Men encouraged to trust God wholeheartedly

BY CHRISTOPHER LUSHIS

“What are you looking for? Do you want to be well? Do you love me?” These questions, first posed by Jesus in the Gospels, were presented anew to more than 900 men gathered at the Allen County War Memorial Coliseum, Fort Wayne, for the annual Rekindle the Fire Diocesan Men’s Conference on Saturday, Feb. 24.

With passion and fraternal affection, speaker Joe Farris emphasized the theme of the retreat — becoming “Fully Alive” — by imploring the men of the diocese “to imagine being given the freedom to leave behind the wounds you’ve been carrying, to give everything you have to Jesus, to start over and begin anew with the Lord, loving Him with your whole being.”

Farris’ emphasis on finding healing through repentance and conversion was echoed by fellow speaker Dom Quaglia Jr., filling in for scheduled presenter Christopher West, who unable to attend due to illness. Quaglia emphasized, “We are called to loving relationship with God. However, we are offered counterfeit versions of love all the

New live drama on first African-American priest coming to diocese

FORT WAYNE — The Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend has announced upcoming performance dates for “Tolton: From Slave to Priest,” a live, theatrical one-man drama performed by actor Jim Coleman and directed by Leonardo Defilippis of Saint Luke Productions. Public performances will take place on Tuesday, April 24, at 7 p.m. at Saint Joseph High School, South Bend, and Thursday, April 26, at 7 p.m. at Bishop Luers High School, Fort Wayne.

“Tolton: From Slave to Priest” is a powerful story based on the life of Father Augustus Tolton, the first African-American priest. This compelling true story of courage, forgiveness and reconciliation resonates deeply with modern American audiences. Bishop Joseph Perry of Chicago, postulator for Father Tolton’s canonization cause, is calling “Tolton” a production that will “inspire a new era of peace, hope and forgiveness in America.”

Admission will be $5 for individuals and $20 for families of four or more. The production runs 75 minutes and is suitable for middle school-age children and up. Tickets can be purchased online at www.diocesefwsb.org/tolton or by calling 260-399-1448.

Augustus Tolton was born a slave on a Missouri farm in

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“Open wide the doors of your life”

Young people encouraged to attend World Youth Day

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TOLTON, from page 1

1854. His mother risked everything to reach freedom in Illinois with her three small children, escaping across the Mississippi River by night in a boat that she rowed herself. After settling in the town of Quincy, Illinois, the family continued to experience hardships and persecution. As a child, “Young Gus,” as he was called, was sent away from the local Catholic school because of the color of his skin.

Despite segregation in the Church, Tolton felt a deep vocation to become a Catholic priest. He applied for seminary. The response? “We’re not ready for a colored priest.” Tolton did not give up and was finally ordained in Rome. Upon his return to Illinois, he worked tirelessly to serve people of all races, especially the former slaves who flocked to Chicago.

Father Tolton saw the Catholic Church as the answer to the discrimination and rejection that he experienced in his own life. “It was the priests of the Church who taught me to pray and to forgive my persecutors,” he said. “We should welcome all people into the Church, not send them away.”

At the young age of 43, Father Tolton collapsed from heat exhaustion on the streets of Chicago and died a few hours later. His cause for sainthood is moving forward, and more and more people are beginning to recognize the humble perseverance, determination and compassion of this extraordinary man.

Volunteers will be needed for each show, including those who would be willing to assist with setup and teardown for each performance. All volunteers, including those who are able to provide meals and lodging for the actor and stage manager, should contact Stephanie Patka at spatka@diocesefwsb.org or by phone at 260-399-1448.

Tickets can be purchased online at www.diocesefwsb.org/tolton or by calling 260-399-1448.

To learn more about Father Augustus Tolton’s cause for canonization, visit www.toltoncanonization.org.

Rare snow at the Vatican

Father David Fons from the Diocese of Lansing and Father Tyler Tenbarge from the Diocese of Evansville throw snowballs at each other in St. Peter’s Square during a rare snowfall at the Vatican Feb. 26.
time, since the enemy has a plan to steal, kill and destroy us. Too often we struggle with one simple thing, the same fault which caused the fall of Adam and Eve; our problem is that we do not trust. While the Lord calls us beyond our comfort zones, He also promises to be with us every step of the way and to provide for all our needs. Return to the Lord, let Him prove to you His faithfulness, take the leap to trust in Him!"

The focus on reconciliation led to more than 500 men receiving the sacrament throughout the day, due also to the encouragement of Father Jac L. Muhlenkamp and Father Ben Muhlenkamp, who served as masters of ceremonies for the event. Nearly 20 priests were in attendance to hear the confessions.

Since becoming “Fully Alive” members of the Church also requires a sincere and devoted focus on the Eucharist, Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades then presented a thorough treatment on the sacrificial and its importance for becoming transformed in Christ.

He exclaimed: “The Eucharist is the heart of the Church. It’s good to think about and discover or re-discover what we do and say at Holy Mass, to mine the riches of this great mystery of our faith, and to grow in our understanding of the great gift God has given us in the Holy Eucharist. The Second Vatican Council encouraged the faithful to take part in the Eucharistic liturgy not ‘as strangers or silent spectators,’ but as participants ‘in the sacred action, conscious of what they are doing, actively and devoutly.’ We are called to participate in Mass interiorly as well as exteriorly, to enter into the mystery with body, mind, heart, and soul, thus allowing the Eucharist to form us as disciples of Jesus, to educate us in love, Christ’s self-giving love in the Paschal Mystery.”

In addition to his study of the Mass, which provided revealing insights of both historical and liturgical significance, Bishop Rhoades engaged the crowd in a question-and-answer session, responding to inquiries on the sacramental life, church teachings and how to defend the faith in an increasingly secular climate.

Following the talks, Bishop Rhoades celebrated Mass and remarked on the struggles endured by Dr. Graham. He shared: “My brothers, this season of Lent is a time when we are called to walk with Christ along the way of the cross, to Mount Calvary, the path to glory. Yes, it can be steep and difficult at times, but with St. Paul we walk this path with the conviction that if God is for us, who can be against us? We walk this path knowing that nothing and no one can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus, Our Lord!

The effects of the conference on those who attended were evident in their remarks. David Maugel, a member of St. John the Evangelist, Goshen, said that the conference served as “a great reminder of what our role is as men in the Catholic Church, of what I need to be doing as a husband and a father.” He added, “It has inspired me to start saying the rosary again on a daily basis and gotten me excited again about Christ and the fact that He is there no matter what and walks beside you in all aspects of your life.”

Michael Tarala, also a parishioner of St. John the Evangelist, expressed his appreciation for the conference and for Quaglia’s talk in particular. “He emphasized how our world throws so many things at us that make us avoid suffering and sacrifice in an effort to stay comfortable. He stressed the importance of being uncomfortable and the graces that come from such discomfort,” Tarala shared. “We, as men, struggle immensely with trust. Therefore, we must put our trust in the Lord and believe that by doing so He will transform our lives.”

