Friars to leave Steuben communities

Joshua Schipper

Father Wayne Hellman, OFM Conv., speaks to parishioners at St. Anthony of Padua Parish in Angola after reading a letter from Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades explaining that the Conventual Franciscan Friars of Our Lady of Consolation will be leaving the parish in June. At that time, a new pastor will be assigned to the parish.

BY JOSHUA SCHIPPER

The Conventual Franciscan Friars of the Province of Our Lady of Consolation, who have long ministered to the Catholic communities of Steuben and LaGrange counties, will complete their 91-year stay in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend in June, according to a letter sent by Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades to parishioners at St. Anthony of Padua Parish, Angola.

Father Wayne Hellman, OFM Conv., the minister provincial of the order that serves at St. Anthony, read the letter to parishioners at Masses last weekend.

"The Conventual Franciscan Friars have faithfully served in our diocese here at St. Anthony Parish, Angola, for the past 91 years, since 1931 when they came to Angola to open their novitiate," the letter read. "There were not many Catholics in Steuben County at that time. It was truly mission territory."

According to the letter, Bishop John F. Noll dedicated St. Rita Church in Angola in 1926. Bishop Noll asked the friars to send a priest to St. Rita's and they obliged.

"The bishop then renamed the parish in honor of the Franciscan St. Anthony of Padua," Bishop Rhoades explained in his address to the parish. "The friars have served here ever since. From St. Anthony’s, they also cared for vacationing Catholics in the county. They opened St. Mary of the Angels Church at Big Long Lake in 1937 and St. Paul's Chapel at Clear Lake in 1941. Their missionary work also extended to St. Joseph Parish in LaGrange."

"Due to a declining number of vocations, the Conventual Franciscan Province will no longer be able to provide priests for St. Anthony’s Parish," Bishop Rhoades explained. "Their long history here will come to an end on June 28, but their legacy and the fruits of their labors will long endure. They built up the Catholic Church in Steuben County. They have been a part of your lives and the lives of your families for many decades. I know you will miss them and their Franciscan charism. Amid our sadness at their departure, may our hearts be filled with gratitude for all the blessings we have received through their ministry and witness. The friars will surely remain in our hearts and prayers."

Bishop Rhoades wrote that he hopes to announce the priests that he will be assigning to St. Anthony Parish and St. Paul Chapel in May. He also said that he will come to the parish to celebrate Mass with the sacrament of confirmation on May 7, and will return to celebrate a parish farewell Mass for the friars at 5 p.m. on Sat., June 18.

"May God bless you with His peace and love!" the letter closed. "May our Blessed Mother and Saint Anthony of Padua intercede for you and for our beloved friars!"

After the announcement, Father Hellman spoke on behalf of the friars and stated that they will miss the community they have served for more than nine decades, and that the parish has a strong future ahead of them.
Theology on Tap series promotes gratitude in young adults

BY SAMANTHA ROHLOFF

The main message and recurring metaphor for the first Theology on Tap session of the winter series at the University of Saint Francis Historic Woman’s Club in Fort Wayne focused on the theme of gratitude.

Theology on Tap series is hosted by young adults and sponsored by the Knights of Columbus, the University of Saint Francis and the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend. Theology on Tap delves into Catholic theology and provides a space for young adults to converse, listen to knowledgeable speakers, discuss and ask questions amongst themselves and share food and drinks in comunidad and fellowship. It is aimed toward young adults ages 21 to 39. Meetings are held on Tuesday evenings at 6:30 from February 1 through March 1.

Stacey Huneck, the youth ministry coordinator at St. Charles Borromeo in Fort Wayne and head of the Theology on Tap series, stated that young adults should come to such events “to grow in community, to meet other young adults, and to develop spiritual lives.” She continued, “We weren’t made for isolation. We were made for relationships.”

The entire series is entitled “Go Forth” and discussions will revolve around “how the Lord gives us Himself to be nourished,” according to an event moderator.

The first night of the series was entitled “Thanks Be to God” and featured Father Stephen Felicichia, parochial vicar of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Fort Wayne, as the speaker. Father Felicichia began his talk by explaining that “every prayer begins with gratitude.” He further relayed that “gratitude has to do with gift,” which we have to be “open to receive like a child.” Throughout his inspiring and moving presentation — it’s entirety of which garnered much applause, chatter and good-natured laughter — Father Felicichia recounted his time spent serving in the U.S. Army as a second lieutenant in the field artillery and shared with the crowd how he found moments of gratitude and awe during those times. Some young adults even expressed that his military stories were their favorite parts of his talk.

He described a particular time he experienced gratitude when a troop’s truck hit a bomb and everyone inside of the truck miraculously survived. Father Felicichia himself was not in that vehicle, but he did witness the event, recalling to the audience that “even though God knows everything and how it ends, He’s thankful they are ok because they’re His.” This reminded the crowd that just as humans could be thankful, so too could God. As G.K. Chesterton put it, “The true soldier fights not because he hates what is in front of him, but because he loves what is behind him.”

Discussion questions were provided for dialogue among the young adults following Father Felicichia’s talk. Attendees were prompted to recount the last time that they had created a list of things they were grateful for, as well as how frequently they spoke the words “thank you.” A microphone was passed around later to offer young adults the chance to ask Father Felicichia questions.

The next three events will have different topics and different speakers and will also be held at the downtown Fort Wayne location. The fifth and final event of the series will include Mass and a Mardi Gras party, which will be held on the campus of the University of Saint Francis at the St. Francis Chapel and Brookside Mansion, respectively.

This series also includes a patron, Blessed Carlo Acutis. It was explained that Blessed Carlo Acutis was born in London but raised in Milan, confirmed at the age of seven and had a strong devotion to the Blessed Mother. He was also a gamer and passed away at only 15 years old. Due to his young age and hobbies, his example is one that the young adults in attendance can relate to without difficulty. His feast day is October 14.

Toward the end of the evening, Father Felicichia also reminded the audience that the word “Eucharist” quite literally means “thanksgiving,” which paves the way for the next event of this Theology on Tap series featuring Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades as he speaks about the real presence of the Lord Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist.
St. Thérèse Little Flower embraces technology to support spiritual life

BY ELISEJANE PLECNIK

Today, an individual’s real life and digital presence are not exactly clear-cut, but entwined. It seems with each year, technology becomes more prevalent in one’s daily life. Take for a few examples: communications, wearable devices, social platforms and streaming media. In practice, Meta/Facebook and FaceTime are used to connect with one’s community; Peacock, Netflix and Hulu are a slice of a vast list of streaming media available on-demand for consumption. One will find the younger generations between 10-25 years old, most often called “Gen-Z,” interact with real-time gaming applications, or apps, as a continuation of conversations with their friends or relatives.

And yet with these new digital products, where can one continue to seek God? In the vast open space of the internet, where can one digitally imprint sycophancy and live the Gospel? Where in this digital space can one find resources that continue to build dialogue between generations?

Parish communities are anchors which expound on effective paths to live in communion, participation and mission to glorify the Lord. South Bend’s St. Thérèse Little Flower Catholic Church leaders have created channels where parishioners can walk together toward Jesus and center lifestyles in Christ.

Households, a new activity which began November 2021, are medium-sized intentional communities of parishioners and their families gathered under a particular charism and united under a community covenant. These communities gather biweekly and invite all who are Catholic, non-Catholic and any one curious about Jesus to come.

Households was established with the intent to help members grow in their relationship with Jesus together as a parish. And Little Flower parish has found much success with the three household charisms established: House of Praise, House of Praise in Love and Joy (Abundance). The motto of a household night is: “Be loved and be fed.” So how do parish leaders align fellow parishioners in the digital frontier?

