



The MESSAGE

Southwestern Indiana's Catholic
Community Newspaper

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www.evdiomessage.org

'Come and See' during National Catholic Schools Week

BY DR. DARYL HAGAN
Superintendent of
Catholic Schools

National Catholic Schools Week (Jan. 31-Feb. 6, 2021) recognizes the value of Catholic education in developing our young people so they can reach their full potential. We acknowledge the vital role of parishes, pastors, administrators, faculty, staff and volunteers in this effort. Moreover, we celebrate our students as they are formed in the faith and acquire the skills needed for the 21st century. A key event each year is 'Come and See.' The students and faculty of our 26 Catholic schools invite prospective families to an open house from 5-7 p.m. local time on Thursday, Feb. 4, 2021.

The "Come and See" event has been reimagined this year to provide a safe and welcoming event to all prospective families. While current students will not be present this year as student ambassadors, their community, academic and extra-curricular achievements will be displayed. Families will tour independent of other families and all mitigation

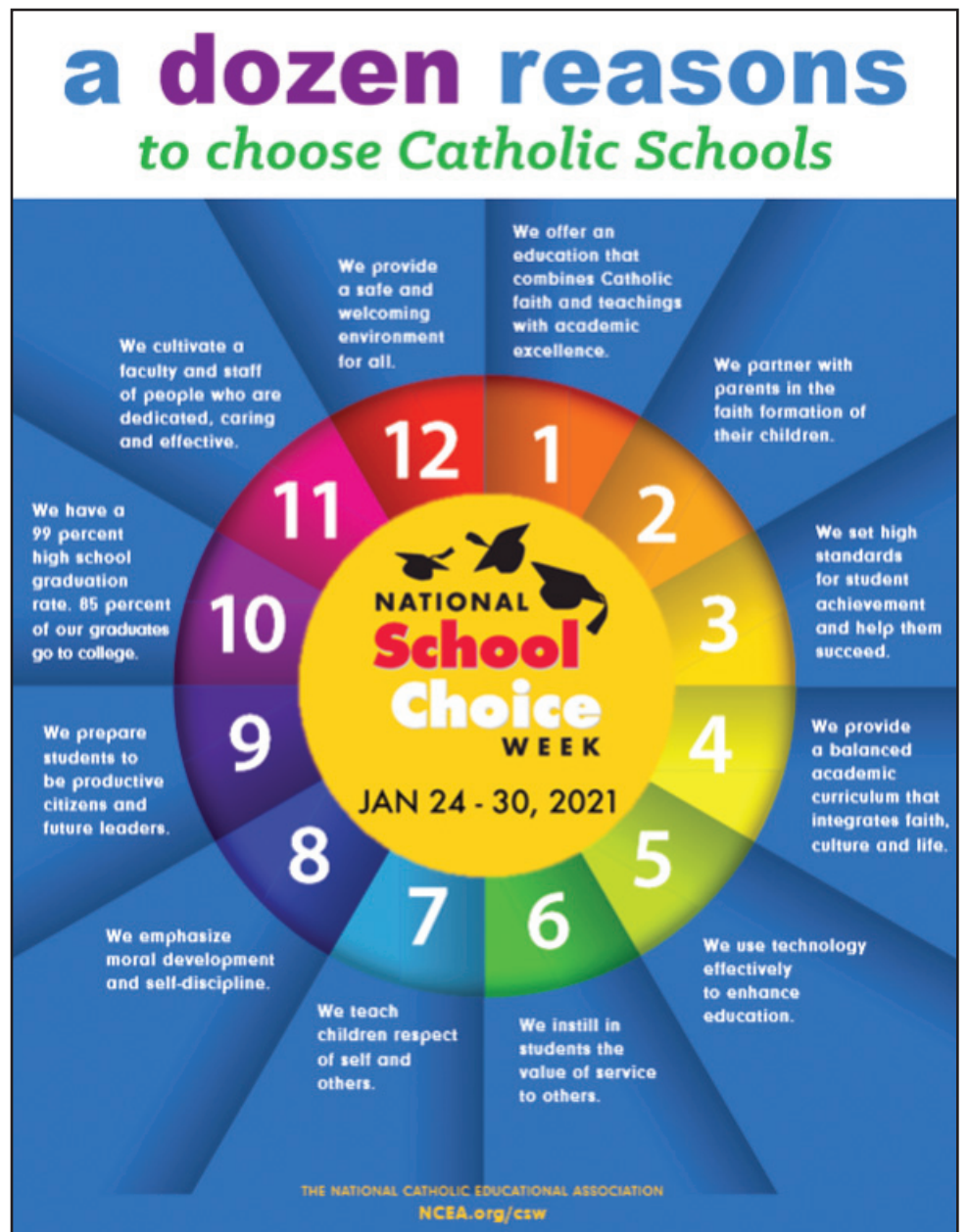
strategies must be adhered to during the open house.