Washington (CNS) — The Rev. Billy Graham was “a preacher of God’s word not only in his sermons, but also in the very life he lived,” said Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

“The Rev. Billy Graham to the Lord he so dearly loved and offer our condolences to his family,” the cardinal said in a statement about the Feb. 21 death of the world-famous Baptist preacher.

“His faith and integrity invited countless thousands around the world into a closer relationship with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Thanks be to God for the ministry of Billy Graham,” Cardinal DiNardo said.

An outpouring of statements paid tribute to the man who was easily the most famous evangelist in history. He reached at least 210 million people not only through his personal appearances but also through his radio and television ministries.

A Catholic bishop in North Carolina — and a fellow Charlotte native — said Rev. Graham “gave us an inspiring example of a life lived in total dedication to Jesus Christ and his Gospel.”

“Through his ministry, he taught the world that Jesus is the way and the truth and the life. May the Father of mercies now receive Dr. Graham into his loving embrace. The condolences and prayers of the Catholic Church are with the Graham family at this time,” said Bishop Peter J. Jugis of Charlotte.

In neighboring Tennessee, Knoxville Bishop Richard F. Stika recalled meeting Rev. Graham in 1999 during his visit to St. Louis as he was preparing for one of

**Rev. Graham recalled for deep faith, his invitation to all to know Christ**
By Dennis Sadowski

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Determination and resolve, mixed with frustration and anger, are guiding a new round of resolute activism to reshape federal gun laws.

The drive is fueled largely by high school students who survived yet another mass school shooting, this one Feb. 14 at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida. Seventeen people, including 14 students, died in the assault that a former student armed with a semi-automatic rifle carried out, according to police. He was said to have shown signs of mental illness.

The incident left a country wondering how such incidents could happen again and again and again.

The number of mass shooting incidents across the county in recent years is alarming. This year 34 mass shootings, resulting in 60 deaths and 144 injuries, have been recorded by the online site Gun Violence Archive. The Feb. 14 incident was the most serious by far.

The site defines a mass shooting as any incident in which four or more people were killed or injured.

The data reveals 346 mass shootings in all of 2017; 385 in 2016; 555 in 2015; and 271 in 2014.

In response to the Parkland incident, students nationwide walked out of classrooms Feb. 21 to call on lawmakers to adopt stricter gun laws, boost school security and fund what they see as a woefully inadequate mental health care system.

A walkout of sorts also was undertaken in the Archdiocese of Miami, in which Parkland is located. High school students were given the opportunity to gather on athletic fields on their campuses for 15 minutes of reflection about their response to the violence.

“We were able to have our kids participate in the spirit of it,” Miami Archbishop Thomas Wenski told Catholic News Service.

The question remains: How will elected officials respond to the student demands?

At the White House in Washington, President Donald Trump field “listening sessions” with Parkland high school students, parents and teachers, among others, in an effort to formulate a response to mass shootings. Attendees included victims of the 1999 shooting at Columbine High School in a Denver suburb and the 2012 shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut.

At least one policymaker, Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Florida, seemed willing to consider some changes in gun laws.

Facing an angry audience of students and parents during a CNN-sponsored town hall meeting in Sunrise, Florida, Feb. 21, Rubio conceded that steps could be taken to reduce gun violence. An ardent gun rights backer, Rubio, who is Catholic, said he would support raising the age at which people can buy rifles, was open to reconsidering the size of gun magazines and disagreed with Trump’s proposal to arm teachers.

He stopped short of supporting a ban on assault weapons, like the kind used in the Parkland attack, saying that such a ban existed from 1994 to 2004 and proved ineffective because gun manufacturers and owners found ways to slightly change a weapon to make it meet the requirements of the law.

Another Republican, Sen. Patrick Toomey of Pennsylvania, has said in the aftermath of Parkland he was looking to reintroduce legislation that would expand background checks of gun purchasers and similar earlier efforts by Toomey, who also is Catholic, have failed under National Rifle Association resistance.

Toomey spokesman Sam Fisher told CNS in an email that the senator “is committed to improving the federal background check system, and continues to reach out to senators on both sides of the aisle to see where progress can be made on the issue.”

“He is also open to new legislation establishing stricter penalties for people who steal or illegally possess firearms, specifically those who provide false information during the background check process,” Fisher said.

The NRA has borne the students’ wrath. Across the country young people have challenged lawmakers to choose between protecting students or standing with the NRA. The young suburban political activists have called for the defeat at the polls of any candidate who fails to act to ban assault-style weapons.

The students have pointed to the millions of dollars the NRA spends on political activities, including contributions to candidates’ campaigns. Since 1998 the NRA has spent $203.2 million on political activities, according to data cited by Politifact.

Despite the pressure from the young people and family members of gun-violence victims, Wayne LaPierre, executive vice president of the NRA, doubled down on the organization’s stance that it would not accept any limits on gun ownership.

Addressing the Conservative Political Action Conference annual meeting outside Washington Feb. 22, LaPierre decried efforts to ban guns of any sort, lashing out at what he called political elites who want to “eliminate our firearms freedoms and eradicate all the individual freedoms.”

“They hate the NRA, they hate the Second Amendment, they hate individual freedom,” he said.

That’s hardly the case in the eyes of gun-control advocates, who see assault-style weapons in private hands as a threat to human life.

Archbishop Wenski welcomed the student activism.

“It’s a good harbinger for the future that our future citizens will be actively engaged in the political process,” he told CNS Feb. 22.

Echoing the long-standing position of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, Archbishop Wenski said “reasonable” gun control was necessary to prevent firearms from getting into the wrong hands.

“The church has been engaged on this issue of gun control for a good amount of time,” he said. “We supported the assault weapons ban in 1994 and various statements and letters to (Capitol) Hill when various types of gun legislation were proposed. We generally came out in support of reasonable regulation of firearms. ”

“The church’s position is clear on this. Our position doesn’t win us many friends among the NRA,” the archbishop said, suggesting, “I think we will continue to be engaged on this issue.”

He also called for improved funding of mental health services, which he said had been “broken for a long time” and questioned the arming of classroom teachers.

“If somebody who has murdered in his heart, including self-murder, I don’t think a teacher should be put in that position. … There’s been a rising saying of ‘suicide by cop’ and people provoke that because they know cops have guns. Now we’re going to venture into suicide by teacher. That is not a viable option.”

Meanwhile, the U.S. Supreme Court on Feb. 20 declined to hear a constitutional challenge to a California law requiring a 10-day waiting period for gun purchases. The decision, vehemently opposed by Justice Clarence Thomas in a 14-page opinion, follows a pattern of the court in recent years shying away from the national debate on gun control.

The court last considered gun cases in 2008 and 2010, when justices ruled that individuals have a right to own a gun for self-defense in their homes.

With growing activism on gun violence, will lawmakers act?

Samuel Zeif, a student and survivor of the mass shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fla., cries after his remarks to U.S. President Donald Trump during a Feb. 21 listening session at the White House. Zeif’s best friend was one of the 17 people killed when 19-year-old former student Nikolas Cruz allegedly stormed the Parkland school Feb. 14 with an AR-15 semi-automatic style weapon.