St. Thérèse Church supports a parishioner’s pilgrimage with Christ in the digital space by promoting Hallow, a Catholic technology product. Like Households, Hallow’s mission is to serve as a vested digital community and resource for Catholic meditation and prayer. Hallow is a growing technology product where the product’s founders, Alex Jones, Alessandro diSanto and Erich Kerekes hope for all people to experience a deeper spiritual connection to God. Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades has lauded the program, stating, “Hallow is an excellent resource for people searching for deeper spiritual lives, especially the younger generation of Catholics today. It helps make clear that a relationship with God is and can be extremely personal and can be a great source of peace, joy and strength.”

A survey was conducted at St. Thérèse asking what parishioners seek in Catholic technology and whether they had heard about Hallow. Responses showed users would seek out an app if: the app would aid in daily prayer and Bible readings, it had approved Catholic content for their children, and if it could introduce users to other Catholics. Two-thirds of those surveyed said that parishioners had heard about Hallow. One parishioner shared that she was drawn to Hallow because of how beautiful and modern it looked for a Catholic app.

Hallow appears to serve what St. Thérèse parishioners would seek in a Catholic app. Hallow publishes content developed by Church leaders and musicians and captivates users with the app’s fresh digital illustrations. Some content featured are the “Bible in a Year” podcast with Father Mike Schmitz; “Psalms with Bishop Barron;” community prayer novenas and a recent release of Hallow Kids, aimed at helping parents guide their children, and if it can introduce users to other Catholics. As a differentiating factor, members of a prayer group can create private prayer groups to invite their network to pray together. As a differentiating factor, members of a prayer group can choose to make their journal entries public for other members to read. Hallow’s content is both inclusive and exclusive. Some parts of Hallow are available at no monetary cost, while other content can be streamed and made available offline at a monthly or yearly premium.

Hallow is a rare Catholic technology app that commissions an individual to continue their relationship with Jesus in an interactive and prayerful life across devices in the digital space. With this in mind, it prompts some questions: How does Catholic technology remove isolation from individuals who seek Jesus? How does Catholic technology improve a parish’s digital imprint to strengthen the Christian faith? What fruits can grow if digital communities like Hallow Heralds can be connected to in-person parish communities? What fruits grow when in-person communities connect with digital communities like Hallow Heralds? What are potential adverse effects, if any, where Catholic technology can inhibit interactions between in-person parish communities?

Concrete conclusions inspire a review of existing data which observes internet usage across the U.S. Pew Research Center reports 98% of adults who are 50 years old or younger in the U.S. actively use the internet. And more than eight out of 10 adults are online daily. According to the Global Web Index, Gen-Z alone spends more than 50% of their time online per day. With these statistics and trajectories in mind, what is the call to action to address shifts in dialogue between generations? What connections can be formed for generations who have assumed technology, Gen-Z, with generations where television was the new technology, such as the Baby Boomer era? In what ways can Catholic technology products like Hallow help build up dialogue and set a Christian imprint in today’s digital space?

As the years pass, it will become more difficult to shy away from highly connected communications that intersect both real and online spaces. Faithful Catholics can rely on parish leaders and communities to examine and establish digital spaces, such as St. Thérèse Parish has done, so that all can live the Gospel with Jesus in the online frontier.
St. Joseph’s Club bolsters faith in young men

BY BRENDAN NIX

Every Wednesday morning at 7:20, a group of high school boys gathers in the pastoral ministry wing of Bishop Dwenger High School in Fort Wayne. Several dozen young men sit down on the couches and chairs that line the room and engage in quiet conversation about topics ranging from schoolwork to sporting events. Once the room is filled, a prayer is said and the conversation is no longer about the latest NFL news or the schedule for that school day. Rather, they begin talking about their faith lives and how they have tried to say rosaries, increase their amount of time in prayer and go to confession.

This is the newly created St. Joseph’s Club at Bishop Dwenger High School, a Catholic young men’s group aimed at helping high schoolers embrace their faith and live a life centered on God. Meeting every Wednesday before school, members share the successes and failures they have had with their faith life in the past week, while other members provide support and accountability.

This is the inaugural year of St. Joseph’s club at Bishop Dwenger, and the club is led by seniors Will Gray and Cole Carey. The idea for the club sprouted when they attended Catholic Youth events over the summer. “I went to Damascus this summer and there I felt a calling that the youth, especially the men, need some sort of group,” Gray said. “I didn’t know what that was going to be or look like, but I just felt that calling.”

Carey agreed and cited the Armor of God retreat he attended as a major inspiration for starting the program. “I think it really sparked when we went on the Armor of God retreat. We came in and it was really good, and it was a lot about accountability. We really enjoyed that, and we thought we needed to bring that to high school students.”

Jason Garrett, head of pastoral ministry and moderator of St. Joseph’s Club, said that the club was founded by students, and he finds that to be one of the most admirable aspects of it, along with the formation that comes from the club. “I think first and foremost the fact that it was initiated through students says an awful lot, and I think in terms of the faith what comes to mind is this quest of personal formation,” Garrett said.

Personal formation is one of the key aspects that the club seeks to instill in the young men. By providing a group where these young men can talk about their faith, St. Joseph’s Club allows for high school students to draw inspiration from others and hold each other accountable. “I think for me it was just the importance of community because I know that I’ve been on plenty of retreats before, and it’s so easy to fall back into normal habits. Having that community makes it so much easier to grow in your faith and in your relationship with God when you know others are doing it with you,” Gray said.

The biggest way in which the club holds members accountable in their faith lives is through weekly challenges. Issued at the end of every meeting, these challenges range from spiritual, like praying a decade of the rosary in your car on the way to school, to physical, like making your bed every morning. People said that these aim to improve the spiritual and physical lives of all who are involved. “Each week after we give our statement of how we’ve been doing in our prayer lives, we offer a challenge, which is kind of a little spiritual exercise that we do for the week, whether it’s something like spending time in prayer or praying a certain prayer like the rosary or also doing a physical challenge like fasting. One of our challenges was just making our bed every morning and just doing that to help us to discipline ourselves in growing in that relationship with God and detaching ourselves from the worldly things.”

Although only in its first year, St. Joseph’s Club already has nearly 35 members, with that number sometimes reaching into the 40s depending on the day. One of the key aspects of the club is for the members to evangelize within the school, as both Gray and Carey see a need for faithful reinvigoration amongst many of the student body at Bishop Dwenger.

Most importantly, St. Joseph’s Club is providing a spark for many people within the school. With new or different members attending the meetings each week, there is a sense of optimism that the goal of the club is being accomplished. Garrett attests to that feeling, saying, “I always envision the Lord looking down on the earth, if you will, and wondering where all His friends are, and obviously needing friends, and in particular young men that are friends, not perfect but striving. It’s inspiring to me watching young guys take on these challenges. It’s inspiring and I see a great deal of hope through the St. Joseph Club.”
A s the 2022 legislative session reached its mid-point, a consumer loan bill that proponents tout as a middle ground for those in desperate financial circumstances continued to face staunch opposition by the Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC) and other advocates for the poor.

Senate Bill 352 – Supervised Consumer Loans – narrowly passed the Indiana Senate on Feb. 1, to the dismay of the ICC and other member organizations of the Hoosiers for Responsible Lending coalition. The bill’s author, Sen. Andy Zay (R-Huntington), maintains that the subprime loan product proposed in the legislation offers people in need of emergency cash but lacking credit an alternative to high-interest payday loans, even allowing them to build credit over time.

Describing the proposed loan product as a “ladder” for economically challenged Hoosiers to ultimately gain access to traditional lending, Sen. Zay called the legislation a “responsible way” to “get people back on their feet.” And while the product carries the 36 percent cap long sought-after by the ICC and its allies in the realm of payday lending, it ends up being usury in another form by another name,” said Angela Espada, executive director of the ICC, the public policy voice of the Catholic Church in Indiana. “The bill creates a problem for the poor say that the num-

ous additional fees tacked on to the proposed legislation render it unacceptable.

