God most provident,
we join all creation
in raising to You a hymn of thanksgiving
through Jesus Christ, Your Son.

For generation upon generation
peoples of this land have sung of Your bounty;
we, too, offer You praise
for the rich harvest we have received at Your hands.

Bless us and this food that we share with grateful hearts.

Continue to make our land fruitful
and let our love for You be seen
in our pursuit of peace and justice
and in our generous response to those in need.

Praise and glory to You, Lord God, now and forever.
Amen.
In gathering for US bishops like no other, annual meeting goes online

BY RHINA GUIDOS

WASHINGTON (CNS) — U.S. Catholic bishops addressed the recent Vatican report on former Cardinal Theodore E. McCarrick when they gathered Nov. 16 and 17 for their annual meeting, taking place in an online format this year because of the coronavirus pandemic.

A revision to the agenda issued in a Nov. 13 news release by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops showed a change to reflect that “changes were made in the schedule in order to accommodate a discussion by the bishops on the Holy See’s report on Theodore McCarrick.”

“Additionally, the bishops will hear a report from the National Review Board, which advises the Committee on the Protection of Children and Young People on matters of child and youth protection, specifically on policies and practices,” the press release said.

In what is undoubtedly one of the largest virtual gatherings of Catholic bishops in the world, more than 300 prelates were expected to log on for the two-day meeting with plenary sessions to be livestreamed from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Nov. 16 and from 1 p.m. to about 5 p.m. Nov. 17, both Eastern Standard Time.

The sessions were livestreamed at www.usccb.org/live via a YouTube channel.

“Hopefully, this is the only (annual bishops’ meeting) we have to do this way, but you never know,” said James Rogers, chief communications officer for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in a Nov. 10 interview with Catholic News Service.

The online format becomes reality given the unusual circumstances, including voting by mail for at least one committee chairman and several chairman-elect.

They were also to vote by email on action items on the agenda, including approval of the 2021 budget, approval of the next cycle of the strategic plan, and the reauthorization of the Ad Hoc Committee Against Racism, Rogers said.

“This meeting really is about the most essential business,” Rogers said.

The public was able to watch the meeting, as in the past.

“I do anticipate there will be discussion on the pandemic, its impact on the Church, its impact on society at-large,” Rogers said.

Some of the discussion included what the Church is trying to do to help and how she has been impacted, he said.

Accredited media were allowed to ask questions in an online news conference following the first day of the plenary session, but organizers were trying to figure out whether there would be a second news conference the following day.

“I know it is the desire of the bishops to have this moment among themselves and to try as best they can to share this moment with the Church in the United States,” Rogers said.

“I think the challenge for the meeting in this time of physical distance is to find spiritual nearness. We’re physically apart, but we need to be spiritually near,”

Though, for now, that needs to be done through technology, and because of the sheer number of bishops, accommodating them all on one screen was impossible.

Instead, the meeting looked like a broadcast of one, as they turn speakers from their respective locales.

Though there might be some challenges, many bishops already have become used to meeting online, Rogers said.

Some have met online for regional meetings as well as at home as the pandemic forced many to run their respective dioceses via livestreams and other forms of video.

“They have some degree of practice,” Rogers said.

Bishops, in virtual meeting, focus on McCarrick report, pandemic, racism

BY CAROL ZIMMERMANN

WASHINGTON (CNS) — The first day of the virtual fall assembly of the U.S. Catholic bishops, Nov. 16, included discussion about the Vatican report on Theodore McCarrick, the ongoing pandemic and the Church’s response to racism.

The two-day assembly, which usually takes place in Baltimore, was virtual this year due to COVID-19 restrictions. The public sessions were livestreamed.

About 300 bishops logged on and for the most part, they crossed the technological hurdles of making sure their individual responses came through on the teleconference format.

One of the first bishops to individually address the group was Bishop James D. Conley of Lincoln, Nebraska, who thanked his brother bishops and Archbishop Christophe Pierre, papal nuncio, for their support during his 11-month medical leave of absence.

“It’s been a great source of strength and grace for me,” the bishop, who returned to full pastoral care of his diocese Nov. 13, told the assembly. “We live in very difficult times and there are a lot of stresses on bishops and it’s only going to get worse,” advising them not to hesitate to reach out if they are struggling mentally or psychologically from stress.

The main topic of the day, which was added late to the bishops’ agenda, was the Vatican report on McCarrick, released less than a week before, on Nov. 10.

Bishop Joseph E. Strickland of Tyler, Texas, said the report, which described McCarrick’s ascent to highest rungs of the Church, even amid rumors of abuse, read like a list of the
Washington — The Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend will conduct the Retirement Fund for Religious collection Dec. 12-13. The National Religious Retirement Office coordinates this annual appeal and distributes the proceeds to assist eligible U.S. religious communities with their retirement needs. Nearly 30,000 senior sisters, brothers and religious order priests benefit.

Last year, the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend donated $180,486.02 to the collection. In 2020, the Congregation of Holy Cross, U.S. Province of Priest and Brothers, received financial support made possible by the Retirement Fund for Religious.

“The generosity of U.S. Catholics enables us to continue our ministry for aging women and men religious,” said Presentation Sister Stephanie Still, the NRRO’s executive director. “We are overwhelmed with gratitude.”

In 1988, Catholic bishops of the United States initiated the Retirement Fund for Religious collection to help address the deficit in retirement funding among U.S. religious congregations. Each congregation is responsible for the care and support of its members. Financial distributions from the collection are sent to a congregation’s central house and may be applied toward immediate expenses — such as medications or nursing care — or invested for future eldercare needs.

Historically, Catholic sisters, brothers and religious order priests served for little to no pay. Today, many religious communities lack sufficient retirement savings. Of 531 communities providing data to the National Religious Retirement Office, only 29 are adequately funded for retirement. From left are Sister Alice Garcia, SSCJ, 91; Brother Martin Gonzales, OSCO, 95; Sister Theresa McGrath, CCVI, 86; Sister Anne Cecile Muldoon, OSU, 93; Abbot Emeritus Peter Eberle, OSB, 79.

Today, many religious communities lack sufficient retirement savings. Of 531 communities providing data to the National Religious Retirement Office, only 29 are adequately funded for retirement. Rising health care costs and a growing number of senior members compound the challenge to meet retirement expenses.

The 2019 collection raised $26.2 million, and in June, the NRRO disbursed $25 million in financial assistance to 341 religious communities. Throughout the year, additional funding is allocated for resources and services that help communities improve eldercare delivery and plan for long-term retirement needs. For example, a new online webinar offers professional guidance on adaptaing care protocols to address issues arising from the coronavirus pandemic.

“During these trying times, we know the best way to support senior religious is to continue helping their communities address retirement and eldercare challenges,” said Sister Stephanie. “Our grateful prayer is with all whose love and generosity sustain this mission.”

Visit retiredreligious.org to learn more.

Correction

In an article on Thanksgiving in the Nov. 15 issue of Today’s Catholic, it was erroneously stated that Thanksgiving is not on the liturgical calendar. In fact, Thanksgiving Day has been on the liturgical calendar for the United States since 1970. It is an optional memorial with its own proper prayers at Mass as well as suggested readings.
At Jesuit agency event, Biden announces he will dramatically raise refugee cap

BY RHINA GUIDOS

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Weeks after the administration of President Donald Trump announced it was dropping to a historic low the cap on the maximum number of displaced people the U.S. decides to resettle in a federal fiscal year, President-elect Joe Biden said Nov. 12 he would be heading in a dramatically different direction.