The drive is fueled largely by high school students who survived yet another mass school shooting, this one Feb. 14 at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida.
Bill to recognize fetus as person in homicides clears House panel

INDIANAPOLIS — A bill to recognize the fetus as a person in cases of homicide cleared the House Courts and Criminal Code Committee by a unanimous vote Feb. 21. The Indiana Catholic Conference supports the proposal.

Senate Bill 205, authored by Sen. Aaron Freeman, R-Indianapolis, would allow a prosecutor to seek increased penalties against a defendant for crimes resulting in the loss of a fetus. If a fetus, at any stage of development, is killed during the crimes of murder; voluntary or involuntary manslaughter; or feticide, the perpetrator may incur additional penalties. The legislation does not apply to a lawfully performed abortion.

Under the bill, a perpetrator who commits a felony that causes the termination of a pregnancy could receive an additional sentence of six to 20 years. Current law provides increased penalties for death of a fetus only if the fetus has reached viability.

Glen Tebbe, executive director of the Indiana Catholic Conference, testified in support of the bill. “All life is a gift from God, all human life has dignity, and is sacred, because each human being is created in the image and likeness of God,” Tebbe said. The Indiana Catholic Conference appreciates that this bill recognizes that life of the unborn child is recognized from the beginning, and values him or her as it does the mother.”

Freeman said the bill originated from his constituent, Jennifer Lee, who came to him with a “tragic story.” He explained Lee’s daughter, Brittany McNew, “was in the wrong place at the wrong time in the city of Indianapolis and was the victim of a drive-by-shooting — a senseless act of violence.” He said, “to commit the problem and make it worse, her daughter was pregnant at the time. The prosecutor could not bring a second homicide charge in that case,” said Freeman.

Current law allows a six-to-20-year enhancement if you kill a woman who happens to be pregnant. However, the fetus is only recognized at the stage of viability, which Indiana statutes defines at 24 weeks gestational age.

“The bill does two things,” said Freeman. “It gives the prosecutor a tool, that if the person knowingly or intentionally knew that a woman was pregnant and killed that woman, the defendant would be eligible for a second homicide charge.” He added that it changes the law to prosecute a defendant for a second homicide charge of a fetus at any stage of development, rather than at viability.

The Indianapolis lawmaker said that the language in the bill is not new. “In 2004, the Unborn Victims of Violence Act from Congress allowed for this, so we are not setting any kind of new precedent,” said Freeman. “Twenty-three other states already have this language of a fetus at any stage of development.” He also assured the committee that he was not trying to do some “backdoor D & E.” When working with Legislative Services Agency to draft the legislation, he wanted to make it “very clear” that the bill would have nothing to do with a woman’s right to an abortion. “It doesn’t have anything to do with a woman’s choice to take her own pregnancy. This is about a third actor, a third person who would kill a woman [who was pregnant]. That’s what this bill targets,” said Freeman.

Lee testified in support of the bill. Lee’s daughter was visiting a house at night in the morning when someone drove by and shot 12 times into the back on the home, with one of the bullets striking her. Lee said, “They got a call that their daughter was being rushed to the hospital.” Her daughter needed immediate surgery. She said that following the surgery, the doctor said, “They didn’t just lose one life, but lost two.” And they believed the last heartbeat they heard was that of the baby. Lee said, “The EMT said Brittany’s last words were, ‘Please don’t let me lose my baby.’ I made promise that I would seek justice for my daughter and her baby.” Lee said they discovered that after the police made the arrest, they could only charge the person with aggravated battery for the death of their grandchild.

“I know this bill won’t go into effect for my grandbaby, but it will stand strong for the next man or woman who commits a senseless act against these unborn babies,” said Lee. “It should not matter if Brittany was 6 weeks pregnant, 6 months pregnant, or their grandchild was 6 years old,” she said. “Just because these babies are not old enough to live outside of the womb does not mean they are not already loved.”

Parvonay Stover, government affairs at the Indiana Attorney General’s office, expressed support. “We absolutely support this bill and giving prosecutors the tools to combat this horrific act.”

For more information on the legislative efforts of the Indiana Catholic Conference, go to www.indianacc.org.
Observing Lent as a couple? Try a team approach

BY JULIE ASHER

The 40 days of Lent can seem like a long time, especially if one is giving up a favorite food or video game. It’s helpful to have a friend to keep a person going. He or she can encourage, challenge and pick us up if we falter. And if that friend happens to be a spouse, so much the better.

This year, consider approaching Lent as a team. That doesn’t mean you have to give up — or do — the same things as your spouse, although that’s a possibility. It does mean sharing Lenten resolutions and asking for each other’s prayers and active support. People often find that they’re much more likely to keep their resolutions when they hold themselves accountable to another person. Knowing that someone walks with us, even if it’s not exactly the same path, can be a great comfort and motivator.

If you’re thinking about Lenten resolutions, consider the traditional practices of prayer, fasting and almsgiving (works of charity). Here are some ideas to get started.

Prayer is the foundation of Christian life. Lent is an excellent time to evaluate one’s prayer life and, if necessary, make improvements. Have I been faithful to prayer each day? Have I used Scripture, spiritual books and other resources to deepen my prayer? Do I try to listen as well as speak? A few suggestions:

Set aside a time for prayer each day and invite your spouse to do the same. It can be the same time, or different times depending on your schedules. If you’re parents, take turns looking after the kids so that each of you can have quiet time.

Watch a video reflection on the day’s Scripture readings. Exchange an insight or two with your spouse. If you’d like to try to pray together but need help to get started, read “How to Pray with Your Spouse: Four Simple Steps” and “Who Me, Pray?... With Her?” Also check out “Ten Pointers for Prayer” at www.foryourmarriage.org.

Participate in the sacrament of reconciliation. Most parishes have added times for confession during Lent.

Dip into a spiritual classic, for example, “Introduction to the Devout Life” by St. Francis de Sales, or the autobiographies of St. Thérèse of Lisieux and St. Teresa of Avila.

Fasting can take various forms. Giving up a favorite food or drink is a tangible reminder of a commitment to draw closer to Christ. Or we can fast from a nonproductive behavior or attitude.

Some ideas: Participate in your parish’s weekly soup supper, or serve a simple supper in your home once or twice each week.

Give up a video game, TV program or social networking site. Use the time to do some spiritual reading, visit an elderly relative, or help your children learn a new skill.

“Fast” from negative comments, put-downs and sarcastic remarks to and about your spouse. Apologize for slip-ups.

Many parishes offer extra opportunities for works of charity and service during Lent. Consider making a commitment that will last beyond the Lenten season. Here are some suggestions:

Take out the household budget and review the charitable contributions. Do you need to increase them or change the allocations to the various charitable organizations?

Nearly 50,000 baptisms registered in China in 2017, says Vatican

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The Catholic Church in China registered 48,556 baptisms in 2017, reflecting the vitality and missionary strength of the Catholic communities there, according to a report by Fides, the news agency of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples.

