Pro-life marchers’ energy, enthusiasm is ‘palpable,’ says March official

WASHINGTON (CNS) – One aspect of the annual March for Life that never changes is the loud cheering when the lead group, carrying the banner, arrives in front of the Supreme Court.

That tradition was sustained Jan. 21 as groups from Christendom College in Front Royal, Virginia, and Immanuel Lutheran School in Alexandria, Virginia, joined by Bishop Michael F. Burbidge of the Catholic Diocese of Arlington, Virginia, arrived from the pre-march rally held in subfreezing temperatures on the National Mall. The march up Constitution Avenue to the court had taken them slightly more than two hours.

The crowd, not quite the more than 100,000 who attended in 2020 when President Donald Trump addressed the rally in person, nonetheless appeared robust, and easily was within the estimate march organizers always give as being in the tens of thousands.

And that was just fine with Jeanne Mancini, president of the March for Life Education and Defense Fund.

“Every year is unique,” she told Catholic News Service before the rally began. “But the energy and enthusiasm of the marchers is palpable.”

Mancini wouldn’t speculate on the future of the national march if, later this year, the U.S. Supreme Court effectively overturns the 1973 Roe v. Wade decision by upholding the Mississippi abortion law in Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization.

But there’s one plan in place if that occurs.

Overturning Roe would return all abortion restrictions to the states. So Mancini said the plan is to have statewide marches established in all 50 states over the next seven years. There are currently a handful of state marches, an effort that turns the 1973 Roe v. Wade decision on its head by upholding the Mississippi abortion law in Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization.

But there’s one plan in place if that occurs.

Overturning Roe would return all abortion restrictions to the states. So Mancini said the plan is to have statewide marches established in all 50 states over the next seven years. There are currently a handful of state marches, an effort that turns the 1973 Roe v. Wade decision on its head by upholding the Mississippi abortion law in Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization.

But there’s one plan in place if that occurs.

Overturning Roe would return all abortion restrictions to the states. So Mancini said the plan is to have statewide marches established in all 50 states over the next seven years. There are currently a handful of state marches, an effort that turns the 1973 Roe v. Wade decision on its head by upholding the Mississippi abortion law in Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization.

But there’s one plan in place if that occurs.

Overturning Roe would return all abortion restrictions to the states. So Mancini said the plan is to have statewide marches established in all 50 states over the next seven years. There are currently a handful of state marches, an effort that turns the 1973 Roe v. Wade decision on its head by upholding the Mississippi abortion law in Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization.

But there’s one plan in place if that occurs.

Overturning Roe would return all abortion restrictions to the states. So Mancini said the plan is to have statewide marches established in all 50 states over the next seven years. There are currently a handful of state marches, an effort that turns the 1973 Roe v. Wade decision on its head by upholding the Mississippi abortion law in Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization.

But there’s one plan in place if that occurs.

Overturning Roe would return all abortion restrictions to the states. So Mancini said the plan is to have statewide marches established in all 50 states over the next seven years. There are currently a handful of state marches, an effort that turns the 1973 Roe v. Wade decision on its head by upholding the Mississippi abortion law in Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization.

But there’s one plan in place if that occurs.

Overturning Roe would return all abortion restrictions to the states. So Mancini said the plan is to have statewide marches established in all 50 states over the next seven years. There are currently a handful of state marches, an effort that turns the 1973 Roe v. Wade decision on its head by upholding the Mississippi abortion law in Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization.

But there’s one plan in place if that occurs.

Overturning Roe would return all abortion restrictions to the states. So Mancini said the plan is to have statewide marches established in all 50 states over the next seven years. There are currently a handful of state marches, an effort that turns the 1973 Roe v. Wade decision on its head by upholding the Mississippi abortion law in Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization.

But there’s one plan in place if that occurs.

Overturning Roe would return all abortion restrictions to the states. So Mancini said the plan is to have statewide marches established in all 50 states over the next seven years. There are currently a handful of state marches, an effort that turns the 1973 Roe v. Wade decision on its head by upholding the Mississippi abortion law in Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization.

But there’s one plan in place if that occurs.

Overturning Roe would return all abortion restrictions to the states. So Mancini said the plan is to have statewide marches established in all 50 states over the next seven years. There are currently a handful of state marches, an effort that turns the 1973 Roe v. Wade decision on its head by upholding the Mississippi abortion law in Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization.

But there’s one plan in place if that occurs.

Overturning Roe would return all abortion restrictions to the states. So Mancini said the plan is to have statewide marches established in all 50 states over the next seven years. There are currently a handful of state marches, an effort that turns the 1973 Roe v. Wade decision on its head by upholding the Mississippi abortion law in Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization.

But there’s one plan in place if that occurs.

Overturning Roe would return all abortion restrictions to the states. So Mancini said the plan is to have statewide marches established in all 50 states over the next seven years. There are currently a handful of state marches, an effort that turns the 1973 Roe v. Wade decision on its head by upholding the Mississippi abortion law in Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization.

But there’s one plan in place if that occurs.

Overturning Roe would return all abortion restrictions to the states. So Mancini said the plan is to have statewide marches established in all 50 states over the next seven years. There are currently a handful of state marches, an effort that turns the 1973 Roe v. Wade decision on its head by upholding the Mississippi abortion law in Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization.

But there’s one plan in place if that occurs.

Overturning Roe would return all abortion restrictions to the states. So Mancini said the plan is to have statewide marches established in all 50 states over the next seven years. There are currently a handful of state marches, an effort that turns the 1973 Roe v. Wade decision on its head by upholding the Mississippi abortion law in Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization.

But there’s one plan in place if that occurs.

Overturning Roe would return all abortion restrictions to the states. So Mancini said the plan is to have statewide marches established in all 50 states over the next seven years. There are currently a handful of state marches, an effort that turns the 1973 Roe v. Wade decision on its head by upholding the Mississippi abortion law in Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization.
TODAY’S CATHOLIC

Catholics must not be indifferent, discouraged in cause of life

IN TRUTH AND CHARITY
BISHOP KEVIN K. RHODES

Homily from the Mass at March for Life – Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, Jan. 22.

The Catholic Church in the United States observes today, Jan. 22, as a “Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children.” We do so since it was on January 22, 1973, that the Supreme Court of the United States legalized abortion across our nation with the infamous Roe v. Wade decision. The next year, the first March for Life was held. I remember as a sophomore in high school my classmates and I discussing the great injustice of the Roe v. Wade decision. As seniors, we participated in the second March for Life here in D.C.

It has been 49 years since Roe v. Wade, and because of that decision, millions of unborn children have never seen the light of day. That decision has affected our culture deeply and led to a serious distortion in our society, a completely individualistic concept of our freedom to take another’s life, the freedom to kill the most vulnerable among us, the child in the womb. This year, there is a real atmosphere of hope that the Supreme Court may overcome Roe v. Wade as it considers the Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization case, the most consequential challenge to Roe v. Wade in many years. Let us pray fervently during these months that the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life, will illumine the minds of our Supreme Court justices.

Roe v. Wade has contributed greatly to the serious moral decline that has taken place in our nation during these past 50 plus years. Many people find it more difficult to distinguish between good and evil when they consider the most basic value, the value of human life. Pope St. John Paul II rightly called the culture that has been formed “a cult of the permisibility of killing.” He said that the killing of the weakest and most innocent human beings is done in the name of freedom of choice or the rights of women. St. John Paul II wrote: “To claim the right to abortion, infanticide, and euthanasia, and to recognize that right in law, means to attribute to human freedom a perverse and evil significance, that of an absolute power over others and against others. This is the death of true freedom.”

God has given us the great gift of freedom. This gift is fulfilled through the gift of self and openness to others. It is violated when it leads to the harm and destruction of others. Freedom to take the life of a child not yet born or to take the life of a person near the end of his/her life becomes a freedom of the strong against the weak and tramples upon the most fundamental human right, the right to life. (cf. EV 12)

I am reading today, St. John wrote: “For this is the message you have heard from the beginning: we should love one another, unlike Cain who belonged to the evil one and slayed his brother Abel. After Cain murdered his brother, “The Lord said to Cain: ‘Where is your brother?’ Cain answered, ‘I do not know: Am I my brother’s keeper?’ And the Lord said: ‘What have you done? The blood of your brother’s blood is crying to me from the ground.’” This fratricide happened at the very dawn of history. That evil has continued and spread throughout history. How many attacks on human life have occurred since then?

Cain tried to cover up his crime with a lie. Throughout history, all kinds of ideologies have tried to justify this evil and crimes against human beings. Cain refused to accept responsibility for his crime. “Am I my brother’s keeper?” he asked. The answer should be: yes, I am. As St. John teaches so emphatically, we are to love one another. We are to be in solidarity with one another, especially with those who are weakest among us, the unborn, the elderly, the infirm, children, and refugees. There is a lot of indifference in the world to their plight, so much so that Pope Francis has called this a “globalization of indifference.” Many, perhaps without saying it aloud, cynically repeat what Cain said: “Am I my brother’s keeper?”

Notice that St. John said that “Cain belonged to the evil one.” How delighted Satan is when we are indifferent to the plight of our brothers and sisters in need, especially the little ones in their mothers’ wombs. Crimes against life continue and are even given legitimacy as happened 49 years ago with the Roe v. Wade decision with its assertion of the right to abortion. We must not become discouraged in the face of various manifestations of the culture of death in our nation and in our world. There are also many signs of the promotion of a culture of life, like the March for Life yesterday. There are people all across our nation working every day for the cause of life, thousands of centers and initiatives supporting women who are in difficulty and may be tempted to have recourse to abortion. There are thousands of people who are not indifferent, who recognize that we are their brother’s keeper. There are many movements and initiatives to educate people on the sanctity of human life. And there are countless numbers of people who, through everyday works of mercy, are serving life, freely giving themselves out of love for their neighbor, especially for the weak and the needy. They are helping to build a civilization of love and life. Most are motivated to do so by their faith, faith in God as the Creator, faith in “the Word who became flesh and dwelt among us,” as we heard today in the Gospel from the Prologue of St. John.

The Second Vatican Council taught that “by His Incarnation, the Son of God has united Himself in some fashion with every human being” (GS 22). In becoming man, he shows us the incomparable value of every human person” (EV 2).

In speaking of the eternal Word through whom all things came to be, St. John says: “What came to be through him was life, and life was the light of the human race; the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.” All things came to be through the Word, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity. Life came to be through Him – human life on this earth leading to eternal life with God. God called us into being so that we can eternally be with Him, sharing in His life.

Though there is darkness in the world, though there is a culture of death in many places, we must always remember that the light shines in the darkness. There is all manner of evil and death in the world, but the light of the Word, Jesus, the Word made flesh, shines in the darkness. John’s whole Gospel is an invitation to embrace the light and not remain in darkness. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. We must never forget this truth.

In a world of conflict between light and darkness, the death and resurrection of Jesus shows us that the victory belongs to the light. It is the victory of love. We celebrate this victory at every Mass, the living memorial of Christ’s death and resurrection. The Eucharist strengthens us to proclaim and to serve the Gospel of Jesus, the Gospel of life and love.

