Cremated loved ones laid to rest during committal service

BY KEVIN KILBANE

Family members hugged each other, heard words of hope and comfort, and then laid to rest 10 loved ones whose cremated bodies had never been buried.

About 30 people gathered on a partly sunny afternoon Oct. 17 for a free committal service offered by Divine Mercy Funeral Home and Catholic Cemetery, 3500 Lake Ave. in Fort Wayne. “I’m just grateful to be here,” an older woman, who brought a loved one’s cremated body to the service, said afterward. Another woman also expressed her gratitude for the opportunity to bury her cremated loved one.

This was the first time Divine Mercy Funeral Home and Catholic Cemetery have offered free committal for cremated bodies, said Casey Miller, funeral home and cemetery executive director. The funeral home and cemetery both are owned by the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend.

“It started with a conversation with staff here,” Miller said of the idea for the service. “We knew there are cremated bodies out there that had not been buried in consecrated ground.”

The Catholic Church believes a deceased person’s body should be present for his or her funeral Mass, Miller said. The Church also believes a person’s cremated body should be buried in a Catholic cemetery, either in the ground or in a mausoleum crypt, and not scattered or divided.

Some participants in the Divine Mercy committal service said financial hardship or a family situation led to the delay in burying their loved one’s cremated body, said Karen Lonergan, director of preplanning services. “I’m just grateful to be here,” an older woman, who brought a loved one’s cremated body to the service, said afterward. Another woman also expressed her gratitude for the opportunity to bury her cremated loved one.

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Some participants in the Divine Mercy committal service said financial hardship or a family situation led to the delay in burying their loved one’s cremated body, said Karen Lonergan, director of preplanning services. In some cases, enough time had passed that the family didn’t know what burial options still may be available to them, Lonergan added.

To accommodate families who wanted to participate in the
Bishops, sisters discuss declining numbers of US women religious

by Dan Stockman

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (CNS) — The precipitous decline in the number of women in religious life and what it means to the Church has people thinking about how to prepare for the future.

Their actions stem from data gathered by the National Religious Retirement Office at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops that projects an estimated 300 women's religious institutes will likely phase out of existence in the next decade.

The estimate is fueled by the fact that the overall number of women religious has declined by 75 percent since 1965 with no change in the trend expected.


The workshop, “Fidelity to the Journey: Together in Contemplation,” was sponsored by the Resource Center for Religious Institutes under a grant from the GHR Foundation.

Mercy Sister Sharon Ewart, the resource center’s executive director, said participants agreed not to invite the press to the workshop to allow for frank and open discussion but to release a report afterward. About 50 people attended the gathering, including Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin of Newark, N.J., who chairs of the bishops’ Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations.

It was the first national gathering among bishops and women religious to discuss diminishing vocations.

“It was not only important, but also timely to connect the experience of these leaders and their communities to diocesan bishops in a way that contributes to the bishops’ understanding of the experience of diminishment — not a notion we are comfortable with, yet it is a shared reality — and its impact not only on the religious institute and its members, but also on the local church,” Sister Ewart said in a statement.

The number of women religious in the United States has declined from a peak of 181,421 in 1965 to 47,160 in 2016, National Religious Retirement Office statistics show. About 77 percent of women religious are older than 70.

“With as many as 300 of the 420 religious institutes in the United States are in their last decades of existence because of aging membership and declining vocations, officials said.

Despite the trend, participants said they came away inspired.

“There really was a presence of the Spirit in the room. You could experience it from the time the sessions began,” Sister Ewart said in an interview. “The openness of each person was truly the work of the Spirit. It was a great opportunity to share with one another and recognize how far we’ve come in working together.”

Sister Carol Zinn, a member of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Philadelphia and executive director of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, said part of the awe and wonder of the event was the mutual recognition of how the transformation of religious life is changing the entire Church.

“It’s not just about a religious congregation that’s selling its motherhouse. It’s about more than that,” Sister Zinn said. “You wouldn’t expect this topic to be so life-giving.”

Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz of Louisville, Kentucky, said the grief and loss are real, but so is the peace many congregations have found in the process.

“It was a very healthy conversation, a true dialogue, grounding in our deep respect for women and men religious and the contributions they’ve made,” Archbishop Kurtz said. “I came away inspired and encouraged.”

Cardinal Tobin also said he was moved by the peace sisters have found in planning for the fulfillment of their mission.

“There’s a sadness at the realization that the death of a congregation often means the disappearance of a particular charism in the church … but there is a great serenity among the women,” he told Global Sisters Report.

The cardinal said it reminded him of the prayer of Simeon when the infant Jesus was presented in the Temple: “Lord, let your servant go in peace, because my eyes have seen your salvation.”

Sister Zinn said the peace comes when a people realize completion is part of the paschal mystery of dying and rising, which is at the core of Christian belief.

“We had a really good conversation about how do we come to an end with the same kind of joy and commitment and passion as we came into at our beginning,” she said. “If we can’t do that, there’s something missing there.”

The term “diminishment” is often used to describe the declining numbers of religious, but many prefer “transition” or “transformation,” arguing religious life is changing, not disappearing, and while numbers may be diminishing, religious life itself is as vibrant and vital as ever.

The workshop addressed topics such as planning, care of members, use of resources, governance issues, and what it means for local churches and dioceses.

The report said the event came about with a discussion of how to continue the dialogue and replicate the experience in other areas. Participants felt the event deepened the communion between bishops and religious leaders, the report said.

Beyond the discussions of clergy sexual abuse and any further actions, the bishops were expected to vote on a new pastoral letter on racism, though the agenda for the meeting has not been finalized.

Security, always tight during the twice-a-year assemblies, is expected to be stricter than usual to prevent access to the Marriott Waterfront Hotel meeting site by protesters upset with the way the bishops have handled reports of abuse by clergy.

In preparing for the fall assembly, the bishops’ Administrative Committee Sept. 19 outlined actions to address the abuse crisis, including approving the establishment of a third-party confidential reporting system for claims of any abuse by bishops.

Committee members instructed the bishops’ Committee on Canonical Affairs and 2 Governance to develop proposals for policies addressing restrictions on bishops who were removed or resigned because of allegations of abuse of minors or adults.

The Administrative Committee also initiated the process of developing a code of conduct for bishops regarding sexual misconduct with a minor or adult or “responding in the exercise of his office related to such cases.”

The Administrative Committee consists of the officers, chairmen and regional representatives of the USCCB. The committee, which meets in March and September, is the highest authority of the USCCB outside of the
WASHINGTON (CNS) — A report from two leading faith-based agencies serving immigrants entering the United States from Mexico and Central America called on the federal government to end a policy of separating children from their families and help families comply with immigration law.

The report details the collaboration in July between the U.S. bishops’ Office of Migration and Refugee Services and Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service to assist more than 1,200 families to reunite after children were separated from adults entering the United States from Mexico and Central America called on the federal government to end a policy of separating children from their families and help families comply with immigration law.

Clergy from different denominations pray at the front gate of the Otay Mesa Detention Center in San Diego during an early June rally in support of immigrant families that had been separated at the U.S.-Mexico border. (CNS photo/David Maung, EPA)

The report outlines the agencies’ response and offered a series of recommendations to the federal government, the U.S. Congress, foreign governments and non-governmental organizations to better serve families traveling north to the U.S.

It said that while little is known about how the forced separation of children and adults will affect young people, initial reports from service providers “indicate that families are experiencing symptoms of trauma, including separation anxiety.”

It also suggested alternatives to detention for asylum-seeking families, especially those who pose no threat to the country.

“Such alternatives are often preferable as they avoid infliction of unnecessary and long-lasting trauma on children and families. Additionally, detaining families that do not present a flight or safety risk is an unnecessary use of limited (Department of Homeland Security) resources,” the report said.

Leaders of both organizations welcomed the report.

“I am proud of the response of USCBB/MRS, LIRS and our Catholic and Lutheran partners around country, including my brother bishops, to be able to work with the administration to provide support to those vulnerable families,” Bishop Joe S. Vasquez of Austin, Texas, chairman of the bishops’ Committee on Migration, said in a statement accompanying the Oct. 17 release of the report.

“I believe the recommendations made are important and should be seriously considered in order to avoid pain and suffering in the future caused by the separation of families,” he said.

In a separate statement, Kay Bellor, vice president of programs for LIRS, praised the agencies for stepping up quickly to aid families.

“As we have been for decades, communities of faith were there, poised and ready, to love and serve our neighbors in need,” Bellor said. “It is our deep hope that the lessons learned from this time in our history will prevent the cruel separation of children from their parents from happening again.”

As of Sept. 27, nearly 2,300 families had been reunited, according to the report. Some of the reunified families remained in detention facilities, some were reunited in their countries of origin, and some were released to allow them to travel to families and friends throughout the U.S.

The report showed that the flow of immigrants from Mexico had eased, but that refugees from Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador shot upward in 2017 and 2018. It cited the growing violence from criminal gangs and illegal drug networks in the three countries as reasons cited by immigrants for seeking to enter the U.S.

