VATICAN CITY (CNS) – Pope Francis said his heart was “broken” by the war in Ukraine, and he pleaded again, “Silence the weapons!”

“Many times, we prayed that this path would not be taken,” he told people gathered in St. Peter’s Square for the midday recitation of the Angelus prayer on Feb. 27. But rather than giving up, he said, “we beg God more intensely.”

With many of the people in the square holding Ukrainian flags, Pope Francis greeted them the way they traditionally greet each other, “Slava Isusu Chrystu,” meaning “Glory to Jesus Christ.”

Pope Francis has continued to personally express his concern about Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and to appeal for peace. The previous evening, he phoned Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. The Vatican press office confirmed the call on Feb. 26, but provided no details.

Zelenskyy tweeted that he had thanked Pope Francis “for praying for peace in Ukraine and a cease-fire. The Ukrainian people feel the spiritual support of His Holiness.”

The Ukrainian Embassy to the Holy See tweeted, “The Holy Father expressed his deepest sorrow for the tragic events happening in our country.”

The call to Zelenskyy came a day after Pope Francis made the diplomatically unusual gesture of going to the Russian Embassy to the Holy See to express his concern about the war. Usually, a head of state would have an ambassador come to him.

Pope Francis also had phoned Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk of Kyiv-Halych, the head of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, who remained in Kyiv with his people, taking refuge with others in the basement of Resurrection Cathedral and sending out daily videos of encouragement.

As Feb. 27 dawned with people under a curfew and many still sheltering in basements and subway stations, Archbishop Shevchuk promised that priests would be joining them underground to celebrate the Sunday Divine Liturgy.
A Lenten message from Bishop Rhoades

‘Now is a very acceptable time!’

BISHOP KEVIN C. RHoades

On Ash Wednesday, we hear these words from St. Paul’s second Letter to the Corinthians: “Behold, now is a very acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation.” Lent is “a very acceptable time” since God wants to create a pure heart in us and to renew within us a steadfast spirit, as we heard in the responsorial Psalm on Ash Wednesday. Lent is truly “the acceptable time” to allow ourselves to be reconciled with God in Christ Jesus. Let us resolve to open our souls to God’s grace and love during these forty days. I encourage you to live intensely this journey of conversion towards Easter through the traditional practices of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving.

In our Lenten journey, we recognize together that we are sinners in need of God’s mercy. We pray with the psalmist: “Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned.” We do penance and make sacrifices out of love for God and our neighbor. We practice self-denial as disciples of the Lord who said: “Whoever wishes to be my follower must deny himself, take up his cross each day, and follow in my steps” (Luke 9:23). The Lord also invites us to the worship that is pleasing to Him – “to rend our hearts, not our garments,” as the prophet Joel exhorts us. We know that the worship pleasing to the Lord is not only our prayers, but also our charity, our love for our neighbor, especially those in need. That is why almsgiving is one of the traditional practices of Lent.

Pope Francis asked Catholics throughout the world to pray and fast on Ash Wednesday for the people of Ukraine. The unjust invasion of Ukraine by Russia has brought tremendous suffering to the people of Ukraine. Let us pray for them and for peace in their homeland. I invite you to remember Ukraine in your prayers and sacrifices throughout the season of Lent. Let us be in solidarity with these brothers and sisters whose freedom has been violated and who seek to live in peace and the dignity of the freedom that is their right.

When we received ashes on Ash Wednesday, the minister pronounced one of these two formulas the Church provides for the imposition of ashes: “Repent and believe in the Gospel” or “Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” The first form recounts the words of Jesus Himself, who began His preaching with these words: “Repent and believe in the Gospel.” Lent is a season in which we hear this call to repentance anew each year. Through our Lenten practices and devotion, we are converted anew to the Lord whose grace helps us to return to Him. The Holy Spirit brings our sin to light and gives our hearts the grace for repentance and conversion.

St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians: “We implore you, on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.” These words echo within our hearts during Lent. Jesus has reconciled us to the Father. He calls us to repent and, thereby, receive this grace of reconciliation. In Jesus, we who are sinners receive the possibility of an authentic reconciliation. Only Jesus can transform a situation of sin into a situation of grace. The sacrament of penance and reconciliation is a gift from the Lord in which we experience this transformation. We repent of our sins and we receive the Lord’s forgiveness. We are reconciled to God and to His Church. Making a good confession should be an important part of our Lenten journey.

During these forty days of Lent, let us keep our eyes firmly set on Christ crucified. His cross is our salvation. We will remember the cross on Good Friday. Praying the Stations of the Cross during Lent is a beautiful practice. Jesus carried the cross, which weighs the weight of all humanity’s sins, including our own. He carried the cross to Calvary, to fulfill by His death the work of our redemption. Jesus crucified is the image of God’s boundless love and mercy for us and for every person. When we pray the Stations of the Cross, we meditate on our Lord’s sufferings. It is an opportunity to tangibly experience the powerful truth of our redemption through the cross and to meditate on the love of Jesus for us.

The other formula at the imposition of ashes reminds us of our mortality: “Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” This is our fate, just like it is the fate of animals. We are creatures, made of earth and destined to return to it. The ashes remind us of our mortality, of death. It is important that we deeply feel and experience our mortality. Every passing day brings us closer to death. There is something destructive about death. It is rather disheartening to think about returning to dust. But it’s important to do so, to not forget that we are merely passing through this world.

At the same time, we know that we were not created for death, but for life. Our death does not mean destruction and annihilation. We have immortal souls. We know that our human bodies will decay, but that our souls will meet God at the moment of our death. We also believe that God will grant incorruptible life to our bodies by reuniting them with our souls, through the power of Jesus’ resurrection. Human death was defeated by the resurrection of Christ. We are preparing during the season of Lent to celebrate the joy of the resurrection of Jesus. Lent is a journey not only to Good Friday, but to Easter Sunday.

Let us ask our Blessed Mother, Our Lady of Sorrows, to help us to make a good Lent. Mary shared in the suffering and redemptive passion of her Son. May her intercession help us in our spiritual combat against sin! May Mary, the first and greatest disciple of the Lord, accompany us throughout this Lenten season!
Understanding the validity of baptism

BY JENNIFER BARTON

The Catholic world received a recent shock when it was discovered that a priest in Arizona invalidly baptized an unknown number of Catholics during his years of service to the Diocese of Phoenix. This came a couple of years after a priest in Michigan, by watching the video recording of his own baptism, discovered that the deacon who performed it did so improperly, thereby rending his baptism, confirmation and even ordination to the priesthood invalid – as well as numerous other sacraments that he had administered.

There is a great deal of confusion and even anger around these cases, both for Catholics and non-Catholics. In both cases, the sacrament was invalid because of one word – “We.” Many people ask: how can this make a difference in one’s salvation? Why is the Church so exacting when this affects the lives of so many people? Father Mark Gurtner, Vicar General of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend sat down with Today’s Catholic to address this issue.

Q: As Catholics, what difference does it make how we say those kinds of things?

