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# TODAY'S CATHOLIC

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## Pope says he was 'astonished' by violence at Capitol



CNS photo/Stephanie Keith, Reuters

**National Guard members walk behind a fence installed in front of the U.S. Capitol in Washington Jan. 7, one day after supporters of President Donald Trump breached the building.**

BY CINDY WOODEN

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Francis offered prayers for the people of the United States “shaken by the recent siege on Congress” and prayed for the five people who lost their lives “in those dramatic moments” when protesters stormed the Capitol Jan. 6.

Remarking on the events after reciting the Angelus prayer Jan. 10, the pope insisted that “violence is always self-destructive. Nothing is gained by violence and so much is lost.”

The pope urged government leaders “and the entire population to maintain a high sense of responsibility in order to soothe tempers, promote national reconciliation and protect the democratic values rooted in American society.”

And he prayed that “Mary Immaculate, patroness of the United States of America,” would “help keep alive the culture of

encounter, the culture of caring, as the way to build together the common good; and may she do so with all who live in that land.”

Pope Francis’ remarks came one day after the release of clips of an interview in which he said he was “astonished” by the violent breach of the U.S. Capitol, especially because the people of the United States are “so disciplined in democracy.”

The interview with Italy’s Canale 5 was scheduled for broadcast Jan. 10, but some clips were aired Jan. 9.

Violence, he told the interviewer, must always be condemned, but it also is true that in even the most “mature” societies, there are violent minorities, “people taking a path against the community, against democracy, against the common good.”

“But thank God this erupted and people could see it well. That way it can be remedied,” he said.

“No nation can brag about never having a case of violence — it happens,” he said. “We must



CNS photo/Vatican Media via Reuters

**Pope Francis leads the Angelus from the Apostolic Palace at the Vatican Jan. 10. He offered prayers for the people of the United States, “shaken by the recent siege on Congress.”**

understand it, so it is not repeated — learn from history, right?”

In the interview, Pope Francis also spoke about the COVID-19 vaccine.

From an ethical point of view,

he said, “I think everyone must take the vaccine; it’s the ethical option because you are playing with your health, life, but you also are playing with the lives of others.”

Sometime in the week beginning Jan. 11 the Vatican expects to begin vaccinating residents and employees who have asked to be vaccinated, “and I signed up; it must be done.”

Pope Francis recalled that when he was a child, polio was a real threat, “and many children were left paralyzed and people were desperate for a vaccine. When the vaccine came out, they gave it to you with a bit of sugar.”

“I don’t know why some people say, ‘No, the vaccine is dangerous,’ but if physicians present it to you as something that will do good, that doesn’t carry particular dangers, why not take it?” he said.

Pope Francis said he could not explain “suicidal denialism,” but “people must take the vaccine.”

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P.O. Box 11169  
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**PUBLISHER:** Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades

**Editorial Department**

**PUBLICATIONS MANAGER:** Jodi Marlin  
**STAFF WRITER:** Jennifer Barton  
**PAGE DESIGNER:** Francie Hogan  
**NEWS SPECIALIST:** Mark Weber

**Business Department**

**BUSINESS MANAGER:** Jennifer Simerman  
**BOOKKEEPING/CIRCULATION:** Geoff Frank  
circulation@diocesefwsb.org  
**BUSINESS SALES MANAGER:** Erika Barron  
ebarron@diocesefwsb.org

**Website:** [www.todayscatholic.org](http://www.todayscatholic.org)  
260-456-2824

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

**BUREAU OFFICE:** 1328 Dragoon Trail, Mishawaka, IN 46544. Telephone 260-456-2824. Fax 260-744-1473.

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**Today's Catholic may be reached at :**

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

[editor@diocesefwsb.org](mailto:editor@diocesefwsb.org)

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# Adoration chapel invites visitors to spend time with the risen Lord

BY JODI MARLIN

St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Fort Wayne has a longstanding and rich history of adoring Christ in the holy Eucharist. An adoration chapel incorporated into the 2001 construction of the present church building, along with frequent exposition of the Blessed Sacrament during scheduled holy hours and parish events, have provided places and opportunities for countless seekers to enter into deep, personal prayer with the Lord in ideal, grace-filled ways.

To offer more opportunities for parishioners and visitors to spend time in prayer before the Real Presence, the Oratory of St. Mary Magdalene opened on the parish campus in November. A perpetual adoration chapel and columbarium located in the parish's old cemetery, the Oratory of St. Mary Magdalene encourages the evangelistic underpinnings of the faith community and offers to all a peaceful, prayerful encounter with the risen Lord.

The addition of a place of endless adoration magnifies the work of the Lord and affirms His presence, Father Scheidt told parishioners during Mass in September, just prior to its dedication. "Our parish will always be at prayer."

## Historic mission

Twenty years before the Civil War began, a group of pioneer Catholics established a faith community a few feet from the corner of what are now called Auburn and Wallen roads. A log cabin church was erected for worship, and deceased members were laid to rest in the surrounding earth.

The current, expansive St. Vincent de Paul Church lies across Wallen Road from the original. It's the faith home of more than 10,000 Catholics who continue to build on the legacy of those founding families.

The Oratory of St. Mary Magdalene aspires to honor the legacy of the old church and cemetery as well as provide for the Christian burial of current and future parishioners. It exists as a new missionary outpost of pioneering prayer on the ground where the parish began, Father Scheidt said last year. The chapel bears witness to Jesus Christ's triumph over sin and death and the power of the risen Lord to make missionary disciples who will invite others to share His victory and new life.

It also fulfills a promise made more than 20 years ago by Father Scheidt, who in 1999 spent the summer serving St. Vincent de Paul Parish as a seminarian.

Appointed by Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades eight years ago as the parish's pastor, Father Scheidt arrived in Fort Wayne with a prayer in his heart from that summer. It took the form of a vow he made in the Old Cemetery, he told parishioners last year a note included in the parish family directory.

"Lord, if you ever make me Pastor of this Parish I shall see to it that you are worshipped and adored on this spot forever," he committed.

Once settled in the St. Vincent de Paul rectory, it became clear to him that the promise was to be fulfilled. So on All Souls' Day 2017, the first brochure explaining the planned construction was presented to parish members.



Jodi Marlin

The altar of the Oratory of St. Mary Magdalene at St. Vincent de Paul Parish, Fort Wayne, is pictured prior to the fall opening of the place of perpetual eucharistic adoration. Parishioners and visitors are welcome and encouraged to come, pray and spend time with the Lord, day or night.

## Into the deep

For two decades, several Scouting groups have flourished under the leadership of exceedingly dedicated St. Vincent de Paul volunteers. Operating initially out of a storage shed located in the Old Cemetery, the Scouts built up additional facilities next door to accommodate their growing numbers and the thousands of visitors who pack an annual Halloween Haunted Castle hosted by the troops for the parish and general public.

The Haunted Castle is the largest single event that takes place on parish grounds, welcoming more than 20,000 people per five-week fall season to the parish — many of whom might never have considered accepting a more direct invitation to visit "church," Father Scheidt noted.

The graveyard of the members' ancestors is geographically well-located to welcome all people to behold the risen Christ's victory over sin, death and division, Father Scheidt wrote to parishioners in November. Rather than being indifferent to that fact, it was decided that the evangelical task of the parish compelled it to build on the Scouts' hospitality and to welcome visitors "with the Lord's love." The storage unit was demolished in 2008 and work on the chapel began in the same location.

## Creating authentic witnesses

"Mary Magdalene went to the tomb, Jesus spoke to her in the flesh and she was so filled with joy that she had to share it with other people and she wanted them to see it too," said Father Scheidt. "The Oratory is designed to give everyone who comes the grace that Mary Magdalene received. The grace of beholding the risen Lord in the Eucharist, and be so filled with the Holy Spirit that they are compelled to invite others."

During his homily at a Mass of blessing and dedication of the oratory in September, Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades elaborated on the example of St. Mary Magdalene's deep faith and unbridled joy of learning of the resurrection of Jesus. He declared her the secondary patron of the parish.

"I am happy to have blessed this beautiful Oratory today, a place of spiritual refreshment, of adoration of Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, on this sacred and historic ground of the old Saint Vincent de Paul Church, here at the resting place of the faithful departed of this parish," the bishop said during the Mass. "In the beautiful art of this Oratory, we see many quotes from the



CNS photo/Andrew Biraj, Catholic Standard

**Father William Gurnee delivers the homily during Mass at St. Joseph's Parish on Capitol Hill in Washington Jan. 10, four days after a mob stormed the nearby U.S. Capitol.**

## Washington pastors reflect on Capitol attack that hit close to home

BY MARK ZIMMERMANN

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Like many across the country, Father William Gurnee and Father Gary Studniewski watched in horror as a rioting mob stormed and ransacked the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, attempting to disrupt Congress at it certified the Electoral College vote of President-elect Joe Biden.

But for those two priests, the attack hit particularly close to home, because they serve as pastors of Capitol Hill parishes in Washington. Father Gurnee leads St. Joseph's Parish on the Northeast side of Capitol Hill and Father Studniewski leads St. Peter's Parish on the Southeast side. Members of Congress and Capitol Hill staff members — who had to be rushed to safety during the attack — attend Mass at those two churches as do Capitol Hill police officers and those who live and work in the neighborhood.

For Father Gurnee, witnessing TV coverage of what was happening at the Capitol was especially painful, because before entering the seminary, he worked on Capitol Hill as a legislative assistant to the late Rep. Robert Smith, R-Oregon, and attended Mass at St. Joseph's Church. After being ordained to the priesthood in 2000, he celebrated his first Mass at St. Joseph's and since 2017 he has been its pastor.

"I never thought I'd have the privilege to be pastor here," said the priest. "I revere this Hill."

In a Jan. 10 interview just before Mass, he said that during the attack, he was receiving texts from parishioners who worked there and were being sheltered in safety as the mob rampaged through the building.



CNS photo/Andrew Biraj, Catholic Standard  
**Father Gary Studniewski, pastor of St. Peter's Parish on Capitol Hill, is seen in in this 2019 file photo.**

"When I saw people walking brazenly on the floor of the Senate, I was sickened," he said, adding that rioters posing for photos in Statuary Hall and with their feet up on a staffer's desk in House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's office "was so insulting to our country."

On Jan. 7, he told the Catholic Standard, archdiocesan newspaper of Washington, that he was still processing what he had seen and what he should say about it in his upcoming Sunday homily, adding that parishioners had encouraged him to offer a theological, not a political message, which he said he planned to try to do.

And four days after the Capitol breach, his homily emphasized the need to stay focused on what really matters — eternal salvation.

The priest said when people take an earthly view over a spiritual outlook, "the results are always ruinous," and he quoted the words of Russian dissident

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, who in reflecting on the aftermath of the Russian Revolution which led to the deaths of millions over the following decades, said, "Men have forgotten God; that's why all this has happened."

"This week, I think we saw the tragic consequences of what happens when individuals and a nation loses its spiritual outlook," he told the congregation.

The priest said he believed that leaders inside and outside the government "cynically manipulated people for their own selfish reasons," and as a result, many people came to Washington "thought they were engaging in an historic event to secure freedom and fairness for this country."

He said some carried signs proclaiming their Christian faith, and some in the crowd probably were "veterans of the Right to Life March who had in years past peacefully proclaimed the need to protect the unborn." For many years, both St. Joseph's and St. Peter's parishes have offered hospitality to marchers from across the country participating in the annual March for Life.

Father Gurnee said participants at the Jan. 6 rally "were told that they should fight, that they should enter into combat and prevent the theft of something given to them by God." President Trump and other speakers had addressed the rally, charging that the presidential election was stolen. The participants, he said, were "incited into a mob, and they were fueled with a rage that told them they were being denied their rights. Instead, they stole the rights of others. Five people died and countless others were trampled or injured."