MRS and LIRS also called for:

— Better coordination and data collection on immigrants throughout the government to allow for improved tracking of family reunification.

— The release of families during “normal but extended business hours” from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. to allow families to be safely transported.

— Reinstituting family case management that had been discontinued in 2017 after just 18 months of operation in what originally was a five-year pilot program.

— Improved training for care providers.

— Expanding programs that address the causes of migration.

— Increased coordination among aid agencies to better serve separated families.

The USCCB has asked that dioceses take up a special Emergency Collection for 2018 Natural Disasters to assist in the rebuilding and long-term recovery efforts in areas suffering from these hurricanes and any other natural disasters that may yet occur this year.

In the wake of two powerful hurricanes in recent weeks, Hurricane Florence and Hurricane Michael, many people face the long process of recovery. Please remember to offer prayers in our parishes for those who have died or been injured and for their families.

Dear Faithful of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend,

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Kevin C. Rhoades
Most Reverend Kevin C. Rhoades
Bishop of Fort Wayne-South Bend
March for Life in January will emphasize ‘pro-life is pro-science’

BY KURT JENSEN

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Next year’s March for Life plans to fortify its pro-life message with science that proves life begins at conception and with a specific focus on stem-cell research.

“Unique From Day One: Pro-Life Is Pro-Science” is the theme announced Oct. 18 by Jeanne Mancini, president of the March for Life Education and Defense Fund. The annual march is scheduled for Jan. 18 to mark the anniversary of the Supreme Court’s 1973 Roe v. Wade decision, which legalized abortion nationwide.

“Our DNA is present at the moment of fertilization,” Mancini said at the Capitol Hill announcement. “Sadly, society tries to ignore or block these facts. When President Obama was asked, ‘When does life begin?’ he replied that was above his pay grade.”

She was referring to Barack Obama when he was running for president and was asked in 2008 during a Dallas forum with evangelical pastor Rick Warren. “When does a baby get human rights?” Obama replied, “Whether you’re looking at it from a theological perspective or a scientific perspective, answering that question with specificity is above my pay grade.”

“Science should always be at the service of life, not the reverse,” Mancini said. She called for the passage of H.R. 2918, known as the Patients First Act, for the advancement of science that proves life begins at conception.

The mission of March for Life is to protect the baby in its earliest stages,” Mancini added. “It’s so important to have a foundation of human dignity for any kind of research.

By the time an unborn infant reaches 18 to 20 weeks, “the science is very clear that you can perceive pain by that point in time,” said David Prentice, research director for the Charlotte Lozier Institute, the research arm of Susan B. Anthony List. “These individuals do not need to be destroyed for healing.”

Prentice said adult stem cells “from many different sources — umbilical cord blood, the heart” would be a suitable replacement.

“Science speaks the truth because it illuminates the truth,” said Dr. Grazie Pozo Christie, a radiologist and a policy adviser for The Catholic Association, who played the sound of a fetal heartbeat at five weeks of gestation.

Abortion “was sold to us as a scientific advance, maybe the ultimate scientific advance,” she said.

But science has subsequently “overthrown it. It has opened our ears,” she said. And the term for fetuses sometimes used in 1973, “a ball of cells,” she described as “a miserable perversion of medicine.”

Activist David Daleiden’s undercover videos from Planned Parenthood clinics have made him a hero to the pro-life movement and have gotten him in substantial legal trouble in California, where the videos were taken.

He and his Center for Medical Progress are defending against 15 state felony charges for conspiracy and invasion of privacy. The charges were originally filed March 28, 2017, by California Attorney General Xavier Becerra. On June 21 of that year a Superior Court judge dismissed 14 of the 15 charges “with leave to amend,” meaning they could be refiled. They were refiled June 30, 2017.

Also on Oct. 4 of this year, a federal judge refused to lift an injunction banning the release of videos taken at a National Abortion Federation meeting.

Nonetheless, Daleiden, after complaining about “jack-booted thugs” who raided his home and office when he was first prosecuted, played excerpts of the videos in which organs from aborted fetuses appear to be discussed as if they were commodified for sale.

“It shows a level of objectification beyond the original objectification of abortion,” he said. “The body parts are only useful for Planned Parenthood to sell.”

Mancini also announced that next year’s rally speakers would include Ben Shapiro, editor in chief of The Daily Wire, and Abby Johnson, the former abortion clinic worker who founded And Then There Were None.

This year’s rally included a video hookup of President Donald Trump speaking from the White House with students from the University of Mary in North Dakota, but political speakers for 2019 won’t be announced for a few more weeks.

USCBC, from page 2

full body of bishops when they meet for their fall and spring general assemblies.

A USCBC spokesman said Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, conference president, was unavailable to discuss specific plans for the assembly because he and other conference leaders were in Rome attending the Synod of Bishops on young people, faith and vocational discernment. The synod was to conclude Oct. 28.

Francesco Cesareo, chairman of the National Review Board, also declined to discuss the issue, saying in an Oct. 16 email to Catholic News Service that board members were continuing to draft recommendations that would be delivered to the bishops during the assembly.

In August, Cesareo told Catholic News Service that the bishops “have to put their trust in lay leadership and allow that lay leadership to develop the processes and oversight when these kinds of allegations occur, particularly holding bishops accountable.”

The all-lay National Review Board, established by the bishops in 2002, oversees compliance by dioceses with the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People. It has no role in oversight of bishops.

Bishop Christopher J. Coyne of Burlington, Vermont, chairman of the bishops’ Committee on Communications, told Catholic News Service Oct. 19 that the bishops must “continue to press forward” in explaining how well the charter “is working and continues to work.”

“It important that we as a conference have made incredible strides in protecting children to the point that one of the safest places for children to participate is the Catholic community in the United States,” he said.

“But that message is not getting out there. Many people still believe that the abuse of children and the cover-up by church authorities is an ongoing issue and that the bishops haven’t done enough to address the issue. That’s contrary to the evidence in contrast to the number of reported abuses since 2002,” Bishop Coyne said.

“We have to continually say the charter is working and doing its job,” Bishop Coyne also told CNS.

While acknowledging many strides made in our country, Bishop Coyne said, “despite many promises, we still see ongoing issues.”

Meanwhile, work on the pastoral letter addressing racism was nearing its conclusion. Bishop Sheldon J. Fabio of Houma-Thibodaux, Louisiana, chairman of the bishop’s Ad Hoc Committee Against Racism, has shepherded the final stages of work on the document since May when he stepped in for Bishop George V. Murry of Youngstown, Ohio, who resigned to undergo treatment for acute leukemia.

The proposed statement, “Open Wide Our Hearts: The Church’s Call to Love — A Pastoral Letter Against Racism,” says that “despite many promising strides made in our country, the ugly cancer of racism still infects our nation.”

“Racist acts are sinful because they violate justice. Their quiet failure to acknowledge the human dignity of the persons offended, to recognize them as the neighbors Christ calls us to love,” the proposed pastoral letter says.

The document examines the history of racism in the U.S. While acknowledging many other groups in the county have endured racism and discrimination in the past, it focuses on three groups: African-Americans, Hispanics and Native Americans.
Without a doubt: Pope shares his thinking on key synod themes

BY CINDY WOODEN

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Having some doubts is definitely better than having no doubts at all, Pope Francis told a group of seminarians.

As the Synod of Bishops on “young people, the faith and vocational discernment” was continuing at the Vatican, the pope tackled some of the synod’s key questions when he met Oct. 13 with seminarians from the Lombardy region of northern Italy.

Doubt came first.

A young man named Daniele from the Diocese of Mantova told Pope Francis that while his year of preparation before beginning seminary studies is mostly one of joy, “sometimes, behind this enthusiasm, there hide seeds of doubt and struggle with the idea of following Jesus through the priesthood in today’s society.”

Pope Francis has attended most of the general sessions of the synod and, according to the Vatican press office, had requested the floor at least twice to give his input during the “open discussion” that ends each evening. The Vatican did not, however, say what the pope said.

But his talk to the Lombardy seminarians gives an indication of his approach to the topic of vocational discernment; his long question-and-answer session with them included both long-standing ideas and new insights that may have been motivated by listening at the synod to bishops, priests, religious and laypeople, including 34 observers under the age of 30.

Daniele, the seminarian, had referred to doubt as a cross. The pope said it may be, but it is a fruitful cross.

“I don’t trust people who never doubt,” the pope said.

“Doubt puts us in crisis. Doubt makes us ask ourselves, ‘Is this good or not?’”

Of course, Pope Francis said, too much doubt is not healthy, but if there’s some doubt and it makes a Christian stop and ask, “Does this come from God or not? Is this positive or not?” then it is actually a motivation for discernment.

The concrete step to take when doubt comes along, he said, is “dialogue. Dialogue with the one who accompanies you. Dialogue with your superior.

Dialogue with your classmates. But open dialogue, sincere dialogue, about concrete things. And, especially, dialogue with the Lord: ‘Lord, what are you trying to tell me with what I’m feeling, with this desolation or this doubt?’”

