

TODAY'S CATHOLIC

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TODAYSCATHOLIC.org



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University of Saint Francis grads sent out to 'bear fruit'

BY JEANNIE EWING



“Jesus ... gives us a mission. He sends us.” The words of Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades’ homily at the University of Saint Francis baccalaureate Mass May 5 resounded to graduates in all professions. “I’d like to suggest that our graduates also think today of their being chosen and sent forth by Jesus. ... Graduates, this is what we celebrate especially at this Mass, the Lord sending you to go forth and bear fruit.”

Later that day, commencement speaker and Allen County Health Commissioner Dr. Deborah McMahan addressed students with a similar message. “Wrap yourself in the power of the Holy Spirit, run into the future, and live a life that matters,” she said. An Indiana native, McMahan said she understands well the responsibility of living out her God-given mission on a daily basis. She shared a story about treating a Burmese immigrant who was frightened upon

Provided by the University of Saint Francis

University of Saint Francis graduates celebrate outside of the Allen County War Memorial Coliseum, Fort Wayne, following commencement ceremonies May 5.

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Pentecost Collection for Seminarian Education May 20

BY JEFF BOETTICHER

The Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, like nearly every diocese in the country, assumes financial responsibility for the preparation of priests at a major seminary. This financial commitment includes tuition, room and board, health insurance, travel and living expenses.

Years ago, before the full impact of the priest shortage began to be felt, it was not at all uncommon for a priest to spend 10 to 20 years or more preparing for his first assignment as a pastor, by serving as a parochial vicar (assistant to the pastor) under the tutelage of three or four different pastors. The new priests benefitted from watching the more-experienced priests exercise both their priestly ministry and pastoral responsibilities. Today, however, nearly all

seminarians can expect to receive their first pastorate within two or three years of their ordination to the priesthood.

This dramatic shortening of the learning curve brought about a critical need to provide more parish-life experiences to these men during their seminary years. As a result, rather than asking them to work during the summers to provide for their annual living expenses — which was also done years ago — seminarians are instead placed in unpaid summer internships at parishes across the diocese and provided a monthly stipend.

For many years, the expenses related to the education of priests were fully covered by the support received during the Annual Bishop’s Appeal. But the continued growth of vocations to the priesthood in the Diocese of Fort

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Veni Sancte Spiritus!

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**USF, from page 1**

receiving a grave health diagnosis and having no one in whom she could find consolation.

"In that moment, I sent a simple prayer upward ... to help me find the right words to educate her and comfort but without false hope," McMahan shared. As a result, she was able to calm down the patient and speak to her with clarity and honesty. Stunned, the woman "had the most beautiful expression on her face" and touched McMahan's hand as a gesture of gratitude.

Shortly thereafter, McMahan said, she was reflecting on this incident while on vacation in Florida. She recalled a moment of epiphany, in which it seemed the Holy Spirit revealed to her that He had given her the consoling words to speak — and that the Burmese woman, in turn, saw Jesus through McMahan and received the fruit of peace.

Bishop Rhoades also suggested to the students that they try to live a life rooted in the true vine, so that they can bear the fruits of the Holy Spirit in their lives — including that of peace. "He is calling you to step out of yourselves and towards others. And the Lord expects fruit from us ... If we conform our wills to the will of Jesus our friend, love will be the fruit," he said.

He urged the graduates not to follow the cultural trends or adopt the societal mindset that the acquisition of material possessions is the highest good. Instead, he encouraged them to foster an ongoing friendship with Jesus, which will become the catalyst of greatness in their lives.

Jesus said, "I call you friends, because I have told you everything I learned from my Father." Bishop Rhoades explained that this message translates into a great promise for all people who are willing to listen to and follow Jesus where He leads.

Love in the form of service to one's community is often the result of a friendship rooted in Jesus. Commencement honorary degree recipients John Tippmann Sr. and Robert Heiny are examples of what it means to bear fruit for God's kingdom. Tippmann has founded three local companies: Interstate Warehousing, Tippmann Construction and Tippmann Properties. He also began the Mary Cross Tippmann Foundation in honor of his mother, with a mission to "promote pro-life initiatives, encourage Christian education and ideals in both youth and adults, as well as to support efforts to relieve the suffering of the poor and others in need."

Heiny, a World War II Army veteran, has dedicated his life not only to the service of his country but also to his family and the Catholic Church. A native of Fort Wayne, he volunteered in a local soup kitchen for years, is a retired small business owner and a devoted father and grandfather. "I don't really feel that



Photos provided by the University of Saint Francis

University of Saint Francis graduate and World War II veteran Robert Heiny, Fort Wayne, smiles after receiving an honorary degree for service to his country and the Catholic Church during commencement ceremonies May 5 at the Allen County War Memorial Coliseum.



my ordinary life deserves this overwhelming honor," he said, "but I'm totally blessed that so many of my family and friends are able to celebrate this honor with me in person." At 95 years of age, Heiny also said he feels proud to call USF his alma mater; especially since his late wife, Marge, also graduated from USF with two college degrees decades ago.

McMahan advised students, "Don't just live in Fort Wayne. Be part of Fort Wayne. Transform Fort Wayne." With Tippmann and

Heiny as examples of transforming their local community through service and charity, there seemed to be great hope that this generation of graduates will be inspired to do likewise.

The University of Saint Francis granted a total of 652 diplomas to graduates this year, ranging from Associate of Arts to Master of Science and Master of Business Administration degrees. Both Bishop Rhoades' and McMahan's messages to the students highlighted the Franciscan mission to "serve one another, society, and the Church" and "foster peace and justice."

As a Catholic university that offers more than 70 undergraduate, graduate and doctoral programs, USF functions as a pillar in the Fort Wayne community and participates in the mission of Christ — bearing fruit that will last.



President Sister M. Elise Kriss stands with four of the six University of Saint Francis valedictorians from the Class of 2018. From left are Shelby Richardson, Courtney Albers, Sister Elise, Rachel Bertsch and Mackenzie McDorman.

Central African cardinal warns against revenge after church attack

BANGUI, Central African Republic (CNS) — A cardinal in the Central African Republic warned against revenge after a priest and at least 24 lay Catholics were killed during a gun and grenade attack on a Mass in the country's capital.

"For decades now, what have we done with our country: coups d'etat, mutinies, repeated rebellions?" said Cardinal Dieudonne Nzapalainga, president of the bishops' conference.

"We see the result in deaths, scenes of pillage and acts of destruction. But behind these events, I ask myself if there's also manipulation and instrumentalization, a wish to divide the country and a hidden agenda."

Cardinal Nzapalainga spoke May 2, the day after an attack on Our Lady of Fatima Church, close to Bangui's mostly Muslim PK5 neighborhood. After the attack, a mosque was burned.

The cardinal appealed to the government and U.N. peacekeeping forces to "throw light" on the atrocity and ensure justice was done, but added that local Catholics should also resist the urge to retaliate.

"The whole Christian community, not just in our country, has been plunged into mourning, after brothers and sisters who came here for Mass encountered suffering, injury and death instead," said Cardinal Nzapalainga. "It's at most difficult moments like this that true heroes arise and find the strength to propose an alternative, saying no to the evil of violence, barbarism and destruction, and choosing the good of love, forgiveness and reconciliation."

Dozens of Catholics were injured in the attack on the church, which was packed with 1,500 people for Mass on the feast of St Joseph.

A researcher for Human Rights Watch told *The New York Times* that roughly 75 percent of the Central African Republic was controlled by armed groups. He said violence had been increasing since February, largely because earlier peace efforts failed to disarm militia groups.

Radio France International named the dead priest as Msgr. Albert Toungoumale-Baba, from the neighboring St. Mathias Parish, and said the incident followed an attempt by security



CNS/Paul Haring

Cardinal Dieudonne Nzapalainga of Bangui, Central African Republic, is seen at the Vatican Nov. 19, 2016. In early May, the cardinal warned against revenge after a priest and at least 24 lay Catholics were killed during a gun and grenade attack on a Mass in the country's capital.

forces to arrest a militia leader from PK5 on a nearby street.

It added that the priest's body had been carried toward the residence of President Faustin-Archange Touadera by a "large, angry crowd," which was dispersed after it destroyed the mosque in Bangui's Lakouanga district.

U.N. troops remained on alert May 3 against further violence, while Touadera declared two days of mourning and visited Cardinal Nzapalainga to convey condolences.

Kobine Layama, the country's chief imam, condemned the attack as an attempt to disrupt "peace, social cohesion and coexistence."

Serge Benda, archdiocesan youth coordinator who was at the Mass, told the France24 TV network the attack had occurred after the Gospel reading, following an exchange of fire with police outside the church.

He added that five assailants had shot at the congregation with Kalashnikov rifles and thrown two grenades, one of which killed Msgr. Toungoumale-Baba close to the pulpit.

Carmelite Father Federico Trincherro described the dead priest as "well known, esteemed and loved by the people," adding that he had sheltered large numbers of refugees of various faiths at his church during the Central African conflict.

A previous attack on Our Lady of Fatima Church in May 2014 left 18 Catholics, including a priest, dead.

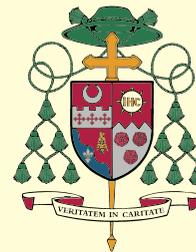
Cardinal Nzapalainga rejected suggestions the conflict had a religious dimension and said Christians and Muslims were now "one people, working arm in arm" for peace and reconciliation in the country.

"Claims of a confessional crisis are instrumental and manipulatory, an attempt to divide people — we must be careful not to fall into this snare," the cardinal told journalists.

"No imam has appeared at the front with arms, and no priest has held a weapon, so how can this be confessional? Instead, people have come here, thrown grenades and opened fire. We now need to find these people, so they'll answer for their deeds."