Father Gurtner: The sacraments have been given to us by the Lord in a certain way (which is passed down to us through both Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition), and for them to be effective, for every sacrament, there’s a particular matter and a particular form. So, for example, for the Eucharist, the matter is bread and wine, and the form is the words that are said of Jesus at the Last Supper, and those words have to be said as they’re supposed to be said in order for the Eucharist to take place. It’s the same with baptism. There’s a certain matter and a certain form. The matter is the washing with water and the form is the words “I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” And to use words other than that would not be the actual form of the sacrament. In the recent case, the substitution of “we” instead of “I” – “We baptize you” – is not the form of the sacrament, and so the sacrament doesn’t happen.

Q: Can you explain the difference between “we” and “I”?

Father Gurtner: We believe that when anyone baptizes, it’s really not the person who is baptizing, but Jesus Himself baptizing through the person; Jesus performs every baptism. And so, that’s the “I” – referring to Jesus – “I baptize you.” I think the motivation for the one who substituted the “we,” I don’t know his mind, but I assume he was thinking “we” in terms of the community – “We baptize you ...” That’s how baptism takes place; it’s not the community that baptizes, it’s Jesus that baptizes.

Q: What makes a Catholic baptism different from certain Protestant baptisms?

Father Gurtner: So, there’s no difference as long as the other denominations, when they baptize, use the proper form, “I baptize you in the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit” and the proper matter, washing with true water. Obviously, there are a lot of denominations that do that: the Methodists, the Lutherans, the Episcopalians and so forth. There are some that we don’t recognize as valid because either the form or the matter is not correct. For example, there are some groups of Pentecostals that do not baptize in the name of the Trinity; they only baptize in the name of Jesus, so that would not be proper form and therefore, the baptism would not have happened. We do not accept Mormon baptism because they don’t believe in the Trinity the way we do, so the intention to baptize in the name of the Trinity is not there. So, for the most part, most non-Catholic baptisms would be invalid.

Q: What about Protestant baptisms where they dunk the person in a river or lake?

Father Gurtner: That would be valid. As long as they say the words. And that’s a washing of water. We could do that, too, actually. It’s not the normal way that we do it, but that would be valid.

Q: Are there other parts of the baptismal ceremony that people might not understand that should be included?

Father Gurtner: The baptism should always be done according to the rite of the Church, but those other things, if they were not done properly or if they were omitted, would not affect the validity of the baptism. Those things are what they call “explanatory rites;” they explain what the baptism is, so those things are really good and should be followed, but it wouldn’t be a matter of validity if they were excluded.

Q: And emergency baptisms?

Father Gurtner: In the case of emergency baptisms, you might not have time to do all those rites, so it’s just enough to do the actual baptism itself.

Q: And that can be done by?

Father Gurtner: Anyone, yes, in cases of emergency, an immediate possibility of dying.

Q: Obviously, these are isolated cases. But if you found out your baptism was not valid, what would you have to do?

Father Gurtner: I think someone should, first of all, call the chancery and then let us sort of explore what needs to be done, because there are repercussions for not having a valid baptism, in terms of confirmation, first Communion, marriage. All those things would be invalid if a person is not baptized. Now, that being said, people should know that this is extremely rare, so we don’t want anyone panicking. Everyone should presume their baptism is valid; it’s only in the extremely rare case that there’s proof that the minister didn’t do it correctly.

Q: If you find out that your baptism was invalid, do you have to go through those sacraments again?

Father Gurtner: Yes. Everything. It wouldn’t take that much to do all that. It’s more problematic with the case in Detroit where it was actually a priest who found out that he wasn’t baptized and that becomes way more problematic because everything the priest himself did was invalid. You have a double tracking down of everyone. But if a person found out that they were invalidly baptized, it wouldn’t take too much to fix it. I’ve never heard of that happening in our diocese.

Q: Have you ever met anyone personally that had an invalid baptism?

Father Gurtner: Not anyone personally. Before these recent cases I heard of, back in the 80s, a group of priests in Boston that were baptizing in the name of the Creator, the Redeemer and the Sustainer, and Rome weighed in on those and said they were invalid, so they had to do this same thing; try to contact those who had been baptized and try to fix all the repercussions of that. But really, that is the last time I’ve heard of until these two recent cases.

“UEKRAINE, from page 1”

“‘The Church is with its people,’” he said. “‘The Church of Christ brings the eucharistic Savior to those who are experiencing critical moments in their life, who need the strength and hope of the resurrection.’

And he called on anyone who could to go to confession and receive the Eucharist, remembering those unable to go to services and, especially, the Ukrainian soldiers defending the nation. But also, he said, make a ‘sacrifice for those who are wounded, for those who are discouraged, for the refugees who are on the roads’ fleeing the war.

Speaking after the Angelus prayer, Pope Francis also remembered the Ukrainians in the bunkers and those fleeing the war, especially ‘the elderly, those seeking refuge in these hours, mothers fleeing with their children. They are our brothers and sisters for whom humanitarian corridors must be opened as a matter of urgency and who must be welcomed.

“In these days we’ve been shaken by something tragic war,’” he told the people in the square.

One who wages war “relies on the diabolical and perverse logic of weapons, which is the furthest thing from God’s will, and distances himself from the ordinary people who want peace,” the pope said. In every conflict “the ordinary people are the real victims” and they “pay for the folly of war with their own skin.”

“With a heart broken by what is happening in Ukraine – and let’s not forget the wars in other parts of the world, such as Yemen, Syria, Ethiopia – I repeat. Silence the weapons!” Pope Francis said.

“God is with the peacemakers,” he said, “not with those who use violence.”
TODAY’S CATHOLIC

BY SAMANTHA ROHLOFF

Bishop Daniel R. Jenky, CSC, of the Diocese of Peoria, Illinois, celebrated 20 years as bishop last month.

On February 12, 2002, he was appointed as Peoria’s eighth bishop by Pope St. John Paul II, according to the diocesan newspaper, The Catholic Post. Prior to his appointment to that post, Bishop Jenky served as Auxiliary Bishop of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend from 1997 until 2002.

While auxiliary bishop, he worked alongside the late Bishop John M. D’Arcy, who promoted Bishop Jenky to rector of South Bend’s St. Matthew Cathedral and as the parish’s pastor, the Diocese of Peoria’s website explains.

The Catholic Post also states that his episcopal motto, “His Will is Our Peace,” was developed during his time as auxiliary bishop. Though his term only lasted for five years, his familiarity with the diocese – particularly the South Bend area – was profound well before his installation.

In 1965, as a college freshman, he attended the University of Notre Dame and returned to the same university a couple years later to study at the Moreau Seminary. Eventually, he was named Associate Director of Campus Ministry and Rector of Dillon Hall upon rejoining the Notre Dame family in 1975, just one year after his priestly ordination in 1974.

Two years later, he became rector of Sacred Heart Parish, located on the Notre Dame campus, and in 1985, he was named Religious Superior of the Holy Cross priests and brothers at Notre Dame. Of the many prestigious titles Bishop Jenky has held throughout the years, he can list teacher among them, as he also taught the Spirituality and Theology of Prayer graduate course as a Notre Dame professor.

In addition to his current and long-standing residency as Bishop of the Diocese of Peoria, he further fosters his Fighting Irish spirit as a Notre Dame trustee and fellow emeritus. He is notably recognized for his advancement of Venerable Fulton J. Sheen’s cause for canonization, begun shortly after he was appointed to the position of bishop. Venerable Fulton Sheen was a native of the Diocese of Peoria.