Another big theme at the synod that was echoed in the question of a seminarian had to do with evangelization in a time of increased secularization.

While some of the synod members seemed to view secularization as a huge obstacle for the Church, Father Arturo Sosa, superior general of the Jesuits, asked synod members to try to think — discern — what God is trying to tell the Church through secularization.

Perhaps, he said, part of it has to do with challenging people to make a clear choice to be a Christian, rather than belonging to the Church just because their parents and grandparents did.

But Pope Francis took a slightly different tack with the seminarians. “You say, ‘This increasingly secularized world,’ but I say, which world was more secularized: ours or that of Jesus?”

While some Christians may be faced with such a challenge, Jesus’ mandate to Christians today is the same as it was then, the pope said: “Go out,” get close to people and share the good news.

A seminary staff member from Cremona asked Pope Francis for suggestions on how those in charge of formation can prepare young men to be ministers in a Church that is a “field hospital” and how they can help the young prudently try new things to bring God’s love and mercy to people.

First of all, the pope said, get them moving because “a priest who is not on the move thinks of stupid things, says stupid things and does stupid things.”

“But it’s risky,” Pope Francis said. “I could hear his audience thinking.”

While someone may slip while on the move, making mistakes teaches humility, he said, even admitting that he has prayed for God to “toss a banana peel” in the path of a certain priest to help the man be humble.

Everything in life involves a process, the pope reminded the group of seminarians and seminary staff members. “Babies aren’t born adults; it’s all a process of becoming, a process of maturation or corruption,” of growing in virtue or growing in vice.

To help young people mature in their faith and commitment to the Gospel, look to how Jesus was with His disciples, the pope said.

Jesus “knew how to tolerate mistakes” and did not give up even when Peter denied Him or the other disciples ran away, the pope said. “Jesus placed His bet on time, on the development of the disciples.”
Bishops call for better religious education, preparation for mission

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Improved religious education and a stronger sense of belonging to a community were some of the topics touched upon as the Synod of Bishops moved into its final round of speeches. Accepting Pope Francis’ invitation for bishops to be bold at the synod, Auxiliary Bishop Thomas Dowd of Montreal told the assembly Oct. 16, “if I was pope — I know I’m not, but if I was — I’d write an encyclical on four basic questions” all human beings ask in one way or another. The four, he said, are: “Who is God? If God is good, why is there evil in the world? If God is good but there is evil in the world and God is doing something about it, how can we be part of it?” The 48-year-old Canadian Bishop told synod members that his own religious education in Catholic schools and parishes was “an abysmal failure,” an education that “just gave us pieces and no overall picture.” The Church needs to renew its religious education programs, he said, and should start by trying to respond to the four questions, which “haunt the heart of every person, religious or not.” Swiss Cardinal Kurt Koch, president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, also acknowledged the “critical situation of the transmission of the faith today” and insisted the best way to combat it is by being better examples for young people and encouraging them to be examples for their peers.

Young migrants bring vitality, need support, synod members say

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Helping young migrants hold fast to their cultural and religious identity, especially in situations where they are a minority, was a recurring topic at the Synod of Bishops. Blessed Sacrament Father Robert Stark, director of the Office for Social Ministry for the Diocese of Honolulu and regional coordinator for the Vatican’s Migrant and Refugees Section, offered synod members very practical advice for assisting young people on the move. First, he said Oct. 16, Church workers must listen to young people thinking about leaving their homelands and inform them of the dangers. Second, the Church should offer food, shelter and safety to young people in transit. And, when they arrive at their destination, the young should be helped with legal assistance and language classes. “At each phase of their journey, young migrants pass through different dioceses but — from beginning to end — they can be in the same loving, caring church,” Father Stark told the synod. Archbishop Iorio Antoniazzi of Tunis, representing the North African bishops’ conference, told the synod that many of the dioceses of Libya, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco are thriving today because of the young African Catholics who come to their countries for university studies or while awaiting an opportunity to migrate to Europe.

Pope says he’s open to visiting North Korea

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Francis, at a meeting with South Korean President Moon Jae-in, said he is willing to visit North Korea. North Korean leader Kim Jong-un had asked Moon to tell the pope of the invitation. According to Yonhap, the Korean news agency, Moon’s presssecretary told reporters the pope said he would accept “if an (official) invitation arrives and I can go.” Meeting the South Korean president Oct. 18, the pope praised Moon’s efforts to promote peace in the Korean peninsula. “Move forward without stopping. Do not be afraid,” the pope told Moon according to Yonhap. In a statement released after the meeting, the Vatican said Pope Francis and Moon discussed the Church’s role in promoting “dialogue and reconciliation between Koreas. Strong appreciation was expressed for the common commitment to fostering all useful initiatives to overcome the tensions that still exist in the Korean Peninsula, in order to usher in a new season of peace and development,” the Vatican said.

All six dioceses in Illinois sued over clergy sexual abuse allegations

CHICAGO (CNS) — Attorney Jeff Anderson, who has represented clergy abuse victims nationwide, filed a lawsuit Oct. 18 in Chicago against all six Catholic dioceses in Illinois and the Illinois Catholic Conference for what he described as an ongoing effort to cover up clergy sexual abuse. The lawsuit states, Pope Francis’ colleges to release all their records on abusive priests.

Honduran Nery Maldonado, right, chats with other migrants as they wait in line Oct. 17 to enter a shelter in Guatemala City. Maldonado and the other migrants are part of a caravan trying to reach the U.S. Maldonado says he lost his feet while riding the freight train called “The Beast” three years ago in Mexico. The caravan encountered violence at the Mexican border late over the weekend.

Indifference, hatred are the first steps to murder, pope says

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Hurling insults and being indifferent to other people’s lives are the first steps along the winding path that leads to killing them, at least figuratively. Pope Francis said. By way of example, he said that “whoever is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment.” Jesus equates hatred with murder, the pope said Oct. 17 during his weekly general audience. “Indifference kills. It’s like telling someone, ‘You’re dead to me.’ because you’ve killed them in your heart. Not loving is the first step to killing, and not killing is the first step to loving,” he told thousands of pilgrims in St. Peter’s Square. Continuing his series of talks on the Ten Commandments, the pope reflected on Christ’s explanation of the Fifth Commandment, “Thou shall not kill.”

Justice Department opens investigation into abuse claims in Pennsylvania

PHILADELPHIA (CNS) — The Archdiocese of Philadelphia has received a subpoena as part of a federal grand jury investigating allegations of child sexual abuse and a cover-up of such claims, Church officials confirmed Oct. 18. The subpoena “requires the production of certain documents,” said Ken Gavin, archdiocesan spokesperson. The archdiocese “will cooperate with the United States Department of Justice in this matter.” The same day, the Diocese of Harrisburg released a statement saying it “will cooperate fully with this inquiry, just as it has with the Office of Attorney General’s investigation,” which resulted in the release last summer of a statewide grand jury report on allegations of sex abuse by priests and other Church workers. Among other diocesan reaction, the Allentown diocese said it, too, would fully cooperate. News reports by the Associated Press say the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Eastern District, based in Philadelphia and led by William M. McSwain, had recently begun serving subpoenas in the new statewide probe. The Catholic Church in Pennsylvania consists of five dioceses: the Archdiocese of Philadelphia and the dioceses of Allentown, Altoona-Johnstown, Erie, Greensburg, Harrisburg, Pittsburgh and Scranton.

Migrant caravan continues northward

PHILADELPHIA (CNS) — The Archdiocese of Chicago’s statement said officials had not reviewed the lawsuit in full but that the diocese has taken significant steps to address clergy sex abuse and had posted the names of priests who have been credibly accused of this on its website.

News Briefs
To love is to will the good of the other

Couples blessed at jubilee Mass

BY JOSHUA SCHIPPER

Couples celebrating their 25th, 50th and 60th wedding anniversaries were recognized at a wedding jubilee Mass celebrated by Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades on Sunday, Oct. 21, at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Fort Wayne. Dozens of couples filled the pews to receive a blessing from the bishop for fulfilling their calling to marriage and for God’s love and grace to continue flowing in their lives.

Following the Gospel reading, Bishop Rhoades preached about the true meaning of marriage. He congratulated the couples, calling them “witnesses to all of us God’s love and fidelity.” Then, he asked them to recall their wedding day.

“On that day, you freely accepted your vocation to follow Christ and serve the kingdom of God in the married state. You placed your trust in God, not knowing the future or how your lives together would unfold. But you stepped out in faith,” he said. “The Lord has been with you through the years with His grace, helping you in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health, to persevere with love.”

Contrasting two different types of love, he said romantic love is “subjective.” “But there is another side of love that I imagine you have learned through the years. We can call it the objective aspect of love,” he said, stressing that objective is “absolutely essential in a marriage no matter how strong or weak your emotions and desires may be.”

He compared objective love to the Italian phrase, “ti voglio bene,” which means “I wish you good” or “I want what is good for you.”

“This Italian expression gets at the deeper, objective aspect of love because authentic love is more than good feelings and emotion, more than romance … he said. “True love is looking outward toward one’s beloved and seeking what is best for that person.”