The Word became flesh in the womb of the Virgin Mary. We celebrate this Mass here in her church, the beautiful Basilica of the National Shrine named in her honor. At the Annunciation, Mary said yes to life when she consented to be the mother of the Incarnate Son of God. She lovingly carried Him in her womb and cared for Him. She is our model of how life should be welcomed and cared for. We ask for her intercession for the cause of life, for the babies in their mothers’ wombs waiting to be born and for their mothers and fathers. We ask her to give us the courage to defend life, even in the face of criticism and opposition, and to persevere in our witness to her Son and His Gospel, the Gospel of life!
Pro-life advocates demonstrate support at South Bend rally

BY JILL A. BOUGHTON

Every year since 1974, people within the pro-life movement have come together on the anniversary of the Supreme Court’s Roe v. Wade decision that codified abortion through all nine months of pregnancy nationwide at the cost of 65 million lives. Right to Life of Michiana held their annual Rally and March for Life on Jan. 21, beginning at St. Hedwig Memorial Center in central South Bend and processing to the Federal Courthouse. There, participants lined Main Street to pray until 1 p.m.

Since the Supreme Court met in November to consider Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization, a court case regarding Mississippi’s new law prohibiting abortion after 15 weeks’ gestation, hope has been rising in the pro-life community. This hope is that the justices will overturn or significantly modify Roe v. Wade, which would fundamentally change the focus of the movement who offered prayers and loving support in the event. Committed members of Right to Life Michiana, urged everyone to make a commitment not just to turn out once a year but to work to change hearts and minds as well as laws. Committed members of the movement who offered prayers and loving support in front of a local abortion facility helped save the lives of at least seven babies last month.

RTL Michiana has a trained Life Team group that stands ready to give presentations covering fetal development, abortion, local support for women and ways to get involved to youth groups, churches, schools and others. The organization also offers a Life Defenders Boot Camp, which teaches people to logically and compassionately defend the pro-life position, empowering them to talk to friends and acquaintances about this issue.

Mike Jacob, outreach pastor at SouthGate Church, led those gathered in prayer. “Lord, You care and You cry for every single soul. Help us be Your voices for the voiceless. Make us the difference-makers. Let us be determined and not depressed.”

Raised in a single-parent household in the projects in California, Jacob’s pro-life commitment is deeply personal. His mother considered abortion when pregnant with him as a college student in 1969, but she valued his life more than her own convenience. Now the father of a long-awaited 19-month-old, Jacob asked how many in his audience love babies. However, he emphasized that babies, born and unborn, have value not because of their cuteness, but because everyone is made in the image of God.

He too urged all, in call and response style, to put their beliefs into action. “If you know something … say something. Sneak your pro-life values into every conversation, whether you’re at work, at school or at the store. … If you say something … you need to be ready to do something about it.”

Around 500 pro-life advocates from the South Bend-Mishawaka area marched and prayed for this cause dear to their hearts. Some of the stalwarts who have demonstrated every year, like John and Kathleen Ferrone, gathered on the grounds of St. Hedwig. South Bend to march to the federal courthouse on a cold, sunny day. They were joined by hundreds of younger participants, including large groups from local Catholic schools and whole pro-life families.

Groups of demonstrators on opposite sides of Main Street chanted familiar pro-life calls across the street to each other. Many passing motorists honked and gave thumbs-up signals, including the drivers of a cement mixer and a city bus.

Veronica, a sixth grader at Trinity School at Greenlawn, a Christian middle and high school in South Bend, said, “I don’t support abortion; I think it’s wrong.” Kristen Kercher brought two babies in a stroller. Young children were scarves proclaiming “Unique from day 1.”

Nationally, the voices were both sides of the discussion because of a nation-wide prayer to end abortion. Right to Life Michiana held their annual March for Life on Jan. 21, including many faithful lay Catholics and religious.

The pro-life demonstrations this year have significant meaning as the Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization case faces a decision in the Supreme Court this summer.

Right to Life Michiana eyes post-Dobbs pivot: ‘the beginning of a new stage’

BY JODI MARLIN

Melanie Lyon and her husband were excited, she said, to be able to attend the emotionally moving National March for Life in Washington, D.C. this year for the first time. The opportunity took on additional gravitas, however, when the South Bend couple realized this year could possibly be the march’s last.

"Obviously this won’t end abortion, but the march began in direct response to Roe v. Wade. This could be the end, which is what we’ve been praying for," she said.

Lyon, outreach coordinator for Right to Life Michiana, said engagement with the organization by supporters of the unborn, as well as harassment and vandalism by abortion rights activists, have increased in recent weeks. She has witnessed emotions become heated on both sides of the discussion because both sides anticipate a historic change in the near future regarding access to abortion.

The hopes of Catholics and others in the pro-life community across the country rest on the outcome of Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization. The case is currently under consideration by the U.S. Supreme Court and challenges the constitutionality of a 2018 Mississippi law limiting abortion after week 15 of pregnancy.

A potential positive outcome — in other words, if the Mississippi law is upheld — will effectively overturn Roe v. Wade, the 1973 Supreme Court decision that affirmed a woman’s constitutional right to abortion.

Discussions have been frequent about what a post-Roe future would look like. Should the Mississippi law be upheld, the decision of how much to limit access to abortion would be returned to the states. The staff and volunteers of Right to Life Michiana are optimistic Indiana would pass fairly restrictive abortion legislation, but that doesn’t
that began six years ago.

Jeff Hunt, director of the Centennial Institute, a think tank attached to Colorado Christian University, said he thought legalized abortion was a nonstarter with the young people who have dominated March for Life for many years.

“Many of them grew up with their brother’s or sister’s sonogram taped to the refrigerator door, “he said. “I think that’s shaping the idea that a child is not a bunch of cells you can kill.”

He thought the current generation of young people is “naturally more pro-life than previous generations.”

Marianne Hofer, coordinator of the student pilgrimage from the University of Mary in Bismarck, North Dakota, said, “We’re extremely excited. We’re very honored to be here at a time when Roe could be overturned.”

The university sent 230 students. Hofer estimated that about half were at their first March for Life.

The march was briefly delayed after it got underway when members of Patriot Front, known as a white nationalist hate group, attempted to march alongside. But they were quickly dispersed.

“March for Life promotes the beauty, dignity and worth of every human life by working to end the violence of abortion. We condemn any organization that seeks to exclude a person or group of people based on the color of their skin or any other characteristic,” Mancini told CNS in reaction to Patriot Front’s effort to join the march.

“Such exclusion runs counter to our mission which recognizes that all human lives are equal from the moment of conception: equality begins in the womb,” she said.

In a statement issued ahead of the march, Bishop Burbidge said the March for Life “is a powerful witness to essential truths that unite us: All of life is sacred and, thus, the life of the unborn child must be protected from the horror of abortion and life at every stage must be revered, cherished and treasured.”

“We march peacefully each year in our nation’s capital to give witness to these truths to a nation in which many in public office and others throughout our communities continue to reject them. Yet we will never despair nor tire of proclaiming the Gospel of Life, with firm belief in the power of God to transform hearts,” he added.
The Indiana Catholic Conference is out front on a number of bills at the Statehouse that would affect individuals and families considered among the poorest in the state.

Leaders of the ICC – the public policy voice of the Catholic Church in Indiana – support some of the proposed legislation while opposing other bills, in line with the long history of Catholic social teaching with respect to the most vulnerable.

“Some of these bills would benefit families in the greatest need and help lift them out of poverty, while we have serious concerns that others may have the opposite effect,” said Angela Espada, executive director of the ICC. “We always want to stand with the most economically disadvantaged among us, especially our children.”

The ICC strongly supports House Bill 1561, a bipartisan measure that would strengthen protections for those who qualify for the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. TANF is a federal government program that provides grants to the states to administer cash assistance payments to families in deepest poverty.

But those families often face barriers in receiving that help because of outdated state guidelines, according to Rep. Chuck Goodrich (R-Noblesville), the primary author of House Bill 1561. That includes a current asset limit of $1,000 for families qualifying for TANF to continue receiving those temporary benefits, which have a lifetime cap of 24 months for adults.

The measure that Goodrich calls “hand-up legislation” would increase that asset limit to $10,000 – and would exempt $2,000 in the local equity value of the family’s motor vehicles from eligibility guidelines. Because these families need reliable transportation for getting to and from work and child care services, this provision is critical, according to the ICC, other advocates and co-authors of the legislation.

“This bill allows people to better themselves and stay on the program until they are in a position to no longer need assistance,” said Rep. Cherish Pryor (D-Indianapolis), among the co-authors of House Bill 1561 and a longtime collaborator with Rep. Goodrich on TANF-related legislation.

The bill passed unanimously Jan. 20 in the House committee on Family, Children and Human Affairs and is now awaiting action by the full House of Representatives.

A broader TANF-related bill backed by the ICC and other advocates for the poor, including the Indiana Community Action Poverty Institute, was awaiting a committee hearing at press time. Senate Bill 327 marks the latest attempt to update major provisions of the TANF program in Indiana, which hasn’t seen substantive change in more than three decades.

As in previous years, Sen. Jon Ford (R-Terre Haute) is leading the charge to modernize TANF in Indiana by pushing for the first monthly increase in cash payouts in 34 years and dramatically expanding eligibility for the program.

For those in deepest poverty, TANF’s cash assistance payments are a lifeline. But those monthly payouts – $288 for a family of three, for example – have not been increased since they were set by state law three decades ago. Moreover, only a fraction of the poorest families in Indiana currently receive even those modest benefits from the federal program because of outdated eligibility guidelines – another issue that Senate Bill 327 is designed to address.

Indiana’s eligibility level for TANF is the fourth-lowest in the United States, behind Louisiana, Arkansas and Alabama. To be eligible for TANF, the maximum income of a Hoosier family must be less than 17 percent of the federal poverty level. Indiana set its income requirements to qualify for TANF in the mid-1990s, when welfare reform was signed into law by then-President Bill Clinton. Those eligibility guidelines have not been adjusted for inflation since then.

While the ICC and its allies continue to advocate for these long-awaited changes, they are working to oppose another TANF-related measure. House Bill 1410 would transfer oversight of the mandatory job search guideline for TANF eligibility to the state level from the local level, where it is currently administered.

ICC leaders argue that local agencies providing support services for families in deep poverty are best equipped to understand each family’s unique needs and circumstances and, therefore, are in the best position to oversee and monitor their job search activities.

“We want to be clear that we are not opposed to the concept of the applicant job search requirement, but the charge to modernize TANF’s eligibility guidelines, while opposing other bills, in line with the long history of Catholic social teaching with respect to the most vulnerable.

“We hope they’ll realize they are working to oppose another TANF-related measure. House Bill 1410 would transfer oversight of the mandatory job search guideline for TANF eligibility to the state level from the local level, where it is currently administered. ICC leaders argue that local agencies providing support services for families in deep poverty are best equipped to understand each family’s unique needs and circumstances and, therefore, are in the best position to oversee and monitor their job search activities.

“We want to be clear that we are not opposed to the concept of the applicant job search requirement, but the charge to modernize TANF’s eligibility guidelines, while opposing other bills, in line with the long history of Catholic social teaching with respect to the most vulnerable.

“We hope they’ll realize they are working to oppose another TANF-related measure. House Bill 1410 would transfer oversight of the mandatory job search guideline for TANF eligibility to the state level from the local level, where it is currently administered. ICC leaders argue that local agencies providing support services for families in deep poverty are best equipped to understand each family’s unique needs and circumstances and, therefore, are in the best position to oversee and monitor their job search activities.

“We want to be clear that we are not opposed to the concept of the applicant job search requirement, but the charge to modernize TANF’s eligibility guidelines, while opposing other bills, in line with the long history of Catholic social teaching with respect to the most vulnerable.