Bishop Jenky has certainly left a lasting impression on his contemporaries and colleagues; those who worked with him in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend have nothing but compliments with which to shower him. Cathy Bracht, Beneficent Administrator for the diocese for 37 years, remembers him fondly, calling him “very personable” and “outgoing.”

Current Notre Dame President Emeritus Father Edward A. Malloy, CSC, who served as Notre Dame’s president for 18 years and is approaching 52 years as a Holy Cross priest, similarly described Bishop Jenky as “friendly, sociable, and respected.” He worked alongside him while Bishop Jenky was rector of Sacred Heart, and he called the bishop “a great pastoral presence.”

Father Peter Rocca, CSC, was Notre Dame’s Assistant Vice President for Student Services at the time Bishop Jenky worked as rector of Sacred Heart. Father Rocca overtook Sacred Heart’s rectorship when Bishop Jenky was promoted to bishop. Father Rocca said that he and Bishop Jenky are “the best of friends” and further characterized him as “genuine, forthright, and down to earth” with “a wonderful sense of humor.” He stated, “Bishop Jenky is one of the finest preachers I know.”

Current Academic Dean and Director of Intellectual Formation at Mount St. Mary’s Seminary Monsignor Michael Heintz worked closely alongside Bishop Jenky. When Monsignor Heintz was parochial vicar of St. Matthew Cathedral, Bishop Jenky acted as its pastor. He called the bishop “a great homilist” and said that working with him was a blessing.

Bishop Jenky will retire this year at the age of 75, as all bishops are obligated to present to the pope their resignations upon reaching that age. Coadjutor Bishop Louis Tylka, enlisted by Pope Francis nearly two years ago to aid Bishop Jenky in his bishopric duties, will succeed him upon his retirement. In his reflection on the bishop’s tenure in Peoria, Coadjutor Bishop Tylka, speaking to The Catholic Post, said, “I hope he truly finds peace in knowing that the Lord says, ‘Well done. my good and faithful servant!’ And we agree.”

There is no doubt that Bishop Jenky’s legacy will leave a lasting impact on his community. To commemorate his time, talismans and the love that he has shared with all, the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend thanks Bishop Daniel R. Jenky for all he has done, congratulates him on 20 years as Bishop of the Diocese of Peoria and wishes him a very happy and blessed retirement.

March 6, 2022

Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion

March 6, 2 p.m., Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Fort Wayne
Promoting the dignity of life is at the heart of key legislation the Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC) continues to track in the pivotal final days of the 2022 General Assembly. As the public policy voice of the Catholic Church in Indiana for more than a half century, the ICC supports or opposes proposed legislation at the Statehouse through the lens of the long, rich history of Catholic social teaching. A prime example is the ICC’s stance on one of the most controversial measures at the Statehouse this session: House Bill 1077, which would repeal the law requiring a license to carry a handgun in Indiana.

Following its passage in the House, the so-called “lawful carry” or “Constitutional carry” bill – which the ICC has opposed from the beginning – was the subject of an intense, eight-hour debate in the Senate judiciary committee. Angola Espada, Executive Director of the ICC, was one among many who offered testimony at the Feb. 23 hearing that stretched well into the night. “We know and former deputy prosecutor said Espada, an attorney who leads the Indiana chapter of Moms Demand Action, a grass-roots organization fighting for public safety measures to protect people from gun violence. “We are doing more to vet the parents and supporters of the legislation maintain that lawful individuals should not have to face what they consider unnecessary hurdles in obtaining handgun permits. “House Bill 1077 gets us to a place where the law-abiding citizen is not required to go through a process of asking permission, submitting to a government investigation and supplying their fingerprints to enjoy a right that is constitutional at the federal level and at the state level,” Rep. Smaltz said in introducing his bill before the Senate Judiciary Committee, chaired by Sen. Liz Brown (R-Fort Wayne). “This bill seeks to level the playing field for law-abiding Hoosiers to defend themselves in public like they would at home, because the criminals are not submitting themselves to these sorts of investigations.”

But Jennifer Haan, a Catholic mother and anti-gun-violence activist who also happens to be a licensed gun owner, offered a strong counterpoint. She was among a contingent of Indiana members of the national advocacy group Moms Demand Action, present at the Feb. 23 hearing. “I can attest that the process to apply for a license to carry a handgun is less cumbersome than filling out kindergarten registration forms,” said Haan, who leads the Indiana chapter of Moms Demand Action, a grass-roots organization fighting for public safety measures to protect people from gun violence. “We are making more do to vet the parents and supporters of the bill on gun violence. “The licensure process is not a burdensome process,” she added. “It is a burden to lose a child to gun violence. At press time, the fate of House Bill 1077 – which would make Indiana the 22nd state to pass this type of legislation – still hung in the balance. Near the conclusion of the lengthy Senate hearing, which included testimony from out-of-state lobbyists supporting the bill, a late amendment stripped the measure dramatically. By a 6-5 vote, the committee approved the amendment, proposed by Indiana State Police Superintendent Doug Carter, to provide individuals with a provisional permit to carry a handgun while awaiting their license.

From here, the bill could undergo further review in a conference committee – the mechanism for reconciling House and Senate versions of a bill – or it could be added to a different bill in the closing days of the legislative session. A pro-life measure that the ICC hopes will eventually reach Gov. Eric Holcomb’s desk is House Bill 1217, which would make it a felony in Indiana to coerce a woman into having an abortion.

The bill, authored by Rep. Joanna King (R-Middlebury), requires medical personnel to ask a pregnant woman seeking an abortion whether she has been forced by someone to do so. If she indicates that she has, the medical provider would be required to offer her information on services available, the use of a telephone and an alternative exit from the health care facility. In addition, the bill mandates reporting of a coerced abortion to law enforcement. The measure, which passed the House on a 73-18 vote in January and the Senate on a 38-10 vote on Feb. 22, now returns to the House with minor amendments. “The provisions of this bill provide resources for vulnerable women and hold offenders accountable,” said Alexander Mingus, Associate Director of the ICC, during House committee testimony in January. “This reflects the Church’s priorities, and we lend our full support.”

If the measure is ultimately passed by the legislature and signed by the governor, Indiana would become the 19th state to offer protections to women from coerced abortion.

To follow this and other priority legislation of the ICC, visit www.indianacc.org. This website includes access to I-CAN, the Indiana Catholic Action Network, which offers the Church’s priority on key issues. Those who sign up for I-CAN receive alerts on legislation moving forward and ways to contact their elected representatives.
Ending conflict requires dialogue; Vatican ready to help, cardinal says

VATICAN CITY – The Vatican is ready to facilitate negotiations between Russia and Ukraine, said Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican Secretary of State. “The only reasonable and constructive way to settle differences is through dialogue, as Pope Francis never tires of repeating,” he said. “The Holy See, which in recent years has followed the events in Ukraine constantly, discreetly and with great attention, offering its willingness to facilitate dialogue with Russia, is always ready to help the parties to resume that path,” said the cardinal. In a joint interview with four Italian newspapers on Feb. 28, Cardinal Parolin said, “Although what we feared and hoped would not happen has happened — the war unleashed by Russia against Ukraine — I am convinced that there is always room for negotiation. It is never too late!” He reiterated the same appeal he said Pope Francis made during his visit to the Russian ambassador to the Holy See on Feb. 25, “stop the fighting and return to negotiations. First and foremost, the military attack, the tragic consequences of which we have all already witnessed, must be stopped immediately,” the cardinal said.