Bishop Rhoades drew a parallel between this kind of love and St. Thomas Aquinas’ definition of love, found in the Catechism of the Catholic Church: “To love is to will the good of the other.”

“So, it’s more than having powerful feelings for another person. It’s about being committed to them and their good.” He used the example of a husband and wife in a Christian marriage, noting that they “unite themselves to (the) common aim of helping each other grow in holiness and deepening their own union and raising children.”

Marriage, he continued, “includes sacrificing one’s own preferences and desires. It includes serving one another.”

Calling to mind the Gospel reading, he quoted Mark 10:45: “… whoever wishes to be first among you will be your servant.”

Having described objective love in detail, Bishop Rhoades directly compared subjective and objective love. “In most marriages,” he said, “those earlier romantic and subjective feelings will fade. But their love hopefully will not diminish, but grow.”

He said that “true love is not merely about one’s experience of good feelings in a marriage, but the commitment to seek what is best for the other person, even when those feelings are not there.”

St. John Paul II gave insight to this sacrificial type of love, he noted. “He wrote that married love is much more than attraction and desire … It is two people who give themselves to each other. It involves surrendering oneself to the other. In self-giving love, men and women recognize in a profound way that their life is not their own.”

Bishop Rhoades said the pope’s ideas on love are “counter-cultural — limiting one’s own freedom and committing oneself to someone else in this radical way.” However, “from a Christian perspective, life is not about doing whatever I want. It is about fulfilling my relationships with God and with the people God has placed in my life. This is how we will really find fulfillment in our life, not in self-getting, but in self-giving!”

“All marriages have challenges, he acknowledged, emphasizing the importance of forgiveness and apologies.

“Isn’t this the way God loves us? Despite our many sins and failures, God remains committed to us. He looks at us patiently and mercifully. He loves us even when we do things that hurt our relationship with Him … we see this radical divine love most powerfully in the Holy Eucharist,” where “Jesus gives Himself to us, His very Body and Blood.”

“Receives us as we are, with all our weaknesses. This is what the sacrament of marriage is about: giving and receiving. Every husband and wife is called to see the other as a gift, a gift from God. And to love the other as he or she is, with all the imperfections. This is how God loves us.”

“May God bless our anniversary couples today and every day,” he concluded. “May He continue to bestow upon them love and grace! And may the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Joseph intercede for them always!”

Medical professionals urged to show Christ’s mercy in their work

BY KEVIN KILBANE

Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades and health care professionals are called to be “instruments of God’s healing love” and “witnesses to the sanctity of life” during a White Mass celebrated Oct. 18 at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Fort Wayne.

“In all you say and do, you are to affirm the life and dignity of your patients, including the tiny infants in the womb of their mothers as well as the frail, elderly patients approaching the end of their earthly life,” Bishop Rhoades said during his homily.

“And you do so by recognizing that every one of your patients, including the disagreeable ones, is a child of God, destined to share the glory and joy of the Creator.”

Most of the approximately 75 physicians and health care professionals who attended the White Mass also gathered afterward for a dinner at nearby St. Mary, Mother of God Church, where guest speaker Dr. Brandon P. Brown discussed “Caring for the Least Among Us: Fetal Medicine.”

The Mass and dinner were organized by the Dr. Jerome Lejeune Catholic Medical Guild of Northeast Indiana. A White Mass for health care professionals also took place in the South Bend area Sept. 26 at St. Pius X Church in Granger.

The goal of a White Mass is to inspire physicians and all health care professionals to imitate Jesus Christ, said Dr. Andrew Mullally, a Dr. Jerome Lejeune Catholic Medical Guild member and the Indiana state director of the Catholic Medical Association.

Catholics have a unique perspective on health care matters,” said Mullally, whose independent Credo Family Medicine practice is located in Fort Wayne.

That includes more than just concern for people at the beginning and ends of their lives, he said. It also involves areas such as social justice, including caring for people in jail and those with disabilities.

This year, the Fort Wayne White Mass took place on the feast day of St. Luke the Evangelist, who was a physician as well as a disciple of Jesus and a friend of St. Paul, Bishop Rhoades reminded worshipers during his homily.

“We invoke his intercession today for all of you who are part of the health care profession,” he said, noting St. Luke is the patron saint of physicians and surgeons.

St. Luke also was the author of two books of the Bible: the
Patients, families urged to learn more about palliative, hospice care

ST. LOUIS (CNS) — Palliative and hospice care “address the needs of the whole person, which is the foundation of Catholic health care,” said Sister Carol Keehan, a Daughter of Charity, who is president and CEO of the Catholic Health Association, based in St. Louis.

She made the comments in an Oct. 8 news release issued jointly by CHA and the Supportive Care Coalition in Hillsboro, Oregon, to mark World Hospice and Palliative Care Day on Oct. 13.

The two organizations are encouraging the public to learn more about the benefits of palliative care to relieve suffering for chronic and life-limiting conditions and about the role of hospice care at the end of life.

They also highlighted the need for greater access to and awareness of palliative care and hospice services in the United States.

While the availability of palliative and hospice care services is growing in the U.S., many patients do not have access to such services and those who do often lack an understanding of how they can benefit from this type of care, the two groups said.

“Patients diagnosed with a serious illness, such as cancer, often face daunting treatment options,” Sister Keehan said.

“And while modern medicine is helping prolong life, surgeries and drugs are only part of the healing process. Often as our patients’ physical condition becomes the primary focus, the care for their emotional and spiritual well-being is shortchanged or overlooked.”

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“A woman sits at the bedside of her mother in 2016 at de Greeff Hospice house in St. Louis. This special house, the only one of its kind in St. Louis, serves terminally ill individuals.”

Palliative medicine provides supportive care for people living with serious illness by focusing on relieving their physical pain as well as their emotional and spiritual distress. It “is appropriate at any age and at any stage in a serious illness and can be provided alongside curative treatment,” they said.

Such care involves a team of doctors, nurses, social workers, chaplains and others working with the patient and family members.

Similar to palliative care, hospice care focuses on keeping a patient comfortable and pain-free, both physically, emotionally and spiritually. This care “is typically provided to patients who are near the end of their lives,” they said.

“We have a long way to go in making ‘what matters to you’ a more important question than ‘what’s the matter with you,’” said Denise Hess, executive director of the Supportive Care Coalition.

Hess’ group is a coalition of Catholic health ministries that believe “palliative care is a hallmark of Catholic health care through which God’s healing love is revealed.” The group’s website is https://supportivecarecoalition.org.

Together, CHA and the Supportive Care Coalition are advocating for access to high quality palliative care for all who need it and developing resources and tools to improve palliative care programs and increase awareness of its benefits.

Three resources designed for patients and their families can be found on the CHA website, http://www.chausa.org/palliative-care:

— “Expressing Your Health Care Wishes,” which includes FAQs about advance directives.
— “Caring Even When We Cannot Cure,” which explains the differences between palliative and hospice care.
— “Caring for People at the End of Life,” which explains the Catholic Church’s teaching about end-of-life decisions.

CHA said the resources are written from the perspective of Catholic tradition “but can be used by people of any religious tradition.”
The students at Marian High School, Mishawaka, couldn’t be found in their classrooms on Oct. 17 because instead of opening their books, they were learning about serving the way Christ calls His children to do: by volunteering for the benefit of others on the fifth annual Knights Service Day.

The students, along with parents and school staff members, served about 50 different organizations in Elkhart and St. Joseph counties, including ADEC; Real Services; St. Augustine Soup Kitchen; Hubbard Hill and St. Paul nursing homes; Hannah’s House; the St. Vincent de Paul Society; The Center for the Homeless: Our Lady of the Road; La Casa de Amistad; and others.

Chris Grossnickle, development associate at Marian, explained how the service day began. Five years ago, as the faculty and staff began planning events for the 50th anniversary of Marian High School, they realized there weren’t many student-focused events. She said the Knights Service Day was a chance “to have the kids go outside the Marian family.”

At first, they concentrated on Catholic organizations like St. Augustine Soup Kitchen, St. Vincent de Paul Society, Catholic Worker House and Marian’s partner schools, but then expanded. Grossnickle said when discussion about the service day began, participants were told to develop a pedagogy, or “a curriculum behind what we’re doing — and that’s been our driving force ever since. I love that piece of it. We discussed, ‘Who do we want to affect? Who does Christ want us to affect?’ He tells us the imprisoned, the hungry, the children, the homeless, (and) the elderly; and we look at those criteria for our service organizations.”

The program is run through the school’s Theology Department, whose faculty talks to the students and explains the difference between direct service — working directly with a person — and indirect service like yardwork or organizing, which might not be as immediately gratifying but are equally important.

Rewarding experiences

Cadence Szajko, the daughter of Eric and Michelle Szajko and a parishioner at Queen of Peace, Mishawaka, shared her impressions from the service experience. She worked with Marian High School students volunteered at ADEC, a nonprofit organization that works with intellectually and physically disabled children and adults. Many of the clients create arts and crafts that they can then sell.