“We hope they’ll realize they are working to oppose another TANF-related measure. House Bill 1410 would transfer oversight of the mandatory job search guideline for TANF eligibility to the state level from the local level, where it is currently administered. ICC leaders argue that local agencies providing support services for families in deep poverty are best equipped to understand each family’s unique needs and circumstances and, therefore, are in the best position to oversee and monitor their job search activities.

“We want to be clear that we are not opposed to the concept of the applicant job search requirement, but the charge to modernize TANF’s eligibility guidelines, while opposing other bills, in line with the long history of Catholic social teaching with respect to the most vulnerable.

“We hope they’ll realize they are working to oppose another TANF-related measure. House Bill 1410 would transfer oversight of the mandatory job search guideline for TANF eligibility to the state level from the local level, where it is currently administered. ICC leaders argue that local agencies providing support services for families in deep poverty are best equipped to understand each family’s unique needs and circumstances and, therefore, are in the best position to oversee and monitor their job search activities.

“We want to be clear that we are not opposed to the concept of the applicant job search requirement, but the charge to modernize TANF’s eligibility guidelines, while opposing other bills, in line with the long history of Catholic social teaching with respect to the most vulnerable.

“We hope they’ll realize they are working to oppose another TANF-related measure. House Bill 1410 would transfer oversight of the mandatory job search guideline for TANF eligibility to the state level from the local level, where it is currently administered. ICC leaders argue that local agencies providing support services for families in deep poverty are best equipped to understand each family’s unique needs and circumstances and, therefore, are in the best position to oversee and monitor their job search activities.

“We want to be clear that we are not opposed to the concept of the applicant job search requirement, but the charge to modernize TANF’s eligibility guidelines, while opposing other bills, in line with the long history of Catholic social teaching with respect to the most vulnerable.

“We hope they’ll realize they are working to oppose another TANF-related measure. House Bill 1410 would transfer oversight of the mandatory job search guideline for TANF eligibility to the state level from the local level, where it is currently administered. ICC leaders argue that local agencies providing support services for families in deep poverty are best equipped to understand each family’s unique needs and circumstances and, therefore, are in the best position to oversee and monitor their job search activities.

“We want to be clear that we are not opposed to the concept of the applicant job search requirement, but the charge to modernize TANF’s eligibility guidelines, while opposing other bills, in line with the long history of Catholic social teaching with respect to the most vulnerable.

“We hope they’ll realize they are working to oppose another TANF-related measure. House Bill 1410 would transfer oversight of the mandatory job search guideline for TANF eligibility to the state level from the local level, where it is currently administered. ICC leaders argue that local agencies providing support services for families in deep poverty are best equipped to understand each family’s unique needs and circumstances and, therefore, are in the best position to oversee and monitor their job search activities.

“We want to be clear that we are not opposed to the concept of the applicant job search requirement, but the charge to modernize TANF’s eligibility guidelines, while opposing other bills, in line with the long history of Catholic social teaching with respect to the most vulnerable.
**Pope declares St. Irenaeus a doctor of the church**

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Francis officially has declared St. Irenaeus of Lyon a doctor of the church. In a decree released by the Vatican Jan. 21, the pope ordered that the second-century theologian be given the title of “doctor of unity” and said St. Irenaeus’ life and teachings served as “a spiritual and theological bridge between Eastern and Western Christians. May the doctrine of such a great teacher increasingly encourage the journey of all the Lord’s disciples toward full communion,” the pope said. During a meeting with Pope Francis Jan. 20, Cardinal Marcello Semeraro, prefect of the Congregation for Saints’ Causes, asked the pope to “accept the affirmative opinion” of the cardinals and bishops who are congregation members to confer the title on St. Irenaeus, who was known for his defense of orthodoxy amid the rise of gnostic sects. St. Irenaeus is the second doctor of the church named by Pope Francis after St. Gregory of Narek, who was given the designation in 2015. He brings the total number of doctors of the church to 37. Born in Smyrna, Asia Minor – now modern-day Turkey – St. Irenaeus was known as a staunch defender of the faith.

Archbishop: Church, its people stand ready to help expectant mothers

WASHINGTON (CNS) – The Catholic Church and its people stand ready not only to help expectant mothers bring their pregnancies to term but to assist women who have had abortions, said Archbishop William E. Lori of Baltimore, chairman of the U.S. bishops’ Committee on Pro-Life Activities. The ministries are many, he said in his homily at the Jan. 20 Mass that began the annual National Prayer Vigil for Life at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. The vigil is held prior to the Jan. 21 March for Life in Washington. “I salute Project Rachel and other pioneering ministries that provide healing and spiritual renewal to women and couples after an abortion,” Archbishop Lori said in his homily. He also praised the Sisters of Life, which he called “a growing religious community of women who, by their way of life, bear witness to the beauty and dignity of every human life. This they do as they welcome pregnant women into their homes and provide life-changing spiritual resources to women in crisis,” he said. Archbishop Lori diverted from his homily to seek – and receive – a round of applause for “the Lord’s disciples toward full communion,” the pope said. During a meeting with Pope Francis Jan. 20, Cardinal Marcello Semeraro, prefect of the Congregation for Saints’ Causes, asked the pope to “accept the affirmative opinion” of the cardinals and bishops who are congregation members to confer the title on St. Irenaeus, who was known for his defense of orthodoxy amid the rise of gnostic sects. St. Irenaeus is the second doctor of the church named by Pope Francis after St. Gregory of Narek, who was given the designation in 2015. He brings the total number of doctors of the church to 37. Born in Smyrna, Asia Minor – now modern-day Turkey – St. Irenaeus was known as a staunch defender of the faith.

Conflict increases in Tigray region of Ethiopia

A survivor of an airstrike by Ethiopian government forces receives treatment at the Shire Shul General Hospital in the northern region of Tigray, Ethiopia, Jan. 8, 2022. The Adigrat Catholic Eparchy has asked for an international push for dialogue and aid.

**El Salvador welcomes four new martyrs, symbols of Vatican II church**

SAN SALVADOR, El Salvador (CNS) — Unlike the spotless image of many holy men and women, a depiction of one of the new martyrs of the Catholic Church looks anything but polished. The boy is hunchered a little. His cuffed pants are slightly too big for his small body. His shirt, improperly unbrowned, hangs just a bit longer on one side than the other. Bullet casings are at the bare feet of the unpolished martyr. That’s the image his parish in El Paisnal, El Salvador, presented to the world, with the message that the most simple and poor, like Nelson Rutillo Lemus, a teenage boy, are worthy of the grace of martyrdom. Lemus was assassinated in his rural hometown next to his pastor, Jesuit Father Rutillo Grande, and sacristan Manuel Solórzano, March 12, 1977. The three, along with Franciscan Father Cosme Spessotto, were beatified Jan. 22 in an outdoor evening ceremony at Salvador del Mundo Plaza in San Salvador. Beatification is one of the final steps toward sainthood. Salvadorean Cardinal Gregorio Rosa Chavez, who presided at the ceremony, placed the martyrs’ and the Catholic Church’s role into the context of the country’s civil conflict in the 1970s and 1980s, which ended with peace accords in 1992. The martyrs beatified were part of more than 75,000 civilians killed. “Of the four martyrs of El Salvador who have just been beatified, we can say what John (in the Gospel) affirms that ‘they come from the great tribulation’ and that they have washed their clothes and made them white with the blood of the Lamb,” the cardinal said.

**Pope confers ministries of lector, catechist on lay women and men**

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Highlighting the importance of the Bible in the life of faith and the role of lay women and men in sharing the Gospel, Pope Francis formally installed eight married women in the ministry of lector and eight others in the ministry of catechist. During Mass on Jan. 23, the church’s celebration of Sunday of the Word of God, the pope used a revised rite for formally installing lectors, a ministry opened to women a year earlier, and the new rite for the ministry of catechist, which he established in May. Pope Francis installed six women — from South Korea, Pakistan, Ghana and Italy — and two Italian men in the ministry of lector, telling them they were placing themselves “in the service of the faith, which is rooted in the word of God.” Three women from Spain, Brazil and Ghana and five men from Italy, Peru, Brazil and Poland were installed as catechists, and Pope Francis told them they were called “to live more intensely the apostolic spirit, following the example of those men and women who helped Paul and the other apostles to spread the Gospel.”

**Franciscan friars praise young Catholics for standing up for life at march**

WASHINGTON, D.C. (CNS) — Though not every participant at the annual March for Life in Washington, D.C. is Catholic, the faithful presence of those who assure high numbers every year. Among the annual marchers are Franciscan Friars of the Renewal, and this year was no exception. They were among the thousands of people from all walks of life who came together in unity to show their support for the lives of unborn children. Jan. 21 for the 49th annual march and rally marking the anniversary of Roe v. Wade. The Franciscan friars arrived in Washington, D.C. from multiple locations in New York and New Jersey, bringing with them lay associates and young people gathering on the National Mall to listen to rally speakers and then march as a group up Constitution Avenue. “To be here and gather together with young people and old people, and to be encouraged by the witness. ... We are here to promote the dignity of life. I want to be a part of that movement,” said Brother Thomas McGrinder, a Franciscan Friar of the Renewal for the past 25 years. “I am encouraged by what I see with all of the young people. It is always a great grace to be here with them and support their witness as well,” he said.
Holy Cross Association announces conference

SOUTH BEND — The Midwest Province of the Brothers of Holy Cross present an upcoming virtual conference for anyone wishing to grow in their spiritual life. "Reaching Out – Touching Minds and Hearts Through Information, Formation and Transformation" will take place on Jan. 29 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. over Zoom. Featured presenters are Judith R. Fean, MA, former vice president at Saint Mary’s College with the topic “Pope Francis’ Gift to Holy Cross” and Michael Reiling, MA, retired high school theology teacher and retreat leader speaking on "Transforming Your Life in Christ." Register for the conference at holycrossassociates.org/chapters/national-and-regional-conferences.

Synod listening sessions

FORT WAYNE — Pope Francis is seeking input from all members of the laity, especially those whose voice is not typically heard. You are invited to share how the Holy Spirit is speaking to you. To this end, the diocese is hosting listening sessions across our geographical region. The diocese will then prepare a summary document on these consultations to share with the Vatican. Please prayerfully consider attending a listening session. The listening session for Vicariate A will take place at St. Pius X in Granger on Thursday, Feb. 3 at 6 p.m. It will begin with Mass, with the listening session to follow. Vicariate D will host its listening session on Saturday, Feb. 5 at 1 p.m. at St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Fort Wayne, beginning with adoration. Vicariate E will have a listening session on Monday, Feb. 7 at 6 p.m. at St. John the Baptist Parish in Fort Wayne, beginning with Mass. Vicariate F will host a listening session on Saturday, Feb. 12 at SS. Peter and Paul in Huntington, with Mass and Holy Hour prior. The session for Vicariate C will take place on Tuesday, March 8 at 6 p.m. at St. Patrick, Parish in Ligonier and will be bilingual. Visit diocesefwsb.org/synod.

Knights of Columbus support seminarian education

Knights of Columbus Council 451 presented vocations director Father Andrew Budzinski with checks to support the seminarian education fund. Representing the Knights are Doug Baisinger, financial secretary, Grand Knight Dennis Redding, and treasurer Joe Mikolay. The council boasts around 350 members and are very active in their native parish of St. Charles Borromeo and the Fort Wayne community. They chose six seminarians with ties to the parish as recipients of their fundraising efforts.