Addressing those gathered for a virtual event marking the 40th anniversary of the Jesuit Refugee Service, Biden, in a prerecorded video, said his administration would raise the 15,000 cap set by the Trump administration for fiscal year 2021 to 125,000 refugees.

During the Trump presidency, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, along with other Catholic organizations and a variety of faith and secular groups, has struggled in its advocacy efforts to allow more refugees into the country, given the record number of forcibly displaced people around the world — almost 80 million, according to the United Nations’ refugee agency, the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees.

Hours after taking office in January 2017, the Trump administration announced it was cutting the cap of 110,000 allowed under the Obama administration to 50,000. The administration consistently lowered the number each fiscal year.

Last year, the administration announced it was setting the cap at 18,000 refugees for the 2020 fiscal year, but fewer than 10,000 have been allowed in.

Biden, in the video for the JRS event, said he would return to the upward trend the U.S. had been on since the federal U.S. Refugee Program began in 1980.

“The United States has long stood as a beacon of hope for the downtrodden and the oppressed, a leader in resettling refugees and our humanitarian response. I promise, as president, I’ll reclaim that proud legacy for our country,” said Biden, declared by the media Nov. 7 as winner of the presidential election, but the Trump campaign has filed lawsuits in several states challenging vote counts.

“The Biden-Harris administration will restore America’s historic role in protecting the vulnerable and defending the rights of refugees everywhere,” Biden added.

Ashley Feasley, director of policy for Migration and Refugee Services at the USCCB, said in a Nov. 13 interview with Catholic News Service that the change in policy for the U.S. would take some ramping up of a network of agencies, international and domestic, whose resettlement work has trickled in the past few years.

Biden would need to issue a new Presidential Determination on Refugee Admissions — what’s needed to increase the number of those allowed in, but even if he does it on his first day in office, it’s going to take a lot of effort, rebuilding relationships with global agencies such as UNHCR, to get the program back up to what it once was.

“I don’t see them getting to 125,000 this fiscal year, but I do see a rebuilding of the infrastructure,” Feasley said.

Catholic and other faith-based agencies such as JRS, whose work was lauded by Biden as well as by Pope Francis during the online celebration, are on the front lines of the resettlement work, providing pastoral care, programs for psychosocial support in detention centers and refugee camps and for humanitarian relief, as well as helping refugees pave new paths in a new home.

JRS, which for four decades has provided education and livelihood programs so that resettled people develop skills and integrate into their new communities, received a letter from Pope Francis addressed to Jesuit Father Thomas H. Smolich, the organization’s international director, on the occasion of its milestone anniversary.

In it, the pontiff thanked staff and volunteers, offering special greetings “to the many men, women and children who seek refuge and assistance from JRS. May they and their families always know that the pope remains close to them and is praying for them!”

The pope wrote of his wishes that the agency continue “raising awareness of the plight of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons” and “extending the hand of friendship to those who are lonely, separated from their families or even abandoned.”

And that’s part of what many Catholic agencies that work to resettle refugees are involved with, Feasley said. It’s part of a spiritual legacy of helping the stranger, and one that the pope reminds Catholics of in his most recent encyclical “Fratelli Tutti,” she added.

Returning to an increase in the work of refugee resettlement is an opportunity to embrace the call of Pope Francis to “welcome, protect, promote and integrate” some of the most vulnerable among us.

“I see challenges but also opportunities to grow and maybe to do more work for Catholics,” she said.

The Catholic faith tradition has a long and noted history of being forced to be on the move, being refugees, but also of a people who are welcoming and who accompany others who are forced to leave, she said.

“Providing personal care for the whole family

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Catholics lead Christians in number of racially diverse congregations

By Mark Pattison

Washington (CNS) — U.S. Catholics lead all Christian faiths in the percentage of racially diverse congregations in their parishes, according to a new study published by Baylor University.

“Catholic churches on average continue to be more diverse than Protestant churches with 25% multiracial, up from 17% in 1998, when churches were first surveyed, the study said.

The reason: “largely white congregations that are gaining more color,” the study’s author, Kevin Dougherty, an associate professor of sociology at Baylor University in Waco, Texas, said in a Nov. 13 phone interview with Catholic News Service.

“In fact, that’s one of the conclusions of the article,” he said. “Although we do see an increase in the number of multiracial congregations, it seems to be a one-way street.”

By way of comparison, just 1% of Black Protestant congregations reported growing more racially diverse since 1998, according to the study.

Although studies do not exist for churches in other nations, few of them have the racial and ethnic diversity of the United States, Dougherty noted, which would make it more difficult for Christian denominations in those countries to replicate the diversity the United States is obtaining in its congregations.

Catholics may benefit from greater diversity because the faith is worldwide, he said. “The Roman Catholic Church is a global denomination. There are Catholic members in Southeast Asia and Latin America and Europe, and their immigrants to the United States are bearing that history and they try to find a faith community that matches their own tradition.”

Paradoxically, Catholic parish boundaries — which were once so sacrosanct some parishes refused to register would-be members if they did not live within them — may also aid in congregational diversity, according to Dougherty.

“It’s exactly that model of parish ministry that is not really the province of Protestants. As the American neighborhood has become more racially mixed, the Catholic churches that serve those neighborhoods as a byproduct have taken on more diversity much more quickly than Protestant churches do,” he said.

By comparison, “in a typical southern Texas town, the Baptist church next to your house isn’t necessarily the one you’re going to attend. You’re going to drive across town,” he said. “Subconsciously, part of that is racial.

“Church shopping among Protestants has led to a hyper-segregation in a way that historically hasn’t been true in the Catholic parish-church model.”

Baylor itself recently shifted the sponsorship of the school from the Southern Baptist Convention — which had to deal with its own legacy of racism amid calls for a name change to further put that history in the past — to the General Baptist Convention of Texas.

Dougherty told CNS, “From prior research that I’ve done or that others have done, the reason that people join a multiracial congregation, is a desire for diversity. There is something appealing about that.”

Clergy may push their parishioners to be more diverse, but “the most successful long-term embrace of diversity is when it’s organically claimed by the congregation on the part of the laity,” he said. “Otherwise, it just becomes a failed initiative from the top.”

Since 1998, the study found, the percentage of mainline Protestant churches that are multiracial went up from 1% to 10%, evangelical congregations went up from 7% multiracial to 22%, and Pentecostal groups went up from 3% multiracial to 16%.

In 1963, the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. famously said: “It is appalling that the most segregated hour of Christian America is 11 o’clock on Sunday morning.”

Today, Dougherty said, the most segregated hour is “5 or 6 p.m. at the dinner table. The American home is more segregated than the American Church.”
Vatican seeks to replace its service vehicles with all-electric fleet

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — As part of its long-running efforts to respect the environment and reduce its use of resources, the Vatican said it was gradually trying to replace all its service vehicles with an all-electric fleet. “Soon we will start collaborating with automobile manufacturers who are able to provide electrical vehicles for evaluation,” said Roberto Mignucci, director of workshops and equipment for the office governing Vatican City State. He told L’Osservatore Romano, the Vatican newspaper, Nov. 10 that an electric fleet was perfect since the average annual mileage for each of their many service and support vehicles is less than 4,000 miles (6,000 km) given the small size of its extraterritorial properties, such as the papal villa and farm at Castel Gandolfo, 13 miles south of Rome to increase the number of charging stations it already has installed for electric vehicles to include other extraterritorial properties surrounding the basilicas of St. Mary Major, St. John Lateran and St. Paul Outside the Walls, he said. Over the years, several car manufacturers have donated different kinds of electric vehicles to the pope, and the Japanese bishops’ conference gave the pope a hydrogen-powered popemobile in October.