"It's at most difficult moments like this that true heroes arise and find the strength to propose an alternative..."

CARDINAL DIEUDONNE NZAPALAINGA



Public schedule of Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades

- Sunday, May 13: 2 p.m. — Confirmation Mass, St. Pius X Church, Granger
- Tuesday, May 15: 3 p.m. — Meeting of Indiana Bishops, Indianapolis
- Wednesday, May 16: 9 a.m. — Meeting of Indiana Catholic Conference, Indianapolis
- Wednesday, May 16: 6 p.m. — Prayer Service and Reception for Seminarians and Donors, St. Mary, Mother of God Church, Fort Wayne
- Friday, May 18: 5 p.m. — Baccalaureate Mass for Holy Cross College, Notre Dame
- Saturday, May 19: 11 a.m. — Diaconate Ordination, Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Fort Wayne
- Saturday, May 19: 5 p.m. — Commencement Mass for University of Notre Dame, Purcell Pavilion, University of Notre Dame



PENTECOST, from page 1

Wayne-South Bend — a blessing from God, to be sure — coupled with the rising costs of seminary tuition, has pushed traditional diocesan resources to their limits.

The diocese has 33 seminarians studying for the priesthood — 15 more men than it had in 2010. These vocations are an incredible gift, and it is the responsibility of the diocese to meet the costs of educating and housing these young men. During the past decade, the annual cost to educate a seminarian has increased threefold. Currently, the average annual cost to educate one seminarian is \$47,000, putting the total annual need for seminarian education in the diocese at more than \$1.5 million.

It is critical to the future of the diocese that parishioners, as they are able, support these courageous young men as they discern their call to religious life. The most direct way to do this is through prayers and contributions to the Pentecost Collection for Seminarian Education. Although this special collection takes place only once each year, on Pentecost, the need is year-

round; as such, contributions to the seminarian support fund can be made anytime throughout the year.

The growth of the Pentecost Collection will allow the diocese to continue to attract outstanding applicants and give them the best training and education possible, equipping them well for a lifetime of service. The future of the diocese rests on its priests, who serve as shepherds, administrators, counselors and teachers for all. It is vitally important that the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend continue developing men who possess the skills, character and commitment to serve in diocesan parishes and the world, as priests dedicated to Christ.

Contributions to the Pentecost Collection for Seminarian Education can be made at any parish on Pentecost Sunday, May 20, or throughout the year by visiting www.diocesefwsb.org/Diocesan-Donations. Gifts of all sizes are needed and very much appreciated.

Jeff Boetticher is director of the Secretariat for Stewardship and Development for the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend.

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Faith groups care for refugees in ways governments can't, group tells U.N.

BY BETH GRIFFIN

UNITED NATIONS (CNS) — Faith-based organizations are uniquely able to care for migrants and refugees because they employ a holistic, person-centered approach that respects the human dignity of each individual, and they have established networks throughout the world, according to panelists at a May 3 United Nations event.

Archbishop Bernardito Auza, permanent observer of the Holy See to the United Nations, said faith-based organizations provide "much of the infrastructure for immediate and long-term hospitality and accommodation, defend the rights and dignity of refugees and migrants independent of legal status, ensure through education, professional and social inclusion that they are able to achieve their potential as human beings, and enrich them and the societies that embrace them through the exchange of talents and culture."

They are unique in their reach and presence at all points of the migratory journey, often filling gaps in services to migrants that governments and other civil society groups are incapable or unwilling to fill on their own, he said.

Archbishop Auza said six of the nine agencies that assist the U.S. State Department in resettling refugees in 190 communities throughout the U.S. are faith-based organizations. They are motivated by faith but granted resettlement responsibilities by the government because of their proven effectiveness, he said.

Speakers at the interreligious event described shared religious

and ethical beliefs that inspire faith-based organizations to champion the rights of migrants and encourage good behavior by displaced people and the communities that host them. They pointed to the experiences of Abraham, Moses, Jesus and the prophet Muhammad as examples of forced migration.

"Migration is about human persons," said Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle, Archbishop of Manila and president of Caritas Internationalis.

"I have observed that some people who are afraid of migrants or refugees have had very little personal encounter with them. They do not even know the people they fear. By meeting them, touching their wounds, listening to their stories and dreams, we might see ourselves in them. They are not strangers. They could be me, my parents, my brothers and sisters, my friend," he said.

Cardinal Tagle described his Chinese grandfather's migration to the Philippines as a child. "I have migrant DNA. I am sure you do too," he said.

Pope Francis has called "for a culture of personal encounter with migrants, refugees and people excluded by contemporary society," Cardinal Tagle said. They should be offered safety, welcome, protection, promotion of their integral human development, and integration into society, according to Pope Francis's guiding principles, he said.

Rabbi David Rosen, director of the American Jewish Committee, said the Bible specifically commands people "to love and empathize with others who seek to dwell within our community." Although societies have a duty to protect their own citizens,

they must also enable safe and secure passage for those on the move and ensure a decent living and social conditions for refugees and migrants, he said.

People do not leave their homes for pleasure. They do so because they are forced by circumstances, according to Mohammed Abu Zaid, senior judge of the Sunni Family Court of Saida, Lebanon. In the Islamic tradition, the migrant is required to respect and cooperate with the host community and not challenge it, he said. The hosts, even if poor, are bound to share with migrants.

Gijun Sugitani said global networks connect religious leaders in countries of origin and countries of destination. They should be used for the protection of refugees and the promotion of interfaith dialogue to ease frictions caused by cultural and religious differences between refugees' homelands and their new homes. Sugitani is supreme advisor to the Tendai Buddhism sect and chairman of Religions for Peace Japan.

Faith-based organizations can foster better inclusion of migrants through language courses, local contacts, and mediation, said Metropolitan Emmanuel Adamakis of France. "Interfaith dialogue should contribute to a better understanding of the other, by rehumanizing the other and thus promoting human dignity and freedom," he said.

"We cannot separate our concern for human dignity, human rights or social justice from our concern for peace and sustainability," Metropolitan Emmanuel said. "The great religious traditions all emphasize the dignity of each person and the unity and common destiny of the entire human race in our common home. Accordingly, each faith calls upon individuals and communities to welcome, assist, and protect the refugees, migrants, and the displaced in our midst."

Reverend Rachel Carnegie, co-executive director of the Anglican Alliance, said the current United Nations discussion about a global compact on safe, orderly and regular migration "is less about subtle negotiations or words and phrases, and more fully about real people's lives and embracing with great vision this once-in-a-generation opportunity to shape cooperative action ... in response to the mass movements of peoples." The event, "Sharing the Journey of Migrants and Refugees: An Interfaith Perspective on the Global Compacts" was co-sponsored by the Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See and Caritas Internationalis.



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Trump signs order to give faith groups stronger voice in government

BY CAROL ZIMMERMANN

WASHINGTON (CNS) — In front of a small crowd of cabinet members and religious leaders at the White House Rose Garden May 3, President Donald Trump announced, and then signed, an executive order giving faith-based groups a stronger voice in the federal government.

"It's a great day," he said after signing the order and passing out pens to religious leaders who surrounded him outside on the spring morning for the National Day of Prayer event.

No details about the order were given at the ceremony, but religious leaders were reminded of the work they do in caring for those in need and were assured by the president that their religious freedom would continue to be protected by the federal government.

A White House document posted online after the order was signed said its purpose was to ensure that faith-based and community organizations "have strong advocates" in the White House and the federal government.

It said the "White House Faith and Opportunity Initiative" would provide recommendations on programs and policies where faith-based and community organizations could partner with the government to "deliver more effective solutions to poverty."

It also pointed out that the new office would enable the Trump administration to know of failures, within the execu-

tive branch, of complying with religious liberty protections and would ensure that faith-based organizations have "equal access to government funding and equal right to exercise their deeply held beliefs."

The initiative will be led by the newly created position of adviser to the White House Faith and Opportunity Initiative and will be supported by community and faith leaders outside of the federal government. It will have designated liaisons from executive departments and federal agencies.

A faith-based office is not new to the White House. Previous administrations, including those of Presidents Barack Obama and George W. Bush, had similar offices.

Jonathan Reyes, Assistant General Secretary for Integral Human Development for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, said his department looks forward to working with the White House on this initiative and hopes it will "continue to have the freedom and the space to serve the least of these, as the Gospel mandates."

"Overcoming poverty and challenging other social problems like the opioid crisis takes all hands on deck," he said in a May 4 statement, adding that faith communities have collaborated with government partners in this country at the federal, state, and local levels for a very long time."

The May 3 ceremony to announce this office began with

a series of prayers, led first by Vice President Mike Pence, who also told the crowd that he and the president frequently have people telling them: "We're praying for you."

He said the Bible "tells us to persevere in prayer" and noted that the American people do this every day and would do this in a particular way during the National Day of Prayer when many would "bow a head or bend a knee" to pray for the nation.

Pence told the crowd that "believers of every background have a champion in President Trump," and he reminded them of Trump's executive order signed a year ago, also in a Rose Garden ceremony, which he said assured people of faith that "no one would be penalized for their religious beliefs."

Washington Cardinal Donald W. Wuerl, one of several faith leaders to deliver a prayer from a podium on the White House lawn, prayed that people would have the grace to stay close to God and one another. He also prayed for government leaders and for believers to have the strength and courage to stand up for their faith.

Trump said prayer has "forged the identity of this nation" and has also sustained it.

He told the group that the new office was a necessary step because in solving many of today's problems and challenges, "faith is more powerful than government and nothing is more powerful than God."

Theologians call for regular consultation of laity in Church decisions

BY CINDY WOODEN

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The Catholic Church needs to seek the input, commitment and talents of all of its members if it is to be truly catholic and to evangelize effectively, said a new document from the International Theological Commission.