U.S. Church offers prayers, solidarity after Russia attacks Ukraine

WASHINGTON (CNS) — As war broke out in Europe on Feb. 24 with Russia’s early morning attack on various areas of Ukraine, Catholics in the U.S. joined Pope Francis in prayers for the people of the East European nation and for peace. “We join @Pontifex in calling on all people of goodwill to pray for the people of #Ukraine and for an end to war,” said Louis Tylka of Peoria, Illinois, “peace in our continent has been shattered.” Coadjutor Bishop Louis Tylka of Peoria, Illinois, who like many in the U.S., seemed to be ending Feb. 23 with news of the initial attacks on Ukraine. “Friends, as we go to bed in central Illinois tonight, the people in Ukraine awake to war,” Bishop Tylka tweeted around 11:30 p.m. (CST). "Let us pray for peace! Let us pray that conflict can be resolved by dialogue — not violence! Lord we pray — bring peace to our troubled world.”

Pope visits Russian Embassy to express concern over war

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — As Russia continued its assault on Ukraine and Russian troops pressed toward the capital, Kyiv, Pope Francis left the Vatican on Feb. 25 to pay a visit to the Russian ambassador to the Holy See. The pope went to the embassy, located at the end of the main road leading to the Vatican, “to express his concern for the war,” said Matteo Brunl, director of the Vatican press office. The pope spent about half an hour at the embassy, he said. Although the embassy told Catholic News Service it had no statement, Ambassador Aleksandr Avdeyev told Russian media: “The focus of the conversation was the humanitarian situation in Ukraine. Pope Francis expressed great concern for the situation of the entire population, both in the Donbas (in Eastern Ukraine) and in other areas, and called for the protection of children, the protection of the sick and suffering, the protection of people.” According to the pope, “this is the main Christian goal,” Avdeyev told the government-owned RIA Novosti news agency. Avdeyev also categorically denied to the Rome correspondent of the Russian news agency TASS that Pope Francis had offered to mediate the conflict, an idea reported by the Argentine news agency Telam.

Researchers estimate 5.2 million children orphaned during pandemic

CLEVELAND, OH (CNS) — An estimated 5.2 million children in 21 countries, including the United States, lost at least one parent, a custodial grandparent or a primary caregiver, Catholic Relief Services representatives described the estimates as “eye-opening” and agreed with the researchers’ conclusion that “an evidence-based emergency response is becoming increasingly urgent” to meet the challenges faced by children pushed into orphanhood by the pandemic.

Catholics urged to oppose bills that would expand abortion in Maryland

ANNAPOLIS, MD (CNS) — The Maryland Catholic Conference has urged Catholics and other pro-lifers to actively oppose several bills being considered by the state’s lawmakers in Annapolis that would broaden and strengthen the right to abortion laws in Maryland. “Given that abortion is ubiquitous in our state, Maryland women are not looking for abortion expansion, but rather help with the basic necessities they need to survive and thrive,” said Jenny Kraska, Executive Director of the Maryland Catholic Conference. “It is not more abortion that Maryland needs, but a clear understanding of the diverse demographic in our state and support and resources for growing families.” Several measures to protect a right to abortion and expand the availability of abortion are being considered in the House of Delegates. A bill introduced by House Speaker Adrienne Jones, a Democrat, would make abortion a right protected by the state constitution. Just one of the measures would put the issue forth as a ballot referendum to be decided by state voters. “This is the most serious and all-encompassing abortion bill introduced this session,” said Susan Gibbs, a spokesperson for the Maryland Catholic Conference, the public policy arm of the Washington and Baltimore archdioceses and the Diocese of Wilmington, Delaware. The Washington Archdiocese and the Wilmington Diocese include a number of Maryland counties. Among other measures one would make permanent Medicaid coverage of abortion.

Mediterranean church, political leaders cry out for peace

FLORENCE, Italy (CNS) — Bishops and mayors from cities around the Mediterranean gathered to talk about migration, peace and development and the promotion of human rights, but war broke out in Ukraine and overshadowed their discussions. Benjamin Karć, the 31-year-old mayor of Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina, was at the meeting in Florence. Her city has become the symbol of the last war fought in Europe — the 1991-95 Balkans war. Karć, speaking on Italian television on Feb. 26, offered prayers for the people in Ukraine’s capital, Kyiv, especially for the frightened children huddled in shelters as the fighting continued. The “Mediterranean for Peace” meeting opened in Florence on Feb. 23 before Russian President Vladimir Putin launched his offensive. The gathering brought together 60 bishops from Europe, the Middle East and North Africa for their own meeting and for joint discussions with 65 mayors from cities in 20 countries around the Mediterranean basin. Pope Francis had been scheduled to address the bishops and mayors at the conclusion of their meeting on Feb. 27 and to celebrate a Mass in Florence, but he canceled his trip after doctors prescribed rest for severe knee pain. Cardinal Gualtiero Bassetti, president of the Italian bishops’ conference, celebrated the Mass instead, leading prayers for Pope Francis and, especially, for an end to what he described in his homily as “an unjust and useless war.” “The madness of war must be stopped,” the cardinal said on Feb. 26 as he opened a joint prayer of the bishops and mayors. Too many of the bishops and mayors present “are familiar with this scourge, which is why we are here,” he said. “We come together to ask for peace. Every conflict is a ‘useless slaughter,’ as Benedict XVI said at the height of the First World War.”
**Ukrainian Catholics pray for the people of Ukraine**

MISHAWAKA – On Saturday, Feb. 26, Catholics gathered at St. Michael Ukrainian Byzantine Catholic Church to pray in a special way for the people of Ukraine, which included family members of some who gathered. Surrounded by the church’s vibrant iconography depicting Christ and the saints, the people gathered with the faithful to pray for Divine Liturgy — the Eastern rite’s name for the Eucharistic service. Father Volodymyr Hudyacz, pastor of St. Michael Ukrainian Catholic Church, returned earlier that week from the funeral of a family member in Ukraine, leaving the country just as Russia began their invasion. Many parishioners are Ukrainian with many having family members residing in that country.

The Byzantine rite is one of six Eastern Catholic churches that are in communion with the Bishop of Rome and its Divine Liturgy fulfills the Catholic Sunday obligation. There are two Eastern rite parishes in the diocese: St. Michael Ukrainian Byzantine Catholic Church in Mishawaka and St. Andrew the Apostle Mission Parish in Fort Wayne. Both communities are going to be formed with gathered objects or paint. Threads, handmade papers and clay are incorporated into the compositions. The registration deadline is three days prior to each session. Register online at Events.SisterProvidence.org.