The students did a variety of work while at ADEC during Knights Service Day on Oct. 17.

Real Services, going out to a homebound woman’s home to clean up her yard, rake leaves and trim bushes. In the past she has gone to elementary schools to help kindergartners read.

The service day “gives us a good sense of how many people need help, and they love having people out to help them. It gives everyone a sense of how privileged we are, and how underprivileged others are — and that little things make a big difference.”

Aside from the service day, Cadence volunteers at church and at Pet Refuge.

Junior Graham Harding, the son of Gene and Lori and member of College Park Missionary Church in Mishawaka, volunteered at Cultivate Culinary, which has a food rescue program: It reloads food from events and restaurants and repackages it for the homeless and underprivileged.

Graham said he felt it was important for Marian to have a service day because, “It helps define who we are. We’re a family here and giving back to the community helps annunciate that, it’s the kind of thing Marian does.”

In addition to helping others, Graham it was fun to be able to work alongside fellow students whom he might not otherwise get to know very well.

Bella Ravotta, the daughter of Steve and Colleen, is a senior at Marian. Her family attends St. Joseph Parish. Bella has participated in the Knights Service Day for four years: This year she worked at ADEC, a nonprofit agency for children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities, helping with arts and crafts and holding hands with a client. She said ADEC’s clients were excited to have the Marian students there; she was told one person there has asked every single day since last year when the Marian students were coming back.

During her freshman year, Bella recalled that she raked leaves at someone’s house. The appreciation she received “really made an impact on me.”

Bella helps with Special Olympics and coaches outside of her service through Marian. She said the Knights Service Day “teaches us we are here for a reason; we’re here to serve others. That’s what we’re called to do as Catholics and that’s part of our mission…. I’m thankful Marian gave me the opportunity to explore other ways to serve and taught me to pursue volunteerism.”

The first year of the project, Grossnickle heard that Marian choir members were singing at Hubbard Hill nursing home and as they were leaving, a nurse asked if they could sing for a man who was dying and whose family was gathered around him. The choir members sang “Amazing Grace” while the man’s family was singing and then the family was gathered around him. The adult daughter of the man told them, “Thank you for singing my dad to heaven.”

‘Learn. Serve. Lead.’

Marian’s slogan is “Learn. Serve. Lead.” and they use the Knights Service Day fits that slogan. Development Director Alicia Redinger said “it’s all rolled into our mission.”

The school has attempted to connect classes to the service organizations, like having the choir sing at nursing homes or the foods class prepare food to bring to those staying at the Ronald McDonald House.

Grossnickle added that they try to give the students a varied experience during their Marian career and encourage them to be open to God’s call.

“We hope by the time they have four years of service they see the needs in the community, where their work is valued and why it’s important to do what God asks of us,” Redinger said. “We hope it instills a lifelong servant’s heart.”
Reading Rangers Program receives national recognition

BY JEANIE EWING

The National Christ Child Society professes a simple, but powerful slogan: “Nothing is ever too much to do for a child.” For Fort Wayne chapter members and Reading Rangers volunteers Lori Neumann and Dianne Bezdon, it means responding to the needs of our local community by being the hands and feet of Jesus.

“Mary Virginia Merrick founded this entire society on the spirituality that Christ is in each of these children,” Neumann explained. “You’re seeing Jesus in each child, reaching out to them. So when we read to these kids, we are imagining that we are serving Jesus personally.”

The Reading Rangers Program is a local initiative born from a need expressed by the National Christ Child Society to increase literacy in young children. Now in its third year, Reading Rangers has expanded from one school, St. Joseph School on Brooklyn Avenue in Fort Wayne, to two, with Most Precious Blood School, also in Fort Wayne. Its format is simple: Christ Child Society volunteers travel to the preschool classes of each school once per month to read fun books to small children.

Each school offers a different routine for these special days each month. The Christ Child Society volunteers join the classrooms for opening prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance at St. Joseph to begin the day, then break into groups with three or four children for each adult. Following the recitation of a book, the kids access a canvas bag from the volunteer to discover what relevant craft or activity they will also be doing together.

An added treat is that the children take home a copy of each month’s book to keep at home, which includes a letter to their parents on ways to incorporate discussion questions that will increase reading comprehension and expand their vocabulary. Finally, the class reconvenes for a skit or performance to tie key concepts of the book together and to encourage young students to love reading.

Neumann added, “We’re careful when we choose the books. We want them to be age-appropriate but also fit the needs of language.” Both schools were identified as having a specific need for this unique program, and the kids are already demonstrating impressive literacy improvements. “Even within the first four months of the school year, I can see their improvement of language skills,” Bezdon elaborated.

Even more than giving of their time to these children, the volunteers receive the joy of building a special relationship with the preschoolers. Each child “lights up” when seeing his or her “grandma,” as they affectionately call the reading volunteers, explains Neumann. There are bright smiles exchanged, because for some children, the books they are given are the only ones they’ve ever owned. They are receiving a special gift in the form of love, time and a book to keep. “They know we’re there because we love them,” Bezdon shared.

Both Neumann and Bezdon feel that their participation in the Reading Rangers program has positively influenced their own Catholic faith, as well. For Neumann, it’s a way to put what she believes as a Catholic into an important and valuable work of mercy. “As you get older,” she reflected, “you lost your contact with childlike innocence, and volunteering for this program reconnects me to my faith by making everything come alive through the eyes of a child again.”

Bezdon concurred, adding, “My faith has been made stronger by seeing the love in the eyes of the children we serve. I thank God for bringing us to these children.”

It’s evident that what the Fort Wayne chapter of the Christ Child Society is doing with the Reading Rangers Program reflects the values of the society, as well as of the individuals who volunteer.

Every two years, the National Christ Child Society holds a large convention in which each of the 44 chapters nationwide are invited to attend. During the convention, one chapter’s outstanding program is recognized with an accolade called the Red Wagon Award, which includes a $1,000 grant. This year the recipient was the Fort Wayne Reading Rangers Program. Neumann shares that their grant money will go toward the purchase of more books for the kids they serve.

Because of its expansion and success, the Reading Rangers Program is seeking volunteers who feel a call to share their time with young children in need of a positive adult role model. The only requirement is to first become a member of the Fort Wayne chapter of the Christ Child Society. The commitment each member makes, Neumann and Bezdon said. Volunteer readers typically spend about one-and-a-half hours per month reading to students. Current members are eager to mentor new volunteers, as well.

“We are open to guests who are interested in learning more about our society. You can also shadow our reading volunteers before making a commitment,” Bezdon added.

For more information on the Christ Child Society and specifically the Reading Rangers Program, visit christchildfw.org or contact either Deb Schmien or Becky Kawiwick at debnbeck@gmail.com.

WHITE MASS, from page 7


The two Bible books St. Luke wrote share a strong theme of Jesus as the merciful Savior and of the need for merciful love, the bishop said. They include stories of the healing of people by Jesus and the Apostles.

“Of course,” the bishop said, “Luke emphasizes that the physical healings accomplished by Jesus all point to the healing of the soul — Christ healing us from the disease of sin, from the devil and from death. It is God’s mercy that heals us, that frees us from the corruption of sin and death.”

Bishop Rhodes said that when he thinks of the health care professions, he thinks of two works of mercy: visiting the sick to care for their illnesses and to help them heal, and comforting the afflicted to assist patients in recovery and to improve their well-being.

“I thank you for living your Catholic faith in your profession by being instruments of Christ’s merciful love in your work,” he said.

After dinner, Brown discussed the many advances in technology and how that has changed the practice of fetal medicine.

Brown is an assistant professor of radiology and imaging sciences at the Indiana University School of Medicine in Indianapolis. He is a founding member of the Fetal Center at Riley Children’s Health hospital in Indianapolis and has taught in the department of philosophy and medical humanities and health studies at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis.

Imaging technology allows doctors to see life from the earliest moments of a pregnancy, Brown said. Doctors also can use new technology to try to treat a baby’s health problems while the child still is in the womb, or to prepare for surgery or treatment immediately after birth.

At the same time, Brown emphasized, doctors and health care professionals must ensure new technology serves them and patient care rather than allowing themselves to become servants of new technology.
Smith dinner’s tone lighthearted, but abuse crisis not ignored in remarks

BY BETH GRIFFIN

NEW YORK (CNS) — In the current toxic environment where political rivals describe each other as “evil” and “enemies,” it is imperative to remember that in America, “our political opponents are not evil, they are just our opponents,” according to Ambassador Nikki R. Haley.

The U.S. ambassador to the United Nations was the keynote speaker at the 73rd annual dinner of the Alfred E. Smith Memorial Foundation Oct. 18 at the New York Hilton.

Haley distinguished the heated rhetoric from the “true evil” she has witnessed in South Sudan, Syria and North Korea since she arrived at the United Nations in 2016.

The Al Smith dinner honors the memory of the former governor of New York, who was the first Catholic nominated by a major political party to run for president of the United States. Proceeds from the $3,000-a-plate event help needy children in the greater New York area. The foundation distributed $3.4 million in grants after last year’s dinner.

