

TODAY'S CATHOLIC

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Month's Mind Mass for Pope Benedict XVI

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'Huge Loss of Life'

Syrians Face Mass Casualties from 7.8-Magnitude Earthquake

BY JUSTIN MCLELLAN

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Francis expressed his "spiritual closeness" and "solidarity" with those affected by a pair of powerful earthquakes that struck Turkey and Syria on Feb. 6.

A 7.8 magnitude earthquake as measured by the U.S. Geological Survey hit southern Turkey before dawn on Feb. 6, wreaking havoc in large areas of neighboring Syria. It was followed by what the geological survey said was a separate 7.5 magnitude earthquake, less than 12 hours later some 60 miles away.

By mid-afternoon local time on Feb. 7, the Associated Press reported the combined official death tolls for Turkey and Syria had surpassed 5,000 and that as rescue efforts turn into recovery efforts and temperatures in the region drop, the number of victims was expected to continue rising.



OSV News photo/Sertac Kayar, Reuters

Rescue workers search for survivors under the rubble following an earthquake in Diyarbakir, Turkey, on Feb. 6. A powerful 7.8 magnitude earthquake rocked areas of Turkey and Syria early in the morning, toppling hundreds of buildings and killing more than 2,800 people.

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'Lay Down the Weapons of Hatred, Revenge,' Pope Tells South Sudanese

BY CINDY WOODEN



CNS photo/Paul Haring

Dancers perform as Pope Francis begins the celebration of Mass at the John Garang Mausoleum in Juba, South Sudan, on Feb. 5.

JUBA, South Sudan (CNS) — Looking out at tens of thousands of smiling faces, Pope Francis told South Sudanese Catholics that the only way the country will get out of the darkness of violence is with the light of their faith and their commitment to peace.

"In the name of Jesus and of his beatitudes, let us lay down the weapons of hatred and revenge, in order to take up those of prayer and charity," the pope said on Feb. 5 as he celebrated a morning Mass in Juba on the grounds of the John Garang Mausoleum.

Garang led the country to the 2005 peace agreement that set the stage for the country's independence from Sudan in 2011. Unfortunately, a civil war broke out two years later and repeated attempts to negotiate peace

and a power-sharing agreement have failed to quell the violence.

Anglican Archbishop Justin Welby of Canterbury and the Reverend Iain Greenshields, Moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, attended the Mass, which came at the end of the ecumenical pilgrimage for peace that they were making with the pope. Some 60 percent of South Sudanese are Christian with the Catholic, Episcopalian, and Presbyterian churches traditionally being the largest.

President Salva Kiir, a Catholic, and other government leaders, were also present.

South Sudanese authorities said thousands of people kept streaming to the site as the Mass began, and by the time of the homily, there were close to 100,000 people present.

Exhorting South Sudanese

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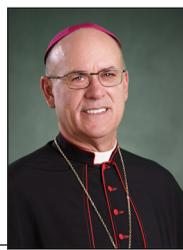
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Surrounded by a Great Cloud of Witnesses



IN TRUTH
AND
CHARITY
BISHOP KEVIN C. RHOADES

On Jan. 31, the one-month anniversary of Pope Benedict XVI's death, Bishop Rhoades celebrated Mass at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception for the repose of the soul of Pope Benedict XVI. The text of his homily at the Mass follows:

One of the favorite images of Saint Paul for the Christian life is that of an athletic contest, specifically a race. That is the image used by the author of the Letter to the Hebrews in today's first reading. He urges us to "rid ourselves of every burden and sin that clings to us and to persevere in running the race that lies before us while keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus, the leader and perfecter of faith." Today, we remember a man who did precisely that: Joseph Ratzinger. He did so from the days of his youth in Bavaria amid the terrors of Nazi Germany, through his years as a priest and university professor, theological expert at the Second Vatican Council, archbishop and cardinal of Munich, prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in Rome, and as successor of Saint Peter with the name "Pope Benedict XVI."

Throughout his life, as a brilliant theologian, as close advisor of Saint John Paul II, and as pope, and in the midst of great challenges and crises, Joseph Ratzinger ran the race, always keeping his eyes fixed on Jesus, whom he loved and served with all his strength. With Jesus, he endured the cross, the pain of criticism, and opposition. He did so out of fidelity to the truth of the Gospel and out of love for the One who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. We heard in the first reading today: "For the sake of the joy that lay before Him, Jesus endured the cross, despising its shame, and has taken His seat at the right of the throne of God." We pray at this Mass for Pope Benedict, that he who was so faithful to the Lord, may enter into the joy of His Master and Teacher, the joy of Christ's Resurrection.

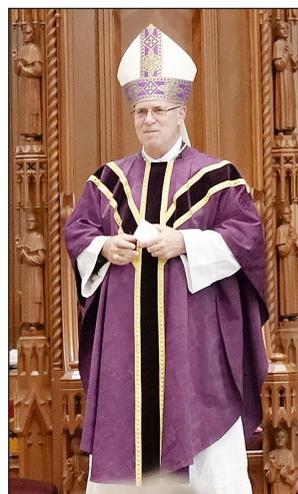
In the reading today, we heard that in the race of the Christian life, "we are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses." This refers to the saints in heaven. Pope Benedict was very conscious of this. In fact, in his general audiences for five years, from 2006 to 2011, he gave beautiful catecheses on the lives of the saints, beginning with the Twelve Apostles and continuing through the centuries. He believed that the lives and examples of the saints are the most convincing explanation of the Gospel.

Pope Benedict had a vision of the Church as a house of holiness, a Church that truly reflects the light of Christ. He believed that the new evangelization would only bear fruit through a genuine renewal of the Church by the witness of holiness. He taught that in these difficult times, in the midst of a culture that has increasingly forgotten or marginalized God, in the midst of what he famously called "a dictatorship of relativism," the world needs the truth of the Gospel and our witness of holiness. And that requires our conversion. As we heard in the reading from Hebrews, to run the race well, we need "to rid ourselves of every burden and sin that clings to us."



Photos by Christopher Lushis

Bishop Rhoades preaches a homily in remembrance of Pope Benedict XVI on Jan. 31 at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Fort Wayne. Known as a "Month's Mind Mass," the celebration took place one month after Pope Benedict XVI's funeral as a reminder to continue to pray for the repose of his soul.



Bishop Rhoades holds up a prayer card of Pope Benedict XVI at the conclusion of Mass, inviting those present to take one home as an aid for continuing to pray for the former holy father. The same cards have been distributed to each parish of the diocese. Additional cards may be obtained by contacting the Diocesan Office of Communications.

Out of love, he gave his life to God and to the Church.

Each time I met Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger and later Pope Benedict XVI, whose theological works I studied and loved, I was struck by his great humility, his goodness, meekness, gentleness, and purity of heart. He was a man obviously close to the Lord. In him, I saw the attributes of Jesus that we heard in this past Sunday's Gospel, the Beatitudes. So many of us, including the millions of young

Pope Benedict wrote of how the saints were human like us and needed to rid themselves of sin like we do. He reminded us that we are no less capable of holiness than they were.

We can learn and grow from the example and lives of these holy men and women who encountered the living Christ and lived to the full grace of their Baptism, who lived beautiful lives of faith, hope, and charity. Pope Benedict XVI learned from the saints he spoke about.

people at World Youth Days in Cologne, Sydney, and Madrid, experienced him as a father, indeed, as "a holy father." He was as he identified himself when he appeared on the balcony of Saint Peter's after his election as pope "a humble worker in the vineyard of the Lord."

Brothers and sisters, in the journey, the race, of our Christian lives, let us be aware, like Pope Benedict was aware, that we are surrounded by a cloud of witnesses. We pray at this Mass that Joseph Ratzinger is now part of that cloud of witnesses, and that if he is in purgatory, that he will soon be within that cloud of witnesses in heaven.

I wasn't greatly surprised when I learned that Pope Benedict's last words shortly before he died one month ago today were: "Lord, I love you." His last audience talk on the saints was on Saint Therese of the Child Jesus. In that talk, he said that the last words of Saint Therese, while looking at the crucifix she held tightly in her hands while dying, were "My God, I love you." Pope Benedict said that those simple words are at the heart of all her writings. "The act of love for Jesus immersed her in the Most Holy Trinity." I think we can say the same about Joseph Ratzinger who, before dying, repeated Saint Therese's words. Like Saint Therese and like his own two favorite models, Saint Augustine and Saint Bonaventure, Pope Benedict let himself be led by God to the depths of His mystery."

We now enter into that mystery through the sacrament of Divine Love, the Holy Eucharist. It is the gift in which Jesus manifests His love for us and offers to us His Body and His Blood. In the Eucharist, we receive the food of salvation, the grace to live in Christ's love, like the saints did and like Pope Benedict did. In the Eucharist, we receive Christ's life for our journey to be with Him and all the saints in glory.

Mass Celebrated in Remembrance of Bishop John D'Arcy on Tenth Anniversary of His Death

BY CHRISTOPHER LUSHIS

In gratitude for the courageous and dedicated leadership of Bishop John M. D'Arcy, especially for his guidance of the diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, a memorial Mass was offered on the 10-year anniversary of his death at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Fort Wayne.

The Mass on Feb. 3, the feast of St. Blaise, Bishop and Martyr, recounted the life and witness of Bishop D'Arcy, faithful son of the Church who spent his life in service of the Gospel with love and perseverance.

Father Mark Gurtner, Vicar General for the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend and Pastor at Our Lady of Good Hope in Fort Wayne, was the main celebrant and homilist. Concelebrating were Father Jacob Runyon, Father Thomas Shoemaker, and Monsignor Owen Campion, with assistance from Deacon Fred Everett.

In his homily, Father Gurtner remarked that Bishop D'Arcy was passionate about helping people discover their vocations and to flourish in them. He also sought to ensure the culture of the priesthood remained healthy, even when that required making tough decisions. He shared the story that "Bishop D'Arcy one time met with Cardinal Ratzinger, the future Pope Benedict XVI, and spoke with him about vocations in our diocese, telling him that it was his strategy as bishop to ordain the highest quality of men, even if that meant ordaining fewer men. His idea was that good priests would inspire other good young men to want to be priests too. He went on to say that he may never live to see the fruit of this strategy. Cardinal Ratzinger responded, 'Yes, this is salvation history, one sows and another reaps,' echoing the words of Jesus in the fourth chapter of Saint John's Gospel. This is a great lesson for all of us in our Christian life, especially in our individual vocations, as we seek to live them faithfully and zealously, we plant seeds of faith and we may never see the harvest."