Pope Francis has called for the Church to be "synodal," which does not just mean holding regular meetings of the world Synod of Bishops, but constantly finding ways to live and work in the world with a greater sense of the value of the prayers, experience and advice of everyone in the Church — including laypeople, the document said.

"Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church" was published in early May with the approval of Archbishop Luis Ladaria, prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, and the authorization of Pope Francis.

The International Theological Commission is a board of theologians, appointed by the pope, who advise the doctrinal congregation.

The new document explored Pope Francis' frequent calls for the Church to be "synodal" or characterized by "walking together" as the pilgrim people of God.

The theologians said a synodal attitude and way of being Church flowed naturally from the Second Vatican Council's description of the Church as a communion and its emphasis on the responsibility of all Catholics for the Church's life and mission, although each person has been given different gifts and roles by the Holy Spirit.

The document explored ways the Church already exercises synodality, including through parish councils, diocesan presbyteral councils, national bishops' conferences, regional councils of bishops, the synods of bishops of the Eastern Catholic churches, the world Synod of Bishops and ecumenical councils, like Vatican II.

While synodality is based on the baptismal gifts and responsibilities of each Catholic, the document said, it is not a call for some form of a Catholic parliament. The pope and the bishops, assisted by their priests, still retain their decision-making authority.

But "the participation of the lay faithful is essential," the document said. "They are the vast majority of the people of God and there is much to learn

from their participation in the various expressions of the life and mission of the ecclesial community, in popular piety and in pastoral work as whole, as well as from their specific competence in the various spheres of cultural and social life."

Any process of Church discernment, the theologians wrote, should begin with a consultation of the laity and for that to be effective, laymen and laywomen must be given more opportunities for education in the faith and more spaces in the Church where they can learn to express themselves.

Greater effectiveness also requires overcoming "a clerical mentality that risks keeping them at the margins of church life," the document said.

Calling for "conversion for a renewed synodality," the document emphasized the need for all Church members to be better educated in "the spirituality of communion and the practice of listening, dialogue and communal discernment."

Without a conversion of hearts and minds, it said, the existing structures of synodality will be "simple masks without heart or a face."

Because the Holy Spirit works within all the baptized, it said, "the renewal of the synodal life of the church requires activating processes of consultation with the whole People of God," including laymen and laywomen.

Synodality, it said, promotes the baptismal dignity and call of all Catholics, values the presence of different gifts given by the Holy Spirit and recognizes the specific ministry entrusted to pastors and bishops in communion with the pope for the preservation of the faith and the renewal of the Church.

"The authority of the pastors is a specific gift of the Spirit of Christ, the head, for the edification of the entire body, not a function delegated by and representative of the people," the theologians wrote.

The synodal nature of the Church is not something activated only on special occasions, the document said. "It must be expressed in the church's ordinary way of living and working," which always begins with prayer and listening to God's word, then trying to discern together where and how the Holy Spirit is calling the community to act.

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Filipinos mark 400th anniversary of arrival of Mary's image

MANILA, Philippines (CNS) — Thousands of Filipino Catholics walked in the heat of the sun for about four hours to mark the 400th anniversary of the arrival of the image of Our Lady of Mount Carmel in the Philippines. People gathered as early as 2 a.m. May 4 to relive the arrival of the image from Mexico in 1618 with the third mission of the Augustinian Recollects. Several streets in Manila were closed to give way to the "Salubong" and "Traslacion," literally the "meeting" and "transfer," respectively, of the image from the Bay of Manila to the Minor Basilica of San Sebastian in Manila's Quiapo district. The procession passed through the district to "meet" the image of the Black Nazarene at the basilica. Teary-eyed devotees sang and offered prayers during the re-enactment of the historic arrival of Mary's image in the city. The meeting of the images was iconic because aside from simulating the moment when Jesus meets Mary as He carries the cross to His crucifixion, it served to reconnect two statues that had the same origin. Ysabel de Dios, a tour guide at the basilica, said both images were brought by the Augustinian Recollects from Mexico and were stored in the same church.

Congo bishop highlights hunger, illness among Catholic clergy

OXFORD, England (CNS) — A Catholic bishop from the Republic of Congo lamented that persistent corruption and poverty have left many of priests hungry and ill while the country's wealth remains dominated by a "handful of the rich and powerful." Bishop Bienvenu Manamika Bafouakouahou of Dolisie said the Church in the violence-torn country faces "challenges from syncretism, Protestant sects and Islam, but above all from disease. Only two of our dioceses, Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire, can pay their priests appropriately while others struggle," he explained in an interview with Aid to the Church in Need. "In my own, the first concern is to ensure priests get enough food. But if they have serious health problems, I have no idea what we do." The diocese lacked clean drinking water and local adults and children at the Catholic school routinely died from waterborne illnesses, the bishop said. Further, he added, poverty had worsened because of a decline in oil prices and widespread corruption and public hospital employees had been on strike for months over government failure to "subsidize basic medicines."

Love is constant caring for others, pope says at parish



CNS photo/Paul Haring

ROME (CNS) — Visiting Blessed Sacrament Parish in the Rome suburb of Tor de' Schiavi May 6, Pope Francis celebrated Mass, focusing on the day's Gospel reading about "remaining" in Jesus' love and on how parishioners were living that out or could undermine it. "Love isn't playing violins, violins, all romantic," the pope said in his homily. "No. Love is work." But that work is not drudgery, he said. It brings joy.

Speaker Paul Ryan gives House chaplain his job back

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Jesuit Father Patrick Conroy, chaplain for the U.S. House of Representatives who said he had been forced to resign, was reinstated to his post by House Speaker Paul Ryan May 3. The priest was reinstated after a letter he wrote to Ryan, R-Wisconsin, became public. In the letter, Father Conroy said he wished to retract his resignation letter and continue working during this Congress "and beyond. I have never been disciplined, nor reprimanded, nor have I ever heard a complaint about my ministry during my time as House Chaplain," his letter said. He also mentioned displeasure that Ryan hadn't spoken to him directly but had his chief of staff ask for his resignation. In a statement, Ryan said his original decision was made with what he thought was in the best interest of the

House, but he now decided that "a protracted fight over such an important post" would not be good for the body and so he accepted the priest's letter and decided he could remain in his position. Ryan, who is Catholic, was expected to meet with Father Conroy May 8 when the House reconvened.

Pope asks German bishops to try to find unanimity on Communion question

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Francis asked the bishops of Germany to continue working together to find broader consensus on guidelines for allowing a Protestant married to a Catholic to receive the Eucharist. "Pope Francis appreciates the ecumenical commitment of the German bishops and asks them to find, in a spirit of ecclesial communion, a result as unanimously as pos-

sible," the German bishops were told, according to a Vatican statement. The pope had invited six German bishops and the general secretary of the bishops' conference to Rome for a May 3 meeting with top officials from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and the Pontifical Council for Legislative Texts. In February, the Vatican statement said, "more than three-quarters of the members" of the German bishops' conference approved a "pastoral handbook titled, 'Walking with Christ — In the Footsteps of Unity: Mixed Marriages and Common Participation in the Eucharist.'" However, the Vatican said, "a not insignificant number" of bishops, including seven who head dioceses, could not give their assent to the document. "These seven turned to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and the Pontifical Council for Legislative Texts."

Philippine cardinal urges daily bell tolling to call attention to murders

MANILA, Philippines (CNS) — Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle called for church bells in the archdiocese to toll at 8 p.m. each day to protest the continuing spate of killings in the country. He said the tolling of the bells will "haunt the perpetrators of violence and killing to remember their victims, never to forget them," reported ucanews.com. "The bells beckon us to remember the dead ... and to ask God to remember them," said a statement from the cardinal. Ucanews.com reported a Catholic priest and a broadcast journalist were the most recent victims of assassinations. Father Mark Ventura was shot to death after celebrating Mass in Cagayan province April 29. Cardinal Tagle invited the faithful "to pause, remember and pray" for Father Ventura, the second priest to be killed in four months. In December, Father Marcelito Paez was shot dead in the province of Nueva Ecija. "It's sad that a priest was killed ... and even if he's not a priest, a person. Isn't he a gift from God? Is it that easy nowadays to just kill and throw someone away?" asked Cardinal Tagle.

Pope praises retired Pope Benedict's writings on faith and politics

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — For more than 50 years, the writings of retired Pope Benedict XVI on the relationship between faith and politics have insisted that the measure of human freedom is the extent to which each person acknowledges being dependent on the love of God, Pope Francis wrote. The future pope's "direct experience of Nazi totalitarianism led him from the time he was a young academic to reflect on the limits of obedience to the state in favor of the freedom of obedience to God," Pope Francis commented in the preface to a new book. "Liberating Freedom: Faith and Politics in the Third Millennium" is a collection of essays written over the course of several decades, including during Pope Benedict's eight years as pope. It is scheduled to be published in Italian by Cantagalli in May 11. The website Vatican Insider posted Pope Francis' preface May 6 and Vatican News posted an English translation the next day. Pope Francis said that when Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger worked alongside St. John Paul II, "he elaborated and proposed a Christian vision of human rights capable of questioning on a theoretical and practical level the totalitarian claim of the Marxist state and the atheist ideology on which it was based."

Ancilla College president retires

DONALDSON — Dr. Ken Zirkle, president of Ancilla College, has announced his retirement effective May 14.

Zirkle has served as president of Ancilla College for four years. He leaves behind a campus looking much different than it did when he began. During his tenure, two new residence halls were built as well as a student life center. New programs were added including the Autism Program at Ancilla College, an agriculture program and a culinary arts program.