"Democracy was assaulted



### Public schedule of Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades

Sunday, January 17: 11 a.m. — Mass, St. Joseph Church, Roanoke  
Wednesday, January 20: 9:30 a.m. — Mass, Bishop Dwenger High School, Fort Wayne  
Thursday, January 21: 9:30 a.m. — Mass, Bishop Dwenger High School, Fort Wayne  
Saturday, January 23: 12 p.m. — Northeast Indiana Pro-Life Rally and March for Life, University of Saint Francis Performing Arts Center, Fort Wayne  
Saturday, January 23: 4 p.m. — Mass, St. Stanislaus Kostka Church, New Carlisle

from within, and our elected leaders were temporarily prevented from discharging their duty. Thankfully, the People's House was restored, and their work finished," he added.

He thanked those serving honorably in government and those who protect our freedoms and also offered condolences "for those who grieve deaths that did not need to happen."

Father Gurnee encouraged people to recommit themselves to a spiritual outlook on life, "one which calls us to love our enemies, to forgive those who harm us and to work respectfully and firmly to proclaim the truth, in season and out."

With his voice breaking slightly, he concluded his homily by saying: "May God bless our parish, may God bless our city, and may God bless the United States of America."

After Mass, a Senate aide who was in lockdown for several hours during the siege of the U.S. Capitol said he and his family attend Mass at St. Joseph's, their home parish and he appreciated the pastor's homily.

Asked about his hopes for the future, he said: "I hope there's progress toward unity, but I think we've learned it has to be unity based on truth."

St. Joseph's Church is located a few blocks from the U.S. Capitol, near Senate office buildings now surrounded by fencing with National Guard members standing sentry there and along the fencing surrounding the Capitol.

On Jan. 7, one day after the Capitol breach, Father Studniewski, pastor of St. Peter's Parish on the other side of Capitol Hill, noted that the previous day he had celebrated morning Mass as usual. Knowing that Congress was scheduled to ratify the Electoral College vote that day, the priest said: "We were able to pray for them, to pray for wisdom, to pray for courage, strength and understanding."

He noted that St. Peter's Church is located near House of Representatives' office buildings, and that day, like typical weekday mornings, several House members from both parties attended the Mass.

"That's how they begin their day," he said, adding that throughout the day, he had seen

a constant stream of protesters walking past the church.

"They were very peaceful. This is what Americans do. They go to demonstrate, to have their voices heard," the priest said.

Father Studniewski added, "It was a normal day, until all that sickening unrest in the afternoon."

The priest had gone out that afternoon to get groceries, and returned to find roads closed around the neighborhood, a sign that something had gone wrong. Then a nearby apartment complex had to be evacuated after a suspicious package was found in a building on that block.

"We had a lot of residents come into (St. Peter's) church as a safe haven," he said, adding that they kept the church open and brought water to their neighbors who had come there. "I was pleased the church was open and could be a sanctuary to them."

As he watched television and saw the mayhem unfolding at the U.S. Capitol, Father Studniewski said it was "very disturbing, very disheartening."

Before entering the seminary, Father Studniewski was a captain in the U.S. Army. After his ordination in 1995, he served as an Army chaplain for many years and achieved the rank of colonel.

The priest, assigned to St. Peter's in 2017, said he hoped the Jan. 6 events lead to "a turning point where people, Red (states), Blue (states), with faith or no faith, people of all stripes and backgrounds, could say, 'Let's make sure this doesn't happen again. The spirit we saw yesterday can never take us forward.'"

He also said he hoped the nation's people and its leaders could be guided by a spirit like that which Jesus witnessed to, a spirit of "truth, justice, harmony, charity and peace," to pursue change nonviolently like Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. did.

"Any change that's going to be lasting and meaningful is going to be grounded in that spirit of God," he said.

*Zimmermann is editor of the Catholic Standard, archdiocesan newspaper of Washington.*

# Federal appeals court blocks Trump order on refugee resettlement

WASHINGTON (CNS) — A federal circuit court of appeals said a Trump administration executive order that would allow state and local government officials to reject refugees in their jurisdiction violated longstanding resettlement practices.

The ruling Jan. 8 from the 4th Circuit Court of Appeals upholds a preliminary injunction granted by a federal judge in Maryland a year ago who determined that the executive order could be seen as unlawful because it grants states and localities veto power that “flies in the face of clear congressional intent” established in the 1980 Refugee Act.

The 28-page ruling came in a case filed by three faith-based resettlement agencies — HIAS, a Jewish organization; Church World Service; and Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service — that said their work would be directly impacted and harmed by the executive order.

It means that resettlement agencies no longer must approach each individual government jurisdiction in which they help refugees put down roots. Overall, 42 governors and more than 100 local authorities had agreed to continue refugee resettlement.

Refugee resettlement agencies welcomed the ruling.

Ashley Feasley, director of policy for Migration and Refugee Services of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, said the court noted in its ruling that the changes required under the executive order “would cause inequitable treatment of refugees and undermine the very national consistency that the Refugee Act is designed to protect.”

The work of MRS and the USCCB “is to help resettle refugees and ensure that they can rebuild their lives and contribute to our country and in many cases reunite with their families,” Feasley said.

“Ensuring that we can help



CNS photo/Luis Echeverria, Reuters

**Guatemalan migrants stand on the tarmac at La Aurora International Airport in Guatemala City Jan. 6 after being deported from the United States. A federal circuit court of appeals said Jan. 8 that a Trump administration executive order that would allow state and local government officials to reject refugees in their jurisdiction violated longstanding resettlement practices.**

to place refugees with their families wherever they may be is a furtherance of the work of the church and of Pope Francis, who notes that especially in this moment of COVID-19, we must care for the vulnerable and ensure to leave no one behind.”

Krish O'Mara Vignarajah, president and CEO of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, said that refugees seeking to safely live in the U.S. will no longer be used as pawns by state and local governments.

“This ruling provides critical relief. Those who have been waiting for years to reunite with their families will no longer have to choose between their loved ones and the resettlement services that are so critical in their first months as new Americans,” she said in a statement.

President Donald Trump issued the executive order in September 2019. The three resettlement agencies soon filed a lawsuit challenging the order. A federal district judge issued

a preliminary injunction Jan. 15, 2020, blocking the Trump administration from enforcing an executive order.

The administration appealed the ruling, leading to the circuit court's decision.

The appellate court said the executive order violated the 1980 Refugee Act, which required the federal government to consult with local jurisdictions on implementing provisions established to resettle refugees. The court said that by requiring state and

local governments to consent to accepting refugees, the consultation requirements established in the act were no longer being followed.

Vignarajah said the agency received widespread community support as it pursued the case in the federal court system.

“The urgency of the moment calls for love and compassion and a recommitment to uphold the American legacy of hospitality for those who need it most,” Vignarajah said.

“It is our civil duty to advocate for the voiceless and hold those in power accountable for restoring the humanitarian principles that have long guided our nation's moral leadership,” she added.

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# Evictions, homelessness could rise if lawmakers override governor's veto

Advocates for the poor fear that an already dire housing crisis in the state could worsen dramatically if lawmakers override the governor's veto of a landlord-tenant bill that was rushed through last year's Indiana General Assembly.

The Indiana Catholic Conference and numerous allies warn that efforts on the part of some lawmakers to restore that legislation would undermine legal protections for renters, who make up about one-third of Indiana's population. This could lead to widespread evictions and subsequently a rapid rise in the state's homeless population during a cold winter and worsening coronavirus pandemic.

Senate Enrolled Act 148 was the result of language added to an unrelated Senate bill in the 2020 legislative session and passed with virtually no opportunity for public debate. SEA 148 was the only bill that Indiana Gov. Eric Holcomb vetoed during the session, at the time stating that the language in the legislation was "overly broad . . . preventing almost any type of local control over landlord-tenant relationships." He also pointed to the global COVID-19 pandemic,

which was beginning to profoundly alter life for Hoosiers.

"We want this veto to stand," said Angela Espada, executive director of the ICC, the public policy voice of the Catholic Church in Indiana. "We were opposed to this bill last year for a variety of reasons, including the fact that it didn't go through the normal process, and that language was added to another bill that wasn't really relevant. But at the heart of the matter was that it placed an even greater imbalance in the relationship between landlords and tenants, and it was pushed through before the pandemic hit with full force.

"All of us who stand with the most vulnerable in our communities applauded Gov. Holcomb's veto of this legislation," Espada continued. "We believe that an override of the veto in this legislative session would open avenues of severe harm for renters at most risk of eviction, many of whom are served by Catholic social service organizations such as Catholic Charities and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul."

Espada was among the participants in a virtual call-to-action meeting held earlier this month by the Hoosier Housing Needs

## INDIANA CATHOLIC CONFERENCE



BY VICTORIA ARTHUR

Coalition, an advocacy group formed last spring in large part due to concerns over SEA 148.

Even before this legislation was pushed through the General Assembly last year, Indianapolis was second in 2016 only to New York City in the number of evictions, according to Family Promise, one of the members of the coalition. In that year, 11,570 evictions occurred in the city — more than those in Chicago and Los Angeles combined.

This disproportionately high rate is due to a law structure in the state that is "heavily tilted toward landlords," according to Andrew Bradley, policy director of Prosperity Indiana, another organization in the housing coalition.

Now, Bradley and other advocates warn, the global pandemic is making a bad situation worse.

"We already had a housing crisis, and COVID-19 further exacerbates that," Bradley said. "We have evidence showing that the people who are typically low-income renters are the same people who have been hit hardest by the virus. These are people who are working in restaurants and bars, in hotels and hospitality, or in service industries like home health care. All of these people working in jobs that require them to be in-person and in close contact with others are more likely to have been laid off, and/or more likely to catch COVID themselves.

"Even before the pandemic, 40 percent of Hoosiers did not have even \$400 saved for emergency use," Bradley added. "So missing even one paycheck puts people at risk for suddenly being homeless."

He and other participants in the virtual call-to-action meeting say they are heartened by the response from a broad cross-section of organizations and concerned citizens. Now they urge members of the general public to make their voices heard with their legislators.

"This is a great opportunity for people all over the state to

get involved in advocating for the basic needs of Hoosiers," said Natalie James, coalition builder for Prosperity Indiana.

The ICC issued an action alert this week calling upon Catholics to do just that. The possible effort to overturn the governor's veto of SEA 148 also was among the subjects of the new weekly podcast hosted by Espada and Alexander Mingus, associate director of the ICC.

"We are calling upon the Catholic faithful to contact their legislators — by phone, email or both — and ask them to vote 'no' on a veto override for SEA 148," Espada said. "With fewer in-person meetings at the Statehouse due to the pandemic, these actions are more important than ever."

**To follow this and other priority legislation** of the ICC, visit [www.indianacc.org](http://www.indianacc.org). This website includes access to I-CAN, the Indiana Catholic Action Network, which offers the Church's position on key issues. Those who sign up for I-CAN receive alerts on legislation moving forward and ways to contact their elected representatives.

### ORATORY, from page 2

Old Testament book, the Song of Songs, and we heard a passage from the Song of Songs in our first reading today. The bride is seeking Him whom her heart loves, but she could not find him.

"It's the same with Mary Magdalene in the Gospel today. She is seeking the Lord whom she loved, but does not find him. She reported to the apostles: 'They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we don't know where they put him.' She went back to the tomb and wept. Her tears reveal her love." But that was not the end of her story, nor that of those who are now saved by the divine sacrifice.

Both Mass and eucharistic adoration are ordered to mission, the bishop noted.

"We who encounter Jesus in His love, like Mary Magdalene did, have a mission to show charity to our neighbors, which takes the form of concern for others, tenderness, compassion and mercy. Pope Benedict XVI called this "Eucharistic consistency." We are counter-witnesses and hypocrites if we spend a Holy Hour in adoration and go forth and show anger, disdain or malice towards our neighbor. The Eucharistic form of the Christian life is sacrificial love. This is what can transform our nation and the world which so desperately needs love and respect, peace and solidarity, justice and fraternity.