The figures likely are incomplete, however, given the difficulty of procuring data from isolated communities such as Hainan Island in southern China, the population is Muslim, registered 1,099 baptisms, while the Diocese of Ningxia had 128 new Catholics baptized. China’s northwest autonomous region of Xinjiang, where the majority of the population is Muslim, registered 66 baptisms. The Archdiocese of Beijing registered 1,099 baptisms, while the Diocese of Ningxia had 128 new Catholics baptized. China’s southwest autonomous region of Shaanxi, where the majority of the population is Hui, registered 38 and 11 baptisms, respectively.

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In spite of the encouraging figures and the great missionary commitment in local communities throughout China, we must always feel called to a renewed missionary commitment,” said the Faith Institute for Cultural Studies.

“Evangelization in China is a long and difficult path to carry out,” it said. The organization also pointed out that its data represented “an invitation and a call because we must strengthen our faith and always go forward on our journey toward Christ.”

The organization encouraged all the Catholic communities of China to maintain and continually improve upon their archives and parish registers so that a more complete set of data can be collected in the future. It concluded by saying that its data is a means “to see the growth of the church and the work of evangelization accomplished by Christ.”
Court blocks Trump administration's effort to end DACA in March

BY RHINA GUIDOS

WASHINGTON (CNS) — The U.S. Supreme Court has dealt a blow to the Trump administration’s effort to end a program in March that protects young adults brought to the U.S. without legal permission as minors.

On Feb. 26, the court declined to hear and rule on whether the administration has the right to shut down the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA program.

In September, President Donald Trump announced his administration was ending the program, giving lawmakers until March 5 to find a legislative solution to protect the young adults benefiting from DACA.

Two federal judges have blocked the Trump administration’s efforts to end the program, ruling the government must continue to accept renewal applications for DACA. In turn, the administration asked the Supreme Court to hear and rule on one of those decisions, from a judge in California, in an effort to bypass the process of an appeal going through the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals based in San Francisco.

That means the March 5 deadline is essentially no longer of any significance, and those benefiting from DACA can keep applying to renew permits that protect them from deportation, and allow them to have a work permit and other documents — as long as they meet certain criteria.

In a brief, unsigned comment, the court said it expected the Court of Appeals “will proceed expeditiously to decide this case.”

The decision was announced the day the U.S. Conference Catholic Bishops called for a “National Call-in Day for the Protection of Dreamers,” encouraging Catholics to call their representatives in Congress to urge support for the young adults called “Dreamers.”

The name comes from the DREAM Act — the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act. The legislative proposal has explored allowing qualifying youth conditional residency and down the line permanent residency, but it has been repeatedly defeated in Congress.

The court’s decision may delay the end of the DACA program, started in 2012 by President Barack Obama via executive order, but immigrant advocates continued to urge action to provide the youth with permanent relief.

“Although the Supreme Court decision buys Congress time to address the situation of undocumented youth, it should not give them an excuse to delay action,” said Kevin Appleby, senior director of international migration policy for the Center for Migration Studies in New York. “These young people remain at risk and deserve permanent protection and a chance to plan their futures. Catholic advocates should continue to push Congress and the president to grant them a path to citizenship.”

Archbishop Jose H. Gomez of Los Angeles, in a statement and via Twitter, warned Feb. 26 that the high court’s decision “does not change anything.”

“It is long past time for members of Congress to take their responsibilities seriously — seriously enough that they are willing to act with courage to negotiate and seek compromises and resist the temptation to keep using this issue for their political advantage,” he said. “People’s lives and futures hang in the balance.

Without legislative protection, “these young people will lose their permission to work in this country and face deportation. This is wrong and it is up to Congress to make it right,” he said.

California’s Catholic bishops sent a letter to their state’s congressional delegation.

“Listen to these voices of reason this coming week. (The Dreamers) are valuable members of our neighborhoods, our workplaces and our families,” the bishops said. “They contribute to the common good and should be part of our common future as a nation.”

Other bishops throughout the country, too, voiced their support for the youth during the call-in day.

In an opinion piece for The New York Times titled “If You’re a Patriot and a Christian, You Should Support the Dream Act,” Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin of Newark, New Jersey, wrote that “the Gospel of Jesus Christ calls on us to welcome and protect the stranger. This should not be hard to do when the stranger is young, blameless and working hard to make this country a better place.”

On Feb. 27, the PCI National Network, a faith-based community organization based in California, has helped coordinate the “Catholic Day of Action with Dreamers” along with Faith in Public Life and a coalition of Catholic social justice organizations based in Washington. At least one Catholic prelate, Bishop John Stowe of Lexington, Kentucky, said he would participate.

“The groups are demanding a new policy which protects Dreamers while not harming their families and communities,” the groups said in a Feb. 26 statement.

Rome Colosseum bathed in red in honor of modern martyrs

ROME (CNS) — Rome’s Colosseum, long a symbol of the persecution of early Christians, was bathed in red light late Feb. 24 as a reminder of and a prayer for the thousands of Christians being persecuted for their faith today.

The family of Asia Bibi, a Christian woman sentenced to death under Pakistan’s highly criticized anti-blasphemy laws, and Rebecca Bitrus, a Nigerian Christian who was held in captivity for two years by Boko Haram terrorists, told their stories before the red lights were shining on the Colosseum. Bitrus and Bibi’s husband and daughter had met earlier in the day with Pope Francis at the Vatican. They were accompanied by leaders of Aid to the Church in Need, a Catholic foundation that has a long history of assisting persecuted Christians.

Alessandro Monteduro, director of the Italian section of Aid to the Church, said the 40-minute meeting with Pope Francis was “extraordinary,” particularly because the entire encounter took place in an atmosphere of prayer by the pope and by his guests.

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Iraqi Catholic leaders urge Christians: Remain steadfast in Lent

AMMAN, Jordan (CNS) — Iraqi Catholic leaders are urging Christians to remain steadfast in this Lenten season as they encounter challenges of the so-called Islamic State’s legacy in their historic lands. In a Lenten pastoral letter, Chaldean Catholic Patriarch Louis Sako of Baghdad urged Iraqi Christians to pursue unity with other Christians at this sacred time with “open hearts.” “Many Christians today live in a crisis of faith and intellect because of the circumstances of war, instability, migration and the dominance of social media on the details of their daily lives,” he wrote in the letter, released Feb. 21. Many Chaldean Catholics lost their homes, properties and other possessions as they fled the so-called Islamic State militants in the summer of 2014. Many are destitute, still living in camps for the internally displaced or sheltering abroad. “However, these challenges should not discourage their determination and dissuade them from renewing their faith and deepening it, to witness of the Lord and his church,” the patriarch said, calling on Christians to “increase within themselves strength, confidence and enthusiasm.”