Zirkle said, "I came to Ancilla College with the intent of staying one year but God had other plans. The past four years have been the most enjoyable and challenging of my career. I am impressed with the cooperative spirit and dedication of the staff and faculty to Ancilla's mission."

The board of trustees has appointed and affirmed Dr. Michele Dvorak, PHJC as the new president of Ancilla College.

Dvorak has ministered in education since 1976 and has a master's degree in administration and a doctorate in Catholic education leadership. She has been a teacher and principal in Indiana and Illinois and a professor at Calumet College of St. Joseph in Whiting, Indiana, where she also held the positions of vice president of academic and student affairs and director of the education program. For the past five years, she has served as a member of the Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ leadership team. Dvorak was serving as the chief operating officer at Ancilla College before her appointment as president. She was born in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and took her first vows as a Poor Handmaid in 1976.

Dvorak expressed, "I am

pleased to offer my gifts and talents in collaboration with the leadership and board of Ancilla College. We look forward to a great year!"

Ancilla Board Chair John Chandler noted, "The board of Ancilla College extends its heartfelt gratitude to Dr. Zirkle for his passionate commitment to the mission of education in Donaldson. We are pleased that one of our own alums, Dr. Dvorak, will lead the college and build on a 75-plus-year legacy of service by the Poor Handmaids in higher education."

Ancilla College, part of The Center at Donaldson, is a liberal arts institution of higher learning sponsored by the Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ.

USCCB announces 'Humanae Vitae' anniversary edition

WASHINGTON — In honor of the 50th Anniversary of Blessed Paul VI's encyclical letter "Humanae Vitae" ("Of Human Life"), the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops is making available a special 50th anniversary edition that includes reflections from succeeding popes on the prophetic teaching that honors the spiritual and sensory elements found in conjugal love.

Recognizing the fullness of the marital union as total, faithful and exclusive, the encyclical proclaims the path of grace and true happiness for married couples under the abiding yoke

of Christ. Originally published in 1968, Blessed Paul VI's letter promotes the whole human person in the context of marital love that respects both the spiritual and physical dimensions of man and woman. Considering the human person as a whole, it also pres-

ents the practical social implications if the document's conclusions — based on the full respect of the totality of persons — are ignored.

This 50th anniversary edition includes the full encyclical, with excerpts from Blessed Paul VI's

AROUND THE DIOCESE



successors affirming the teachings of Humanae Vitae. Also included are selections from the 1968 U.S. Catholic bishops' statement, "Human Life in Our Day."

The 50th anniversary edition of "Humanae Vitae" can be ordered online at store.usccb.org/humanae-vitae-50th-anniversary-edition-p/7-596.htm.

Additional books and resources pertaining to marriage and family life, the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the Vatican, ministry and more can be found by visiting the USCCB's online bookstore at <https://store.usccb.org/>.

Choir to sing in support of South Bend Catholic Worker House

SOUTH BEND — The University of Notre Dame Women's Liturgical Choir has formed a mutually beneficial partnership with Our Lady of the Road in South Bend, a drop-in homeless meal and hospitality located at 744 S Main St.

Several choir members volunteer their time at Our Lady of the Road throughout the semester.

At 8 p.m. on May 16, the entire choir, led by Dr. Patrick Kronner, organist and choral program director, will provide the liturgical music for a Mass that will be celebrated in the chapel at that location.

On May 18, as a way for choir members to work toward something greater for their end-of-the-year performance, they will also present a benefit concert for Our Lady of the Road in the Basilica of the Sacred Heart on the University of Notre Dame Campus.

All are invited to attend, enjoy the talents of the Notre Dame Women's Liturgical Choir and support Our Lady of the Road's programs for the homeless in South Bend.

Christian Leadership Award winners selected



Photos provided by the Father Solanus Casey Vocation Society

Every year the Father Solanus Casey Vocation Society presents awards to two senior students at each of the Fort Wayne Catholic high schools, Bishop Dwenger and Bishop Luers. The students who are honored are chosen because of their demonstrated devotion to promoting their Catholic faith in the high school setting. In the photo at left, from Bishop Luers High School, are Father Andrew Budzinski, principal Jim Huth, students Emma Ward and Ashton Everett and campus minister Beth Carlin. At right, from Bishop Dwenger High School, are Father Jake Runyon, principal Jason Schiffli, students Megan Shanebrook and Colin Stroud and campus minister Jason Garrett.

JOSÉ ARROYO AND DANIEL NIEZER TO BE OR

BY RON BUSCH

The office of deacon in the Catholic Church may be described as one of service in the sacred liturgy and in the ministries of charity; for seminarians José Arroyo and Daniel Niezer, it will also be the last big step toward their ordination to the priesthood next year.

On Saturday, May 19, all may accompany the two seminarians at their Mass of Ordination to the Sacred Order of the Diaconate, which will take place at 11 a.m. at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Fort Wayne. Recently, *Today's Catholic* had the opportunity to interview the candidates prior to this milestone.

Arroyo grew up in a Puerto Rican family that placed high value on education and sports, he said. His mother is a physical education teacher, and his father, who has a Navy back-

ground, is a teacher as well. Arroyo is the second of four boys; his two younger brothers are twins. Both are professional boxers, having participated in the 2008 Olympics.

Early on, at age 9, although his parents did not attend Mass regularly, they asked if he might have an "interest in serving the Church." His immediate reaction was "no," but by age 15 he had begun to take the question more seriously.

Around that time, Arroyo was exposed to the Eternal Word Television Network. Visiting seminarians also gave him access to materials regarding the priesthood, and he began to be drawn to a closer relationship with his Savior.

Currently finishing his fourth year of theology, Arroyo expresses gratitude for the help he received during his formation from professors along the educational journey. He sees the goal and the focus on becoming



Joe Romie

Seminarians José Arroyo, originally of Puerto Rico, and Daniel Niezer, of Fort Wayne, are looking forward with anticipation to their ordination to the diaconate May 19 at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Fort Wayne.

a priest as well worth it. He also gives credit to various priests who have served as his spiritual directors. Although discerning and studying to enter the priesthood is a lengthy commitment, time has not been an issue, he said, as it has gone by very quickly.

Arroyo has words for someone who might be considering a religious vocation. His primary advice is "to trust in the Lord." "If you sense such a desire, then pray about it and talk to someone you trust in the Church. As God calls, do not be afraid. If you are called to holiness, then don't ignore it. God's grace is freeing and liberating."

He shares a special connection with Father Benedict Joseph Groeschel of the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal in New York City, whom he considers a "true man." Arroyo served at the age of 19 as a caregiver for Father Groeschel following a car accident. He also is grateful to Msgr. Emilio Toro, a priest who helped after a devastating 1989 hurricane in Puerto Rico.

One of his favorite Bible verses is found in Matthew 25 during the last judgment of Jesus. It is proclaimed that "... whatever you did not do for one of these least ones, you did not do for me," which brings to Arroyo's mind the work of Mother Teresa with the poor and sick.

Also anxiously anticipating his ordination to the Sacred Order of the Diaconate is Niezer, a young man who grew up very

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St. Elizabeth Ann Seton parish
are with our Son of Seton

Daniel Gerhardt Niezer

and his classmate

José Emmanuel Arroyo Acevedo

and their families,

on the occasion of their

Ordination to

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ORDAINED TO THE DIACONATE

far from Puerto Rico, right here in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend.

Niezer is the youngest of four children, with an older brother and two older sisters. His Catholic upbringing included membership at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in southwest Allen County.

Niezer attended public school and then, like his brother and sisters, went to Bishop Dwenger High School in Fort Wayne. He went on to one year at Wabash College. There, he initially desired to study math and economics with a goal of working as an actuary or elsewhere in the accounting profession.

His interest in the religious life and the priesthood began after attending World Youth Day in Madrid, Spain. Niezer returned from World Youth Day with a pronounced excitement about his faith and a desire to practice it more fully. He describes it as a period in which he "fell in love with the faith." He was also profoundly influenced by talks and time spent with Father Jim Shafer at St. Elizabeth.

Niezer entered the Pontifical College Josephinum in Columbus, Ohio. The breaks when he

returned home were filled with talks and inspiration from numerous priests in the Fort Wayne area. Niezer remarked that there are 10 or so priests in the area who have been key in

On Saturday, May 19, the Mass of Ordination to the Sacred Order of the Diaconate will take place at 11 a.m. at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Fort Wayne.

his continued journey toward the priesthood.

The past six years, the time has flown by, he said. He has loved his time in seminary. He has remained close to his very supportive family with every step of the journey.

Niezer encourages prayer and "talking with Jesus" for anyone discerning a vocation to the priesthood.

Ordination to the diaconate will occur for both Arroyo and

Niezer on May 19. While being ordained a deacon is an important step in the religious journey of each, both look forward to what will still lie ahead, becoming priests of the diocese. They look forward to being able to serve the Catholic Church in new ways that priestly duties will allow them to participate in once they reach that milestone. Being able to witness and perform marriage during Masses for couples, celebrating the Mass, hearing confessions and giving absolution, and performing last rites are duties that they joyfully anticipate.

Arroyo has the additional gift of being able to preach in both English and Spanish, as well as some knowledge of sign language. He sees an evangelization effort with the deaf as a possible extension of his calling to the priesthood. Niezer is also excited to serve people in new ways.

Ordination will enable both to put into fuller practice the love of Jesus and its expression in daily living. Arroyo and Niezer continue along a journey of faith, ever aware of the responsibilities; but also of the joy and trust extended to them as soon-to-be deacons.



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Twentieth anniversary of Christ Child Society of Fort Wayne

BY BARB SIEMINSKI

The Fort Wayne chapter of the National Christ Child Society held its annual spring meeting and luncheon May 2 at the Mirro Center, this year with the special focus of celebrating its 20th anniversary. The women's group, which includes more than 200 members, implements a hands-on mission: "Where love leads to action."