"I pray that St. Vincent de

Paul Parish will be an example in our diocese of a vibrant authentically Eucharistic Christian spirituality. As Pope Benedict taught: "the celebration and worship of the Eucharist enable us to draw near to God's love and to persevere in that love until we are united with the Lord whom we love." He prayed that St. Vincent de Paul and St. Mary Magdalene would intercede for the parish, and that like the two saints, its members might be authentic witnesses of the mystery of the Eucharist, the mystery of Christ's love.

Visitors, passers-by, those drawn to Scouting program events and all others, especially those working at, visiting or served by nearby Parkview and DuPont hospitals, are welcome and encouraged to join parishioners in prayer throughout the day, every day. The Oratory is open for silent prayer from 5 a.m. To 8 p.m. From 8 p.m. to 5 a.m. it is accessible only by those who have committed to a particular hour of nocturnal adoration and hold an electronic key, which can be obtained from the parish office.

**Angels of the Seven Churches — named in the Book of Revelation — overlook the graves of the ancestral founders of St. Vincent de Paul Parish, Fort Wayne, and the final resting place of current and future generations at the Oratory of St. Mary Magdalene, a perpetual adoration chapel and columbarium.**



# NEWS BRIEFS

## Pope amends canon law so women can be installed as lectors, acolytes

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Recognizing “the gifts of each baptized person” — women and men — Pope Francis ordered a change to canon law and liturgical norms so that women could be formally installed as lectors and acolytes. “A consolidated practice in the Latin church has confirmed, in fact, that such lay ministries, being based on the sacrament of baptism, can be entrusted to all the faithful who are suitable, whether male or female,” the pope wrote in his order changing canon law. The document, issued “*motu proprio*” (on his own accord), was published by the Vatican Jan. 11. It changes the wording of Canon 230, paragraph 1. In most dioceses around the world — and at the Vatican as well — women and girls have been lectors at Mass and have served at the altar for decades. That service was possible, not as a formally instituted ministry, but under the terms of Canon 230, paragraph 2, which allowed for women or men to carry out the functions “by temporary designation.” In a letter published with the document, Pope Francis repeated St. John Paul II’s teaching that the Catholic Church “in no way has the faculty to confer priestly ordination of women” since Jesus chose only men as His apostles. But with “nonordained ministries it is possible, and today it seems opportune, to overcome this reservation” of allowing only men to be formally and permanently instituted as lectors and acolytes.

## National Prayer Vigil for Life will be virtual this year

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Each year on the night before the annual March for Life, at least 10,000 people have filled the Great Upper Church of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington for the National Prayer Vigil for Life. This year, due to local restrictions on attendance sizes because of the pandemic, the prayer vigil will be virtual. Catholics across the country are instead being encouraged to take part in a nationwide prayer vigil from Jan. 28 through Jan. 29, marking the 48th anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court’s 1973 *Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton* decisions legalizing abortion. The vigil will begin with a live broadcast at 8 p.m. EST on Thursday, Jan. 28 from the basilica, starting with the praying of the rosary followed by Mass. Bishops from across the country will lead Holy Hours throughout the night in the livestreamed vigil. The service can be viewed on EWTN or livestreams from the basilica or from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

## Tommy Lasorda, baseball lifer and Hall of Fame manager, dies at 93



CNS photo/Larry Downing, Reuters

Hall of Fame Los Angeles Dodgers manager Tommy Lasorda stands next to his portrait before it is hung at the National Portrait Gallery in Washington Sept. 22, 2009. Lasorda, a Catholic, who led the Dodgers from 1976 to 1996, winning two World Series titles, four National League pennants and eight division crowns, died Jan. 8, at age 93. As a pitcher, Lasorda’s baseball career didn’t amount to much — an 0-4 career record with a 6.48 ERA over 58.1 innings playing two seasons with the Brooklyn Dodgers and one with the Kansas City Athletics — but as a manager he shone, winning four National League pennants and 1,599 games, all with the Dodgers. Lasorda served as a self-styled ambassador for the Catholic faith: He grew up in the Philadelphia suburb of Norristown, Pennsylvania, where he attended an Italian parish, Holy Savior.

## COVID-19 claims lives of over 200 priests in Italy since start of pandemic

ROME (CNS) — Of the more than 76,000 people known to have died of COVID-19 in Italy the past 11 months, more than 200 were priests, according to the Catholic newspaper, *Avvenire*. Already four priests have died since the start of 2021, the newspaper said Jan. 6, adding that the cumulative toll amounts to about one death every one and a half days since the pandemic began. Some 204 priests, many of whom were still actively serving their communities, have died in Italy as of early January, the newspaper reported. While the majority of men were in their late 70s and 80s, one of the youngest to have lost his life was 58-year-old Father Alfredo Nicolardi of the

Diocese of Como, who died Dec. 31. Hospitalized Dec. 8, his condition worsened and, right before he had to be intubated, he asked a visiting priest for absolution “through the glass” separating them. Vocationist Father Matteo Mpampanye, who was born in Congo and was serving in parishes south of Salerno, died Dec. 1 at age 51.

## Virtual retreats offer boost for spiritual health

CONCORDIA, Kan. (CNS) — The coronavirus pandemic has created the conditions for a spiritual crisis, but a traditional retreat at a house run by women religious isn’t necessarily COVID-19 friendly. Though the Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia, Kansas, have long offered one-on-one spiritual direction — with the

sisters and staff of Manna House of Prayer also offering directed retreats on a variety of topics — the threat of COVID-19 has made most in-person meetings impossible or impractical. The sisters at Manna House quickly assessed the situation and began offering both spiritual direction and many of their retreats virtually. Virtual spiritual direction is not new to Manna House. Several of the spiritual directors had previously used video calls or messaging platforms to reach out across long distances to offer their services. They used that experience — and the addition of other technology tools like Zoom — to increase their reach in 2020 as the pandemic swept across the country. “In these times of COVID-19 and all of the uncertainty and suffering it has caused, the heartbreak of losing loved ones, jobs, markets, businesses and the future that we’d dreamed of or banked on, it is sometimes helpful to

have a ‘spiritual companion’ or ‘soul friend’ to visit with about the deepest concerns and questions that haunt us,” said Sister Marcia Allen, a spiritual director at Manna House.

## Quebec government closes places of worship for a month

QUEBEC CITY (CNS) — Churches and all places of worship are once again closing in the province of Quebec in an effort to stop the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. This decision is part of a new series of containment measures announced by Premier Francois Legault Jan. 6. Places of worship will be closed from Jan. 9 to Feb. 8. Only funerals will be authorized, but limited to 10 people. The government of Quebec announced stricter rules Jan. 6, including a curfew from 8 p.m. to 5 a.m. “It’s urgent to reduce contacts between Quebecers,” said Legault, asking citizens to leave their homes only when absolutely necessary. “We are in a race against time and, right now, the virus is going faster than us. We need to strike a blow if we want to save lives and if we want to continue to be able to heal our world,” he said. During his news conference, Legault mentioned some “problems” with places of worship but did not go into details, simply saying they’ll also be closed — along with many other public places, including nonessential stores — for at least a month.

## Pope marks opening of Holy Door at Santiago de Compostela

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pilgrims who embark on the long journey of the Camino to Santiago de Compostela remind others of the spiritual journey all Christians make through life toward heaven, Pope Francis said. In a letter marking the opening of the Holy Door at the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela, the pope said that just like countless pilgrims who embark on the famed Camino toward the tomb of St. James the Great each year, Christians are “a pilgrim people” who do not travel toward “a utopic ideal but rather a concrete goal. The pilgrim is capable of placing himself or herself in God’s hands, aware that the promised homeland is present in the one who wished to make camp amid his people, to guide their journey,” the pope wrote in the letter sent to Archbishop Julian Barrio Barrio of Santiago de Compostela and published Dec. 31. The Holy Year is celebrated in Compostela in years when the July 25 feast of the apostle falls on a Sunday. The most recent Holy Year was observed in 2010. For centuries, pilgrims have traveled along the famed Camino de Santiago de Compostela to venerate the remains of St. James.

# CHA letter to Biden reveals extensive list of health care priorities

BY MARK PATTISON

WASHINGTON (CNS) — The Catholic Health Association issued an extensive list of priorities it would like President-elect Joe Biden's administration to pursue.

Those priorities include strengthening the Affordable Care Act, increasing access to affordable health care, making senior citizens a priority, removing barriers to health care access by immigrants, and increased focus on the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

"It will take a highly coordinated federal response to bring the virus under control and stabilize our nation's health care delivery system," said Mercy Sister Mary Haddad, CHA president, in a Jan. 7 letter to Biden, Vice President Kamala Harris and the Biden transition team. The text of the five-page, 2,100-word letter was released Jan. 8 by the CHA.

Sister Haddad said she wants to see, among other things, improved supply and distribution of COVID-19 vaccines as well as that of personal protective equipment and COVID-19 testing kits.

"Our long-term care facilities and other programs," she said, "did not receive protective equipment or testing when they needed it. Then, when help did arrive, the initial equipment was often of poor quality and not usable."

Moreover, she said, "we recommend that this administration place a priority on the needs of seniors and those who provide services for them. As efforts are made to address what led to the devastating impact the virus had in long-term care, we urge that the mental health and quality of life as well as the infection control needs be considered."

To bulk up the Affordable Care Act and increase insurance coverage, Sister Haddad suggested that the incoming administration "open a special enrollment period in the federal health insurance marketplaces to provide health coverage options for those who have lost insurance during this pandemic," and to "invest in

public marketing and outreach activities to increase enrollment in ACA plans."

Sister Haddad said the Biden administration should "work with Congress to make coverage truly affordable for individuals and families by providing a marketplace reinsurance program; addressing the 'family glitch' that disqualifies families from the marketplace premium tax credits when employer coverage is available but unaffordable for families; increasing premium subsidies and capping premiums for those with incomes below 400% of the federal poverty level."

She added the administration could also combat racism by addressing health equity issues. Two ways to do that, Sister Haddad said, would be to "address the disparate effect of COVID-19 on people of color and their communities by directing additional funding and support to states, localities and community-based organizations for targeted outreach, testing and treatment for vulnerable individuals and communities," and to "increase language assistance resources and outreach for limited-English-proficient populations."

She said Medicaid can be strengthened by rescinding the proposed Medicaid Fiscal Accountability Rule and recent rules that weaken the maintenance of effort protections for Medicaid enrollees; "eliminating Medicaid work requirements and other barriers to eligibility in state waivers"; and "working with states and Congress to expand Medicaid coverage to ensure the most vulnerable have access to needed timely care, including 12-month post-partum care for pregnant women."

To improve health care outcomes for immigrants and refugees, Sister Haddad recommended that the Biden administration "protect and continue" the Deferred Action on Childhood Arrivals program and rescind "the harmful 'public charge' rule promulgated by the previous administration. The addition of Medicaid and other federal

# AROUND THE DIOCESE

## Living out the Gospel



Provided by Anita Senesac

Giving lovingly and freely to those in need, as the Gospel commands, is a practice young people who are preparing for the sacrament of confirmation are asked to adopt via service projects. But two back-to-back quarantines from COVID-19 exposure stymied Elizabeth Alarie's attempts to complete her service hours, so the St. Paul of the Cross candidate got creative — deciding to bake and sell cookies out of her home, with the profits going to a shopping spree. The four carts of items Elizabeth purchased were donated to the Columbia City St. Vincent de Paul food pantry.



CNS photo/Lucy Nicholson, Reuters

People in Los Angeles line up in their vehicles at Dodger Stadium for the COVID-19 test Jan. 4.

assistance programs to the definition of public charge for legal immigrants has been detrimental to their health and well-being and an additional burden on our health care system."

Noting the disparity between rich and poor exacerbated by the pandemic, she said the administration should "provide flexibility in federal health programs to address health-related social needs" and "strengthen federal programs and policies

that address the social needs of low-income individuals such as Supplemental Security Income, the Earned Income Tax Credit, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, the National School Lunch Program and housing benefits such as rental assistance," among others.

Sister Haddad also asked that the incoming administration honor "reasonable conscience

protections to allow Catholic health facilities to continue to provide health care in accord with our religious and moral convictions."