He expressed his sincere gratitude for Bishop D'Arcy's commitment and fidelity to his mission, saying, "We in the diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend continue to be the beneficiary of many good seeds which Bishop D'Arcy planted, reaping a harvest of God's grace and the continual flourishing of the Catholic faith, not



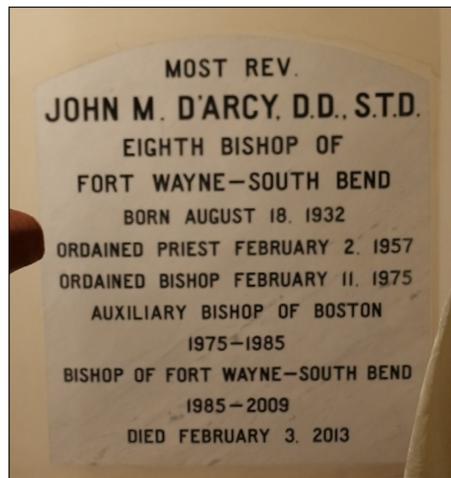
Photos by Christopher Lushis

Father Mark Gurtner, Vicar General for the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, preaches the homily at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception on Feb. 3. Mass was celebrated in remembrance of former Bishop John M. D'Arcy on the 10-year anniversary of his passing.

only regarding vocations, but in many other ways, as well. What a blessing it was for us to have had such a good bishop for so many years!"

Father Gurtner continued, "We should imitate Bishop D'Arcy, as the Letter to the Hebrews says in today's reading, 'Remember your leaders who spoke the Word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith.' I never knew Bishop D'Arcy ever to be discouraged, even during some very difficult times. He always sought to do what was right and good and what he believed God was asking of him. If we are faithful and zealous in our Christian life and vocations, God will bring a bountiful harvest forth from us also."

Finally, Father Gurtner reminded everyone of the need to pray for Bishop D'Arcy. "This Mass is a gift we can offer back to him. If he is in purgatory, our prayers and offering of this Mass will assist him to be free of any stain of sin, to be then led to the glory of Heaven. If he is already in Heaven, our prayers for him will no doubt be applied to others whom God in His wisdom and goodness desires to receive these benefits in Bishop D'Arcy's name, which will be all the more cause for joy for our beloved Bishop. We give thanks to God for Bishop D'Arcy, for the fruit he brought



Following Mass, visitors were invited to the Crypt Chapel of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception to pray before the tomb of Bishop D'Arcy.

to our diocese, and ask that he be given eternal rest."

Following Mass, the hundreds of people in attendance were invited to proceed to the Cathedral's Crypt Chapel to pray before the body of Bishop D'Arcy. Prayer cards, identical to those which were distributed at his funeral in 2013, were available as well. Additional cards may be obtained from the Cathedral parish office.

Speaking in 2013 following Bishop D'Arcy's passing, current Bishop of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Kevin C. Rhoades, remarked, "My dear friend and predecessor was truly a man of God who offered to me and to all of us a model of holiness. His life of prayer and witness to the Gospel was an inspiration to us all. He always kept before his eyes the example of the Good Shepherd 'who came not



Public schedule of Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades

Monday, Feb. 13: 8:15 a.m. – Mass and Pastoral Visit, St. Joseph Catholic School, Fort Wayne
 Tuesday, Feb. 14: Noon – Meeting of Diocesan Finance Council, Best Western Plus, Warsaw
 Tuesday, Feb. 14: 6:30 p.m. – Mass, St. Vincent de Paul Church, Fort Wayne
 Wednesday, Feb. 15: 9 a.m. – Meeting with Diocesan High School Principals, Syracuse
 Wednesday, Feb. 15: Noon – Meeting with Council of Teachers, Syracuse
 Wednesday, Feb. 15: 6 p.m. – Meeting with Diocesan School Board, Syracuse
 Thursday, Feb. 16: 6:30 p.m. – Presentation at the Faith Speaker Series of St. Thomas Parish, Elkhart, Antonio's Restaurant, Elkhart
 Saturday, Feb. 18: 3 p.m. – Question and Answer Session, Rekindle the Fire Men's Conference, Century Center, South Bend
 Saturday, Feb. 18: 4:30 p.m. – Mass, Rekindle the Fire Men's Conference, Century Center, South Bend
 Sunday, Feb. 19: 2 p.m. – Rite of Election and Rite of Continuing Call to Conversion, St. Matthew Cathedral, South Bend



Priest Assignment

The Most Reverend Kevin C. Rhoades, Bishop of Fort Wayne-South Bend, has made the following assignment:

Rev. Antonio Alejandro Gutierrez Gualtieri as Parochial Vicar of St. Anthony of Padua Parish, Angola, and St. Joseph Parish, Lagrange, effective January 31, 2023.

to be served, but to serve and to give his life for the sheep.' Bishop D'Arcy shepherded the faithful of our wonderful diocese for nearly 25 years with generosity and zeal. Personally, I am so grateful for his wisdom, counsel, and example. He carried out with joy the mission the Lord entrusted to him; he was a faithful teacher who fed us with God's word, a devoted priest who nourished us with the grace of the sacraments, and a good shepherd who led and built up our diocese in truth and holiness."

A longtime friend of Bishop D'Arcy, who passed away on Jan. 9, 2023, before this Mass took place, was Deacon James A. Fitzpatrick. For more than 30 years, Fitzpatrick served as Master of Ceremonies for both Bishop D'Arcy and Bishop Rhoades, at numerous confirmations, baccalaureate Masses, ordinations, and other liturgies. In 2013, at the time of Bishop D'Arcy's passing, Deacon Fitzpatrick stated, "Before a priest is ordained a bishop, he is questioned about his resolve to uphold the faith: 'Do you resolve to guide the Holy People of God in the way of salvation as a devoted father and sustain them with the help of your fellow ministers, the priests and

deacons?' For more than 23 years, I was privileged to serve Bishop D'Arcy as his Master of Ceremonies and I was able to observe firsthand his fulfillment of his 'I do' in answer to that question. We saw in this holy man, first and foremost, a priest, a man who gave up spouse and children in order to serve the people of God entrusted to him. His priestly ministry was the bedrock of his ministry as bishop. He took great pleasure in ordaining young men as priests to be his coworkers in the vineyard of Christ. He loved to administer the Sacrament of Confirmation on the young. Most of all, he wanted to exercise the teaching Office of Bishop by bringing alive the Word of God in the hearts of his flock. He often spoke that when his time came to meet the Lord, that he knew he would be judged in part on how well he ministered and cared for the souls of the people in this diocese. The last time I saw him, a few days before his death, he gave me his blessing and asked that I pray for his soul, that he might be found worthy to gain entrance into heaven. Now the Lord has called him home and we pray that he will be found worthy of the heaven he taught all of us to strive for."

Pope Asks Congo's Priests, Religious to Be Authentic Witnesses of Faith

BY CINDY WOODEN

KINSHASA, Congo (CNS) — The strength and unity of the Catholic community in Congo and its ability to be an effective force for peace and reconciliation depend in large part on the attitudes, witness, and ministry of consecrated women, priests, and religious brothers, Pope Francis said. After an afternoon storm brought wind and rain to the nation's capital, the pope held an early evening meeting on Feb. 2, with some 5,000 priests, religious, and seminarians gathered inside and outside the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Congo in Kinshasa. "If we bow before God in humility, He makes us become like Himself, agents of mercy," the pope said. "If we remain docile in God's hands, He shapes us to become a



CNS photo/Paul Haring

Pope Francis leads a prayer meeting with priests, religious, and seminarians in Our Lady of the Congo Cathedral in Kinshasa, Congo, on Feb. 2.

people of reconciliation, capable of openness and dialogue, acceptance and forgiveness, who make rivers of peace flow through the arid plains of violence." That way, he said, "when the stormy winds of conflict and division blow, we are not broken, for we are filled with the love of God. May you always be docile to the God of mercy, never shattered by the winds of division." Although meetings with priests, religious, and seminarians are a standard item on papal trip itineraries, the gathering in Kinshasa had an additional character because it took place on Feb. 2, the day the church celebrates the World Day for Consecrated Life.

Displaced Persons Meeting Pope Underscore South Sudan's Overlapping Crises

BY JUSTIN MCLELLAN

ROME (CNS) — Africa's largest displacement crisis has seen nearly 4.5 million people flee their homes due to deadly civil conflicts and environmental disasters in South Sudan. Pope Francis was scheduled to meet with some of them on Feb. 4 during his three-day "ecumenical pilgrimage" to the country with Anglican Archbishop Justin Welby of Canterbury and Reverend Iain Green Shields, Moderator of the Church of Scotland. Since 2013, violence ranging from concentrated

attacks between rivaling ethnic groups to full-on civil war has gripped the world's youngest nation, which declared its independence in 2011. A peace agreement was signed between the two largest warring parties in 2015 only to fall apart a year later. A revitalized peace agreement was signed in 2018. "There is a peace agreement, but there is still active subnational violence," Charlotte Hallqvist, an officer of the U.N. refugee agency, UNHCR, in South Sudan, told Catholic News Service on Feb. 2. "Ethnic conflicts are on the rise."



CNS photo/Charlotte Hallqvist, UNHCR

A group of internally displaced people arrive by boat at Malakal riverside seeking safety at the Malakal Protection of Civilians (PoC) site in Upper Nile State, South Sudan, on Dec. 3, 2022. The group of mainly women, children, and the elderly are among at least 20,000 people displaced by armed conflict in the region since August of 2022.

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Legislation Would Offer Relief to Hoosiers in Poverty, Hunger

A long sought-after update to a cash assistance program for the poor is among the bills the Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC) is advocating for at the Statehouse to aid the most vulnerable Hoosiers.

Legislation expanding income eligibility for the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program in Indiana unanimously passed the Senate in late January, another step toward a larger overhaul more than three decades in the making. Meanwhile, the ICC is also backing measures aimed at simplifying access to food stamps for older Indiana residents and the disabled and assisting the estimated 30 percent of college students who face food insecurity.