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton student wins spelling bee

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton seventh grader Elizabeth Hill won the 2022 St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic School Spelling Bee and will go on to compete at the county level. Pictured are Kim Conte, pronouncer for the bee, Elizabeth Hill, Ella Funk, runner-up, and Chad Hornman, teacher and bee moderator.

Seeking Totus Tuus summer missionaries

Totus Tuus is looking for college-aged adults to serve as summer missionaries around the diocese. Four missionaries will be chosen to travel to six parishes for weeklong summer formation programs geared toward elementary and high school students. Totus Tuus uses fun activities such as theatrical skits to teach lessons pertinent to the Catholic faith, with Mass, recitation of the rosary and adoration a part of each mission day. Training is provided at the Totus Tuus location in Peoria, Illinois prior to the start of the summer rotation. To apply, visit diocesefwsb.org/totus-tuus.

‘You Can Lend a Hand’ coupon books on sale

FORT WAYNE — Support local Catholic schools through the yearly “You Can Lend a Hand” coupon books on sale beginning Feb. 1. Participating Burger King locations include most restaurants in northern Indiana, select cities in Michigan and Van Wert, Ohio; Chili’s in Fort Wayne, Goshen, Mishawaka, Michigan City and St. Joseph, Michigan and Papa Vino’s locations in Mishawaka and St. Joseph, Michigan. Coupons offer deals on sandwiches, meals and more. For anyone outside the region who would still wish to support Catholic education, donations can still be made at the website youcanlendahand.com/buycoupons—donate. Coupon sales end on Feb. 28.

Saint Mary’s Women’s Choir performing at Cathedral

FORT WAYNE — Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades has invited the Saint Mary’s College Women’s Choir to participate at Mass on Feb. 20 at 11:30 at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Fort Wayne. The choir is a 40-voice ensemble which has performed throughout the U.S. and Canada, including Carnegie Hall in New York City and even as far away as China. They have participated in choral competitions and recorded four compact discs on the ProOrgano label. All are welcome to attend.

Taizé Prayer service scheduled

SAINT MARY-OF-THE-WOODS — The Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods will host a Taizé prayer service on Feb. 8 from 7-8 p.m. both in person and via livestream. This prayer service offers song, quiet contemplation and inspired readings to aid in spiritual growth. It will take place in the Church of the Immaculate Conception at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods on the second Tuesday of each month. Persons of all faiths are welcome to attend. For more information or to find the livestream link, go to taize.sistersprovidence.org or call 812-535-2952.

Knights of Columbus present a $7,000 check to the Fort Wayne Diocese. Pictured are Grand Knight Dan Burke, Grand Knight Dennis Redding, President of the Fort Wayne Diocese Knights of Columbus Council 451, and Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades. The donation will support the seminarian education fund. Knights of Columbus Council 451 present a check to Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades. Pictured left to right are Doug Baisinger, financial secretary, Grand Knight Dennis Redding, and treasurer Joe Mikolay. The council boasts around 350 members and are very active in their native parish of St. Charles Borromeo and the Fort Wayne community. They chose six seminarians with ties to the parish as recipients of their fundraising efforts.
Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades met virtually with a delegation from St. Charles Borromeo Parish, Fort Wayne, as the parish marked the beginning of their chapter of Catholic Relief Services on Jan. 19. St. Charles Borromeo became the first parish to start a CRS chapter in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend.

“I’m really grateful to Father Tom and to all of you for not just your interest in CRS but your willingness to spread the word and to be involved,” Bishop Rhoades told those gathered at the kick-off.

“I do believe we are, as you think of Cain after killing his brother Abel, said to God, ‘Am I my brother’s keeper?’ and, of course, the answer to that is yes,” he said. “Oftentimes we focus so much attention on our immediate community and on our nation.”

Bishop Rhoades continued, “which of course is important because there are needy people everywhere. But there’s dire poverty. There are people dying in poor nations of the world. And our responsibility, I think, God will judge us, you know these are our brothers and sisters in the human family.”

Beth Knobbe, community engagement manager at CRS, also expressed her enthusiasm and gratitude for the new parish chapter. “I’m just so excited to be with all of you tonight as we officially kick off a new CRS chapter at St. Charles Borromeo,” she said. She thanked those who had attended and articulated her hopes that members of the parish would learn about the mission of CRS and be inspired to aid in it.

“We are at a really pivotal moment in history,” Knobbe continued. “Millions of people around the world are experiencing poverty, hunger, violence and other affronts to their human dignity. You may know that there are more people displaced today than at any other time in history. And, for the first time in nearly 20 years, extreme poverty rates are expected to rise as a result of the COVID pandemic.”

Father Tom Shoemaker, pastor of St. Charles Borromeo, shared a story about an interaction he had with CRS in Tanzania 30 years ago. “There had been a drought, there had been a famine. Catholic Relief Services was able to organize relief efforts — that’s not their primary way of operating — but it was needed there.”

Father Shoemaker explained that a priest in Tanzania told him that the relief brought in by CRS was more efficient than government aid because they could use resources already in place, namely parishes and rectories throughout the country to distribute food and other essential goods to those in greatest need. “The people knew one another and knew who was in need and who wasn’t,” he said. The Catholic Church is the largest Christian community in Tanzania.

“I’m just impressed with everything Catholic Relief Services has done over the years.” Sister Genevieve Raupp said at the meeting.

“And with our students,” she continued, “we try to always, every year, do some type of a collection, not Rice Bowl, but we are collecting money, sending to help in one of the many relief areas throughout the world and making the kids in tune to that.”

Knobbe closed her comments, saying “Congratulations on a brand new chapter of CRS at St. Charles Borromeo. I’m excited to journey with you, it’s very exciting.”

High schools and universities in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend already have relationships with CRS, and St. Charles was the first local parish added to that list.

CRS operates in more than 100 countries throughout the world, working in nearly every country in Africa and Asia especially, but also through Central and South American countries and in the U.S. Mostly CRS is known for their yearly Lenten almsgiving opportunity, the Rice Bowl collection.

They work to assist the poor and vulnerable and carry out the commitment of the USCCB by doing so, as stated in their mission statement: “We are motivated by the Gospel of Jesus Christ to cherish, preserve and uphold the sacredness and dignity of all human life, foster charity and justice, and embody Catholic social and moral teaching.”

For those who wish to contribute to CRS, or to learn more information, visit www.crs.org.
Parents, religious and teachers essential for educating children intellectually, spiritually

BY DR. JOSEPH BREITNNACHER

Welcome to the 48th Annual Catholic Schools Week. It provides me with an opportunity to thank all the parents who have chosen a Catholic education for their children in our schools. We take the responsibility of working with you seriously. We know that parents are their child’s primary and most important teachers. Our schools help parents by educating the whole child spiritually, intellectually, and socially. We help students develop a personal relationship with Jesus Christ within his mystical body, the Church, become disciples of Christ, fulfill their destiny to become saints, and reach the ultimate goal for students in our Catholic schools – heaven.

The theme for Catholic Schools Week is “Faith, Excellence, and Service.” Allow me to add a twist to the theme, tailored for our 39 elementary schools and four high schools, rather than discuss national statistics. We will look at faith, excellence, service, and add another extremely important element – why Catholic Education is more affordable than you may think.

Faith
Catholic Schools Week is a time to reflect on past bishops, priests, and religious who built, oversaw, ran, taught, and supported Catholic education. An interesting historical note is that Father Julian Benoit was appointed to the diocese in 1840. He took on finishing a church, begun by his predecessor, then built the first schools in what is now the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend. The first was St. Augustine Academy, which opened in 1845, and then more followed. He secured the Sisters of Providence and Brothers of Holy Cross to help run them. Father Benoit expressed, “I can do nothing without schools.”

I, of course, must add a brief note about Saint Mother Theodore Guerin. She was the foundress of the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods and opened an academy for girls less than a year after migrating from France. She continued to establish schools across Indiana and eastern Illinois throughout her adult life. We are grateful to the religious orders that have taught in or run our schools. They include the Sisters of Notre Dame, Sisters of St. Agnes, Sisters of Holy Cross, Sisters of St. Francis, Sisters of the Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ, Franciscan Sisters of Joliet Illinois, Sisters of St. Francis of the Sacred Heart, Sisters of St. Joseph, Sisters of the Precious Blood, Sisters of St. Francis of Kunegunda, Sisters of Providence from St. Mary of the Woods, the Dominican Sisters, Sisters of Nazareth, Sisters of St. Francis of Lafayette, Felician Sisters, Sisters of St. Joseph Tipton, Holy Cross brothers and sisters, and many others. Let us also not forget the past priests who have run or taught in our schools for their very important contributions and support of Catholic education.

Currently, we are fortunate to have the Most Reverend Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades, pastors, and religious who support Catholic education. They are faith-filled people who see Catholic education as a vocation. Let us not forget their contribution to our schools.

God has blessed us with these Christ-like servant-leaders who help to ensure our schools are faith-filled.

Excellence
An excellent Catholic education requires committed administrators, faculty, and staff. The commitment is always apparent, but especially during this COVID-19 pandemic. During this crisis, our Catholic schools strove to keep open wide the doors for in-person learning. They have put in long hours and endured much stress to keep our children safe while teaching them. Their faith in God has helped them become beacons of hope for parents and their children. May God continue to shower His blessings upon them.

Excellence is evident in our 48 diocesan schools in many ways. We educate more than 11,500 students, and by the time they graduate, more than half earn an honors diploma. In addition, 100% of our K-8 students attend Mass weekly. Our four high schools earned an “A” rating from the Indiana Department of Education, and 98.1% graduated in four years. On average, we have 17 students per teacher, allowing for more individualized instruction. We have more than 700 dedicated educators and we have diversity in our schools (21.6% Hispanic/Latino and 10.9% racial minorities). Also, a significant number of students attend Catholic Schools Week 2022

January 30–February 5

www.NCEA.org/csw
#CSW22

LETTER, page 10

SAINT ELIZABETH ANN SETON
Catholic School

WE ARE CALLED TO AIM HIGHER!

Academic excellence is combined with a daily focus on our Catholic faith, values and a Christ-centered education.

We invite you to discover the opportunities that await your child!

• Call the school office for a private tour
• Celebrate Catholic Schools Week with us, kicking off on January 30, 2022 (school tours available after the 8 a.m., 9:45 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. Masses)
• Kindergarten reception is February 2, 2022 at 6:30 p.m. for new, interested families (reserve your place for 2022-2023!)
• Be on the lookout for 2022-23 preschool & K-8th grade enrollment dates

Give us a call with questions or to set up a private tour
(260) 432-4001  www.seascfw.org

BUILDING EXCEPTIONAL STUDENTS • CONFIDENT INDIVIDUALS • STRONG VALUES & SPIRITUAL LIVES
of our schools score higher than the state average on proficiency tests. The list could go on.

Service

Service to others is an essential component of Catholic education. When our students participate in service activities, learning locally and abroad, they demonstrate their faith, values, and learn how to make the world a better place both now, and throughout their lives.

Many of our schools plan to do the following, among many other acts of service as part of suggestions from the National Catholic Education Association:

- Write notes, make posters, or decorate treat baskets to deliver to neighbors and local businesses around the school to thank them for being great neighbors!
- Host a dress-down day fundraiser, asking students to donate $1 toward a Catholic charity or service organization.
- Invite community members into the school for muffins or other appetizers or a student-led tour or event.

