St. Mother Theodore Guerin Chapel, 1122 S. Clinton St. Mass at 7 a.m. is followed by networking and breakfast at 8 a.m. in the Cathedral Center. This month's featured speaker is Seminarian Augustine Onuoha, who will share his vocation story: "Thanksgiving for Amazing Grace."

Marian Trivia Knight

MISHAWAKA — Share your knowledge at Trivia Knight on Friday, Dec. 1, at Marian High School. Doors open at 6 p.m. and trivia begins at 7 p.m. The cost is \$150 per table of 10 people. Support the Athletic Transportation Fund. Reservations are needed by Monday, Nov. 27, and can be made online at www.marianhs.org or by contacting Colleen Ravotto at 574-258-7676 or cra-votto@marianhs.org. Round and event sponsors needed, contact Colleen.

Christmas craft fair

FORT WAYNE — Shop local on Saturday, Dec. 2, at the St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Christmas craft fair, 10700 Aboite Center Rd., from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Find unique, handmade items and more. Chili, pizza and snacks available for purchase. Contact seaschristmascraftfair@gmail.com

com for questions or find us on Facebook: [facebook.com/seaschristmascraftfair](https://www.facebook.com/seaschristmascraftfair).

Saint Nick Six

SOUTH BEND — The 9th annual Saint Nick Six takes place Saturday, Dec. 2, from 9:30 a.m. to noon. Events include 6K and 3K Runs, a 3K Walk, and the "Run, Run Rudolph .06K" for first grade and younger. Entry Fees: 6K Run - \$25; 3K Run - \$15; 3K Walk - \$10; Run, Run Rudolph: Free.

REST IN PEACE

Auburn

Paul J. Schrader, 80, Immaculate Conception

Jack A. Mitchener, 78, Immaculate Conception

Richard Foster, 77, Immaculate Conception

Bremen

Dorothy A. Taylor, 83, St. Dominic

Fort Wayne

Barbara A. Becker, 83, St. Charles Borromeo

Doratheia L. Neddeff, 83, Queen of Angels

Rita A. Minnich, 74, Our Lady of Good Hope

Anastasia S. Roach, St. Charles Borromeo

Norbert A. Minick, 74, St. Henry

Mishawaka

Joan Grittani, 80, St. Bavo

Mary Anne Lawhorn, 71, St. Joseph

Mary Claire Sodder, 95, St. Monica

New Carlisle

Adeline H. Jasinski, 92, St. Stanislaus Kostka

Doris M. Truyaert, 81, St. Stanislaus Kostka

New Haven

Rita C. Reuille, 82, St. Louis Besancon

Notre Dame

Herald Esch, 87, Basilica of the Sacred Heart

Robert H. Schuler, 91, Basilica of the Sacred Heart

Pierceton

David L. Sommers, 76, St. Francis Xavier

South Bend

Irene L. Dudek, 92, Christ the King

Kathryn A. Inwood, 90, St. Matthew Cathedral

John O'Malley, 66, St. Matthew Cathedral

Dr. James W. Wack, 90, Christ the King

Roman J. Radecki, 95, Holy Family

Anne Cecelia Zubler, 61, Corpus Christi

Elizabeth J. Urban, 87, St. John the Baptist

Submit obituaries to mweber@diocesefwsb.org

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LITTLE FLOWER HOLY HOUR

Dec. 5
 7 p.m.

Fort Wayne, Indiana
 St. Mother Theodore Guerin Chapel
 with Deacon Jim Fitzpatrick

Please, come and pray for vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life.

Scholars use Catholic tradition to probe the good and the evil in modern culture

BY WILLIAM SCHMITT

Deep explorations of good and evil, as they operate in individuals, society and today's ethical dilemmas, prompted diverse cultural references — including the television show “Breaking Bad” and the Disney movie “Frozen” — at a recent University of Notre Dame conference.

The university's Center for Ethics and Culture convened more than 100 speakers and about 800 attendees for the fall conference Nov. 9-11. This interdisciplinary and international gathering, which annually showcases the Catholic moral and intellectual tradition, marked its 18th year with the title, “Through Every Human Heart.”