Philippines typhoon aftermath

Children wait in line for food at an evacuation center in Manila, Philippines, Nov. 14 after being forced from their homes from flooding caused by Typhoon Vamco. Five tropical storms or typhoons have hit the Philippines in a three-week period, including the strongest typhoon since 2013 and the biggest floods since 2009.
Miss Virginia’s Food Pantry operates on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at 1312 S. Hanna St. in Fort Wayne, serving those in need.

Legacy of Miss Virginia continues under new leadership

BY GEORGIA LIEB

Miss Virginia’s Food Pantry in Fort Wayne has experienced a year of change, including new leadership and adaptation to the coronavirus pandemic. Greg Witte stepped in as director in January following the retirement of former director Joseph Miller. He continues the good work of foundress Virginia Schrantz.

For Witte, Miss Virginia’s provided a way for him to assist his community.

“I wanted to give back what had been given to me,” Witte said. “Always wanted to volunteer.”

He brings to the position more than 40 years of experience in the meat industry, as well as management skills. He said he discovered the open director position while looking through his Sunday bulletin and decided to reach out.

Under Witte’s leadership this year, the food pantry, located near St. Mary, Mother of God Church, has continued to assist those in need during the pandemic. Masks, social distancing, plexiglass partitions and temperature checks are the new norm at Miss Virginia’s.

Miss Virginia’s provides families with food supplies on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. During the initial pandemic-related shutdown, operations moved outside, with people driving through to receive food.

A dedicated team of volunteers serves around 700 people a week, down from the pre-COVID number of more than 900.

“If I could say one thing that makes this thing go for me, it’s the group of people downstairs, those volunteers,” Witte said. “I feel really blessed.”

Former director Miller, who served from 2015 to 2019, also said he had felt called to help others. A retired teacher for Fort Wayne Community Schools, he appreciated what he had been given.

“I knew somehow I wanted to give back to the community,” Miller said. He received a community service award from the American Legion in 2018 and was named a Paul Harris Fellow by the Rotary Foundation for that service.

“There’s so much satisfaction in helping people that are in need,” Miller said. “We share the bounty of the county.”

Another change at the food pantry is the upcoming retirement of Leon Youngpeter, president of the Inner City Hope Corporation board. Planning to step down at the end of 2020, he has spent his time helping those in need. He started the St. Mary Christmas Food Box program in 1985, and it was through that program that he met Schrantz.

Many Fort Wayne schools began donating items for Schrantz to give away.

News of her good work spread. She had a visit from Mother Teresa, who came to her home in 1982. In 1992, she had the honor of traveling to Washington, D.C., to receive the International Service to Mankind Award. Schrantz continued helping those in her neighborhood for 40 years.

Youngpeter had the opportunity to meet and talk with Schrantz at her home. He brought her leftover food from the food box program to give to the people she served.

“I think truly she was a saint,” said Youngpeter. “I think she was cut from the same mold as Mother Teresa. She was such a human, kind, loving person. All she did was give to other people. If the world had people like her, it would just be a whole entirely different world.”

In 1995, Schrantz asked Father Tom O’Connor, former pastor at St. Mary, Mother of God, if there was anything he could do to serve those coming to her home once she passed away. Father O’Connor worked with a lawyer to create the Inner City Hope Corporation, turning Miss Virginia’s work into a nonprofit organization.

Following her death in 1998, Miss Virginia’s home became Miss Virginia’s Mission House, serving around 210 families per week.

In 2014, after noticing the lack of food given to those visiting, Youngpeter saw the need for a better food system. He worked to implement the Balanced and Nutritional Food Program, which provides a wider variety and volume of foods for a better and more wholesome diet. “Our goal is to always provide healthy, nutritional food,” Youngpeter said.

Under Miller’s leadership in 2015, Miss Virginia’s Mission House changed its name to Miss Virginia’s Food Pantry to clarify the purpose of the house. Previously, the mission house had provided additional items such as clothing or other supplies, but they decided to focus specifically on food, as so not to duplicate other active ministries in the area that already provided those items.

Located at 1312 S. Hanna St., Miss Virginia’s Food Pantry operates out of Miss Virginia’s home and is the third-largest food pantry in Indiana. It runs entirely on donations from generous businesses, food banks and individuals. Community Harvest Food Bank and Tim Didier Meats provide Miss Virginia’s with food, as do many other donors.

The Community Foundation of Greater Fort Wayne has assisted Miss Virginia’s with funding, along with other businesses and individuals.

To learn more about Miss Virginia’s Food Pantry and how to help, visit www.missvirginia-foodpantry.com.
Christmas shopping with Catholic social teaching

BY JENNIFER MILLER

Being Catholic isn’t limited to liturgies and attending Mass for an hour on Sunday. Being Catholic fully permeates every aspect of one’s life, from the books read — or not read — to words spoken or omitted. Even Christmas shopping can be influenced by faith.

The Gospel of Matthew, Chapter 22: 34-40, explains this. Known as “the greatest commandment,” Jesus is tested by the Pharisees about how to live as God designed.

“He said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments.” Jesus explains how one’s love of God directs all other choices, the opposite of the American concept of compartmentalizing each part of one’s life.

Catholic social teaching is this living out of the faith, in practical, ordinary, small and large ways. Seven principles of CST all have roots in the Church’s Tradition and the life of Christ. In modern times, they have been developed into a “list,” but have always existed in Scripture and Tradition.

The primary starting point of CST is the recognition of the inherent dignity of every person. Grounded in God’s own very creation, CST maintains and reflects the Incarnation, where God became human and lived simply. God chose to be born naturally and normally, through Mary, as an infant baby. God chose a small community for His son to grow up in, where food was grown by local farmers, hunters and herders. Jesus’ clothes were made from local materials from people in His community, if not family: God chose poor and holy parents for Jesus to be born of and raised by, showing a special option for the economically poor. Jesus later chose His disciples from the local men of the area.

Being disciples and followers of Christ, Catholics must look at their life choices. Could the small, the local, the poor be chosen? What and who are favored when it comes to something as silly and small as Christmas gifts? Where are one’s time, money and words dedicated?

Realizing that humans are social creatures, the principle of the call to family, community and participation focuses on the spheres and circles of life that a person interacts and lives among daily. From the economy to politics, how a society is organized impacts directly the growth and flourishing of a human person. Supporting marriage and family as vital social institutions strengthens the full, fleshing out of a human’s dignity and life as well.

The principle of the dignity of work and the rights of workers reminds Catholics that a healthy economy serves the people, not the reverse. Work is more than a job; it is a way for the human person to participate in God’s creation. Earning a just and fair wage from holy and productive work supports the person’s family, buying food, clothes and other necessities including private property. The right of workers follows too in God’s own footsteps, both as God the Father in creating the world, as described in Genesis and each human life, as well as God the Son, as His foster father, Joseph, trained Him as a carpenter.