**USF Jesters announce performance**

FORT WAYNE – The Jesters program at the University of Saint Francis will present its spring performance, “All in Awe” on March 12 and 13 at the USF North Campus Auditorium, 2702 Spring St. Performances begin at 6 p.m. on Saturday, March 12, and 3 p.m. on Sunday, March 13. Tickets for the annual spring event are $10 and will be available at the door or can be purchased in advance by calling USF Creative Arts at 260-399-8064. The Jesters is a performing arts group for people with intellectual/developmental disabilities (I/DD), ages 8 through senior citizens. “All in Awe” will use music, dance, theater, improvisation, visual art, storytelling and animation to explore the historical figure of St. Francis and Franciscan values.

**Forever Learning Institute offers new pilgrimage class**

SOUTH BEND – St. Thérése Little Flower Parish is hosting a course provided by the Forever Learning Institute entitled, “A Pilgrimage: Camino de Santiago in Spain.” The series will run for nine weeks on Friday mornings with the first meeting to be held at the parish on March 11 at 9 a.m. This class will provide details and information to anyone wishing to know more about this specific pilgrimage in Spain or other pilgrimages in general, and will also provide an opportunity for those who have already walked the Camino to share their experiences with others. Visit fli.coursestorm.com/category/religion-and-philosophy/?page=2 for further information and registration.

**University of Saint Francis receives grant**

FORT WAYNE – The University of Saint Francis will use an American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) grant of $23,664.24 to fund new library equipment for students. This project is supported by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) under the provisions of ARPA and administered by the Indiana State Library. A portion of the ARPA grant will provide new video conferencing equipment and a professional grade book scanner. The video conferencing equipment will allow USF to expand how it provides instruction online. The book scanner will be used to provide students and faculty with digital access to resources in USF’s print collections, and to provide support for other digital preservation efforts on campus. “We are grateful to IMLS for the award of these ARPA funds that will help connect faculty and students to the digital technology and resources they need to successfully teach and complete their coursework at USF,” USF Library Director Maureen McMahan said. The Institute of Museum and Library Services is the primary source of federal support for the nation’s 123,000 libraries and 35,000 museums. Its mission has been to inspire libraries and museums to advance innovation, lifelong learning, and cultural and civic engagement.

**Sisters to host ‘The Scriptures of Lent 2022’**

SAINT MARY-OF-THE-WOODS – Join the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, during the month of March as they host the virtual program, “The Scriptures of Lent 2022.” The programs will take place on Thursdays – March 3, 10, 17, 24 and 31, as well as April 7 – from 6:15-7:45 p.m. Explore with others as the richness and beauty of Scripture passages come alive during the Lenten season. Each workshop during the series will be facilitated by a preacher, teacher or Scripture scholar, and Scripture passages will be provided for all prior to each session. Cost to attend is $5 per session or $25 for all six sessions.

**Around the Diocese**

**Bishop Rhoades joins seminarians at Mount St. Mary’s**

Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades visited the seminarians from the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend at Mount St. Mary’s University in Emmetsburg, Maryland. On his trip, he celebrated Mass and enjoyed camaraderie with the faithful young men in formation for the priesthood, taking the time to get to know them and aid in their discernment process.

**Saint Meinrad exhibit features mixed media**

SAINT MEINRAD – An exhibit of mixed media artwork called “Completely Mixed” will be on display from February 23 through March 26, 2022, in the Saint Meinrad Archabbey Library Gallery, St. Meinrad, IN. The gallery will exhibit works by Evansville, IN, artist Janice Greene. Inspired by her surroundings, Greene creates both abstract and representational art. She is particularly interested in textures, layers and reflective surfaces. This exhibit showcases abstract art in mixed media. Some works are assemblages created from recycled materials, while others combineays with gathered objects or paint. Threads, handmade papers and clay are incorporated into the compositions.

**USF Jesters announce performance**

FORT WAYNE – The Jesters program at the University of Saint Francis will present its spring performance, “All in Awe” on March 12 and 13 at the USF North Campus Auditorium, 2702 Spring St. Performances begin at 6 p.m. on Saturday, March 12, and 3 p.m. on Sunday, March 13. Tickets for the annual spring event are $10 and will be available at the door or can be purchased in advance by calling USF Creative Arts at 260-399-8064. The Jesters is a performing arts group for people with intellectual/developmental disabilities (I/DD), ages 8 through senior citizens. “All in Awe” will use music, dance, theater, improvisation, visual art, storytelling and animation to explore the historical figure of St. Francis and Franciscan values.

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Hundreds of men convened at the Allen County War Memorial Coliseum in Fort Wayne for the annual Rekindle the Fire conference on Feb. 26. Fathers Ben Muhlenkamp and Stephen Felicichia emceed the conference, which saw men of all ages gather together united by faith.

The men heard from several speakers, had time for discussion and celebrated Mass with Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades, who also participated in a Q&A session.

The first speaker, Nathan Crankfield, talked about excellence, as well as his conversion journey. Crankfield said that his parents were different faiths, and that he was raised as a Lutheran. He began kindergarten at a Catholic school, where he was introduced to the Church and ultimately converted at age 13.

The second speaker, Tim Staples, touched on Catholic apologetics, which center around defending the faith. He said that he had conversed with someone who thought that the Catholic belief in transubstantiation was incorrect, thinking, “Do Catholics really believe that God is holding Himself in His Hand at the Last Supper?”

Staples says that he responded to this questioning by asking the individual if they believed that God couldn’t hold Himself in His hand if He wanted to do so.

The third speaker, Jason Shanks, spoke about experiences surrounding his time recovering from COVID-19, and how this brought him closer to his family and the Lord. Throughout the day, a number of diocesan priests were available for reconciliation, and there was a quiet space that had been converted into an adoration chapel for men who wanted to step out of the conference hall to visit and pray before the Lord in the chapel for men who wanted to be reconciled.

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Brandon Peat, one of the men participating in the conference, has been attending Rekindle the Fire off and on since its inception. This year, he attended with his father and brother.

“IT’s pretty cool to see the growth and the response over the years.”

Peat says that the guest speakers and the spiritual value of the conference drives him to return to Rekindle the Fire, as well as the experience’s relevance to everyday life.

“Every year, it’s a different lineup of speakers,” said Peat, “so that’s always great. But it’s kind of like a spiritual shot in the arm, once in a while, getting those kinds of experiences that help. You can then take that encouragement or what you’ve learned, and then take that back into the rest of your life.”

Peat said that he liked all of them. However, he resonated most with Crankfield’s talk at the beginning of the conference.

“I think I really responded to Nathan, the first speaker, and him kind of talking about excellence. And how excellence is something for every area of your life. It’s not like something you turn on and off in different areas. I think that, like a lot of men, I kind of stereotypically fall into the habit of like, excellence at work and then everything else kind of falls to the side. Whether that’s family or faith – whatever. I think that’s a good wake up call for me, personally. Yeah, I can’t just be striving for excellence here. It needs to be everywhere.”

Peat added that he finds the atmosphere of fraternity among those gathered to be especially striking. He said, “I love the conference, because I keep coming back year after year. It’s really cool to be in a room with a thousand other Catholic men. I don’t think that we are the most social creatures by habit.”