"Catholic social teaching provides for options for the poor and vulnerable," said Angela Espada, Executive Director of the ICC, the public policy voice of the Catholic Church in Indiana. "The ICC supports these bills to reduce food insecurity and to improve the lives of those in need. These efforts are extremely important as inflation continues to affect our population and many people are struggling to make ends meet."

Across Indiana, Catholic Charities staff members are among those on the front lines who witness these needs every day. And the needs are growing.

In downtown Indianapolis, the food pantry located at the Catholic Center recently added Monday evening hours to accommodate those who work during the day but still cannot put enough food on the table.

"Food costs have risen so much that people's budgets are being stretched to the limit," said Stephanie Davis, Director

of the Crisis Office for Catholic Charities Indianapolis. "Forty percent of the people who come to us each week are new to us — people who have never had to depend on a food pantry before. They're the people in the community who were always the Boy Scout leaders and softball coaches, the everyday people who always gave back to the community. Now they're the ones coming in and needing help."

Soaring costs of rent and other necessities contribute to the growing numbers of Hoosiers "barely scraping by," Davis said.

One lifeline for the poorest of the poor is TANF, a federal government program that provides block grants to the states to administer temporary cash assistance payments and other services to families in deepest poverty. But too many Hoosier families face barriers in receiving that help because of outdated state guidelines.

Senate Bill 265, which passed the Indiana Senate by a 45-0 vote on Jan. 30, would change the income eligibility for a family of three to participate in the TANF program from 16 percent of the federal poverty rate to 50 percent by the end of 2027. The current federal poverty level stands at a little more than \$23,000 for a family of three.

Under current state law, a family of three making more than \$307 per month would not qualify for TANF. Senate Bill 265, authored by Sen. Jon Ford (R-Terre Haute), would increase the monthly income eligibility threshold in Indiana to \$959 per month once fully enacted.

Indiana's current eligibility level for TANF is the fourth-lowest in the United States, behind Louisiana, Arkansas, and Alabama. Indiana set

INDIANA CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

BY VICTORIA ARTHUR

its income requirements to qualify for TANF in the mid-1990s, when welfare reform was signed into law by then-President Bill Clinton. Those eligibility guidelines have not been adjusted for inflation since then.

"Expanding eligibility for families in need will help thousands of Hoosiers make their way out of poverty," said Ford, who has promoted TANF-related legislation for years. "In addition to cash assistance, the TANF program provides job training, child care, and transportation in order to eliminate many hurdles folks face when looking for higher-paying jobs."

Senate Bill 265 is currently under consideration in the Indiana House of Representatives. A similar measure, House Bill 1160, is also moving through that chamber. This legislation represents the latest effort to modernize the TANF program in Indiana, which has seen only incremental changes in 35 years.

The ICC and its allies have been pushing for years for what they consider a long-

overdue update to TANF in Indiana. That includes a meaningful increase to the \$288 maximum monthly cash payment for a family of three in deep poverty — which has not been adjusted for inflation since 1988. In addition to expanding the eligibility threshold for TANF, Senate Bill 265 and House Bill 1160, authored by Rep. Edward Clere (R-New Albany), aim to address that issue.

The ICC and other advocates for the poor also support Senate Bill 334, which would simplify requirements for certain individuals applying for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), more commonly known as food stamps. The measure, authored by Sen. Shelli Yoder (D-Bloomington), would streamline the process for individuals 60 years of age or older or those with a disability applying for SNAP.

In addition, the ICC and its allies are tracking "Hunger-free campus" bills introduced in both chambers of the state legislature aimed at addressing food insecurity among college students. One in three students on college campuses in Indiana and across America face this issue, according to statistics from Feeding Indiana's Hungry, an advocacy group affiliated with Feeding America.

Senate Bill 51, a bipartisan measure authored by Yoder and Sen. Ron Altling (R-Lafayette) and House Bill

1161, authored by Rep. Earl Harris, Jr. (D-East Chicago), would provide grants to state colleges and universities to help address hunger among students who attend these institutions.

For Davis of Catholic Charities Indianapolis, the help offered by this type of legislation cannot come quickly enough.

"Sometimes it's beyond what the world comprehends of what food insecurity is," said Davis, who also directs the Christmas Store for Catholic Charities Indianapolis. "We're downtown at the Catholic Center, and I've got people coming 20 miles just to get food once a week. We've seen an increase in senior citizens coming in to get help, and we've seen college students who don't have the financial means to provide food for themselves.

"It's a huge need."

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

Lenten Journey Pledge

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NEWS BRIEFS

Chinese Spy Balloon Shot Down; Catholic Lawmaker Calls for 'Frank and Sober' National Security Conversation

WASHINGTON, D.C. (OSV News) — A Chinese surveillance balloon flying at high altitudes over the continental U.S. was shot down over the water off the South Carolina coast by U.S. military on Feb. 4, Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III confirmed in a statement. The balloon, which was first spotted on Feb. 2 over Montana, moved southeast across the United States, with sightings in the Midwest and Southeast. Television footage showed a white object falling from the sky just before 3 p.m. Eastern time. "On Wednesday, President Biden gave his authorization to take down the surveillance balloon as soon as the mission could be accomplished without undue risk to American lives under the balloon's path," the statement said. "In accordance with the president's direction, the Department of Defense developed options to take down the balloon safely over our territorial waters, while closely monitoring its path and intelligence collection activities." The balloon, Austin said, was "being used by the (People's Republic of China) in an attempt to surveil strategic sites in the continental United States."

Diplomats, Faith Leaders Gathered at U.N. Urged to Advance Religious Tolerance, Harmony Around the World

UNITED NATIONS (OSV News) — A combination of U.N. ambassadors, religious leaders, diplomats, academics, representatives of nongovernmental agencies, and several musicians gathered on Feb. 3 in a vast conference hall at the United Nations headquarters in New York City to mark World Interfaith Harmony Week. The special week, observed this year from Feb. 1 to Feb. 7, is a product of a 2010 U.N. resolution, first conceived by Jordan's King Abdullah II, known for his commitment to religious tolerance and interfaith dialogue. The week stresses the need to advance mutual understanding and interreligious dialogue as a way to promote harmony among all people. "We all need each other to open doors for one another," said one speaker, Rabbi Joseph Potasnik, Executive Vice President of the New York Board of Rabbis. "We can't allow harmony week to be just one week. It has to con-

Migrants Continue to Risk their Lives Seeking Asylum



OSV News photo/Jose Luis Gonzalez, Reuters

Asylum-seeking migrants are pictured crossing the Rio Bravo River from Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, on Jan. 2, the border between the United States and Mexico, to request asylum in El Paso, Texas.

tinue throughout the year and throughout our lives."

New Translation Tweaks to Sacrament of Penance Take Effect This Lent

WASHINGTON, D.C. (OSV News) — Beginning Ash Wednesday, this year on Feb. 22, the experience of the sacrament of penance in the Roman rite will be slightly different, thanks to recently approved changes in the English translation set to come into effect. While most faithful will not notice the minor modifications to the prayer of absolution, the revisions continue efforts throughout Church history to ensure the accuracy of liturgical text translations from the Latin. The revised version states: "God, the Father of mercies, through the death and resurrection of His Son, has reconciled the world

to Himself and poured out the Holy Spirit for the forgiveness of sins; through the ministry of the Church may God grant you pardon and peace. And I absolve you from your sins in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." Other recent new English translations of Roman rite liturgical books have been completed for the missal (2011), confirmation (2015), matrimony (2016), exorcism (2017), the dedication of a church (2018), the blessing of oils (2019), the baptism of children (2020), and ordination (2021).

Ukraine's Embattled Religious Orders Keep Faith and Hope Alive Amid War

KYIV, Ukraine (OSV News) — Catholic religious orders have played a major role in channeling life-saving humanitarian aid

across Ukraine since Russia's February 2022 invasion, keeping hopes alive while continuing to minister to the country's much-depleted Catholic communities. "Although some have had to leave, most religious priests and sisters have stayed on — and their witness has been very important for Ukrainians," explained Father Jaroslaw Krawiec, Superior of the country's Dominican order. Throughout the war, friars from Ukraine have been sending letters to their Dominican communities across the globe, and to journalists, describing efforts by fellow clergy to sustain church life amid scenes of devastation and despair from Lviv in the west to Izyum and Kherson in eastern Ukraine. Father Krawiec told OSV News that "no one can know all the stories of sacrifice and dedication this war has brought about, but they'll be told one day in the histories of our religious orders."

Free Childbirth or Reduce Cost of Raising Kids? Pro-life Leaders Mull Proposal for Congress

WASHINGTON, D.C. (OSV News) — Some pro-life leaders called on Congress in January to make childbirth free for mothers, while others maintain addressing the financial burden of raising children will make greater impacts on saving lives from abortion. Catherine Glenn Foster, President and CEO of Americans United for Life, and Kristen Day, Executive Director of Democrats for Life of America, co-wrote a white paper outlining the proposal called, "Make Birth Free: A Vision for Congress to Empower American Mothers, Families, and Communities." They cited childbirth costing \$19,000, with even privately insured mothers paying \$3,000 out-of-pocket "simply for delivery." Other pro-life leaders note reducing the cost of raising children may be a more effective, lifesaving policy. "There are definitely women who have abortions for economic reasons," Patrick T. Brown of the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, D.C. told OSV News. "But those economic factors tend to be longer-lasting than just the initial days around labor and delivery, and our social supports should recognize that."

'Hand of The Lord' Spared Ohio Town Amid Train Derailment, Says Priest

EAST PALESTINE, Ohio (OSV News) — An Ohio priest said "the hand of the Lord" prevented a Feb. 3 freight train derailment from turning deadly. Some 50 cars, 20 of which were carrying hazardous materials, caught fire after the crash in the town of East Palestine, Ohio, near the Pennsylvania border. No injuries were reported, although officials evacuated those within a one-mile radius, while issuing shelter in place orders for the rest of the area. Local faithful offered prayers of gratitude that "there was no loss of life," said Father David Misbrener, Pastor of the Our Lady of Lourdes and St. Jude Parish communities, located in East Palestine and Colombiana, Ohio. "If you're a person of faith, you have to believe that the hand of the Lord is in something like this."

AROUND THE DIOCESE

Adoration Times Increase at Parishes in the Diocese



Christopher Lushis

Eucharistic Adoration is offered at Queen of Angels Catholic Church in Fort Wayne from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. on Tuesdays, 8 a.m. to 9:15 a.m. on Thursdays, and following 8:30 a.m. Mass on Fridays and First Saturdays.

