



# The Criterion

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**'We need to be more mission-driven'**

Pastors learn lessons in pandemic for future of parish ministry, page 7.

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Amid the devastating impact of COVID-19, Oscar Castellanos and Pearlette Springer have adapted their approaches to deepen the faith lives of Hispanics and Blacks across the archdiocese. Castellanos is director of Intercultural Ministries for the archdiocese while Springer is the coordinator of Black Catholic Ministry. They are pictured with a banner of St. Martin de Porres. Their communities have a shared love for the saint, who was the son of a Spanish nobleman and a freed Panamanian slave of African descent. (Photo by Brandon A. Evans)

## Black, Hispanic ministries keep the faith with communities hit hard by COVID-19

By John Shaughnessy

As they have strived to deepen people's connection to God in the archdiocese, Pearlette Springer and Oscar Castellanos have also paid close attention to news reports that Blacks and Hispanics have been disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 virus.

"The Black Catholic community in Indianapolis was hit pretty hard with COVID-19 cases," says Springer, coordinator of Black Catholic Ministry in the archdiocese. "People were

mourning and grieving, alone and isolated. Sadness and death filled the air.

"Even as the death numbers have decreased and the positive testing numbers are down, people are still grieving, mourning and scared. And we still have not been able to come together to mourn our losses. That is really devastating to a collective culture like Black Catholics."

The impact on Hispanic Catholics has also been devastating.

See **INTERCULTURAL**, page 8

## School choice expansion among legislative successes for ICC in 2021

By Victoria Arthur

Social distancing did not deter lawmakers from joining together to pass an overwhelmingly bipartisan budget at the close of the 2021 General Assembly that



included a historic expansion to school choice in Indiana.

Only five of 150 legislators voted against the two-year, \$37 billion budget that was boosted by \$3 billion in federal COVID-19 relief funding. The budget saw major increases in funding for K-12 public education, along with sweeping changes to extend the reach and impact of the state's school choice programs. That includes Indiana's Choice Scholarship Program, more commonly known as the voucher program.

The Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC) and other advocates heralded the hard-fought success, which came exactly 10 years after they played a key role in the passage of the state's original Choice Scholarship legislation that has become a model across the nation.

"Hoosier families won," said John Elcesser, executive director of the Indiana



John Elcesser

Non-Public Education Association (INPEA), which represents the state's more than 400 non-public schools, including Indiana's 175 Catholic schools. "Most of the choice expansions lobbied for by the INPEA and the ICC will soon be a reality, and more families will now find non-public school options affordable.

"We thank the legislative leadership for their bold vision for funding Hoosier education."

Among the school choice provisions in the budget passed by lawmakers on April 22 are a dramatic expansion in eligibility

See **ICC**, page 8

## 'Patients are ... dying in front of my eyes,' says India hospital director

THRISSUR, India (CNS)—Catholic hospital directors in India told Catholic News Service (CNS) they did not have enough facilities to treat patients as India set records for the number of COVID-19 deaths—numbers many people believe were underreported.

"The situation is very bad. No beds available anywhere in the hospital. Patients are on the corridors and many are dying because no beds, no oxygen,"

See **INDIA**, page 16

A health care worker wearing personal protective equipment pulls a patient suffering from COVID-19 on a stretcher outside Guru Teg Bahadur hospital in New Delhi on April 24. (CNS photo/Adnan Abidi, Reuters)



# Several Catholic colleges will require COVID-19 vaccinations in fall

WASHINGTON (CNS)—As Catholic colleges grapple with how to reopen in the fall, many are already saying they will require their students to be vaccinated for COVID-19, and some schools are also mandating that staff members be vaccinated.

“Our goal is simple and twofold: to provide a COVID-safe environment in which our students, faculty and staff can pursue our mission; and to help protect the health and safety of our off-campus neighbors,” said Jesuit Father Joseph McShane, president of Fordham University in New York, in an April 16



Fr. Joseph McShane, S.J.

letter to the college community explaining that all students need to be vaccinated—“with some considerations for medical and religious exemptions”—by the start of the fall semester.

He noted that the pandemic year has been difficult for the campus community and its families and that the threat of COVID-19 still continues as more contagious strains are spreading. “However, we see a path to the end of the pandemic. That path is vaccination,” he wrote. He also said the university would be providing vaccinations on campus this spring and for international students when they arrive if they were not able to be vaccinated in their home countries.

The number of private colleges requiring COVID-19 vaccinations continues to grow, numbering about 75 on April 27 on a list updated by the Chronicle of Higher Education.

The Criterion checked with the three Catholic colleges in the archdiocese about their approach concerning required vaccinations for enrollment.

“As we learn more every day about the vaccine, we continue to make adjustments to our plans,” said Maggie Kucik, executive director of marketing communications for Marian University in Indianapolis. “As of today, we are not mandating the vaccine for anyone, but we are strongly encouraging vaccines for all students, staff and faculty. Additionally, we are regularly communicating important facts about the safety and benefits of getting the vaccine.”

Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College in St. Mary-of-the-Woods is taking a similar approach.

“At this time, we are not requiring vaccines, but we are encouraging them,” said BJ Riley, director of marketing at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods. “Our numbers have been low this year in terms of the need to quarantine and for positive testing. Our students have really done a good job of staying healthy and abiding by the protocols.”

Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad, on the other hand, will require its faculty staff, lay students and seminarians to be vaccinated by the start of the fall semester, school officials said.

Only a handful of public universities initially said they would mandate the vaccine but by late April, this started to change at several big universities, following the decision of University of California and California State University to require students to be vaccinated for the fall semester.

Other Catholic universities with fall COVID-19 vaccine requirements include Georgetown University in Washington, Assumption University and Holy Cross College in Worcester, Mass., Boston College, Chicago’s DePaul University and Loyola University Chicago, Seattle University, Saint Mary’s College in Notre Dame, Ind., as well as the University of Notre Dame, Trinity Washington University, the University of San Diego and Le Moyne College in Syracuse, N.Y.

St. Edward’s University in Austin, Texas, was one of the first colleges to announce in late March that it was requiring students and faculty to be vaccinated for COVID-19.

On its website, it says the school’s policy is “aligned with federal, state and local laws and committed to ensuring the health and safety of all students, faculty, staff, campus guests and the greater Central Texas community.”

It also said it will provide exemption for students and employees “related to religious beliefs, underlying medical conditions” and concerns associated with the vaccine’s emergency use authorization granted by the nation’s Food and Drug Administration before the vaccines are formally approved.

The school is following similar procedures for proof of vaccination as it does with the state law requiring students to show proof of their meningitis vaccination.

A message to the DePaul community from its president, A. Gabriel Esteban, said the university was requiring its students to be vaccinated for COVID-19 this fall “in the spirit of caring for each other and for our surrounding community.” To that end, the school was providing a vaccination clinic on campus at the end of April.

He said the university had not yet decided if it will require employees to be vaccinated but noted that in a school survey in February, “the vast majority of our faculty and staff already have received or plan to receive a COVID-19 vaccine.”

The University of Notre Dame, which similarly issued a requirement for students to be vaccinated by the fall announced on April 15 that 90% of its students had received their first dose of the COVID-19 vaccinations, and as a result the school would be loosening some of its restrictions on gatherings and wearing masks outdoors.

Many schools and universities are still determining their vaccine policy for the fall.

At Marymount University in Arlington, Va., which hosted a mass vaccination clinic on April 21 in the campus gym, the university’s president, Irma Becerra, said school officials are “evaluating every day the issue of requiring vaccines or not.” †



## Public Schedule of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

May 4–11, 2021

**May 4 – 11 a.m.**

College of Deans meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis

**May 4 – 7 p.m.**

CYO Volunteer Awards Ceremony at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, followed by reception in Assembly Hall at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center, both in Indianapolis

**May 5 – 7 p.m.**

Confirmation for youths of St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) and St. Ann parishes, both in Indianapolis, St. Thomas More Parish in Mooresville and St. Thomas the Apostle Parish in Fortville, at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral

**May 6 – 10 a.m.**

Leadership Team meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center

**May 6 – 12:30 p.m.**

Women’s Care Center Board Luncheon at Women’s Care Center, Indianapolis

**May 6 – 7 p.m.**

Confirmation for youths of St. Susanna Parish in Plainfield and St. Joseph Parish in Indianapolis at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral

**May 7 – noon**

Anniversary Lunch for Bishop Gerald Gettelfinger at The Overlook Restaurant, Leavenworth, Ind.

**May 7 – 6:30 p.m.**

Race for Vocations Mass at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral

**May 8 – 2 p.m.**

Confirmation Mass for youths of Prince of Peace Parish in Madison at Father Michael Shawe Memorial High School Gymnasium, Madison

**May 11 – 10:30 a.m.**

Priest Personnel Board meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center

# Pope Francis proclaims sainthood of venerated third order Dominican woman

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope Francis issued a decree declaring the sainthood of Blessed Margaret of Città di Castello, a much-loved Italian third order Dominican woman.

The decree is what the Vatican terms an “*equipollenti*” or equivalent canonization; when there is evidence of strong devotion among the faithful to a holy man or woman, the pope can waive a lengthy formal canonical investigation and can authorize the person’s veneration as a saint.

The Vatican announcement on April 24 said the pope declared her a saint after the cardinals and bishops who are members of the Congregation for Saints’ Causes recommended doing so.

Born to noble parents around 1287, St. Margaret was blind and had a severe spinal curvature. Her parents, determined to keep her out of public view, kept her in seclusion in a walled room of a parish.

Taking her to a shrine known for miraculous cures in the Umbrian town of Città di Castello, St. Margaret’s parents abandoned her there when she was not healed. Helped by the townspeople, she was given shelter in various homes and eventually welcomed by Dominican nuns.

Despite the hardship and rejection she endured, St. Margaret was known for her joyful disposition and was later accepted as a third order Dominican. Since her death in 1320, hundreds of miracles have been attributed to her intercession.

Meeting with Cardinal Marcello

Semeraro, prefect of the Congregation for Saints’ Causes on April 24, Pope Francis also advanced the sainthood cause of Enrique Ernesto Shaw, signing a decree recognizing the heroic virtues of the businessman from the pope’s native Argentina.

Born in 1921, Shaw founded the Christian Association of Business Executives and was arrested during a wave of anti-Catholic sentiment under the administration of Argentine President Juan Peron.

After he was released, he continued advocating the application of Catholic social teaching in the workplace. He died in Buenos Aires in 1962 of cancer.

The pope also signed decrees advancing the sainthood causes of:

- Redemptorist Father Vicente Nicasio Renuncio Toribio, five other Redemptorist priests and six Redemptorist brothers who were killed “in hatred of the faith” between 1936 and 1939, during Spain’s Civil War.

- Italian Cardinal Pietro Marcellino Corradini, founder of the Collegine Sisters of the Holy Family. He was born in 1658 and died in 1743.

- Emanuele Stabulum, an Italian physician and member of the Congregation of the Sons of the Immaculate Conception. He was born in 1895 and died in 1950.

- María de los Desamparados Portilla Crespo, a wife and mother of 11 children, who was born in Valencia, Spain, in 1925 and died in Madrid in 1996.

- Anfosina Berardi, an Italian girl who was born in 1920 and died in 1933. †

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# Father Herman Lutz served in archdiocesan parishes, tribunal

By Sean Gallagher

Father Herman Lutz, a retired priest of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, died on April 20 at the St. Paul Hermitage in Beech Grove. He was 88.



Fr. Herman Lutz

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on April 26 at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis. Archbishop Charles C. Thompson was the principal celebrant of the liturgy. Father Robert Gilday, pastor of St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) Parish in Indianapolis was the homilist.

Burial followed in the priests' circle at Calvary Cemetery in Indianapolis.

Father Lutz ministered for many years in the archdiocesan metropolitan tribunal with retired Msgr. Frederick Easton, a former archdiocesan vicar judicial.

"He was a gentle soul," Msgr. Easton recalled.

Ministry in canon law for Father Lutz, said Msgr. Easton, "was a ministry of justice. He felt that he was helping people get justice in the Church regarding their marriage cases."

At the same time, Msgr. Easton

recalled Father Lutz's love for parish ministry.

"Making sure that people had access to the sacraments and pastoral counseling was always important to him," said Msgr. Easton. "He was a quintessential parish priest at heart, as well as being a tribunal priest."

Father Gilday served with Father Lutz for many years in the tribunal. He, too, remembered how much his brother priest enjoyed parish ministry.

Whether he was serving in the tribunal or in faith communities across central and southern Indiana, Father Lutz took the same approach to ministry.

"His vocation as a priest was at the very center of it—the priestly identity," said Father Gilday. "Whatever he was doing was ministry as a priest of the Church. Whatever assignment he had, he approached it that way."

"He was a priest who served his people. He was always pastoral in everything that he did."

Herman George Lutz was born on Dec. 30, 1932, in Indianapolis to the late Herman John and Mary Catherine (Kieffer) Lutz. He grew up as a member of St. Anthony Parish on the west side of the city.

After graduating from Cathedral High School in Indianapolis in 1950, he worked for a short time in the

insurance industry before enrolling as a student at St. John's University in Collegeville, Minn.

After discerning a call to the priesthood, Father Lutz became an archdiocesan seminarian and received his initial priestly formation at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad from 1953-55.

He then received priestly formation at the Pontifical North American College, earning a licentiate degree in sacred theology at the Pontifical Gregorian University, both in Rome.

Father Lutz was ordained a priest on Dec. 20, 1958, by Archbishop Martin J. O'Connor, then rector of the North American College, in the seminary's St. Marcellus Oratory and later celebrated his first Mass at St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican.

Father Lutz returned to Rome in 1961 for graduate studies, earning a licentiate degree in canon law in 1963 at the Pontifical Lateran University.

Except for his two years of graduate studies in Rome, Father Lutz served as a notary in the tribunal from 1959-84. During that time, he was assigned to several archdiocesan parishes.

His first pastoral assignment was as associate pastor of Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish in Greenwood from 1959-61.

After returning from his graduate studies, Father Lutz served as associate pastor of St. Susanna Parish in Plainfield from 1963-68. In 1968, he served as the administrator pro-tem of St. Susanna.

He served as pastor of Mary, Queen of Peace Parish in Danville from 1971-73 and as co-pastor of the former St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Indianapolis from 1973-76.

Father Lutz was in residence in Indianapolis at the former St. Bernadette Parish from 1976-78 and at Holy Spirit Parish from 1978-84.

From 1984-96, Father Lutz ministered as the pastor of the former St. Paul Parish in Sellersburg.

In 1993, he took up ministry again in canon law as a judge in the tribunal while continuing parish ministry.

From 1996-99, Father Lutz served as pastor of St. Philip Neri Parish in Indianapolis. His last assignment in parish ministry was as pastor from 1999-2003 of St. Mary Parish in North Vernon.

Although he retired from parish ministry in 2003, Father Lutz continued as a judge in the tribunal until 2009.

He is survived by a sister, JoAnn Traub of Indianapolis.

Memorial contributions can be made to the St. Paul Hermitage, 501 N. 17th St., Beech Grove, IN 46107. †

# Pope calls for prayers after hospital disaster in Baghdad, migrant deaths

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—In the wake of a deadly fire in a Baghdad hospital treating COVID-19 patients and more migrant deaths in the Mediterranean Sea, Pope Francis prayed for the victims of the disasters and their families.