The CST principle of solidarity reflects Pope St. Paul VI’s words, “If you want peace, work for justice.” As all people are united, as sisters and brothers of one human family, it is imperative that Catholics model and strive for peace in a world scarred by sin and violence. Solidarity reminds Catholics to pray and act with their fellow humans, loving their neighbors as themselves.

Lastly, but integral to the other principles, the CST of care of God’s creation calls Catholics to be stewards or caretakers of the Earth. In doing so, they respect their Creator and enjoy the gifts of the environment, from the air to the sea. All seven CST principles are interconnected and together weave a rich pattern of a healthy, holy, integrated Catholic life. One principle bleeds into another, allowing the integrity of each soul to choose serving God.

Lay ecclesial minister, wife and mother, Mary Ann Wilson found this very integration of her faith into every aspect of her life liberating and refreshing.

“When I first learned of Catholic social teaching in college, it was a watershed moment. To hear that the Catholic faith was meant to permeate every aspect of my life made sense. Everything was meant to be a reflection of the Gospel — that felt like really good news. I was inspired that that could be possible — total and integrated.” Saints such as Mother Teresa, St. Francis and Servant of God Dorothy Day offered Wilson an example of what this fully Catholic living could look like. Soon after, she met her husband, Ben. She realized that with him “this is a person who I can really live this out with. Ben chose simple living and solidarity with people in mind.”

Now a family of seven, the Wilsons still daily choose to live their faith in concrete, practical ways of Catholic social teaching. The preferential option for the poor is the primary CST principle, which guides many of their decisions.

Parishioners of St. Matthew Cathedral, they chose to live by the Catholic Worker House in South Bend and in the downtown area to remain physically close to the poor. This is “a daily call to conversion, which asks a lot of us and can lead us to a deeper truth,” Wilson explained.

For Christmas gifts, the Wilson family “focuses on fleshing it out and making it: Asking themselves, ‘What can I give? What can I make?’ versus what can receive or buy. They try to be creative, making or finding an experience to share. When shopping, Wilson prefers to buy
Convenience isn’t one of our efficient or the most convenient. Not mass produced. We choose sacrifice because you’re paying it comes at a price. Along with her husband, Andy, and two young children, she explained, “it comes at a price.” Proverbs 31 reminds her of this choice, that it matters how she conducts her business, because it impacts both her family and local community. The Wilsens then bring those actions back to prayer. For example, they buy their vegetables and meat from a local, organic farm and regularly thank God for the efforts of their farmer friends, Matthew and Jen Betz Insley and Stephen and Raquel Storey. The benefit and good of a just economy is important to the Wilsens, realizing that they are dependent on others and making “those relationships as healthy and real as possible, knowing where products come from and supporting local businesses.”

This year, she pondered over the idea of offering the children an opportunity to buy an animal, such as a cow or goat, for a family in need for Christmas, as well as encouraging them to plan and make gifts for their siblings. “Those are often the most beloved gifts of the Christmas season,” she reflected.

Becky Czarnecki, St. Joseph, South Bend, parishioner, also stressed solidarity and subsidiarity, in her Christmas shopping. Along with her husband, Andy, and two young children, she explained, “it comes at a sacrifice because you’re paying more money for goods that are not mass produced. We choose the person, not the cheapest, efficient or the most convenient. Convenience isn’t one of our highest values as Christians.”

She’s found “supporting real people, paying them a reason- able wage and building up our community by keeping money in the area, through choosing families and small businesses” a life-giving way of living Catholic social teaching and their Catholic faith.

“We tend to choose convenience and quick and easy fixes in America, so to choose the small, the local, the slower way is counter-cultural — it’s not how America runs. But it is how Jesus lived. He prioritized people one on one. By loving them, He chose people over a larger profit. Choosing to go out of your way isn’t logical, but it can make a bigger difference,” Czarnecki suggested. “Imagine if every person who bought from Amazon purchased just one Christmas gift locally. The impact would be huge.”

Czarnecki uses her “go-to” list of local individuals who make things: a former co-worker from Hope Ministries who makes T-shirts and items with a Cricut, a store that sells fair trade coffee and 10,000 Villages. She tries to only buy used clothing and items directly from small businesses. After finding out Etsy takes a huge cut of artists’ profits, she started directly contacting the artist to purchase.

When she was assigned her wealthy sister in law for their family Christmas gift swap, she contacted a lady from Etsy directly. Invoking through PayPal, to make personalized stationery, something her sister couldn’t buy herself. It was a personal gift that still supported a small business. “I can’t do everything,” Czarnecki reflected, “but I can do something.”

For small businesses in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, that something means a lot. With the global COVID-19 pandemic still greatly affecting local business, Catholics can positively live their faith by practicing Catholic social teaching and supporting local, Catholic individuals and families through their Christmas — and everyday — purchases.

Divine Mercy Gifts owner and Christ the King parishioner Sue McFarland felt the impact from the coronavirus pandemic last spring. The only Catholic store in the South Bend area, she had ordered items for first Communions before the mandatory shutdown began in March. She missed the business for the many graduation and first Communion parties that usually were celebrated. Now, McFarland is grateful to be able to open her storefront and hopeful for the coming Christmas shopping season.

Artist Jen Towers of Grand Hope Ministries who makes T-shirts and items with a Cricut, a store that sells fair trade coffee and 10,000 Villages. She tries to only buy used clothing and items directly from small businesses. After finding out Etsy takes a huge cut of artists’ profits, she started directly contacting the artist to purchase.

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Artist Jen Towers of Grand Expressions is grateful for her small business, which she understands as a ministry. “Most days I am blown away that God allows me to do it,” she shared.

Begun just three years ago, she has already painted 10,000 peg dolls of 298 different saints, 1,125 key chains and ornaments, 450 animals in Nativity sets and 1,200 icon eggs for Easter. Towers, a parishioner of St. Pius X Parish, Granger, works from home, as she gracefully balances home-schooling her six children. By purchasing a hand-painted saint peg doll from Towers for a child’s Christmas gift, a person can live out multiple principles of Catholic social teaching, enabling their relationship with God to develop and flourish, as well as that of the Church and world. 
Priests make headway at new parishes during pandemic

BY JENNIFER BARTON

African proverb says: “Smooth seas do not make skillful sailors.” While moving from parish to parish is common in priestly ministry, the changes priests encounter in adjusting to a new workplace and a different mix of people can feel overwhelming—and those who transferred this year face increased obstacles. From leaving smaller churches for larger ones, parishes with schools for those without, several priests within the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend navigated the uphill climb of changes due to an additional situation that was challenging for everyone—the statewide quarantine order.

Crossing rough waters

“There’s challenges, obviously … You feel limited in what you can do because there are restrictions in place for people’s safety, for their health,” said Father Craig Borchard, new pastor at St. Vincent de Paul in Elkhart. He moved from St. Michael in Plymouth to Elkhart this past summer, and since the two parishes have a similar Hispanic ministry, St. Vincent is a much larger parish and school. Once at their new parishes, getting to know the new people at the new location was a predicament. Adjusting is strange when much of the congregation is missing and parish traditions have been put on indefinite hold, Father Borchard said. “What I miss most about parish life is the day-to-day interaction with parishioners. The life of a parish flows from our faith, which we want to share with each other. When there are restrictions of gatherings, it makes it difficult to share our faith life together.”