"We urge your administration to work with us as you develop your legislative and regulatory agendas," she wrote Biden, "to ensure that Catholic hospitals and health care facilities can continue to provide vital health care services to their communities and those most in need."



Photos provided by Jonelle Lesniak

Continuing to provide a safe, faith-based education became a challenge for Catholic schools of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend last spring. A focused effort by Holy Family School in South Bend accomplished it, and by fall a large number of students had returned to in-person learning and even received sacraments.

## Holy Family School: Trust mitigates pandemic's challenges

BY JILL A. BOUGHTON

Having a strong parish and school community has enabled Holy Family School to thrive despite all the changes wrought by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.

Because a plan for e-learning was already in place for inclement weather, the end of in-person schooling last spring went relatively smoothly. "It wasn't perfect, but it was swift. Our staff, including the support staff, came together beautifully," said principal Jennifer Veldman. The school counselor made home visits, and disadvantaged students received technology so they could access virtual learning. There were even food deliveries from the on-site pantry to families affected by job loss. Virtual contests built school unity despite months of separation.

The new school was slated to start on Aug. 13, so there was a virtual back-to-school night Aug. 12. But the Holy Family staff didn't want to begin welcoming students into the building until every safety measure was in place. Funding provided by the coronavirus relief bill for personal protective equipment was administered by the South Bend Community School Corporation, and state approval was slow in coming, so everyone learned at home for the first two weeks. After that, each family could choose what felt best for them.

Out of 260 students, only 57 opted to learn virtually; by the second quarter, that number was down to 24.



Holy Family School principal Jennifer Veldman, right, and office assistant Lori Hester, left, pitch in to clean when the South Bend school's custodians were quarantined last year. Careful observation of sanitizing, spacing and keeping students in small cohorts have helped limit the incidence of COVID-19 at the school and allow in-person learning in addition to virtual.

"Families trust us," explained Veldman. Careful observation of sanitizing, spacing and keeping students in small cohorts have helped limit the incidence of COVID-19 to seven students and four staff members; none seem to have contracted the virus at school.

School nurse Beth Kirk and the St. Joseph County Department of Health made sure every family was informed of each incident. All students are met in the parking lot and their temperatures checked before they even enter the building.

If only one family chose to keep their student at home, their teachers would post daily lessons for them. They also have designated Google Meet "office hours" to offer personal assistance.

For some subjects, at-home learners participate in a classroom livestream; for others, they work individually at their own pace on the material the teacher designates.

It's extra, energy-draining work for the teachers, who look forward to scheduled breaks like the Christmas holidays. Understanding this, their principal frequently asks: "What do you need? How can I support

you?" There is open communication about the challenges as well as the successes.

Each student attends Mass twice a week, once in person and once via livestream. In the principal's words, "Holy Family has worked diligently to keep our Catholic faith alive during the pandemic." Pastor Father Glenn Kehrman and associates are still invited into classrooms, and students in prekindergarten through second grade still participate in Catechesis of the Good Shepherd every week.

Teachers have adapted to the new reality in creative ways. For example, instead of having her students sing hymns used in the liturgy, the music teacher has been teaching them motions to the lyrics.

As Veldman sees it, the greatest challenge is closely related to the school's greatest strength. "We are a family," she said. "In a normal year, we frequently welcome parent volunteers and other guests into our classrooms, host all-school events to showcase our school, and group our students in 'houses' with members from every grade. We're doing our best, with the help of weekly newsletters and posts on social media, but it isn't quite the same."

*"Holy Family has worked diligently to keep our Catholic faith alive during the pandemic."*

PRINCIPAL JENNIFER VELDMAN

Teacher Jennifer Grindle —

# 'There's nothing God's going to hand us that we can't get through together'

BY JENNIFER BARTON

Middle school is possibly the most difficult age of childhood development, bringing changes and struggles in all areas of preteen life. Jennifer Grindle remembers these difficulties, which is what led her to become a middle school teacher. This is Grindle's third year teaching middle school math and seventh grade religion at St. Michael School in Plymouth.

In years past, St. Michael had no middle school and Grindle, an alumna of the school, had a hard time adjusting to the public middle school to which she transitioned as a student. But she had two middle school teachers who changed my perspective on life, she said. "From that moment on, I knew I was going to be a middle school teacher."

Grindle took the experience to heart in her role as a teacher and mentor, particularly in the Catholic school setting. She sees herself as "that calming person" in the middle of the storms life sometimes brings to her students, particularly this year. Beyond teaching math equations, and the Catholic faith, she tries to help them manage the emotional challenges they face on a day-to-day basis. "Supporting the students mentally and developing their emotional side is for sure my favorite part about teaching."

Since math tends to be a subject dreaded by many students, her goal is to keep things "fun and positive." That put her in a predicament earlier in the school

year when Grindle made the difficult decision to teach virtually for the first month or so. One of her three children is at high risk for COVID-19, so she worked with the principal and other staff to allow her to work from home for a time.

In making the decision her greatest worry was potential backlash from the community of parents and staff. She soon learned that those fears were unfounded.

"All I got was outpouring support" both from parents and other teachers, both of whom understood her reasoning.

That month she kept a busy schedule, ensuring she was not leaving her work undone. Early mornings and afternoons were spent helping her first grade twins and third grader with their own schoolwork. The rest of the day – minus lunchtime – she was logged on virtually to teach her class. Evenings found Grindle in her classroom, collecting papers to grade and preparing student binders for the next day. She spent Sundays at school also, listening to music while making copies of the week's work and getting lessons ready.

Throughout that time, she found herself amazed by the hard work and adaptability of her students. "I think we forget how resilient our youth is," Grindle remarked. "And watching the students persevere through the different situations and the support they have shown me has been really neat. I don't know that you would see that everywhere."

Once her son was medically

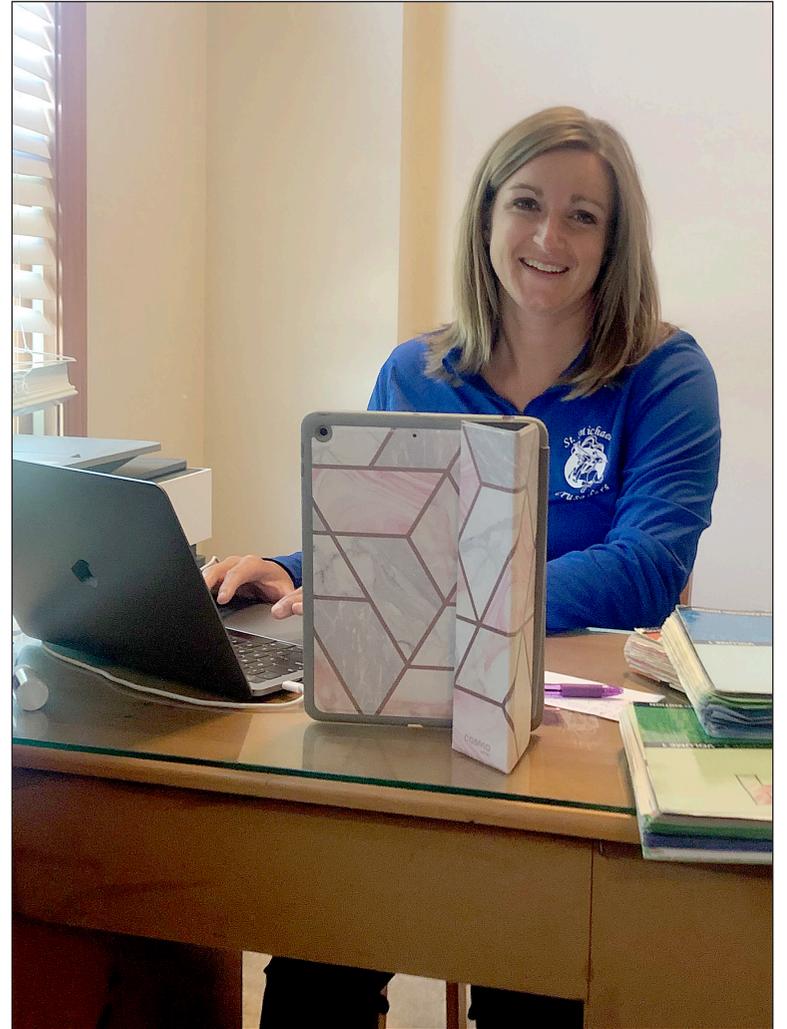
cleared to return to school, she was grateful to reenter the classroom. She views her situation as a teaching opportunity in itself. Through conversations with her students, she emphasized to them that "there's nothing God's going to hand us that we can't get through together."

That has certainly been the case at St. Michael, where two other teachers, both members of the intervention team, agreed to be present in the classroom to make it possible for her to teach virtually. They collected papers, handed out assignments and observed the students at work. This was beneficial also because one is a resource teacher and the other is an English language learner teacher, so they were able to observe students' needs and habits.

Prior to coming to St. Michael, Grindle worked at a public high school and middle school. For her to now be able to incorporate the Catholic faith into her classroom is a blessing.

Since most of the students at St. Michael will move into public high schools after graduation, she believes it is vital to lay a strong foundation of faith before they make that transition. She stated that "being able to make those kids comfortable with their faith and understand it's something to be proud of, not something that they should be ashamed of, I think that's one of my biggest things."

"Just reiterating to them, when people question you about your faith, that's OK, that's a time to be able to express the importance of it, to teach others and to share the faith."



Photos provided by Jennifer Grindle

**Jennifer Grindle teaches math and religion to middle schoolers at St. Michael School, Plymouth. This fall she shared many of the students' lessons with them virtually, from her home, due to the pandemic.**

Being in a Catholic school is not simply about teaching the faith to her students but learning from them as well. "It's been twofold – I teach them, but then at the same time while you're teaching them, while you're reiterating the faith to them, it has been really neat to see it yourself."

This year, she included a Scripture writing exercise in class that helps students delve into Bible passages and find areas that stand out to each one personally. It has been interesting for Grindle to see what words or phrases have meaning to different students.

Though her post-graduation plans did not initially include working at her former grade school, when the opportunity to be in the same building as her children came up, she made the switch. What struck her most about coming to a Catholic school was the feeling of peace at the school.

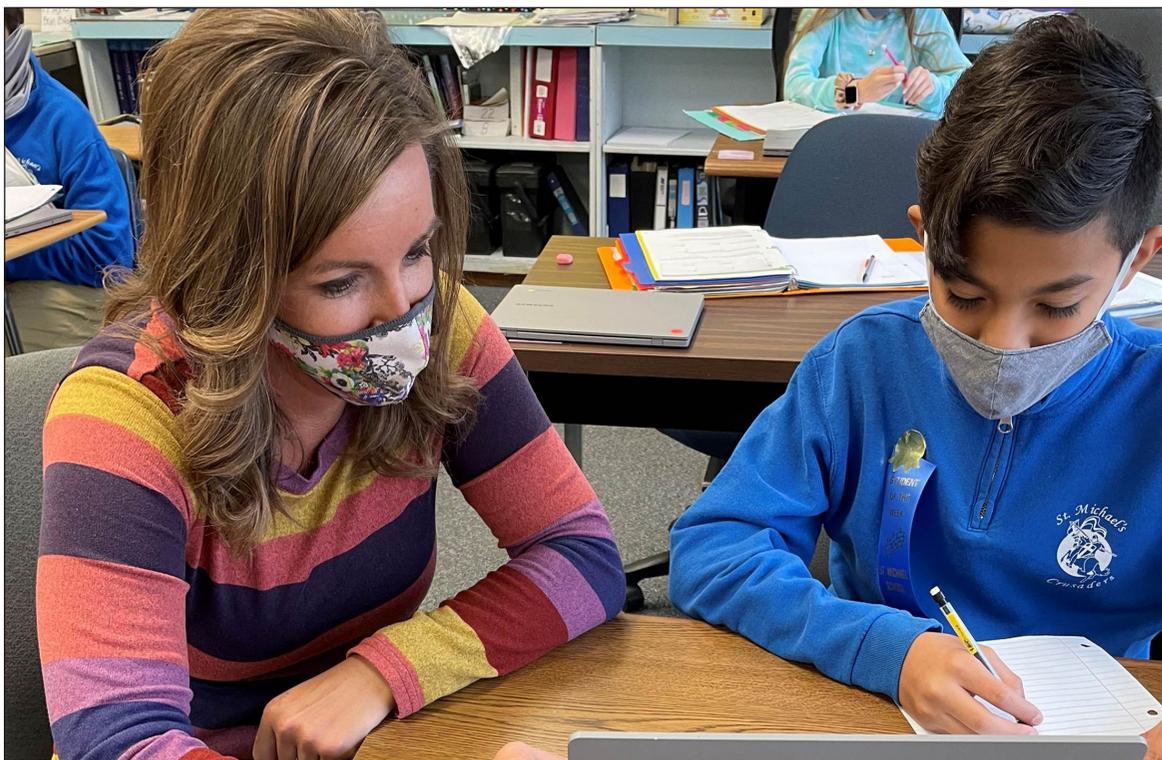
"Our principal said to me when I applied that St. Michael's has a sense of peace in our building, and that was very true. I didn't totally understand what she meant, but it was enticing to me."