“We are extremely disappointed by the Indiana Senate’s passage of Senate Bill 352,” said Andy Nielsen, senior policy analyst for the Indiana Community Action Poverty Institute. “Simply put, the bill expands predatory lending in Indiana without any consideration for financially vulnerable Hoosiers and their families. The bill creates a problematic loan product, preserves payday lending, and lacks any consumer guardrails – fueling a debt trap during a time of economic recovery.”

“Our legislation should focus on solutions that provide equitable, responsible access to credit,” continued Nielsen, whose organization – formerly known as the Indiana Institute for Working Families – is a longtime ally of the ICC. “Unfortunately, the Indiana Senate has taken the opposite approach. Our coalition, Hoosiers for Responsible Lending, will continue to fight this bill, and we ask that each and every Hoosier do the same.”

Nielsen was among those who spoke out against the bill during a Jan. 19 hearing in the Senate Insurance and Financial Institutions Committee, which Sen. Zay chairs. Angela Espada of the ICC also delivered strong testimony during the meeting on behalf of the five Catholic bishops of Indiana.

“When we look at the fees that can be added on (to this loan product), it ends up being usurious in another form by another name,” said Angela Espada, executive director of the ICC, the public policy voice of the Catholic Church in Indiana. “On a three-month loan of just $400, someone could end up paying $633. If you extend it to four months, it turns into almost $700. That’s outrageous. These are people who need help and shouldn’t be exploited.”

In addition, Espada noted during the committee hearing that usury – the lending of money with an exorbitant rate of interest – was publicly condemned by Pope Francis in 2014. She added that in 2015, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) joined with other Christian denominations to form Faith for Just Lending, calling the payday lending industry a “predatory lending nationwide.”

Responsible lending should provide benefits for both lender and borrower, Espada emphasized during her testimony. Senate Bill 352, she argued, “is so unbalanced that most of the good ends up being on the side of the lender.”

While Senate Bill 352 caps interest rates for subprime loans at 36 percent, and other fees can exceed 75 to 100 percent of the principal of the loan – particularly for loans over $1,500.

An amendment was added to the bill to permit loansharking. Espada added. Lenders who offer time loans would be exempt from prosecution under the state criminal loansharking statute, allowing lenders to evade the 72 percent loansharking cap. This mirrors the exemption provided to payday lenders.

Also expressing concern about the bill during the Jan. 19 hearing was Jim Bauerle, vice president and legislative director of the Military/Veterans Coalition of Indiana. He called the lawmakers’ attention to the Military Lending Act (MLA), a 2006 federal law that provides special protections for active duty servicemembers, including a 36 percent cap on interest rates and other protections for most consumer loans.

Bauerle, a longtime advocate for military members and veterans, maintained that the 36 percent cap proposed in Senate Bill 352 should include all fees associated with the loan. While acknowledging what he considers good intentions behind the bill, Bauerle noted that veteran of the Vietnam War and Operation Desert Storm challenged lawmakers to do better for the most vulnerable in Indiana.

“I think you could do more,” said Bauerle, a member of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Carmel, Ind., in the Diocese of Lafayette.

Despite the organized opposition, the bill passed the Senate on a vote of 27-22 just before the Indiana General Assembly reached “crossover” – the halfway point of the legislative session, when bills that are still active move from one legislative chamber to the other. The proposed legislation now awaits consideration in the House of Representatives.

Two related bills that the ICC and its allies had supported stalled in their respective legislative chambers and will not move forward. Senate Bill 253 and House Bill 1159 had sought to limit the payday lending institutions that currently charge consumers an APR of up to nearly 400 percent on the short-term loans that they offer. These bills would have restricted the APR on payday loans, also known as cash advances, to no more than 36 percent.

Now, among the key priorities of the ICC in the second half of this short, non-budget-year legislative session is making sure that Senate Bill 352 does not advance in the House.

“Ultimately, our neighbors in need are at the heart of this,” said Alexander Mingus, associate director of the ICC, in a recent installment of the weekly podcast he hosts with Espada. “The bill to eliminate predatory loan product on the market.”

The Ministry of Exorcism: A talk by Father Vincent P. Lampert
Exorcist for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis

Thursday, February 24, 7:30 p.m.
Driscoll Auditorium, Holy Cross College

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Pakistan’s first ‘servant of God’ is 20-year-old killed by suicide bomber

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – Akash Bashir, a 20-year-old volunteer security guard who was killed by a suicide bomber in 2015, is the first Pakistani to be given the title, “servant of God,” an initial step on the path to sainthood. Archbishop Sebastian Shaw of Lahore, Pakistan, informed Catholics of his archdiocese that Pope Francis had granted the title to Bashir on Jan. 31, the feast of St. John Bosco. "We praise and thank God for this brave young man, who could have escaped or tried to save himself, but he remained steadfast in his faith and did not let the suicide bomber enter the church. He gave his life to save more than a thousand people present in the church for Sunday Mass," the archbishop said, according to Fides, the news agency of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples. Bashir had studied at the Don Bosco Technical Institute in Lahore and was one of the parishioners of the Church of St. John who volunteered to provide security outside the church. "Akash was on duty at the church entrance gate on March 15, 2015, when he spotted a man who wanted to enter the church with an explosive belt on his body," Fides said. "Akash blocked him at the entrance gate, foiling the terrorist’s plan to massacre those inside the church.”

Now or never: People must overcome challenges together, pope says

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – The time has come to live in a spirit of fraternity and build a culture of peace, sustainable development, tolerance, inclusion, mutual understanding and solidarity, Pope Francis said. “Now is not a time for indifference: either we are brothers and sisters or everything falls apart,” he said in a video message marking the International Day of Human Fraternity on Feb. 4. The international celebration is a U.N.-declared observation to promote interreligious dialogue and friendship on the anniversary of the document on human fraternity signed in Abu Dhabi in 2019 by Pope Francis and Sheikh Ahmad el-Tayeb, grand imam of Al-Azhar in Egypt. The pope, the sheikh and U.S. President Joe Biden all issued messages for the commemoration. “Fraternity is one of the fundamental and universal values that ought to undergird relationships between peoples, so that the suffering or disadvantaged do not feel excluded and forgotten but accepted and supported as part of the one human family. We are brothers and sisters,” the pope said in Italian in his video message.

Olympic games spotlight Chinese human rights violations


Survey finds path to U.S. citizenship for migrants has majority support

WASHINGTON (CNS) – Though immigration remains a polemic topic in political circles, just 44% of Americans recently surveyed by the Public Religion Research Institute said it was a “critical issue” in the U.S. A majority favored a path to citizenship for those who are in the country without legal permission. By and large, Americans had a positive view of immigrants, saying they strengthened the country, with a minority seeing immigrants as a burden to the U.S., the survey found. Those were among findings released Feb. 3 by PRRI from a survey examining American perspectives on immigration policy. The survey, conducted online between Sept. 16 and 29, interviewed a representative sample of 2,508 adults age 18 and up living in all 50 states in the U.S. It focused on welcoming views about immigration to the U.S. and whether it’s a critical issue at all. The survey looked at how political affiliation, the kind of media some respondents digested, race and sometimes age affected the answers given. It also asked questions about whether respondents viewed immigration favorably or otherwise. A majority of Americans “support offering immigrants living in the U.S. illegally a way to become citizens, provided they meet certain requirements” and nearly two-thirds support “allowing immigrants brought illegally to the U.S.” as children to gain legal resident status.