That lack of human interaction has been their biggest struggle. Father David Huneck went from St. Jude Parish in Fort Wayne to St. Paul of the Cross in Elkhart. At St. Jude, he was able to meet many parishioners by walking the neighborhood. In Columbia City, his congregation is spread out, so this is not an option. He also continues as co-chaplain at Bishop Dwenger High School. Even at school, getting to know incoming freshmen and new students is similarly problematic.

“I don’t know what they look like because they wear masks. And my parishioners, I don’t know what they look like. They have eyes, I know that,” he stated with a laugh. He is certainly not the only priest to face adversity with humor. Father Patrick Hake, new pastor of St. Peter Parish in Fort Wayne and co-chaplain at Bishop Luers High School, joked that it “would be helpful if parishioners all start talking in third person. ‘Father Hake greets you,’ Father Patrick asks him to do this.”

For some priests, the pandemic marks their first time serving as pastor. As Father Hunk stated, “I don’t really know any different, so this is kind of normal, I guess. I’ve moved into a parish as associate and met people there, but my first time as pastor, I’m kind of like, ‘OK, this is how it is.”

Priests tend to make only small changes when they first arrive at a parish, and this has been true for most new pastors this year. Ready to hit the ground running, Father Hake found his efforts thwarted by the pandemic. “I have a lot of energy. I want the Church to fulfill its mission,” he said.

Not every parish had resources in place to allow priests to communicate easily with their flock. Other parishes might have outdated records or no directory, so pastors had to utilize alternative means. This included learning parishioners’ names from collection envelopes, writing bulletin letters and posting homilies online.

“I never thought that March 17, 2020, would be the last Mass celebrated publicly for nearly two months,” said Father Robert Garrow, who was transferred to St. Stanislaus Kostka in New Carlisle this year.

That was one challenge Father Garrow faced. To bridge the gap, he sent out an introductory letter to every parishioner when he arrived at St. Stanislaus. He followed up with another letter offering suggestions for parishioners to maintain their faith life at home. He also being able to visit the sick and homebound and worries over the “faith of the parishioners during this time. There are so many times I hear from people that watching Mass at home is not the same, their prayer life has been struggling, they feel far from God. This makes me sad, and I take these to the Lord and ask for His grace to fill us.”

A brother is born out of adversity

So, where do these pastors turn when they need help and guidance? One of the best resources is the prayers of the parish themselves and the parish staff. Father Hake credited parish secretary Karen Zawodni, who has been part of the parish for somewhere around 30 years. He called her “a gold mine of information,” and added that Zawodni, who is also the organist, sacristan and cantor, “keeps things flowing when I’m not sure how things ought to flow.”

Father Borchard recognized the efforts of his parish and school staff as the ones who keep things running smoothly. But even more supportive are his brother priests. He relied on his parochial vicars, Father Eloy Jimenez and Father Daniel Niece, who have both been at the parish for a year, to share their knowledge and experience. To implement social distancing requirements, St. Vincent added two more weekend masses, bringing the total to eight. Fortunately, with three priests, it was not unbearable. In fact, all three priests stand outside church after Mass to greet parishioners and ease the isolation felt on both sides.

Additionally, previous pastor Father Matthew Coonan has been “an incredible help.” Father Borchard continued: “The parish was healthy when he left; it was vibrant and doing well and fulfilling its mission and living for Jesus … and it continues to do that.” Though Father Coonan is finding his way with two new parishes, he has still been a source of wisdom for Father Borchard.

Another thing that helped acclimate Father Hake to his new parish is attending meetings of the parishes that have resumed, such as the Knights of Columbus, Rosary sodality and, of course, the parish council. He also has a great deal of admiration, he said, for elderly parishioners who still send in their weekly envelopes, even if they have not been able to attend in person.

For those with access, he posts audio recordings of his homily on the parish’s Facebook page. Of course, the greatest aid to priests is God. A life rooted in prayer is essential for priestly ministry, especially this year. “As a priest, I try to turn things over to God,” said Father Garrow. “I also have to remember that I am only one person, I have a staff, a parish family to assist our parish to meet our needs. We are all working together for the glory of God and sanctification of His people.”

Ask and ye shall receive

How can those in the pews or at home assist their new shepherd? “Number one, by your prayers,” said Father Garrow.

“Secondly, ask if there is anything to help with in the parish: cleaning, making phone calls, helping in other ways.” He also suggests that members contact the parish office to ensure that their information is up to date.

“In the future, I’d love to connect with the people of the parish. It’s always good to introduce yourself and you can even call the office and introduce yourself, that you have more time. You can schedule a meeting with the priest. I still meet with people … If you think the priest is doing a good job, let him know.”

“Those who feel safe to invite me over, invite me over,” offered Father Hake. “There’s been about four or five families that have invited me over, so I definitely appreciate that.”

The silver lining

On the flip side, Father Borchard sees an advantage to the less-frenzied pace of parish life. “It can also kind of work in your favor in the sense that it’s not quite as busy. It’s not quite as crazy because not everything’s up in the air.”

It’s coming at me just a little bit slower than maybe it would come at me than if I’d come here in a normal year.”

What do these priests most look forward to when the face masks finally come off? “I want to go to meetings,” he said.

Both he and Father Huneck also hope to organize parish events in the future. Father Huneck suggested “Our least day is Oct. 20, so it’s the perfect time to do an Oktoberfest, but next year maybe have something like that. I think people are going to be desperate for human interaction after this.” He also plans to bring Catholic traditions such as midnight Mass and Stations of the Cross to his parish to bolster its faith life. Father Hake is looking ahead to the 150th anniversary of St. Peter Parish in two years.

For now, these priests are taking their time adjusting to the new culture and anticlerics processions to his parish to bolster its faith life. Father Hake is looking ahead to the 150th anniversary of St. Peter Parish in two years.

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Black Catholic saints to know

FORT WAYNE — November is Black Catholic History Month. Who are the African-Americans who are candidates for canonization?

**Venerable Father Augustus Tolton**

The child of two slaves, Augustus Tolton was born in 1854. After his father died serving the Union Army during the Civil War, his mother took him and his siblings across the Mississippi and settled in Quincy, Illinois. The Tolton children attempted to attend Catholic school, but parents of the other school children complained so the School Sisters of Notre Dame tutored the children privately.

Augustus applied but was not accepted to several seminaries. His parish priests began to train him in theology themselves. Eventually, he was able to complete his studies at Franciscan College in Quincy and then at Propaganda Fidei in Rome. Ordained in 1886, he was the first black priest to serve in the U.S. Augustus Tolton gained respect from parishioners and is known especially for his ministry to blacks Catholics on Chicago’s south side. He died in 1887 at the age of 43.

**Sister Thea Bowman**

Sister Thea Bowman was born in 1928. She converted to Catholicism and joined the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, where she would be the only African American member of the convent. She trained to become a teacher, eventually earned her doctorate and became a college professor. She often challenged her fellow Catholics to promote inclusivity of African Americans. When Sister Thea was asked by her friend, Father John Ford, about what should be said about her at her funeral, she replied, “Tell them what Sojourner Truth said about her eventual Dying: ‘I’m not going to die. I’m going home like a shooting star.’” She died on March 30, 1990.