Mideast Christian leaders shut Church of Holy Sepulcher to protest taxes

JERUSALEM (CNS) — Protesting several recent actions they described as a “systematic campaign against the churches and the Christian community in the Holy Land,” the heads of Christian churches announced Feb. 19 they were to close the doors of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher for an undisclosed period of time. Bewildered pilgrims pooled around the doors in front of the church as Greek Orthodox Patriarch Theophilos III — flanked by Franciscan Father Francesco Patton, custos of the Holy Land, and Armenian Patriarch Nourhan Manougian — read a short statement to the press. At the same time, the only two people allowed to close the doors — the Muslim custodian of the key, Aedeb Jawad Jawdeh Al Hussein, and Muslim door keepers Vahid Nuseibehe — closed and locked the doors. “This systematic and unprecedented attack against Christians in the Holy Land severely violates the most basic … and sovereign rights, trampling on the delicate fabric of relations between the Christian community and the authorities for decades,” the heads of churches said in their statement. The church leaders were protesting the Jerusalem municipality’s intention to impose property taxes on church property, such as hotels and convention centers, not used for worship purposes. The proposal to levy taxes on some properties would run contrary to the unofficial historical tax-exempt status the churches have enjoyed for centuries. In addition, the church leaders said they oppose a bill in the Israeli parliament that would limit the ability to sell church-owned land to private owners. The bill, whose vote was postponed following the protest, would be specifically detrimental to the Greek Orthodox Church, which owns large tracts of land in central Jerusalem upon which many private homes are built; many of those 99-year-old building rental contracts will soon expire. The church already has sold some of the land to private owners, and homeowners whose apartments are on the land worry about losing their homes.

Euthanasia in hospices ‘a serious error,’ says Vancouver archbishop

VANCOUVER, British Columbia (CNS) — Archbishop J. Michael Miller of Vancouver said the British Columbia provincial government must stop attempts to force hospices and care homes to provide euthanasia. Provincial health authorities are “making a serious error” in trying to coerce caregivers — “committed to making the final stages of life for the elderly, sick, and suffering meaningful and dignified” — into supporting assisted suicide, the archbishop said in a Feb. 22 statement. “Assisted suicide stands in stark contrast to the care that hospices offer, and none should be compelled to provide it, he said. More than 2,000 Canadians have died of assisted suicide since the practice was made legal in June 2016. Archbishop Miller said that points to a dire need for better end-of-life care, not increased access to a lethal injection.” If the elderly, sick, and suffering in our population feel that euthanasia is their best option, it means we as a society and as individuals are letting them down,” he wrote.

Decision to stop Texas execution called ‘example of restorative justice’

AUSTIN Texas (CNS) — The Catholic bishops of Texas praised Gov. Greg Abbott for stopping the execution of death-row inmate Thomas Whitaker shortly before he was to be put to death Feb. 22. Whitaker will now serve life in prison without the possibility of parole. “We offer prayers of Thanksgiving that Thomas Whitaker’s father granted clemency and mercy has been shown,” the bishops said in a Feb. 22 statement. They called Abbott’s decision “an example of restorative justice.” Whitaker, now 38, was found guilty and sentenced to death for plotting the December 2005 shooting deaths of his mother, Patricia, and his 19-year-old brother, Kevin, in their suburban Houston home. His father, Kent, was shot in the chest but survived. He has long asked for clemency for his son. “We believe this case suggests a spirit of restorative justice, and we pray all may reflect on how Texans would be better served by a criminal justice system which embraces restorative justice,” they said. “We pray the Whitaker family may also experience healing and ongoing reconciliation in their lives.”

Artists can help people discover beauty of God’s love, pope says

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Francis implored artists to “make the deep beauty of God’s love visible” and to create and protect areas of beauty in the world’s teeming cities. Meeting a group of musicians, actors, poets, painters, dancers, sculptors and architects Feb. 24, Pope Francis urged them to help people “discover the beauty of being loved by God and bear witness to it in a situation shown to others, especially those who are excluded, wounded and rejected in our societies.” The artists are part of a movement called “Diakonia of Beauty,” created in 2012 to restore a relationship in which the Catholic Church relies on artists to share the Gospel and in which the artists seek to learn from and serve the Church. “You are asked to work without letting yourself be dominated by the search for vain glory or easy popularity, and even less by personal profit alone,” the pope told the group, which is particularly active in France. Too often today, the pope said, people think technology holds the key for understanding the meaning of life, but beauty is a much better path to understanding, he said, urging the artists to create and safeguard “an oasis of beauty,” especially “in our cities, which are too often filled with cement and lacking soul.”

St. Francis art exhibit opens at National Gallery

This 15th-century miniature on vellum by Cosme Tura titled “Saint Francis Receiving the Stigmata” is part of the “Heavenly Earth: Images of Saint Francis at La Verna” exhibit at the National Gallery of Art in Washington. St. Francis of Assisi’s reception of the stigmata, the wounds of Christ, at La Verna in Italy and its depiction by artists beginning in the 14th century is the focus of the National Gallery of Art exhibit, which includes 30 pieces of Franciscan art centered on the miraculous 13th-century event. The exhibit opened Feb. 25.
Leadership recognized at Avilla school

Principal Andrew Adams of St. Mary of the Assumption School, Avilla, and members of the school’s seventh-grade class presented the eighth-grade students with special gold-fleece jackets in appreciation of their leadership this school year, after Mass on Feb. 16. The students, pictured, were honored for leading by good example.

“It is important to us that the choices and preferences of our residents are considered and honored,” stated COO David Deffenbaugh. “During this transition, we pledge to maintain our resident-focused approach to ensure successful, safe and timely transfer of our residents to timely transfer of our residents to our new homes. It has been our pleasure to serve the residents, families and local community at Grace Pointe. We look forward to continuing our mission of service to seniors at the Randallia and Victory Noll locations.”

Healing ministry to visit diocesan parishes

SOUTH BEND — Father Richard McAlear, OMI, an internationally known speaker and minister of healing, will celebrate Masses for Healing at two different parishes in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend during March.

Father McAlear will visit St. Thérèse, Little Flower Church, 54191 Ironwood Rd., South Bend, the weekend of March 17-19, and St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church, 10700 Aboite Center Rd., Fort Wayne on Thursday, March 22.

A native of Boston, Father McAlear became involved with the Catholic Charismatic Renewal in 1972. At a Charismatic prayer meeting, he was asked to offer his blessing for a woman suffering from a serious illness. When the woman was healed, McAlear was shocked and intimidated. Gradually, he began to see and accept that he had a calling to teach others about God’s love and compassion.

Though he has worked as a teacher, organized outreach programs for the poor and served as vocation director for his order, the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, in 1976, he entered the healing ministry full time.

At St. Thérèse, Father McAlear will speak at the 5:30 p.m. Mass on March 17 and at the 8, 9:30, and 11:30 a.m. and 8 p.m. Masses on March 18. He will also offer a talk, “How God Heals Us,” at 6 p.m. on March 18.

On March 19 at Little Flower there will be opportunities to receive the sacrament of reconciliation beginning at 6 p.m. At 7 p.m. Father McAlear will celebrate a Mass for Healing with Father Terrence M. Coonan Jr., pastor at St. Thérèse. After the liturgy, Father McAlear will offer blessings to individuals who come forward for prayer. There will be also be eucharistic exposition and additional prayer.

At the March 22 event at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, reconciliation will be available at 5:15 p.m., with the Mass for Healing beginning at 6 p.m. Father David Voors, pastor at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, will concelebrate. Following the liturgy, Father McAlear will give a blessing to any individuals who wish to come forward.

Confessions, anointing, eucharistic exposition and prayers will also be offered.