Many of our Catholic graduates go on to a lifetime of service to their communities due to their service learning.

Affordable

With the Indiana Choice Scholarship Program, Scholarship Granting Organizations, and school-specific tuition assistance, affording a Catholic education is easier than you may think.

Indiana Choice Scholarship Program: The Indiana Choice Scholarship Program has three criteria. The student must reside in Indiana. Each student must meet one of eight Choice Scholarship program tracks. Families whose household income is less than 300% of the Child Nutrition Program Income Eligibility Guidelines qualify for 90% of what it costs to educate a student at their local public school. For instance, a family of one can make up to $71,484 adjusted gross income and qualify; a family of four, $147,075; a family of eight, $273,060; and a family of ten $298,257. Contact your local Catholic school for a comprehensive list.

- Scholarship Granting Organizations: Families qualify for scholarships based upon the same household income guidelines listed above through the Scholarship Granting Organization.
- School-specific tuition assistance: Many schools in the Diocese of Fort-Wayne-South Bend provide tuition assistance such as family discounts, parishioner rates, and scholarships.

Your pathway to Catholic education is as simple as contacting the Diocesan school of your choice, applying for assistance, and enrolling.

Happy Catholic Schools Week!

“We are the Light of the World”

Students as young as kindergarten learn the importance of spending time with Jesus in the Eucharist as they attend adoration on Mission Fridays at St. Matthew Cathedral School.

Mission Fridays present faith, excellence, service

Tucked away on bustling Miami Street southeast of downtown South Bend, St. Matthew Cathedral School has a vibrant faculty, staff and students who live out the theme of the 48th annual Catholic Schools Week: “Catholic Schools: Faith, Excellence, Service.” The 2022 theme was chosen by the National Catholic Educational Association.

This year, St. Matthew Cathedral School rolled out its unique Mission Fridays program, and both students and school administrators share the fruits of the program’s efficacy. The activities in Mission Fridays permeate the school’s curriculum and community on- and off-campus.

Mission Fridays focus on prayer and activities that enrich the spiritual, intellectual, moral, social and physical development of all students at the school. The Adoration Club is a Mission Fridays faith activity for all grade levels to pray as a whole school community. As of September, the kindergarten through fourth grade students and their teachers walk over to St. Matthew Cathedral to share 20 minutes with Jesus at their assigned adoration time. Fifth through eighth grade students are permitted to participate in adoration at 7:30 a.m., before school begins.

“It is amazing to watch,” said Dr. Lindsey Esbensen, vice principal and school librarian. She accompanies the kindergarteners and first graders to adoration often, and remembers how she first felt some concern over the kindergartners’ patience when adoration for their grade was introduced. But she trusted that things would work out, and is blessed to witness the parts come together as a fruitful whole. “The students are trying to figure out why this is so important, and the teachers are doing such an excellent job of conveying to them, ‘This is Jesus right here, with us,’” she stated.

Esbensen describes with joyful admiration how she witnesses young students sitting quietly and praying. Some of the 5-year-olds cover their eyes in order to concentrate and genuinely focus on prayer. Their teachers emphasize adoration with a consistent message: “It is important to listen for God.”

Esbensen concluded that: “If kindergartners are able to (be still) for 20 minutes, you know adoration Fridays are working ... some of the most touching things I’ve seen are just how good they are and how truly reverent they are of the Blessed Sacrament.”

Mission Fridays initiate integral development through service activities. They promote a sense
Colin wanted an education that would connect his faith to the modern world. He found it at the University of Saint Francis. "My faith has grown tremendously since I’ve been at USF. I love the fellowship within Campus Ministry. We have deep friendships because we have the same goal: to better our lives, grow our relationship with Jesus, and serve the world." 

Colin White, Class of 2023

Generous Catholic and community service scholarships available. Learn more at go.sf.edu/scholarships.
Mother, daughter recognized as exemplars

BY JENNIFER BARTON

Some mothers and daughters share material possessions like clothing and shoes. Some share hobbies. A few have the same career paths. But even fewer share what Maureen and Katherine Alexander have experienced: four years teaching together.

And this year they have the extraordinary privilege of being honored with the esteemed Christ the Teacher award together. Maureen is at St. John the Baptist in South Bend and Katherine is at St. Pius X in Granger.

“I am touched to share this honor with my daughter,” Maureen stated. “Family and faith are the most important parts of our lives.”

Katherine agreed. “This is very special to share this beautiful recognition with my mom.”

Double awardees

Their career paths were similar. Both women first experienced the same desire to work with children as babysitters, both attended Saint Mary’s College, both taught at St. Anthony de Padua School in South Bend and both made the decision to move to new schools in the same year.

Maureen teaches third grade at St. John the Baptist, though she had taught fifth grade in previous years. Katherine teaches middle school math and science. She also serves as athletic director and coaches sports at St. Pius X.

Both women previously received the Christ the Teacher award in different years while at St. Anthony de Padua. Maureen was teaching kindergarten when she won it, and Katherine was working with second graders, which was special for her as she walked with them through their sacraments.

“It was very bittersweet leaving St. Anthony’s and moving on to new schools for both of us, but I think if we would have stayed at the same school, this would have never happened,” Katherine said. “How cool it is to share this honor together in the same year.”

At both of their schools, the awardee is nominated by fellow teachers, rather than by students and parents. It was a different feeling, knowing that their peers recognized their work as exceptional.

Someone to emulate

Katherine had a couple of excellent role models who inspired her to pursue a teaching career, one of which was definitely her mother. “Growing up, I had a front row seat at witnessing teacher life and my mom made it look so effortless by the way she gracefully handled each day,” Katherine commented. She admired the way that Maureen was able to balance her work and home life, raising three children. “She made it look so easy and fun.”

Katherine has learned for herself that while teaching is not easy, it is definitely enjoyable. “It’s meaningful work. There is purpose. And no class or day is the same, so I like that.”

Her high school physics class at Marian High School gave her an additional boost toward the classroom when then-teacher – and now principal – Mark Kirzeder helped instill in her a love of science through his classroom lessons. He is part of the reason she chose science and math as her specialty. The benefit of teaching in a Catholic classroom, she said, is that: “I talk about my faith and I incorporate that in my science class every day… science and religion go hand-in-hand.”

Setting the example

Now Katherine is the one who fills the role as an example for her young students. When she came to St. Pius X, she decided that it was important for her students to witness her faith outside the classroom, and became a parishioner there, where her students can see her as a greater or extra-ordinary minister of Holy Communion on various Sundays. In a humorous twist, the baby she nannyed for as a young adult is her godson and currently one of her eighth-grade students.

“I realized my students are learning how to be a good human from me,” Katherine said. “They’re not going to remember what I said, but they’ll remember how I made them feel, and I think that’s really what made me into the teacher I am today, that realization.”

While they each have had some experience in the public school setting, both mother and daughter believe they have been called to teach within the Catholic schools system. When she started teaching, Maureen wanted to be in a place where her children could attend, and as her parents sacrificed to send her and her siblings to Catholic schools, so she wanted the same for her three children.

St. Anthony de Padua is still her home parish, but she feels needed at St. John the Baptist. “I teach at a school where less than half the population are Catholic, but their parents have chosen St. John’s as an alternative education for them,” she said. This gives her an opportunity to be a witness to the faith and “incorporate anything I can so that they’ll remember God every day.”

St. John the Baptist has begun using the Virtue=Strength program this year in the classroom, and Maureen has adapted each month’s virtue for her young students to understand. She also took extra time after school this year to teach phonics to help fill the gap that many of her students have faced due to the pandemic and the educational struggles that went with it. “I think I’ve chosen the right school that needed a teacher and needed the dedication that I have.”

In her years as a teacher, Maureen has also mentored future teachers and has particularly paid back her alma mater by accepting 10 Saint Mary’s students as student teachers.

Although she has roughly 35 years of teaching under her belt, Maureen has no plans for leaving her chosen field. “I’ve had success this year with children who were having trouble in public schools and making them feel at home in our Catholic school, and that’s gratifying. The teachers that I teach with and the students that I help – it’s the reason why I go in every day.”
Bishop Luers student grateful for Catholic education

BY JENNY CONRAD

ishop Luers High School student Gabby Durnell is thankful, and her grateful spirit permeates her commentary on high school life. She recently earned a $1,000 award from the Institute for Quality Education for her essay submission to their “Voices for Choices” competition. This essay contest is typically reserved for parents. Gabby was the only student in the state of Indiana to submit an essay and is one of three awardees. Bishop Luers High School in Fort Wayne also received a matching prize.

Along with her parents, principal Jim Huth and admissions director Jenny Andorfer, Gabby will travel to Indianapolis to attend a breakfast with Governor Eric Holcomb and state legislature representatives at the end of the month in recognition of her award.

Her gratitude extends well beyond scholarship recognition or monetary awards. Gabby is passionate about the Indiana School Choice program and what it has meant for her family and her high school education.

Gabby’s path to Bishop Luers began while she was still in middle school. She grew up in the Southwest Allen County School district, but sensed that, as her school system grew, it was not the right fit. Gabby decided to visit Fort Wayne, telling her that Bishop Luers would be a good fit. “At the time, I told my parents that this was the kind of place we wanted Gabby to be.”

Her parents were open to investigating the school as well. Victoria Durnell remembers her husband, Jason, who grew up in Fort Wayne, telling her that Bishop Luers always had a very good reputation. Together with Gabby, the Durnells decided to visit the school. Victoria stated, “I was impressed from the beginning – the class size, academics, teachers and staff impressed me. And everyone was so personable, you couldn’t help but feel warm and welcomed. Our top priority was putting Gabby where she would grow spiritually, academically and athletically. We believed Bishop Luers would be a good fit.”

Once their decision was made, the enrollment process began. But shortly after, they hit a roadblock. Gabby recalls the situation. “The pandemic came and my mom lost her job. Now with only one income, my parents didn’t know how we could afford private school tuition,” she said. “So, sadly, my parents made the decision they would call the admissions director and let her know I wouldn’t be coming.”

Victoria still remembers making that phone call to Andorfer, and how hard it was to say that Gabby wasn’t coming to Bishop Luers. “I poured everything out in that phone call. It was so emotional for me,” Victoria said. “I kept saying I want her there, but I just don’t know how we can do this.’ And I didn’t want to take up a spot that could go to another student, so we decided to stop the enrollment process.

Mrs. Andorfer just listened, then said to me, ‘We can find a way to make this happen.’”

Andorfer also recalls that conversation. “At the time, I told her we’d do everything we could to help them. I knew she truly believed this was the best place for Gabby and we never want to turn a child away due to financial circumstances,” she stated.

So she sat down with Gretchen Steele, the tuition manager at Bishop Luers, and evaluated any financial aid the Durnells might qualify for, including the School Choice voucher. After that, Victoria, thrilled that there were available resources, applied for everything she could. She praised Andorfer for providing Gabby with scholarship information and walking them through the process. Finally, they had enough financial aid to enroll Gabby.

“Voices for Choices” is a grant program reserved for parents. Gabby was the only student in the state of Indiana to submit an essay and is one of three awardees. Bishop Luers High School in Fort Wayne also received a matching prize.

The pandemic came and Gabby’s mom lost her job. Now with only one income, Gabby and her parents didn’t know how they could afford private school tuition. So, they decided to call the admissions director and let her know Gabby wouldn’t be coming to Bishop Luers.