Phoenix pastor resigns after diocese learns he performed invalid baptisms

PHOENIX (CNS) – Bishop Thomas J. Olmsted of Phoenix said baptisms performed by a priest during years of ministry in the diocese are invalid, leading to the resignation of the clergyman on Feb. 1. In a Jan. 14 letter to the diocese, Bishop Olmsted said diocesan officials learned from the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith that the baptisms were invalid because of the form used during the ritual by Father Andres Arango. “Specifically, it was reported to me that Father Andres used the formula ‘We baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.’ The key phrase in question is the use of ‘We baptize’ in place of ‘I baptize,’’ Bishop Olmsted wrote. ‘The issue with using ‘We’ is that it is not the community that baptizes a person, rather, it is Christ, and Him alone, who presides at all of the sacraments, and so it is Christ Jesus who baptizes,” the bishop’s letter said. The use of the improper form led Father Arango to resign as pastor of St. Gregory Parish in Phoenix. Bishop Olmsted said Father Arango remains a priest in good standing in the diocese and that he would be helping the diocese identify and contact people whose baptisms are invalid.

School ‘Bus’; NFL Hall of Famer Bettis goes back to Notre Dame for degree

NOTRE DAME, Ind. (CNS) – Jerome Bettis, in his football days, went by the nickname “The Bus” because he was carrying would-be tacklers along with him during his punishing runs from scrimmage. Today, what Bettis is carrying is a full load of classes at the University of Notre Dame, as he strives to finish what he started in his college days more than 30 years ago – a bachelor’s degree in business. Bettis, now 49, is on track to graduate this spring and get that coveted Notre Dame diploma. If he does, the Pro Football Hall of Famer will have made good on a promise to his mother. Gladys – you may remember their Campbell’s Chunky Soup commercial from 20 years ago – that he would get his sheeppakin. “I promised my mother that I would get my degree,” he said. “In my immediate family, I’ll be the first person to graduate from college.” Bettis told NBC’s “Today Show” on Jan. 28, “But most importantly, I have two children. For them to see dad finish a commitment that he set out some 25 years ago, for me to complete that, I think it says a lot to them.” And at commencement exercises in May, Bettis getting a diploma means that all 2 Notre Dame football recruits from 1990 will have graduated.

Tributes mark life, legacy of late Catholic philosopher, professor, author

NEW ROCHELLE, N.Y. (CNS) – When Alice von Hildebrand was promoting her late husband’s work, the Catholic philosopher, professor and author spent most of her life “reminding women of the privilege of femininity and the gift of maternity,” said Rachel Bulman, a blogger and popular speaker. She made the comments in a Jan. 28 appreciation she wrote on the life and work of von Hildebrand, who died peacefully at home in New Rochelle on Jan. 14. She was 98. “Alice invited women to be women, to have their power rooted in their own femininity. She believed that women could be receptive, nurturing, demure, and empathetic while also wielding the dynamism of intellect and culture,” said Bulman in an essay posted on the website wordsfrom.org. Her article was among many tributes pouring in after von Hildebrand’s death. Her funeral Mass was celebrated on Jan. 22 at her parish church, Holy Family in New Rochelle. She was the wife of Dietrich von Hildebrand, a German Catholic theologian, philosopher and religious writer. After his death in 1977, she saw her primary mission as preserving his legacy.
Ava’s Grace retreat planned

NOTRE DAME – For those who have lost a baby before or after birth, Ava’s grace ministry offers support and healing. Come join others who have suffered miscarriage, stillbirth or infant loss for a daylong retreat, free of charge, to help face grief in the context of fellowship and faith. The retreat will be held on Saturday, March 5, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Sacred Heart Parish Center on the outskirts of Notre Dame’s campus. Lunch will be provided. While this retreat is geared for couples, individuals are welcome as well. Sponsored by Marriage & Family Ministry. To register, contact Lisa Everett at leverett@diocesefswb.org or by calling 574-234-0687. For more information about Ava’s grace, the diocesan ministry to support families grieving the loss of a baby before or after birth, please visit www.diocesefswb.org/avasgrace.

Sharing the Light of Christ Award

FORT WAYNE – St. Mary, Mother of God Parish honored one of its parishioners, Jane Wick, with the Sharing the Light of Christ Award for 2022 at Mass on Jan. 9. Wick has served the parish for 50 years as agreeter, extraordinary minister of holy communion and coordinator of the funerals. Wick is a longtime member and current president of the St. Martin de Porres Society, the parish’s outreach to Black Catholics. She also serves the congregation as a coordinator of funeral luncheons. She has served the parish for 50 years and has been recognized for her service.

‘Restorative Justice and the Role of Faith’

NOTRE DAME – Holy Cross College is excited to announce college president Rev. David T. Tyson, CSC, as a guest speaker at the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities Advocacy Day happening February 6-9, in Washington, D.C. He will speak on “Restorative Justice and the Role of Faith.” Among the handful of issues with bi-partisan support during the recent past has been an increased interest in prison reform, including the positive role higher education can play in turning lives around. The effort has led to a reversal of the ban on Pell Grants for the incarcerated. Faith-based groups, both conservative and liberal, played an essential role in this policy turnaround. Tyson will speak about the Holy Cross College Moreau College Initiative, which is an academic collaboration between Holy Cross College and the University of Notre Dame, in partnership with the Indiana Department of Correction. College students incarcerated at Westville Correctional Facility earn credits towards a Holy Cross College Associate of Arts degree.

Bishop Luers boys’ basketball team hosts Afghan refugees

Members of the Bishop Luers High School basketball team spend time with refugees from Afghanistan after their Jan. 28 game. These refugees have recently resettled in the Fort Wayne area and have been welcomed by various Catholic organizations and volunteers.
Supporting marriage a priority in the Church

BY JENNIFER BARTON

Making marriage work is a lifelong undertaking, one in which the Catholic Church is heavily invested. Strong, faithful marriages make strong, faith-filled families. Within the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, there are many resources to help married couples focus on each other’s needs and keep the spark alive.

Marriage Course Online

One of these is the Marriage Course Online program that the Marriage and Family Ministry has offered since 2020. Lisa Everett hosts the program with her husband, Deacon Fred. The Marriage Course is a Christian, not Catholic, program, so the Everetts give a short presentation prior to the video in a Catholic perspective. While Deacon Everett is serving on a mission trip to Cuba, Lisa will continue to give the presentations on her own until his return.

In the videos, real-life couples and marriage experts speak on the topic presented, and participating couples have time for private conversations built into the program.

Lisa said, “I also make a point to pray the rosary for all of the couples during the 30-minute conversation that is the centerpiece of each session, so I think the couples benefit from that prayer support and feeling bolstered by grace during that conversation as well.

“The course has received rave reviews from couples who have taken it,” she continued. By using an online platform, couples do not need to travel from home to benefit from it, and even those outside the diocese can participate. The program is offered at no cost and the only things participants need to pay for are their personal journals to use in the course.

Married for 30 years, with three children and one grandchild, Eric and Kristine Dohrman still like to find new ways to enrich their marriage. When they found the Marriage Course Online, they chose to participate.

Both admitted to being skeptical of the program and its online platform at first. “However, as we made our way through the course, I really appreciated being able to discuss the topics with my husband from the privacy of our home,” Kristine shared.

“After the first session, I was impressed by the way the program was structured and more importantly how Kris and I could relate to a number of the couples that were sharing about themselves and their marriage journey,” Eric said.

Eric and Kristine are members of St. Mary of the Assumption in Decatur. One of the benefits of the online course is that they can comfortably participate from their own home. The couple has made the evening a special part of their week by making dinner and enjoying dessert together. “We really looked forward to the sessions each week and our time together — it was a nice time to share together in the midst of the normal duties of the week,” Kristine said.

In their experience, the couples featured in the videos were relatable and the program simply gave them additional tools to grow in their relationship. Kristine said, “The session on ‘The Impact of Family’ helped me to realize the impact that family background can have on a marriage. It really opened up some good conversation between the both of us.”