**Servant of God Mother Mary Lange**

Around 1794 in Cuba, Servant of God Mother Mary Lange was born. Her family settled in Baltimore in the early 1800s. There was no formal education for African American children in Maryland at the time, so Mary Lange opened a school in her home. Eventually, she founded the first religious congregation for African American women religious in the history of the Catholic Church: the Oblate Sisters of Providence.

**Servant of God Julia Greely**

Julia Greely was born into slavery sometime between 1833 and 1848. As a young child, she lost her right eye due to her slave master’s whip. After being freed by the Emancipation Proclamation she began serving white families, and in her spare time assisted poor and destitute neighbors. In 1868 she became Catholic and a promoter of devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus to both Catholics and non-Catholics.

**Venerable Henriette Delille**

Born in 1812 in New Orleans, Henriette Delille was a free woman of color. At 24 she had a conversion experience and founded the Society of the Holy Family, which served the enslaved, elderly and sick, and...
Speaking the truth during a Biden presidency

Barring the confluence of several successful legal challenges, Joe Biden will sworn in as the 46th president of the United States on Jan. 20.

For American Catholics, and especially those of us in the Catholic press, the advent of the second Catholic president poses even more challenges than the foreboding term of the first one. Joe Biden is a Catholic, baptized and confirmed and practicing. He is also a dissenter from Church teaching, most notably on abortion but also on (among other things) artificial contraception, embryonic stem-cell research and marriage. (And, on the latter point, not just in theory: He presided at the civil marriage of two men while vice president.)

When the U.S. Supreme Court handed down its decision in Roe v. Wade, Biden opposed it; but in 1974, he adopted the position later made famous by New York Gov. Mario Cuomo: “personally opposed, but …” The outlines of that position had been drawn 14 years earlier by the first Catholic president, John F. Kennedy. In his speech as a candidate to the Greater Houston Ministerial Association, when he declared that “I believe in a president whose religious views are his own private affair” and “I am the Democratic Party’s candidate for president, who happens also to be a Catholic. I do not speak for my Church on public matters, and the Church does not speak for me.”

For the better part of his five decades in public office, Biden set personal limits on what he would and wouldn’t support with regard to abortion and largely adhered to them. While not supporting any federal restrictions on the core decision in Roe, he did, in 1982, vote in the Senate for a proposed constitutional amendment to return the issue of abortion to the states. For decades he supported the Hyde Amendment and the Mexico City policy, which, respectively, forbade the use of federal funds for abortions domestically and overseas.

But as vice president from 2009 to 2017, he did not publicly oppose President Barack Obama’s repeal (through executive order) of the Mexico City policy. And in running for president in 2020, Joe Biden cast off the last of his personal limits. He announced that he no longer supports the Hyde Amendment, and he has pledged to back legislation to enfranchise Roe v. Wade in federal law, should the U.S. Supreme Court overturn Roe and return regulation of abortion to the states. He has stated that the Biden administration’s “Justice Department will do everything in its power to stop the state of the laws that are contrary to the constitutional right to an abortion, such as so-called TRAP [targeted regulation of abortion providers] laws, parental notification requirements, mandatory waiting periods and ultrasound requirements.”

In short: In order to win the White House, Joe Biden is made clear once and for all that the Kennedy/Cuomo/Biden “personally opposed, but …” stance is not only morally untenable but politically so. If one believes with the Church that life begins at conception but acts in a way that results in the death of unborn children, then one isn’t truly “personally opposed” to those deaths. Biden’s “personal opposition” and his understanding of his adherence to Church teaching have become abstractions, and under the policies that he has pledged to impose (mostly by executive order), real children will pay the price.

These are not matters that the Catholic press can gloss over. We cannot “balance” them against other areas where a Biden administration may act in ways that are consonant with Church teaching. Church teaching have become abstractions, and under the policies that he has pledged to impose (mostly by executive order), real children will pay the price.

On the lost art of ‘pairing ‘em up’ and its effects on marriage

One of the more common concerns that young adults express to me is the difficulty in meeting and dating. Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, in her memoirs, wrote that “finding a husband is the most important thing in a woman’s life. It is an investment for her future and the future of her family.”

When I was a young priest, more than 30 years ago, I had numerous weddings to celebrate and most of the couples were in their early 20s.

Today, I have far fewer weddings and the average age of the couples is in their early 30s. In 1990, there were 530,000 weddings in Catholic parishes. Last year, there were 137,885, a 58% drop.

While there are many reasons for the delay of marriage, (college debt, longer time in college, the rise of the virtual world, etc.), another reason we must explore is that we, who are older, don’t do much of a job helping to “pair ‘em up.”

In the video mentioned below, an older couple across the street

The Lord will defeat our death and judge us rightly

Feast of Christ the King
Matthew 25:31-46

On this weekend, the Church celebrates its liturgical year of 2020. Next week, a new year will begin with the First Sunday of Advent. This weekend, the Church closes the year with an excited and fervent proclamation of Christ as the king of all.

The first reading comes from the ancient Book of Ezekiel. In this reading, God speaks in the first person, placing protection of the flock; in other words, the people of God. He is the shepherd, seeking the lost, caring for the injured, rescuing the imperiled. Also, God will distinguish between the sheep and others who assume other identities because of their voluntary unfaithfulness.

St. Paul’s First Letter to the Corinthians provides the second reading. This section is a proclamation of the resurrection, and of the role of the Lord as redeemer of humankind. He is the Risen Lord, the first of those who will rise to everlasting life. Those who will follow Jesus in being raised from the dead are “those who belong” to Christ, in other words, those persons who have admitted God, through Jesus, into their lives, and who have received from the Lord the gift of peace, eternal life and strength.

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

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

This expectation was a favorite theme in the early Church, in the community that surrounded and prompted the formation of the Gospels. The reading repeats the description given in Ezekiel. In Ezekiel, God, the shepherd, separates the sheep from the goats, the good from the unfaithful. In this reading from Matthew, Jesus promises a final judgment to separate the faithful from the sinful. Beautifully in this reading, the Lord describes who will be judged as faithful and who will be seen as unfaithful. The faithful will not be those who only give lip service to their belief in God, but those who, in the model of Jesus, give themselves totally to the will of God.

Reflection

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

The king, and his wife, known for decades in her widowhood, until her own death in 2002, as Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, were courageous figures as the British struggled against enormous odds in the Second World War. For long, terrifying, deadly months, the German “blitz,” or bombing, relentlessly tore British life apart. A German invasion seemed inevitable. Rumors spread that the royal family, for its own security, would flee to Canada.

One day, at the scene of a horrendous bombing attack, Queen Elizabeth was confronted. Would she and her husband send their young daughters to safety in Canada? Indeed, would she and the king flee?

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

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

C O M M U N I T Y  I N  M I S S I O N

MSCR. CHARLES POPE

see to young people living next to each other but seemingly lost in their own worlds. Through a series of mysterious mailings, they get them to meet. The old expression calls this “pairing them up.”

Adults used to take a more active role in getting their children to meet. My parents’ families knew each other before my parents married and had helped make the introductions. In the Church we often sponsored dances and other youth and young adult activities. Far fewer colleges were coed in those older days, and so the faculties were much more intentional about sponsoring activities between the women’s and men’s
POPE FRANCIS, ‘FRATELLI TUTTI’ AND THE UNIVERSAL DESTINATION OF GOODS

In the wake of the publication of Pope Francis’ most recent encyclical letter, “Fratelli Tutti,” there was a great deal of negative commentary regarding the pope’s attitude toward capitalism and private property. Many readers interpreted Francis to mean that the capitalist system is, in itself, exploitative and that the holding of private property is morally problematic. Like most who write in a prophetic mode, Pope Francis is indeed given to strong and challenging language, and therefore, it is easy enough to understand how he excites opposition. But it is most important to read what he says with care and to interpret it within the context of the long tradition of Catholic social teaching.