After reciting the "Regina Coeli" prayer with visitors in St. Peter's Square on April 25, the pope urged those gathered there to join him in prayer.

"I confess I am extremely sad over the tragedy that has once again taken place in the Mediterranean," he said, referring to reports that all of the estimated 130 people on board a rubber dinghy drowned in rough waters.

European Union border protection agents alerted Italian, Maltese and Libyan government authorities of a vessel in distress on April 21, but it was up to nonprofit rescue groups and three merchant vessels to conduct an active search, ending in finding no survivors on April 22.

Pope Francis lamented not just the loss of life, but the lack of immediate rescue by government authorities.

"They are people. They are human

beings who begged for help in vain for two whole days—help that never arrived," he said.

"Brothers and sisters, let us all ask ourselves about this umpteenth tragedy. It is a shameful moment. Let us pray for these brothers and sisters, and for all those who continue to die in these tragic crossings," he said.

"Let us also pray for those who can help but prefer to look the other way. Let us pray in silence for them," the pope added.

The pope also expressed his closeness and prayers for victims of a fire in a hospital for COVID-19 patients in Baghdad.

Late on April 24, some 82 people died and more than 110 were injured by the blaze, which was suspected of being caused by improperly stored oxygen canisters. With Iraq now facing a second wave of infection, the hospital housed patients affected by the coronavirus.

Cardinal Louis Sako, the Baghdad-based Chaldean Catholic patriarch, visited the hospital on April 25 and prayed for those

who died or were injured and their families.

In a note published on the patriarchate's website and translated by AsiaNews, the cardinal called it a "humanitarian and national disaster" which requires "unity and solidarity" in order to "avert such shameful disasters in the future."

Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi suspended the minister of health from his duties as an investigation was underway. The leader also announced three days of national mourning and promised financial compensation for the families of each victim. †

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\*as of April 22, 2021

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# The Criterion

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John F. Fink, *Editor Emeritus*

## Editorial



Keith Thompson of Salem, Ore., is baptized at Queen of Peace Church during the Easter Vigil on April 3. Also pictured is Calli Hardwick-Wood, who also was baptized. (CNS photo/Daniel Black, Catholic Sentinel)

## Why Catholics are leaving

Welcome, new Catholics who were received into the full communion of the Church on Holy Saturday at the Easter Vigil. We're glad that you have followed God's call to join us in the Church. Sadly, many of our brothers and sisters in faith at this time have chosen instead to walk away from our family of faith.

The number of Catholics in the United States has continued to decline during recent years. For every convert who has been coming into the Church, about four are leaving. Besides that, the number of Catholics who are getting married in the Church fell from 352,458 in 1965 to 125,916 in 2016. And it keeps falling.

The number of priests has also fallen for the past six decades, mainly because older priests are retiring faster than new priests are being ordained. Many priests are coming from Asia and Africa to minister in the U.S., but our priests are still being overworked.

Fewer Catholics are attending Mass on weekends. According to Villanova University's Center for Church Management, only about 21% of U.S. Catholics were attending Mass on Saturday evenings or on Sundays before the COVID-19 pandemic. We don't know how many of them will return to their parishes when the pandemic ends.

Catholic schools have been severely affected. According to the National Catholic Education Association, U.S. Catholic school enrollment declined by 111,000 students last year, the largest decrease in 50 years. A total of 209 Catholic schools closed or consolidated last year as well.

With fewer Catholics going to Mass and fewer children attending our schools, is it any wonder that we are losing members? Polls show that former Catholics tend to leave the Church in their early teens, and the exodus continues as they get older and are more and more influenced by the secular values of our society.

Even those who remain Catholic frequently disagree with some of the Church's teachings. Cohabitation instead of marriage, which until fairly recently was also frowned upon by society, is now considered acceptable by 65% of those who call themselves Catholic, according to a 2015 Pew Research Center poll. Another Pew Research Center study in 2019 reported that 60% of U.S. Catholics have been sufficiently influenced by society's values to approve of same-sex marriage.

This almost always indicates that many have made no attempt to learn why the

Church teaches what it does. They just believe that the Church is too strict. Studies have shown that young people associate the Catholic Church with conservative views, which they often don't share.

Other Christian faiths have also experienced these problems. The number of "nones"—those who say they practice no religion—has exploded and is now larger than any of the Protestant denominations. A 2019 Gallup poll reported that 70% of Americans attended church regularly in 1999, with that number falling to 50% by 2018.

We know the problem—Catholics are leaving the Church—but the solution is illusive. Changing some teachings to correspond to the views of society doesn't seem to work. Many mainline Protestant denominations have tried this, and they're losing members at a higher rate than the Catholic Church is. Or are people leaving the Catholic Church because they perceive that it has already changed its teachings?

It has been said by some that "Catholic" means "here comes everybody" because everyone can be a member—all races and people of all political viewpoints.

The teachings of the Church do not fit into one political category or another. They are consistent in teaching love of God and neighbor, and that we are all created in the image of God and therefore of inestimable worth from conception to natural death. In terms of American politics, that means that the Church opposes not only abortion but also euthanasia and the death penalty, and that it opposes racism and supports efforts to help the poor and migrants.

Renowned novelist Mary Gordon was so intrigued by that fact that she wrote a book called *What Kind of Catholic Are You?* She described it in the Jesuit magazine *America*: "I have come up with a series of couples, with each member of the couple saying that her or his ideas stem from his or her Catholicism—except that the ideas are diametrically opposed. So I link Bill O'Reilly and Stephen Colbert, Nancy Pelosi and Kellyanne Conway, Sonia Sotomayor and Brett Kavanaugh, Paul Farmer and Robert R. Redfield, Anna Quindlen and Ross Douthat, Rachel Maddow and Laura Ingraham."

Christ died for all, and he founded a Church for all. The solution to the Church's problems is evangelization—by all of us. It's up to each one of us to fill our churches.

—John F. Fink

Be Our Guest/Sr. Constance Veit, L.S.P.

## Lessons that I learned from the cherry blossoms in Washington

Nothing speaks of spring more than blossoms in March and April.

Since moving to Washington several years ago, I've become fascinated by the cherry blossoms that blanket Washington's urban landscape in clouds of pink and white.



Each year, I try to organize special activities to help our elderly residents participate in our city's annual Cherry Blossom Festival.

Since the festival was shut down last year due to the pandemic, I was even more excited about it this year, studiously checking the official Park Service's Cherry Blossom Watch report daily.

After a few days of exceptionally warm weather, the blossoms reached their peak at the beginning of Holy Week—quite an inconvenient time for us since Holy Week is packed with its own very significant activities. It's hardly the time to go wandering among the cherry blossoms!

With the ceremonies of Holy Week and Easter Sunday behind us, we ventured out to explore the "sakura," as they are called in Japanese, on Monday. But even the trees considered to be "late blooming" were well past their prime.

As we gazed upon the flower petals blanketing the footpaths rather than the trees, I realized an important lesson. The Japanese celebrate the "sakura" because they symbolize the fleeting nature of life. For them, spring is a time to contemplate the brevity of life and to practice gratitude and mindfulness by being present in the moment.

When the cherry blossoms hit their peak in Japan, life pauses for a few days and people gather under the trees to picnic and enjoy their fleeting beauty. They know that nature is not governed by human convenience, even though we often assume that we can control everything around us.

The pandemic taught us the patience of waiting for nature to take its course. The cherry blossoms teach us to seize the graces of each unrepeatable moment.

I learned a second, even more important lesson this spring, one that is uniquely relevant to our elderly residents. As I delved into Japanese culture, I discovered "kintsugi," a term referring to the repair of broken pottery.

Through the process of *kintsugi*, artists

mend broken vessels by filling the cracks with gold. Damage is not hidden but accentuated.

According to Japanese tradition, when something has been broken it acquires a history and is thus transformed into something more beautiful and valuable. This philosophy is also applied to human experience.

Although the philosophy of *kintsugi* originated outside our Christian faith, it resonates with it.

As we journey through life's ups and downs, God teaches us to look on traumatic events in a positive way, taking the best from them and embracing our inevitable cracks and scars as treasures that make us more beautiful in God's eyes—and more aware of our need for him.

Old Testament prophets spoke of God as the potter forming us like clay in his hands. St. Paul reminded us that we carry our treasure in earthen vessels, "that the surpassing power may be of God and not from us" (2 Cor 4:7).

Paul appealed to believers not to be

discouraged by their brokenness. "Although our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this momentary light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison as we look not to what is seen but to what is unseen" (2 Cor 4:16-17).

St. Peter also saw value in trials: "For a little while you may have to suffer through various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold that is perishable even though tested by fire, may prove to be for praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:7).

We have not seen a case of the coronavirus

among our residents for many months, but it is evident that the pandemic has taken a toll. Some residents seem less sure on their feet; for others, their vision, hearing or memory seem less clear.

Yet when we talked about the concept of *kintsugi*, our seniors agreed that they are proud of having survived this tough period, and like worn vessels repaired with gold, they look on their aches and limitations as precious scars that prove their inner strength and resilience.

(*Little Sisters of the Poor Sister Constance Veit is director of communications for the Little Sisters of the Poor in the United States.*) †

*'The pandemic taught us the patience of waiting for nature to take its course. The cherry blossoms teach us to seize the graces of each unrepeatable moment.'*

## Letters Policy

Letters from readers are published in *The Criterion* as part of the newspaper's commitment to "the responsible exchange of freely-held and expressed opinion among the People of God" (*Communio et Progressio*, 116).

Letters from readers are welcome and every effort will be made to include letters from as many people and representing as many viewpoints as possible. Letters should be informed, relevant, well-expressed and temperate in tone. They must reflect a basic sense of courtesy and respect.

The editors reserve the right to select the letters that will be published and to edit

letters from readers as necessary based on space limitations, pastoral sensitivity and content (including spelling and grammar). In order to encourage opinions from a variety of readers, frequent writers will ordinarily be limited to one letter every three months. Concise letters (usually less than 300 words) are more likely to be printed.

Letters must be signed, but, for serious reasons, names may be withheld.

Send letters to "Letters to the Editor," *The Criterion*, 1400 N. Meridian Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367. Readers with access to e-mail may send letters to [criterion@archindy.org](mailto:criterion@archindy.org). †



# Christ the Cornerstone

## Christ is the vine, and we are the branches

*“Just as a branch cannot bear fruit on its own unless it remains on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing”* (Jn 15:4-5).

The Gospel reading for the Fifth Sunday of Easter (Jn 15:1-8) offers us the familiar, but quite powerful, image of the vine and the branches.

This image was particularly familiar to the people of Jesus’ time because they were closer to the process of growing grapes and making wine than most of us are. Still, we understand what Jesus is telling us. We are all connected, receiving life from the same source.

One of the greatest and most dangerous myths of our time is the idea that we are all self-reliant individuals who have the ability to sustain ourselves by our own effort.

The Gospel image of the vine and the branches flatly contradicts this notion. “Without me you can do nothing” (Jn 15:5), Jesus says. Not only are we not very successful as rugged individualists, we are utter failures. The

poet John Donne expressed this truth quite eloquently when he wrote:

*No man is an island entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main; if a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as any manner of thy friends or of thine own were; any man’s death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind. And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.*

Anyone else’s death diminishes us because we are all one, members of the one Body of Christ, intimately related both to him and to each other.

The first reading for this Sunday (Acts 9:26-31) makes a similar point. At first, the disciples in Jerusalem were suspicious of this newcomer, Saul (later Paul). After all, he had persecuted Christians and was heard to utter “murderous threats” against them. Barnabas and several others came to his defense, but the point is that the great missionary and evangelist St. Paul didn’t do it alone. He relied on his Lord, first and foremost, but also on his brothers and sisters in the one family of Christ. As we will read in the

Acts of the Apostles this Sunday:

*“[Saul] moved about freely with them in Jerusalem, and spoke out boldly in the name of the Lord. He also spoke and debated with the Hellenists, but they tried to kill him. And when the brothers learned of this, they took him down to Caesarea and sent him on his way to Tarsus”* (Acts 9:28-30).

Like Barnabas and the other Christians in Jerusalem, we are called to be missionary disciples, branches intimately connected to the vine that is Christ. We are responsible for one another.

The second reading for this Sunday (1 Jn 3:18-24) tells us what is expected of us as branches connected to the vine that is Christ. We must “believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another just as he commanded us” (1 Jn 3:23). Faith and love are the two signs that we are healthy branches capable of producing much good fruit.

As our Lord makes clear in today’s Gospel reading, it’s essential that we remain faithful to our calling and be fruitful in good works. Otherwise, we become like dry, withered

branches that are only good for use as firewood.

*“Anyone who does not remain in me will be thrown out like a branch and wither; people will gather them and throw them into a fire and they will be burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask for whatever you want and it will be done for you. By this is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples”* (Jn 15:6-8).

The good news, of course, is the Lord’s assurance that his Father is glorified whenever we remain connected to Jesus, and to the other branches on our vine. God the Father has promised that whatever we ask for in Jesus’ name will be given to us.

As we continue this season of Easter joy, let’s remember who we are—individuals, certainly, but never “islands unto ourselves.” We are not meant to be isolated from each other or from God.

Let’s pray for the wisdom and courage to let go of our individualist tendencies and to embrace the community of faith and love that is our inheritance as children of God and missionary disciples of Jesus Christ. †



# Cristo, la piedra angular

## Cristo es la vid y nosotros los sarmientos

*“Permanezcan unidos a mí, como yo lo estoy a ustedes. Ningún sarmiento puede producir fruto por sí mismo sin estar unido a la vid; lo mismo les ocurrirá a ustedes si no permanecen unidos a mí. Yo soy la vid; ustedes, los sarmientos. El que permanece unido a mí, como yo estoy unido a él, produce mucho fruto, porque separados de mí ustedes nada pueden hacer”* (Jn 15:4-5).

La lectura del Evangelio del quinto domingo de Pascua (Jn 15:1-8) nos ofrece la imagen familiar, pero muy poderosa, de la vid y los sarmientos.

Esta imagen era especialmente conocida para la gente en la época de Jesús porque estaban más cerca del proceso de cultivo de la uva y de la elaboración del vino que la mayoría de nosotros. Aun así, entendemos lo que nos dice Jesús: que todos estamos conectados y recibimos vida de la misma fuente.

Uno de los mitos más grandes y peligrosos de nuestro tiempo es la idea de que todos somos individuos autosuficientes que tenemos la capacidad de mantenernos por nuestro propio esfuerzo.

La imagen evangélica de la vid y los sarmientos contradice rotundamente esta idea. “Separados de mí ustedes nada pueden hacer” (Jn 15:5), dice Jesús. Como

individualistas empedernidos, no solo no llegaremos muy lejos, sino que además seremos unos completos fracasados. El poeta John Donne expresó esta verdad con bastante elocuencia cuando escribió:

*Ningún hombre es una isla entera por sí mismo. Cada hombre es una pieza del continente, una parte del todo. Si el mar se lleva una porción de tierra, toda Europa queda disminuida, como si fuera un promontorio, o la casa de uno de tus amigos, o la tuya propia. Por eso, nunca preguntes por quién doblan las campanas; doblan por ti.*

La muerte de cualquiera nos empequeñece, porque todos somos uno, miembros del único Cuerpo de Cristo, íntimamente relacionados con él y con los demás.