Eric added that he enjoyed the program and the special time with his wife so much that he would willingly repeat the course with her. “It added so much to each week and provided us a unique way of taking time out of each week to focus on each other and our relationship.”

— Eric and Kristine Dohrman

Within the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, there are many resources to help married couples focus on each other’s needs and keep the spark alive.

SALT Marriage Enrichment

Another way to help couples focus on their relationship is a program known as SALT – an acronym for “savoring a lifetime together.” Several local parishes have initiated this “date night” program for married couples.

At Queen of Peace Parish in Mishawaka, Michelle Szajko runs SALT, though the idea originally came from another parish in the diocese.

Every year, the Queen of Peace group hosts three large events in January, February and March. They chose those months because there didn’t seem to be as much going on, which meant fewer reasons for couples not to attend. These events run about an hour and a half and give couples tools to strengthen their marriages, Szajko explained.

“We try and find practical ways to share tools with couples.”

One such event focused on the book “Men are Like Waffles, Women are Like Spaghetti,” a devotional written by Bill and Pam Farrel about the different ways men’s and women’s brains work. The SALT organizers try to keep each event fun, and made a dinner of spaghetti and waffles for the attendees.

Offering free babysitting as much as possible is a must for Queen of Peace’s SALT nights, as Szajko recalls that she and her husband didn’t go on dates because of childcare issues. The group boasts an average of 15-20 couples.

“We all get into a daily routine ... you go one day at a time and forget to make the extra time together,” she said. “And families do so much better when parents take extra time.”

Sometimes, Szajko said, “Just being around other couples inspires us to do better, to be better.”

For Your Marriage

Another resource comes from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, which sponsors an ongoing online initiative to help dating, engaged and married couples find the assistance they need for spiritual and practical relationship matters. The website For Your Marriage posts daily marriage tips and frequently adds new blogs for those in various stages of their relationship, focusing on Church teachings and prayers for the family. Additionally, there is a link to Unique for a Reason’s podcast, “Made for Love.”

For Your Marriage also has an active Facebook page for couples to connect with other Catholic couples and strengthen their bonds of friendship and support. And the companion website For Tu Matrimonio offers resources for Spanish-speaking couples as well.

For information on the USCCB’s marriage initiatives, visit usccb.org/topics/marriage-and-family-life-ministries/marriage-and-family.
Marriage Encounter encourages spiritual, marital growth

BY JENNIFER BARTON

There’s something about Hallmark films that can leave people in a state of longing. Underneath the saccharine sappiness of these flicks is the deep desire to have the kind of love story that ends in the perfect marriage. Every couple wants their perfect ending.

But “no marriage is perfect,” said Janine Brown. "If you know, having been married to her husband Tony for 40 years. For 20 of those years, the Browns were married with Worldwide Marriage Encounter.

WWME dates back to the 1950s in Spain and was introduced in the U.S. in the 1960s. Since then, it has spread to 94 countries worldwide. While it is not a specific outreach of the Catholic Church, it is Catholic-based and one of many tools that couples can use to strengthen their marriages. It is certainly not the only tool, but for those who have a good marriage, Janine explained, a Marriage Encounter weekend can make it better.

Both Tony’s and Janine’s parents had attended Marriage Encounter weekends and his mother urged them to go on one not long after they had wed, professing that it had changed her own marriage. But it was on a date night that Janine and Tony discovered that their marriage could benefit from this program. In general, they considered their marriage to be a strong, solid union; one that others looked up to.

After hearing another couple speak at her parish about an upcoming weekend, Tony suggested to Tony that they attend. During the course of that conversation, Tony confessed that he had stopped “being present” with Janine. “He had stopped telling me his hopes and dreams because I generally shut them down by saying ‘we can’t afford it,'” Janine clarified.

For the Browns, Marriage Encounter took their relationship to a whole new level. One of the greatest lessons they learned was how to better communicate and approach any issues in a loving manner.

“I’ll say that it is not magic,” Janine cautioned. “It can be, but that’s your choice. A Marriage Encounter weekend gives you tools to strengthen your marriage. The catch is, you have to take them home and use them. And we did that. And it has changed so much about our lives.”

One great change it brought regarded Tony’s faith life. At the time they attended their weekend, more than 20 years ago, Tony was not Catholic. “We grew up unchurched, and I was interested in her faith mostly because the way she spoke about it was she had a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. That was interesting,” Tony stated.

In a roundabout way, it was Marriage Encounter that helped solidify his journey to the Catholic Church. They became involved in Marriage Encounter and spent time with a group of others in the ministry. Seeing the faith of the men in the group greatly impressed him. It was after a Christmas party with their Marriage Encounter group that Tony had a spiritual awakening. He accompanied Janine to one of the last Advent penance services before Christmas, initially only because he needed her to take him up to nearby Garrett to pick up his truck, and St. Vincent de Paul Parish was on the way.

“Somewhere during that penance service, something changed. After that, he started going to church with us every week.” Janine said. Finally, she asked if he was ever going to join the RCIA program which he did. The Browns met on November 22, married on December 22 of the following year, and — not by coincidence — Tony was baptized on April 22. His chosen sponsor was one of the men from their Marriage Encounter group.

Once Tony became Catholic, he and Janine were able to become presenters for the ministry, which they have done in various locations and the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, though mostly in Ohio. Generally, a Marriage Encounter weekend is considered residential, meaning couples stay overnight in a hotel or retreat center, and it lasts from Friday evening to Sunday afternoon. Parish-based or non-residential weekends have gained in popularity, where couples go to a local parish and come home in the evening. All of the events are condensed into a two-day retreat. There are even some virtual weekends, though the Browns have not seen those work as successfully.

Couples learn about themselves as well as about their spouses, because of how hard it is to connect with another person when one does not truly understand him — or herself. Much of what is included in a Marriage Encounter weekend, Tony said, is “nothing that’s earth-shaking, really. I think they just try to get you back to when you were new and that was a unique and moving and loving and discovering kind of time. … Then you get married and all the other stuff distracts you from that.”

Married couples often get lost in the hectic chaos of day-to-day living and sometimes forget that the best thing they can do for their children is solidify their relationship, Janine explained.

She would say that those couples who say they are too busy for a weekend are the ones most in need of it.

“We’ve been presenting for a long time now and we’ve witnessed amazing things,” she remarked.

Even priests can benefit from a Marriage Encounter weekend, the Browns believe. For one, just like laypeople, priests also lead incredibly busy lives. Also, when his parish hosts a WWME weekend, the pastor can better get to know his flock outside of parish events in a relaxed and intimate setting, and see their relationships in action.

The WWME website even has a link for priests, which says: “married couples and priests enrich, support and learn from each other at all stages of life.”

Part of the success of WWME is that the weekend is not the end of the journey, but the beginning. Their website has resources for participants to stay connected to others and the organization after their weekend. Participants are also encouraged to join a sharing group to continue growing in love for God and each other. “It’s really hard to make a lifestyle change all by yourself. And it’s just not as much fun.”

Tony stated.

When the pandemic forced nearly everyone to take on some kind of project, Janine decided to prove to their grandchildren that Tony is still romantic after all their years of marriage by writing out their love story. And she didn’t shy away from including some of the hard stuff, either.

Throughout those many years of experience, Tony and Janine have learned to put the other person first, as Janine said, “In any relationship … if you’re not willing to sacrifice self sometimes for the good of the other person, you don’t really have a relationship.”

Father, as we prepare for World Marriage Day, we thank you for your tremendous gift of the Sacrament of Marriage. Help us to witness to its glory by a life of growing intimacy. Teach us the beauty of forgiveness so we may become more and more one in heart, mind, and body. Strengthen our dialogue and help us become living signs of your love. Make us grow more in love with the Church so we may renew the Body of Christ. Make us a sign of unity in the name of Jesus, our Lord and Brother. Amen.