First, in regard to capitalism, or what the Church has come to call the “market economy,” the pope has this to say: “Business activity is essentially a noble vocation, directed toward securing wealth and improving our world.” (Fratelli Tutti, 123) He thereby distances himself from any ideology that would simply demonize capitalism, and clearly affirms that a morally praiseworthy economic arrangement is one that not only distributes wealth, but creates it through entrepreneurship. Moreover, he argues, a certain self-interest, including the taking of profit, is even required to the moral purpose of economic activity: “In God’s plan, each individual is called to promote his or her own development, and this includes finding the best economic and technological means of multiplying goods and increasing wealth.” (123)

In making these observations, Francis stands firmly in the tradition of St. John Paul II, who saw the market economy as an arena for the exercise of human creativity, ingenuity and courage, and who endeavored to draw ever more people into its dynamism. He also reiterates the teaching of the founder of the modern Catholic social tradition, the great Leo XIII, who, in Rerum Novarum, strenuously defended private property and, using a number of arguments, repudiated socialist economic arrangements. So, I hope we can put to rest the silly canard that Pope Francis is an enemy of capitalism and a cheerleader for global socialism.

Now, without gaining any of this, we must, at the same time, point out that, like all of his papal predecessors in the social teaching tradition, without exception, Francis also recommends limits, both legal and moral, to the market economy. And in this context, he insists upon what classical Catholic theology refers to as the “universal destination of goods.” Here is how Francis states the idea in “Fratelli Tutti”: “The right to private property is always accompanied by the primary and prior principle of the subordination of all private property to the universal destination of the world’s goods, and thus the right of all to their use.” (123)

In making the distinction between ownership and usufruct, Pope Francis is hearkening back to St. Thomas Aquinas, who saw the market economy as an enemy of capitalism and a proponent of socialist economic arrangements. Many read St. Thomas Aquinas as follows: “When we provide the needy with their basic needs, we possess are not our own, but theirs.” (St. John Chrysostom as follows: “We can then say that each country also belongs to the foreigner, inasmuch as a territory’s goods must not be denied to a needy person coming from elsewhere.” (124) This is not “globalism” or a denial of national integrity; it is simply Aquinas’ distinction between ownership and use, extrapolated to the international level.

Once more, lest we see Pope Francis’ teaching here as egregious, I would like to give the last word to Leo XIII, ardent defender of private property and equally ardent opponent of socialism: “When what necessity demands has been supplied, and one’s standing fairly taken thought for, it becomes a duty to give to the indigent out of what remains over.” (Rerum Novarum, 22)

Bishop Robert Barron is an auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles and the founder of Word on Fire Catholic Ministries.

SCRIPITURE SEARCH®
Gospel for November 22, 2020
Matthew 25:31-46

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

WORD ON FIRE

BISHOP ROBERT BARRON

GLORY SHEPHERD BLESSED DRINK IN PRISON ANSWER ETERNAL FIRE

ANGELS SHEEP INHERIT STRANGER VISITED LORD DEVIL NAKED RIGHTIOUS LEAST CLOTHING

ETERNAL FIRE


GERTRUDE THE GREAT

FEAST: NOVEMBER 16
1256-1302

GERTRUDE THE GREAT was born in Germany’s Thuringia state, this virgin was entrusted at the age of 5 to the Cistercian nuns at Saxony’s Helfta Abbey, where she was educated and became a nun. At 23, she had a mystical “conversion” and thereafter lived a contemplative life. Her experiences are included in “Revelations of Gertrude and Mechtilde.” Gertrude also was among the first to promote devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. In 1738, Pope Clement XII decreed that the feast of this important medieval mystic be celebrated throughout the Western Church.

RICHERT, from page 12

Biden on the carpet for any executive orders, Justice Department actions, or proposed legislation that is designed to make possible the deaths of unborn children will be seen — and rightly so — by both Catholics and outside observers as the Catholic press’s own version of “personally opposed, but ....

The purpose of the Catholic press is to speak the truth — the truth of the Gospel, and the truth of how those of us baptized into Christ must live out the reality of the Gospel in this world. We must proclaim that truth to all — even the president of the United States.

Scott P. Richert is the publisher of OSV.

POPE, from page 12

Colleges. And frankly too, there was a kind of expectation that young people should get married soon after college or high school was completed. It was “time to settle down.”

Every now and then, as a priest, I try to make introductions between you and my sisters. At other times, I try to coach them in making the ask. I also advise many of them to work through other friends and seek their help to meet someone. I tell them that when I was young, I remember asking a friend if he would like to join my prom with me. He did the groundwork, saw some interest in him and set up the occasion for me to ask. Later in college, I too was told by a friend of my college sweetheart, “She likes you and want you to ask her out!” I was surprised because she was so pretty and would never have dared ask her out. I gladly took the hint and asked her that very evening.

At any rate, we need to do a better job of pairing ‘em up. Elders, families, Church leaders, friends, all have a role that we used to do more frequently. Check out this video https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y1GAF5F68M4 and see if it gives you any ideas.

Magr. Charles Pope is the pastor of Holy Comforter – St. Cyprian Catholic Church, Washington, D.C.
Alex Trebek dies at 80; ‘Jeopardy!’ host educated in Catholic schools

BY CAROL ZIMMERMANN

WASHINGTON (CNS) — When the death of Alex Trebek — beloved longtime host of “Jeopardy!” — was announced, celebrities and fans around the country took to social media to express their grief.

Many did this in the form of a question, paying tribute to the format of the game show Trebek hosted for 36 years.

Trebek, a Canadian-born American who was educated in Catholic schools, died of pancreatic cancer at his home Nov. 8. He was 80.

He was consistently described as calm, reliable, intelligent and personable with a dry sense of humor. He was known as a comforting presence in America’s family rooms with a show that always stayed with its simple format.

The iconic host and winner of multiple Emmy awards announced in a video last year that he had been diagnosed with stage 4 pancreatic cancer.

A year later, this March, he gave another video update saying there had been “moments of great pain … and massive attacks of great depression that made me wonder if it really was worth fighting on.”

To give up, he said, would have betrayed his friends and family who were helping him survive.

In an interview last year with ABC’s “2020,” he said: “Laughter is one of the greatest cures that we can possibly have. It’s right up there with prayer, believe me.” He also said he wanted to be remembered as a “nice man” who “helped people through his charity work” and was “kind to everybody he encountered.”

Trebek was born in northern Ontario, Canada, and attended Jesuit schools there until age 12 when he went to a boarding school run by a missionary religious congregation.

At first, he pursued a career in journalism, but in 1966, he began hosting a Canadian game show. Seven years later, he came to the United States for various roles hosting TV game shows before settling into “Jeopardy!” In 1998, he became a U.S. citizen.

In early January, Trebek and his wife, Jean, received Fordham University’s Founders’ Award in Los Angeles.

“If there’s one thing I have discovered in the past year, it is the power of prayer,” he said in accepting the Fordham award. “I learned it from the Jesuits when I was a kid. I learned it from the Oblates of Mary Immaculate when I was in boarding school.”