The events of Father McAlear’s visit are open to all.
Second-grade students around the diocese have been preparing for, or have recently received, their first sacrament of reconciliation.

"Reconciliation is incredibly special," said Allie Selking, a second-grade teacher at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School, Fort Wayne. "Kids and parents are excited. You can see the students beaming when they walk away from the priest. I am always so proud of them for making such a huge step in their faith."

On Nov. 14, Angela (Gia) Allen, a second-grader at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, stepped in the confessional to acknowledge her sins through this sacrament for the first time in her life. "I was really, really scared, but excited," said Gia. "I knew what I wanted to say, but saying it was hard. I was so nervous. Everyone in my family has done it, I'm the last one. It's a big deal."

Gia is the youngest of Tracy and Amy Allen's seven children, all of whom have attended Catholic schools. Samantha, Grace, Anthony, Joseph, Katherine, Peter and Gia range in age from 21 to 7 years old. "My oldest daughter, Samantha, received the sacrament of first reconciliation in 2003," said Amy. "Fifteen years later, it never gets old. With Gia being the last of our kids to have received this sacrament for their first time, it is a little bit sweeter."

Preparing students for this moment is not taken lightly. For months leading up to entering the confessional, Gia's class had been learning about the different kinds of sins, along with absolution, penance and what an examination of conscience was. Students were also given both home and in-school activities that focused on the sacrament and self-reflection. "We spend a lot of time breaking down and practicing the act of contrition," said Selking. "I think it's important that students learn what it really means."

St. Elizabeth students were also prepared by working with the parish clergy. Deacon Thomas Zehr talked to students about absolution and how their sins are forgiven. Pastor Dave Voors showed students around the confessional and answered any questions they had. Father Voors wanted to make sure everyone was comfortable with him, a priest. He also wanted them to know the purpose of everything in the confessional. Students asked Father Voors questions about what the night was going to be like, if priests can tell anyone their sins and examples of what their penance might be.

"I wanted to know if the priest would remember what I told him," said Allen. "He told me to imagine that I was talking to God when I was in there and that I didn't have to worry." Worrying was only one of the feelings Gia felt before confessing.

Ten minutes later, she walked out of the confessional and was greeted by her family. "I looked around and saw everyone in my family there. Tony, my older brother, gave me a huge smile and it made me feel so good. Confession made me closer to God. I can be a better person with this sacrament."

That night, Joe said Gia looked like she was relieved and that he could tell she was proud of herself. He added that he was proud of her too. "I did it, and it was awesome!" said Gia.

All the preparation had led her to the very moment that she knelt to say her penance. Gia, along with her classmates, had made the first step in a lifelong journey of a newfound freedom, joy, healing and grace through God.

"Confession made me feel closer to God’

BY EMILY DIEHM

Photos by Emily Diehm

Gia Allen, a second-grader at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School, Fort Wayne, remembers the penance that was assigned to her at her first reconciliation. "I had to say an Angel of God. I didn't stop smiling the entire time I was kneeling. I felt so awesome!"

“I could tell that Gia was nervous,” said Joe, a sixth-grader. “It was in her eyes. She looked terrified.

However, on Nov. 14, a Tuesday night, Gia took a deep breath and a seat in front of a priest. Looking down at her hands, she began to name and take responsibility for her sins.

Ten minutes later, she walked out of the confessional and was greeted by her family.

“You looked around and saw everyone in my family there. Tony, my older brother, gave me a huge smile and it made me feel so good. Confession made me closer to God. I can be a better person with this sacrament.”

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“I did it, and it was awesome!” said Gia.

All the preparation had led her to the very moment that she knelt to say her penance. Gia, along with her classmates, had made the first step in a lifelong journey of a newfound freedom, joy, healing and grace through God.

“I know that God forgives all my sins,” said Gia. “I just have to ask Him and pray to Him. That’s so cool!”
Holy Cross School celebrates Black History Month

BY CLARE ROACH

Holy Cross School in South Bend values the richness of its diverse community and has a tradition of celebrating black history in February. This year, however, the teachers at Holy Cross reached out to the school, parish and local community to re-envision how to integrate Black History Month more robustly into the life of the school.

On Sunday, Feb. 4, a committee of teachers, administrators, pastoral staff, parents and community partners offered ideas, local contacts and prayers. Devising a plan to leverage assets in the community, the participants’ goal was to help students understand the many ways African-Americans have contributed to the vitality of their nation and their Church.

In addition to the black history topics teachers traditionally integrate into their everyday instruction, Holy Cross School welcomed artists, entrepreneurs, culinary experts and people of faith to help celebrate this important month set aside for learning, celebrating and elevating the contributions of black Americans.

Chloe Dukes, of the Notre Dame Center for Arts and Culture and an alumna of Holy Cross School, visited the second-, third- and fourth-grade classrooms to introduce students to African-American artists and art forms throughout history and in modern times. After Dukes’ presentation, students chose their own art pieces based on the work of Lorna Simpson. In addition, Dr. Anthony Douglas of Teacher’s Credit Union and Dr. Paul McLeod, D.D.S., visited the early elementary classrooms to talk about their experiences making a difference in their community.

On Thursday, Feb. 22, students, teachers and administrators celebrated a spirited Mass in the African-American tradition, with Deacon Mel Tardy of St. Augustine Parish preaching the homily at an all-school Mass celebrated in the African-American tradition Feb. 22 at Holy Cross School, South Bend, in honor of Black History Month.

Deacon Mel Tardy preaches the homily at an all-school Mass celebrated in the African-American tradition Feb. 22 at Holy Cross School, South Bend, in honor of Black History Month.

Eighth-grader Rayna Brooks proclaims one of the readings at Mass.

Later that day Wendy Summers, a member of St. Pius X Parish and the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend Black Advisory Council, visited with Holy Cross middle school students, inviting them to get to know a variety of black saints and holy men and women. Summers’ presentation included stories about Sts. Felicity and Perpetua, Charles Lwanga and Josephine Bakita, as well as several Americans on the road to sainthood, like Father Tolton and Mother Mary Lange.

The month of celebration will conclude with a meal for the entire school community prepared by Calvin Metts, sous-chef at the Morris Inn at the University of Notre Dame.

Pamela Harris lends her vocal talents in praise.

Students experienced a variety of hands-on activities in honor of Black History Month. Chloe Dukes of the University of Notre Dame Center for Arts and Culture introduced students to the work of African-American artists. She is pictured at Madison School, where she and a few classmates went to every classroom and allowed each child to pick out a book.

Saint Joseph High School senior Abby Wager held a book drive this winter that collected 350 books, which were delivered to children at the Center for the Homeless and three South Bend Title 1 schools that are the most in need. The idea developed from a small reading and writing program she offers at the Center for the Homeless every Monday night with seven to nine elementary school children. Abby is pictured at Madison School, where she and a few classmates went to every classroom and allowed each child to pick out a book.

Drive collects 350 books

Chloe Dukes of the University of Notre Dame Center for Arts and Culture introduced students to the work of African-American artists. She is pictured with third-graders who attempted to imitate the style of Lorna Simpson.
Forming attitudes of athletes

When I was about 15, I had a bad temper — so bad that I quit playing golf.