Center director Carter Snead, a professor of law and political science, told those attending that the title is taken from “The Gulag Archipelago” by Nobel Prize-winner Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. The Russian historian wrote of learning that “the line separating good and evil passes not through states, nor between classes, nor between political parties either, but right through every human heart.”

Guests at the three-day meeting included students as well as thought leaders from numerous schools and organizations, such as Bishop Godfrey Onah from the Diocese of Nsukka, Nigeria; Gary Anderson, a Notre Dame theologian; and Richard Doerflinger, a commentator and former associate director for pro-life activities for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Anderson, who is the university's Hesburgh Professor of Catholic Theology, used a clip from the television series “Breaking Bad” as an illustration during his Josef Pieper Keynote Lecture titled “Is the God of the Old Testament Evil?”

Assuring the audience that



Photos by Peter Ringenberg/Courtesy of the Notre Dame Center for Ethics and Culture

“Is the God of the Old Testament Evil?” was one of the questions discussed during a University of Notre Dame Center for Ethics and Culture conference that took place Nov. 9-11.

his summary answer to that question was “No,” Anderson showed a scene portraying a killer's instinctive desire for people to recognize the evil nature of his actions. Anderson then discussed scriptural scenes in which God expressed His just motive for punishment alongside a merciful responsiveness, when His people recognize their sinfulness and intercede for each other.

Evil cannot be ignored, Anderson said, pointing to Old Testament events such as Moses' dialogue with God when the Israelites began idolizing a golden calf. Moses, as a representative before God, asked Him to forego punishing His people, and God relented.

Anderson quoted an analysis by Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI regarding God's desire for

human participation in acknowledging sin and fulfilling His desire to forgive: “Intercessory prayer makes divine mercy so active within the corrupted reality of the sinful man that it finds a voice in the supplication of one who prays and, through him, becomes present where salvation is needed.”

In a separate panel presentation, discussing sacrificial love as a response to a broken world, Doerflinger spoke on “Warming the Frozen Heart: Self-Deception and Self-Sacrifice in Disney's ‘Frozen.’”

Referring to the 2013 animated musical loosely based on

Hans Christian Anderson's “The Snow Queen,” Doerflinger said interpretations of the popular, cheerful songs don't coincide with the actual story being told, which sees characters struggling to rise above painful circumstances. The story is ultimately about “the education of [Princess] Anna in what love is,” as Doerflinger described it.

Several characters in the film place themselves in danger to help Anna as she tries to save the snowbound kingdom of Arendelle, Doerflinger pointed out. Anna, although stricken with a frozen heart by her snow-queen sister Princess Elsa, cli-

matically (and climatically) surrenders her own life to save Elsa. This deed of familial love brings healing and happiness to both sisters and to the kingdom. As Olaf the talking snowman comments, “An act of true love can thaw a frozen heart!”

Doerflinger concluded: “In its treatment of the complexity of good and evil and its message about the power of self-sacrificing love, ‘Frozen’ may be the best popular Catholic movie in recent years.”

The film includes several subtle Catholic references, but there is no proof the script intentionally affirms a Christian message, Doerflinger said. “I think the reality is that this message of ‘you save yourself by giving yourself to others’ is something embedded deep in our souls. It is the answer to life's problems, and every once in a while, somebody stumbles onto that.”

The conference included other notable presenters and attendees as well. Bishop Onah asked in his talk, “When is Poverty a Virtue and Wealth a Vice?” Harvard professor Jacqueline Rivers placed academia under the microscope with a speech titled, “Social Scientists and Values: Scholarly Objectivity or Passionate Advocacy?” The center's distinguished research fellow Alasdair MacIntyre, reflected on such terms as “bad” and “evil” in his talk, “From Grammar to Metaphysics, from Adjectives to Evils.”

A number of initiatives at the Center for Ethics and Culture focus on the Catholic intellectual heritage through teaching, research and engagements on- and off-campus. The center's website is ethicscenter.nd.edu.



Gary Anderson, University of Notre Dame professor of Catholic theology, left, and professor Carter Snead, director of the Center for Ethics and Culture, field questions following a presentation by Anderson at conference that took place Nov. 9-11, looking at God, evil and human tendencies.