After a welcome by the group's president, Dianne Bezdon, and words from emcee Nicholas Ferreri, WANE-TV chief meteorologist, the group's spiritual advisor, Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades, gave words of support and an invocation before a buffet luncheon was served. Beth Barrett, National Christ Child Society board vice president, presented the keynote speech on "Challenging Poverty Intentionally." The local organization's vice president, Tina Bailey, presented the prestigious Red Wagon Award to Karen Schleinkofer, treasurer of the Fort Wayne chapter.

"We are celebrating the dedication and involvement of many women – currently 205 – of all faiths, who give of their time to provide much-needed items for children in need," said Bezdon, who leads the all-volunteer 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization's local chapter and who has been a member since 2011. "Several of our charter members are still with us and active in our organization, as are our partners."

In each child served, the organization sees the Christ Child Himself. The founder of the national organization was Mary Virginia Merrick, who in 1887 believed nothing was too little to do for a child, according to local communications and public relations director Sharon Simmons. Today there are more than 40 chapters nationwide carrying on Merrick's legacy, helping to fight poverty and serve at-risk children by making layettes for new mothers, including such items as blankets, diapers, clothing and toiletry items, and providing coats, hats, gloves, a gift card for shoes or boots distributed to children in pre-K through eighth grade.

The Christ Child Society of Fort Wayne fills "My Stuff" backpacks with toiletries, stuffed animal, educational and school supplies, reading and activity books and gives them to homeless children, foster care children and abused children. A literacy program coordinates volunteers to read to preschoolers once a month and make a craft with them. Each child is also provided a new book to take home for their personal library, along with a letter to the parents listing questions to ask as they read with their child.



Photos by Barb Sieminski

Gathered at the Christ Child Society of Fort Wayne's 20th anniversary luncheon at the Mirro Center, Fort Wayne, on May 2 are society officers and Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades. From left are communications and public relations director Sharon Simmons; vice-president Tina Bailey; Bishop Rhoades; president Dianne Bezdon and coats program chairperson Janet Didier.

At left is a display of "My Stuff" backpacks that the Christ Child Society provides to older children.



A Crib Club exists at three locations of the Women's Care Center, where new and expectant mothers attend parenting classes and counseling sessions promoting good health and self-dependency. The Crib Club is stocked with new baby clothes, diapers and baby-care items. The Women's Care Center does the teaching and Christ Child Society supplies the items in the Crib Club, which are made available to the mothers using coupons they have earned by attending parenting classes and doctor visits and learning about good health practices.

The Sewing Committee partners with Vincent Village, which shelters homeless families and teaches basic sewing skills. Additionally, the Christ Child Society helps children and parents grow in self-esteem in a friendly environment.

Longtime member Donna Cardeaux has contributed spiritually by helping plan retreats, the bishop's Mass, luncheons and designing a memorial book of deceased members and keep-

Long journey ends with the American dream

BY LUZ OSTROGNAI

Sixteen years ago, Isabel Soto thought she was home free. She came to the United States legally, from Mexico, on a visa and joined other family members in a small, quiet north-east Indiana town. Here, she thought, she could finally pursue her dream of going to school, and perhaps one day raise a family without fear of crime and deprivation. Even with its snow and cold winters, Angola seemed like a paradise.

Life in her native Mexico City had been anything but. Soto's childhood was full of fear and uncertainty. In the poor neighborhood where she grew up, she and her family lived in constant danger of gangs, crime and drug-related violence. Fear of being mugged or killed was just a normal part of everyday life.

"I could not even walk to the market without being afraid," said Soto. "It was a very dangerous place."

At a young age, Soto had to quit school to work so she could help her family make ends meet. In those circumstances, her dream of getting an education became little more than a fantasy. Her only horizon was one of ongoing fear, crushing poverty and bleak prospects.

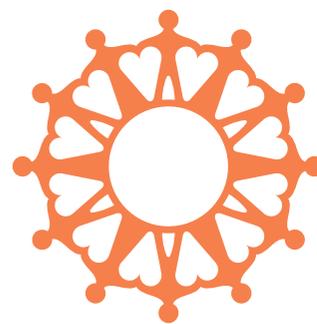
All of that seemed to move behind her, though, when at 17, she had a chance to come to the United States. She was finally able to enroll in high school, and by the end of four years, something remarkable had happened.

After working very hard, Soto graduated with a high school diploma — a terrific achievement for someone who only a short time earlier did not speak the language and lacked a foundation in formal education.



Provided by Catholic Charities

Isabel Soto fled one dangerous situation and later found herself in another: She has now been able, with the help of Catholic Charities, to pave the way to a safe future for herself and her daughter, Kailey.



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"This seemed like a very safe place, a wonderful place with lots of opportunity," she said. "I was very happy with my life."

Then Soto met a man, fell in love and got married. That marriage produced a beautiful daughter, Kailey. Tragically, her husband became abusive: so she did what for her had been unthinkable. She contemplated divorce.

"When I got married, I believed [marriage] was for life," said Soto. "So it was a very, very difficult decision for me to leave."

But while divorcing her husband would free her and her daughter from harm, it would also put her at risk of deportation because she did not have a green card. She was very afraid of being sent back to Mexico City, so she turned to a friend. The friend referred her to Catholic Charities.

Through the agency's immigration services, Soto found hope. The silver lining was that she received permission to stay under the Violence Against Women Act, a law enacted in 1994 that allows spouses and children of U.S. citizens to self-petition to obtain a green card.

Soto petitioned for VAWA status, which was granted to her in 2015.

Now on her own, Soto was filled with equal measures of relief and uncertainty. She saw the long road ahead to independence. To provide adequately for her daughter, she would have to continue her education so she could land a better-paying job. With that goal in mind, she enrolled at Ivy Tech with her sights set on a two-year degree in business operations applications and technology.

Soto is now on track to complete that degree in August of this year. In the meantime, she is holding down two jobs: one as a tax preparer and the other as an administrative assistant in an export company. She also studied to become a U.S. citizen, a test she just passed in April.

"I'm so happy now to be a citizen," said Soto. "I am truly living my American dream."

Luz Ostrognai is the immigration supervisor for Catholic Charities.

CHRIST CHILD, from page 10

ing it up to date. The Crib Club, though, has been Simmons' favorite part of the organization.

"My favorite 'job' with CCS is my time working at the Crib Club, where I work Friday mornings, when the Club is open for mothers to spend the coupons they earn attending parenting classes and keeping their doctors' appointments. Our mornings are very busy as sometimes as many as 100 young mothers visit us to shop. I am always touched by the care the mothers take selecting the items for their babies. Most of them are Burmese and we have a language issue, but not a connection issue. The moms smile and show us what they have selected for our approval. They leave smiling and telling us one of the few English phrases they do know: 'Thank you!'"

"When our last mom has left, I have time to marvel at their

strength and courage in coming to a new country with a new language and culture when they are so young themselves. Their smiles and happiness in earning items for their babies fills my heart with gratitude to be a part of CCSFW."

Several other members said they were also humbled by people coming up to them in public and showing interest in the organization.

"A food server today spoke to our past president, Pat Spoltman, about our group and was so impressed with us that she asked to join," said Bezdon. "We are gladly accepting her as a new member and will be inviting her to the upcoming 'meet-and-greet' session geared to the members who joined these past two years."

To find out more about serving at-risk children and young mothers in poverty, or to donate money, resources or time, email info@christchildfw.org.



Barb Sieminski

The Fort Wayne chapter of the Christ Child Society, like its partners across the country, exists to lend foundational support to babies whose mothers would benefit from the assistance. A celebration May 2 of the chapter's 20th anniversary included, above, a display of layette items that the society donates to the babies and mothers.

Michelle Wolf and the 'throwaway culture'

The other night at the White House Correspondents' Association dinner, Michelle Wolf, who I'm told is a comedian, regaled the black-tie and sequin-gowned crowd with her "jokes." Almost all were in extremely bad taste and/or wildly offensive, but one has become accustomed to that sort of coarseness in the comedy clubs and even on mainstream television. However, she crossed over into the territory of the morally appalling when she indulged in this bit of witticism regarding Vice President Mike Pence: "He thinks abortion is murder, which, first of all, don't knock it until you've tried it. And when you do try it, really knock it, you know. You gotta get that baby out of there."

One is just at a loss for words. I mean, even some in the severely left-leaning crowd in Washington groaned a bit at that remark.

It might be helpful to remind ourselves what Ms. Wolf is referencing when she speaks of "knocking that baby out of there." She means the evisceration, dismemberment, and vivisection of a child. And lest one think that we are just talking about "bundles of cells," it is strict liberal orthodoxy that a baby can be aborted at any stage of its prenatal development, even while it rests in the birth canal moments before birth. Indeed, a child, who somehow miraculously survives the butchery of an abortion, should, according

to that same orthodoxy, be left to die or actively killed. Sure sounds like fun to me; hey, don't knock it until you've tried it.

I realize that these attitudes have been enshrined in American law for some time, but what particularly struck me about the White House Correspondents' Association dinner was how they were being bandied about so shamelessly for the entertainment of the cultural elite. Let's face it, the people in that room — politicians, judges, writers, broadcasters, government officials — are the top of the food chain, among the most influential and powerful people in our society. And while the killing of children was being joked about — especially, mind you, the children of the poor, who are disproportionately represented among the victims of abortion — most in this wealthy, overwhelmingly white, elite audience guffawed and applauded.