La primera lectura de este domingo (Hechos 9:26-31) hace un planteamiento similar. Al principio, los discípulos de Jerusalén sospechaban de este recién llegado, Saulo (más tarde llamado Pablo). Al fin y al cabo, había perseguido a los cristianos y se le había oído proferir “amenazas de muerte” contra ellos. Bernabé y varios otros salieron en su defensa, pero la cuestión es que el gran misionero y evangelizador san Pablo no hizo su labor solo. Se apoyó en su Señor, en primer lugar, pero también en sus

hermanos y hermanas de la única familia de Cristo. Como leeremos en los Hechos de los Apóstoles este domingo:

*“Saulo se movía libremente por Jerusalén en compañía de los apóstoles, y hablaba sin miedo acerca del Señor. Pero pronto entró en polémica con los judíos de lengua griega, que comenzaron a tramar planes para matarlo. Al enterarse, los hermanos lo escoltaron hasta Cesarea y después lo encaminaron a Tarso”* (Hechos 9:28-30).

Como Bernabé y los demás cristianos de Jerusalén, estamos llamados a ser discípulos misioneros, sarmientos íntimamente unidos a la vid que es Cristo. Somos responsables unos de otros.

La segunda lectura de este domingo (1 Jn 3:18-24) nos dice lo que se espera de nosotros como sarmientos unidos a la vid que es Cristo: “que creamos en el nombre de su Hijo Jesucristo, y nos amemos los unos a los otros como él nos ordenó” (1 Jn 3:23). La fe y el amor son los dos signos de que somos sarmientos sanos, capaces de producir mucho fruto bueno.

Como el Señor deja claro en la lectura del Evangelio de hoy, es esencial que permanezcamos fieles a nuestra vocación y que seamos fructíferos en buenas obras. De lo

contrario, nos convertimos en ramas secas y marchitas que solo sirven para utilizarlas como leña.

*“El que no permanece unido a mí, es arrojado fuera, como se hace con el sarmiento improductivo que se seca; luego, estos sarmientos se amontonan y son arrojados al fuego para que ardan. Si permanecen unidos a mí y mi mensaje permanece en ustedes, pidan lo que quieran y lo obtendrán. La gloria de mi Padre se manifiesta en que ustedes produzcan fruto en abundancia y se hagan discípulos míos”* (Jn 15:6-8).

La buena noticia es, por supuesto, la seguridad del Señor de que su Padre es glorificado siempre que permanecemos conectados a Jesús, y a los otros sarmientos de nuestra vid. Dios Padre ha prometido que todo lo que pidamos en el nombre de Jesús se nos dará.

Al continuar esta temporada de alegría pascual, recordemos quiénes somos: individuos, ciertamente, pero nunca “islas en sí mismos.” No estamos destinados a estar aislados de los demás ni de Dios.

Recemos para tener la sabiduría y el valor de dejar de lado nuestras tendencias individualistas y abrazar la comunidad de fe y amor que es nuestra herencia como hijos de Dios y discípulos misioneros de Jesucristo. †

# Events Calendar

For a list of events for the next four weeks as reported to The Criterion, log on to [www.archindy.org/events](http://www.archindy.org/events).

## May 3, 10, 17, 24

St. Therese of the Child Jesus (Little Flower) Parish Center, St. Therese Room, 4720 E. 13th St., Indianapolis. **SoulCore Rosary Workout**, 6:30-7:15 p.m., prayer and exercise, free. Information: 317-727-1167, [joane632003@yahoo.com](mailto:joane632003@yahoo.com) or [soulcore.com](http://soulcore.com).

## May 5

MCL Cafeteria, 5520 Castleton Corner Lane, Indianapolis. **Solo Seniors**, 5:30 p.m., Catholic, educational, charitable and social singles—separated, widowed or divorced—age 50 and older, new members welcome, also call about regular Friday night dinner events. Information: 317-796-8605 or 317-243-0777.

## May 6, 13, 20

**The Third Option virtual marriage crisis/enrichment class**, 7-8 p.m., no registration needed, free. Upcoming topics: May 6, “Feelings and the Hurt Spiral,” May 13, “Forgiveness and Repair,” May 20, “Rebuilding Trust.” Go to [carmelthirdoption.org/web](http://carmelthirdoption.org/web), click on link at top of page. Information: [carmelthirdoption.org/web](http://carmelthirdoption.org/web), or Keith Ingram, [kingram@aicinvest.com](mailto:kingram@aicinvest.com) or 317-324-8446.

**Bible Study: St. Paul’s Letter to the Romans**, via Zoom, sponsored by St. Michael Parish, Greenfield, 1-2:30 p.m., led by graduates of Guadalupe

Bible College, free. Information and registration: Darlene Davis, [ljdarlene@gmail.com](mailto:ljdarlene@gmail.com) or 317-498-2242.

## May 7

Women’s Care Center, 4901 W. 86th St., Indianapolis. **First Friday Mass**, 5 p.m., Fr. James Farrell, celebrant, optional tour of center to follow. Information: 317-829-6800, [www.womenscarecenter.org](http://www.womenscarecenter.org).

Our Lady of the Greenwood Church, 335 S. Meridian St., Greenwood. **First Friday bilingual celebration of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus**, Mass, 5:45 p.m., exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, following Mass until 9 p.m., sacrament of reconciliation available. Information: 317-750-7309, [msross1@hotmail.com](mailto:msross1@hotmail.com).

**Pre-Race for Vocations Mass and Pasta Dinner**, Mass at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, 1347 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, 6:30 p.m., Archbishop Charles C. Thompson presiding, followed by pasta dinner at McGowan Hall Knights of Columbus, 1305 N. Delaware St., Indianapolis, 7:30 p.m., \$10, registration for dinner required: [raceforvocations.org/pasta-dinner](http://raceforvocations.org/pasta-dinner). Information: [raceforvocations.org](http://raceforvocations.org) or [race4vocations@gmail.com](mailto:race4vocations@gmail.com).

## May 8

John Paul II Parish, St. Paul Chapel, 216

Schellers Ave., Sellersburg. **First Saturday Marian Devotion**, 8 a.m. rosary, meditation, prayer; 8:30 a.m. Mass with confessions prior. Information: 812-246-3522.

St. Michael Church, 145 St. Michael Blvd., Brookville. **First Saturday Marian Devotional Prayer Group**, Mass, devotional prayers, rosary, 8 a.m. Information: 765-647-5462.

St. Michael Parish, 519 Jefferson Blvd., Greenfield. **Race for Vocations**, 8 a.m., 5K and half marathon, post-race gathering to follow race, both events are free. Registration: [raceforvocations.org/registration](http://raceforvocations.org/registration). Information: [raceforvocations.org](http://raceforvocations.org) or [race4vocations@gmail.com](mailto:race4vocations@gmail.com).

## May 8-9

St. Margaret Mary Parish, 2405 S. 7th St., Terre Haute, and St. Patrick Parish, 1807 Poplar St., Terre Haute. **Bruté Weekend at St. Margaret Mary and St. Patrick churches**, all weekend Masses, Father Andrew Syberg, formation dean of Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary, will celebrate Mass and share how the seminary forms future priests. Information: Ellen Sanders, 317-236-1501 or [esanders@archindy.org](mailto:esanders@archindy.org).

## May 9

Providence Spirituality & Conference Center, 1 Sisters

of Providence, O’Shaughnessy Dining Room, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Mother’s Day Brunch**, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., reservations only with three seating sessions: 9-11 a.m., 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. or 2-4 p.m., carved prime rib, shrimp, fried chicken, breakfast menu, salads, made-to-order omelets and waffles, side dishes, desserts, \$24.95 adults, \$22.95 ages 60 and older, \$12.95 ages 5-11, ages 4 and younger free. Tickets: [brunch.sistersofprovidence.org](http://brunch.sistersofprovidence.org). Information: 812-535-4285 or [spsmw.org/events](http://spsmw.org/events).

## May 11

**Sisters of Providence online “The Spirit Breathes” Monthly Taizé Prayer Service**, 7-8 p.m., silent and spoken prayers, simple music, silence. Link: [cutt.ly/Taize](http://cutt.ly/Taize). Information: 812-535-2952, [provctr@spsmw.org](mailto:provctr@spsmw.org).

## May 12

**Catholic Charities Bloomington online fundraiser**, noon-1 p.m., success stories in mental health assistance in response to three times the normal requests during the pandemic. Event link: [www.facebook.com/ccbindiana](http://www.facebook.com/ccbindiana). Donations: [ccbin.org](http://ccbin.org). Information: [cbush@archindy.org](mailto:cbush@archindy.org) or 317-236-1411.

## May 16

Roncalli High School, 3300 Prague Rd., Indianapolis. **Katie’s 5K Run/Walk for Hope**, registration 12:30 p.m., start time 2 p.m., benefiting Katie Lynch Scholarship Fund, picnic to follow at St. Jude pavilion, register online by May 1 to receive T-shirt, \$25 adults, \$15 students, \$100 family. Online registration: [katiehope.org](http://katiehope.org). Information: 317-502-1979 or [katies5kwalk@gmail.com](mailto:katies5kwalk@gmail.com).

## May 19

Calvary Mausoleum

Chapel, 435 W. Troy Ave., Indianapolis. **Monthly Mass**, 2 p.m. Information: 317-784-4439 or [www.catholiccemeteries.cc](http://www.catholiccemeteries.cc).

## May 20

St. Joseph Church, 1401 S. Mickley Ave., Indianapolis. **Third Thursday Adoration**, interceding for women experiencing crisis pregnancy, 11 a.m.-7 p.m., with Mass at 5:45 p.m.

Our Lady of Peace Cemetery and Mausoleum, 9001 Haverstick Road, Indianapolis. **Monthly Mass**, 2 p.m. Information: 317-574-8898 or [www.catholiccemeteries.cc](http://www.catholiccemeteries.cc).

Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Church, 520 Stevens St., Indianapolis. **Faithful Citizens Rosary Walk**, 10:45-11:45 a.m., meet in front of church. Information: [faithfulcitizens2016@gmail.com](mailto:faithfulcitizens2016@gmail.com). †

## Catholic Radio Indy will hold annual Golf Outing on May 25

Catholic Radio Indy will hold its annual Golf Outing at Plum Creek Golf Club, 12401 Lynnwood Blvd., in Carmel, Ind., on May 25.

Check-in is at 10:30 a.m., Mass will be celebrated at 11:30 a.m., lunch will be served at noon and the shotgun start will take place at 1 p.m.

The annual golf outing helps raise funds to keep Catholic programming on the air at 89.1 and 90.1 FM. Catholic Radio Indy is also available anywhere around the clock online at

[catholicradioindy.org](http://catholicradioindy.org), by downloading free Catholic Radio applications or by calling 641-552-5881 toll free to listen via speaker phone or in the car via Bluetooth.

The cost is \$125 per individual or \$450 per foursome. There is no cost for priests, deacons or vowed religious. The cost includes golf, golf cart, lunch and dinner.

To register, go to [catholicradioindy.org](http://catholicradioindy.org). For more information, call 317-870-8400 or e-mail Valerie Bendel at [valerie@catholicradioindy.org](mailto:valerie@catholicradioindy.org). †

## Celebrate Marriage ministry will host Amazing Race social, dinner on May 15

The Celebrate Marriage ministry of Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish will host “The Amazing Race” social and dinner event at the Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish Life Center, 335 N. Meridian St., in Greenwood, from 2-7 p.m. on May 15.

All married couples are invited to join in this marriage enrichment event. Couples can dress as a team to compete for “most fun couple,” participate in a photo scavenger hunt, enjoy a tailgate dinner and more.

The Celebrate Marriage mission is to give couples opportunities for Christ-centered marriage enrichment

through large group, small group and individual couple events. The purpose of the ministry is to provide opportunities for married couples to have more time together, to find the romance in their marriage, to examine their lives together, to look for the fun in their marriages and to grow closer together—in other words, to be the best couple they can be.

The cost of “The Amazing Race” event is \$30 per couple, and beer/wine bracelets are available for \$5. For more information, call 317-489-1557 or e-mail [olmarriageministry@gmail.com](mailto:olmarriageministry@gmail.com). †

# Wedding ANNIVERSARIES

## ROBERT AND MARY FRANCES MOHR



**ROBERT AND MARY FRANCES (KONOVSEK) MOHR**, members of St. Malachy Parish in Brownsburg, will celebrate their 65th wedding anniversary on May 5.

The couple was married in the former Holy Trinity Church in Indianapolis on May 5, 1956.

They have six children: Mary Ann Cox, Barbara Friesenhahn, Jennifer Norris, Rosemarie Pell, Andrew and Robert Mohr, Jr.

The couple also has 11 grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

They plan to celebrate with a family dinner. †

## JOHN AND ANITA BRELAGE



**JOHN AND ANITA (SCHRANK) BRELAGE**, members of St. Louis Parish in Batesville, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on May 1.

The couple was married in Holy Family Church in Oldenburg on May 1, 1971.

They have seven children: Kathy Altschul, Sandy Decker, Angie Moster, Andy, Jason, Michael and Steven Brelage.

The couple also has 29 grandchildren. †

## RANDY AND SUE BRODERICK



**RANDY AND SUE (MURPHY) BRODERICK**, members of St. Luke the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on May 8.

The couple was married in Holy Family Church in Syracuse, N.Y., on May 8, 1971.

They have two children: Jason and Scott Broderick.

The couple also has four grandchildren and one great-grandchild. †

Events and retreats can be submitted to The Criterion by logging on to [www.archindy.org/events/submission](http://www.archindy.org/events/submission), or by mailing us at 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202, ATTN: Ann Lewis, or by fax at 317-236-1593.

Announcements for couples celebrating 50, 55, 60, 65, 70 or more years of marriage are accepted. Go to [bit.ly/2M4MQms](http://bit.ly/2M4MQms) or call 317-236-1585.

*'We need to be more mission-driven'*

## Pastors learn lessons in pandemic for future of parish ministry

*Second of a two-part series*

By Sean Gallagher

Easter this year was quite different from the great feast of Christ's resurrection a year ago.

In 2020, churches across the archdiocese were closed on Easter at the start of the coronavirus pandemic. They were open for worshippers this year, even if the size of the indoor congregations was limited due to ongoing COVID-19 protocols.

All Saints Parish in Dearborn County wanted to welcome as many worshippers as possible during Holy Week and Easter, and celebrated all of its liturgies outdoors.

Nearly 1,900 people attended its four Easter Masses, more than any year dating back to 2015. Some 750 attended its 9:30 a.m. Mass.

"I literally began crying as I started to make the sign of the cross," said Father Jonathan Meyer, All Saints Parish's pastor, as he recalled the Mass. "It was so powerful to see my people respond. ... I was a proud father seeing my people just do what they're called to do as disciples."



Fr. Jonathan Meyer

Some 180 miles to the west of All Saints Parish, Benedictine Father Luke Waugh had a similar experience at St. Isidore the Farmer Parish in Perry County, where he serves as administrator.

There, the congregation for its Easter Sunday Mass was at pre-pandemic levels, with some staying in their cars in the parking lot outside the church and listening to a radio broadcast of the liturgy through the parish's low-wattage FM transmitter.

"It was absolutely wonderful to see people who were eager to come back, eager to be present for the sacraments, eager to worship the risen Lord," said Father Luke. "It was absolutely phenomenal."

Father Meyer, Father Luke and other parish leaders across central and southern Indiana have learned a lot about parish ministry during the past year of the pandemic.