Why choose a Catholic school for your child?

Here are some reasons for your consideration:

- We provide a safe and welcoming environment for all
- We offer an education that combines Catholic faith and teachings with academic excellence
- We partner with parents in the faith formation of your children
- We set high standards for student achievement and help them succeed
- We prepare students to be productive citizens and future leaders
- We teach children respect of self and others
- We instill in students the value of service to others
- We use technology effectively to enhance education
- Tuition is affordable by providing tuition assistance through the

See [SCHOOLS](#), page 2



Diocese offering Project Rachel ministry

BY ERIC GIRTEN
Director of Family and Life
Special to The Message

"Project Rachel is a ministry of the Catholic Church in the U.S. to those who have been involved in abortion. It is a diocesan-based network of specially trained priests, religious, counselors, and laypersons who provide a team response of care for those suffering in the aftermath of abortion. In addition to referring for Sacramental Reconciliation, the ministry provides an integrated network of services, including pastoral counseling, support groups, retreats and referrals to licensed mental health professionals."

— USCCB

The Diocese of Evansville now offers this healing ministry in Southwest Indiana. A unique Project Rachel phone number (812-483-7812) and email address (projectrachel@evdio.org) have been created specifically for persons whose lives have been touched by abortion. To speak with a Project Rachel associate, call the

number above or send an email, and someone will respond. The first step down the path of healing is often the most difficult. Project Rachel associates are here to help make it easier. **Calls and emails are confidential.**

If you or someone you know carries the weight of abortion-related grief, please pray about contacting the Project Rachel ministry. There are many ways that Project Rachel can help: You can speak with one of the Project Rachel phone ministers, find spiritual healing through the Sacrament of Reconciliation, speak with a Project Rachel counselor, receive literature and resources to help you get started or continue on your path toward healing, get information on the nearest post-abortion healing retreats, find information regarding Days of Healing, be placed (confidentially) on the Project Rachel prayer team list, and become a part of the



project rachel

Peace starts here

Project Rachel community.

Many women and men who have sought healing after abortion speak about guilt, anxiety, depression, the inability to forgive, the impact on relationships; and they speak of the feelings of peace, comfort, joy and love after having taken that first step toward healing. Take the step.

Call 812-483-7812 or email projectrachel@evdio.org.

Project Rachel is a part of the Office of Family and Life in the Diocese of Evansville. For program information or to volunteer, contact egirten@evdio.org.

Church encourages use of vaccines, masks for the common good



BY VICTORIA ARTHUR
Statehouse Correspondent for
Indiana's Catholic Newspapers

As the new COVID-19 vaccines gain more widespread use, they are provoking debate among Indiana lawmakers and the public while also prompting questions by the Catholic faithful.

At the same time, even face masks — nearly universal in their presence since the global coronavirus pandemic began — proved to be a source of contention at the Statehouse in Indianapolis earlier this month.

Dozens of people who gathered there to testify in favor of a vaccination-related bill on Jan. 14 defied Statehouse guidelines by refusing to mask once inside the building, causing others — mostly opponents of the potential legislation — to leave before having a chance to testify. Senate Bill 74 would prohibit Indiana companies from requiring employees or prospective employees to receive immunizations of any type if doing so would compromise their health or violate their conscience.

The Indiana Catholic Conference emphasizes that Catholic social teaching on the common good should underscore decision-making in all of these areas.

"While the COVID-19 vaccines cannot be mandated, the

See [ICC](#), page 2



CNS photo by Tyler Orsburn

March for Life goes virtual

People walk up Constitution Avenue headed toward the U.S. Supreme Court while participating in the 47th annual March for Life in Washington Jan. 24, 2020. The 2021 March for Life in Washington will be held virtually because of the COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing political unrest in the nation’s capital. See related story at right.

ICC

Continued from page 1

Catholic Church has made it clear that it is not only morally acceptable to receive the vaccines but encouraged as a means of turning the tide on this deadly pandemic,” said Angela Espada, executive director of the ICC, the public policy voice of the Catholic Church in Indiana.