This brotherhood, Peat says, becomes most obvious toward the end of the Rekindle the Fire conference. “And when there’s something like at the close of the ceremony, we sing a Hail Mary together. And it’s really cool to hear the deep timbre of voices from a thousand men singing that because you’re used to singing songs in church, but you know, you get a range of all voices.”

Peat continued to say that he thinks that, while singing at church, most of the men are probably mumbling. Because this group of men are actually singing rather than merely mumbling at the conference, it makes for a unique yet infrequent experience.

“It’s really cool to just feel like that brotherhood with all the other men there who are, you know, strong in their faith. It’s just a really cool experience.”

Father Ben Muhlenkamp and Father Stephen Felicichia emceed the event. Father Muhlenkamp offers a prayer over all those who attended.
Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades visited the annual Rekindle the Fire Men’s Conference on Saturday afternoon for a Q&A session and to celebrate Mass.

During the Q&A session, Redeemer Radio host Kyle Heimann asked the bishop several questions that conference participants had written on note cards earlier that day. One of those centered around whether or not the Catholic Church would say that it is morally acceptable to become involved in a war.

“War should only be a last resort,” the bishop explained. “The Church is very clear on that. We have a tradition that’s called the just war theory – the just war tradition. Actually, it has roots in ancient Greek and Roman thought and it’s been developed in the Church, especially by lay theologians like St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas.”

Bishop Rhoades continued to explain the criteria by which the Church determines the morality of war involvement, including the chance of success in the conflict. He also mentioned that the question was particularly timely with the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

He added that unjust methods within war include the use of biological and chemical weapons, as well as indiscriminate killing, and that there has to be grave reason to go to war, according to the Church.

Relating the question to the current crisis in Eastern Europe, the bishop talked about where Church tradition fits with regard to Ukraine.

Taking up arms against the Russian invasion. “Obviously, our assistance to Ukraine right now with providing arms, et cetera, I think is just,” he explained. “They’re being attacked by an aggressor. And it’s terrible – it’s a crime what President Putin is doing – violating the sovereignty of another nation.”

“Innocent people are being killed today in Ukraine. That’s an unjust aggressor. Ukraine does have a right to defend itself – to take up arms against the aggressor. All the diplomatic means were attempted, and Putin still attacked. It was unjust. The injustice is on the part of the Ukrainians. And it is just for us to assist them.”

After the Q&A session, the men convened to celebrate Mass with Bishop Rhoades. In his homily, the bishop talked about hypocrisy, as how sins and vices can prevent people from growing in the Christian life.

“In today’s Gospel, Jesus continues to challenge his disciples, teaching us again, for example, not to judge another’s faults without first addressing our own worse faults. We’re all familiar with the famous words of Jesus in today’s Gospel: ‘Why do you notice the splinter in your brother’s eyes, but do not perceive the wooden beam in your own … You hypocrite! Remove the wooden beam from your eye first – then you will see clearly to remove the splinter in your brother’s eye.’”

Bishop Rhoades continued to say that, during the upcoming season of Lent, it is a time to “recognize the wooden beam in our eye and to remove it.”

“I invite you to think about that wooden beam. What sins, vices and faults are blinding us and preventing our growth in the Christian life? What do we need to remove or to ask the Lord to help us remove so that we can become better men, better priests, better husbands, better fathers, better neighbors?”

The bishop added that everyone can admit to some hypocrisy in their lives. “What our Lord says in today’s Gospel is so true. If we’re honest with ourselves, I think we all have to admit at least some hypocrisy in our lives. We often judge others and their faults and give ourselves a pass, Jesus is teaching us to judge ourselves or we will be like blind guides of the blind. If we’re blind to our own sins, how can we help others deal with their sins?”

He also mentioned that in Jesus’ time, it was the Pharisees that he called “guides of the blind” in Matthew’s Gospel.

“Let us all make sure to make some resolution for Lent in this area of prayer to help us answer our Lord’s summons to live as He lived. That’s what the Sermon on the Plain describes – the way Jesus lived, acted and spoke. It’s the way He wants us, His disciples, to live. He wants us to be good trees that produce good fruits in his vineyard.”

BY JOSHUA SCHIPPER
When churches and ministries were shut down, Armor of God arose to aid and arm men to be the spiritual leaders of their homes as God was calling them to be."

Robert Gregory, Chairman of AOG’s Board of Directors, shared, “This movement was born in the midst of the pandemic, when men and families needed spiritual enrichment and leadership more than ever. When churches and ministries were shut down, Armor of God arose to aid and arm men to be the spiritual leaders of their homes as God was calling them to be.”

He continued, “As momentum grew from successful bi-annual retreats and monthly spiritual briefings, a theme emerged, which was to ‘change the world.’ A catalyst that the AOG leadership team devised to do this was to create our own social media platform. In a time with so much negativity, sexualization, suppression and oppression, it made sense to create a safe space online for men to find the accountability and holy fraternity that they were seeking.”

Now during the season of Lent, it is essential to review how one’s time, energy and effort are spent – or mis-spent – and discern what fresh steps can be taken to purify habits, deepen in prayer and seek the Lord anew.

Gregory emphasized: “Men should not underestimate the power of having other Catholic men to message, share content, create groups, discuss questions with and be challenged in their understanding of the Mass, Church history and the spiritual life. As we grow the number of men who make profiles this year, we will be upgrading our platform and creating new content. We really do believe this will be a powerful online vehicle for many men, who need Christ-centered community now more than ever. By following Jesus as brothers in unity, we can make an impact and change the world!”

In addition to being a digital space for lay men to post and share, the Brigade also has members of the local clergy, including the movement’s spiritual advisor, Father Jay Horning, parochial vicar at St. Vincent de Paul and Father Daniel Whelan, parochial vicar at Our Lady of Good Hope, both in Fort Wayne. Gregory exclaimed, “We love having priests with us because it re-energizes what we are trying to create: a powerful, uplifting and authentic online platform for men to be encouraged spiritually and fed and catechized. My hope is that the laity along with the clergy come together to use what we have built to transition from the traditional negative and anti-Christian platforms to this very intentional platform designed to arm men.”

In a recent letter to his brother priests, Father Horning testified to the good fruits he has personally witnessed and received from Armor of God. He stated, “My priesthood has been impacted, because now I am being surrounded by men who can support my mission by actively living the mission with me. More men are bringing their families to Mass, confession and parish activities. More men are praying with their children and wives at home. More men are seeking to become leaders in their places of work. It is rejuvenating my priesthood and challenging me to be a better preacher.”

Those interested in learning more about Armor of God can visit their website armingmen.com. To sign up for a Brigade profile or to download the free app, scan the QR code above.

To witness what the Armor of God movement offers in-person, their next spiritual briefing will be held on Wednesday, March 16, at 6:45 p.m. in the Msgr. Kuzmich Life Center at St. Vincent de Paul Parish. Father J. Steele, CSC, pastor of Blessed Sacrament, Albion, and Immaculate Conception, Kendallville, will be presenting on the topic of “Arming Men on the Power of Holy Fraternity.”

Men of all ages are welcome to attend.

The first annual Catholic Teacher Award

The Catholic Community Foundation of Northeast Indiana is currently taking nominations for the first annual Catholic Teacher Award. Nominations are due April 15 with award presentation on May 5.