Even as some parishes see their members coming back in larger numbers due to increased knowledge of how to protect people from the virus and the introduction of vaccines, pastors who spoke with *The Criterion* know from their experiences that they can't go back to the way parish ministry was pre-COVID.

### 'A two-fold encounter'

While some parishes attracted many worshippers for Easter, many pastors acknowledge that some of their parishioners who were active in their faith communities before the pandemic have not yet come back.

The priests note that ongoing health concerns keep some away. Others, though, have simply gotten out of the habit of attending Mass each Sunday.

"A lot of people in the past 12 months have changed their habits," Father Meyer



Altar servers and Deacon Thomas Hill, left, surround a fire outside of St. Joseph Church in Shelbyville on April 3 while Father Michael Keucher, St. Joseph Parish's pastor, prays at the start of the faith community's Easter Vigil. (Submitted photo)

said. "So, they'll have to re-establish the habit of Sunday Mass and the habit of the Church being at the center of their lives. That's hard."

"I'm a little concerned about the people who were kind of going through the motions before the pandemic," said Father Michael Keucher, pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Shelbyville. "Then, when the churches were closed, religion completely fell off the radar."

Dominican Father Patrick Hyde, pastor of St. Paul Catholic Center in Bloomington, ministers to many young adults who are students at Indiana University. Many people in that age group had distanced themselves from the Church even before the pandemic.



Fr. Patrick Hyde, O.P.

But Father Patrick has seen a 20% growth during the past year in the number of young adults participating in small-group Bible studies organized at St. Paul by missionaries of the Fellowship of Catholic University Students that meet in a variety of ways: online only, hybrid and in-person only.

"There's a desperate desire and need to have relationships and be known," Father Patrick said. "One of things that we're seeing, more than anything, is how people feel isolated and not known and loved."

Knowing of this desire, Father Patrick and the staff at St. Paul now prioritize a "two-fold encounter."

"The personal encounter we have with the people who are next to us, but also a personal encounter with Christ," Father Patrick said. "The people who have had both of those things through the pandemic ... have certainly grown.

Whereas, the people who have struggled in one or both of those seemed to really feel disconnected from the community in many ways."

Young adults, he said, desire not just community, but also connection.

"Unless they have a connection point, a person that they know and trust who invites them, they're not coming [to St. Paul]," Father Patrick said.

This reality has determined the direction of ministry at St. Paul to its young adult community. It has led Father Patrick and his staff to "focus almost exclusively on that inefficient, awkward personal ministry so that people know that, no matter what, we know and love them" he said.

### 'Strengthening the domestic Church'

Father Keucher has seen a similar experience in parishioners of other age groups at St. Joseph.

Since the parish re-opened in mid-May 2020, he has seen a growth in small prayer groups, most of them initiated by parishioners.

"A hunger for God has grown in people's hearts during this COVID time," Father Keucher said. "So now that we're able to come back, it's like, 'Let's do some things that are new in safe ways.'"

This is a positive change for Father Keucher, who made a great effort during the pandemic to keep St. Joseph's ministry going through livestreaming and posting videos on a daily basis.

"Discipleship is often one-on-one. It's community," he said. "It's face-to-face. In the last year, we did the best we could do with the online outreach. But, there's no substitute for being together face-to-face. Especially as disciples of Jesus, we need community."

Father Keucher said the key to keeping alive the spark of life he has seen since last May at St. Joseph is "strengthening the domestic Church."

He and his staff, and other parish leaders across the archdiocese, did much to help families practice their faith at home during the shutdown.

They livestreamed Masses; posted catechetical videos; shared via e-mail faith activities based on Sunday Mass

readings that could be done at home; and encouraged families to build in their homes makeshift altars where they could gather for prayer.

Seeing the families of his parish respond to those efforts during the shutdown was encouraging to Father Keucher. But he knows that the life of faith in the home needs to continue to grow.

"We have to keep feeding and encouraging the way the faith has grown in the home," Father Keucher said. "If it's in the home, then the spark will stay alive."

### 'We need to be more mission-driven'

A year later, Father Keucher is, in a way, thankful for the shutdown at the start of the pandemic, and thankful for the change in perspective on parish ministry that it helped bring about.

"There's been a reawakening in a lot of us priests and parish leaders that we need to [focus on] mission," he said. "It's not enough just to keep what we have. We need to be going out, to be evangelizing and equipping families with the faith. We need to be more mission-driven."

In the county west of St. Joseph, Father Todd Goodson had a similar experience.

"It sort of lit a fire in me internally for evangelization," said the pastor of Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish in Greenwood. "It forced me to see as a priest to stop looking at how I can get people in [to the parish], but how I can go out."

"That's something I've been trying to hold on to as we've come out of COVID, to keep that mentality of how I'm reaching out to people, not just managing what's going on here."

That's a challenge for Father Goodson, because enough members of his parish are coming back and seeking pastoral ministry that he is now finding himself working 12- to 14-hour days.

"It's encouraging," he said. "We're not out of the woods, and we've got a long way to go. But there's a lot more energy and excitement here at the parish and for me as a minister. You start to see all the possibilities and things we can do. We're kind of starting from ground zero again. There are all sorts of possibilities of where ministry can go."

(The first part of this two-part package, which appeared in the April 23 issue of *The Criterion*, can be found online at [www.CriterionOnline.com](http://www.CriterionOnline.com).) †



**'It sort of lit a fire in me internally for evangelization. It forced me to see as a priest to stop looking at how I can get people in [to the parish], but how I can go out.'**

—Father Todd Goodson, pastor of Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish in Greenwood

# ICC

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for the voucher program and a sizable increase in the scholarship amount that voucher students receive.

The current eligibility for vouchers stands, in most cases, at a maximum family income of 150% of the federal Free and Reduced Lunch program. Under the new guidelines, that threshold would jump to 300% by next year, helping middle and upper middle-class families still struggling to pay for private school tuition, Elcesser explained.

In addition, eligible families will see increases in the dollar amounts of the vouchers their students receive. Currently, the program operates under three tiers, with students receiving vouchers of 50, 70 or 90% of state tuition support based on family income. Going forward, all eligible students will receive a 90% voucher, representing 90% of the state's tuition support for their child if they attended their local public school.

"These are historic developments that will help so many families send their children to the schools that best meet their needs," said Angela Espada, executive director of the ICC, the public policy voice of the Catholic Church in Indiana. "Even the highest quality public school still may not be the best choice for a particular family and their unique situation. We always support what is best for the child, and families are best at making those decisions."

In addition to the school choice legislation, the ICC closely tracked numerous other bills during this long session of the General Assembly, occurring every other year and culminating in the passage of Indiana's biennial budget. As always, the ICC supported certain measures while opposing others, in keeping with Catholic social teaching.

A significant pro-life bill that had strong support from the ICC was headed to Gov. Eric Holcomb's desk for signature at press time. House Bill 1577, authored by Rep. Peggy Mayfield (R-Martinsville), would require abortion providers to offer additional information and resources to women who are considering abortion, including an ultrasound image of their unborn child.

The most intensely debated aspect of the bill concerned offering women information about possibly reversing a chemical, or medication, abortion. This method of abortion

in early pregnancy involves the ingestion of two pills within a 48-hour period.

Women sometimes change their minds after taking the first pill, mifepristone, and the legislation would require abortion providers to inform them about an option that could potentially save the unborn child—taking the hormone progesterone after that initial abortion pill is consumed.

Another measure headed for the governor's desk was House Bill 1009, which offers some advances related to Indiana's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program while stopping short of a long sought-after increase to monthly cash payments for families in deep poverty. The ICC and its allies say they will continue to lobby for modernizing the implementation of that federal program in Indiana, which has not seen a meaningful update in more than three decades.

The ICC monitored several measures related to the environment throughout the legislative session and strongly opposes one bill awaiting the governor's signature, even in modified form. Senate Bill 389, which originally would have eliminated legal safeguards for up to 90% of Indiana's wetlands, was later amended to reduce some protections rather than abolish them entirely.

"While the amended version of the bill is not as harmful as the original, the ICC is still opposed to this legislation and would like to see the governor veto it," said Alexander Mingus, associate director of the ICC. "The Church's rich tradition of environmental stewardship and care for creation form the basis of our opposition to this bill."

Mingus and Espada, who just completed their first legislative session together at the helm of the ICC, have plans for keeping the Catholic faithful engaged on important issues like this in the General Assembly "off-season." One example is delving deeply into



Alexander Mingus



**'Because of COVID, this was an interesting legislative session. However, technology actually made connecting with legislators easier. We were able to schedule Zoom meetings with lawmakers instead of hoping to catch someone in the hall. These one-on-one meetings gave us the opportunity to present our positions on various bills.'**

—Angela Espada, executive director of the Indiana Catholic Conference

"*Laudato Si'*: On Care for Our Common Home," the groundbreaking encyclical by Pope Francis concerning stewardship of the environment. The ICC leaders want to use their revamped website and other vehicles not only to educate and mobilize Catholics on matters of importance to the Church, but to foster dialogue.

"We have used technology in many new ways, including launching our podcast," Espada said. "These connections with the faithful along with the lawmakers helped tremendously as we worked on a variety of bills over these past four months."

"Because of COVID, this was an interesting legislative session," Espada continued. "However, technology actually made connecting with legislators easier. We were able to schedule Zoom meetings with lawmakers instead of hoping to catch someone in the hall. These one-on-one meetings gave us the opportunity to present our positions on various bills."

Regardless of how the 2022 General Assembly will operate, Espada and Mingus are counting on the continued support of the Catholic faithful in amplifying the voice of the ICC.

"We are so grateful for everyone's advocacy and prayers during this legislative session," Espada said. "We want people to stay tuned and stay engaged so that we can continue that momentum going forward."

For more information, visit [www.indianacc.org](http://www.indianacc.org).

(Victoria Arthur, a member of St. Malachy Parish in Brownsburg, is a correspondent for The Criterion.) †

# INTERCULTURAL

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"Many of the communities we serve experienced sadness and loneliness due to not knowing how to manage the COVID disease. Others, due to lack of medical attention, experienced hopelessness," says Castellanos, director of Intercultural Ministries for the archdiocese.

"Without a doubt, the lack of psychological support and counseling in their native languages caused these conditions to worsen. Many of the people who are immigrants who lost loved ones were unable to travel to their native countries to say goodbye to them. Others who lost their jobs and sources of income have expressed how difficult it has been to support their families."

In the midst of this crisis, the leaders of the Black and Hispanic ministries for Catholics in central and southern Indiana have had to adapt their efforts to keep—and deepen—people's connection to God and their faith. While the past 13 months of the pandemic have created unprecedented challenges in these ministries, they've also created opportunities going forward.

## 'People needed to connect with each other'

Beyond the formidable health risks of COVID-19, the particular challenges for Black Catholics in regard to their faith emerged quickly at the onset of the pandemic, Springer notes.

"Blacks, in general, are a collectivist culture. In other words, we think, live and breathe community," she says. "Also, we are oral people for the most part. We communicate best verbally. In-person, verbal communication is our preferred method. COVID-19 restrictions have almost eliminated that form of communication. Gatherings, no matter how small of a group, became super-spreaders of the virus.

"In the beginning, not many people wanted to engage in virtual activities. I kept hearing, 'I will wait until this is over.' So, they waited and waited. And some continue to wait."

Springer learned she couldn't afford to wait in her ministry, so she made strides to adapt.

"I was always one of the first to say, 'It has to be in-person, no matter the cost. It works better in-person,'" she says. "Finally, I had to break down and learn the software and develop programming that worked virtually. People needed to connect with each other. People needed to mourn and grieve together. Since we could not do it in-person, virtually was the only way to go."

She began sending two e-mails a week to the people on her list, sharing information about online events across the country, writing short reflections on the daily Mass readings, and including links to articles, videos and podcasts about Black Catholics.

She also started two online events a month, with both events featuring music, prayer, Scripture and reflection.

On the third Monday of each month, she invites Black Catholic women from the archdiocese to join together.

On the last Saturday of the month, she leads a conversation with Black Catholics about "different resources available to discuss racism with our fellow Catholics."

"I am also working with two Black Catholic young adult women who want to engage other Black Catholic young adults," Springer says. "We have begun creating an online presence with videos."

She has also stayed connected to Black Catholic ministry groups that don't have the capability to connect virtually.

In making the changes to her ministry, Springer has seen a change in herself and her faith.

"Writing and sharing with the community has created a deeper

bond for me with the community spiritually and has deepened my faith life," she says. "I have been able to connect with people that normally have not participated in Black Catholic Ministry."

As she looks to the future, she hopes to help Black Catholics learn more about leading a ministry group. She also has a concern.

"The downside is that as restaurants and entertainment open back up, people will again flock to these events and place religious-centered activity on the back burner. But it is my hope that virtual programming has touched a few souls. I hope that they will continue to keep God and the connecting to God's people as their priority."

It's a hope that Castellanos has for Hispanic Catholics, too.

## 'The power that comes with creating community as disciples of Christ'

In the past 13 months of the pandemic, Castellanos has seen the importance of creating virtual spiritual connections for Hispanic Catholics. He has also seen its limitations.

He and Saul Llacsas, coordinator of Hispanic Ministry for the archdiocese, have created podcasts and videos in Spanish to help people grow in their faith. They have also hosted virtual gatherings for members of their communities.

While "it has worked to keep us in touch with the people we serve, we have recognized that this is not ideal," Castellanos says.

In the beginning of the pandemic, there was the challenge of teaching people how to navigate the virtual world.

"Later, many experienced a virtual fatigue, wishing to return to what we know as normal," Castellanos says. "We also noticed how the fact of not being connected with the sacraments and their parishes brought a certain passivity in their faith. This challenged many people on issues of anxiety, spiritual aridity and lack of meaning in their lives."

Castellanos found himself challenged, too. The challenge surfaced during the monthly meetings with people who are involved in Hispanic ministry in parishes. While the agenda of these meetings usually focuses on issues relating to parishes and the archdiocese, a different concern emerged during the pandemic.

"We witnessed a side which is usually not shown among these groups, which is the feeling of vulnerability as a minister," he says. "We discovered the importance of always dedicating a space to address personal challenges and experiences as ministers. We give them the opportunity to share their struggles and how they connect, affect or nourish their ministry. This strengthened the group in trust and openness."

It was an eye-opening moment for him.

"This helped me think about the importance of asking about the emotional and spiritual well-being of our ministers and employees. Many times as diocesan directors, we think about how to help the communities through them. It is just as important to think about the ministers who accompany the people of God in the parishes."

That lesson is part of the overall one that Castellanos has learned about ministry during the pandemic.

"COVID-19 has taught us to value how important interpersonal relationships are to ministry. Today, more than ever, we value accompaniment. This accompaniment has proven to be essential for the kind of ministry that we do. Little by little, we have begun to resume meetings and events."

As for the future, Castellanos believes the emphasis of ministry has to be on building community.

"Less planning for the people and more planning *with* the people," he says. "The virtual world is great, but we do not want to take away the power that comes with creating community as disciples of Jesus." †



# Minnesota Catholics continue prayers after Chauvin verdict

ST. PAUL, Minn. (CNS)—As the Twin Cities and the nation continue to absorb events that led to the April 20 guilty verdict of former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin in the death of George Floyd, Minnesota's Catholic leaders are pointing a way forward: Christ's example of forgiveness, compassion and thirst for justice.