When I played poorly (which was most of the time), I would throw clubs and say things I was not allowed to say at home. It made the game unpleasant for my playing partners and an occasion of sin for me.

I have found myself reflecting on my misspent youth while watching the Winter Olympics this month. A lot of the athletes on the American team are teenagers, much older than I was when I was flinging clubs around the golf course.

Red Gerard, Vincent Zhou, Chloe Kim and Tess Johnson are 17 years old. Karen Chen and Nathan Chen (no relation) are 18.

Every four years, the performance demands on Olympic athletes seem to increase. Five different types of quadruple jumps for a skater. Two 1440s in luge. Speed records in luge. (Is that a sport?)

Teenagers like the ones in Pyeongchang have spent most of their lives practicing to compete at this level. I am impressed by how well they do. But they’re at this level. I am impressed by their lives practicing to compete.

Chloe Kim and Tess Johnson are around the golf course. Most of the time, the athletes on the American team are watching the Winter Olympics on my misspent youth while...
Life-giving sacrifice in Lent

I would bet that when Msgr. Coll began an interdenominational drive against world hunger in Allentown, Pennsylvania, in 1975, he had no idea he was becoming an important part of the history of Catholic Relief Services.

In our 75 years, CRS has had many defining and important moments. The beginning of what is now the CRS Rice Bowl is certainly one of them. By all accounts — including the testimony of his career — Msgr. Coll was appalled by the fact that millions of people around the world go hungry every day. How to alleviate the reality of hunger to people in a well-fed part of a well-fed country?

The way he put it in a 1976 People magazine story on Rice Bowl was that he wanted his parishioners and other churchgoers to be “hungry enough to hurt,” so they would know what “five hundred million of our fellow human beings feel like seven days a week.”

To do that, members of Catholic, Protestant and Jewish congregations in Allentown got a cardboard box called a Rice Bowl. Every week, they would collect nickels, dimes and quarters that Msgr. Coll first collected in cardboard Rice Bowls. Jim DeHarpporte arrived as CRS’ zonal director in June 1975 and was told about a delegation from Allentown that had recently visited: $25,000 was coming his way.

DeHarpporte used the money for a feeding program for infants, often already born underweight, then limited to breast feeding long after they needed supplementary food — about four months — simply because their mothers couldn’t afford it.

An Indian doctor and an Australian nun who were working in a poor neighborhood in Kolkata had come up with a plan of roasting wheat and adding lentils — known as dal — to provide needed nutrition. “The funds provided by the Rice Bowl grant were used to purchase the wheat and dal,” DeHarpporte reports, noting that CRS also provided U.S. Government donated milk powder to add to the value of the supplemental feeding.

Today, CRS Rice Bowl involves millions of Catholics of all ages every year. It has raised more than $250 million over the decades. The international-local split remains, 75 percent going to CRS to combat hunger overseas, 25 percent remaining with the local diocese to confront that issue at home.

Msgr. Coll eventually spent years working for CRS and helped set up an interfaith feeding program to combat famine in Ethiopia in the 1980s. CRS continues to administer the descendent of that program, which feeds millions in Ethiopia every year.

DeHarpporte, who still works for CRS as regional manager on the west coast, says that the feeding program in Rice Bowl collection funded in Calcutta led to the founding of the Child in Need Institute, now internationally recognized in the field of infant malnutrition.

The nickels, dimes and quarters that Msgr. Coll first collected in cardboard Rice Bowls in Allentown created a legacy that reverberates in the history of CRS, of the Church in the United States, and among the hungry around the world.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops noticed what was going on in Allentown, and plans were soon afoot to make Rice Bowl a national campaign — launching it at the Church’s 41st Eucharistic Congress in Philadelphia in August 1976. Rice Bowl, which fit the conference theme — The Hungers of the Human Family — perfectly, made its debut on the same day that Mother Teresa led the Congress in a prayerful and symbolic bread-breaking ceremony.

Mother Teresa had come to Philadelphia from India, then a main focus of those concerned about world hunger. There was an undeniable enriching relationship between her breaking of the eucharistic bread and the Rice Bowl Lenten meals that had been a topic earlier that day. As Maureen McCullough, now of the CRS Program in St. Paul, Minn., and editor of SisterStory.org.

The CRS program in St. Teresa’s home — Kolkata — received some of the first funds collected in Rice Bowls. Jim DeHarpporte arrived there as CRS’ zonal director in June 1975 and was told about a delegation from Allentown that had recently visited: $25,000 was coming his way.

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‘Paul’ film producer: ‘Real important to tell the story of God’s mercy’

BY MARK PATTISON

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Every story has a message within. So does every movie — and every biblically based movie as well.

With the new movie “Paul, Apostle of Christ,” Eric Groth, one of the film’s executive producers, said, “It was really important to tell the story of God’s mercy."

“His message of love and life and mercy is so important for us today,” Groth said at an invitation-only audience of about 60 at a Feb. 15 advance screening of the film at the St. John Paul II National Shrine in Washington.

Groth is head of ODB Productions; he said the initials stand for “Outside Da Box.” The company has made, by his estimate, about 250 short films for Catholic religious education programs, and a series of 15 shorts based on each of the 15 sections of the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

“All I wanted to do (in college) was play baseball. Then the Lord moved my heart,” Groth said. In addition to the film shorts, he also produced “Full of Grace,” about Jesus’ mother, Mary, helping repair the fractures that developed in the early Church. It was written and directed by Andrew Hyatt, who had the same two jobs on “Paul, Apostle of Christ."

Groth called “Full of Grace” “a feature film that wasn’t supposed to be a feature film,” but one that led to “Paul” being made.


Paul is played by James Faulkner, who portrayed Randyll Tarly on HBO’s “Game of Thrones,” Lord Sinderby on PBS’ “Downton Abbey,” and Pope Sixtus IV on Starz’ period drama “Da Vinci’s Demons.” Faulkner also has read each of Paul’s letters in the New Testament in a series to be released by the American Bible Society.

“Paul, Apostle of Christ” is rated PG-13 for disturbing images and violent content, virtually all of it Roman violence against Christians, although one group of Christians decides to act in a highly un-Christian way in response to the dictums against their sect by Roman Emperor Nero.

Groth declared “Paul” “OK for middle school and up,” adding some of the imagery in it could have been worse. “We flipped the room when they (a group of condemned Christians) were going out into the lions” so that the lions and the carnage are never seen, Groth said.

He gave credit to Sony Pictures for its willingness to go out on a limb with the movie. “They stretched partnering with a Catholic organization, they stretched in the idea, they stretched in the screening schedule,” which had started a few months before its March 23 premiere, Groth said. A constant comment he said he had received from preview audiences was that the film was “imbued with Scripture without it having been read to them.”

“Paul, Apostle of Christ” is set to open March 23 on more than 2,000 screens in the United States, and will simultaneously open in at least 15 other countries, with deals still in the process to more than double that number, he added.
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.