Throughout her years of

teaching, Grindle has found fulfillment in watching her students grow and thrive. One of her students this year made great strides in maturity and work ethic from last year, for example. She was also privileged to be a confirmation sponsor two years ago for a student.

Her efforts to mentor young students earned her the Christ the Teacher award for St. Michael School this year. Learning that she had won the award came as a surprise to her, though she was pleased the staff recognized the hard work she put into her classwork, even when she could not be physically present.

"I couldn't do it without the support staff, from administration to the other teachers who helped me. The other thing is the quality of character in our students — I don't think I could have done the virtual thing in every building."



**In the classroom, Grindle helps a students with math questions. Grindle has been teaching at St. Michael for three years and embraces her mentorship role.**

# Superstars of service: Antonio Marchi

BY TAMI DELUCENAY

Antioch Youth Community serves teens in St. Joseph County and offers them the opportunity to know, love and serve Christ. Antonio Marchi directs the ministry, which is a cooperation between St. Monica, St. Bavo and St. Joseph parishes in Mishawaka.

"I have lived in the South Bend/Mishawaka area my whole life. My wife Jenny and I were part of the Antioch community as teenagers," Marchi recalled. "We returned to lead the community four years ago. Antioch has served as one of the most consistent blessings of our marriage and family life."

Antioch has a special place in the heart of the Marchi family, as Antonio and Jenny both experienced strong fruits of conversion being part of the community throughout their own teenage years. As they seek to center their married and family life around Christ, they say they are humbled by the opportunity to continue growing alongside the teens.

Antioch ministry came together more than 10 years ago as a way to provide fellowship and deepen the spirituality of Catholic teens at the three parishes, which at the time were not able to sustain individual youth groups. It has continued to thrive under the direction of faithful couples like the Marchis and the involvement of caring priests.



Teenagers at Antioch Youth Community in Mishawaka make a visible sign of their specific commitments to Christ at the close of a summer retreat led by Antonio Marchi at St. Joseph Parish, Mishawaka.

Photos provided by Antonio Marchi

"The ministry has dedicated adult volunteers who have been impacted by Antioch; some for the past two decades. The teens and adults involved with seek fidelity to Christ above all else. We gather weekly to pray and deepen our formation, growing in knowledge, love and service of Christ," he said.

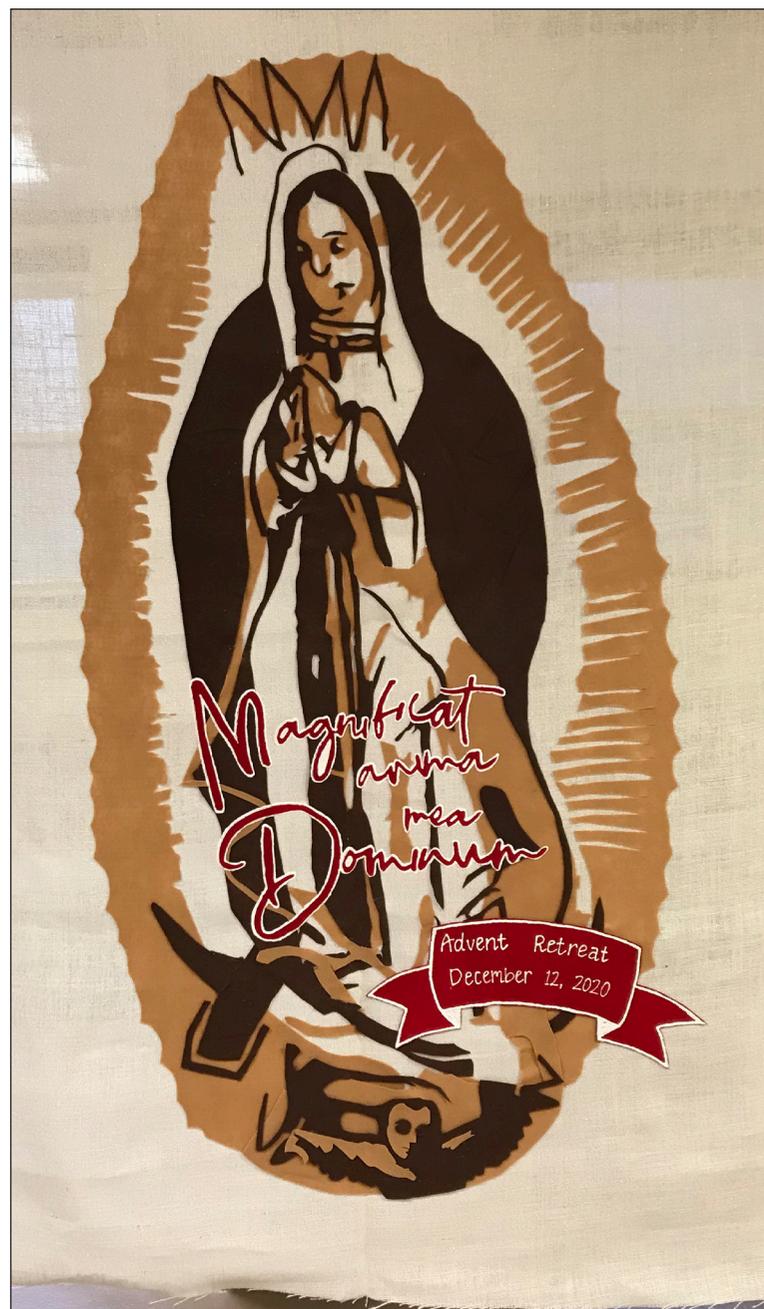
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An Our Lady of Guadalupe banner displays the central theme of an Antioch Youth Community Advent retreat at St. Felix Catholic Center in Huntington: "Magnificat anima mea Dominum." Director Antonio Marchi said the retreat was an opportunity to dwell on the Blessed Mother's model of perfect discipleship.

## Youth Ministry Leaders

evening begins with a holy hour of adoration. Afterward, they gather in community from 7 to 9 p.m.

"Our time together is spent in worship, prayer, formation, study of Scripture and sacred tradition, along with some time for recreation," explained Marchi. "The Antioch teens hunger for truth, seeking to deepen their conversions as we draw nearer to Him."

Through the ministry teens have opportunities throughout the year to take time away from their busy lives and go on retreat. Last summer, a powerful retreat took place at St. Joseph. Such moments bring together young people closer to each other and to the Lord, as they rely on the generosity of others to provide food and prayer support by signing up for an hour of adoration. More recently, the teens celebrated the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe at St. Felix Catholic Center in Huntington. It was an opportunity to dwell on the Blessed Mother's model of perfect discipleship, said Marchi.

"This retreat offered a period of silence to practice hearing the word of God as His Mother Mary did. The teens reflected most especially on Mary's Magnificat and discovered their own personal fiat."

"Many teens are wrestling with the circumstances that have been out of their control during these difficult times and have come to terms that perfect peace comes from putting Christ first," said Marchi. "As we focused on our Blessed Mother's Magnificat and learned to cry out 'my soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,' even in the midst of the challenges we face, we came away with a sense of peace knowing that our Lord is with us through all seasons."

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# Parish missions provide opportunity to spend time focused on the Lord

BY KEVIN KILBANE

## Parish missions offer chance for spiritual growth, renewal

As a recent convert to the Catholic faith, McKenna Eltzroth wanted to get more involved in her parish, St. Joseph in Bluffton.

"It's really important for me to plant roots in the parish in Wells County," Eltzroth, 21, of Liberty Center, said of attending the parish mission Dec. 7-9 at St. Joseph.

Fellow parishioners Barbara and Robert Whitacre, both age 73, of Berne, thought attending a parish mission would strengthen their prayer life, Barbara said. They also had met this year's parish mission guest speaker, Father Stephen Felicichia, when he was a deacon at St. Joseph and thought he was a great preacher.

Parish missions provide an opportunity for connection and spiritual growth and renewal.

"It's another chance, another offering, for parishioners to deepen their relationship with the Lord," said Father David Violi, St. Joseph pastor.

Parish missions frequently invite parishioners and visitors to gather on three or four consecutive nights for prayer, worship and presentations by guest speakers. Missions often take place during seasons of preparation, such as Advent and Lent, but also are scheduled for other times of the year. There's no set format.

"Missions are like most things: They are only limited by the imagination," Father Violi said.

In 2019, for example, St. Joseph Parish held an Advent

parish mission that featured different guest speakers on three different weekends, he said.

This past December, St. Joseph's parish mission adjusted to the coronavirus pandemic by offering both in-person attendance and a livestream on Facebook for people who couldn't attend or who didn't feel comfortable being there in person because of health concerns. Those who were interested also could view a recording of the livestream at a later time or re-watch mission events, Father Violi said.

The parish decided to have only one guest speaker this year, Father Felicichia, parochial vicar at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Fort Wayne. He had served as deacon at St. Joseph and also stayed there last year between the date that his seminary closed in early 2020 because of the coronavirus pandemic and when he started his assignment at St. Elizabeth in late June.

Father Felicichia had an hour to speak the first night. The next two evenings, including the feast of the Immaculate Conception on Dec. 8, consisted mainly of Mass, with Father Felicichia giving the homily.

"It is not just a speaker you are listening to," Father Violi said. "It is sacrificing. It is taking time out of your day to hear about the Lord."

Father Felicichia's presentation and homilies focused on the theme of God becoming man and the supernatural breaking into the natural world. Eltzroth,

*Attending a parish*

*mission provides*

*"a kind of recharge."*

FATHER FRANCIS CHUKWUMA

who attended the parish mission in person, said the talks made her feel at peace because they assured her there are divine forces working on behalf of mankind.

The Whitacres participated virtually because of coronavirus concerns, the more than 10-mile drive one-way from home to church, and their desire to avoid driving at night, Barbara said. Watching online worked well for them.

Taking part in parish missions helps them grow spiritually and to remember things they have been taught over the years, she said. They also enjoyed praying the rosary, which keeps them strong in their faith and reminds them of the mysteries in God's life, she added.

Attending a parish mission provides "a kind of recharge," said Father Francis Chukwuma, pastor of St. John Bosco Parish in Churubusco and Immaculate

Conception Parish in Ege. "The glow of the lamp, it sometimes gets a little dim."

St. John Bosco offered a parish mission during Lent 2019 and Immaculate Conception began a mission in March 2020. The latter was cut short by one day because of state restrictions on public gatherings at the start of the coronavirus pandemic.

Father Chukwuma said both parishes started planning their missions about a year ahead. The process included looking at each parish's needs and vision and making plans to address those topics during the mission.

As part of each parish mission, he said, parishioners also were asked to do a self-assess-

ment and to ask themselves what they will do to help the parish and to be a witness of faith to others.