"We wish to hold up before all peoples the image of the Crucified Christ," the bishops of Minnesota said in a statement shortly before the jury announced its verdict in the Chauvin trial.

"Jesus Christ gave his life to bring eternal justice, reconciliation and salvation to all peoples. He is before us as a witness, because he is fully God and fully man, to the healing power of forgiveness, compassion, reconciliation and peace," the bishops said.

There is work to do, the bishops added, noting that the trial reopened questions about the impact of racism on society and culture.

Archbishop Bernard A. Hebda of St. Paul and Minneapolis released a separate statement after the verdict, calling it "a sobering moment for our community."

Jesus calls people, through their "shared brotherhood," to "a deeper respect for all human life," the archbishop said. "We ask him to bring healing into our communities, comfort to the family of George Floyd and all who mourn, and satisfaction to those who thirst for justice."

The jurors' verdict in Chauvin's case did not lead to more protests and riots. It was met with relief and hope among many who gathered to hear it in front of the Government Center, where the courtroom is located. A joyful mood prevailed at the George Floyd Memorial, the site where Floyd was killed.

Carole Burton, a 53-year-old business leadership, equity and workplace trainer and a member of the Basilica of St. Mary in Minneapolis, said she followed the trial and recognized its significance. But it was a moment, she told *The Catholic Spirit*, archdiocesan newspaper of St. Paul and Minneapolis.

"It's an important moment," said Burton, who is Black. "We as Catholics have a lot of work to do. In our workplaces and where we gather in large places, that is where change will take place. It's up to us to commit and to opt in and to dig in."

Everlyn Wentzlaff, 69, a member of St. Peter Claver Parish in St. Paul who helped organize a Peaceful Presence prayer group in the church during the trial, said she sees the Church's role as "being there for the



A woman in Minneapolis places flowers at the George Floyd memorial during an Earth Day celebration moved to April 24 because of the Derek Chauvin trial. The former Minneapolis police officer was found guilty by a jury of second-degree murder, third-degree murder and second-degree manslaughter in the death of George Floyd. (CNS photo/Octavio Jones, Reuters)

community and to listen, and to speak up and to speak out." She also wants to see people of color "at the table" as the Church in the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis addresses racism and racial injustice.

"We are here, and we want to be seen, and we want to be heard," said Wentzlaff,



Everlyn Wentzlaff

who is Black and who converted to Catholicism 25 years ago. "Catholics can be supportive. You don't have to be Black to support Black people."

St. Catherine University in St. Paul closed on April 21 for a day of reflection

following the verdict. In an Instagram post, the university encouraged students and staff to reflect on the situation. "We pray for peace, for strength and for love of the dear neighbor," the post said.

Since Floyd's death, Archbishop Hebda has been encouraging the faithful of the archdiocese to join him in prayers for peace and justice.

On the weekend before the trial began, the archbishop prayed with other faith

leaders in front of the Government Center. As closing arguments were scheduled to begin, the archbishop held a special Mass "For the Preservation of Peace and Justice" at the Cathedral of St. Paul in St. Paul, and he urged all priests of the archdiocese to celebrate that special Mass on the same day.

At the April 19 Mass, the archbishop in his homily noted that the issues of racism, peace and justice were larger than one person can solve, but that did not mean people should do nothing.

"We can't single-handedly force healing to those who feel the wounds of racism in our land," the archbishop said. "We can't bring George Floyd back to life, or Daunte Wright back to life. Does that mean we do nothing? Absolutely not." His reference to Wright was about the 20-year-old Black man fatally shot by a police officer on April 14 in the Minneapolis suburb of Brooklyn Center during a traffic stop.

The day after Wright's death, Father Paul Shovelain, pastor of St. John the Baptist Parish in New Brighton, got on his church roof and prayed a rosary he livestreamed on Facebook as he gazed at the homes and businesses, churches and schools of Brooklyn Center, only miles away, one hour after a citywide 7 p.m. curfew went into effect.

At St. Thomas More Parish in St. Paul, members of an anti-racism task force organized two hours of prayer every weekday afternoon during the Chauvin trial. The church was open from 3-5 p.m. to offer a "peaceful presence," for people to quietly reflect and pray for peace. A similar prayer opportunity was held at St. Peter Claver Church in St. Paul on Wednesday evenings.

On April 17, Father Paul Jarvis, pastor of St. Bridget Parish in north Minneapolis, and several parishioners walked the neighborhood in an ecumenical group called Come Together, praying for all victims of violence.

Dean Rademacher, parish director at St. Joseph Parish in New Hope, said parishioners recently formed a Peace and Justice Commission. Its first project is a book club meeting via Zoom to discuss a book titled *A Good Time for the Truth: Race in Minnesota*, a 2016 compilation of 16 essays by people of color from the Minnesota Historical Society.

Discussions are impactful, and they mark a step in the direction of greater understanding, Rademacher said.

"We always tie it into Catholic social teaching," he added. "There is a wisdom that's been around a long time." †

## Catholics urged to join in efforts needed to address racism, right wrongs

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Following the Derek Chauvin verdict, the chairmen of two U.S. bishops' committees prayed God "strengthens us to cleanse our land of the evil of racism, which also manifests in ways that are hardly ever spoken, ways that never reach the headlines."

The May 25, 2020, death of George Floyd while in police custody and the surrounding events, including the three-week trial of Chauvin, the former Minneapolis police officer now found guilty for his death, revealed "so much pain and sadness."

Floyd's death "highlighted and amplified the deep need to see the sacredness in all people, but especially those who have been historically oppressed. Whatever the stage of human life, it not only matters, it is sacred," said the chairmen's joint statement on April 21.

It was issued by Bishop Shelton J. Fabre of Houma-Thibodaux, La., chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) Ad Hoc Committee Against Racism, and Archbishop Paul S. Coakley of Oklahoma City, chairman of the USCCB's Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development.

In a statement after the verdict, Indianapolis Archbishop Charles C. Thompson said working to respect the dignity of every human must become a centerpiece of society.

"For the past 11 months, people of goodwill have prayed that George Floyd's death would not be in vain

and that justice would be done. Mr. Floyd's family said they want peace and do not want to see any further violence," Archbishop Thompson said. "Racism is not a thing of the past, and we all must continue to work and pray that the God-given dignity of all people—especially those in our country whose voices have not been heard adequately—will be respected. Let us never turn a blind eye to racism and let us pray that God will heal our broken world."



Archbishop Paul S. Coakley

The events following Floyd's death—which included protests and riots across the Twin Cities, the nation and parts of the world—"also highlighted the urgent need for racial healing and reconciliation," Bishop Fabre and Archbishop Coakley said. "As we have seen so plainly this past year, social injustices still exist in our country, and the nation remains deeply divided on how to right those wrongs."

On April 20, the jury, after deliberating for more than 10 hours through two days, found Chauvin guilty of second-degree unintentional murder, third-degree murder and second-degree manslaughter in the death of Floyd, an African American. Chauvin is white.

His actions in Floyd's arrest, including restraining him for nine minutes and 29 seconds with a knee on his neck as he lay on the street handcuffed, were captured on a bystanders' video that went viral.

Bishop Fabre and Archbishop Coakley joined their voices and prayers in support of Archbishop Bernard

A. Hebda of St. Paul and Minneapolis and the entire Minnesota Catholic Conference, and they quoted a conference statement:

"As a diverse community, the Catholic Church is committed to changing hearts and minds and to moving the conversation about race in this country beyond accusations and recriminations toward practical, nonviolent solutions to the everyday problems that are encountered in these communities."



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

The USCCB committee chairmen urged Catholics to "join in the hard work of peacefully rebuilding what hatred and frustration has torn down."

"This is the true call of a disciple and the real work of restorative justice," Bishop Fabre and Archbishop Coakley said. "Let us not lose the opportunity to pray that the Holy Spirit falls like a flood on our land again, as at Pentecost, providing us with spiritual, emotional and physical healing, as well as new ways to teach, preach, and model the Gospel message in how we treat each other."

Their statement included a link to resources for prayer prepared by the Ad Hoc Committee Against Racism and posted on the USCCB website at [bit.ly/3gs03DC](https://bit.ly/3gs03DC).

The two prelates also noted the USCCB's president, Los Angeles Jose H. Gomez, as well as several USCCB committee chairmen and other U.S. bishops and archbishops issued statements last year after Floyd's death. Links to those statements also are posted online at [bit.ly/32DHt36](https://bit.ly/32DHt36). †

# Pray, be poor, be close to the people, pope tells new priests

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—The priesthood “is not a career, it is a service,” Pope Francis told nine men just before ordaining them to the priesthood for the Diocese of Rome.

The service to which priests are called must reflect the way God has cared and continues to care for his people, a “style of closeness, a style of compassion and a style of tenderness,” the pope told the men on April 25 during his homily at the ordination Mass in St. Peter’s Basilica.

The Mass marked the first time in more than a year that Pope Francis presided at a liturgy at the main altar in the basilica, and the first time that more than a few hundred people were allowed in at the same time. Close to 1,000 people, mainly family and friends of the ordinands, sat socially distanced and wearing masks throughout the liturgy.

Rather than walking the entire length of the basilica, Pope Francis processed into the Mass from the Altar of the Chair, avoiding a situation where people would crowd together at the center aisle to see him up close and take photos.

The new priests, who are between the ages of 26 and 43, include six Italians, a Romanian, a Colombian and a Brazilian. Six studied at Rome’s major seminary; two prepared for the priesthood at the Neocatechumenal Way’s Redemptoris Mater Seminary in Rome; and one attended the Rome Seminary of Our Lady of Divine Love.

On the Sunday when the Gospel reading is about the good shepherd and the Church celebrates the World Day of Prayer for Vocations, Pope Francis told the new priests that they must never forget they were called from among God’s people to be shepherds.

“Be shepherds” like Jesus, he said, “shepherds of the holy, faithful people of God, shepherds who go with the people



Clergy help newly ordained priests change into their priestly vestments during an ordination Mass celebrated by Pope Francis in St. Peter’s Basilica at the Vatican on April 25. The pope ordained nine new priests for the Diocese of Rome. (CNS photo/Donatella Giagnori, pool)

of God—sometimes ahead of the flock, sometimes in the midst of it or behind it. But always there with the people of God.”

Pope Francis said that as he already had mentioned to the nine in the sacristy before Mass, “Please, steer clear of the vanity, the pride of money. The devil enters through the pockets. Think about this.”

“Be poor like the holy, faithful people

of God are poor,” he told them. “Don’t be climbers” seeking some kind of “ecclesiastical career.”

Priests who become “functionaries” or “businessmen,” he said, lose their contact with the people and “that poverty that makes them like Christ, poor and crucified.”

Closeness is key in the life of a priest,

the pope said. First, they must be close to God in prayer. Then, close to their bishop, close to one another and close to their people.

“I suggest you make a resolution today: Never speak ill of a brother priest,” he said. “If you have something against another, be a man, put on your pants, go and tell him to his face.” †



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Pope Francis ordains one of nine new priests for the Diocese of Rome during a Mass in St. Peter’s Basilica at the Vatican on April 25. (CNS photo/Donatella Giagnori, pool)

# Faith *Alive!*

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## Hospital chaplains faced challenges at start of pandemic

By Maureen Pratt

Among the many heroes that have emerged from hospitals and other care facilities during the pandemic, Catholic hospital chaplains are especially inspirational.

Whether virtually or in person, they have persevered to bring spiritual care and sacramental support to critically ill and dying COVID-19 patients while also providing a pastoral presence to families and health care workers at the heart of the crisis.

In the spring of 2020, when New York City hospitals were beginning to fill with critically ill patients, Paulist Father Paul Rospond could look through the window of his room in the rectory at St. Paul the Apostle Church and see the ambulances lined up in front of the emergency room at Mount Sinai West Hospital—but he couldn't go inside and minister.

"It was overwhelming," says Father Paul. "There were so many ambulances, against the unusual quiet of the city. But for several months during the pandemic, we couldn't go into the hospital at all."

Calls for prayer helped to reach across the ambulance-clogged street, and then the hospital started setting up Zoom calls with Father Paul, other chaplains, dying patients and their families. The calls were not a completely satisfactory substitute.

"Touch and anointing are part of the sacrament of the sick," says Father Paul. "Also, when a family is physically together, they can touch, talk, [and] comfort each other as they cry."

Still, virtual connections had benefits, especially with multinational families.

"It was possible to unite a number of family members," says Father Paul, "whether they were here or in Latin America. Waiting for the nurse to set up the call was a good opportunity to start a conversation among themselves as a substitute for family gatherings at the deathbed."

In California, the pandemic's arrival shattered regular chaplain ministry.

"It's the closest thing I've seen to a mass casualty event," says Conventual Franciscan Father Peter Mallin, senior priest chaplain at Providence Little Company of Mary Medical Center in Torrance, Calif.

Hospital lockdowns precluded administering sacraments and created a multilayered sense of social and spiritual isolation.

"It's not just social distancing," says Father Peter, "but the isolation people feel not only in the hospital, but at home."

Father Peter used technology to bring together patients, families and staff and celebrated Mass by closed-circuit television, even at the height of the pandemic, offering the prayer for spiritual communion as a way for distanced faithful to participate in Eucharist.

"Here in the hospital, where people's spiritual needs are intertwined with their health needs, particularly with COVID, there's a level of frustration in trying to meet their needs." But Father Peter says, "The Lord is not inhibited or frustrated by the sense of our isolation. God is still in that room."

Besides chaplains' efforts to minister electronically, some dioceses sought ways for priests to personally minister to the dying. Among these was the Archdiocese of Chicago.

Father Matt O'Donnell, pastor at St. Columbanus Parish in Chicago, says, "Very early on hospitals were shutting down to visitors. Last March, Cardinal [Blase J.] Cupich recognized it would be important for people who were in danger of death from



Deacon Richard Becker, director of pastoral care and ethics, blesses patient Camille Watts at Good Samaritan Hospital Medical Center in West Islip, N.Y., on Feb. 11. Hospital chaplains have had to adhere to COVID-19 protocols while offering pastoral care during the coronavirus pandemic. (CNS photo/Gregory A. Shemitz)

COVID to receive the anointing of the sick."

Justin Lombardo, chief human resource officer of the Archdiocese of Chicago and co-lead of the archdiocesan COVID-19 task force, says, "Across the country, priests were hungry to continue ministry."

An archdiocesan task force studied how this could be done safely, and in late March 2020, 24 younger priests, including Father O'Donnell, 34, answered the call for volunteers. Training included personal protection equipment protocols and how to administer the sacraments in the unique circumstances related to the pandemic.

A similar arrangement was made in the Church across central and southern Indiana during the height of the pandemic in 2020.

Often, patients were intubated and unable to speak.

Father O'Donnell says, "It was humbling for me to be able to pray with them, blessing them with the sign of the cross on their forehead and hands, even to know if they weren't able to respond that they were able to feel my presence there. In other rooms, they were awake and very grateful.

"I saw one person in a nursing home. I asked her if she wanted to receive Communion and she immediately started to cry. After all those months [of not being able to receive], she just cried. As a priest, it's a reminder of what we do."

Father O'Donnell says he will be "mindful of the trauma of the number of people who passed away in a short amount of time" and believes parishes can help everyone heal.

"Creating spaces for people to talk about what they've felt and process what they've been through," says Father O'Donnell, "that's definitely a thing parishes can do something about."