— Father Bill Dilgen, SMM
New marriage preparation course begins in diocese

BY JENNIFER BARTON

Purchasing rings, choosing a venue, shopping for a wedding dress, deciding on the menu – the list of tasks to accomplish goes on and on for couples headed for the altar. The details are so endless that these couples often get so wrapped up in the wedding that they barely spare a thought for the marriage itself.

From the moment an engagement begins, couples dream of spending a lifetime together in wedded bliss. On Oct. 22, 1911, the day after his wedding to Empress Zita, Blessed Charles of Austria, Emperor of Austria-Hungary, said to his bride, “Now, we must help each other get to heaven.” This quote is a good reminder of a husband’s and wife’s duty in married life.

As marriage is a vocation, the Catholic Church believes that couples should go through a period to prepare themselves for the storms that sometimes roll through even the sunniest days of married life. In the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, a new marriage preparation program is being rolled out for engaged couples this year.

Deacon Robert Byrne has served as the coordinator for both marriage and baptismal preparation at Queen of Peace Parish since his arrival in October of 2015. When he speaks to engaged couples, Deacon Byrne focuses on the sacramentality of marriage and the spiritual action they are seeking to undertake.

“When we talk about marriage, a lot of these kids aren’t spiritually prepared for it,” he commented. Around half of the couples that he sees seeking marriage within the Church do not regularly attend Mass.

Some couples struggle with the course because they “don’t have a strong faith basis,” he said.

But for those couples that do, “the ones with a relationship with Christ, those are the good ones to work with.”

And when he sees couples heading down an immoral path, such as living together before marriage, Deacon Byrne said, “I don’t mince words with them. I talk to them about their salvation.”

Queen of Peace has just begun rolling out the new marriage course and Deacon Byrne is becoming familiar with it. He explained that it has three separate but linked components: the pre-marriage course produced by Alpha International, the BELOVED – Finding Happiness in Marriage course from the Augustine Institute and a natural family planning overview.

Deacon Byrne stated that the new program began at Queen of Peace only recently with the Alpha course. This five-week course is an online series that utilizes The Pre-Marriage Course Study Journal to present different themes that will help a couple understand how marriage works and how to build a lifelong relationship.

BELOVED pairs engaged couples with a mentor couple who will work through a series of six videos together. The mentor couples Deacon Byrne uses have a long marriage history or are even on their second marriage, which is just as valuable as a decades-long relationship because of their first-hand knowledge and experience with the difficulties of marriage. Deacon Byrne has plenty of experience with the married life himself, approaching his 50th anniversary this summer.

Some parishes may not offer the mentorship aspect. In that case, the Office of Marriage and Family offers weekend retreats to fill this gap.

The natural family planning aspect, as Deacon Byrne explained, is not necessarily required in the previous marriage preparation program, but it is very strongly encouraged in the new one. Even couples who are already married are welcome to join the online course, offered on the first Wednesday of every month on Zoom.

Deacon Byrne uses the FOCUS pre-marriage inventory with his engaged couples, but he doesn’t start off with the test. “I want them to get through the initial stuff on their own before the FOCUS exam,” he explained, because the exam can frequently “stimulate conversations on a variety of topics.”

Lisa Everett, director of Marriage and Family Ministry for the diocese, spoke on the importance of a good marriage preparation course. She said, “Helping couples prepare well for the vocation and sacrament of marriage is a high priority for the Church and for our diocese. We are excited about our new marriage preparation program and are confident that it will provide couples with the human formation, intellectual formation, spiritual formation and moral formation which will give them a solid foundation on which to build their lives together as husbands and wives.”

The new marriage preparation program is being rolled out in parishes this year in both English and Spanish. All couples seeking to be married in the Catholic Church will go through the program. She said, “We are excited about our new marriage preparation program and are confident that it will provide couples with the human formation, intellectual formation, spiritual formation and moral formation which will give them a solid foundation on which to build their lives together as husbands and wives.”

The new marriage preparation program is being rolled out in parishes this year in both English and Spanish. All couples seeking to be married in the Catholic Church will go through the program. And those couples who have already begun marriage preparation will transition to the new program.

Through these efforts, the diocese and the Church at large hopes to usher newlyweds all the way from the altar and – as Blessed Charles so aptly put it – into heaven, together.
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

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; 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:

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To request a free proposal, contact Connie Gualano, manager of planned giving, at 812-535-2811
PlannedGiving.SistersofProvidence.org

Rates Subject to change based on the ACCGA.
Is your parish family-friendly?

Who doesn’t want the church to grow or the next generation of Catholics to embrace a deep love for their faith? One simple way we can do this is by asking how our parishes are welcoming to families — of all ages, abilities, shapes and sizes.

Start small. Are electrical outlets covered to keep out babies’ fingers? Would parents know what room to visit if they needed to soothe a toddler tantrum? Are there changing tables in both men’s and women’s restrooms? Is childcare offered during parish events? Are the sounds of children welcome in church — and not just the cries of babies but the sounds or movements of children with disabilities? Are teenagers encouraged to serve as lectors, altar servers or extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion?

Making a parish family-friendly is a practical and spiritual undertaking. It both requires a checklist and an examination of conscience. Where have we done the holy work of welcoming each person as Jesus? Where have we failed to reach part of the body of Christ?

Over the years, readers have sent me examples of signs posted near church entrances, printed in parish bulletins or tucked in pews to let parents know their children are welcome.

I found one such poster on vacation years ago as I quieted a fussy baby in the back of church. “Jesus said, ‘Let the children come to me,’” it read. “Remember that the way we welcome children in church directly affects the way they respond to the Church, to God, and to one another. Let them know that they are ‘at home in this house of worship.’”

The poster offered ways that parents might engage young children. Sit near the front so it’s easier to see. Explain parts of the Mass in age-appropriate ways. Sing the hymns together. Feel free to use the gathering space if you need to leave with your child.

But the last words held the most important message to all parishioners: “The presence of children is a gift to the Church, and they are a reminder that our parish is growing! Please welcome our children and give a smile of encouragement to their parents.”

Making a parish family-friendly is not just the work of the pastor or staff. It’s a charge to all of us. I’ve also heard heartwarming testimonies from pastors and parishioners who went out of their way to welcome families.

We can debate pastoral approaches for addressing the variety of parishioners’ needs — from separation strategies like cry rooms, nurseries or “family Masses,” to inclusive approaches like offering religious books for children to read in the pews.

But the best way to learn what your particular parish might need is to start asking families.

Could you organize a family holy hour of eucharistic adoration where parents or grandparents can bring children to pray without worrying about their volume?

Could you add supplies in the restrooms like baby wipes, diapers and sanitary products: a simple gesture to show that this is a church that cares for body and soul?

Could you offer a daily Mass outside of work or school hours to allow more families to attend?

Welcoming families is not a one-size-fits-all task, and every parish is limited in its ministries and resources. But even the simplest approaches can make a big difference.

No matter what we do, we follow the lead of our Lord who drew children close to His side and reminded us that whenever we welcome a child, we welcome Him.

Laura Kelly Fanucci is a writer, speaker, and author of several books including “Everyday Sacrament: The Messy Grace of Parenting.” Her work can be found at laurakellyfanucci.com.

Find joy in the simple things

You wouldn’t think a small group of individuals going sledding during a winter storm would make the news, but on Jan. 29, as Winter Storm Kenan pulmed the Northeast, that’s what happened.

It helps when the group in question are members of the Sisters of Life, making for idyllic photos of white habits, big coats, and wide smiles in a snowy landscape.

The group of sisters, based in New York City, took advantage of the winter weather when transportation ground to a halt while they were trying to get to a crisis pregnancy center in Lower Manhattan.