And this put me in mind of Friedrich Nietzsche. I've spoken and written often of the influence of this 19th-century thinker, whose musings have trickled their way down through the universities and institutions of the high culture into the general consciousness of many, if not most, people today. Nietzsche held that the traditional moral values have been exposed as ungrounded and that humanity is summoned to move, accordingly, into a previously unexplored space "beyond good and evil." In such



WORD ON FIRE

BISHOP ROBERT BARRON

a morally unmoored universe, the "Übermensch" ("superman" or "over-man") emerges to assert his power and impose his rule on those around him.

Nietzsche had a special contempt for the Christian values of sympathy, compassion and love of enemies, characterizing them as the ideals of a "slave morality," repugnant to the noble aspirations of the Übermensch. Through his many avatars in the 20th century — Sartre, Heidegger, Foucault, Ayn Rand, etc. — Nietzsche, as I said, has exerted an extraordinary influence on contemporary thought. Whenever a young person today speaks of traditional ethics as a disguised play of power or of her right to determine the meaning of her own life through an exercise of sovereign freedom, we can hear the overtones of Friedrich Nietzsche.

All of which brings me back to the White House Correspondents' Association dinner. When we live in the space beyond good and evil, when morality is construed as entirely

BARRON, page 13

A woman of uncompromising faith

Preparation for the 75th anniversary of Catholic Relief Services calls to mind a truly remarkable woman whose work has informed the Catholic social tradition, particularly in the United States during the last century.

In my own case, I owe her a special debt. Though she is not well-known beyond the peace movement circles, her legacy has probably touched Catholics everywhere.

I refer to the inimitable Eileen Egan who in 1943 was the first woman and first lay representative to go overseas for War Relief Services (eventually renamed Catholic Relief Services), newly formed by the bishops of the United States.

Before there was any operating procedure and established protocol for such work, Egan ministered to refugees from World War II, victims of the Holocaust and displaced people in Gaza, Pakistan, Hong Kong, India and elsewhere.

Concomitant with her CRS assignments, Egan became a force in the Catholic Worker Movement, which led to a profound friendship with Dorothy Day.



OUR GLOBAL FAMILY

CAROLYN WOO

She served as associate editor of *The Catholic Worker*, wrote and led numerous external communications, organized Day's tours and events, and was at her side during Day's last protest

and arrest. As a biographer, Egan's books and essays have served as primary sources on the life and ministry of Day.

Perhaps holy women naturally flock to each other. Circa India 1955: Egan came upon the tiny nun of Kolkata and

her residences that sheltered the most marginalized folks. Their suffering and appearances initially intimidated Egan. She learned from Mother Teresa how to engage these individuals by seeing Christ in them.

Egan then brought Mother

WOO, page 13

She learned from Mother Teresa

how to engage

these individuals

by seeing Christ in them.

The risen Lord lives in us today and every day



THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

MSGR. OWEN F. CAMPION

Feast of the Ascension of the Lord Mark 16:15-20

Celebrating the Feast of the Ascension of the Lord varies from place to place. In some places, this feast will have been celebrated on Thursday, May 10. In these places, the liturgy for this weekend will be that of the Seventh Sunday of Easter.

In other dioceses, the feast is celebrated this weekend. These reflections will address the readings for the feast of the Ascension, not for the Seventh Sunday.

In the opening reading, from the first verses of the Acts of the Apostles, the author speaks first

to Theophilus.

Scholars debate about the identity of Theophilus. Some believe that it is the actual proper name of a person in the early Church. Others, noting that the name is the Greek translation for "Friend of God," hold that it was not a proper name but rather something of a title of respect or endearment.

Regardless, the use of this name or title reveals the link between the Gospel of Luke and Acts. Both are addressed to Theophilus.

This reading is about the Ascension. It also is about the Apostles, and more importantly it is about the special role that Jesus gave them. They witnessed the Ascension, as they witnessed the other great events in the mission of Christ: the miracles, the preaching to the multitudes, the Last Supper, Good Friday and the resurrection.

Intimacy with the Lord prepared them to teach the Gospel. He commissioned them. The Holy Spirit empowered them.

Angels challenged these

privileged Apostles when Jesus ascended, telling them not to look longingly to the skies, nor at each other; not being locked in where they were before meeting Jesus, but to go abroad — taking with them the Good News of God's mercy, come what may.

Indeed, as the future unfolded, all went abroad preaching the Gospel. All, save one, were martyrs.

For the second reading, this liturgy presents the Epistle to the Ephesians. In this epistle, Paul prays that God will give wisdom and insight to all who follow the Lord. It is a wisdom too great to be native to humans. God must provide it.

In the reading, Paul extols Jesus as the Lord and Savior, supreme above all creation, including all humans.

St. Mark's Gospel is the last reading. The Lord sends the Apostles into the entire world "to proclaim the Good News of salvation." He invests them with divine power, giving them authority even over the devil. They will be able to flaunt death.

They will be able to cure the sick.

They will be able to act as the Lord acted. In every sense, they will represent Jesus. The Gospel concludes that as the Apostles went far and wide, the Lord "worked through them."

Reflection

Today the Church celebrates the Ascension of the Lord. This great event of the Ascension, so well described in the Scriptures, is a sign of the Lord's divine identity — as was the resurrection, certainly as much as were the miracles.

The story, however, as reflected in Acts and in Mark, does not end with its affirmation of the place of Jesus as Son of God and Savior, visibly seen during the Lord's public ministry in the Roman province of Palestine in the first century AD.

For us Christians today, as for all Christians who have lived since the events recorded in these Scriptures, the story has critically strong personal implications. The Lord, crucified

on Calvary, risen at Easter, is with you and me. He is in our world. He has been in the world, living, healing, and saving, for 20 centuries.

He lives through the Apostles and their successors. Through them, we hear the Lord. Through them, we meet the Lord. Jesus is Lord. He is God. He lives!

READINGS

Sunday: Acts 1:1-11 Ps 47:2-3, 6-9 Eph 1:17-23 Mk 16:15-20

Monday: Acts 1:15-17, 20-26 Ps 113:1-8 Jn 15:9-17

Tuesday: Acts 20:17-27 Ps 68:10-11, 20-21 Jn 17:1-11a

Wednesday: Acts 20:28-38 Ps 68:29-30, 33-36b Jn 17:11b-19

Thursday: Acts 22:30; 23:6-11 Ps 16:1-2a, 5, 7-11 Jn 17:20-26

Friday: Acts 25:13b-21 Ps 103:1-2, 11-12, 19-20b Jn 21:15-19

Saturday: Acts 28:16-20, 30-31 Ps 114:4-5, 7 Jn 21:20-25

Monks' weekend retreat helps recovering alcoholics find God

Christian monks have been seeking God since the dawn of Christianity. They have removed themselves from the chaos and temptations of daily life "in the world" in order to pray, do good work and share their journeys with others who also seek God in community.

Of course, the monk quickly learns that "the world" comes with him or her. There is no absolute escape from the trials and temptations of life. There is only the transforming power of God's amazing grace which is available to all God's children wherever they are. Even so, there are special — holy — places where it seems much easier to seek and find "the God of our understanding," and to discover — and then do — God's will. Saint Meinrad Archabbey, a Benedictine monastery in southern Indiana, is one of these holy places.

For the past nine years, Saint Meinrad Archabbey has served as the host for a weekend retreat for recovering alcoholics. The overarching theme of the retreat is the 11th Step of Alcoholics Anonymous: "Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood him, praying only for knowledge of his will for us and the power to

carry that out."

What better place to examine prayerfully this important step in the recovery process? Could there be a better group of people to pray with and share their spiritual journeys than those who have freely given themselves to a life dedicated to the search for "conscious contact with God"?

Many believe that alcoholism is a multifaceted disease that affects the mind, body and emotions of those who suffer from this all-too-common form of physical addiction, mental obsession and emotional illness. There is no cure, experts say, but many women and men do recover if they can work the 12 steps of AA with honesty and humility. One day at a time.

Alcoholics Anonymous describes itself as "a spiritual program" that has no affiliation with any religious or secular group. AA's spiritual program of recovery is open to "all God's kids" regardless of religious, social or economic status. Thus, the 11th Step Retreat is open to all — including spouses, family members, friends and professionals who work with people in recovery.

In addition to the retreat conferences, the program includes opportunities for prayer with the monks, silent reflection and

Could there be a better group of people to pray with and share their spiritual journeys than those who have freely given themselves to a life dedicated to the search for "conscious contact with God"?



GUEST COMMENTARY

DANIEL CONWAY

meditation, and fellowship with other retreatants at meal times and during social gatherings.

Pope Francis recently spoke about the value of this kind of retreat:

"In this age, when people are so busy that they do not have enough time to listen to God's voice, monasteries and convents become like oases, where men and women of all ages, backgrounds, cultures and religions can discover the beauty of silence. At monasteries, people can rediscover themselves in harmony with creation, allowing God to restore a proper order in their lives" (Pope Francis, general audience, April 19, 2018).

The ninth annual 11th Step Retreat will be held at Saint Meinrad on July 13-15. Its particular theme is "The Joy of the Journey," and guest speakers will include Dr. John M., author of "Being Sober and Becoming Happy," and a video presentation by Franciscan Father Richard Rohr, author of "Breathing Under Water."

Those thinking about attending should go to spiritualretreatsteps.com to register.

Daniel Conway is a member of the editorial committee of *The Criterion*, newspaper of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.

WOO, from page 12

Teresa on her first trip to the United States to address the 1960 National Council of Catholic Women Conference in Las Vegas. A full-blown national tour followed and included a meeting between Mother Teresa and Dorothy Day.

Egan's commitment to justice and peace also located her at the historic march in Selma with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and in correspondence with Father Thomas Merton.