As has been widely reported, Pope Francis and Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI — both at high risk for complications from the virus because of their age — received their first doses of the vaccine earlier this month.

Espada also pointed to the recent statement on ethical considerations related to the vaccines by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, co-authored by Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend. Bishop Rhoades serves as chairman of the committee on doctrine for the USCCB.

In the document, he and Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann of Kansas City, Kansas, chairman of the USCCB’s committee on pro-life activities, addressed the moral concerns that stem from the three COVID-19 vaccines having some connection to cell lines that originated with tissue obtained from abortions.

“In view of the gravity of the current pandemic and the lack of availability of alternative vaccines, the reasons to accept the new COVID-19 vaccines from Pfizer and Moderna are sufficiently serious to justify their use, despite their remote connection to

morally compromised cell lines,” the bishops’ statement reads. “Receiving one of the COVID-19 vaccines ought to be understood as an act of charity toward the other members of our community. In this way, being vaccinated safely against COVID-19 should be considered an act of love of our neighbor and part of our moral responsibility for the common good.”

The bishops found the third COVID-19 vaccine, developed by pharmaceutical giant AstraZeneca and not yet approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, to be “more morally compromised” than the others and concluded that it “should be avoided” if alternatives are available. In all cases, the bishops urged Catholics to remain “on guard so that the new COVID-19 vaccines do not desensitize us or weaken our determination to oppose the evil of abortion itself and the subsequent use of fetal cells in research.”

Espada praised Bishop Rhoades for his leadership on this issue.

“It is wonderful that one of Indiana’s own is at the forefront of these important ethical discussions,” Espada said.

With regard to the use of masks — at the Statehouse and elsewhere in public — Espada says the matter is even more straightforward.

“We encourage people to wear masks in this time of global crisis to protect themselves and others because it’s the right thing to do,” she said. “If anyone wants to testify during this legislative session on issues important to the ICC — and we certainly encourage people to do so — they should always wear masks.”

It was an uneventful week on the legislative front. All government offices were closed Jan. 18 for Martin Luther King Jr. Day. In addition, the Indiana General Assembly cancelled all legislative activity for the entire week — and Gov. Eric Holcomb closed the state government complex for most of the week. This was out of an abundance of caution surrounding threats to state capitols related to the Jan. 6 assault on the U.S. Capitol and the Jan. 20 inauguration of President Joe Biden.

The General Assembly is expected to resume its business on Jan. 25.

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

Schools

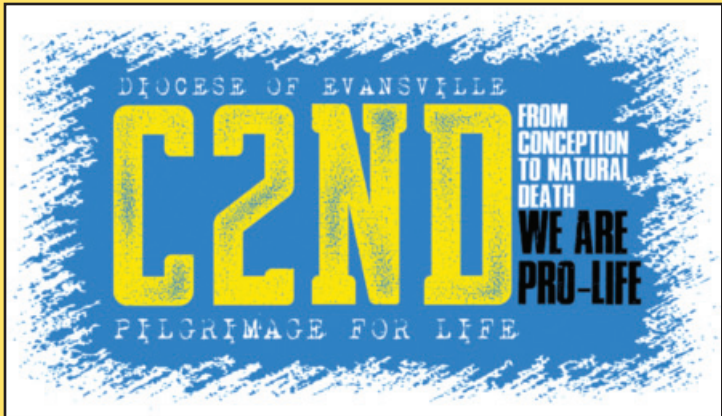
Continued from page 1

Indiana Choice Scholarship Program as well as assistance from your parish, school endowments, and/or the SGO.

Contact your local Catholic school and experience the virtual events to celebrate National Catholic Schools Week. This week is a great opportunity to thank the pastors, administrators, faculty