The event drew 700 guests to the traditionally festive gathering of political, religious and philanthropic New Yorkers. Among those sharing the three-tiered dais were New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo, New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio, Sen. Chuck Schumer, former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and Jeff Glor, anchor of the “CBS Evening News.”

Comedian Jim Gaffigan was the dinner’s master of ceremonies. He poked fun at the presumed wealth of the guests, whom he described as a “distinguished diverse group of rich, super-rich and Michael Bloomberg.”

Bloomberg, the billionaire former three-term mayor of New York, also was seated on the dais. Gaffigan said wearing a white bow tie and tails and looking at the sea of diners in formal attire made him feel “like I’m in an ugly episode of Downton Abbey.”

He introduced Haley as “the next president of the United States,” in a nod to widespread speculation that the Oct. 9 announcement she will leave her U.N. post at the end of the year signifies her intention to run for the presidency. Haley, the Republican former governor of South Carolina, has denied that she will challenge President Donald Trump in 2020.

She made light of the unexpected news of her departure. Haley said she asked Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan of New York, the event’s host, if there was anything she could do to boost attendance at the dinner. “He said, ‘Why don’t you resign as U.S. ambassador?’” she said.

Haley joked that as a member of Trump’s Cabinet, “it’s a thrill to be out to dinner without being harassed.”

She said Trump, who spoke at the 2016 dinner with then-opponent Hillary Clinton, offered her advice about her speech. “He said if I get stuck for laughs, just brag about my accomplishments. It really killed at the U.N.”

Haley said she learned a lot during her tenure at the U.N. Despite the serious disagreements and differences among the 193 member nations, “at one point, every single one of them was paying Paul Manafort,” she laughed.

Haley said her parents emigrated from India “legally, but I keep them at an undisclosed location,” just in case. “She said when Trump heard she was an Indian American, “he asked if I was from the same tribe as Elizabeth Warren.”

Despite the lighthearted tone of the event, the clergy sex abuse scandal and its fallout hung in the air and were addressed head-on by the speakers. In his invocation, Cardinal Dolan, the dinner’s host, asked God’s mercy “on a Church we have also blushed at” for its response to the issue.

Haley said sexual abuse is not limited to the Catholic family, and the Church “recognizes its deep responsibility to address this moral failing.”

“It would be tragic to allow the abuse scandal to blind anyone to the amazing good works the Catholic Church does every single day,” Haley said. “In the last two years, I have been to some very dark places where human suffering is on a level hard for most Americans to imagine.”

She described a South American border area where church organizations are the sole providers of food and a refugee camp in central Africa where the Church is on the forefront of those seeking change.

“Just about everywhere I’ve been, I’ve come across the Catholic Church doing incredible work that lifts up millions of desperate people. It is serving God’s will,” she said.

Gaffigan and his wife are both from large Catholic families. “She is one of nine and they do everything together,” he said. A movie outing at Christmas included 50 people. “That’s not a group, it’s a flash mob. People thought we were from a church. To put in perspective, Jesus only walked around with 12.”

The comedian said he and his wife “have recreated the chaos of our childhoods” by raising a young family of five in Manhattan. He said the real reason he accepted Cardinal Dolan’s invitation to emcee the dinner was the optimistic hope that the cardinal would “write some recommendations” for his children.

Gaffigan and former chief executive officer of Verizon Communications, received the Happy Warrior Award. The dis-
The media’s rush to publish

I wonder if I am alone in worrying about a side effect of our two most recent public discussions of sexual abuse.

I mean, of course, the confirmation of Justice Brett Kavanaugh and the MeToo abuse scandal in the Church. My concern is that the media, sensing an appetite for stories of this kind and a willingness to credit them, will be too quick to publish charges against innocent people.

Don’t get me wrong. The Church crisis is a crisis because it is a crisis, and there are people (bishops, the Senate Judiciary Committee, therapists, employers, law enforcement) who need to see and act with discretion on information that might be inconclusive.

It’s different when the media publish salacious stories for the sake of attracting readers or viewers. It’s different still when those with no duty to act engage in watercooler gossip.

The New Yorker once was famous for its Fact-Checking department. But it published a sexual allegation against Justice Kavanaugh by a woman who admitted to some uncertainty about the facts, despite lacking a second source to corroborate. The New York Times, actually the same group refused to publish the story after failing to corroborate the charge. The New Yorker published it anyway.

Likewise, the Church’s scandal has generated whispering campaigns against some priests and bishops. It’s mostly word-of-mouth, but some allegations end up in print.

The very real abuses that have come to light do not make up all such tales true. When they are not true, someone is badly hurt. And the legal and cultural climate today encourages a rush to publish before we have all the facts.

Under New York Times v. Sullivan, the First Amendment protects the media even for publishing false reports about “public figures” (like judges and bishops), unless they act with actual malice. The effect of this venerable precedent is multiplied by advances in technology that extend to the humblest blogger an enormous power to publicize things that might be true or false.

Then there is the increasing politicization of news reporting. The Pew Research Center’s media polarization report rates The New Yorker’s audience as “consistently liberal.” Fox News is right of center. Aggregators like the Drudge Report and the Huffington Post deliver only right- or left-wing feeds, creating a media silo effect that results in the marketplace of ideas being partitioned off to public figures (like judges and bishops), unless they act with actual malice. The effect of this is that even some situations in the Church, which are extremely serious, do not raise a hue and cry — especially if they are made against one who makes an allegation that is unsubstantiated, indeed even if they are false.

We need to keep in mind that allegations of sexual misconduct or abuse are also particularly harmful to people they are made against — even if they are unsubstantiated, indeed even if they are proven false. When Raymond J. Donovan, President Ronald Reagan’s secretary of labor, was acquitted of larceny and fraud after an eight-month labor, was acquitted of larceny and fraud, he famously said, “Which of my accusers will now be too quick to publish charges against innocent people?”

John Garvey is the president of The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. The Catholic University website is www.cua.edu.

Finding peace in a turbulent world

It is easy to feel anxious and stressed in the tumultuous world today. Not only are we busier than ever before, but we have stresses unique to the modern world. Technology such as email and texting makes us feel more connected, but it also makes us feel more polluted with request and questions within minutes of receiving them. What's more, social media instantly creates comparison with other people. We are living up to what we should be? Are others more successful, efficient, prudent, smart, creative, etc. than we are? Even people with the best intentions can get caught up with competition spurred by the virtual world.

What's more, the world is clamoring for our children's attention. Many vices abound, ready to entrap them. Videos, poems, music, and the like affect people, even some of their acquaintances, current styles and dress. Not only are there stresses and pressures that come simply from the market of ideas, but the turmoil in politics, created prominently in the headlines and on television. There are troubles in the schools and the marketplace, and even some situations in the Church. Good men and women trying to live holy lives need to discern daily right and wrong actions. No wonder there is more anxiety being reported than ever before.

The saints counsel us not to worry.

Theresa A. Thomas

The Lord continues to come to the aid of His people

The Sunday Gospel

Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Mark 10:46-52

The book of Jeremiah provides this weekend’s first reading. A few facts about Jeremiah are known from the book itself. He was more successful, efficient, prudent, smart, creative, etc. than we are? Even people with the best intentions can get caught up with competition spurred by the virtual world.

What’s more, the world is clamoring for our children’s attention. Many vices abound, ready to entrap them. Videos, poems, music, and the like affect people, even some of their acquaintances, current styles and dress. Not only are there stresses and pressures that come simply from the market of ideas, but the turmoil in politics, created prominently in the headlines and on television. There are troubles in the schools and the marketplace, and even some situations in the Church. Good men and women trying to live holy lives need to discern daily right and wrong actions. No wonder there is more anxiety being reported than ever before.

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Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Mark 10:46-52

The book of Jeremiah provides this weekend’s first reading. A few facts about Jeremiah are known from the book itself. He was, in all likelihood, quite formidable in his establishment of the Temple and the Holy Land. He would have thought that the Hebrews did not escape Egypt simply because they were lucky, or because they were clever. To the contrary, they succeeded in fleeing the miseries they had endured in Egypt only by the mercy and power of God. Jericho was not in his lifetime as threatening, or as awful, like the plight of his people centuries earlier in Egypt. He lived to see Babylonia as a homeland, and he saw the destruction of being conquered, disease and incapacity brought to bear upon his people. Moses healed, the effects and challenges, such as blindness, were reduced to begging unless their families assisted them. Blindness, as other bodily difficulties, had a spiritual component for the ancient Jews. God willed nothing evil or heartless. Disease and incapacity were signs of a grave sin that had been committed. Thus, when Jesus healed, the effects and power of sin also were overcome.

The key to Bartimeus’ being healed was being honest.

Reflection

Jeremiah was hardly the only ancient Hebrew writer who concentrated on the mercy of God. As seen in the Epistle to the Hebrews, God’s mercy is everlasting, because God is eternal and unchanging. God is not forgiving and blessing in one instance, but punitive and angry in another. Just as hardships and great wealth can cause one’s heart to harden, the Hebrews long after they had left Egypt, so sadness and difficulties confront us today.