(Maureen Pratt's website is [www.maureenpratt.com](http://www.maureenpratt.com).) †



Father Sengole Thomas Gnanaraj, administrator of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Richmond, wears a protective suit outside a home in Connersville in the spring of 2020 before going in to anoint three family members—two who had tested positive for the coronavirus, including one who was believed to be close to death, and a third who was presumed to have been infected by the virus. (Submitted photo)

For the Journey/Effie Caldarola

## Acknowledging our nation's history as we move forward

In 1919, a mob of several thousand people dragged a Black man named Will Brown from an Omaha courthouse. He had been accused of raping a white woman, but never given a trial. He was beaten, hanged, shot more than 100 times, and his body burned before a jeering crowd, contributing to the gruesome photo history of race in this country.



Recently, we witnessed the trial of George Floyd's accused killer.

Floyd died while then-Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin kept his knee on Floyd's neck for more than nine minutes as the handcuffed man lay prostrate on the street. This death was captured for history as well.

Floyd's death, one of a string of Black deaths suffered during encounters with law enforcement, left the question of guilt in the hands of jurors. After a three-week trial, Chauvin was found guilty on April 20 on counts of second-degree unintentional murder, third-degree murder and second-degree manslaughter in the death of Floyd.

Brown and Floyd remind us that Jesus' own brutal death was performed at the hands of the authorities, both civil and religious, but a mob also played a role in demanding his execution.

I live in Omaha, and I'm participating in a program called Faith and Racial Healing: Embracing Truth, Justice and Restoration. It examines our country's long and torturous treatment of Blacks, from the first enslaved person brought to our fledgling colonies to the present day.

What's hardest to examine is the role that Christianity, and our own faith, played in this sorrowful history.

The transport of millions of Africans to the new colonies in the Americas was a transaction built on greed. The crops were lucrative but labor intensive. The slave trade itself was economically rewarding.

Never mind the fact that human beings were packed into ships like inanimate cargo, resting on planks one above the other where they sailed in terror, darkness and filth, awash in their own and others' bodily fluids. Millions died.

Catholic individuals, institutions and universities owned slaves and found excuses: Africans were "uncivilized" and in need of conversion.

History, of course, is replete with slavery. But this vast American enterprise offered something rather unique:

Generations were kept enslaved, millions bred to be free labor in perpetuity. Families were separated, humans marched to slave markets, chained and naked like so many cattle. White slave owners abused Black women freely; the offspring of these rapes added to the bottom line.

The end of the Civil War brought emancipation, but brief years of hope and freedom ended in the brutality of Jim Crow and American homegrown terrorism. Voter suppression, economic deprivation, housing redlining, strict segregation—these lasted well into the 1960s and in some ways plague us today.

Will Brown was one of more than 4,000 Black Americans, men and women, to be lynched in our history. We must ask ourselves, how deeply embedded is this generational trauma in the lives of our Black neighbors today? How willing are we to teach our history? How much would we prefer to forget?

The Jesuits have unveiled plans for a "truth and reconciliation" initiative in partnership with descendants of people once enslaved by their order, pledging to raise \$100 million within five years with a goal of reaching \$1 billion in pursuit of racial justice and racial healing. It's the largest financial pledge from a U.S. religious institution seeking to make amends.

How will this work? Stayed tuned. But it's an honest and positive beginning.

Often, when horrible events happen, we say, "This is not who we are." But we must acknowledge our history. This is part of who we are. We learn the greatness of American history, but we also must know our sin.

(Effie Caldarola writes for *Catholic News Service*.) †

Faith and Family/Sean Gallagher

## Easter Vigils to remember

I was 17 when I experienced an Easter Vigil for the first time. It was a moment in my life that I'll never forget.



In the spring of 1988, I went on a spring break trip to Italy sponsored by the Latin Club of Shelbyville High School, where I was a student. The trip happened to fall during Holy Week.

Several high schools from across the country participated in the trip, which was organized by a Catholic high school in Philadelphia.

We arrived in Rome on Good Friday. On Holy Saturday morning, the Philadelphia group announced that it had received at the last minute several tickets to the Easter Vigil to be celebrated at St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican. They offered them to anyone who wanted them.

I immediately accepted one, even though I didn't know at the time the significance and liturgical richness of the Easter Vigil.

It was powerful to worship with Pope John Paul II (who shook my hand while processing out of the basilica after the liturgy) and thousands of worshipers from around the world. Some 33 years later, my memories of that moment remain sharp.

But my recollection of a more modest Easter Vigil celebrated earlier this month at Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Parish in Indianapolis will surpass those 1988 memories in my heart and mind.

That's because it was the first Easter Vigil for my 16-year-old son Raphael.

On Palm Sunday evening, he asked me, wholly on his own, if he could attend the Easter Vigil. I gave my approval right away. Raphael ended up assisting as an altar server.

As a father who deeply loves the Catholic faith and tries (however imperfectly) to make it the center of my life, Raphael's request made me happier than I can say.

Watching him assist at this most holy of liturgies in a cassock and surplice in the sanctuary and lighting tapers of people in the congregation was beautiful.

It was a small fulfillment of dreams that my wife Cindy and I have had since we had Raphael baptized as an infant. Here he was, a growing young man asking wholly on his own to take part in and assist with a liturgy replete with beauty, but also one that the Church does not obligate the faithful to attend.

When Raphael was baptized, Cindy and I freely took on the sacred task of forming him in the faith.

Speaking for myself, I know that I often fail in this duty in one way or another pretty much on a daily basis. But the dreams of our son—and his four brothers—freely embracing the faith has never faded. Neither has the grace of God, which is the source of any good that comes from my life as a father.

As much as I already cherish the memory of Raphael taking part in the Easter Vigil, I remain sober in knowing that he certainly isn't at the end of his journey of faith. He continues to need the support of Cindy and me and so many others to help him get where God is calling him to be.

All parents have dreams for their children that they hold in their hearts from the time they are infants. There's no greater dream for us who are Catholic parents than to see our children fully embrace the faith that will lead them to be with God forever in heaven.

Rejoice with the joy of the risen Christ when you catch a glimpse of such a wonderful dream coming true. †

Intellect and Virtue/John Garvey

## Electronic memories no substitute for truly living the moment

I saw an ad on television recently that encouraged the observer to start "making memories" with the device being offered, probably a phone of some kind.



My iPhone has, under its Photos icon, a Memories section that undertakes to do this for me. It mashes random pictures together and sets them to music.

This is a strange idea, "making memories." But it exactly describes the way many of us go about living our lives.

When Pope Francis visited Washington in 2015, I attended an event for him at the nuncio's residence. On the way in, he stopped to shake some hands, including that of a teenage girl standing next to me.

Instead of shaking the pope's hand, she did what many young people would do: She turned her back on him, held up her phone and took a selfie of herself and the Holy Father.

When the New England Patriots staged their memorable comeback against the Atlanta Falcons in Super Bowl LI, Fox TV showed a similar incident. The Patriots' then-quarterback, Tom Brady, is married to a famous model, Gisele Bündchen, and she naturally had a luxury box.

When her husband engineered the crucial touchdown, the television cameras focused on her. She was holding up her cellphone, shaking her hair and recording herself cheering into the phone.

There's something out of order about this.

When I was just the age of the girl at the nunciature, my family had an audience with Pope Paul VI. It was in St. Peter's in Rome, and there was a large crowd. I managed to get away from my parents and up to the wooden barrier where the pope

was standing. This was before the age of cellphones, so I did the old-fashioned thing: I shook the pope's hand.

I have a memory of that incident, more precious now that he has been canonized. It's in my head, not on my phone, and after 50 years it's lost some of the surrounding detail. I imagine I can still feel the touch of his hand and the look in his eye.

Fifty years from now, the girl at the nunciature will have the advantage of me; her picture of her and Pope Francis will still be sharp—unless, of course, it gets lost in the cloud or the technology changes, as it did with floppy disks.

On the other hand, I actually met the pope. She acted a part in a play about meeting the pope. Her audience was the people who would view her Instagram account. Her emotions were not those of a teenager meeting the pope. They were a version staged for the cellphone camera of what someone might look like who was in a picture with the pope.

So too with Gisele. She wasn't transported with delight at Tom's victory. She was posing for the camera and her followers, playing the part of someone who was transported with delight.

In this preoccupation with recording electronic memories, we are missing out on the very experiences we want to share. The picture might be sharper than a recollection, though, to be honest, it leaves out smells and touches. But it can never compare with just living through the moment—the thing you miss when you're too busy putting yourself on the other side of the camera.

In *De Rerum Natura*, Lucretius observes critically, "Some people sacrifice life itself for the sake of statues and a title." We make the same mistake in trying to immortalize ourselves on the internet.

(John Garvey is president of *The Catholic University of America in Washington*. Follow him on Twitter @CatholicPres. Catholic University's website is [www.cua.edu](http://www.cua.edu).) †

The Human Side/Fr. Eugene Hemrick

## Let the spirit of virtues be the lifeblood of your joys, successes

How might we measure our spirit?

One excellent way is to determine how well it stacks up to virtue.



Kindness means being well-disposed toward life, neighbor, self and God. On a scale of one to 10, how does our kindness rate, and how well do we counter ill disposition?

Reverence is awe of another, life and God's creation. It likewise reminds us to allow a person their space and freedom.

Reverence speaks to our sense of awe, raising the question, "Are we able to maintain a deep sense of wonderment and truly feel its thrill? No matter our age or illnesses

we suffered, can we still be spellbound, especially about God's creation?"

Another side of reverence challenges us to ask, "How much do we give others their space, leaving them free to be themselves and avoiding the tendency to dominate them?"

An ancient Chinese proverb states that the fewer interests a person possesses, the more powerful the person is. It is an axiom on the virtue of disinterestedness, reminding us the power of our personality becomes stronger in proportion to the absence of interests to which we cling. Here we ask how much we are our true self, i.e., being a true selfless person who thinks less of self and more of others.

One meaning of loyalty is firmness that results when a person assumes a responsibility and abides by it no matter the

consequences. The old saying of them "stick to their guns" is an excellent description of firmness when tempted to retreat.

Some never think of humor as a virtue, yet it is because it gives us an eye for the oddity of existence and its comic side. It is the antithesis of uptightness by keeping us loose despite life's irrational shortcomings.

How well then do we employ humor to maintain our sense of humor? And how often do we employ it to help others be less serious about life's disappointments?

There is the temptation to determine life's progress through the eyes of success or failure. Seldom do we see the spirit within each virtue being the lifeblood of true joy and success.

(Father Eugene Hemrick writes for *Catholic News Service*.) †

Fifth Sunday of Easter/Msgr. Owen F. Campion

# The Sunday Readings

Sunday, May 2, 2021

- Acts of the Apostles 9:26-31
- 1 John 3:18-24
- John 15:1-8

The Acts of the Apostles, once again, furnishes the first reading for Mass in the season of Easter.



This weekend's first reading is about St. Paul and St. Barnabas. In the story, Paul, who was converted on the road to Damascus and then spent much time learning about Jesus, attempts to join the Christian community in Jerusalem. The

community fears him—and not without cause. After all, Paul had been a strident opponent of the Gospel and had persecuted Jerusalem's Christians.

Understandably, these same Christians must have wondered what dark purpose lay beneath Paul's wish to enter their community. Was he looking for ways to entrap Christians or to gather evidence to bring to the authorities in order to attack them?

Barnabas, already part of the community, spoke for Paul, urging Paul's admission into the community. Eventually Paul was accepted.

Paul remained in Jerusalem, speaking boldly about Jesus wherever he went. Such fervor was not always appreciated among those not part of the Church. Some tried to kill him, but the Christians rescued him by taking him to Caesarea, the Roman capital of the region, a seaport on the Mediterranean located slightly north of modern Tel Aviv. There they put Paul on a ship bound for Tarsus.

Meanwhile, as Acts says, the Church in Palestine was growing, and its faith was deepening.

Also, once more this season, the First Epistle of St. John supplies the second reading.

As was the case in the readings for the past weekends, this passage is moving and compelling in its eloquence. It refers to its readers as "children" (1 Jn 3:18). This form of address is highly expressive. Believers, as all humans, are vulnerable, weak and limited. They are "children"—but God's children. God will protect them from peril. Sin endangers them.

St. John's glorious Gospel provides the last reading.

Last weekend, the Lord gave us the beautiful image of the Good Shepherd. He is our leader. He guides us away from danger.

This weekend, the image is no less telling and descriptive. Jesus is the vine. We believers are the branches. This image was as immediate in its message to the first hearers of these words as was the story of the Good Shepherd. The society in which Jesus lived was agrarian. Viticulture was popular. Everyone knew about vines, and everyone knew what vine growers did for a living.

## Reflection

In last weekend's Gospel, Jesus appeared as our guide and protector. In this weekend's reading, the link between believers and Jesus is revealed. His life is within believers. He is bonded with believers. Without Christ, they can accomplish nothing. In Christ, they can live forever.

The key to this wonderful relationship is our grace-inspired willingness to love the Lord with the love that he first gave us, a love that is uncompromising, constant and complete.

Our love requires absolute trust and commitment.

Achieving this supreme level of love means recognizing the Lord and setting nothing above our desire to be disciples. Paul is a good model. After despising Jesus, he changed his heart completely and totally with the necessary help of God's grace.

The image of the vine is useful. Branches die if cut from the vine. Christians die spiritually if cut from the vine, which is Christ. The tragedy in this case is that some willingly cut themselves away from the vine. The blade is sin.

To look again to Paul as a model, he indeed was converted. The process was not instantaneous. Elsewhere, Acts speaks of his intense study and reflection as he sought to learn about Jesus. For him, discipleship was no solitary experience. He wanted to be part of the Church.

Once converted, Paul wholeheartedly turned to Jesus.

A secondary lesson is about evangelization. Barnabas reached out to Paul to bring him into the community. †

## Daily Readings

**Monday, May 3**  
St. Philip, Apostle  
St. James, Apostle  
1 Corinthians 15:1-8  
Psalm 19:2-5  
John 14:6-14

**Tuesday, May 4**  
Acts 14:19-28  
Psalm 145:10-13b, 21  
John 14:27-31a

**Wednesday, May 5**  
Acts 15:1-6  
Psalm 122:1-5  
John 15:1-8

**Thursday, May 6**  
Acts 15:7-21  
Psalm 96:1-3, 10  
John 15:9-11

**Friday, May 7**  
Acts 15:22-31  
Psalm 57:8-10, 12  
John 15:12-17

**Saturday, May 8**  
Acts 16:1-10  
Psalm 100:1b-2, 3, 5  
John 15:18-21

**Sunday, May 9**  
Sixth Sunday of Easter  
Acts 10:25-26, 34-35, 44-48  
Psalm 98:1-4  
1 John 4:7-10  
John 15:9-17

## Question Corner/Fr. Kenneth Doyle

### It is believed Jesus ascended to heaven near Jerusalem

Where did Christ's ascension take place? Matthew and Mark tell us that the Apostles were to go back to Galilee, but Luke says that they should stay in Jerusalem until Jesus has risen. (Kentucky)



Amount of Olives outside of Jerusalem's Old City is a small hexagonal chapel that commemorates the

site of the ascension of Jesus.

St. Luke, who is considered the author of the Acts of the Apostles, narrates in that book how the disciples gathered with Jesus, and "as they were looking on, he was lifted up and a cloud took him out of their sight" (Acts 1:9). Then, Luke notes, "they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a sabbath's journey away" (Acts 1:12).