Eileen Egan abhorred war. Born in 1911 to an Irish family in Wales, she experienced the effects of World War I. From her CRS work with victims, she saw war as the negation of the incarnation of Christ in every person and the reversal of every corporal work of mercy.

She could not accommodate war for any reason and was particularly concerned about the just-war theory and the tolerance

for nuclear weapons.

Her efforts at advocacy, including a lead editorial of a special issue of *The Catholic Worker* titled "We are all under judgment," influenced the Church's thinking at the Second Vatican Council. The resulting pastoral constitution, "Gaudium et Spes," denounced attacks on population centers with weapons of mass destruction and the arms race, while supporting the rights of Catholics as conscientious objectors.

Egan continued to push the United Nations on this last issue, making the point that an institution devoted to peacemaking must allow for the rights of an individual acting on his conscience to not kill. It was an effort that spanned at least two decades. The resolution was placed on the U.N. agenda in 1971 and approved in 1987.

She was also the co-founder of Pax Christi USA which has as

its mission to call on the Church to recover its own rich traditions from the Gospel of nonviolence and to recognize in the teachings of Christ that justice and the works of mercy are the only acceptable alternatives to war.

Eileen Egan was a person who, having seen the horrors of wars, did not just attend to their victims but spent the rest of her life seeking the only solution that aligns with the Gospel.

To do so, she wrote; marched; critically assessed cultural values, stereotypes and assumptions; organized movements; and challenged the Church she loved to accept nothing less than what Christ stands for.

Carolyn Woo is the distinguished president's fellow for global development at Purdue University and served as the CEO and president of Catholic Relief Services from 2012 to 2016.

SCRIPTURE SEARCH®

Gospel for May 10 or 13, 2018

Mark 16: 15-20

Following is a word search based on the Gospel reading about the Ascension of the Lord and its aftermath. The words can be found in all directions in the puzzle.

GO INTO	THE WORLD	PROCLAIM
BELIEVES	BAPTIZED	SAVED
CONDEMNED	ACCOMPANY	NAME
DEMONS	HANDS	DRINK
DEADLY	ON THE SICK	RECOVER
LORD JESUS	TAKEN	HEAVEN
RIGHT	EVERYONE	WORKED

LAST DIRECTIONS

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

BARRON, from page 12

the invention of personal freedom, when nothing counts as intrinsically wicked, when any claim to moral authority is automatically shouted down — in other words, when we live in the world that Nietzsche made possible — then the will of the most powerful necessarily holds sway. And when something or someone gets in the way of what the powerful want, well then, they just "gotta knock it out of there." Michelle Wolf's comment was not just a bad joke; it was a brazen display of power, designed to appeal precisely to those who have reached the top of the greasy pole.

One of the extraordinary but

often overlooked qualities of a system of objective morality is that it is a check on the powerful and a protection of the most vulnerable. If good and evil are objective states of affairs, then they hem in and control the tendency of cultural elites to dominate others. When objective moral values evanesce, armies of the expendable emerge, and what Pope Francis aptly calls a "cultura del descarte" (a "throw-away culture") obtains. One of the indicators that this has happened is lots of people in tuxedos and formal gowns, sipping from wine glasses, and laughing while someone jokes about the murder of children.



CNS file photo

Polish displaced persons released from Siberian labor camps and arriving in Mexico stand next to a National Catholic Welfare Conference's war relief services bus sometime near the end of World War II. Eileen Egan is at center.

Ancilla College celebrates its 51st graduating class

DONALDSON — Ancilla College graduated its 51st class in school history on Saturday, May 5, at the Ancilla Domini Chapel. Lt. Gov. Suzanne Crouch addressed the audience that came to celebrate the 137 graduation candidates.

"It is exciting to have such a large graduating class," said Ancilla College president Dr. Ken Zirkle. "The increasing number of graduates reassures me that the college is headed in a positive direction."

A reception organized by the Ancilla Alumni Association followed, as Ancilla faculty, staff, students and their families gathered in Cana Hall for fellowship and refreshments.

"Because most of our students are only here for two years, it always seems that they leave so quickly," said Sam Soliman, acting vice president for academic affairs. "I am delighted that we had such a large group of students receiving honors this year."

An Honors Convocation took place on Friday, May 4, at the Ancilla Domini Chapel, to recognize these students for their achievements. Of the 137 candidates, 40 received recognition for graduating summa cum laude, magna cum laude and cum laude. Fifty-one were honored for their affiliation with Ancilla's Beta Beta Beta chapter of Phi Theta Kappa, the two-year college honor society in American

higher education, making this the largest PTK class to date. There were also an additional eight students who were recognized for completing honors-level courses, a first for Ancilla college.

Candidates receiving additional special honors were: Karson Williams, Kingsbury, Departmental Honor for Exercise Science and Athletic Scholar; Quyen Tran, Vietnam, Departmental Honor for Theology and Scholar of Distinction; Tyler Stringfellow, Middlebury, Departmental Honor for Criminal Justice; Corgan Shepard, Kokomo, Athletic Scholar; Francisco Ocampo, Elkhart, Departmental Honor for Computer Information Systems; Allyson Norby, Decatur, Departmental Honor for Health Sciences; Quynh Nguyen, Vietnam, Departmental Honor for Theology; Angelique McKeny, Hebron, Departmental Honor for Education; Charlie Lanam, Angola, Departmental Honor for Exercise Science; Chi Nu Huynh, Donaldson, Departmental Honor for Theology and Scholar of Distinction; Zayne Hartz, Newburgh, Departmental Honor for Business; Zachary Felty, New Palestine, Scholar of Distinction; Kenneth Eslick, Walkerton, Departmental Honor for History; Ha Cao, Donaldson, Departmental Honor for Theology and Scholar of Distinction.



One hundred and thirty-seven Ancilla College students completed degree programs in elementary education, computer information systems, nursing, criminal justice and other professional areas this spring.



Photos provided by Ancilla College

The 2018 graduating class of Ancilla College, Donaldson, gathers in Ancilla Domini Chapel for an Honors Convocation May 5.



Indiana Lt. Gov. Suzanne Crouch addresses the graduates.

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

WHAT'S HAPPENING carries announcements about upcoming events in the diocese. View more Catholic events and submit new ones at www.todayscatholic.org/event. For additional listings of that event, please call the advertising sales staff at 260-399-1449 to purchase space.

Run With the Knights

FORT WAYNE — Bishop Luers High School will host Run With the Knights on Saturday, May 12, at 9 a.m. at Foster Park, 333 E. Paulding Rd. The 10K/5K run, walk is hosted by the alumni department. Cost is \$20 per person. Sign up at www.bishopluers.org by clicking on "Run With the Knights" in the "Alumni" tab. For information contact Tess Steffen at 260-456-1261, Ext. 3039.

Interpreter to be at Mass

FORT WAYNE — An interpreter from DeafLink, a service of The League for the Blind and Disabled Inc., will be present for the 11:30 a.m. Mass on Sunday, May 13, at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Fort Wayne, 1122 S. Clinton St. An interpreter will sign in American Sign Language every second Sunday of the month. An interpreter from Community Services All Deaf will sign in American Sign Language. at 11 a.m. at the St. Matthew Cathedral, 1701 Miami St. South. Bend, IN 46613. Contact Allison Sturm in the Secretariat for Evangelization at asturm@diocesefwsb.org or 260-399-1452.

St. Mary of the Assumption School HASA 5K Color Run

AVILLA — St. Mary of the Assumption HASA, 232 N. Main St., will have a 5K Color Run/Walk on Saturday, May, 19,

beginning at 7:30 a.m. with check-in and 8 a.m. start time. Cost is \$15 for participants 10 years and older and includes T-shirt, headband, and temporary color.

Flea market and bake sale

YODER — St. Aloysius Church, 14623 Bluffton Rd., will have a flea market and bake sale Saturday and Sunday, May 19 and 20, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Concessions and bake sale, housewares, home decor, furniture, toys, handbags, shoes, jewelry, clothing, tools, vintage items, handcrafted items, knick knacks and much more.

Preschool open house

GARRETT — St. Joseph's Preschool, 301 W. Houston St., will have an open house Sunday, May 20, from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. St. Joseph Preschool serves children ages 3 and up. Classes take place on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. For additional tours call the school at 260-357-5137 ext. 23. For further information, visit www.stjosephgarrett.org or follow on Facebook.

Mother-daughter tea

MISHAWAKA — Mothers and daughters are invited to an afternoon tea Sunday, May 20, from 2-4 p.m. in honor of our Blessed Mother and one another. Enjoy tea, refreshments and fellowship

at an event designed for girls in upper elementary/middle school grades and their moms at the St. Francis Convent Auditorium, 1515 W. Dragoon Trail. The afternoon will conclude with a Marian procession. Please RSVP by May 14. Sponsored by the Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration.