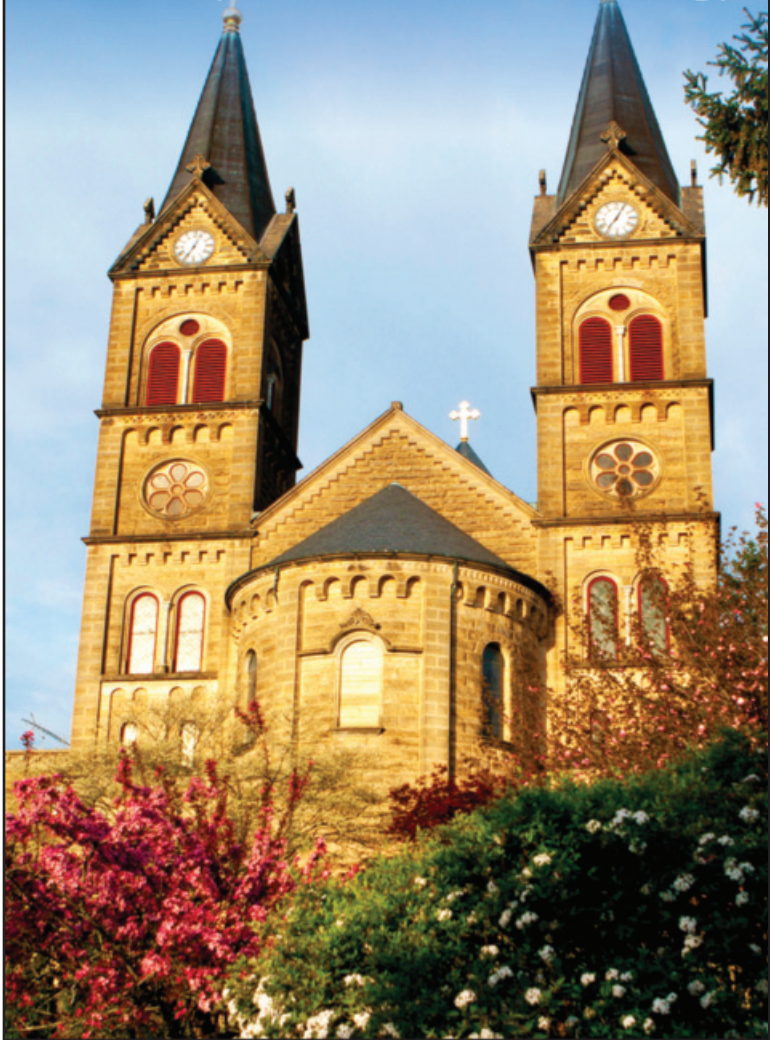
and staff for what has been a challenging year. I also encourage new families to come and see for themselves the difference a Catholic school education can make. Catholic schools are part of our future as a church and nation. May God bless our schools and all who contribute to the important work they do on behalf of the children of our parishes and communities.

Watch the Mass for Life!



Bishop Joseph M. Siegel will celebrate a Mass for Life at 5:30 p.m. CST on Jan. 29 at St. Benedict Cathedral in Evansville. You can watch the Mass via livestream on the St. Benedict Cathedral Facebook page at www.facebook.com/saintbenedictcathedral. In addition, the Diocese of Evansville offices of Catechesis, Education, Family Life, Hispanic Ministry, and Youth and Young Adult Ministry have collaborated on resources you can use to Stand for Life. In lieu of a 2021 Pilgrimage for Life, and as a way of expanding prayerful participation in pro-life activities, these offices have developed prayers, videos and other elements that anyone can download and use — including a link to EWTN’s live coverage of the March for Life in Washington, D.C. They are available now at evdio.org, the homepage of the Diocese of Evansville.

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AROUND
THE
DIOCESE

St. Maria Goretti
Youth Distinction
nominations now open

Happy Birthday!

Deacon Thomas Kirsch of St. Philip Parish in Posey County celebrates his birthday Jan. 31.

Happy Anniversary!

Father Sudhakar Bhastati, administrator of St. Peter Parish in Montgomery, was ordained to the priesthood on Jan. 29, 2009.

Father Simon Natha, administrator of St. Peter Parish in Linton and Holy Name Parish in Bloomfield, was ordained to the priesthood on Jan. 29, 2009.

Please send information for AROUND THE DIOCESE to Tim Lilley, The Message, P.O. Box 4169, Evansville, IN 47724. The e-mail address is tlilley@evdio.org.

Special to The Message

The St. Maria Goretti Youth Distinction website has been updated for 2021, and the nomination portal is open. You can find more information and the nomination portal at www.evdio.org/maria-goretti.html. Key details for this year include:

- The St. Maria Goretti Youth Distinction will be conferred by Bishop Joseph M. Siegel at St. Benedict Cathedral, Evansville, at 1 p.m. CST on Sunday, March 7
- The application deadline is Feb. 8
- Application administrative fee is \$25

Due to COVID-19 precautions, a maximum number of attendees will be permitted. This will limit the number of family members able to attend the Mass and ceremony to immediate family only (i.e., parents and siblings living in the same household). Please RSVP to Marilyn Durchholz (mdurchholz@evdio.org or 812-424-5536) before March 1.