Catholic Charities Names Vice President of West Region

SOUTH BEND — Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend (CCFWSB) welcomes Kellie Porter as the Vice President of the West Region. Porter will oversee CCFWSB's programs, fundraising, and community engagement initiatives for St. Joseph, Elkhart, Marshall, and Kosciusko counties.



KELLIE PORTER

Prior to joining the agency, Porter had a long and respected career in fundraising at the University of Notre Dame, Children's Healthcare of Atlanta, and Beacon Health System. She also successfully co-led a for-profit business in healthcare.

"Kellie is the perfect fit for advancing our mission in the West Region of our diocese," said Dan Florin, CEO of

CCFWSB. "With a long history in South Bend and a strong business background, not only does Kellie understand the needs of our clients, but also possesses the know-how to manage community-changing programs."

Porter earned a bachelor's degree in Political Science and MBA from the University of Notre Dame.

A native of South Bend, her early years were spent on Marine Street and her family was a member of Saint Matthew Cathedral. They later became parishioners of Christ the King Catholic Church, where both she and her sister attended the grade school. Today, the Porters are member of St. Joseph Catholic Church in South Bend.

"I am so happy to be in a role that combines faith and service," said Porter. "It is very meaningful to serve the neighborhood in which I was born and began my faith journey."

Porter began working in this newly created position on February 23, 2022. She can be reached at kporter@ccfwsb.org or 573-234-3111, extension 110.

Eucharist: The Incarnation Brought to Completion

BY JILL A. BOUGHTON

Celebrating "First Friday Mass and Clarification of Thought" at Our Lady of the Road Center in South Bend with members of the St. Peter Claver Catholic Worker community and their guests on Feb. 3, Bishop Rhoades shared "concrete guidance for a genuine Christian life" from Hebrews 13, validating the Catholic Worker "mission of loving hospitality."

Citing the admonition of St. Benedict, Patron Saint of Hospitality, the bishop said, "All guests should be cherished as Christ." He elaborated, "That involves willing their good, spiritual as well as material."

"We are to invite and help others on the journey toward holiness," he added, referencing his own experience in a Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, parish with a soup kitchen.

The epistle reading from Hebrews also said, "Remember your leaders who spoke the word of God to you ... Imitate their faith," an especially apt exhortation on the 10th anniversary of the death of Bishop John M. D'Arcy, who faithfully and lovingly shepherded the diocese for nearly 25 years before Bishop Rhoades.

Since it was the feast day of St. Blaise, Bishop Rhoades blessed throats after Mass, and after having told a story about his time as a college student at Mount St. Mary's when a professor who dismissed the custom as a medieval superstition came down with strep throat

the following day.

Before sitting down to share a meal at the center, Bishop Rhoades was gifted a yellow T-shirt designed by Rachel, one of the Workers, with the slogan "Housing is Healing." Supporters plan to wear the shirts to a county council meeting on Feb. 14 to advocate for ongoing funding for Motels4Now, which ministers to many who were formerly unsheltered. The artist explained that her design was inspired by the words of Father Greg Boyle about becoming "the front porch of the house we all long to live in."

"Clarification of Thought" was provided after the meal by Dr. Jonathan Ciraulo, a friend of the Catholic Worker, who said his claim to be the best theologian in the world at skateboarding has never been contested. He's also a St. Meinrad Seminary professor and the author of a recent book on the Eucharistic theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar, which Ciraulo said he sees as inevitably overflowing in the works of mercy.

"The Incarnation finds its completion not at Bethlehem, but in every Eucharist," Ciraulo stated. He pointed out the continuity between Bishop Rhoades' homily and the Eucharistic Revival: The word "host" refers both to the Body of Christ and to the one who welcomes guests.

Bishop Rhoades was invited to talk about the three-year Eucharistic Revival, currently in its diocesan phase, which began on the Feast of Corpus

Christi in 2022. The thousands of people who gathered in Warsaw took part in what is said to be the largest Eucharistic procession to date, but plans are underway for an even more ambitious set of processions for the final year. Monstrances blessed at the Vatican will process from the northern, southern, eastern, and western borders of the United States to Indianapolis for the 2024 Eucharistic Congress. Plans are also underway for a procession from Fort Wayne to South Bend this summer. Parishes will be the focus of the middle year, with Eucharist-focused small group meetings and 40 Hour Devotions taking place in each of the parishes in the diocese.

Bishop Rhoades encouraged everyone to participate in the Feb. 11 gathering at St. Pius X in Granger, where he will present three one-hour teachings on the Eucharist as Sacrifice, Presence, and Communion. There was a great response to the same event on the Fort Wayne side of the diocese in January. Some people in attendance at the January event reached out to tell Bishop Rhoades that the event and his talks in particular rekindled their belief in the Real Presence. "Despite the crisis in Eucharistic faith, there is a real hunger in our diocese," stated Bishop Rhoades. "I am excited about this Eucharistic Revival. As Pope Benedict eloquently wrote, the Eucharist is a mystery to be believed, celebrated, and lived — as you do here at Our Lady of the Road."



In honor of the feast day of St. Blaise, Bishop Rhoades blesses the throats of those in attendance at Mass at Oratory of the Holy Spirit at Our Lady of the Road Center in South Bend on Friday, Feb. 3.



Photos provided by Jonathan Schommer

Following Mass at Oratory of the Holy Spirit at Our Lady of the Road Center, Bishop Rhoades is presented with a "Housing is Healing" T-shirt.

Pastoral Visit Kicks Off Catholic Scho

BY LISA EMRICK

The students at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic School in southwest Fort Wayne came home from school on Friday, Jan. 27, buzzing with news that not only was it going to be Catholic Schools Week, but Bishop Rhoades would be visiting the school on Monday.

Pastor Father Terry Coonan, and Parochial Vicar Father Stephan Felicichia helped officiate the Mass and celebration of the Eucharist with Bishop Rhoades on Monday, Jan. 30, as part of his pastoral visit to the school. "There is no better way to celebrate this week than to celebrate the Holy Eucharist together," Bishop Rhoades told the packed church of students, staff, and parishioners in his opening remarks.

Bishop Rhoades' homily was student-focused, talking about heroes and explaining that people can have many. "Sometimes they're sports heroes ... our greatest heroes are the Saints. We have our favorite saints. I have a bunch of heroes. I actually have sports heroes too; by the way I am an Eagles fan, so I am very happy today because they're going to the Super Bowl." That drew smiles from those in attendance.

He explained that the author of the first reading, from Letter to the Hebrews, was about the heroes of the Old Testament ... men and women of faith. Polling those in the pews, Bishop Rhoades asked for names of great men and women of faith from the Old Testament. Some of the 3rd grade students answered with Noah, Isaiah, Moses, and Moses' assistant (his brother Aaren, Bishop Rhoades clarified). One student answered with David, to which Bishop Rhoades responded that the story of David was one of his favorite stories — of a slingshot and a giant.

The second part of his homily focused on the Gospel of Mark where the congregation listened to how Jesus drove many demons out of a man into a pack of swine and cast them over the cliff. Looking to the 8th graders to help explain "possessed" to their younger peers, Bishop Rhoades explained how Jesus freed the man and liberated him from evil as He does for us with sin. When the man wanted to follow Jesus, He told him to say and proclaim what had happened.

Being at St. Elizabeth, students have many opportunities



Photos by Lisa Emrick

It was "The Three Amigos" (Bishop Rhoades, Father Terry Coonan, and Father Stephan Felicichia) up against "Jesus' Fav" (students selected by teachers at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton) in a religious trivia contest at an all-school assembly as part of Catholic Schools Week for the bishop's pastoral visit to the school on Monday, Jan. 30.

to learn about Jesus and are called to go out and proclaim as well. St. Elizabeth has 582 students in preschool through 8th grade this year, an increase of 85 students from last school year. Sitting across from two public schools and nestled next to additions and walking trails, it is a perfect place to evangelize.

Bishop Rhoades closed Mass by thanking those in attendance and Father Coonan, Father Felicichia, and Parochial Vicar Father Luke Okoye, who is away visiting family, for their priestly ministry. "Catholic school education is not only one of my priorities, but an important priority for parishes, and part of the mission of this parish is the education and formation of our children and young people in the faith. So, I want to thank the parishioners and the parents who are here today for your strong support of the mission of this school." Bishop Rhoades said before his final blessing.

After Mass, the bishop had the opportunity to visit classrooms, where the main theme kept coming back to God's graces and the bishop's discernment to priesthood. He started each class by asking about what the students were learning and ended with

answering their questions.

Bishop Rhoades spent time with both sacramental grades separately — discussing the importance of the next steps the students will be taking in their faith journey. Returning to a lighter note with the younger students, the bishop answered questions and impressed them with stories of his travels to Rome and living near Hershey, Pennsylvania, the smell of chocolate on car rides, and the excitement of a senior citizen discount; along with asking them questions about their faith. Later in the day, he was able to see their artwork of the monstrance in learning about Eucharistic adoration. Both age levels were curious about the bishop's discernment process to becoming a priest and how someone discerns the call to be a bishop. He was also able to take time and explain the differences in the colors bishops wear and what they wear on their heads. While being able to talk more in depth with the 8th-graders, Bishop Rhoades discussed the gifts of the Holy Spirit. He also talked about different cathedrals since the students are working on paper mache cathedrals in art class. When the students had their turn to ask questions, Bishop Rhoades got a surprise from

Jamie Owen, who he said was the first person he said had ever asked him his favorite tree, which is evergreens, and then maple trees for shade.

In Mrs. Morgan's 1st-grade class, the bishop was pleased to see how thankful the students were for their priests, being able to celebrate Mass, and prayers they were writing. Bishop Rhoades learned that in Mrs. Peter's 1st-grade class, the students received love letters from God based on books she had found.

During other parts of the day, the bishop had fun in the art room talking with a group of 5th graders and then he popped in with a preschool class during their snack time.