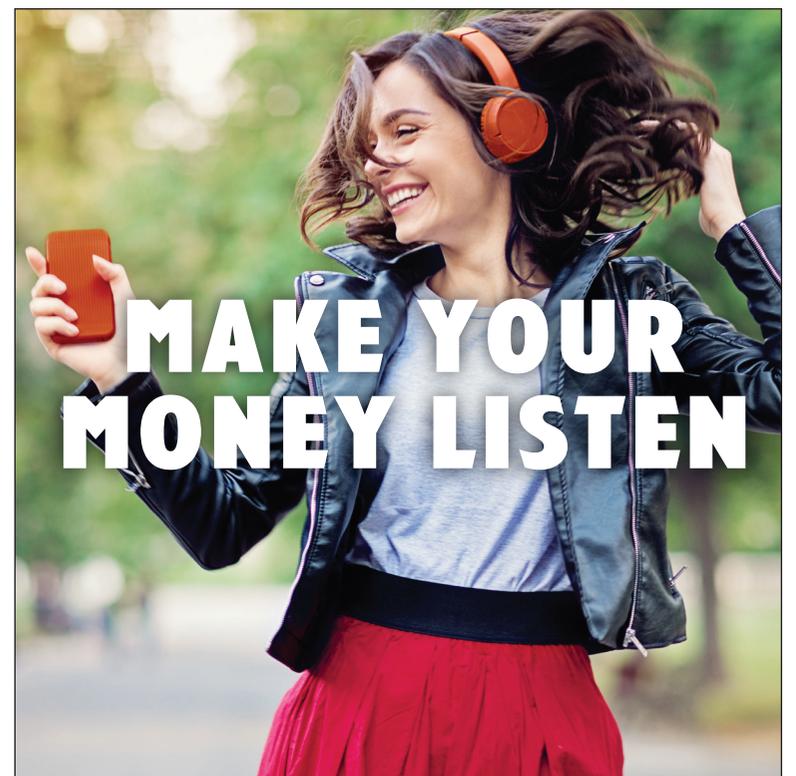
After each mission, people who attended seemed more welcoming to others, Father Chukwuma said.

A number of other parishes had parish missions planned for last year but canceled or postponed them because of coronavirus risk or health restrictions.

With hope that coronavirus vaccines soon will end the pandemic, St. John and Immaculate Conception parishes plan to focus this year on getting people back to Mass and to parish life rather than to plan a parish mission, Father Chukwuma said.

St. Joseph hopes to hold a mission this year during Lent, Father Violi said.

"We don't know yet what it will look like," he added.



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Provided by St. Joseph Parish, Bluffton

People listen to Father Stephen Felicichia speak during a parish mission Dec. 7 at St. Joseph Parish in Bluffton. Father Felicichia, a parochial vicar at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Fort Wayne, spoke during all three nights of the mission.

## With Biden in office, here is the way forward

Even in a normal year, the juxtaposition of the U.S. presidential inauguration and the anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Roe v. Wade* (1973) is jarring.

2021 is not a normal year.

On Jan. 20, Joseph R. Biden Jr. will be sworn in as the 46th president of the United States. While approximately 22% of all Americans are Catholics, President Biden will be only the second Catholic in 232 years to attain that office.

Like the previous Catholic president, John F. Kennedy, Biden is a member of the Democratic Party. Unlike his predecessor, who died in office in 1963 before a single U.S. state had legalized abortion for any reason, Joe Biden's entire political life has been conducted in the shadow of *Roe v. Wade*.

Two days after President Biden's inauguration, the country will mark the 48th anniversary of *Roe*, a case that the freshly minted junior senator from Delaware declared in early 1973 "was not correctly decided," adding that "the right of abortion was not secured by the Constitution."

That anniversary will be a defining moment in Joe Biden's presidency, and in the history of the Catholic Church in America.

This editorial board congratulates President Biden on becoming the second Catholic to attain the highest office in the land. We urge him to use that office to bring the wisdom of Catholic teaching to bear on all aspects of American policy, foreign and domestic. We pray that his own faith will be

strengthened, and that he will reconsider those areas in which he personally and politically departs from Catholic teaching — chief among them the protection of the unborn.

As Catholics actively engaged in the public life of our nation, we recognize that no single politician and no political party fully represents the totality of Catholic social teaching. Prudence requires us not only to choose wisely among imperfect candidates but to remain politically engaged even when the imperfect candidate we prefer loses to another imperfect candidate.

Political engagement in those circumstances cannot and should not always take the form of opposition. In those areas where proposed policies are aligned with the vision of the common good set forth by the Catholic Church, we as Catholic Americans should follow the example of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, who have lent their support over the years to all good policies, regardless of the political persuasion of those who have put them forward. Where such policies fall short, we should propose alternatives (again, as the USCCB has often done). And on those occasions when proposed policies would undermine the common good and threaten the health or the very lives of the most vulnerable, we must vigorously oppose such actions — even if the candidate for whom we voted is now the elected official proposing such policies.

As Catholics, our commitment must be to the truth, not to any particular political party, much

### GUEST COMMENTARY

OSV EDITORIAL BOARD

less to a single politician. And the truth is that those who govern us do so only because, as Christ Himself said to Pontius Pilate, God has granted them that authority. That doesn't mean, of course, that every manner in which Congress or the president exercises that authority is necessarily prudent or even just. But when it is just, we are called to assent to that authority.

And when that authority is exercised unjustly, we must stand up for the truth.

On Jan. 22, 1993, the 20th anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*, newly inaugurated President Bill Clinton issued an executive order repealing the Mexico City Policy, which banned the distribution of federal funds to organizations that advocate abortion in other countries. First instituted by President Ronald Reagan in 1984, the Mexico City Policy has since become a symbolic way for new presidents to prove their loyalty to their respective party's platform on abortion. And the anniversary of *Roe* has become the time to do it.

On Jan. 22, 2001, President George W. Bush reinstated the Mexico City Policy; on Jan. 23,

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## We need grace to succeed in our resolutions

I learned the act of contrition in second grade. Mrs. Tartamella would patiently practice with us every day. We'd go through the prayer line by line, and when we'd get to "I firmly resolve, with the help of thy grace, to sin no more ..." there'd be a huge emphasis on the middle part of the phrase.

"With the help of thy grace ..."

It was almost sing-song the way we'd say it, a gaggle of 7-year-old kids learning a prayer we will hopefully say thousands of times throughout the course of our lives, emphasizing "thy grace," as if we fully comprehended what it meant. I'm not sure I even know what it means now.

It's an emphasis on God's grace — freely given, abundantly bestowed. It's what truly matters, and in the grand scheme of things, it is God's grace that transforms us, spurs us on, heals deep wounds and helps us make good on that resolution to sin no more.

As 2021 begins — a year so many of us are relieved has finally arrived, hoping it'll be better than the year we've just left behind — we are making resolutions. Firmly resolving a lot of things, we may find ourselves in this early part of the new year trying to think of ways to make things easier, happier, holier and healthier.

Some of our resolutions are probably boilerplate: eat healthy, exercise, pray more, go to bed before midnight. Maybe they're



### WINDOW SEAT WISDOM

KATIE PREJEAN MCGRADY

quite significant resolutions, involving bigger investments than just not swinging by Chick-fil-A for an iced coffee every morning after school drop-off.

Wherever those resolutions fit on the "I'll do better this year" spectrum, I dare say that most of us launching into this year with at least a small desire to do some things differently will need significant help to actually make good on our resolutions.

And the help will come with "thy grace."

It has to.

Because whether it's choosing fruit over ice cream for dessert or working to root out implicit bias and defeat racism in our homes and communities, the good work we resolve to do in this new year is only done because we are spurred on, transformed, healed and aided by the free, abundant, life-changing gift of God's grace.

We can each make the resolution. We can each declare the good thing we want to do. We can even post those resolutions on social media. On our own, with just a desire and some commonplace habit building, we

MCGRADY, page 13

## The Lord is calling us to be His disciples: How will you respond?



### THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

MSGR. OWEN F. CAMPION

### Second Sunday in Ordinary Time John 1:35-42

The First Book of Samuel is the source of the first reading for this weekend. Originally, First and Second Samuel were one volume. At some point in history, an editor divided them into the two volumes, and so two volumes appear in Bible translations today.

As the title of these books implies, the central figure is Samuel, a prophet active centuries before Christ.

Prophets were highly revered throughout the history of the chosen people. They were regarded as being God's special

representatives, but, also, they personally were very holy and devoted to God. At times, prophets resisted their calling initially. Such was the case of the great prophets, Isaiah, Ezekiel and Jeremiah. After all was said and done, they accommodated themselves to God's will and accepted the call to be prophets.

These figures were admired because the call to be a prophet was seen precisely as a call, as a summons, as a commission from God, and an empowerment and emboldening.

In this weekend's reading, God calls Samuel. It occurs according to God's plan. Samuel is open to hearing God, indeed ready to hear God, but Samuel cannot hurry the divine plan.

St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians supplies the second reading for this weekend. Many of the Pauline writings are lustrous in their clear revelation of the bond between true believers and Jesus. Jesus was the Son of God, but also human, in a mystery that theologians call the incarnation. The incarnation is a

great, fundamental and essential fact of Christian belief.

In this belief, committed Christians, in faith and baptism, are inseparably bound to Jesus, both in a shared human nature, but also in the divine life given believers by Christ.

This supernatural bond, the very keystone of personal salvation, requires Christians not only to be spiritually faithful but faithful in every sense of their lives. They must reject carnal sin.

Stressing this point to the Christian Corinthians seems for some to be excessive for Paul, but it should be remembered, Corinth was known near and far as a virtual capital of lewdness and vice.

St. John's Gospel furnishes the last reading. It is a story about the decision to follow Jesus by Simon, later known as Peter, and Simon's brother, Andrew. In the story, Jesus intrigues Andrew and Simon. The brothers recognize Jesus as Messiah. They thirst for salvation with its peace and promise. Jesus calls them, and they follow.

To indicate their new lives, Jesus gives Simon a new name, Cephas, that is often translated as Peter.

### Reflection

The Church, in the majesty and glory of its liturgy, called us all to celebrate the birth of Christ at Christmas, revealing to us that Jesus was the son of Mary, therefore a human, as she was only human despite her unique holiness and singular place in the divine plan of redemption.

Two weeks later, it celebrated the feast of the Epiphany, revealing to us the fact that Jesus, born in Bethlehem, was divine, the Son of God, and that redemption is God's gift for all people.

Then, the Church brought us to the Baptism of the Lord. He is our Savior, rescuing us from our sin. So the Church, with the greatest joy and hope, has introduced us to the Lord.

Each time, the Church tells us that we are called as Samuel and the Apostles were called. We are

being touched by God's grace.

The Church now urges us, hearing these readings and celebrating these feasts, to respond, asking ourselves what does Christ truly mean to each of us?

How should we react to the Lord? St. Paul gives very concrete advice. Samuel, Peter and Andrew are examples. We must willingly follow Christ in every way.

### READINGS

**Sunday:** 1 Sm 3:3b-10, 19 Ps 40:2, 4, 7-10 1 Cor 6:13c-15a, 17-20 Jn 1:35-42

**Monday:** Heb 5:1-10 Ps 110:1-4 Mk 2:18-22

**Tuesday:** Heb 6:10-20 Ps 111:1-2, 4-5, 9, 10c Mk 2:23-28

**Wednesday:** Heb 7:1-3, 15-17 Ps 110:1-4 Mk 3:1-6

**Thursday:** Heb 7:25—8:6 Ps 40:7-10, 17 Mk 3:7-12

**Friday:** Heb 8:6-13 Ps 85:8, 10, 11-14 Mk 3:13-19

**Saturday:** Heb 9:2-3, 11-14 Ps 47:2-3, 6-9 Mk 3:20-21

# Stepping back from the brink

Jan. 6, 2021, was an epiphany of sorts for Americans who watched in horror as a mob breached the U.S. Capitol, assaulted police and vandalized offices. It was both shockingly unexpected and shockingly unsurprising given growing extremism, a polarized electorate and the relentless marketing of allegations that a huge, if unproven, conspiracy had stolen the election.