We look forward to recognizing outstanding Catholic young people who are making a positive difference in their community. Please contact Steve Dabrowski (sdabrowski@evdio.org or 812-424-5536) with questions.

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Subscribe or renew online at www.evdiomessage.org or call Ruth at 812-424-5536

Indiana Knights of Columbus develop ‘Drive for Life’

BY TIM LILLEY
The Message editor

Indiana Knights of Columbus plan to Drive for Life on Jan. 30. Locally, Knights are planning to decorate their vehicles with pro-life messages and drive around to proclaim those messages — including a drive past the Four Freedoms Monument in downtown Evansville.

K of C District Deputy Darren Sroufe told **The Message** that the idea for a Drive for Life originated in Indiana, and K of C national has designated it a pilot program this year. Sroufe said, “Even with the pandemic we could not stand idly by without our voices being heard and the Knights being seen in support of life. So the Indiana Knights presented the idea to the Supreme Council, and they approved us to be a pilot state for this event. If it goes well, all states will be able to make it a project for supporting life from conception to natural death.”

In an email to K of C councils in District Nos. 33 and 36, Sroufe said, “On Saturday, Jan. 30, cars will leave from your parish at noon (local time). This is not a formal parade. Each driver is responsible for obeying all traffic laws. No intersections may be blocked. The group will proceed on a route determined by your council. The only thing we ask is that you drive by the Four Freedoms Monument, downtown Evansville, sometime during the Drive. Cars can, and should, be decorated appropriately. There will not be a rally. We are asking each council in the area to do the same thing at the same time. “Brothers, this is an opportunity to make a difference in spite of the pandemic.”

If you are interested in participating, contact your parish’s Knights of Columbus Council.

People We Care About

Following is a feature in the **Message**, designed to help draw together the People of God in southwestern Indiana. Readers are invited to submit information about people who may benefit by some extra prayers and attention.


• **William Leonard Wittgen, 88**, of Evansville, died Jan. 13 at St. Vincent Medical Center. He is the father of Karen Cain, who serves as associate finance officer for the Diocese of Evansville. He was born Dec. 19, 1932, in Evansville to the late Herman and Lillian (Maday) Wittgen.

Bill was a 1950 graduate of Reitz Memorial High School. He attended St. Edwards University and graduated from Evansville College. He was a veteran of the U.S. Army. Bill was a Certified Public Accountant and partner of George S. Olive and Company for over 28 years. He was a member of Annunciation Parish Christ the King Campus and received the Bruté Society Award for his many hours of service to the parish. Bill also volunteered his services to the House of Bread and Peace. He was a member of Rolling Hills Country Club and an avid golfer. Bill was a member of the Evansville Duplicate Bridge Club and a loyal Notre Dame fan.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his brother, Richard Wittgen.

Survivors include his wife of 65 years, Mary Ann (Fleming) Wittgen; son, Donald Wittgen of Hawthorn Wood, Illinois; daughter, Karen (Jonathan) Cain of Evansville; grandson, Nicholas Cain of Evansville; sister-in-law, Janice Wittgen of Evansville; and many nieces and nephews.

Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated Jan. 16 at Christ the King Church. Interment followed in St. Joseph Cemetery, Evansville. Please keep Bill and his family in your prayers.



WILLIAM
LEONARD
WITTGEN

Please send information for PEOPLE WE CARE ABOUT to Tim Lilley at The Message, P.O. Box 4169, Evansville, IN 47724 or e-mail tlilley@evdio.org.

Sisters of Providence welcome new Mission Advancement Director

SPECIAL TO THE MESSAGE

Providence has provided a way for Maureen Dickinson to make a difference in peoples’ lives with the Sisters of Providence of St. Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana.

Recently, the Illinois native accepted the position of Director of Mission Advancement for the Congregation. The Mission Advancement department is responsible for marketing and fundraising, as well as developing relationships with the greater community and with the Sisters of Providence.

“This opportunity answers my prayers,” Maureen said. “The position blends my professional background with my spirituality, something I have sought for several years. The mission of the Sisters of Providence and the strategic direction, under the leadership of the General Council, present compelling ways of making a difference in peoples’ lives as we grow His kingdom and steward the resources with which we are blessed.