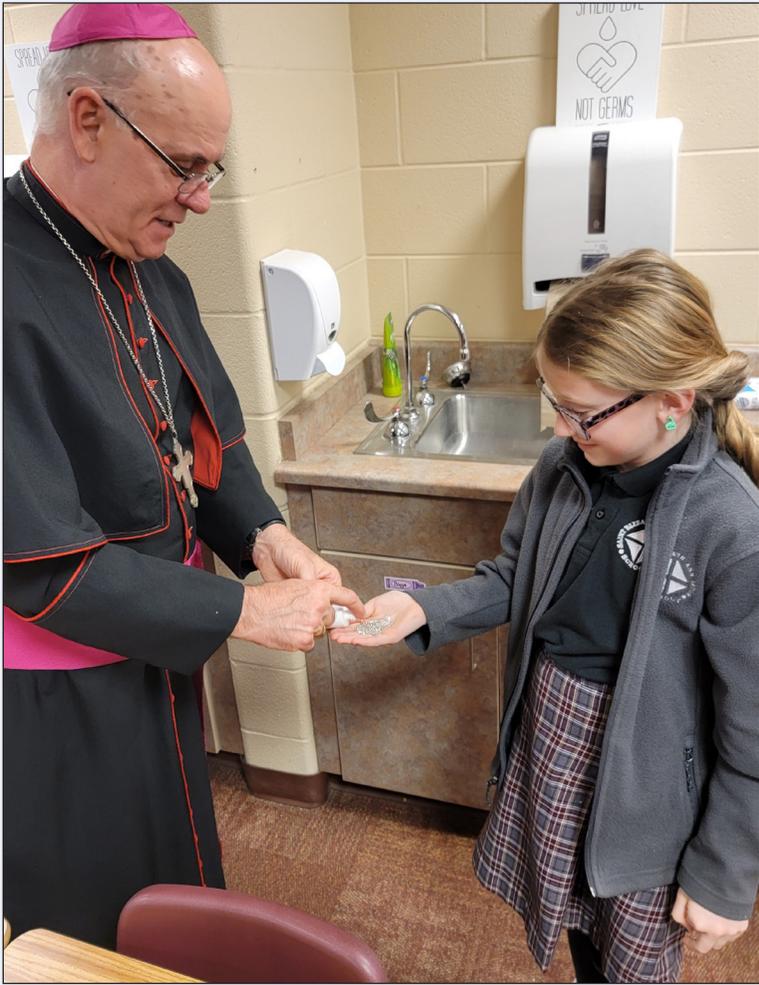
After visiting several grades and classrooms, Bishop Rhoades shared lunch with teachers and staff. The lunch was provided by St. Elizabeth's Home and School Association (HASA) in celebration of Catholic Schools Week. During lunch, he shared a story of his early priesthood when he taught a rambunctious 6th-grade class and discovered his vocation is not as a school teacher. That drew him to express his appreciation for the teachers and thank them for all their hard work in helping to educate future generations. St. Elizabeth's longest

reigning teachers are Jodi Jump, a Middle School Science Teacher with 40 years of experience (37 at St. Elizabeth), and Tonya Brown, English Language Learner Resource Teacher, with 23 years of experience.

Following lunch, Bishop Rhoades moved on to visiting 4th-graders, where he was greeted with a "Hello, your excellence" (the bishop beaming ear to ear hearing it) from a bursting room of students who waited anxiously to speak with the bishop and have him bless items such as rosaries and medals. He ended their meeting with a Hail Mary and received an invite to their Second Annual Rosary Rally on May 18.

Towards the end of visiting classrooms, Principal Lois Widner was very excited that Bishop Rhoades had the opportunity to visit the new Consumer Tech class. St. Elizabeth started the program this year with Sarah Steffan teaching. The class is a mix of life skills and home economics, where students learn things like how to cook and how to do laundry. They also learn the proper way to set a table and different types of resources it takes to run a business. Widner says the class has no limits.

Catholic Schools Week at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton



Bishop Rhoades uses Holy Water to bless a rosary brought in by a 4th-grader at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic School in Fort Wayne during his pastoral visit on Monday, Jan. 30.

Walking the rooms and halls and interacting with the students and seeing how they interacted with each other, it was apparent to the bishop that students are being taught how to love one another and how to see each other's differences as something beautiful and a gift from God.

Closing the fun-filled day,

HASA organized a school assembly with trivia. Students who were selected by teachers (with the help of Middle School Religion Teacher Ms. Meixner) named themselves Jesus' Fav and were up against Bishop Rhoades, Father Coonan, and Father Felicchia (The Three Amigos). Their knowledge was tested in three categories: gen-



Bishop Rhoades poses for a photo with the 2nd-graders at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton after hearing how they are discussing the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist in school.

eral knowledge, Catholic identity, and Saints and friendships ... with a total of 25 questions. Teams earned points for correct answers and how fast they would answer. Everyone was on the edge of their seats in the bleachers cheering the teams on — erupting after every question where Jesus' Fav pulled further ahead of The Three Amigos. Some trick questions slowed team Jesus' Fav answering time enough for The Three Amigos to creep closer in points. The Three Amigos were



Sweet Little Ones Shop donated window clings of the Prayer to St. Michael for all the students at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton for Catholic Schools Week and had them blessed by Bishop Rhoades at the all-school assembly on Monday, Jan. 30.

able to pull ahead when asked what Saints had a special bond through motherhood (the answer was St. Elizabeth and Mother Mary) and the gym went crazy. However, they did not hold the lead and ultimately lost with fewer points than what Jesus' Fav had — 1,462 — making them the winners.

Widner and Assistant Principal Chris Schuhler con-

cluded the assembly by asking Bishop Rhoades to bless St. Michael window clings donated by Jessica Beckler's shop that would go home with students for Catholic Schools Week. Before asking the bishop to give a blessing, they thanked him for spending the day touring the school and experiencing the day with students.



Bishop Rhoades joins teachers and staff for lunch during his pastoral visit on Monday, Jan. 30, sharing stories of his early priesthood and teaching.

Joy and Christ-Centered Education Shine at Mishawaka Catholic

BY NICOLE HAHN



Mishawaka Catholic School is a beautifully unique school within the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend as it encompasses three campuses to serve students from Preschool through 8th grade.

St. Bavo, St. Joseph, and St. Monica are recognized as “Three Campuses — One Family of Faith.”

The St. Bavo Campus houses students in Preschool through 2nd grade. At the St. Joseph Campus, there are students in 3rd through 5th grade. That leaves students in 6th through 8th grade at the St. Monica Campus.

On Friday, Feb. 3, Bishop Rhoades spent the day at Mishawaka Catholic to celebrate Mass and make his pastoral visit.

Mass on the special Feast Day of the Presentation of the Lord included the “Blessing of the Candles,” often called Candlemas or Mass of the Candles. Each of the students in attendance held onto their lit candles for the blessing.

David Maugel, Associate Superintendent of Catholic Schools, said it was wonderful to witness. “I had the opportunity to participate in

the “Blessing of the Candles” and the Feast Day of the Presentation of Lord Mass with the Most Reverend Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades as the celebrant,” he said. “It was beautiful to witness the students of Mishawaka Catholic demonstrating the reverence of the Blessed Lord while Bishop Rhoades engaged students during the homily with the story surrounding the Presentation of the Lord.”

Maugel said it was heartening to hear the students responding to questions from the bishop about those present at that time of the Presentation of the Lord. Students also participated in the Mass as servers, cantors, and lectors.

After Mass, Bishop Rhoades visited classes at the St. Joseph Campus and participated in a game of jeopardy with categories representing elements of our Catholic faith. Students were observed collaborating with their classmates and with their team before providing an answer to the host — the classroom teacher.

“It was inspiring to see students demonstrating their knowledge of their Catholic faith and working together in discussion logically to come up with responses to the selected category,” said Maugel.

Bishop Rhoades joined a



Photos provided by Mishawaka Catholic School

As part of his pastoral visit to Mishawaka Catholic School, Bishop Rhoades celebrated Mass on the Feast Day of the Presentation of the Lord, which included the “Blessing of the Candles” on Friday, Feb. 3. Each of the students in attendance held onto their lit candles for the blessing.



Bishop Rhoades visited the classrooms at the St. Joseph Campus of Mishawaka Catholic and played games of jeopardy with the students with categories representing elements of the Catholic faith during his pastoral visit on Friday, Feb. 3.

team in each classroom and often confirmed the student's choice response. On occasion, he even provided hints to the correct response. Students delighted in spending time with Bishop Rhoades, sharing stories about their school and their lives, and asking questions of the bishop about his life and his job.

Maugel said that he is thrilled to see the happy and Christ-centered environment that exists at Mishawaka Catholic. "Principal Karen Salvador, her faculty, and staff have created a school of joy in their commitment to developing disciples of Christ through the ministry of education that perpetuates hope in Christ."



MISHAWAKA CATHOLIC SCHOOL
 223 W. Grove St., Mishawaka, IN 46545
 574-255-0709
 mcmish.org

St. Bavo Campus
 PreSchool through 2nd Grade
 524 W. 8th St.
 Mishawaka, IN 46544
 574-259-4214

St. Joseph Campus
 3rd through 5th Grade
 230 S. Spring St.
 Mishawaka, IN 46544
 574-255-5554

St. Monica Campus
 6th through 8th Grade
 223 W. Grove St.
 Mishawaka, IN 46545
 574-255-0709

Share Faith with Kids Simply

What's the most important influence on a child's faith, according to numerous studies?

It is not attending Mass with their family; not watching their parents' habits of prayer. It's not pastors, youth group leaders, Catholic school, faith formation classes, summer camp, or mission trips.

Instead, it's the simple act of parents talking to kids.

In their recent book "Handing Down the Faith: How Parents Pass Their Religion on to the Next Generation," sociologists Christian Smith and Amy Adamczyk report that not only do parents have the biggest influence on their children's future faith lives, but the most powerful factor is how parents speak with their kids about religion and God in everyday life.

It turns out, ordinary conversations matter more than anything else.

These surprising findings need not undermine what we believe as Catholics. We know our celebration of the sacraments (especially the Eucharist) is essential; daily prayer is a must and forming generations in faith is a huge priority.

But such studies of families across the U.S. underscore the truth that parents are the primary catechists of their children. It turns out forming kids in faith does not come from even the best parish programming but from regular conversations at home.

It might feel daunting to bear the weight of this responsibility, but consider the possibilities:

It's not religious professionals at church or school who impact kids the most, but the adults they interact with all week long. This fact holds huge promise for what parents and grandparents can offer.

Through ordinary conversations, we normalize faith as part of daily life. Parents don't have to preach or teach in the typical sense. The best thing we can do is bring conversations about faith to the dinner table, the drive to school, the bleachers, or the backyard — wherever we're already interacting with our kids.