For more information contact the school principal or Sarah Shively at sshively@ccfnei.org
M any current and prospective members of the Catholic Church were brought together under one roof on Sunday, Feb. 27, in South Bend for the Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion. At St. Matthew Cathedral in South Bend, Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades affirmed the nearly 175 individuals, overseen by their respective sponsors and godparents, as they publicly acknowledged their willingness to become full, faithful members of the Catholic Church through the sacraments of initiation.

One of the three sacraments of initiation, baptism, is typically the first administered, as it generally occurs at infancy, but can be done at a later time. By receiving this initial sacrament, one is considered a member of the Catholic Church. However, those wishing to become full members of the Church must receive all three sacraments of initiation: baptism, Communion and confirmation.

Catechumens are individuals who have not yet received baptism and are preparing to receive all three sacraments of initiation. Candidates, on the other hand, are individuals who have been validly baptized and are preparing to receive the other two sacraments.

During the Rite of Election, catechumens, deemed the “elect” once the bishop signs their names into the Book of the Elect, gather to freely proclaim their commitment to receive all three sacraments of initiation. The Call to Continuing Conversion is similar. Here, candidates gather to publicly profess their intention to receive Communion and confirmation. Both catechumens and candidates will obtain the sacraments they have not yet received and thus enter into full communion within the Catholic Church upon entering into full communion with the Church through the sacraments.

The Office of Worship Director for the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Brian MacMichael, stated that there were 111 catechumens and 63 candidates from South Bend-area parishes. Bishop Rhoades spoke on the blessings that both these catechumens and candidates would receive upon fully entering into the Catholic Church.

Bishop Rhoades welcomed the catechumens and candidates with St. Paul’s opening words to the Corinthians, found in that day’s reading: “Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” The bishop told them each respectively that “they will receive the beautiful gift of God’s grace in the sacraments of initiation” as well as “an increase of God’s grace,”

that they will each partake in when fully received into the Body of Christ, the Church.

The bishop explained that this gift also “recalls God’s merciful love shown in Jesus Christ and bestowed on Christians through the Holy Spirit.” Concluding with this same theme, he told the catechumens and candidates present: “You will receive His sanctifying grace in the sacraments at Easter.”

During and after the celebration, catechumens and candidates were inspired by the welcoming, continuing invitation and encouragement for the continuation of their journeys of faith that the bishop and their loved ones provided.

Wendy Guzman, a catechumen from St. John the Evangelist Parish in Goshen, explained that before regularly attending church and understanding its importance, she felt empty – her consistent attendance filled that emptiness and lit the spark to her conversion, she said. The number of priests present at the Rite of Election moved her, and she conveyed her joy in knowing that she would soon be able to approach the altar and receive the sacraments she so desired from the priests. Already happily married, she is most looking forward to validating her marriage in the Church upon entering into full communion.

Originally from Jackson, Michigan, Alex Bliss has been going through the process of entering the Catholic Church at Holy Family Parish in South Bend. He expressed that his yearning to join the Church sprouted from a prolonged “struggle with faith and religion.” He further explained that becoming Catholic “is another beginning” for him, fulfilling his desire to spend his whole life with his now-fiancé after his conversion.

Looking forward to the lifelong love they will share, she instilled that every Catholic is called to lead others to heaven, the true place where eternal love abides.

Formerly a member of another Christian denomination, James Johnson, a candidate from Holy Family, explained the reasoning behind his conversion as a result of a loved one’s passing — who happened to be Catholic. “When we did Mass for her, I noticed that there was a lot of relief that came off my shoulders.” He reiterated that, “It felt like it was a lot of anger coming off my shoulders.” James is most looking forward to stepping back into the faith and expressed his excitement at meeting Bishop Rhoades.

During the approaching Easter Vigil Mass, the Catholic Church will receive these 174 individuals into full communion and joyfully anticipate their entrance, welcoming them home with open arms.
McGuffey Readers

When I was in high school, my English class read O. Henry’s “Moratorium” in an edition that showed Daphne in the alto, as she was transformed into a lark. I learned that a principal caused a minor flap when he directed us to use a different version. Nowadays that instruction would land him in federal court.

The issue of what children can read has taken on cultural and political significance lately. The Washington Post reports that “at least 27 states are considering legislation this year that would limit how race, and in some cases gender, can be taught in schools.”

Alongside disputes over the curriculum, we see efforts to remove controversial books from school libraries. There is a lot of pearl-clutching on the left over these conflicts. Terry McMillan, reporter for governor of Virginia last fall, said, “I don’t think parents should be telling schools what they should teach.”

The idea that parents should venture to instruct school boards, or worse, that legislatures should wade into the business of teaching, somehow upsets the natural order of things. I’d like to make a few observations that we might keep in mind in this discussion.

First, this is not a free speech problem. The First Amendment forbids the government to regulate the content of speech by private parties. But this regime doesn’t make sense for speech by the government.

Government speech necessarily takes one point of view (e.g., in favor of immigration or higher taxes and the like). The way we control government speech is by voting the speaker out of office.

Public schools are run by the government, and they have always taken a particular point of view. McGuffey Readers, widely associated with the public school movement, proposed bringing together students from a variety of backgrounds and teaching them principles that would character-ize for a free society. The Pledge of Allegiance that children recite today is designed to promote the values of a free society. The Pledge of Allegiance, essentially the same in all states, is required in over 40 states.

When she is on the job, she can’t be partisan. The First Amendment, they said, because it would “rob (them) of the information, ideas, and institutional approaches essential to the preservation of America’s democratic system.”

As I said above, when the government speaks, it necessarily takes a point of view. That’s how a democracy works. It would turn the system upside down if we allowed courts to order government employees to put forward a different and competing set of ideas. It would be particularly undemocratic to do this at the behest of a group who are not yet allowed to vote.

Mind you, I’ve said nothing about what we should be teaching. Only that this is a matter for the people to decide, not courts or bureaucrats or politicians.

The first to hear this reading was Jesus. He didn’t make sense for speech by the government.


Jesus, by contrast, is serene and strong. He is in control.

Although defeated for the moment, the devil does not relent but only lies in wait for another opportunity.

Reflection

On Ash Wednesday, the Church invited us to use the season of Lent as means to our great holiness.

Never deuding us by implying that the path to holiness is a walk along an imagined prime path, the Church frankly tells us that holiness requires discipline, focus, and unfailing faithfulness to God despite difficulties and the forces, very real in the world, that are absolutely at odds with the Gospel of Jesus.

In so many ways, we are similar to the Hebrews as they fled Egypt and slavery to the land of freedom and slavery they had promised as a land in flight from the slavery and hopelessness of sin.

The first to hear this reading from Romans, and the reading from Luke, also were in flight from sin, death and anxiety. They were weak. We also are weak, because selfishness attracts us. They could not see. Neither can we.

God alone gives strength and insight. Lent gives us the opportunity to strengthen our own resolve to resist sin, to be with God, and in God, to find our way.
Thank you, Sister Norma Pimentel

Sister Norma Pimentel, a Mexican-American Catholic sister born in Brownsville, Texas, daughter of immigrants, serves as the Executive Director of Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley. She has become a true symbol of Christian love and discipleship serving immigrants and refugees at the U.S.-Mexico border.