We cannot do everything ourselves, but the loving God of the Exodus, with us because of the reconciling death of Jesus, still comes to our aid. The key is that we, as Bartimeus, love God and trust in the Lord.

Readings

Sunday: Jer 31:9-Ps 126:1-Hab 2:14-15

Monday: Eph 4:32-5-Phil 1:1-4

Tuesday: Eph 5:21-23

Wednesday: Eph 5:9-10

Thursday: 1:4-9

Friday: Wis 3:1-9

Saturday: Phil 1:18-26-Ps 42:2-3,
Scdf Lk 14:1, 7-11

Thomson, page 13
Hope for the future of the Church

Almost every day, the question is asked: How can the Catholic Church remove the sexual scandal from its ranks? Can the Church retain or regain its moral standing? How can the Church live up to the historic challenge of its founding?

One often overlooks the scandal as the reformation initiated by St. John Paul II in the seminarian formation process nationwide. The young man's social and psychological development at time of application, ongoing evaluation and discernment throughout all of seminary life that furtheres and continues this vetting process and an overall educational environment that nurtures not only one's spiritual growth, but also personal, intellectual and pastoral growth. The purpose of this process is to assure that all seminarians, upon being ordained, will always serve in the best traditions of the priesthood.

This reformation has had a top-to-bottom effect beginning with the rectors in our seminaries down to the vocations office in each diocese. It is a process that was embraced by the late Bishop John M. D'Arcy.

Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades and we have an individual who was a seminary rector himself. The priority he places on the discernment process and the reforms adopted in the mid-2000s is part of the reason we have seen an increase in vocations within the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend. Similar increases, for similar reasons, can be seen in a number of other dioceses nationwide. The young men who have been brought up within our diocese over the last five to 10 years represent, in many ways, the initial response of the Catholic Church in assuring a future priesthood that seeks only to emulate Christ in the service of others. It is no coincidence that credible allegations of sexual abuse within currently active clergy have literally reached a point of nonexistence within our diocese.

Our parents are the parents of a current seminarian with the Fort Wayne-South Bend diocese. We know what our son will face as he progresses towards ordination. We know his priesthood will always have an additional burden because of the wrongs committed by some of those who have come before him. We know there will be more investigations that follow the one recently conducted in Pennsylvania. We know that, in many ways, the hammer has yet to fall on this portion of Church history.

We are neither ignorant nor immune from the problems facing the Catholic Church. Through it all, we continue to seek God's will in the hearts of our son and those of his classmates in seminary. Bishop Rhoades, our currently active priest, deacons and seminarians, we see a true faith that seeks only good and not evil: A faith that is abundant in mercy with a sole desire to help others. It is a faith that asks others to heal the very victims it seeks to heal as it moves forward. We see hope for the future.

Bishop Rhoades is not only a shepherd for the victims in our diocese, but he is also the gatekeeper and shepherd for the men discerning and being formed for the priesthood. We have devoted priests and deacons in our parish communities that desire nothing more than to provide love, support and spiritual guidance to all they serve. We have, with the intercession of our Blessed Mother, Mary, Mother of Jesus, young men who are in seminary or discerning application to the seminary that seek nothing but a life of holiness and a life that is ready to be sacrificed for others. In short, we see throughout our diocese the kind of priest, both existing and those who are formed, that was sought by the victims of sexual abuse at a time when it was most needed in their lives. God willing, that kind of priest will once again enter their lives to bring God's love and mercy to not only the victims, but the loved ones of the victim who have been hurt as well.

None of this should be construed as being ambivalent to the victims of sexual abuse or a desire to see anything less than a full and complete effort to correct the wrongs of the Church. The victims are not solely rooted in the past sins of the Church, but also rooted in the future of its existing and future clergy. We have seen that future in sermons from the pulpit over these past months from our priests, both young and old alike, and we have seen a decision to identify past clergy of this diocese who have had credible allegations of sexual abuse brought against them. We have seen the care given by our diocese to victims of sexual abuse, and we have also, person-ally, witnessed a victim's joy in knowing there is abundant good that stems from the formation of young men who seek only to be holy men of God. We continue to pray for victims of sexual abuse scandal, and to pray for our Church. We pray that the Church always keeps the victims at the forefront of all that she does. We pray that the Church remains able to ordain holy men of God that are able to provide a saving grace for the victims of the sexual abuse scandal, and their families, in the years and generations to come. Admittedly, some will say prayer is not enough. We agree, but to say prayers is not enough. All the Church is doing belies a truth and a reality that can be found in how young men are being formed for the priesthood.

Thomas, from page 12

well-being. Getting up and moving goes a long way in alleviating stress.

2. Get outside. Nature is healing. The wind on our skin, the sun on our skin and sounds of birds and clouds and sky are all invigorating and restorative. God gave us the brilliant colors and sights and sounds of His creation to restore us. We can get outside to exercise, killing two birds with one stone. Or we can be one of my favorite things, porch-sit, in the sunshine, with a loved one and engage in some simple conversation. Just talking goes a long way in releasing peace in the heart and banishing stress.


4. Pray. Join in with what the world advises that contemplation and meditation help soothe the soul. How much better when these actions are done in place in the ultimate communication with God, prayer. The rosary is an ideal method of communication that also embodies meditation. Focusing on the mysteries of each decade centers our thoughts on God’s will for our lives and enables us to use our worries into our prayers. I love to pray when I walk outside. The cadence of my footsteps helps me keep time with the rhythm of prayer.

Sometimes I enjoy praying first thing in the morning as I sip a cup of coffee in the dark, before anyone rises. Find your time for prayer. Consider using present with God, and let Him speak to you in the quiet.

5. Stretch. Stretching releases tension. The body God gave us need time and attention to operate properly. According to the Harvard Health letter, “Streching can increase a range of motion in the joints. Without it, the muscles shorten and become tight. Then, when you call on the muscles for activity, they are weak and unable to extend all the way. That puts you at risk for joint pain, strains and muscle damage.” And stress. Take the time to warm up with stretches each day before you dive in to your many duties and responsibilities.

6. Take deep breaths.

7. Get plenty of sleep.

8. Help others. Focusing outward, not inward is virtue-building and stress relieving.

9. Keep a “To-Do” list. If you write it down, it’s out of your mind. Also, writing things down helps organize your thoughts, and when you see them literally on paper what you need to do or what concerns you, it automatically seems easier to cope with.

10. Take a hot bath, enjoy some quiet time alone. We are not machines. We are human beings. God provides rest and the need for sleep so we can restore. Take a moment, relax, and turn off the television and radio and all other devices. Seek the peace in silence. Finally, put down the Bible and open up to a few passages God has just for you: Philippians 4:6-7, Psalm 94:19, Isaiah 41:10, Psalm 23:4, Peter 5:6-7, Luke 12:22-26, Psalm 55:22, Deuteronomy 31:6, Mark 5:36.

Living in the world can be very stressful, but we have some wonderful saints to encourage us. We have strategies to cope. We must look at the stresses in life as opportunities to grow in virtue — to develop fortitude and patience, for example. We can utilize various common-sense strategies to soothe our bodies, minds and souls. Be assured that God is with us, in all trials and tribulations. Even in our suffering, He is there. All suffering, including anxiety, which is offered to Christ and united to Him on the cross, becomes redemptive. We must do what we can to release stress and anxiety, and what remains we give to Him. Therein we find joy, and peace, even in this tumultuous world.
Books explore young adult outreach in face of today’s challenges

BY PATRICK T. BROWN


The foreign policy texts and mass-market spy thrillers of the late 1980s often inspire a feeling of “if only they knew.” Examining the strengths of the Soviet bear in the last years before its collapse gives us reading now a sense of uncomfortable premonition, that we know something the authors didn’t, trapping the analysis in amber no matter how sound the writing or scholarship.

That same feeling starts to arise when reading two new books about Catholicism and young adults that were written before the summer of the Pennsylvania grand jury report and the revelations about retired Archbishop Theodore E. McCarrick. Their diagnosis of the spiritual emptiness facing many teens and young adults might be spotless, their prescriptions sound, but even books published in early 2018 feel a little bit from another era.

Saying this is not meant to slight the authors of these books at all. Katie Prejean McGrady, one of three young adult delegates selected to represent the United States at last March’s pre-synod convocation at the Vatican, and Leonard DeLorenzo, a University of Notre Dame theology professor who leads an annual summer program for hundreds of high school students, both have a finger firmly on the pulse of what young people are looking for.

McGrady’s book, “Follow: Your Lifelong Adventure with Jesus,” takes a direct approach, offering favored prayers, routines and practices to teenagers or college students interested in deepening their relationship with Christ.

“Follow” is a conversational read, detailing stories from McGrady’s dating experiences, including a deeply inspired meet-cute story about her future husband, her professional career and moments along her spiritual journey.