Concert: The Fire of the Holy Spirit

MISHAWAKA — St. Bavo Parish, 511 W. 7th St., will offer congregational songs, solos, choral singing and readings from Scripture with the theme of the coming of the Holy Spirit on Sunday, May 20, from 4-5 p.m. to celebrate this month of special

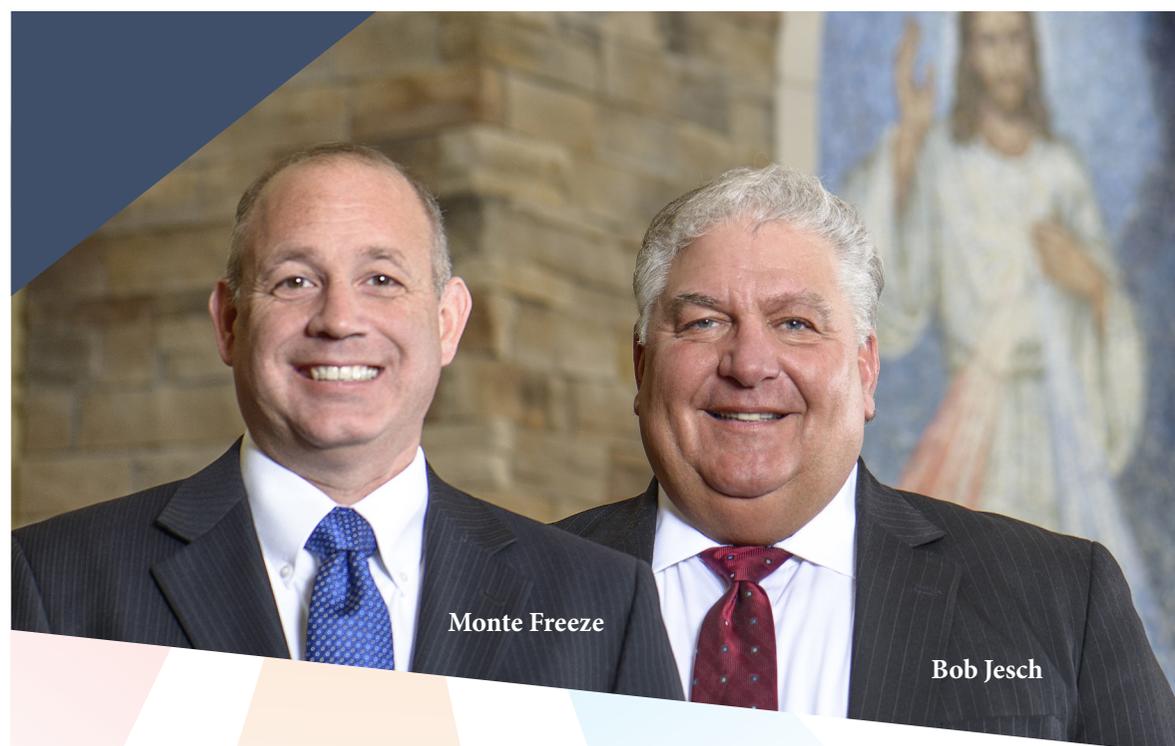
REST IN PEACE

<p>Fort Wayne Virginia Mae Feipel, 82, St. Jude</p> <p>Joan M. Horstman, 89, St. Henry</p> <p>Donald R. Clifford, 87, St. Therese</p> <p>Sandra J. Wisniewski, 78, St. Jude</p> <p>Maurice J. Wyss, 83, Our Lady of Good Hope</p>	<p>Francis C. Thissen, 79, St. Charles Borromeo</p> <p>Mishawaka Lois Leyes, 90, St. Joseph</p> <p>New Carlisle Mary Ann Turczynski, 85, St. Stanislaus Kostka</p> <p>Piercetown Judith H. Smyjunas, 77, St. Francis Xavier</p>	<p>South Bend Elizabeth Ann True, 92, St. Joseph</p> <p>Theresa M. Widawski, 81, St. Adalbert</p> <p>Shirley A. Klein, 76, Holy Family</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Submit obituaries to mweber@diocesefwsb.org</p>
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devotion to our Blessed Mother. Celebrate in joy and song the birthday of the holy Church. The concert is free and open to the public. Visit www.stbavochurch.com for information.

Bishop Rhoades Memorial Day Mass at Saint Joseph Cemetery Chapel

SOUTH BEND — Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades will celebrate Mass at Saint Joseph Cemetery Chapel, 24841 Grant Road, Monday, May 28, at 11 a.m.



Monte Freeze

Bob Jesch

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.

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.

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

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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Belonging

"Creating a Sense of Belonging"

Building Inclusive Parishes (BIP)

A new grassroots ministry in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend

Mission Statement: Through prayer, support, advocacy, and catechesis, we strive to be inclusive of all individuals with disabilities or special needs and help them know that they are welcomed, accepted, and necessary in contributing their gifts to our parish life.

Please join Fr. Dave Voors, Pastor of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, and members of the BIP Core Team

Monday, May 14th

7:00 – 8:15pm

Parish Center at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton

(Enter through the Main Church Doors)

10700 Aboite Center Road, Fort Wayne 46804

All are welcome to attend

For a full calendar of events and to share yours, visit www.todayscatholic.org/event

GROWING IN GRACE: spiritual motherhood

A reflection by Jennifer Miller

Most women have an innate call to motherhood within their very being. This vocational reality can be demonstrated through a variety of ways, each one as unique as the woman growing into it.

With the eyes of faith, this reality can truly blossom and flourish, especially when connected to the very life of its creator, God. Jesus, the vine, sustains such spiritual life as the Holy Spirit renews and refreshes the call to motherhood in each stage of a woman's life. A woman's own spiritual motherhood springs forth from the love of the Trinity.

The beautiful call to spiritual motherhood begins when a girl is still very little. The inclinations towards receptivity and openness to new life highlight this vocation. Both attributes can be practiced through every stage of her life, from birth to natural death, as she prepares for eternal life.

Each stage of a woman's spiritual motherhood holds a

er might pray for and speak with her students, with whom she is entrusted to care for in a particular way.

As she grows in experience and wisdom, a woman in her young adult life might then physically raise, care for, foster, adopt, pray for, or bear children, all the meanwhile nurturing them in her maturing vocation as mother. A blossoming woman in menopausal years might nurture younger women as they look for God and grow in friendship with other motherly figures as Christian examples. A spiritual mother is aware of the hunger and needs around her and knows how to care and feed her children.

A retired woman, aware of the gift of time she holds, could offer her spiritual fruits to her parish, planting the seeds of faith as a catechist or leading retreats. I've experienced an older woman sharing her spiritual motherhood with others through spiritual direction and graced centering prayer. Senior women can offer their mother-

in Catholic family. However, the richness, depth and truth of motherhood goes beyond that of actual birth, even for women who have physically had children themselves. Religious communities of women, although celibate, know the reality of spiritual motherhood well. They often call their religious superior "Mother," highlighting this fact.

The Gospel of John speaks of this new life coming forth in a different manner than one might imagine. "Participation in the divine life arises 'not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God' (Jn 1:13). The Catechism of the Catholic Church highlights this passage as it speaks of the spiritual motherhood of all people, following the example of Mary.

Mary is the physical mother of Jesus, albeit through divine conception, and too is the spiritual mother of every person. We all have at least two mothers, if not more; she who conceived, carried, labored and bore us,

As in life, bareness or infertility can also be present in periods of our spiritual motherhood. Our own family and friends, as well as our spiritual relatives Hannah and Elizabeth in the Bible, have all experienced such pain. Mary herself was present, but remained quiet, through such suffering with Jesus at the foot of the cross. A response of faith in the midst of such darkness, such as Mary's in the Magnificat "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord ..." is an acknowledgment of the existing spiritual motherhood. To know that one's womb is empty points to the realization of the existence of the womb itself, and the vocational call to be a spiritual mother.

St. John Paul II wrote in "On the Dignity and Vocation of Women:" "The moral and spiritual strength of a woman is joined to her awareness

that God entrusts the human being to her in a special way."

This Mother's Day might be a special opportunity to ask God and discuss in prayer what your vocation as a spiritual mother looks like this year. How might He be offering new life to be born of you? How could you open yourself to be receptive to His call, growing new life and bear it with your nurturing self? May our own mother, Mary, standing with you, love you through it all.

"If you ever feel distressed during your day — call upon our Lady — just say this simple prayer: 'Mary, Mother of Jesus, please be a mother to me now.'

I must admit — this prayer has never failed me."

— St. Teresa of Kolkata

beauty all its own. A baby first begins this vocational journey by coming to awareness of herself, her role in the world and relationship with God. A toddler can then learn how to be nurturing and grow new life by turning away from self and towards others. In everyday life this can look like meeting and developing new friendships, or as simple as growing plants and flowers in a garden.

A young girl, learning how to be a good friend, growing in relationship with others, practices and observes mothers around her. As a teenager, she could blossom further in continuing to deepen her interior prayer in relationship with God and exteriorly in service to her family and community.

As a young lady her second vocational choice often becomes clearer. She discerns religious, consecrated single or married life, all the while developing her natural, spiritual motherhood in her everyday work. For example, a young woman serving professionally as a high school teach-

hood in great depth of intercessory prayer and faithful reception of the sacraments.

The journey of spiritual motherhood continues even later and longer into eternal life! St. Thérèse of Lisieux mentions this when she told her fellow sisters, "I will be of more use in heaven than I am here. I want to spend my heaven doing good on earth." She was and is so full of divine life that the fruits of her spiritual motherhood continue to this day.

St. Thérèse said, "I understand that love includes all vocations. I realize that all my desires are fulfilled. I have found my vocation. In the heart of the Church, my mother, I will be love." There is indeed an appropriate and fruitful way to live one's spiritual motherhood in every stage of a woman's life.

Often, as Americans, we think of motherhood simply in terms of procreation, of the physical nature of a mother's womb or caring for one's own children. This is obviously true, beautiful, needed and important

and Mary, who was with our physical mother every moment of that pregnancy. The Catechism explains this as "Jesus is Mary's only son, but her spiritual motherhood extends to all men whom indeed he came to save: 'The Son whom she brought forth is he whom God placed as the first-born among many brethren, that is, the faithful in whose generation and formation she cooperates with a mother's love'" (CCC 501).

This is very healing and vital to those who might have a difficult or no relationship with their physical mother, as well as for those women who struggle being mothers themselves. Asking and trusting in Mary's intercession can develop within us this vocational call, which might have been hurt or wounded. St. Maximilian Kolbe reminds us, "Never be afraid of loving the Blessed Virgin too much. You can never love her more than Jesus did."