It is her mission; her life. This is how she actualizes her vocation as a baptized woman and a member of her religious congregation, the Missionaries of Christ Jesus, founded in Spain in 1944. Sister Norma does not need much introduction. She has been publicly commended by Pope Francis for her inspiring work with immigrants, gaining her the approval of “the pope’s favorite nun.” In 2020, Time magazine featured her as one of the most 100 influential people of the year.

These recognitions, and many others, have done little to change Sister Norma’s attitude toward life and service. She is by and large one of the most grounded persons I have met. It is not about her, she repeats constantly. It is about seeing the face of Christ in the immigrant and the refugee.

It has been an honor to engage Sister Norma in conversation several times and to learn from her wisdom through some work we have done together at the service of our Church. She exudes a loving compassion that reminds anyone around her that without love, and more particularly without loving like God does, we cannot build a just and equitable world.

Sometimes U.S. Catholics spend far too much time and energy questioning one another, finding fault in what we do and how we think, often antagonizing each other. In the meantime, Sister Norma and many others like her are working tirelessly to welcome and serve the many Christ’s of all ages who arrive at our borders seeking an opportunity in this nation of immigrants.

This reminds me of St. Teresa of Kolkata, whose work of fiction not aimed at children, about her, she repeats constant

CAPECCHI, from page 12

She believes everyone is creative, though the sterilization of modern life can squelch that spark. Her best remedies: going on a walk, chatting with a friend or praying at adoration, where she always brings a notebook.

“There’s so much to learn,” said Haley, who shares updates on her website, carootsforschmellamas.com. “There’s so much to learn.”

Herself a former fighter jet pilot, now a noted author and theologian, and a professor, Capecchi is also a well-known social justice activist. "Creativity is living in the space where I suddenly have a million ideas," Haley said. "It’s being human, the way that God has wired us to be, like Him." Sometimes, the first step of creativity is the hardest: slowing down and looking up.

"It comes down to wonder," Haley said. "When we’re connected to God, we’re awake to the reality that the world is enchanted by the footsteps of God. When we’re awake to that, we’re more open to creativity.”

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

CAPECCHI, from page 12
work of fiction not aimed at children.

Catholicism fosters creativity, offering a tradition replete with sacred art and a sensory-rich liturgy, she said. “It’s hard for me to separate out my Catholicism from my writing.”

Creativity is evident in everyday problem solving: rearranging a room, turning the contents of a fridge into a meal, managing the flow of a party. And it is always a spiritual endeavor, a co-creation with God – an idea Haley has embraced ever since reading Madeleine L’Engle’s book “Walking on Water: Reflections on Faith and Art.”

“Creativity is participating in God’s image, as creator,” Haley said. “It’s being human, the way that God has wired us to be, like Him.”

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Diocesan Safe Environment Coordinator
The Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend in Fort Wayne is seeking a full-time (30 hour per week) Diocesan Safe Environment Coordinator. This position’s primary function is to coordinate, implement, and support all diocesan entities in their compliance with the diocesan Safe Environment Program (SEP) and to assist the diocese in its full response to the United States Catholic Conference of Bishop’s Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People. Interested applicants should view the complete job description and apply online at diocesefwsb.org/careers by March 10, 2022.

Administrative Assistant – Business Office
The Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend has a full-time opening for an Administrative Assistant at the Archbishop Noll Center in Fort Wayne. The Administrative Assistant in the Business Office is responsible for all gift processing (Annual Bishop’s Appeal, Pentecost Collection, Special Fund Drives and Designated gifts) to include posting the gift and sending proper acknowledgement to the donor. Under the direction of the CFO, the Administrative Assistant will also provide support to the Business Office team with administrative duties, as well as provide clerical support to the CFO. This position will also collaborate with the Secretariat for Stewardship and Development and will receive direction on duties related to gift processing from the Secretariat for Stewardship and Development.

Preferred candidates will have experience working in databases, understanding of accounting principles, and proficiency with Microsoft Office Word and Excel. Interested applicants should apply online at diocesefwsb.org/careers by March 10, 2022.

National Eucharistic Congress seeks Executive Director
Purpose: The organization exists to promote and carry our National Eucharistic Congresses for the Catholic Church in the U.S. These Congresses are opportunities to gather tens of thousands of Catholics from across the country to participate in formation sessions, share in prayer and worship experiences, and renew their missionary commitments as followers of Jesus Christ.

Position Summary: The Executive Director serves as the pivotal staff person who, understanding all facets of the organization, articulates the mission to others, seeks partnership with organizations consistent with the mission, and leads each National Eucharistic Congress in a manner that fulfills its mission.

Key Responsibilities include:
• Vision, Revenue, Organization Management, Interfacing with Board of Directors, and Networking

Effective Date: March 2022
For more information visit diocesefwsb.org/careers
**What’s Happening?**

**What’s Happening** carries announcements about upcoming events in the diocese. View more Catholic events and submit new ones at www.todayscatholic.org/event. For additional listings of that event, please call the advertising sales staff at 260-399-1449 to purchase space.

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**Fish Fry**

*St. John the Baptist to host fish fry*

FORT WAYNE — Celebrate the first Friday of Lent with Dan’s Fish Fry at St. John the Baptist from 4:30 p.m. Carryout is available off Arlington Ave., or bring the whole family for all-you-can-eat-fish in the school gym. Tickets are $12 for adults, $7 for children 13 and younger, and children two and younger eat free. Menu includes Dan’s Fish Fry, Hall’s macaroni and cheese, Hall’s scalloped potatoes, Hall’s green beans and homemade dessert. Contact Karen Eckrich at 260-744-4393 or parishsecretary@saintjohnfortwayne.com.

**Queen of Angels’ Lenten fish fry (drive-thru only)**

FORT WAYNE — Queen of Angels Parish will host a Lenten fish fry on Friday, March 4, from 4-7 p.m. (or until fish runs out). This will be drive-thru only, located in the parking lot, 1600 W. State Blvd., off of Irene Ave. The price per box will be $12.50. Menu will include a generous portion of fish, tartar sauce, coleslaw, applesauce and cookie. Contact Laverne Gladies at 260-482-9411 or parishsecretary@queenofangelsfw.org.

**Dine-in/carry-out fish fry in Walkerton**

WALKERTON — St Patrick Church, 811 Tyler St., will have a fish fry on Friday, March 4, at 4 p.m. Fish prepared by Tyner IOOF Lodge 821. Tickets are $12 per adult dinner, $8 per child 6-10 years old and children younger than 6 eat free. Children are dine-in only. No all-fish carryouts. Dinner includes fish, two sides, drink and dessert. Dinners served until fish runs out. Contact Nancy Keahanowski at 574-586-7152 or info@saintpats.church.

**Revive!**

FORT WAYNE — Join a city-wide night of transformation on Wednesday, March 9, from 6:30-9 p.m. at Bishop Dwenger High School, 1300 E Washington Center Rd. Featuring the Damascus Worship Collective and inspirational preaching from international revivalists, you and your family will encounter a God who is living and active. Damascus brings life-changing experiences to tens of thousands of people annually. Visit damascus.net/revivefw or contact Emily Knuth emily@damascus.net for details.

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