In the weeks following his rising from the dead, Jesus appeared to the Apostles and disciples on a number of occasions, both in Jerusalem and in Galilee.

On Easter itself, he appeared to Mary Magdalene, to the women at the tomb, to Peter, to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus and to the 10 Apostles in Jerusalem (when Thomas was not present).

A week later, when Thomas was with them, he appeared again to the Apostles in Jerusalem. Later, he appeared to seven disciples as they were fishing near the shore of the Sea of Tiberias (Jn 21:1) and to 11 disciples on a mountain in Galilee (Mt 28:16).

The Ascension marks the final departure of Jesus for heaven following this series of apparitions. From then on, the disciples were to live by faith and communicate with Jesus through prayer and the sacraments.

As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* explains the sequence, "Christ's body was glorified at the moment of his resurrection, as proved by the new and supernatural properties it subsequently and permanently enjoys.

"But during the 40 days when he eats and drinks familiarly with his disciples and teaches them about the kingdom, his glory remains veiled under the appearance of ordinary humanity.

"Jesus' final apparition ends with the irreversible entry of his humanity into divine glory, symbolized by the cloud and by heaven, where he is seated from that time forward at God's right hand" (#659).

When is it proper to leave church at the end of Mass? Do you have to stay for the recessional hymn to end, or can we leave after the blessing, while the recessional is still being sung? (location withheld)

You should remain in church while the recessional hymn is being sung. Singing is a part of worship—particularly so if it is a hymn meant to be sung by the entire congregation.

Although the Mass finishes when the priest blesses us and the deacon or priest tells us that the Mass is ended, for the sake of simple politeness one ought not distract others in the congregation by leaving before communal worship is concluded.

I find it helpful if the priest remains at the altar for the first verse or two of the recessional hymn and structures it so that the procession of liturgical ministers reaches the back of church as that hymn is ending.

Ideally, of course, worshippers would then spend a few minutes in private, silent prayer of thanksgiving before leaving church.

On this side of heaven, we are never closer to the Lord than when we've just received him in the Eucharist.

(Questions may be sent to Father Kenneth Doyle at [askfatherdoyle@gmail.com](mailto:askfatherdoyle@gmail.com) and 30 Columbia Circle Dr., Albany, New York 12203.) †

## My Journey to God

### Watching You

By Jan Riley

I'm watching you, from inside my bed,  
as you do my care.  
I'm watching you intently,  
as you stroke my hair.

I watch you as you pick me up  
to hold me in your arms,  
And know God gives you strength and grace  
to protect me from all harm.

My parents cannot visit,  
Their choices have been bad.  
Here I am, beginning life,  
for that I'm very glad.

It may look like I'm all alone,  
I know that seems unfair.  
But I have my NICU nurse,  
who is always there.

Will I remember my preemie weeks,  
spent without a mom and dad?  
Or will I feel the divine love of God,  
That I always had?



(Jan Riley is a member of Holy Spirit Parish in Indianapolis. Photo: A nurse cares for a premature baby in an incubator in Sanaa, Yemen. May 6 is designated as Nurse Appreciation Day in the United States.) (CNS photo/Sucheta Das, Reuters)

# Rest in peace

Please submit in writing to our office by 10 a.m. Thursday before the week of publication; be sure to state date of death. Obituaries of archdiocesan priests serving our archdiocese are listed elsewhere in *The Criterion*. Order priests and religious sisters and brothers are included here, unless they are natives of the archdiocese or have other connections to it; those are separate obituaries on this page.

**BACK, Lawrence E.**, 71, St. Mary, Greensburg, April 12. Father of Brittany and Brian Back. Stepfather of Eric Sparks. Brother of Bob and Dave Back. Uncle and great-uncle of several.

**BOVA, Marie C.**, 98, St. Bartholomew, Columbus, April 10. Mother of Cheryl, Kenneth, Raymond and William, Jr. Grandmother of four. Great-grandmother of five.

**CARSON, Thomas J.**, 75, St. Jude, Indianapolis, April 13. Husband of Mary Carson. Father of Gina Hansen, Nancy Hermann, Gretchen Miller and Frank Carson. Brother of Nita and Jim Carson. Grandfather of 10.

**CHARLES, Thomas J.**, 88, St. Jude, Indianapolis, April 18. Father of Mary Carroll, Terri Hamilton, Diana Mayfield, Angel Woolever, Michael and Robert Charles. Grandfather of 11.

**COX, Judith (Gaones)**, 83, St. Mary-of-the-Knobs, Floyd County, April 16. Wife of Philip Cox. Mother of Ariane, Vivian, Eric and Kevin Cox. Grandmother of 10. Great-grandmother of one.

**DAUBY, Cleta E.**, 96, St. Paul, Tell City, April 17. Mother of Mary Jane Miller, Mike, Phil and Steve Dauby. Sister of Marietta Collins and Leo Strobel. Grandmother of four. Step-grandmother of two. Great-grandmother of seven.

**DEES, John W.**, 95, St. Lawrence, Indianapolis, March 18. Father of Julie Ann, Charles, Sr., John and William Dees.

**DRAGA, Robert J.**, 93, St. Lawrence, Indianapolis, April 7. Husband of Rosemary Draga. Father of Deborah Carr, Claudia Grantham, David and

William Draga. Grandfather of eight. Great-grandfather of seven.

**GILL, Corrine**, 95, St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower), Indianapolis, Jan. 3. Mother of Michael McCoy. Sister of John Farrell. Grandmother of one. Great-grandmother of one.

**GROMER, Lorena A.**, 83, St. Elizabeth of Hungary, Cambridge City, April 9. Mother of Bill Gromer. Sister of B. Jo Brewer. Grandmother of two. Great-grandmother of two.

**HARDING, Steven J.**, 39, St. Augustine, Leopold, April 10. Son of Danny and Pam Harding. Brother of Cheri Harpenau, Kelly Mace and Vick Queck. Uncle of several.

**HUBERT, Norman A.**, 79, St. Augustine, Leopold, April 7. Uncle and great-uncle of several.

**JOHNSON, Aimee R.**, 50, Our Lady of the Greenwood, Greenwood, April 17. Wife of Eric Johnson. Mother of Ariel and Paris Johnson. Daughter of Bridget and Jerry Lahrman. Sister of Jill Nelson, Mary Ann Schoettle and Todd Lahrman.

**MCGOFF, Dorothy L.**, 91, St. Pius X, Indianapolis, April 11. Mother of Patty Nowlan, Mary, Jim, John and Kevin McGoff. Grandmother of 11. Great-grandmother of six.

**MORROW, Rosalie J.**, 73, St. Lawrence, Indianapolis, March 28. Wife of Clarence Morrow. Mother of Tammy Henline and Charles Robertson. Grandmother of six. Great-grandmother of four.

**O'BRYAN, Patricia**, 85, Holy Family, Oldenburg, April 12. Sister of Karen, Bob, Jerry, John, Michael, Norman, Tim and Willie O'Bryan. Aunt and great-aunt of several.

**REMMERT, William**, 64, St. Lawrence, Indianapolis, March 9. Father of Danielle and Shannon Remmert. Grandfather of two.

**REMBOSKE, Robert**, 63, St. Bartholomew, Columbus, April 13. Father of Stacy Kidwell and Ryder Remboske. Stepfather of Liam Wettrick. Son of Betty Dittrich. Brother of Lori Wood. Grandfather of two.

**ROSEMAN, Misty N. (Kuykendall)**, 47, St. Lawrence, Indianapolis, Jan. 29. Wife of Kenneth Roseman. Mother of Anthony and Ethan Roseman. Daughter of Virginia Kuykendall. Sister of Zaya Kuykendall-Bowen and Donald Kuykendall.

## April snow in Judy



Shadows and morning sunlight spread across snow on the Veterans Memorial Plaza in downtown Indianapolis on April 21. Unusual late April snow fell across the city and other parts of Indiana the previous night. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

**RUDOLPH, Sr., George**, 89, St. Paul, Tell City, April 1. Father of Angela Baur, Shelia Poole, Melena Waninger, Ed, Jeff and Keith Rudolph. Brother of Anna Owen.

Grandfather of six. Great-grandfather of four.

**SCHUMAN, Marthia C.**, 86, All Saints Parish, Dearborn County, April 11.

Wife of Joe Schuman. Mother of Sharon Bischoff, Mary Jayne Cull, Sue Hartman, Terri Norman, Donna Smith, Dale and Larry Schuman.

Sister of Mary Schuman. Grandmother of 14. Great-grandmother of 13.

**SOURBEER, Carmen L.**, 87, St. Elizabeth of Hungary, Cambridge City, April 16. Mother of Jeff and Jim Sourbeer. Grandmother of eight. Great-grandmother of two.

**SPENCER, Helen A.**, 89, St. Paul, Tell City, April 18. Mother of Sara Belcher, Cathy Hagedorn, Jane James, Carol Sabelhaus, Joe, Jon and Paul Spencer. Sister of Betty Hartz, Jane Huber and Charles Peter. Grandmother of 12. Great-grandmother of 20.

**SPOONER, Zachary D.**, 30, St. Jude, Indianapolis, April 15. Son of Douglas and Mary Ellen Spooner. Brother of Sarah Latham and Bill Spooner. Grandson of Jim and Judy Kelley. Uncle of one.

**WISSEL, Elvera H.**, 82, St. Anthony of Padua, Morris, April 15. Mother of Alyssa Dickey, Monica Hooten and Sheila Kieffer. Sister of Vernon Harpring. Grandmother of six. Step-grandmother of two. Great-grandmother of seven. †

## Providence Sister Mary Patricia Cummings served in Catholic schools, parish ministry

Providence Sister Mary Patricia Cummings (formerly Sister Marie Janice), a member of the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods in St. Mary-of-the-Woods, died on April 12 at Mother Theodore Hall on the campus her religious community's motherhouse. She was 96.

Because of the coronavirus pandemic, a virtual funeral service was held on April 22. Burial followed at the sisters' cemetery.

Sister Mary Patricia was born on March 10, 1925, in New Albany where she grew up as a member of the former Holy Trinity Parish. She entered the Sisters of Providence on Jan. 7, 1942, and professed final vows on Aug. 15, 1949.

Sister Mary Patricia earned a bachelor's degree at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College and master's degrees at Indiana State University in Terre Haute and at Spalding University in Louisville, Ky.

During her 79 years as a member of the Sisters of Providence, she ministered as an

educator for 32 years in schools in Illinois, Indiana, Maryland and Washington, D.C. In 1978, Sister Mary Patricia began ministry as a pastoral associate in parishes in Illinois and Indiana. In 2001, she returned to the motherhouse where she served her community in many ways before dedicating herself entirely to prayer in 2008.

In the archdiocese, Sister Mary Patricia served at St. Thomas Aquinas School in Indianapolis from 1953-56, Holy Family School in New Albany from 1967-69, St. Charles Borromeo School in Bloomington from 1970-71, Our Lady of Providence High School in Clarksville from 1971-76 and as a pastoral associate at St. Augustine Parish in Jeffersonville from 1978-85.

Memorial gifts may be sent to the Sisters of Providence, 1 Sisters of Providence Road, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods, IN 47876. †

### Online Lay Ministry Formation

The Archdiocese of Indianapolis has partnered with the University of Notre Dame and Catholic Distance University (CDU) to offer not-for-credit online theology classes:

- Earn certificate in Lay Ministry
- Complete 12 courses online with ND STEP program
- CDU offers classes on Catechism of the Catholic Church
- 20% discount for all employees, volunteers, and parishioners

For more information, please log on to [www.archindy.org/layministry](http://www.archindy.org/layministry)



### REPORT SEXUAL MISCONDUCT NOW

If you are a victim of sexual misconduct by a person ministering on behalf of the Church, or if you know of anyone who has been a victim of such misconduct, please contact the archdiocesan victim assistance coordinator. There are two ways to make a report:

**1 Ethics Point**  
Confidential, Online Reporting  
[www.archdioceseofindianapolis.ethicspoint.com](http://www.archdioceseofindianapolis.ethicspoint.com) or 888-393-6810

**2** Carla Hill, Archdiocese of Indianapolis, Victim Assistance Coordinator  
P.O. Box 1410, Indianapolis, IN 46206-1410

**317-236-1548 or 800-382-9836, ext. 1548**  
[carlahill@archindy.org](mailto:carlahill@archindy.org)

## Be consoling presence for suffering, pope tells nuns

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—The experience of tragedy and loss can help Christians become a consoling presence for others in need of hope and consolation, Pope Francis said.

Meeting at the Vatican with a group of Poor Clare nuns from the Monastery of St. Clare in Paganica, near L'Aquila, the pope chose to set aside his prepared address on April 26 and speak privately with them, the Vatican said.

In his prepared remarks, the pope recalled the suffering the community endured after a devastating earthquake that struck central Italy in 2009, injuring an estimated 1,000 people and killing nearly 300, including Mother Gemma Antonucci, the abbess of the monastery.

"God made you emerge from that tragedy strengthened and, like the grain of wheat that must die in order to bear fruit, so has it been for your monastic community," the pope wrote in his address, which he handed to the sisters.

Besides experiencing great pain and loss, the pope

said, the community also experienced "the loving care of your heavenly Father and the solidarity of so many people."

"On that night, you lost everything except God and fraternity. From these two solid points, you set out again with courage," he said.

The Poor Clare's efforts to rebuild their monastery "is a message you have given to the people" of the region, he said. "In the face of tragedy, it is necessary to start anew from God and from fraternal solidarity. Thank you so much for this."

Pope Francis encouraged the nuns to continue to be "a prayerful and consoling presence" to the people who have been "sorely tried by the terrible experience and are still in need of comfort and encouragement."

"Faithful to the charism received from St. Clare and St. Francis, respond with generosity to the desire that God has placed in your hearts, living your lives as consecrated women in total adherence to the Gospel," the pope said. †

## Investing with Faith/Kimberly Pohovey

# Beneficiary designations provide easy way to benefit charity of choice

Have you thought of leaving a planned gift to a charity near to your heart, only to be overwhelmed by the available options or complexity of



giving vehicles? If you are not in a legal or financial role, the world of planned giving can be confusing.

What if I could tell you there is an extremely easy and convenient way for you to

leave a lasting gift to a parish, school or ministry that has touched your life or heart? It's as easy as naming a beneficiary designation.

Beneficiary designations apply to: 1) Individual retirement accounts; 2) Employer-sponsored retirement plans, such as 401(k), 403(b), etc.; and 3) Life insurance policies. Simply put, you can name an archdiocesan parish, school or

ministry as the entity that will benefit from any one of these accounts at the time of your death. It is a legally binding directive, and it is as stress-free as contacting the institution that manages your retirement account or life insurance policy and completing their required form stating who you want to benefit. Often, this can be accomplished on your account custodian's website.

Beneficiary designations may be handled in several ways. You may set up a "primary" as well as a "secondary" or "contingent" beneficiary. The secondary beneficiary is named in the event that your primary beneficiary is no longer living at the time of your death. In this scenario, many donors elect to name a charity as the secondary beneficiary after intending for a family member to be the primary. You can also designate that your asset's full value be given to the beneficiary of your choosing, or you may designate percentages of the asset's value to be given to multiple beneficiaries.

Here are some compelling reasons to consider a charitable beneficiary designation:

—It is easy to set up; no out-of-pocket expense; no legal fees.