She offers sound advice for developing a spiritual life, including an introduction to the practice of “lectio divina” (a form of prayerful meditation on the word of God) that is pitched just right for beginners, and weaves personal anecdotes about the power of prayer into prompts to encourage a deeper relationship with Christ. High school students interested in deepening their personal prayer practices couldn’t pick up a book better suited for them.

“What Matters Most: Empowering Young Catholics for Life’s Big Decisions,” written by DeLorenzo, is a more pastoral book, aimed at parents and youth leaders in the position to offer counsel and advice to teens and young adults. DeLorenzo challenges readers to think about how the tools we use shape us, from the internet to cellphones to even the tyranny of a morning alarm clock.

To form young people to be free and brave, to become capable of true vocational discernment and missionary discipleship,” he writes, “we have to reclaim the power of patience.”

Patience is required for moving outside the daily stream of nonstop information and activities to build space for students and young adults to truly listen to their call. DeLorenzo writes. If we examine the unthinking assumptions that make up our day-to-day responsibilities, we may just find ourselves contributing to a culture that prizes workaholism, materialism and utilitarianism. These values are antithetical to the more humanistic view of authentic flourishing for which DeLorenzo would advocate.

“What Matters Most” is intended for a more limited audience, perhaps especially for those who find themselves (or the students they mentor or teach) at risk of being seduced by a meritocratic view of society that treats material and reputational success as its own reward, rather than a means of facilitating our ability to do good. DeLorenzo’s book is a bracing corrective to that fallacy, and a positive view of how Catholics can be a distinct leaven in the world, offering a bold alternative rather than a conformist echo.

Both of these books feel necessary and needed. They also feel, through no fault of their own, of slightly of a different time, given how much the ground has shifted since their writing.

Outreach to young adults is a challenge even in the best of times – and these are far from the best of times.

The millennials and members of Generation Z who are McGrady’s and DeLorenzo’s direct and indirect intended audience weren’t tuned into the church revelations of 2002. The summer of 2018 was their first true taste of gut-punching revelations on a seemingly daily basis. Even now, trust in the Church has been shaken like never before.

The Church as an institution may struggle to combat disillusion, distrust and apathy in the wake of these revelations, yet the long-term existential spiritual needs detailed by the two authors are not going away.

Rebuilding trust in the Church may require more dramatic measures than can be found in “Follow” and “What Matters Most,” but that does not mean DeLorenzo’s keen insights and McGrady’s warm, personable approach can be ignored.

Patrick T. Brown is a graduate student at Princeton University’s Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs.
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.

St. Joseph Parish Holiday Craft BOO!zaar

MISHAWAKA — The St. Joseph Parish Choir will sponsor a Holiday Craft BOO!zaar on Saturday, Oct. 27, from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. at St. Joseph School, 217 W. Third St. This family friendly event features 80 booths of crafts, collectibles, holiday items and direct sales vendors, plus trick-or-treat, a balloon man, face painting, raffles, kettle corn, hot spiced cider, lunch and a Rosary Society bake sale and raffle. Bring a nonperishable food item for the St. Vincent de Paul pantry and receive an entry for the mini-raffle for each item donated. Contact Nancy Brubaker at 574-286-1906.

Pro-Life Apologetics Workshop

FORT WAYNE — A Pro-Life Apologetics Workshop will be Saturday, Oct. 27, from 9 a.m. to noon at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church, 10700 Abreo Center Rd., where participants will be equipped by Mike Spencer of Life Training Institute to speak confidently and graciously to the most pressing moral injustice of our time: legalized abortion. Register at www.ichooselife.org/event/lawi or call 260-471-1849. Cost is $5. Coffee and doughnuts provided.

Fancy Fair craft bazaar and cookie bar

ROME CITY — The St. Gaspar Rosary Sodality will sponsor a craft bazaar, cookie bar and lunch from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the parish hall, 10871 N. SR 9. Homemade cookies, soup, sandwiches and desserts will be offered. Contact Carol Sievert at lsievert@embarqmail.com.

St. Joseph School to host Pumpkin Festival

GARRETT — St. Joseph Catholic School will host a Pumpkin Festival on Sunday, Oct. 28, from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Events include a children’s carnival and a homemade chicken and noodle dinner served in the lunchroom. Tickets are $10. Children’s meals are $5. Carryout and drive-up service will be offered. A hot dog meal for children will also be available. A Home and School Association raffle will be held with a variety of cash and prizes. Unlimited game wristbands will be available for $10. Individual game tickets are $.25 each. For more information call 260-357-5137 or visit www.stjosephgarrett.org.

Technology and Teens: dangerous mobile apps

FORT WAYNE — Parents are invited to a free Technology and Teens Parent Workshop on Sunday, Oct. 28, from 6:30-7:45 p.m. at St. Charles Church, 4916 Trier Rd. This workshop will explore the way that smart phones impact a young person’s brain. This workshop is presented by Clinton Faupel, co-founder and executive director of RemedyLIVE. Website: http://www.stcharlesfortwayne.org.

Discover Saint Joseph High School day

SOUTH BEND — Eighth-grade students from Saint Joseph partner schools are invited to discover Saint Joseph High School, 455 S. Notre Dame Ave., Nov. 2, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Guests will attend mini-classes, visit with students and meet freshmen faculty. Families with children enrolled at other schools or who will be new to the area may contact the admissions office at 574-235-6137, ext. 524.

Knights of Columbus fish fry

SOUTH BEND — The Knights of Columbus Council 5921 will have a fish fry at the South Bend Francis Club, 61533 Ironwood Rd., on Friday, Nov. 2, from 5-7 p.m. Shrimp and chicken strips are also available and pizza for $1 per slice. Prices for all meals: adults $9.50, children 5-12 $5.50, children under 5 free.

Rest in Peace

Auburn
Mary Schrader, 80, Immaculate Conception

Decatur
David A. Bowers, 61, St. Mary of the Assumption

Eugene A. Braun, 91, St. Mary of the Assumption

Fort Wayne
Teresa M. Glosson, 91, St. John the Baptist
Richard L. Arend, 87, St. John the Baptist

Huntington
Charlene Ann Pettit-Didier, 91, St. Vincent de Paul

Maria A. Alvizures, 63, St. Mary

Little Flower Holy Hour

FORT WAYNE — Pray for vocations to the priesthood and the consecrated life on the first Tuesday of each month from 7-8 p.m. at the Mother Theodore Guerin chapel. Tuesday, Nov. 6, will feature prayers led by Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades.
COMMITAL, from page 1

during the service.

of blessing at a mausoleum in Catholic Cemetery during a committal service.

who receive His Son and believe in Him will be raised from the dead on the last day.

After closing prayers, Msgr. Schulte and the participants moved outside to the black-walled mausoleum in Catholic Cemetery behind the funeral home. Along with leading additional prayers, Msgr. Schulte blessed each cremation urn or box and sprinkled each container with holy water.

Family members holding a loved one’s cremation urn or box then stepped forward, one at a time, to hand the container to Miller, who worked with the cemetery’s director of maintenance, Scott Guerrero, to place each urn or box in a separate niche space in the crypt.

When all the loved ones had been set in the crypt, Msgr. Schulte concluded the burial.

“My Almighty God bless you all,” he said to the families, before they walked slowly to their cars to go home.

Miller said Divine Mercy staff expect some of the cremated bodies will be moved to a new burial space in future years after a spouse or other family member dies.

The brief committal service took place in one of the funeral home’s visitation rooms. Msgr. Robert Schulte, pastor of nearby St. Jude Parish, officiated.

Those present placed their loved ones’ cremation urns and boxes in a row on a long, wooden table along one wall of the room. A red rose lay on each cremation container.

A large wooden crucifix stood in the middle of the table while candles burned in two holders behind it.

Msgr. Schulte began with prayer and then read the names of the 10 individuals being laid to rest. He spoke about the message in the Gospel of John in the middle of the table while candles burned in two holders behind it.

Msgr. Schulte concluded the burial.

“May Almighty God bless you all,” he said to the families, before they walked slowly to their cars to go home.

Miller said Divine Mercy Funeral Home will offer the free committal service again, possibly every two years.

Publicity about the committal service also inspired a few families to purchase niches at Catholic Cemetery so they can lay a cremated loved one to rest now and later be buried beside their loved one, Lonergan said.

Fourth-grade students present gifts of food to Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades during the All-Schools Mass in Fort Wayne Oct. 17. Students who attended the Mass overflowed collection barrels at the Allen County War Memorial Coliseum with donations for Community Harvest Food Bank.

The All-Schools Masses are sponsored by the You Can Lend a Hand program, said Kelli Stopczynski, director of marketing for Quality Dining, Inc. The Fitzpatrick family, owners of the company, grew up in the Catholic schools and so appreciated the own educational experiences that they wanted to give back to the cause. Dan Fitzpatrick, now chairman and CEO, learned of some suboptimal situations in his then-area Catholic schools and started a dialogue, trying to find a way to help. From that, the coupon book fundraiser was started.

Now $3 apiece and sold every February, schools use the funds raised for everything from playground equipment to new technology, raising $11 million in the 37 years of the program’s existence.