Victoria, thrilled that there were available resources, applied for everything she could. She praised Andorfer for providing Gabby with scholarship information and walking them through the process. Finally, they had enough financial aid to enroll Gabby.

“The pandemic came and my mom lost her job. Now with only one income, my parents didn’t know how we could afford private school tuition,” she said. “So, we had to make this happen.’”

So, Gabby and her parents decided to check it out. Gabby recalls the situation. “The pandemic came and my mom lost her job. Now with only one income, my parents didn’t know how we could afford private school tuition,” she said. “So, we had to make this happen.’”

Provided by Jenny Conrad

Bishop Luers sophomore Gabby Durnell, center, was surprised to learn that her essay was chosen as a winner of the $1,000 “Voices for Choices” scholarship by the Institute for Quality Education. Pictured with her are her parents Jason and Victoria Durnell, Jenny Andorfer, the admissions director who ensured that Gabby would be able to attend Bishop Luers, and principal Jim Huth.

Bishop Luers student Gabby Durnell is thankful, and her grateful spirit permeates her commentary on high school life. She recently earned a $1,000 award from the Institute for Quality Education for her essay submission to their “Voices for Choices” competition. This essay contest is typically reserved for parents. Gabby was the only student in the state of Indiana to submit an essay and is one of three awardees. Bishop Luers High School in Fort Wayne also received a matching prize.

Along with her parents, principal Jim Huth and admissions director Jenny Andorfer, Gabby will travel to Indianapolis to attend a breakfast with Governor Eric Holcomb and state legislature representatives at the end of the month in recognition of her award.

Her gratitude extends well beyond scholarship recognition or monetary awards. Gabby is passionate about the Indiana School Choice program and what it has meant for her family and her high school education.

Gabby’s path to Bishop Luers began while she was still in middle school. She grew up in the Southwest Allen County School district, but sensed that, as her school system grew, it was not the right fit. Gabby decided to visit Fort Wayne, telling her that Bishop Luers would be a good fit. “At the time, I told my parents that this was the kind of place we wanted Gabby to be.”

Her parents were open to investigating the school as well. Victoria Durnell remembers her husband, Jason, who grew up in Fort Wayne, telling her that Bishop Luers always had a very good reputation. Together with Gabby, the Durnells decided to visit the school. Victoria stated, “I was impressed from the beginning – the class size, academics, teachers and staff impressed me. And everyone was so personable, you couldn’t help but feel warm and welcomed. Our top priority was putting Gabby where she would grow spiritually, academically and athletically. We believed Bishop Luers would be a good fit.”

Once their decision was made, the enrollment process began. But shortly after, they hit a roadblock. Gabby recalls the situation. “The pandemic came and my mom lost her job. Now with only one income, my parents didn’t know how we could afford private school tuition,” she said. “So, sadly, my parents made the decision they would call the admissions director and let her know I wouldn’t be coming.”

Victoria still remembers making that phone call to Andorfer, and how hard it was to say that Gabby wasn’t coming to Bishop Luers. “I poured everything out in that phone call. It was so emotional for me,” Victoria said. “I kept saying I want her there, but I just don’t know how we can do this.’ And I didn’t want to take up a spot that could go to another student, so we decided to stop the enrollment process.

Mrs. Andorfer just listened, then said to me, ‘We can find a way to make this happen.’”

Andorfer also recalls that conversation. “At the time, I told her we’d do everything we could to help them. I knew she truly believed this was the best place for Gabby and we never want to turn a child away due to financial circumstances,” she stated.

So she sat down with Gretchen Steele, the tuition manager at Bishop Luers, and evaluated any financial aid the Durnells might qualify for, including the School Choice voucher. After that, Victoria, thrilled that there were available resources, applied for everything she could. She praised Andorfer for providing Gabby with scholarship information and walking them through the process. Finally, they had enough financial aid to enroll Gabby.

“The pandemic came and my mom lost her job. Now with only one income, my parents didn’t know how we could afford private school tuition,” she said. “So, we had to make this happen.’”

So, Gabby and her parents decided to check it out. Gabby recalls the situation. “The pandemic came and my mom lost her job. Now with only one income, my parents didn’t know how we could afford private school tuition,” she said. “So, we had to make this happen.’”

Provided by Jenny Conrad
Oratory an invitation for students to ‘listen to Jesus’

BY KATIE SLEE

On a frigid January day, a class full of St. Vincent de Paul School students bundled up to cross the street and make their way to the Oratory of St. Mary Magdalene in Fort Wayne. They knew the temperature and were aware of the wind chill, but nevertheless were excited to brave the elements to spend time in the presence of Christ.

Despite the number of students in the oratory, those in the building could hear a pin drop. Some students knelt to pray, others journaled, some read prayers, a few simply sat and took in the peace. One young man made his way to the front and knelt, gazing at the Eucharist.

This isn’t the image of youth to which society has become accustomed. Second grade teacher Amy Johnson explained, “they actually crave the silence. Their whole life, their whole world is full of so much noise that they have found they look forward to this. They need this.”

The Oratory of St. Mary Magdalene is a perpetual adoration chapel located on the campus of St. Vincent de Paul Parish. It is a short walk across the street for students and staff who want to spend some time in quiet prayer and rest in the presence of Christ. The building maintains the practice of complete silence. There is no singing, no spoken prayer, or instruments. The only exception to this is a weekly Mass offered on Friday evenings.

While accessible to anyone at any time, there is a list of adorers who sign up for a holy hour so someone is always present. One need not be signed up to walk in, and those who drop by can stay for however long they choose. Adoration is open to all people, parishioners or not, Catholic or not. Even those with no faith affiliation at all are welcomed and encouraged to walk in and feel the peaceful presence. In a world full of noise and distractions, this in itself is a powerful conversion tool.

Beyond the adoration of the Eucharist, Johnson said she has noticed her students observing and appreciating other aspects of the oratory. “We have had conversations in which they have shared that they also ‘adorer the art,’” she explained.

According to Johnson, Father Daniel Scheidt had an active and passionate role in selecting the art for the space. He spent a lot of time mindfully and prayerfully choosing what to display. Among her students’ favorite works to look at is the Tree of Life, a striking carving held aloft in the center of the oratory that depicts the crucified Christ, not on a traditional cross, but on the Tree of Life. In addition to the carving, stained glass windows with images of saints familiar to the children are beginning to be inserted.

Parish advancement director Regina Zedaker shared that the students of St. Vincent feel such a connection to the oratory in large part because they have played a significant role in the construction of it. “We had the students write their names on the tresses as it was being built. They were able to take a tour of it while it was under construction, and they didn’t feel the need to explain some of the pieces. The students also wrote on the back of the floor tiles before they were installed. They could share prayers, verses or just their names and know that they were always going to be in the presence of Christ.”

Johnson affirmed the tie her students have to the oratory. “They know it is a holy place,” she said. “They know it is special.”

While it might not always be an easy task to get a class full of second graders to sit in silence, Johnson said she has noticed that the consistent practice of adoration has been a key component of their faith formation as she prepares them to receive their first Communion this spring. She has diligently and faithfully incorporated this experience into their sacramental education to prepare them not only for the big day itself, but for their faith life in the future.

Johnson is striving to shape a generation of Catholics who, even for a few moments, remember to stop and listen so they can refocus their daily lives to center on what really matters. These lessons are not only sinking in, but they are also being shared by the children.

When asked what her favorite thing about going across the street to adoration is, student Elsie Tippmann summed it up clearly and without hesitation, saying, “I just like to sit and listen to Jesus.” In a complicated and noisy society full of anxiety and distractions, anyone would benefit from pausing, even briefly, and learning a lesson from a second grader.
Catholic Charities volunteers provide welcome to Afghan refugees in Fort Wayne

BY KEVIN KILBANE

They gave of their time for different reasons. Their work transformed an unused former nursing home into Catholic Charities’ new Cabrini Center, which will offer temporary housing and resettlement services to Afghan refugees starting a new life in the Fort Wayne area.

“Volunteers were instrumental in every piece of getting this open,” said Nicole Kurut, mission advancement manager for the Catholic Charities office serving the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend.

The Afghan resettlement project also became an interfaith effort, with congregations from other religious denominations partnering with Catholic Charities about volunteer opportunities and needs, said Lisa Gutoskey, a local Afghan resettlement sub-office in South Bend.

At the time Afghan refugees were being resettled in the Fort Wayne area, Florin said. They currently expect to resettle a total of about 125 Afghans here.

Mark and Lisa Meadows of the Carpenter’s Union had been in touch with Catholic Charities about volunteer opportunities and needs, said Linda Gutoskey, a local Afghan resettlement sub-office in South Bend.

“Refugees” heading.

“All of us work together to welcome the stranger. And it gives us a chance to impact people’s lives,” Mark said of Catholic Charities’ efforts to open the center, which will provide services to Afghan refugees being resettled in the Fort Wayne area.

With help of many volunteers, Catholic Charities converted an unused building owned by the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend into the Cabrini Center, a hub for providing services to Afghan refugees being resettled in the Fort Wayne area.

At the time Afghan refugees were being resettled in the Fort Wayne area, Kurut said. So Catholic Charities looked for other ways to accommodate some of the new arrivals.

The diocese already owned the building that now is the Cabrini Center. The original portion had been constructed in 1958 as a convent for religious sisters, Florin said. It later became a nursing home but had basically sat unused for a year or more when Catholic Charities took possession of it in October, Kurut said.

Volunteers from Allen County, the nearby city of Warsaw and places in Ohio swarmed in to clean up the interior and remove items left from its previous use, Kurut said. They unboxed and sorted donations of clothing, kitchen items, bedding and other things the families will need to set up their own households. They set up rooms for use by Afghan families, who can stay there 30 to 60 days while Catholic Charities helps them find housing of their own.

Eleven members of Knights of Columbus Council 451 at St. Charles Borromeo Parish in Fort Wayne volunteered at least 200 hours of time picking up donated household goods at owners’ homes and delivering them to the Cabrini Center, said Dennis Redding, the council’s Grand Knight.

Redding, whose wife Jill sorted clothing donations, said the volunteer matched two key missions for Knights of Columbus members: “We are associated with the Catholic Church, and this project helped the Church. And it gave us a chance to impact people’s lives.”

Members of the Carpenter’s Sons, a ministry of the St. Vincent de Paul Society of Fort Wayne, tackled the remodeling work that required more skilled labor, Kurut said. Catholic Charities hired a contractor to repair a larger room that had sustained water damage.

The Afghan resettlement project also became an interfaith effort, with congregations from other religious denominations in the Fort Wayne area holding fundraisers or organizing other activities to assist Catholic Charities, Kurut said.

“None of this would have been possible without our volunteers,” she emphasized. Those who volunteered found the experience extremely rewarding. “I like working with all the other volunteers,” said Linda Gutoskey, a local Afghan resettlement sub-office in South Bend.

Kurut said. “It is a local need,” she explained. “It gets you thinking about it in a different way.” Mark said.

At the time Afghan refugees were being resettled in the Fort Wayne area, Kurut said. They currently expect to resettle a total of about 125 Afghans here.

Catholic Charities also recently opened a refugee resettlement sub-office in South Bend.

“Volunteers were instrumental in every piece of getting this open,” said Nicole Kurut, mission advancement manager for the Catholic Charities office serving the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend.

“Volunteers were instrumental in every piece of getting this open,” said Nicole Kurut, mission advancement manager for the Catholic Charities office serving the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend.