This has been an age of conspiracies, so the soil has been well prepared by such weirdly gnostic phenomena like “Q,” and outrageous allegations of perversion and murder on the part of political opponents. Was anyone surprised that almost as soon as the Capitol was cleared, voices on social media were asserting that antifa — the anti-fascist bête noire of various nationalist and white supremacist factions — had cleverly engineered the debacle?

Yet what unfolded before our eyes was obvious and terrible: Confederate flags waving from the halls of the Capitol. Signs reading “Jesus saves” being held above the rioting crowd. Attackers battling the police and committing acts of vandalism while lawmakers cowered. At times it had the eerie look of a zombie apocalypse movie.

Those cowering lawmakers and their parties, collectively, bear some of the blame for the state we find ourselves in. Many Catholic leaders and others have been warning of the perils of polarization. As each side demonizes the other — making

dialogue, compromise or even mutual understanding impossible — the gulf between us has grown.

With it is added a toxic mix of self-righteousness and victimhood. Because we believe ourselves both in the right and unfairly treated, we confer on ourselves a special status that obviates any need to understand, much less compromise with, those we believe are to blame.

The attack on the Capitol was both the nadir of this polarized state that imprisons us and a foretaste of how bad it will become if we don't commit to a different path.

Unfortunately, if we look to social media for this different path, we are unlikely to find much solace. Social media has become the psycho playground of the nation's id. The level of discussion is not much loftier than two kids yelling at each other: “You started it!” “No, you did!”

If we continue to frame every issue in apocalyptic terms, we leave no room for anything other than an apocalypse. It is the antithesis of what a democracy should be, and it is the antithesis of Christian dialogue and charity.

Despite the hand-wringing, despite President-elect Joe Biden's stated intention to unite not divide, the forces of greed and division seem stronger than the pull of unity.

There is money to be made in extremism, not moderation or dialogue. Feeding the sense of entitlement or grievance pays. Too many people across the ideological divide are too finan-



## AMID THE FRAY

GREG ERLANDSON

cially committed to division. In a universe of facts and alternative facts, too much money is being made reinforcing the prejudices and base instincts of their audiences.

The Church is being subjected to these same gravitational pulls. We have our own extremists on both sides, well-funded and willing to challenge anyone from pope to pastor with whom they do not agree.

And the line between political and ecclesial extremism is blurring. The conservative and liberal political agendas are driving Church agendas, and the same apocalyptic rhetoric is being adopted as well.

This is a tough time to be a leader in the Church, whether pope or pastor or parent. Yet we need those who can speak for humility, for selflessness and for the common good. We need to focus on those in need, not those aggrieved, and we need to find ways to dismantle the barriers so many of us have helped erect.

**Greg Erlandson**, director and editor-in-chief of Catholic News Service, can be reached at [gerlandson@catholicnews.com](mailto:gerlandson@catholicnews.com).

### MCGRADY, from page 12

won't get very far.

But with the Lord, we can become holy.

In Him, we can accomplish remarkable things. Not by our own power, and certainly not simply because we grit our teeth and get to work, but because we have been given, and gratefully receive, His grace, which aids us in the work.

Is that not what Scripture tells us? On decorative signs hung

in homes across America, we read, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”

Those words from St. Paul, written to the Philippians, aren't just pithy, meant to make us feel like we can conquer the world. It comes as St. Paul tells his audience about generosity of spirit, instructing them how to give of ourselves to the task, the moment, at hand, the same way he has done. And he was able to do it, and we will be able to as well, because of Jesus Christ.

With the help of His grace we can face and take on — and even succeed — with the resolutions before us, whether those of our own making or those we feel called to because of circumstances, tensions and challenges within our country and world.

We firmly resolve and hope for a better year with the help of His grace.

**Katie Prejean McGrady** is an international Catholic speaker and author.

## BLESSED LAURA VICUNA

FEAST: JANUARY 22  
1895-1908



After her father's sudden death, Laura's family left Chile for Argentina, where her mother became the mistress of a wealthy landowner. He initially paid the fees for Laura and her sister to attend a school run by the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians. However, he stopped when Laura rebuffed his sexual advances, and she and her sister worked to pay the fees themselves. She had tried to join the order in 1902 but was rejected because of her mother's lifestyle. Her death, shortly before her 13th birthday, was caused by stress and a severe beating by the mother's lover.

## SCRIPTURE SEARCH®

Gospel for January 17, 2021

John 1:35-42

Following is a word search based on the Gospel reading for the Second Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle B: The first Apostles join Jesus. The words can be found in all directions in the puzzle.

JOHN	DISCIPLES	JESUS
BEHOLD	THE LAMB	OF GOD
HEARD	FOLLOWED	RABBI
TEACHER	STAYING	COME
WILL SEE	THAT DAY	AFTERNOON
BROTHER	SIMON	CHRIST
CEPHAS	TRANSLATED	PETER

### SIMON'S NAME

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

### OSV, from page 12

2009, President Barack Obama rescinded it; on Jan. 22, 2017, President Donald Trump reinstated it once more.

As a U.S. senator from Delaware, Biden changed his position on Roe v. Wade before his first vote on abortion in 1973. Even so, he supported the Hyde Amendment (first passed in 1980, banning federal funding of abortions) and the Mexico City Policy, as well as parental-notification laws, the federal ban on partial-birth abortion, and the Born Alive Infant Protection Act. As vice president under Barack Obama, he publicly stated that he did not agree with the president's decision to repeal the Mexico City Policy.

When he ran for president in 2020, however, Vice President Biden dropped his support for the Hyde Amendment, declared that he would rescind the Mexico City Policy, and went further than any other president has in announcing that, should the U.S. Supreme Court overturn Roe v. Wade, he would work to enshrine the key points of Roe in federal law.

We urge President Biden to reconsider all of those positions and instead follow Catholic teaching on the dignity of human life. We also especially urge him to break the cycle of using the somber anniversary of a Supreme Court ruling responsible for the deaths of over 60 million unborn children as a way to signal loyalty to a party platform.

While we hope and pray that President Biden will do so, we rec-

ognize that it is unlikely. We urge our readers not to use this as an excuse to oppose any reasonable policies proposed by the president in other areas, however. As a nation, we need desperately to bring our divisions to an end, and it is likely that the only way we will ever arrive at a national consensus that human life is sacred from the moment of conception to that of natural death is by first healing lesser divisions.

We also urge our readers not to grow discouraged should President Biden put his campaign promises regarding abortion into action. Even as we oppose those policies by speaking the truth in charity, we must remain vigilant in our mission to build a culture of life. We should actively seek to protect the lives of unborn children and support their mothers through legislation at the state level and through local action — for instance, by supporting the thousands of local pregnancy care centers that work tirelessly to provide women with alternatives to abortion and with support after their child is born.

Christ did not demand that His disciples win every political battle. What He asked of them — and asks of us — is to remain faithful to the truth and to serve the least among us. If we do that, even as we may lose the battle, we will gain the most important reward.

**The Our Sunday Visitor Editorial Board** is comprised of Gretchen R. Crowe, Scott P. Richert, Scott Warden and York Young.

# Authors find spiritual lessons amid pandemic's restrictions

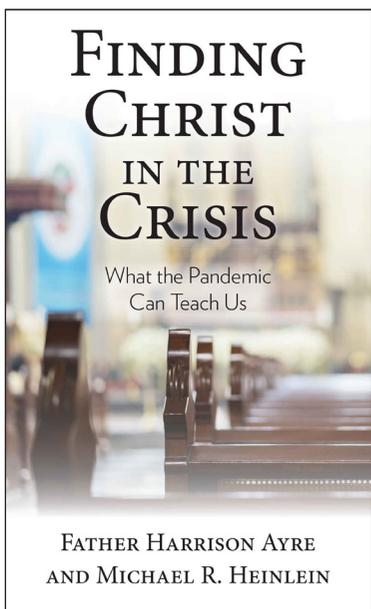
BY KURT JENSEN

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Under COVID-19 pandemic isolation and its steadily escalating death toll, managing the anxiety of ordinarily stressful life passages has become exponentially unbearable.

Michael Heinlein, the editor of the "Simply Catholic" website in Fort Wayne, Indiana, learned this in the past year when his grandmother with Alzheimer's disease needed an operation and moved into a nursing home.

"Those small sacramental stations along the way," he said were made easier when his family found a priest to anoint her despite the health risks. "We just carry the cross, all of us, in different ways," he added.

Father Harrison Ayre, pastor at St. Peter's Catholic Church in Nanaimo, British Columbia, found, as he switched parishes, that the socializing to which he



CNS photo/courtesy Our Sunday Visitor  
**This is the cover of the book "Finding Christ in the Crisis: What the Pandemic Can Teach Us," by Father Harrison Ayre and Michael R. Heinlein.**

was accustomed was impossible on top of "the stress of organizing and making Mass safe" with no more than 50 worshippers at a time.

Health guidelines have made it difficult for worshippers to develop the sense of being part of a congregation — livestreamed services, a welcome respite in the early months of the pandemic, have their limits — and access to the Eucharist has been restricted, he noted.

Heinlein and Father Ayre decided this was a teaching moment for anyone finding themselves falling into the despair of the "COVID fog." They put their acquired insights into writing "Finding Christ in the Crisis: What the Pandemic Can Teach Us," recently published by Our Sunday Visitor.

For those suffering from the deaths of loved ones, the lack of human contact and the inability to feel connected to the larger world, the book is intended to be

a compact means of support.

"While attending Mass in person is the ordinary means of participation (because we live an incarnated faith), we have a unique opportunity for spiritual growth when we cannot attend physically," the book says.

The authors point out the "encouragement to receive Communion in the hand and the requirement to wear a face mask when inside a church have entailed a sacrifice of significant personal piety on our part. Yet we can find comfort in the knowledge that the sacraments are Christ's gifts, mediated by the hierarchy. Receiving Communion in the hand is not a violation of revelation or ecclesial tradition."

Heinlein said the goal of writing the book was to answer the question: "Where was God in the mist of all of this? And so, we decided to just write and see where we landed. We each wrote it over the course of a couple of

weeks and decided to pitch it as a book."

The theory expressed by some that the pandemic is a hoax "is not based on a Catholic understanding of truth, but a relativistic one, guided primarily by ideology," they wrote.

"Those who see this pandemic as a hoax have set themselves up as public health and statistical experts, though most have no experience in either field. Others see the pandemic as a conspiracy, a secret attempt by those in power to overthrow or further control society," the book stresses.

None of this connects to "the Catholic vision of truth," which "depends on the reasonableness of things, relying on data and evidence to support such claims — something conspiracies and hoaxes are unable to offer."

Regarding the sacrament, the

**AUTHORS, page 15**

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# 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](http://www.todayscatholic.org/event). For additional listings of that event, please call the advertising sales staff at 260-399-1449 to purchase space.

**Pro-life drive-in rally, 'Moving the Movement' Midwest Tour**

**FORT WAYNE** — Saturday, Jan. 16, the "Moving the Movement" Midwest tour brings the pro-life momentum to Fort Wayne with a drive-in rally, inspiring speakers and diaper drive. The rally will begin at 4 p.m. at Concordia Theological Seminary, 6600 N Clinton St., at the parking lot near the soccer fields. Parking opens one hour prior to the rally. Please arrive 30 minutes prior to the rally start to ensure all are parked. For more information and to register see <https://march-forlifefchicago.org/tour>.

**Opportunities to stand for life**

**FORT WAYNE** — Jan. 22 marks the 48th anniversary of Roe v. Wade, the Supreme Court decision that legalized abortion on demand in the U.S. There are many opportunities in the diocese to witness to life this January and to pray for an end to abortion: prayer gatherings, a peaceful protest, a downtown march and even a drive-in rally. Visit [www.diocesefwsb.org/local-marches](http://www.diocesefwsb.org/local-marches) for a listing of all of the local pro-life events this month, as well as how to sign up for the national 9 Days for Life novena. Contact Lisa Everett at 574-234-0687 or [leverett@diocesefwsb.org](mailto:leverett@diocesefwsb.org) for information.