In her remarks, reported by the university’s news site, Jean Trebek said: “We understand how education, and probably more importantly, higher education, is one of the linchpins of society.”

She referenced the scholarship she and her husband established at Fordham about five years ago, explaining that seeing how a scholarship can change a life inspired them.

In 2015, the Trebeks established the Alex Trebek Endowed Scholarship, with a $1 million scholarship for students from the New York City neighborhood of Harlem. In 2019, they added another $1 million to the endowment to aid students from New York and East Harlem.

Jesuit Father Joseph McShane, president of Fordham, called Trebek, who was raised a Catholic, “a brilliant man who is the nation’s schoolteacher.” If people think the “Jeopardy!” host is a good man, “you don’t know the half of it,” the priest said.

“He’s better than you think,” calling him a man of “quiet generosity,”

He teaches us about how to live each day with purpose, with focus, with determination, with love, and without being obsessed with oneself,” he added.

The Trebeks’ two children graduated from Jesuit schools: Emily graduated from Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles in 2015 and Matthew graduated from Fordham College at Rose Hill, New York, in 2013.

On Nov. 8, Fordham University tweeted that it “honors the death of Alex Trebek, Fordham parent, benefactor, and Founder’s Award recipient.”

Comedian Jeremy McLellan tweeted: “You can tell Alex Trebek was trained by Jesuits because he invented a game show where you have to reply to everything with a question.”

And on a more serious note, Justin Trudeau, prime minister of Canada, said: “We have lost an icon. Almost every night for more than three decades, Alex Trebek entertained and educated millions around the world, instilling in so many of us a love for trivia.”

Many former contestants posted photos of themselves with Trebek on social media and one of the more famous contestants, Ken Jennings, who holds the record for the longest winning streak on the show with 74 wins, similarly posted a photo of the two of them.

“Alex wasn’t just the best ever at what he did. He was also a lovely and deeply decent man, and I’m grateful for every minute I got to spend with him,” he tweeted.

“Thinking today about his family and his ‘Jeopardy!’ family,” he added, “which, in a way, included millions of us.”

Since his death, flowers and messages have been left at his star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. In Sudbury, Ontario, where he was born, flags have been lowered to half staff at the city hall.

What does Bishop say about……?

Explore topics at: diocesefwsb.org/bishop

SAINTS, from page 11

provided care and education for the poor. When she died, her obituary read: “Henriette devoted herself untringly for many years, without reserve, to the religious instruction of the people of New Orleans, principally of slaves....for the love of Jesus Christ she had become the humble and devout servant of the slaves.”

Venerable Pierre Toussaint

Venerable Pierre Toussaint was born in Haiti and brought to New York City as a slave. He was taught how to read and write and eventually apprenticed with a local hairdresser, and worked in the homes of wealthy women in New York City.

He was freed in 1807 when his master’s widow died. After that, he and his wife opened their home to orphans and educated them. They also helped abandoned people who were suffering from yellow fever. Throughout his life, Toussaint was a generous financial donor, assisting both blacks and whites who were in need.

Information provided by Redeemer Radio
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.

Choral vespers for feast of Christ the King
SOUTH BEND — A socially distanced choir of four area music directors will provide the music for a sung vespers service at Christ the King Church, 52473 State Road 933, Sunday, Nov. 22, at 7 p.m. for the feast of Christ the King. Prayerful music including Latin polyphony and homophonic motets, as well as a new Advent setting of the Magnificat. The service is open to the public, and will also be livestreamed at https://youtu.be/JzkHm2BOWnc. Contact Jessica Roberts at 574-272-3113 or jroberts@christthekingonline.org for information.

Holiday open house at Good Shepherd Bookstore
FORT WAYNE — A holiday open house will be Wednesday, Nov. 25, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. at Good Shepherd Books and Gifts, 915 S. Clinton St. Enjoy free refreshments and browse the selection of Advent and Christmas items. Receive a 20% discount off of your entire purchase. The store will be closed Thanksgiving Day and Friday, Nov. 27. Saturday hours: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Free parking in the attached garage. Call 260-399-1442 for more information or visit www.goodshepherdbookstore.org.

Advent Taizé prayer
SOUTH BEND — An Advent Taizé prayer service will be Sunday, Nov. 29, at Christ the King Church, 52473 State Road 933, at 7 p.m. Taizé is named after a city in France with an ecumenical worship community that developed a calming, meditative type of musical prayer. Be sure to wear a mask. Visit youtu.be/goargKg4k0g or contact Jessica Roberts at 574-272-3115 or jroberts@christthekingonline.org for information.

Parish mission: ‘Chosen for Joy, Sent in Power’
FORT WAYNE — Join diocesan seminarians Vince Faurote, Brian Florin and Brian Isenbarger for a three-night parish mission at St. John the Baptist Church, 4525 Arlington Ave. Each night will feature a talk, time for adoration, confession and evening prayer. Each evening starts at 6:30 p.m. on Dec. 1: Chosen – Who are you and why are you here? What is your deepest identity? Dec. 4: Joyful praise reorders all of creation, including our own body and soul. Dec. 8: Sent in Power – Jesus tells us that the least in the kingdom are greater than even St. John the Baptist.

An evening of Heavenly Lights
The Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend presents "An evening of Heavenly Lights" with Prayer Service and Tree Lighting with Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades.

Sunday, Nov. 29
6:30 p.m.
Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception Plaza
www.diocesefwsb.org/HeavenlyLights
or call: 260-399-1438

Living choices for every age and every stage
Presence Sacred Heart Home, located just north of Fort Wayne, is a Catholic faith-based community that offers a continuum of care including independent living, assisted living, short-term rehabilitation, long-term care and memory support.

Call 260-888-3539 to schedule a personal visit or learn more at ascensionliving.org

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The bishops did not address the recent presidential election, although during the news conference held after the bishops adjourned, when a reporter asked Archbishop Gomez about his Nov. 7 message congratulating President-elect Biden, the archbishop said that was a just an acknowledgment and that he and his fellow bishops “respect the election process.”

The bishops had election results of their own in this meeting. Msgr. Jeffrey D. Burrill, a priest of the Diocese of La Crosse, Wisconsin, was elected the new general secretary of the USCCB, succeeding Msgr. J. Brian Bransfield a priest of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, who has served in this position since 2015.

In another vote, Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan of New York was elected chairman of the bishops’ Committee for Religious Liberty.

The bishops also voted on chairmen-elect for seven committees and seven seats on the board of directors of Catholic Relief Services.

The votes for chairmen-elect included: Committee on Priorities and Plans: Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio of the U.S. Archdiocese for the Military Services; Committee on Catholic Education, Bishop Thomas A. Daly of Spokane, Washington; Committee on Communications, Auxiliary Bishop Robert P. Reed of Boston; Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church, Auxiliary Bishop Arturo Cepeda of Detroit; Committee on Doctrine, Bishop Daniel E. Flores of Brownsville, Texas; Committee on National Collections, Bishop James S. Wall of Gallup, New Mexico; and the Committee on Pro-Life Activities, Archbishop William E. Lori of Baltimore.

The second day of the meeting, Nov. 17, was to include continued discussion on racism and the pandemic.

Contributing to this report was Dennis Sadowksi, Mark Pattison, Rhina Guidos and Julie Asher.