They gave of their time for different reasons. Their work transformed an unused former nursing home into Catholic Charities’ new Cabrini Center, which will offer temporary housing and resettlement services to Afghan refugees starting a new life in the Fort Wayne area.

“Volunteers were instrumental in every piece of getting this open,” said Nicole Kurut, mission advancement manager for the Catholic Charities office serving the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend.

They gave of their time for different reasons. Their work transformed an unused former nursing home into Catholic Charities’ new Cabrini Center, which will offer temporary housing and resettlement services to Afghan refugees starting a new life in the Fort Wayne area.

“Volunteers were instrumental in every piece of getting this open,” said Nicole Kurut, mission advancement manager for the Catholic Charities office serving the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend.

They gave of their time for different reasons. Their work transformed an unused former nursing home into Catholic Charities’ new Cabrini Center, which will offer temporary housing and resettlement services to Afghan refugees starting a new life in the Fort Wayne area.

“Volunteers were instrumental in every piece of getting this open,” said Nicole Kurut, mission advancement manager for the Catholic Charities office serving the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend.

They gave of their time for different reasons. Their work transformed an unused former nursing home into Catholic Charities’ new Cabrini Center, which will offer temporary housing and resettlement services to Afghan refugees starting a new life in the Fort Wayne area.

“Volunteers were instrumental in every piece of getting this open,” said Nicole Kurut, mission advancement manager for the Catholic Charities office serving the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend.
COVID-19 and scientism

A t the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, I was puzzled about how our reactions to it divided along party lines. There is no obvious reason why Democrats should fear sickness and death more than Republicans. But the division has persisted, indeed hardened; there is clearly something else going on.

One possible cause is that a pandemic invites government intervention, something Democrats are fond of. We’ve seen more of this from President Joe Biden, blue-state governors and big-city mayors than from their Republican counterparts. Another reason for our division is not political, though I missed it for a long time because it aligns with party affiliation. It has to do with beliefs about science.

The cognoscenti say that those who object to vaccines, masks, quarantines, tests, crowd controls and school closings fail to “follow the science.” Mainstream media see those objects as mouth-breathing ninnies who lack the wherewithal to understand what’s good for them.

This is unfair. There is much we don’t know about the progress of the infection or the effects of our responses. We used to worry about doorknobs and surfaces; now we don’t. We’ve gone back and forth about masks. It now seems that the vaccines, although they help prevent severe outcomes from infection, are much less effective at preventing transmission of the omicron variant than they were the delta variant. It’s not that science isn’t helpful, but there is a kind of scientism on the secular left that helps explain our disunion on this subject. And it’s better aligned with religion than with politics. The division is not confined to public health policy. We see it in disputes over climate change and gender identity and abortion.

In each of these cases, the adherents of scientism argue that experts in the field have fully comprehended some matter of social concern.

For COVID-19, it’s the infectious disease experts created for Disease Control. For climate change, it’s NASA, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the U.N. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

Gender identity is the concern of the American Psychiatric Association. In recognizing a constitutional right to abortion in Roe v. Wade, Justice Harry A. Blackmun, in his own words, “ quoted from the Mayo Clinic, mentioned the word “physician” 48 times.

I say “scientism” rather than “scientific method” because there is almost religious commitment to the creed defined by the experts. And a corresponding resolution to stay neutral.

Last year, President Biden’s press secretary said the White House was working with Facebook to prevent disinformation about vaccines on Google and YouTube banned ads from videos contradicting “well-established scientific consensus” about the causes of climate change. Amazon pulled Ryan Anderson’s book about transgenderism.

And as with other varieties of scientism on the secular left that helps explain our disunion on this subject, and it’s better aligned with religion than with politics. The division is not confined to public health policy. We see it in disputes over climate change and gender identity and abortion.

The answer is hinted at in the song “Blankets of Snow,” a winter anthem by the bluegrass duo the Oaky Dokey Brothers. They sing: “Let the milk and cocoa simmer on the heat. Don’t you know the bitter cold makes the bittersweet.”

But science can’t tell us anything about moral responsibility. Its tools are logic and empirical measurement. It can assess whether mRNA vaccines work, and how fast the omicron variant spreads.

But it has no way to solve moral equations like how to weigh the risk of this infection against the immorality of the suffering, the sick, going to church, educating your children, respecting privacy, kissing your grandmother.

Experts tend to picture the world with their own specialty in the foreground. My nephrologist tells me not to drink milk, lest I get kidney stones. He forgets that I need calcium and vitamin D for bones and teeth. Scientism suffers from the same cognitive bias in its approach to COVID-19.

Minimizing the risk of infection is not our only challenge in life.

The Audience was outraged, its language. Jeremiah descended on a mission from God in 622 BC. God told him to prophesy. He gives the period of time, the reign of King Josiah, who ruled the Kingdom of Judah from 640 to 609 BC. God told Jeremiah to be bold and predicted the controversy response to Jeremiah’s prophesying, urging the prophet not to be daunted by unfriendly or angry reactions.

As its opening reading for this weekend, the Church offers a passage from the First Epistle to the Corinthians. It is one of the most noted and best known sections of the entire corpus of Pauline literature.

Clear and straightforward, it is the beautiful explanation of love, this ability so vital to and treasured by humans, in nature, exist.

Paul then reveals what happens when a person embraces the Gospel. Knowledge increases. Maturity is reached. The insecurities, smallness and short-sightedness of youth are overcome.

The Gospel is the source of the last reading. Jesus, as the story clearly states, appeared in the synagogue in Nazareth. In earlier verses not part of this weekend’s reading, Jesus stood to read a section of the Book of Isaiah, in which Isaiah recalled his own calling to be a prophet. Isaiah gave details as to what this calling meant. It meant that he was God’s representative, sent by God to bring liberty to the oppressed. Knowledge and the poor, and sight to the blind.

Then, continuing in the passage, this weekend, Jesus declared that “this prophecy has now been fulfilled. In other words, Jesus spoke as the long-awaited spokesman of God.”

The question was outraged, especially when Jesus recalled an incident, mentioned in the Old Testament, in which God showed mercy upon gentiles.

This mention of divine favor for anyone outside the chosen people influrated the audience in the synagogue so much that they tried to murder Jesus. He, of course, escaped.

Reflection:

The Church remembers the great feasts of Christmas, the Epiphany and that of the Baptism of the Lord, in early January when it celebrated the mercy of God that came to us in the Lord Jesus.

Now, building upon this idea of God’s gift of mercy and the possibility of our eternal life, the Church this weekend presents these readings.

As the Gospel made clear, God’s love excludes no one, but we all must do their part in receiving divine mercy. We ourselves should love others, with love as pure and unselfish as that described by St. Paul.

Granted, it is more easily said than done. Reactions to Jeremiah and to Jesus remind us that human insights are limited and self-centered. We can be bitter and angry in our selfishness and short-sightedness.

As the Gospel made clear, God’s love excludes no one, but we all must do their part in receiving divine mercy. We ourselves should love others, with love as pure and unselfish as that described by St. Paul.

Granted, it is more easily said than done. Reactions to Jeremiah and to Jesus remind us that human insights are limited and self-centered. We can be bitter and angry in our selfishness and short-sightedness.

God supplies us with what we cannot find or create on our own, eternal life but also genuine wisdom. Thus, God sent Jeremiah. Thus, God sent Jesus to us.
The ethics of pig to human organ transplants

Early this year, a Maryland man suffering from severe heart failure underwent a new experimental therapy, receiving a pig heart transplant. His medical team had determined he would be a poor candidate for a human heart transplant or for an artificial heart, so he was offered the opportunity to participate in a novel treatment using a genetically modified pig’s heart.

The pig had been specially bred and modified with DNA edits to increase the speed of successful transplantation. Three genes of the pig that contribute to the rapid antibody-mediated rejection of pig organs by humans were “knocked out.” Six human genes that would produce “human protective proteins” and improve immune acceptance of the pig heart were also inserted into the pig’s genome. An additional gene knock out was done to prevent the pig’s heart from becoming too large.

The transplantation of animal organs into humans is known as “xenotransplantation” and is a new field that appears poised to expand rapidly in the future. Xenotransplantation can be ethical as long as pilot studies are performed in animals ahead of use in humans, safety issues are carefully addressed, the benefits of the transplantation procedure outweigh the burdens and risks are reasonably limited.

While we have a duty to treat animals well and should try to avoid causing them undue suffering, it’s also clear that human beings have been given by God a legitimate dominion over members of the animal kingdom. Animal trials have always been key to launching new therapies in humans.

Pig organ transplants into baboons and other non-human primates have been taking place for decades. These transplants offer an important advantage over traditional human-to-human transplants: the opportunity to modify the donor organ, rather than only modifying the recipient through suppressing his or her immune system.

In the early days of implanting pig organs into non-human primates, researchers faced the serious problem of immediate organ destruction due to hyperacute rejection, with the failure time being measured in minutes, rather than hours or days. Hyperacute rejection occurred because the baboon’s immune system recognized a carbohydrate molecule on the surface of the pig organ. By knocking out the troublesome carbohydrate molecule via genetic engineering, and relying on additional immunosuppression strategies in organ recipients, led to the realization that it might finally be possible to attempt implantation of a genetically modified pig heart into a human patient.

In the future, additional and more sophisticated genetic engineering of source animals and the use of new immunosuppressive agents in recipients should further improve compatibility and decrease the chances of xenotransplant rejection.

Still, it should be noted that there are other potential concerns besides organ rejection. Animal retroviruses or diseases could potentially be transmitted to humans when they receive an animal organ. Some have argued, however, that by maintaining strict control over how animals are housed, fed and bred for organ procurement, scientists can achieve a greater degree of assurance in terms of minimizing their exposure to pathogens through the highly biosecure laboratory conditions the animals are raised in; meanwhile, for human organ donors, detailed knowledge of individual exposure profiles may not be available.

This concept feels encapsulated in our Catholic faith, which delivers healing through sacraments we cannot find elsewhere. The priest doesn’t say Mass; he celebrates it. In the dead of winter, the Eucharist nourishes us.

Father Tadeusz Pacholczyk, Ph.D., serves as the director of education at The National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia. See www.ncbcenter.org.

CAPECHI, from page 16

If it’s above zero, we bundle up and head to the neighborhood pond, our sled filled with ice skates and firewood. We roast more marshmallows in the winter than the summer. That’s when we need the fire.

I’m reading Katherine May’s bestseller “Wintering,” which chronicles a period she calls “wintering,” when she and her husband experienced serious health problems and their son’s anxiety peaked. Katherine means meaning out of a season many consider dormant, worthless. But she does so with gentle realism.

“If happiness is a skill,” she writes, “then sadness is too. … As adults, we often have to learn to hear the clarity of its call. That is wintering. It is the active acceptance of sadness. It is the practice of allowing ourselves to feel it as a need. It is the courage to stare down the worst parts of our experience and to commit to healing them the best we can. Wintering is a moment of intuition, our true needs felt keenly as a knife.”

Christina Capechi is a freelance writer from Inver Grove Heights, Minnesota.

SCRIPTURE SEARCH®

Gospel for January 30, 2022


Following is a word search based on the Gospel reading for the Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle C: Nazareth rejects Jesus. The words can be found in all directions in the puzzle.