Showing young people that faith is a normal, natural part of life speaks volumes. Think about school struggles, sports seasons, friendship dramas, political debates, health concerns, news headlines, or family milestones. Any conversation we start through the lens of faith can show how God's light shines on every part of life.

To be an authentic witness to your faith does not require learning a new language. You simply need to share what matters to you. As we know from our kids' practices and rehearsals, regular repetition is what helps us grow into new skills.

Try it with your children this week. Start one small conversation and see where it leads. Speak up about a political issue in the news, an injustice you see in the world, a question about last Sunday's homily, or a way you're helping a friend through a hard time. Share with your children what reminded you of God today: a vibrant sunset, a smile from a stranger, a song on the



FAITH AT HOME

LAURA KELLY FANUCCI

radio, or a kind word when you needed it most.

Ask your children what they think God might say about a certain situation. Listen to their responses. Wonder together about their questions or go searching for the answers.

The Gospels prove the power of ordinary exchanges. Jesus walked and talked with friends and strangers every day. Many of these brief encounters became life-changing events. So, too, the greatest gift we can offer our children is to keep faith at the heart of family life together.

In the car. After the game. Before bed. During dinner.

We can't simply drop kids off at Catholic school or religious education classes and consider the job done. We can't expect Sunday Mass to teach our children everything they need to know. Faith formation is what happens at home. As parents we cannot control how our children turn out, but we have a powerful role to play — and we can mindfully share the faith more in our conversations, starting today.

Laura Kelly Fanucci is a writer, speaker, and author of several books.

The Greatest of These Is Love

This morning, I recognized a shift in my journalism career that feels noteworthy. In the past two years, I've done more open-ended interviews than ever before.

It's partly because I've pitched more stories (versus receiving commissions), granting me greater license over the shape of an article. It's also because I've grown more patient, finally accepting the fact that a good interview simply cannot be rushed.

As a result, I'm able to explore my curiosities during each interview. When I read the notes from past conversations, I see recurring questions — the same wonderings held up to different light, each time eager to glimpse something new.

I love to discuss creativity. Do you believe everyone is creative? What sparks your creativity? How do creativity and faith relate?

As a Catholic writer, the answers to these questions matter to me.

I'm also drawn to lifestyle questions of wellness and rest. How do you recharge after a long day? What boundaries do you set up for social media? How do you guard your sense of wonder?

This question feels important. When I am filled with wonder, I am filled with faith — a profound, childlike faith that sees the good in all, awak-



TWENTY SOMETHING

CHRISTINA CAPECCHI

ened to the miracle of each new day.

There is so much chipping away at our sense of wonder — to great spiritual detriment. Identifying those forces becomes the first step.

But my favorite question is my closer. I used to pose it at random. Now, freed by my open-ended interviews, I raise it regularly. It's a question I borrow from Oprah Winfrey, who borrowed it from the late film critic Gene Siskel. (You may borrow it too.)

What do you know for sure? This question usually generates a pause. How good it is to pause and think before we speak, to not fear the silence, to not panic about the wait.

People respond with humility. Something about the "for sure" part, the expectation for expertise. They don't want to assume too much. They don't want to pretend their way into it. They choose their words carefully — and, by doing so, they choose few.

CAPECCHI, page 13

Jesus is Always the Answer to Our Problems



THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

MSGR. OWEN F. CAMPION

Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time Matthew 5:17-37

The Book of Sirach, the source of this weekend's first reading, is part of a collection of biblical writings that in their very origin teach an important lesson.

As various political, economic, and individual fortunes changed, collapsed, and reversed among God's people in the decades after the Babylonian Captivity, and as new alien empires seized the Holy Land, Jews emigrated from the homeland of their ancestors to other places.

Understandably, many went to places where opportunities

were more plentiful.

While certainly some of these emigrants not only survived, but possibly did well in their new surroundings, one thing was lacking. They were not living in a society in which all acknowledged the God of Israel. In fact, their adopted culture well could be hostile to the ancient Hebrew tradition.

So, to record their ancient religious beliefs, and very importantly to pass these beliefs along to oncoming generations, Jewish scholars composed books such as Sirach.

The essential point in Sirach was that human reason and honoring God are not ideas at odds with each other. Obeying God, logic can prove, is the way to order, peace, justice, and reward in human life.

St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians is the source of the second reading. Paul, who would have been no stranger to this notion of a compatibility between divine revelation and human wisdom, as he was so well trained in Judaism but also exposed to Greek philosophy, added a new dimension to the

story. Revelation is of a reality that human knowledge often cannot comprehend.

He refers to "hidden wisdom" and "mystery." We as humans simply cannot understand all. In great love, God therefore has revealed to us what otherwise we would never know.

The Gospel reading is from St. Matthew. The Lord expounds on the meaning of several of these rules for life given by God to Moses on Sinai.

This process reveals two important factors. The first is that God's law is permanent and unchanging. This is logical. It touches very basic instincts and conditions among humans, all attached deeply and intrinsically to human nature itself, and as such it is not open to qualifications or to changes that humans might wish to make.

Secondly, here the Lord speaks with authority. He defines and explains the law of Moses. Jews did not regard the law of Moses as merely a set of principles personally composed by Moses. Rather, Moses was

the medium through which God revealed the divine law to humanity. God is the author of the divine law. He is the author of the Commandments. He is the lawgiver.

By defining and making more precise this law, the Lord acts as God. It is an important revelation of the identity of Jesus.

Reflection

The war in Ukraine continues to work its deadly will. Debates in our government remind us that people are still hungry and hopeless. Is there no relief? No answer?

Basically, the problem is bad human decision, resulting from an absence of love and a sense of justice.

The liturgies always remind us that the answer to problems is in Jesus. He called humanity to hear and to acknowledge God.

This is the Church's call today, echoing the call of Christ.

At Christmas, the Epiphany, and at the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River by John

the Baptist, the Church celebrated the events of salvation achieved for us by Christ, by reminding us, insisting, that Christ is available to us.

Before too long, the Church will lead us into Lent, when we will decide what our choice shall be, to follow the Lord, or to make decisions devoid of right and of love. It is this simple.

Follow the Lord. The world can be better.

READINGS

Sunday: Sir 15:15-20 Ps 119:1-2, 4-5, 17-18, 33-34 1 Cor 2:6-10 Mt. 5:17-37

Monday: Gn 4:1-15, 25 Ps 50:1, 8, 16bc-17, 20-21 Mk 8:11-13

Tuesday: Gn 6:5-8; 7:1-5, 10 Ps 29:1a, 2, 3ac-4, 9c-10 Mk 8:14-21

Wednesday: Gn 8:6-13, 20-22 Ps 116:12-15, 18-19 Mk 8:22-26

Thursday: Gn 9:1-13 Ps 102:16-18, 19-23, 29 Mk 8:27-33

Friday: Gn 11:1-9 Ps 33:10-15 Mk 8:34-9:1

Saturday: Heb 11:1-7 Ps 145:2-5, 10-11 Mk 9:2-13

Africa Is Not the Future, It Is Today

Often European and American Catholics cite the Church in Africa as the future of the Church. The World Christian Database projects that, by 2050, 32 percent of the world's Catholics will be African. But it is a narrow view that casts Africa as the Church of the future. Africa is the Church of today. Home to more than 250 million Catholics, Africans already make up 19 percent of the global Catholic population. Africa is home to nearly one-fifth of our Church!

Popes have been visiting the continent since Pope St. Paul VI in 1969. During a welcome ceremony at Entebbe Airport, he declared, "Thanks be to God also for the marvels of His grace, poured out abundantly upon this land, and for the generous response of Africa to the Gospel message." In the course of the trip, Pope Paul VI dedicated the Basilica of the Uganda Martyrs in Namugongo (a shrine to 22 African martyrs) and lobbied for the cause of peace in the face of the Nigerian civil war.

The people of Africa perpetually face great challenges — challenges related to poverty and violence and corruption. But how much do we pay attention? How often do we read the news stories, pray for the people who suffer, and assist them with our own resources? How often are the struggles of our brothers and sisters in Christ just white noise in the background of our day-to-day tasks?

That's why an apostolic journey like Pope Francis' trip to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and South Sudan matters so much. Pope Francis departed on Jan. 31 and arrived in the DRC for

a three-day journey before moving on to South Sudan. He returned to Rome on Feb. 5. The texts and visits of the trip will illustrate to the global Church the challenges faced by our brothers and sisters today — and, no doubt, call the world to action.

First among these is the civil situation. Many African countries continue to suffer civil wars and diplomatic insecurity. Paul VI's first visit was marked by appeals for peace in Nigeria. Already in 2015, Pope Francis has visited Africa, making a journey that included stops in Uganda, the Central African Republic, and Kenya. But the themes of non-violence and peace endure: Pope Francis chose for the theme of the trip the phrase, "All Reconciled in Christ Jesus." The current conflict in eastern DRC has led to more than 11,000 deaths and displaced 1.4 million people. The Holy Father will meet with victims of the fighting in the east. While 95 percent of Congolese people are Christian, the war rages on.

Second is the plight of migrants. While flying over the Sahara Desert on his way to Kinshasa, Pope Francis invited the journalists traveling with him to pause for a moment of prayer. He said, "Let us spare a little thought, in silence, a prayer for all the people who in search of a little comfort, a little freedom, have crossed it and have not made it." Far from being a photo op, the Holy Father's visit, which includes a meeting with internally displaced persons, will draw global attention to unseen and unspoken needs.

Finally, Pope Francis' journey will conclude with a visit to South Sudan. On this

GUEST COMMENTARY

OSV EDITORIAL BOARD

portion of the trip, he will be accompanied by the Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, the head of the global Anglican communion, and the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, Reverend Iain Greenshields. This ecumenical visit is intended to be a sign to the world of the ongoing work for Christian unity. Standing together in solidarity, these three Christian leaders will witness to the harmony of the Gospel in the midst of discord and strife.

Pope Francis' voyage to Africa is a lifeline for many who are facing terrible challenges with no easy way out. Said one refugee to OSV News: "We have suffered for a very long time, and his coming means a lot to us because he is the only hope we have as people of South Sudan."

Let us pray for Pope Francis during his journey, and especially for the people to whom he is ministering, that he might be that ray of hope, reminding the world that the people of Africa — the home of the Church today — need our attention, our support and, most of all, our love.