—Custodian institutions provide the necessary forms, instructions and assistance.

—Beneficiary designations avoid probate court, making for a seamless transfer of the gift.

—Your designations can be revisited as your life and giving goals change.

Perhaps the most compelling reason to consider a charitable beneficiary designation is that gifting retirement assets to a parish, school or ministry occurs tax free. However, if you leave retirement assets to your heirs, they will be taxed.

According to the Stepped-Up Basis tax provision, donors may transfer other appreciated assets to heirs, such as stocks, bonds, mutual funds, businesses, equipment and real estate,

and avoid capital gains tax. However, IRAs, 401(k)s, pensions and annuities are not eligible under this provision. Therefore, it may prove more tax-savvy for you to leave other appreciated assets to heirs and retirement accounts to a charitable organization.

In my role at the archdiocese, I am one of a team of development officers whose responsibility it is to walk donors through the planned giving options that best suit their needs, marrying their passions with their giving goals. If you have questions regarding beneficiary designations or other planned giving options, we would be honored to assist you. Contact [ccf@archindy.org](mailto:ccf@archindy.org).

(Kimberly Pohovey is the director of major and planned gifts for the archdiocese. Tax or legal information provided herein is not intended as tax or legal advice. Always consult with your legal, tax or financial advisors before implementing any gift plan.) †

## Abuse survivor believes now is a great evangelical moment for Church

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (CNS)—Teresa Pitt Green, who as a child was sexually abused by Catholic priests, said she is convinced "there's a lot more hope than people dare to feel."

"If I can turn all the suffering and darkness of my life into a testimony that, even in that place, Jesus was there and Jesus heals me, then that's not such a bad way to use having been abused," she said.

Pitt Green is co-founder of Spirit Fire, a Christian restorative justice initiative and fellowship of survivors of abuse in the Church.

People associated with Spirit Fire find healing by integrating their therapies with their efforts to grow in their relationship with God. They share wisdom, experience and faith with others seeking healing, growth and reconciliation.

They work with Church leaders to deepen pastoral care for survivors, their family members and all Catholics, including priests, deacons, consecrated and religious persons.

"There is simply no darkness where you're not going to find light," Pitt Green told *The Catholic Missourian*, newspaper of the Diocese of Jefferson City. "Not because there's a lamp, but because of Jesus."

She and the other Spirit Fire survivors are committed to holding the entire Church—hierarchy, clergy and laity—accountable for protecting its most vulnerable people, and for tragic failures to do so in the past.

They also are helping all Catholics—priests, laypeople, victims and bystanders—find healing and reconciliation.

"Even after his resurrection, Jesus still had his wounds," Pitt Green noted. "We also still have our wounds, but they are different—transformed by the new life that he offers us after his own suffering."

Pitt Green grew up in a devout, Irish Catholic family in the Northeast. Her mother started working in the parish rectory when Teresa was 5 or 6. Her father drove 40 miles each day so she could attend a Catholic school.

The family regularly entertained priests as guests in their home. Her parents had no idea the priests they knew and trusted were abusing their daughter.

She wasn't abused every day, she said, "but once you're under the spell of being intimidated and dominated, you spend your life in that time between each instance of abuse."

The trauma affected her physically, emotionally and spiritually. Symptoms of what now is called post-traumatic stress disorder persist to this day.

She left home at 19, losing access to her parents and everyone she knew.

She wandered around New York City,

trying various group programs and forms of alternative medicine to make the pain go away.

"I knew I needed a savior," she noted. "And there's only one Savior. ... Through all those terrible years, at Mass every week, even with my abusers saying [the Mass], I knew the Eucharist was real."

She would spend "hours in adoration," she added.

The lingering trauma affected her career. Her health suffered. At 25, still thinking the abuse was her fault, she confessed everything to a priest.

"He would have none of that!" she recalled. "He said, 'What happened to you is not a sin on your part. Now let's talk about getting you the help you need.'"

She began the grueling road to healing and eventually reconciled with her family. They worked to create new relationships, she said, "and our lives are now so much richer for our having done that."

A survivor's journey is never easy, and there's no set timetable for healing, she said. "Healing itself hurts. ... I've accepted I will always feel the pain I feel. I just have to manage it."

The Catholic Church's past failures to protect its most vulnerable members from abuse have shaken people's faith to the core, but she said, "Just because some bishops and in some cases, laypeople, didn't have the faith to face down this evil, that doesn't mean that Jesus didn't.

"You can understand pathology, but here, I also understand evil and that it has been vanquished, once and for all," Pitt Green said. "I stake my whole life that Christ is the victor, and it in some way works out when I'm rejoined with him."

Referring to the Church, she believes "it's time to for the family to heal."

There's great hope—enormous hope—in healing," she said. "It's what our whole faith is about!"

That's why she and Luis Torres, another survivor of abuse, founded Spirit Fire: to help restore what has been broken in themselves, their families, the Church and their society.

She and Father Lewis S. Fiorelli, a priest of the Oblates of St. Francis de Sales, co-wrote *Veronica's Veil: Spiritual Companionship for Adult Survivors of Child Abuse—A Guide for Integrating Faith with Recovery*.

Catholics' hearts "are broken by this" scandal, she said. "All priests' hearts are broken by this, although most of them have carried the burden unbelievably well.

"We deeply believe that faith and spirituality is part of our healing," she said, and that "engaging in a constructive dialogue with the Church can help bring more pastoral care to survivors who need it and can't find it."

She and other Spirit Fire survivors facilitate low-key dialogue, including with members of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors.

The pandemic has forced many of these gatherings to take place virtually, but they are still God-led and effective, she said. Participants return to their dioceses or curial roles with renewed conviction to help past victims and their families and to prevent any abuse from happening again.

Pitt Green and her Spirit Fire associates help priests learn how to become sensitized to trauma and minister to victims without taking on a therapist's role.

She serves on numerous diocesan review boards advising local bishops and also works with several programs for priests who have been abusers.

She feels the Church has made remarkable progress in how it protects children from abuse and how it helps victim-survivors.

"I can talk to you about ways the Church failed at it, but it is really important that people realize that this isn't just the Church. It's everywhere," she said.

As chairwoman of the Northern Virginia Human Trafficking Task Force, she said this is a dangerous time in general for children and young people, because they are being lured by technology into abuse and exploitation.

"The threats are much bigger now," she said. "People need to become aware of child abuse and the signs of it."

There are ways to empower young people without scaring them and ways to empower adults to help protect them.



Teresa Pitt Green, an abuse survivor, speaks to bishops in the chapel during a day of prayer on Nov. 12, 2018, at the fall general assembly of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in Baltimore. (CNS photo/Bob Roller)

"There's a lot to be done and a lot of reason to really stay close to our faith," she said, but she sees reason for hope.

"It's so incomprehensible that there could be so much hope," she said. "But it's there. You just have to walk people through it."

(More information about Spirit Fire can be found at [spiritfirelive.org](http://spiritfirelive.org).) †

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# At 108, Dominican sister says God ‘just wants me to hang around’

EAST WILLISTON, N.Y. (CNS)—To put Sister Francis Dominici Piscatella’s extraordinarily long life into historical perspective, consider that Pope St. Pius X was pontiff and Woodrow Wilson was U.S. president when she was born in 1913.

Nine popes and 18 presidents later, Sister Francis, a member of the Sisters of St. Dominic of Amityville, N.Y., is defying the aging process while living independently in a condominium apartment she shares with another religious sister at a Long Island village.

Sister Francis celebrated her 108th birthday on April 20.

Data collected by the Gerontology Research Group, an organization that tracks centenarians globally, said Sister Francis is the second-oldest woman religious in the United States. Only Sister Vincent de Paul Hutton, a Dominican Sister of Peace, at 110, is older. She resides in a long-term care facility managed by her community in St. Catharine, Ky.

Sister Francis told Catholic News Service (CNS) she doesn’t feel her age.

“I’m just living a normal life, thinking normally, reading and doing things an old lady would do,” she said.

“Normal” isn’t the word most observers would use to describe her. “Incredible” may be more accurate.

Sister Francis remains in exceptional physical and mental health 90 years after entering religious life.

Her daily activities include praying, reading, solving word-search puzzles and watching the Catholic Faith Network and other television programming. Weather permitting, she attends daily Mass with fellow Dominican Sister Francis Daniel Kammer, 81, with whom she lives and who drives her to church and other appointments.

Remarkably, Sister Francis manages to get around without the use of a wheelchair, walker or cane.

Born and raised in Central Islip, N.Y., she has proven to be strikingly resilient, having lived through two World Wars, the Great Depression, the Spanish flu and COVID-19 pandemics, among other challenges.

At age 2, Sister Francis’ left forearm was amputated after she sustained a serious hand injury. She later recovered from a car accident that resulted in a shattered right arm and bounced back from a near-fatal brain bleed suffered when she fell at age 102. She also has had hip-replacement surgery.

Sister Francis, one of seven children of Italian immigrants Salvatore and Angela Piscatella, credited her mother for developing her drive to overcome personal obstacles.

“Nobody has ever had to help me,” she said. “If

anyone was helping somebody, it was I helping them.

“My mother made me completely independent. When I went to the convent, I had to prove to my superiors that there was nothing I couldn’t do.”

Sister Francis joined the Dominicans in 1931 after other religious communities turned her away because of her physical disability. She responded to the call to serve the Church as an educator, preparing for that career at St. John’s University, where she earned bachelor’s and master’s degrees.

Possessing an aptitude and love for numbers, Sister Francis excelled as a math teacher and tutor at several grade schools in the Diocese of Brooklyn, N.Y., and subsequently at Dominican Commercial High School in a neighborhood of the New York City borough of Queens, and Dominican-run Molloy College in Rockville Centre, N.Y., where she worked for 52 years before retiring at age 84.

Sister Francis Daniel was one of the thousands of students inspired by the beloved nun. She was taught by Sister Francis at Dominican Commercial and later asked her to sponsor her when she applied to enter the order.

Following in Sister Francis’ footsteps, Sister Francis Daniel became a religious sister and a teacher, serving in elementary schools in the Brooklyn and Rockville Centre dioceses before reuniting with her as a fellow professor at Molloy. Between the two of them, Sisters Francis and Francis Daniel have recorded 156 years of religious life.

Prayers and a positive attitude have helped the two women religious navigate life during the coronavirus pandemic.

They have found sanctuary in their home and leave the apartment only when necessary. Sister Francis Daniel drives Sister Francis to doctors’ appointments. They resumed attending Mass when their parish, St. Aidan Church in Williston Park, reopened for communal worship last spring.

Sister Francis Daniel also will make occasional trips to



Sister Francis Dominici Piscatella, a member of the Sisters of St. Dominic of Amityville, N.Y., waves as relatives and friends gather outside the window of her East Williston, N.Y., apartment to celebrate her 108th birthday on April 20. Also pictured is Sister Francis Daniel Kammer, a fellow Amityville Dominican. According to searchable public data, Sister Francis is the second-oldest living religious sister in the U.S. (CNS photo/Gregory A. Shemitz)

the store for provisions to supplement the cooked meals relatives and friends deliver to them.

Cabin fever has not affected the two women. “We’re never bored,” Sister Francis Daniel said. “We do a lot of praying. We always find something to do.”

Because of the pandemic, Sister Francis’ last two birthday celebrations were restricted to the lawn outside the front windows of their ground-floor apartment, where family members and other well-wishers gathered with balloons and signs and sang “Happy Birthday” to her.

Both women religious, who have received the first dose of a two-dose COVID-19 vaccine, remain hopeful that Sister Francis will be able to celebrate her next birthday at a restaurant that can accommodate a guest list that includes her eight nephews and nieces, 23 grandnephews and grandnieces, and 25 great-grandnephews and great-grandnieces.

Sister Francis, who will achieve “supercentenarian” status when she turns 110, said she is “happy” with her life.

Her secret to longevity?

“I guess God doesn’t want me yet,” she said. “He just wants me to hang around.” †

## INDIA

continued from page 1

Father P.A. George, director of the Holy Family Hospital in New Delhi, told CNS.

“I have no place even in emergency [area] to give oxygen. Patients are just dying in front of my eyes. Feeling so distressed and frustrated and helpless. It is horrible, and the disaster is beyond the imagination. Please pray to God [to] give us strength to save some lives,” said the priest, who heads the largest Catholic hospital in New Delhi.

Though the hospital has a limit of 340 beds, it is accommodating nearly 400 patients, he added.

In Gujarat state, Syro-Malabar Father Thomas Nadackalan, director of Christ Hospital in Rajkot, told CNS on April 26, “We have to turn away around 600 cases daily.

“We are struggling to get oxygen in time to save the lives of those admitted,” he said. Of the 70 beds in the hospital, he added, 40 are set apart for those needing oxygen treatment.

The inadequate care and treatment in government hospitals in Ahmedabad, commercial capital of Gujarat, drew national attention as even the widespread deaths were underreported by the state government.

The National English daily *The Hindu* carried an investigative story exposing

the hollowness of the government claim of only 78 deaths on April 16, citing cremation of 689 bodies in seven cities alone under COVID-19 protocol in the state.

“We have lost a dozen members of our community here,” P.T. Chacko, president of Gujarat Syro-Malabar Catholic Association, told CNS on April 26. He, his wife and daughter were recovering from COVID-19.

Cardinal Oswald Gracias, president of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of India, offered the Church’s full support in “the war against the dreadful COVID-19 situation in the country.

“There was lack of planning and lack of foresight. Otherwise, we would not have been in the awful situation we are in now,” Cardinal Gracias, archbishop of Mumbai, told CNS on April 25. That day, India’s health ministry recorded nearly 354,000 new infections and more than 2,800 deaths. In the week of April 18-25, India witnessed exponential spread of the pandemic across the country.

“The world is concerned about the situation in India and I am getting several calls,” said Cardinal Gracias, endorsing widespread criticism in India against the federal government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi for its laxity and failure to prepare for the second surge.

COVID-19 infections had peaked at 93,000 cases in mid-September in India, with 1.38 billion people. The infections declined steadily to 11,000 cases by February with the daily death toll below 100. However, the fresh infections soon started rising, with daily counts reaching

52,000 on April 1.

Following the deadly second surge, India media has been witnessing an unprecedented avalanche of criticism for the severe shortage of medicines, vaccines and even oxygen that the government had been exporting to other countries. The newspaper *India Today* reported the government failed to act on a February parliamentary committee report that had urged it to augment its oxygen production and supply system in preparation for a second surge.

The oxygen shortage has become the scourge of the nation, with hundreds of breathless COVID-19 victims dying even in hospitals struggling to get adequate oxygen supply.

Responding to reports of states blocking and even hijacking trucks carrying liquid oxygen to various hospitals, Cardinal Gracias said, “When a traffic signal fails and there are no policemen at the crossroads, there will be chaos.

“The government has to increase oxygen supply and set up strict monitoring to ensure each hospital gets enough oxygen so that people do not die in hospitals,” he added.

“The nation has to fight against this pandemic on war footing. We have already opened ... centers and [are] ready to extend all our support with our personnel and institutions in this fight,” Cardinal Gracias said.

On April 25, Cardinal George Alencherry, major archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church, urged federal and state governments “to treat the availability of medical oxygen as a basic human right.” †



A relative holds a bottle of intravenous medicine being administered to a COVID-19 patient waiting to enter a hospital for treatment in Ahmedabad, India, on April 26. (CNS photo/Amit Dave, Reuters)