YOUR HEARING PROVERB GRACIOUS
ELIJAH SEVERE CAPERNAUM THREE
LEPERS FAMINE CLEANSED
SYRIAN SYNOAGOGUE SYDON
TOWN BUILT DROVE HIM
NOT WELCOME
P R O V E
S A E L C H
R J W E P S G
A O A J O S L Y Y N
T V E C D I A D R C N I
H E L R I D R I S A A R
U R I E W O A B E P G A
R B J F V N U D V E O E
L D A E A I S S E R G H
H Y H M L M D O R N U R
I I A T L R I D E A E U
M A A T O W N R U E O
N A N W T H R E E M K Y

ST. VALENTINE

FEAST: FEBRUARY 14

How Feb. 14 came to be celebrated as the feast for lovers is somewhat a mystery. What little is known of the feast’s namesake can be attributed to the lives of two martyrs: one a priest, the other a bishop. Their lives have no connection to the contemporary holiday. The priest Valentine reportedly was beheaded in 269 by Emperor Claudius II. The bishop, known for healing, was martyred earlier. It’s probable that a medieval custom of sending messages of love on this day somehow merged later with the feast.
Director of Sacred Music

St. Elizabeth Seton Catholic Church, which serves a Roman Catholic community of more than 9,700 in Carmel, Indiana, seeks candidates for our position of Director of Sacred Music.

The successful candidate should be an energetic, collaborative individual with experience in liturgical music within a parish setting to direct the liturgical music ministries of the parish. The person will be responsible for the preparation, coordination, performance, and organization of Music and music ministers/choirs. The director must be collaborative and knowledgeable of the Roman Catholic Liturgy.

The Director of Sacred Music is responsible for planning/directing a comprehensive parish music program which includes several choir/musician groups, musicians, and cantors performing at various liturgies including funerals and weddings. This person also serves as the parish music resource person in the areas of religious education, social ministry and evangelization. The successful candidate will have comprehensive knowledge of Catholic music and liturgy; be a Catholic in good standing; leadership, communication, planning and organizing skills and responsiveness to facilitating the worship life of the parish are required. This is an open position that is available immediately. Qualified and interested candidates are invited to send letter (email preferred) of interest and resume to:

Kevin Sweeney
St. Elizabeth Seton Catholic Church
10655 Haverstick Road
Carmel, IN 46033
317-846-3850
kevin.sweeney@setoncarmel.org

Encanto

BY JOHN MULDERIG

NEW YORK (CNS) — Will viewers be charmed by Disney’s “Encanto”? For the most part, the answer is probably yes, though this vivacious animated musical does include content that could be of concern for the parents of impressionable kids.

The setting, from which the film takes its title, is an enchanted enclave in Colombia. Long ago, this realm became home to Alma (voice of María Cecilia Botero), a then-young refugee mother who had recently been widowed when her courageous husband fell afoul of a band of soldiers.

Now, Abuela Alma presides as the matriarch of both her community and her family, the Madrigals, each member of which has traditionally received a supernatural talent on reaching the age of 5. All, that is, except Alma’s 15-year-old granddaugh-ter Mirabel (voice of Stephanie Beatriz) who, a decade back, awaited her gift in vain.

As Mirabel, strong-willed Alma and Mirabel’s protective parents, Julieta (voice of Angie Cepeda) and Agustín (voice of Wilmer Valderrama), continue to wrestle with this misfortune, they find themselves threatened with a far worse one. A dark vision of the whole clan’s doom granted years before to Mirabel’s Uncle Bruno (voice of John Leguizamo) seems on the verge of fulfillment.

Amid colorful visuals and catchy songs by Lin-Manuel Miranda, the script, penned by Charise Castro Smith and Jared Bush (both of whom co-directed with Byron Howard), delivers worthy messages about community service, cooperation and family reconciliation. Yet “Encanto” may not be a good fit for the youngest moviegoers for a variety of reasons.

Along with the screenplay’s strong emphasis on magic — including divination — and the vivid dangers through which Mirabel must pass, the movie also includes a slightly ambiguous treatment of religion.

Thus the namesake area includes a church whose amiable, briefly glimpsed priest is shown to be a local leader. Yet if the mystical is pervasive — the Madrigals, for example, live in a house that’s essentially alive and that moves its elements around to protect and accommodate them — Christianity has only a marginal presence in the movie. That’s an imbalance that might be hard to explain to small fry.

On the other hand, there’s certainly no note of animosity against the faith discernable in the proceedings. Instead, Catholicism seems to be momentar-ily acknowledged as part of the culture, but then implicitly relegated to a state of mild-man-nered irrelevance.

“Encanto” is preceded by a sweet-natured short cartoon, “Far From the Tree.” The story of an overly curious young raccoon, it includes some potentially scary moments, but is otherwise acceptable for all.

The film contains nonscrip-tural beliefs and practices and characters in peril. The Catholic News Service classification is A-II — adults and adolescents. The Motion Picture Association rating is PG — parental guidance suggested.

Director of Pastoral Care

St. Elizabeth Seton Catholic Church, which serves a Roman Catholic community of more than 9,700 in Carmel, Indiana, seeks candidates for our position of Director of Pastoral Care to serve seniors in our area.

The successful candidate will be responsible for providing support, programs, and resources to meet the needs of the community and extending the resources of the parish — from middle-aged to seniors, or struggling with physical or mental-emotional health, grieving or otherwise in need of support by providing practical assistance and spiritual guidance for life’s transitions and crises.

The responsibilities of the director will cover many functions relating to spiritual health, social activities, counseling and education: providing spiritual support services and outreach programs. The successful candidate will be a Catholic in good standing, have a bachelor’s degree, prefer BSW, MSW, Pastoral Ministry, or Theology degree.

This is an open position that is available immediately. Qualified and interested candidates are invited to send letter (email preferred) of interest and resume to:

Kevin Sweeney
St. Elizabeth Seton Catholic Church
10655 Haverstick Road
Carmel, IN 46033
317-846-3850
kevin.sweeney@setoncarmel.org

YOUR NEWS. WHEREVER YOU ARE.

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

The Marriage Course Online  
MISHAWAKA — Strengthen your marriage from the comfort of your own home with The Marriage Course Online. Based on a brand-new film series featuring “regular” couples and relationship experts from around the world, this free seven-week program will take place online over Zoom on Thursday evenings from 8-10 p.m., Feb. 3 through March 17. Topics covered are strengthening connection, the art of communication, resolving conflict, the power of forgiveness, the impact of family, good sex and love in action. The program is hosted by Lisa Everett, director for Marriage and Family Ministry for the diocese. For more information and to register, visit www.diocesefwsb.org/marriage-course.

Most Precious Blood School trivia night  
FORT WAYNE — Trivia night at Most Precious Blood School, 1529 Barthold St., will be Saturday, Feb. 5. Cost is $100 per team of 10. Doors open at 6 p.m. and trivia starts at 7 p.m. Open to adults 21 and over. Adult beverages by Tower Bar and Grill. No outside beverages. You may bring your own food. Contact Angela Gernhardt at 260-424-4832 or office2@preciousblood.org.

2022 Rekindle the Fire men’s conference  
FORT WAYNE — Join men from across the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend for a Rekindle the Fire conference Saturday, Feb. 26, from 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. at the Allen County War Memorial Coliseum. This year’s speakers are Tim Staples, Nathan Crankfield, Father Wade Menezes and Jason Shanks. Visit www.rekindlethefire.net for information.

Belonging Catholic schools meeting: Ministry with Persons with Disabilities  
FORT WAYNE — A meeting is offered the first Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. via Zoom to connect with others interested in helping children with disabilities attend Catholic schools in the diocese. To get the link, call 260-399-1452 or email asturm@diocesefwsb.org.

Red Cross Blood Drive  
FORT WAYNE — Our Lady of Good Hope will host a blood drive Friday, Feb. 12, from 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in the school gym, 7215 Saint Joe Rd. Donations must be scheduled for adequate staffing (sorry, no walk-ins at this time). Each donor also receives a $10 gift card. Sign up now for your preferred time at https://olghfw.com/ministries/outreach-ministries/american-red-cross-blood-drive. Contact Debi Schoedel at 260-485-9615 or debi@olghfw.com.

Sensory-friendly Mass celebrated each week at St. Vincent de Paul  
FORT WAYNE — A sensory-friendly Mass is celebrated every Sunday at 1:30 p.m. at St. Vincent de Paul Church, 1502 E. Wallen Rd. A sensory-friendly Mass provides a safe, comfortable and stigma-free setting for children and adults with sensory challenges, mental illness or any kind of disability to feel engaged and experience Mass in a meaningful way. Parishioners and nonparishioners are welcome. Questions about offering a sensory-friendly Mass at your parish? Contact Allison Sturm at asturm@diocesefwsb.org or 260-399-1452.

Elementary Principal  
For 2022-2023 school year  
The elementary school principal, under the direction of the pastor, is charged with the complete administration of the school. These duties include, but are not limited to, the following responsibilities:

1. Serve as spiritual leader of the school with and under the pastor;
2. Witness Catholic values and work with others to establish a faith community;
3. Establish rules and procedures to carry out assigned responsibilities;
4. Follow directives of the Diocesan Catholic Schools Office and other diocesan offices;
5. Implement diocesan policies;
6. Implement, monitor, and assess the diocesan curriculum;
7. Establish instructional programs;
8. Ensure that teachers are supportive of the Catholic faith by their teaching and example;
9. Hire, assign and evaluate employees;
10. Supervise the work of employees;
11. Develop the school budget and manage the fiscal operations of the school;
12. Establish student conduct and discipline rules;
13. Act as spokesperson for the school in cooperation with the Diocesan Communications Office;
14. Coordinate marketing and development efforts in cooperation with the appropriate diocesan office;
15. Develop and implement a strategic plan for the school; and
16. Work closely with the local school board, which is consultative to the pastor and principal.

Submit your event at www.TodaysCatholic.org/event

Holy Family School in South Bend seeks an Elementary Principal

For 2022-2023 school year

The elementary school principal, under the direction of the pastor, is charged with the complete administration of the school. These duties include, but are not limited to, the following responsibilities:

1. Serve as spiritual leader of the school with and under the pastor;
2. Witness Catholic values and work with others to establish a faith community;
3. Establish rules and procedures to carry out assigned responsibilities;
4. Follow directives of the Diocesan Catholic Schools Office and other diocesan offices;
5. Implement diocesan policies;
6. Implement, monitor, and assess the diocesan curriculum;
7. Establish instructional programs;
8. Ensure that teachers are supportive of the Catholic faith by their teaching and example;
9. Hire, assign and evaluate employees;
10. Supervise the work of employees;
11. Develop the school budget and manage the fiscal operations of the school;
12. Establish student conduct and discipline rules;
13. Act as spokesperson for the school in cooperation with the Diocesan Communications Office;
14. Coordinate marketing and development efforts in cooperation with the appropriate diocesan office;
15. Develop and implement a strategic plan for the school; and
16. Work closely with the local school board, which is consultative to the pastor and principal.

To apply, visit ccfswb.org

Apply at diocesefwsb.org/careers
YOU CAN LEND A HAND™
DONATE $1
TO SUPPORT LOCAL CATHOLIC SCHOOLS & RECEIVE FREE FOOD

OVER $11 MILLION RAISED

- Student Scholarships
- Technology - Tablets, Laptops, Smartboards, Chromebooks, etc.
- Science Lab & Lunchroom Tables
- New Math Curriculum
- Upgraded Fire Safety System
- Athletics and PE equipment
- Field Trips
- Playground Equipment
- Office Equipment
- Textbooks and Library Books
- General Funds

During the month of February, donate to local Catholic School Students or online at youcanlendahand.com