“We basically couldn’t get our cars out of the snow. There were so many cars stuck, we decided to ‘sledding,’” said Sister Magdalene Teresa, the local superior. “It was really fun.”

And what the sisters had fun doing, the world had fun taking. It wasn’t long before the New York Post had posted on social media photos of the sisters sliding down hills in Central Park on big black inner tubes and plastic toboggans, and the internet loved it. The pictures were reposted with many comments, including:

“This is the kind of news I’m here for.” “Joy.” “Love this. Joyful sisters sledging in the snow makes me ridiculously happy for some reason.”

After a short time playing and

Following God is the only lasting reality

People who set their sights on material goals or live only for material advancements play a fool’s game.

Reflection

The Church in this liturgy, and through these readings, is beginning to prepare us for Lent, just more than a few weeks in the future. By definition, Lent will be a time of reflection, but to benefit us, our reflection must be completely focused and starkly realistic.

It will be useless if we do not face facts. In these three readings, ending with the words of Jesus, the Church presents as the most fundamental facts the reality that earthly incentives are fleeting in survival and rest on quicksand.

Only the spirit is everlastingly alive. Thus, only judgments based on spiritual motives have lasting effects. In these quite somber teachings, the Church leads us down no primrose path. Instead, very honestly, it warns us that we are of this world, so the enticements of the world are especially appealing to us. Nevertheless, they ultimately bring us only emptiness and maybe eternal death. What is our hope? Our only assurance? It is the Lord Jesus.

Choosing our future is our decision. The Church, through these readings, calls us to decide, thinking about reality.

READINGS

Sunday: Jer 17:5-8 Ps 1:1-4, 6 1 Cor 15:12, 16-20 Is 6:17, 20-26

Monday: Jas 1:1-11 Ps 119:67-68, 71-72, 75-76 Mk 8:11-13

Tuesday: Jas 1:12-18 Ps 94:1-13a, 14-15, 18-19 Mt 8:21-26

Wednesday: Jas 1:19-27 Ps 15:2-4b, 6a 1 Cor 15:20-26

Thursday: Jas 2:1-9 Ps 34:2-7 Mk 8:27-33

Friday: Jas 2:14-24, 26 Ps 112:1-6 Mk 8:34—9:1

Saturday: Jas 3:1-10 Ps 12:2-5, 7-8 Mk 9:2-13

The Sunday Gospel

MSGR. OWEN F. CAMPION

Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Luke 6:17, 2-26

For its first reading, this weekend’s liturgy presents a selection from the Book of Jeremiah. Jeremiah must have been intense in his personality. First, he was strongly committed to his calling to be a prophet. He keenly felt that God had called him by name, to name and he believed that as a prophet, he made real God’s protection of the chosen people.

Upsetting him was the spiritual sluggishness, if not the downright sinfulness, of the people. Instead of following God’s will, they followed the fads of the time or the demands and thoughts of earthly leaders. Jeremiah continually, and eloquently, insisted that true peace and well-being exist only by obeying God and by listening to God’s word in making decisions about life.

To use a simile, life may seem like a mirage, with no permanent reality that earthly incentives are fleeting in survival and rest on quicksand. Only the spirit is everlastingly alive. Thus, only judgments based on spiritual motives have lasting effects. In these quite somber teachings, the Church leads us down no primrose path. Instead, very honestly, it warns us that we are of this world, so the enticements of the world are especially appealing to us. Nevertheless, they ultimately bring us only emptiness and maybe eternal death. What is our hope? Our only assurance? It is the Lord Jesus.

Choosing our future is our decision. The Church, through these readings, calls us to decide, thinking about reality.
The Psalms: The Church’s songbook

I had the extraordinary experience last month of recording all one hundred Psalms for the new Catholic Hallow App. Over the course of several sittings, sequestered in a tiny studio, I endeavored to communicate the intelligence, passion, and devotion of the person (more likely persons) who wrote these ancient poems. Though I have been regularly praying the Psalms as part of the Liturgy of the Hours for the past roughly 40 years, I had never before simply read them through aloud, one after another. It was, at the same time, demanding and deeply prayerful — and it compelled me to see the Psalms with fresh eyes.

As I pronounced these poems from the Church’s privileged book of prayer, I thought of Dietrich von Hildebrand’s musings on the heart. Von Hildebrand complained that the Catholic intellectual tradition gives ample attention to the mind and to the will but that it painfully neglects the heart — which is to say, the seat of the passions and emotions. In the presence of a value, he says, the entire person responds, the mind appreciating what is good in it, and the heart seeking what is true in it, the will seeking what is true in it, the heart seeking what is good in it, and the heart delighting in its beauty. This multivalent “value response” occurs in relation to, say, Beethoven’s Seventh Symphony, a pristine winter morning, a lovely face, or an elegant mathematical equation. And it occurs, for example, in relation to the seat of the passions and emotions, with respect to the supreme value of God. The mind revels in God’s truth (think of the writings of Thomas Aquinas); the will responds to God’s infinite goodness (think of the dedication of Maximilian Kolbe or the Little Flower); and the heart overflows in the presence of his splendor (think of the words and gestures of the liturgy).

Now, there is indeed something of Aquinas in the Psalms, for we could distill a theology of God from them; and there is indeed something of Kolbe in them, for we could distill from them a moral program; but there is in them, above all, the aching, longing and delight of the heart. The Psalmist exults, laments, spits out his anger, excoriates his enemies, praises God and berates God; he is so happy he can barely contain himself and he is so profoundly sad that he feels like lying down with dead people. The motto that St. John Henry Newman took when he became a cardinal was cor ad cor loquitur (heart speaks to heart). I can’t think of a better description of what is happening as we recite the Psalms: to God, who has poured out his heart to us, we pour out our own hearts. A second strong impression I had upon reading all the Psalms is how much stress they place on enemies. I would wager that “enemy” and “foe” are among the most common words — it compelled me to see the Psalms with fresh eyes.

In relation to, say, Beethoven’s Seventh Symphony, a pristine winter morning, a lovely face, or an elegant mathematical equation. And it occurs, for example, in relation to the seat of the passions and emotions, with respect to the supreme value of God. The mind revels in God’s truth (think of the writings of Thomas Aquinas); the will responds to God’s infinite goodness (think of the dedication of Maximilian Kolbe or the Little Flower); and the heart overflows in the presence of his splendor (think of the words and gestures of the liturgy).

Now, there is indeed something of Aquinas in the Psalms, for we could distill a theology of God from them; and there is indeed something of Kolbe in them, for we could distill from them a moral program; but there is in them, above all, the aching, longing and delight of the heart. The Psalmist exults, laments, spits out his anger, excoriates his enemies, praises God and berates God; he is so happy he can barely contain himself and he is so profoundly sad that he feels like lying down with dead people. The motto that St. John Henry Newman took when he became a cardinal was cor ad cor loquitur (heart speaks to heart). I can’t think of a better description of what is happening as we recite the Psalms: to God, who has poured out his heart to us, we pour out our own hearts. A second strong impression I had upon reading all the Psalms is how much stress they place on enemies. I would wager that “enemy” and “foe” are among the most common words — it compelled me to see the Psalms with fresh eyes.

As I pronounced these poems from the Church’s privileged book of prayer, I thought of Dietrich von Hildebrand’s musings on the heart. Von Hildebrand complained that the Catholic intellectual tradition gives ample attention to the mind and to the will but that it painfully neglects the heart — which is to say, the seat of the passions and emotions. In the presence of a value, he says, the entire person responds, the mind appreciating what is good in it, and the heart seeking what is true in it, the will seeking what is true in it, the heart seeking what is good in it, and the heart delighting in its beauty. This multivalent “value response” occurs in relation to, say, Beethoven’s Seventh Symphony, a pristine winter morning, a lovely face, or an elegant mathematical equation. And it occurs, for example, in relation to the seat of the passions and emotions, with respect to the supreme value of God. The mind revels in God’s truth (think of the writings of Thomas Aquinas); the will responds to God’s infinite goodness (think of the dedication of Maximilian Kolbe or the Little Flower); and the heart overflows in the presence of his splendor (think of the words and gestures of the liturgy).