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

SCRIPTURE SEARCH®

Gospel for February 12, 2023

Matthew 5:17-37

Following is a word search based on the Gospel reading for the Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle A: The importance of words. The words can be found in all directions in the puzzle.

| | | |
|------------|-----------|------------|
| THE LAW | PROPHETS | LETTER |
| BREAKS | LEAST | NOT ENTER |
| LIABLE | BROTHER | ALTAR |
| RECONCILED | GUARD | LAST PENNY |
| ADULTERY | RIGHT EYE | SWEAR |
| THRONE | FOOTSTOOL | CITY |
| GREAT KING | HEAD | BLACK |

ABOUT THE LAW

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 S R W L O E E D T H T O
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 L O O T S T O O F Y R R
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CAPECCHI, from page 12

The older the person, the humbler their answer.

"When you're young, you think you know everything for sure," a 74-year-old woman said. "The older you get, the more you realize that you really don't know much for sure."

What do you know for sure? "Not a lot," a bestselling Catholic author in her 70s told me.

"Not much," my grandpa said a year before his death, chuckling.

Sometimes the not knowing is what we know for sure. The mystery is the certainty. Two retired 79-year-old Catholic men expressed this to me last year.

"What I know for sure is I still have a long way to arrive at that point," a well-read, widely-traveled bishop said. "I have to learn more all the time."

"I know that I don't know what's going on in people's lives," a former Catholic school principal told me. "Some people are in a terrible marriage, they're in a terrible job, and I just don't know. I know I have to be slow to judge."

What do you know for sure? A clear pattern emerged in the answers, coming from interviewees of all ages. Again and again, they landed on the same word: love.

"I know for sure that I love

the Lord," an empty nester said.

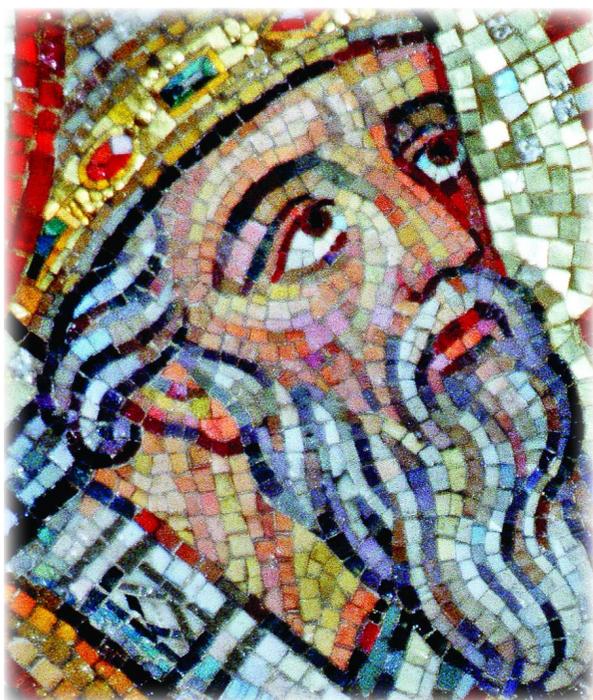
"I know the love of God in my life," a bishop said.

"I know that I am loved," a criminal prosecutor said.

"Love is real," a high school English teacher told me. "It's worth fighting for. I know for sure it's real."

"The only thing I know for sure is that I'm loved," a hospice CEO said. "That's enough."

And now these things remain. The greatest of these is love.



ST. VALENTINE

FEAST FEB. 14
3rd CENTURY

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

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

Priest Who Offered Up Cancer for Clerical Abuse Victims Says He Was Healed at Lourdes

BY GINA CHRISTIAN

(OSV News) — A priest who offered up his suffering from cancer for the sake of clerical abuse victims said he has experienced a miraculous healing following a June 2022 pilgrimage to the Marian shrine at Lourdes, France.

Father John Hollowell, a priest of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, told OSV News that doctors have said his brain tumor, diagnosed in 2019, has disappeared.

"I had an MRI two weeks after I got back from Lourdes (at the end of June 2022)," said Father Hollowell, who first announced the news in a Jan. 30 video message on his YouTube channel. "All that remained was scar tissue from the surgeries."

In 2020, Father Hollowell learned that a series of fainting spells and dizziness were the result of an oligodendroglioma — a brain tumor usually occurring in white and non-Hispanic males between the ages of 35 and 44. About 1,200 individuals in the U.S. are diagnosed with the tumor each year.

But the rare form of cancer was not entirely a surprise to the priest.

"In 2018, I made a prayer that I would be willing to suffer for the victims of the Catholic clergy's sexual abuse," he told OSV News. "And then a month later, I had what I know now was the first seizure from the brain tumor."

The diagnosis was not confirmed until Feb. 11, 2020, the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, by doctors at the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota.

"I knew it was the answer to the prayer I had made two years earlier," said Father Hollowell, noting he celebrated Mass that same day in the "stunningly beautiful" chapel at the clinic's St. Mary's Campus.

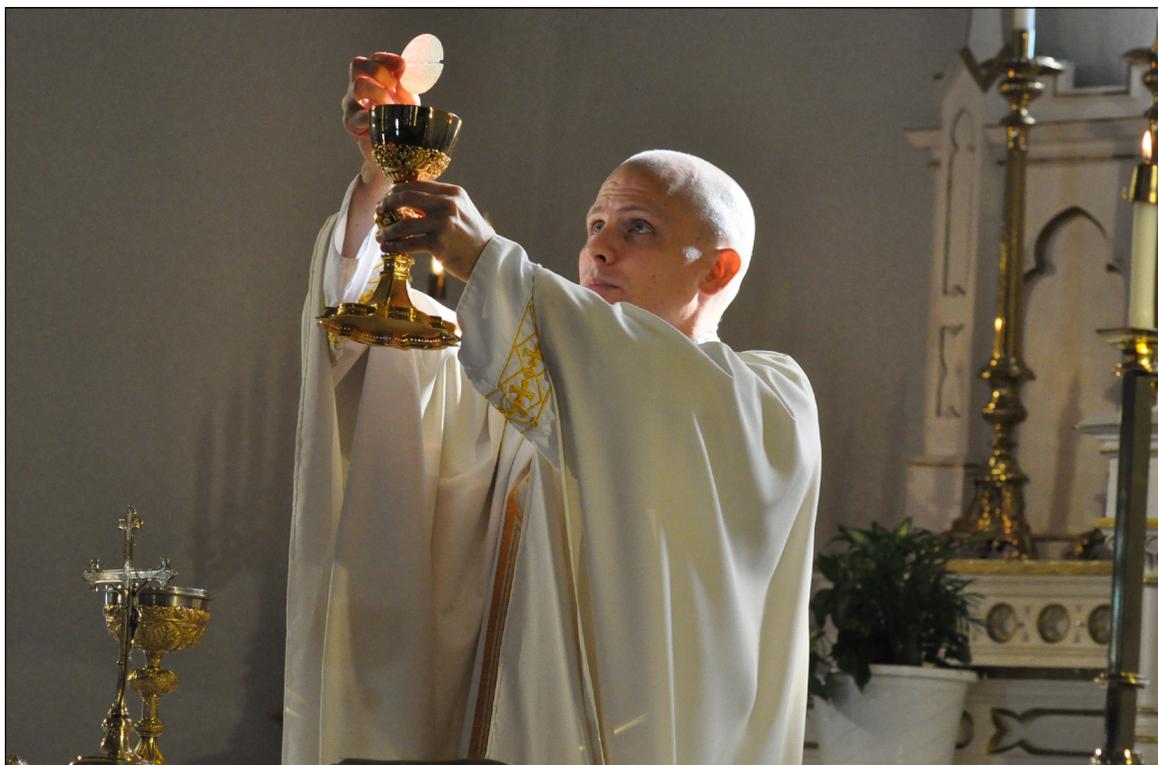
Before surgery at Mayo, the priest took to his now-closed Twitter account, letting his 20,000 followers know in a Feb. 13, 2020 post that he planned to "embrace this (illness) willingly" for clerical abuse survivors.

The offering gained national attention, prompting hundreds of tweets and emails of gratitude from around the world.

About a month later, Father Hollowell returned to Mayo for surgery, taking with him "the names of about 180 victims" who had contacted him.

"I literally prayed for them every day," he told OSV News. "I had a wristband on my arm that said 'For the victims.'"

The procedure revealed that "some fingers from the tumor



OSV News photo/CNS File, Sean Gallagher, The Criterion

Father John Hollowell, pictured in a file photo celebrating Mass at Annunciation Church in Brazil, Indiana, was diagnosed with brain cancer in 2020. He decided to offer his sufferings on behalf of clerical abuse victims, and received hundreds of letters of support. Now, following a June 2022 visit to Lourdes, Father Hollowell has learned from his doctors that the brain tumor has disappeared.

had gone deeper into my brain than the neurosurgeon expected," he said.

The surgery also coincided with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in the U.S., and Father Hollowell remained at Mayo, having developed infections from the surgery, which was followed by two more operations as well as radiation and nine months of chemotherapy.

The Archdiocese of Indianapolis granted Father Hollowell a medical leave of absence from his assignments, which include pastoring two Indiana parishes — Annunciation Catholic Church in Brazil and St. Paul the Apostle in Greencastle — and serving as a Catholic chaplain at DePauw University in Greencastle and at Putnamville (Indiana) Correctional Facility.

Father Hollowell said his chemotherapy, which was marked by "a lot of complicating factors," prompted side effects that included depression and even suicidal thoughts.

He completed that treatment and returned to his parishes by July of 2021, reporting for MRI scans every three months. By January of 2022, scans showed the tumor was starting to regrow, joined by a second tumor on his pituitary gland.

"I was totally fine with dying," Father Hollowell told OSV News. "It's actually a prayer I had started to make: 'If I am able to offer up my life

in reparation for the crimes of priests, I would do that willingly.'"

At the same time, he booked a June 2022 trip to Lourdes — site of 18 Marian apparitions experienced by St. Bernadette Soubirous in 1858 — to see if he might be one of the thousands who claim to receive healing from visiting the shrine.

He also had another objective.

"I thought ... if I'm healed, that might help draw some of my family members and friends who had fallen away (from the practice of faith) back to church," Father Hollowell told OSV News.

The trip, which he undertook alone, proved to be "a nonstop adventure," he said, one that saw him getting lost while walking from a train station to the shrine, and almost missing his spot in line to splash himself with the sanctuary's famed spring waters.