**Belonging: Zoom workshop**

**FORT WAYNE** — Belonging: Ministry with Persons with Disabilities is offering a Zoom Workshop on the Sensory-Friendly Mass on Tuesday, Jan. 19 from 7-7:30 p.m. A sensory-friendly Mass provides a safe, welcoming, stigma-free environment that helps children and adults with sensory challenges, mental illness, or any kind of disability to feel engaged and experience Mass in a meaningful way with family and caregivers. Pastor at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Father Dave Voors, along with parishioners, catechists and parents will explain this Mass in greater detail and answer questions. There is no cost but you must contact Allison Sturm at [asturm@diocesefwsb.org](mailto:asturm@diocesefwsb.org) to get the Zoom link to participate.

**AUTHORS, from page 14**

book notes that receiving them alone does not make the impact, instead: "Our own cooperation with God's grace is needed for them to be effective and so the sacraments are not spiritual personal protective equipment."

Heinlein is also attentive to those who grew up with, and have become accustomed to, daily Mass attendance.

"There were plenty of saints who only received Communion a few times a year," he observed. "I think this moment sort of forces us to find the balance. The grace that Christ gives us — he doesn't give us part of himself in the Eucharist, he gives all of himself. And so, the graces of our last Communion are still

operative in our lives. And we can't forget that."

Father Ayre said one of his goals was "dealing with whatever God has put in front of us," since the pandemic he has seen reactions that were either "extreme distraction or extreme laziness. This time has helped at least make us aware that a lot of that is in our hearts."

He thinks God is saying: "I want to meet you in what resists my love."

Accepting inconvenience to our way of life can be seen as an act of love, not a violation of our freedom," the book points out. "True freedom is when we lay down our lives, in whatever way, for others. As St. Clare of Assisi put it: 'Love that cannot suffer is not worthy of that name.'"





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## REST IN PEACE

**Angola**

Frederick J. Homan, 81, St. Anthony of Padua

Barbara Leite, 94, St. Anthony of Padua

John W. McBride, 84, St. Anthony of Padua

Dan A. Newell, 60, St. Anthony of Padua

Ruth A. Sheets, 92, St. Anthony of Padua

Peter J. Washbure, 80, St. Anthony of Padua

Louise Weimer, 87, St. Anthony of Padua

**Clear Lake**

Dennis P. Hook, 79, St. Paul Chapel

**Decatur**

Jeanne M. Kortenber, 91, St. Mary of the Assumption

**Fort Wayne**

Margaret Bromberek, 95, St. Charles Borromeo

Hazel I. Kriesel, 87, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton

Marion K. Stone, 100, Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception

**Huntington**

Larry R. McCutcheon, 82, SS. Peter and Paul

**Mishawaka**

Andrew Blasko, 94, St. Monica

Mitchell Gohn, 19, St. Joseph

Mary A. Groshans, 77, St. Joseph

Albert Hatkevich, 86, St. Joseph

Jerry Rohleder, 78, St. Joseph

Helen Trippel, 90, St. Joseph

**New Haven**

Jane Lomont, 76, St. Louis, Besancon

**South Bend**

James Cierzniak, 85, St. Matthew Cathedral

Amelia Dorn, 100, Holy Cross

Jean Golubski, 99, Holy Cross

Carmela Lacopo, 95, Holy Cross

Frederick J. Letts, 67, St. Jude

Mary E. Maenhout, 87, Holy Family

Arthur Pine, 98, Christ the King

Phyllis Rulli, 85, Christ the King



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# Bishops call for an end to the federal death penalty

WASHINGTON (CNS) — A joint statement from two U.S. bishops who head different committees of the U.S. bishops called for an end to the federal use of the death penalty as “long past time.”

“We renew our constant call to President (Donald) Trump and Acting Attorney General (Jeffrey) Rosen: Stop these executions,” said the Jan. 11 statement from Archbishops Paul S. Coakley of Oklahoma City, chairman of the bishops’ Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development, and Joseph F. Naumann of Kansas City, Kansas, chairman of the bishops’ Committee on Pro-Life Activities.

“Following a year where the federal government, for the first time, executed more people than all 50 states combined, there are three more federal executions scheduled this week,” the two archbishops said. Federal executions resumed last year after a 17-year reprieve.

Archbishops Coakley and Naumann also called on President-elect Joe Biden and Congress to “make this a priority. One vehicle to accomplish this in federal law is the Federal Death Penalty Prohibition Act. In addition, we ask President-elect Biden to declare a moratorium



Archbishop Paul S. Coakley of Oklahoma City, chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development, and Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann of Kansas City, chairman of the U.S. bishops’ Committee on Pro-Life Activities, are seen in this composite photo.

on federal executions and to commute current federal death sentences to terms of imprisonment.”

“It is long past time to abolish the death penalty from our state and federal laws,” they said.

Ten times in the past two years, bishops, groups of bishops, or the full U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops had either spoken out against capital punishment, asked the faithful to add their voice on the issue,

or sought to end its use in the courts.

Also Jan. 11, the Catholic Mobilizing Network launched an online petition campaign asking Biden to make an end to federal executions a priority once he is

sworn into office.

“After six months of needless death from what will soon amount to 13 executions, the Trump administration has driven home why an end to the federal death penalty is so urgently needed,” said a Jan. 11 statement by Krisanne Vaillancourt Murphy, executive director.

During a Jan. 6 Georgetown University-sponsored forum on capital punishment, Bishop Daniel E. Flores of Brownsville, Texas, cited the “throwaway culture” line frequently used by Pope Francis and said, “We let people die or we kill people, in the death penalty’s case, to solve problems. And the church is simply saying: Enough blood. Stop.”

The petition urges the incoming administration to “uphold the sacred dignity of every person” and make good on its promises to dismantle the federal death penalty system.

It names several possible avenues toward abolition that the president-elect could pursue, including declaring an official moratorium on federal executions, commuting the death sentences of all those currently on the federal death row, and advocating to end the death penalty in law.

# For World Day of the Sick, pope calls for health care for all

BY CINDY WOODEN

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Praising those who help the sick and praying for those who are sick, Pope Francis called on Christians to practice what they preach, including by guaranteeing equal access to health care for all people.

“The current pandemic has exacerbated inequalities in our health care systems and exposed inefficiencies in the care of the sick,” the pope wrote in his message for the 2021 World Day of the Sick, which the Catholic Church marks Feb. 11, the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes.

The COVID-19 pandemic has made it obvious to everyone that “elderly, weak and vulnerable people are not always granted access to care,” at least not in an equitable way, he said. “This is the result of political decisions, resource management and a greater or lesser commitment on the part of those holding positions of responsibility.”

“Investing resources in the care and assistance of the sick is a priority linked to the fundamental principle that health is a primary common good,” Pope Francis wrote in his message, which was released by the Vatican Jan. 12.

The papal message, using Jesus’ denunciation of hypocrisy in Matthew 23:1-12, insisted that real faith leads to real care

for all who suffer from illness, poverty or injustice.

“When our faith is reduced to empty words, unconcerned with the lives and needs of others, the creed we profess proves inconsistent with the life we lead,” the pope wrote. “The danger is real.”

When another person is suffering, he said, Jesus “asks us to stop and listen, to establish a direct and personal relationship with others, to feel empathy and compassion, and to let their suffering become our own as we seek to serve them.”

Being sick makes one realize his or her “own vulnerability and innate need of others,” the pope said. “It makes us feel all the more clearly that we are creatures dependent on God.”

“When we are ill,” he continued, “fear and even bewilderment can grip our minds and hearts; we find ourselves powerless, since our health does not depend on our abilities.”

For many people, the pope said, “sickness raises the question of life’s meaning,” something Christians must “bring before God in faith. In seeking a new and deeper direction in our lives, we may not find an immediate answer. Nor are our relatives and friends always able to help us in this demanding quest.”

Like Job in the Bible, people must stick with their prayers, crying out to God for help, he said.

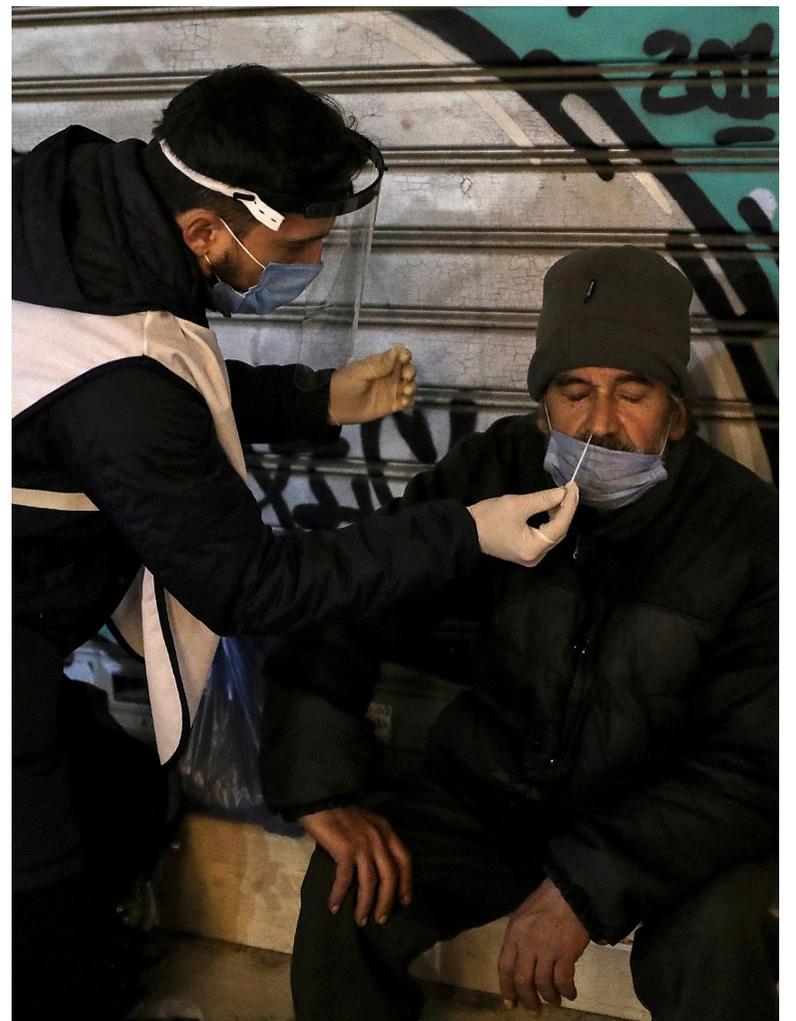
In the end, God “confirms that Job’s suffering is not a punishment or a state of separation from God, much less as sign of God’s indifference,” he said. Job, “wounded and healed,” confesses his faith in the Lord.

Pope Francis praised the “silent multitude of men and women,” who, as the pandemic continues, do not look away, but help their patients or their neighbors.

“Such closeness is a precious balm that provides support and consolation to the sick in their suffering,” he said. “As Christians, we experience that closeness as a sign of the love of Jesus Christ, the Good Samaritan, who draws near with compassion to every man and woman wounded by sin.”

Jesus’ commandment to love one another also applies to a Christian’s relationship with a person who is sick, the pope said. “A society is all the more human to the degree that it cares effectively for its most frail and suffering members, in a spirit of fraternal love.”

“Let us strive to achieve this goal, so that no one will feel alone, excluded or abandoned,” he said, praying that “Mary, Mother of Mercy and Health of the Infirm,” would watch over the sick, health care workers and all those who help others.



CNS photo/Costas Baltas, Reuters

A health care worker takes a swab from a homeless man for a rapid antigen COVID-19 test in Athens, Greece, Dec. 21. In his message for the Feb. 11 celebration of the World Day of the Sick, Pope Francis called on Christians to practice what they preach, including by guaranteeing equal access to health care for all people.