Catholic Business Network Breakfast
FORT WAYNE — The First Friday breakfast will be on Friday, March 2, at the St. Mother Theodore Guerin Chapel, 1122 S. Clinton St. Sponsored by Those Catholic Men, this month’s guest speaker is Jacob Laskowski, who will be speaking on “Millenials: who they are and how to reach them.”

Las Vegas Night
SOUTH BEND — Holy Family Church Ushers Club, 56405 Mayflower Road, will be holding a Las Vegas Night. Saturday, March 3, from 6-11 p.m. in the Parish Center. Tickets are $8 in advance at the rectory and $10 at the door. Ticket includes sandwiches, beverages and a chance at $1000 drawing. License #145991

St. Vincent de Paul Knights host breakfast
FORT WAYNE — St. Vincent Knights of Columbus, 1502 E. Wallen Rd., are hosting a breakfast to benefit both the Women’s Care Center and A Mother’s Hope on Sunday, March 4, from 8-11 a.m. A free will offering will be accepted with proceeds helping support Right to Life organizations.

St. John the Baptist fish fry
NEW HAVEN — St. John the Baptist Holy Name Society will have a fish fry Friday, March 2, from 4-7 p.m. in the school gym, 2817 Corpus Christi Dr. Tickets are $10 for adults, $4 for children 6-12 and free for children under 6. Carryout available.

Corpus Christi Lenten fish fry
SOUTH BEND — Corpus Christi Parish will have a fish fry Friday, March 2, from 4:30 p.m. in the church gym, 56405 Mayflower Rd. Cost is $10 for adults, $5 for children ages 6-11 and children under 5 free. Carryout available.

St. Aloysius fish fry
YODER — St. Aloysius Parish will have a fish fry Friday, March 2, from 4:30-7:30 p.m. in the activity center, 14607 Bluffton Rd. Cost is $10 for adults, $5 for children ages 6-11 and children under 5 free. Carryout also available.

St. Joseph Knights of Columbus fish fry
FORT WAYNE — The Knights of Columbus Council 14299 will host a fish fry held at St. Joseph Parish, corner of Brooklyn and Hale Ave., Friday, March 2, from 5-8 p.m. Tickets are $10 for adults, $6 for children 5-11 and free for children under 5. Fish by Dan’s Fish Fry.

Women’s Morning of Reflection
COLUMBIA CITY — A Women’s Morning of Reflection will be on Saturday, March 10, at St. Catherine Church, 9989 State Road 9, from 8-11 a.m. Mass will be followed by breakfast in the church hall. Talks on St. Elizabeth Ann Seton. Call Linda Bussman at 260-344-3112.

Looking for a Fish Fry?
Download the Today’s Catholic App for easy access to the calendar with events and fish frys across the diocese. Download on Google Play or in the App Store. Visit www.todayscatholic.org.

Service to others is their calling.
Divine Mercy Funeral Home is honored to introduce our Funeral Directors, Bob Jesch and Monte Freeze. But for many in the Fort Wayne community, Bob and Monte need no introduction.

Bob is a Bishop Dwenger graduate and former hockey coach who has served as a Funeral Director for over 35 years. Originally from South Bend, Monte has served as a Funeral Director for over 20 years in Fort Wayne, where he lives with his wife of 17 years and two sons. Bob and Monte are well known

and respected for their experience, compassion, and dedication to the families they serve. Their patience and understanding puts families at ease. Just when they need it most.

We invite you to call Bob or Monte at 260.426.2044 for an appointment or visit the office at 3500 Lake Ave., 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

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Submit obituaries to mwebertodayscatholic.org
Unusual statue remains popular at Cathedral Museum

BY MARIAM SCHMITZ

A statue of the scourged Christ is on display at Fort Wayne’s Cathedral Museum, which offers visitors a chance to see the wounds He endured for the salvation of all people. The statue is a well-known representation of the Passion of Christ and is a popular attraction for those who visit the museum.

Pope Francis called on adults in the Catholic Church to have courage, too, and give young people “important responsibilities.”

BY VATICAN CITY (CNS) — It’s time to break free from fear, fake online personas and looking at the world through a digital screen display, Pope Francis told young people.

“Do not do the spark of youth to be extinguished in the darkness of a closed room in which the only window to the outside world is a computer and smartphone,” the pope told youths in his annual message for local celebrations of World Youth Day.

“The only way forward is to open wide the doors of your life! May your time and space be filled with meaningful relationships, real people with whom to share your authentic and concrete experiences of daily life,” he said in the message, published Feb. 22 at the Vatican.

In preparation for the next international celebration of World Youth Day — which will be held in Panama Jan. 22-27 — many dioceses will have their own celebrations Palm Sunday, March 25.

The Panama gathering will focus on Mary’s response to the angel Gabriel’s announcement that God had chosen her to bear the child Jesus: “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word.” The 2018 theme chosen by Pope Francis is the angel’s reassurance, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.”

Mary’s response reveals the deep human connection to God. Many young people today are afraid — afraid of never being accepted, of finding a good job and even of their real selves, the pope said in his message.

Today, there are many young people who feel the need to be different from who they really are, in an attempt to adapt to an often artificial and unattainable standard,” he wrote. “They continuously ‘photo-shop’ their images, hiding behind masks and false identities, almost becoming fake selves.”

This sense of inadequacy is the root of many uncertainties and even obsessions, such as “receiving as many ‘likes’ as possible” on social media, he added.

No one is exempt from doubt or fear, which even can be seen in the Bible in the lives of Mary, Moses, Abraham, the apostles and many others, he said. In fact, he added, the biggest obstacle to faith in God is often fear, not skepticism.

The only way forward is to face one’s fears head on, identify them clearly and come to terms with them, he said, “so as not to find yourself wasting time and energy by being gripped by empty and faceless ghosts.”

People have to act, which requires faith in God and His grace, otherwise fear and doubt will make people become inward-looking and closed off to defend ourselves from every threat we need to overcome, but a favorable time given to us for living out the uniqueness of our personal vocation, and for sharing it with our brothers and sisters in the church and in the world,” he said.

Being with others on life’s journey is always key, he said, because it helps unlock one’s own gifts, inspires dreams and opens new horizons.

“Never lose the enthusiasm of enjoying others’ company and friendship, as well as the pleasure of dreaming together, of walking together,” he said.

That is why it is so important young people break out of the “darkness of closed room” and the virtual world so as to experience meaningful relationships with real people, he said.

“The unknown that tomorrow holds for us is not a dark threat we need to overcome, but a favorable time given to us for living out the uniqueness of our personal vocation, and for sharing it with our brothers and sisters in the church and in the world,” he said.

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“Young people need to know that someone truly believes in you,” he said. “Please know that the pope has confidence in you, that the church has confidence in you! For your part, have confidence in the church!”

“In the sacred Scriptures the expression ‘do not be afraid’ is repeated 365 times with different variations, as if to tell us that the Lord wants us to be free from fear, every day of the year,” he said.

The Catholic Church’s annual gathering of World Youth Day “is for the courageous! Not for young people who are searching for ‘comfort and who wish to be extinguished in the darkness of a closed room’," the pope said. “Do you accept the challenge?”

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WyD 2019