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The United States Province of the Congregation of Holy Cross seeks a Marketing Communications Manager for its Office of Vocations (located in Moreau Seminary on the beautiful campus of the University of Notre Dame). The position designs and produces electronic and print media, as well as promotional items and materials, highlighting the formation programs and vocations office programming of the Congregation of Holy Cross. Qualified applicants will be practicing Catholics and must possess a bachelor’s degree from a four-year college or university. Strong organizational skills required. The United States Province offers an outstanding compensation and benefits package that includes paid time off, paid holidays, medical/dental insurance, 403(b) retirement savings with an employer match as well as a pension plan.

For a complete position description, or to apply, submit resume and cover letter to:
Father John DeRiso, CSC
Director, Office of Vocations
via email at jderiso@holycrossusa.org.

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A position opening for a Marketing Communications Manager is available at the University of Notre Dame. The ideal candidate will possess a bachelor’s degree from a four-year college or university and should be proficient in electronic and print media design. The position involves creating promotional items and materials that highlight formation programs and vocations office programming of the Congregation of Holy Cross. The candidate should be a practicing Catholic with strong organizational skills. The position offers a competitive compensation and benefits package, including paid time off, paid holidays, medical/dental insurance, 403(b) retirement savings, and an employer match. The application deadline is not specified in the text. Interested candidates should submit a resume and cover letter to Father John DeRiso, CSC.
WHAT’S HAPPENING carries announcements about upcoming events in the diocese. View more Catholic events and submit new ones at www.todayscatholic.org/event. For additional listings of that event, please call the advertising sales staff at 260-399-1449 to purchase space.

St. Stanislaus Kostka men’s BBQ NEW CARLISLE — The 64th annual men’s smoker will be on Sunday, Feb. 20, from noon to 5 p.m. in the parish hall. Tickets are $10 in advance or at the door. Ticket price includes a chance for door prizes, draft beer and a BBQ meal. There will be nearly 200 Tip Boards, Blackjack tables, Texas Hold’em, plus ample tables and seating for private games. For more information, call the parish office at 574-654-3781. (Must be 21 to enter)

Pasta for Peace ANGOLA — Every third Thursday of the month, from 5:30-7:30 p.m., the St. Anthony de Padua Parish Council will host “Pasta for Peace” which will focus on fellowship, friendliness and the joy of good food at St. Anthony Parish Hall, 700 W Maumee St. A goodwill offering will be accepted. Contact Patti Webster at 260-665-2259 or patti@stanthonyangola.com for information.

‘There’s More’ parish mission GARRET — St. Joseph Church will host a Lenten parish mission. Father Richard Kaley will speak on God’s unconditional love, knowing Christ and the call to a personal relationship with Jesus during this parish mission. Meet Sunday, Feb. 27 through Tuesday, March 1, from 6-30-8 p.m., in the church. Refreshments and conversation will follow each evening after the mission. Visit www.stjosephgarrett.com for more information.

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, 1602 E Walten 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.

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 on 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 Cranfield, Father Wade Menezes and Jason Shanks. Visit www.rekindlethefire.net for information.

Knights of Columbus Fish Fry ANGOLA — The St. Anthony de Padua Knights of Columbus Lenten fish fries will be carry-out every other Friday beginning Feb. 25, from 5-7 p.m. Cost is $9 per meal. Gather in the parking lot at 700 W Maumee St. Visit www.stanthonyangola.com or contact Mike Wyss at 260-316-2165.

Little Flower Holy Hour FORT WAYNE — Little Flower Holy Hour for Vocations will be Tuesday, March 1, from 7-8 p.m. at the St. Mother Theodore Guerin Chapel, 1102 S. Clinton St. The February holy hour will be led by Father Stephen Felcicia. Contact Christine Nix at 260-422-4611 for information.

Submit your event at www.TodaysCatholic.org/event

What’s Happening?
Winter storm interrupts Catholic Schools Week across diocese

BY JENNIFER BARTON

When local meteorologists began calling for large amounts of snowfall across the geographic region covering the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, many people began talking about other historic snow events – particularly the Great Blizzard of 1978. This occurred on Jan. 26 more than 40 years ago, hitting Indiana and Ohio with huge amounts of snow and, sadly, took the lives of 70 Hoosiers. Snowfall combined with record low temperatures closed schools, including colleges, for several days and buried streets, cars and houses. Even for those who had not experienced that event, the memory of the worst blizzard on record in the area still lives on whenever winter weather threatens northeast Indiana.

This year, schools in the area closed or switched to eLearning on the evening of Feb. 1 in anticipation of the potentially hazardous weather expected to begin on Feb. 2. About a foot of snow fell in most areas within the diocese and travel advisories and warnings were declared throughout northeast Indiana.

With the unpredictable winter weather in Indiana, Hoosier schoolchildren can typically expect delays or closures due to adverse weather conditions – fog, snow and ice can all make travel difficult if not impossible. Even extreme cold and negative wind chill sometimes keeps students home from school.

Aside from the 1978 blizzard, other events have impacted learning and shut down entire cities in the Hoosier state. 2009 saw a snow and ice storm that swept through the Midwest and caused hazardous road conditions and closures. In early 2014, Indiana experienced a snowstorm which was followed by such cold temperatures that a state of emergency was declared across much of the state, and even colleges closed their doors for a few days.

Catholic Schools Week tends to fall in late January or early February, during the heart of severe weather season. It is a much-anticipated celebration of the Catholic school system, replete with fun activities and themed-dress days. Unfortunately, there is always the possibility that a day or two of school might be missed due to snow or ice or other hazardous weather. This year, most schools shut their doors for at least two if not three days during the celebratory week, depending on the school’s location and the surrounding road conditions.

Virtual learning has allowed schools to utilize technology to keep students safe at home while still counting it as a school day, and the COVID-19 pandemic has equipped most schools to take advantage of that. But some schools find that too many days in a row of eLearning are harder to maintain, and others schools see the benefit of simply canceling school for the day.

“There are times when everyone needs a break from digital learning,” said Dennis Wiegmans, principal at Queen of Angels School in Fort Wayne. He chose to prepare students in advance for eLearning on Wednesday, but expected to simply call a snow day for Thursday and Friday. “We need to remember the days when we were children and days off school meant sledding, building a snow fort or snowman and having snowball fights. Good old-fashioned snow days can be just as much of an educational experience as eLearning.”

St. Jude School in South Bend closed for two days, so they were able to enjoy some of their planned Catholic Schools Week activities during the three remaining days. Principal Anna Marie Lewis said that, since the students look forward to those themed days, they will move the two that were missed to the next week.

Each day saw a new theme at St. Jude, such as welcome and inclusiveness, and the dress code for each day matched the theme. For example, for inclusiveness, students are taught that they are part of the Universal Church and were allowed to wear shirts from other Catholic elementary and high schools or colleges. Throughout these days, students also had the opportunity to support four charities selected by the house representatives, to which each individual student could choose to give their dress-down donations.

Aside from simply making the days enjoyable for the students, Lewis wanted to honor the teachers who take up this important vocation. On Monday, she surprised them with new school supplies, Tuesday with a coffee bar – that was very well-received – and Friday provided chips and salsa for the staff.

Every school manages to find fun ways to celebrate their Catholic identity during Catholic Schools Week – even when snow and ice threaten to disrupt the festivities. Adaptability is yet another aspect in which Catholic schools excel.