At times, he found himself "at the point of tears," he said.

Yet Father Hollowell said "the greater experience" was seeing "thousands of my prayers, not related to my health," answered.

Two weeks after his return — with parishioners already telling him he "looked a lot healthier" — an MRI showed Father Hollowell's oligodendroglioma was gone. Issues from the growth on his pituitary gland "stopped when I got back

from Lourdes," he said.

Now, doctors have told Father Hollowell to report for MRIs every seven, rather than three, months.

But he's not planning to submit his case to Lourdes' medical officers for consideration.

"As a parish priest, I feel like I don't even have the time to go through all of that, (getting) a miracle approved," he told OSV News. "I don't really need doctors to tell me I have a miracle, even though I do."

And if his cancer returns, he is prepared.

"If it comes back, that's God's will, and I'm totally at peace with whatever that is," said Father Hollowell. "I'm not afraid, and that can only come from the Holy Spirit. Jesus says to just worry about one day at a time."



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WHAT'S HAPPENING?

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

FEMM Introduction for Young Adult Women

NOTRE DAME — If you are a young adult woman interested in learning more about what a healthy fertility cycle looks like and how to track your biomarkers, join a free, four-session workshop series on the campus of Saint Mary's College. There is no need to register. Come to the first session on Wednesday, Feb. 15, from 7:30-9 p.m. in 123 Regina Hall. For more information, visit diocesefwsb.org/femm.

The Marriage Course Online

MISHAWAKA — Strengthen your marriage from the comfort of your own home with The Marriage Course Online! Based on a beautiful film series featuring "regular" couples and relationship experts from around the world, this seven-week program will take place online through Zoom on Thursday evenings from 8-10 p.m. from Feb. 9 through March 23. The course is free, but each couple purchases two course journals on their own. For more information, go to diocesefwsb.org/marriage-course.

Fatima Children's Rosary Rally

GOSHEN — America Needs Fatima Rosary Rally in Association with Cabelleros de Rosario praying the rosary publicly on the occasion of the feast day of Sts. Francisco and Jacinta of Fatima will be held on Saturday, Feb. 18, from noon to 1 p.m. at St. John

the Evangelist, 409 W. Main St. Contact Patrick Wheeler at 574-312-9942 or pjmariawheeler16670@gmail.com for information.

Fort Wayne Museum of Art to Offer Tours of St. Peter

FORT WAYNE — Join the Fort Wayne Museum of Art on Saturday, Feb. 18, for a tour of the art and beauty of the "Splendor of the Southside." FWMoA's Charles and Amanda Shepherd, along with Jenna Gilley, will provide in-depth look at the Church's view of art as evangelization and the symbolism behind multiple architectural attributes, paintings, statues, and stained glass windows at St. Peter Church, 518 E Dewald St. Tickets are \$10. Visit eventbrite.com/e/fwmoa-historic-art-tour-tickets-523081178887 for tickets.

64th Annual St. Stan's BBQ

NEW CARLISLE — The 64th annual St. Stan's BBQ, will be held on Sunday Feb. 19, at St. Stanislaus Kostka Parish Hall, 55756 Tulip Rd. Doors open from noon to 5 p.m. Tickets are \$10 in advance or at the door. Ticket price includes a chance of door prizes, draft beer, and a BBQ meal. There will be nearly 200 tip boards, 50/50s, raffles for a big screen TV, bushel of meat, and a recliner. It will also feature Black Jack tables, Texas Hold'em, plus ample tables and seating for private games. Must be 21 to enter. Call the parish office at 574-654-3781 for more information.

Theology on Tap

FORT WAYNE — This winter's Theology on Tap Series, titled "Called by Name", offers a unique opportunity for young adults to build community and explore a deeper relationship with the Lord. Weekly talks at the Historic Women's Club in Fort Wayne will explore an in-depth understanding of our identity which is rooted in the Lord who calls us by name into communion and urges us on mission. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. and the talk begins at 7. Food and drink are available for purchase. The series will conclude on Feb. 21 with a 6:30 p.m. Mass at the USF Chapel followed by a party at the Brookside Manor on the USF Campus. For more information visit diocesefwsb.org/tot-fw.

St. Joseph Hessen Cassel Notre Dame Football Smoker Fundraiser

FORT WAYNE — St. Joseph Parish, 11337 US 27 S., will have a Notre Dame Smoker on Sunday, Feb. 26, at 2:30 p.m. Entry fee is \$25, which can be paid at the door or pre-sale tickets are available at Nine Mile Restaurant. This is a stag-only event with all you can eat and drink, door prizes, casino, and tip boards. This fundraiser is hosted by the school dads, with assistance from the Knights of Columbus Council 12379, and will benefit the school's improvements and upkeep. Visit facebook.com/StJoeHCNotreDameFootballSmoker or contact Jay Wyss at 260-445-6054.

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Marlene Romie, 83, St. Charles Borromeo

David John Moreno, 84, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton

Dennis Grill, 71, St. Jude

Sally Ley, 74, St. Jude

Susan Vorich, 95, St. Jude

Patricia Witte, 99, St. Jude

Jerry Welker, 83, St. Vincent de Paul

Mishawaka

Sister M. Geraldine Hartke, OSF, 89, Our Lady of the Angels Convent

Milt Ross, 90, Queen of Peace

Margery Hershberger, 97, St. Bavo

New Haven

Douglas M. Swaidner, 56, St. John the Baptist

Roy Meese, 70, St. Louis Besancon

Notre Dame

Sister Gladys Marie, CSC, 92, Church of Our Lady of Loretto

South Bend

Jose Luz Bermudez, 72, St. Adalbert

Donald Alexander, 75, St. Casimir

Frances Mattasits, 99, St. Jude

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EARTHQUAKE, from page 1

Officials with the Catholic charity Aid to the Church in Need said a Catholic priest was among the dead in Syria. Father Imad Daher died in the collapse of the residence of retired Melkite Archbishop Jean-Clement Jeanbart of Aleppo, who was injured and hospitalized, the charity said.

Pope Francis was "deeply saddened" to learn of the "huge loss of life" caused by the disaster and offered his "heartfelt condolences" to those mourning losses, wrote Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican Secretary of State, in telegrams to the Vatican's ambassadors in Turkey and Syria.

The pope also prayed that emergency personnel would "be sustained in their care of the injured and in the ongoing relief efforts by the divine gifts of fortitude and perseverance."

According to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the earthquake is the largest disaster to hit the country since 1939, when a 7.8 magnitude earthquake killed more than 32,000 people and injured more than 100,000. It is unclear how high the number of dead and wounded from the Feb. 6 earthquakes will reach, he added.

The Turkish president said that more than 45 countries have offered to support Turkey in relief efforts in addition to NATO and the European Union.

The Middle East Council of Churches, representing Orthodox, Evangelical, and Catholic churches, issued a statement calling on the inter-

national community to provide emergency aid to the region and to lift sanctions on Syria "so sanctions may not turn into a crime against humanity."

Just a few hours after the quake, the Knights of Malta announced that Malteser International, their relief agency, was sending an emergency response team.

"Our local partners have an urgent need of support, especially in areas of northern Syria where hundreds of thousands of people live in simple refuges and now, with the earthquakes, are even more defenseless," said Oliver Hochedez, Head of the Malteser International Emergency Response Department. "In the hospitals run by our partner organizations, the number of injured arriving increases hour by hour. We must provide help rapidly."

Chaldean Catholic Bishop Antoine Audo of Aleppo told Vatican News on Feb. 6 that he had never seen such destruction in war-torn Syria. "There was a strong fear and now the people are in the street, in the cold, and under the rain," he said. "There is damage everywhere, even in the cathedral. The libraries are destroyed, the houses crumbled. It's an apocalyptic situation."

Caritas Internationalis, the umbrella organization of national Catholic charities, immediately began a fundraising campaign for relief efforts in Turkey and Syria. The charity has been active in Turkey since 1991 and in Syria since 2011, primarily providing aid for refugees.



OSV News photo/Umit Bektas, Reuters

Earthquake survivors stand near a collapsed building in Hatay, Turkey, on Feb. 7. A powerful 7.8 magnitude earthquake rocked areas of Turkey and Syria early on Feb. 6, toppling hundreds of buildings and killing thousands.



A young earthquake survivor cries outside her destroyed home in Jandaris, Syria, on Feb. 7. A powerful 7.8 magnitude earthquake rocked areas of Turkey and Syria early on Feb. 6, toppling hundreds of buildings and killing thousands.

OSV News photo/Khalil Ashawi, Reuters



CNS photo/Paul Haring

A woman raises a cross as people wait for the start of an ecumenical prayer service attended by Pope Francis at the John Garang Mausoleum in Juba, South Sudan, on Feb. 4.



People sing before Pope Francis' celebration of Mass at the John Garang Mausoleum in Juba, South Sudan, on Feb. 5.

POPE-CONGO, from page 1

Christians to be the "salt of the earth" and the "light of the world," as the day's Gospel reading called them to be, Pope Francis told the people, "This country, so beautiful yet ravaged by violence, needs the light that each one of you has, or better, the light that each one of you is."

The path toward peace,

he said, requires that people "overcome the dislikes and aversions that over time have become chronic and risk pitting tribes and ethnic groups against one another."

In fact, he said, it is time "to apply the salt of forgiveness to our wounds; salt burns but it also heals. Even if our hearts bleed for the wrongs we have suffered, let us refuse, once and for all, to repay evil with

evil, and we will grow healthy within.

"Let us accept one another and love one another with sincerity and generosity, as God loves us," the pope said. "Let us cherish the good that we are, and not allow ourselves to be corrupted by evil!"

After so much war and violence, with some 4 million people displaced in the country or abroad, with poverty raging

and the threat of hunger looming for the majority of South Sudanese, Pope Francis said he understands that individuals may feel small and powerless.

But, he said, the salt that the Gospel calls them to be is also small, as just a pinch makes all the difference.

"Before we worry about the darkness surrounding us, before we hope that the shadows around us will lighten, we

are called to radiate light, to give brightness to our cities, our villages and homes, our acquaintances, and all our daily activities by our lives and good works," the pope said. "The Lord will give us strength, the strength to be light in Him, so that everyone will see our good works, and seeing them, as Jesus reminds us, they will rejoice in God and give Him glory."