“I am so excited about joining their mission!”

Prior to joining the Sisters of Providence, Maureen served as the Executive Director of Quad-Cities Foundation for Black Hawk College in Moline, Illinois.

After the extensive search to fill the director’s position, General Councilor Sister Jeanne Hagelskamp said she and the entire Congregation welcome



MAUREEN DICKENSON

Maureen into the fold.

“I believe that Maureen is just the right person to serve as Director of Mission Advancement at this time in our history,” Sister Jeanne said. “Her vast experience in advancement, her giftedness in other areas and her desire to work in a faith-based community make her so very well-suited for the position.

“Already, I sense her care for the mission and her eagerness to partner with us in sharing that mission with our many friends and benefactors.”

Maureen grew up on the south side of Chicago and is familiar with the Congregation through its ministries in the Windy City.

“I knew about the fine reputation of Guerin Prep High School and the sisters’ education ministry,” she said. “After learning of this opportunity, though, I began researching the Congregation and learned

much about its formation, St. Mother Theodore Guerin’s writings and the great works the Sisters of Providence do through their vast social justice ministries.”

Maureen added she is looking forward in the coming weeks to get to know many more Sisters of Providence and Providence Associates, as well as residents of the Wabash Valley.

“One woman in my book club grew up near Terre Haute, and she, too, shared information about the sisters’ involvement in the greater Terre Haute community,” Maureen said. “I look forward to meeting the sisters at the Motherhouse and the others living in different areas, as travel restrictions abate.”

Maureen officially started her position on Jan. 11 and said she is ready to move forward.

“I hope to build on the strong foundation of philanthropy and marketing the Sisters of Providence have cultivated,” she said. “That means first, learning the stories of these remarkable women religious — their histories, spiritual pathways, and personal ministries — and then sharing those stories throughout the world.

“I also want to establish fresh avenues for young women discerning how they will answer God’s call by tapping into existing Catholic networks and mobilizing the shared collective of our members, Providence Associates, staff and supporters.”

Bitten by lies



CONNECTING FAITH AND LIFE
BRENDA HOPF

injury, either to the one lying or to those who believe the lie. We need to look no further than our beloved country. A person can't help but scratch their head and wonder what has brought us to this moment. I have no doubt lies have played a central role in what we have been witnessing in our country for some time now.

Maybe rather than looking at the picture "out there," you and I should start by looking "in here" — in our own hearts. Have we, whether intentionally or unintentionally, contributed to the lies? Do we just believe the lies or do we want to find the truth; and if so, through what channel do we seek the truth — I mean the real Truth; the Truth that will never change; the Truth that will help us to overcome our sinful ways of contributing to the lies of this world? It is only through each individual person's commitment to seek out the real Truth, Jesus Christ, that we can begin to have the strength to overcome whatever role we play in the lies of this

world. Healing our country begins with each one of us individually. Jesus, the Truth, will be our strength; and He will lead us in the way we should go. We can make a difference through Him.

You know, sometimes we are just like my grandpa; we let our guard down, becoming oblivious or apathetic amidst the lie for just a second, and . . . SNAP! The lie has bitten us. It is obvious our country is swimming in a sea of lies. We've all been bitten and we, as a country, have lost more than a fingernail. I believe in my heart that the lies can eventually be revealed and order once again restored in our country. This can only happen through you and me and our commitment to the Truth, now and in the future as we move forward.

Each one of us has a choice. We can contribute to the lies, allowing them to happen through our apathy or our oblivious state of being; or we can commit to the Truth. I pray that we choose the latter. May Jesus, who is the Way, the Truth and the Life, bless us all in our efforts.

Brenda Hopf is a member of Divine Mercy Parish in Dubois County and also contributes to the "Sharing the Load" column in The Message.

Auditors certify diocese in compliance

SPECIAL TO THE MESSAGE

StoneBridge Business Partners of Rochester, New York, has notified Bishop Joseph M. Siegel that the Diocese of Evansville is in compliance with the data-collection requirements for the 2019-2020

Charter audit period. StoneBridge audits Evansville and dioceses across the country annually to review and certify Charter compliance. The firm notified Bishop Siegel that it is providing the audit report to the Secretariat of Youth and Child Protection.

Not too late to join '9 Days for Life' novena

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Catholics across the country are invited to take part in the "9 Days for Life" novena, which began Jan. 21 and concludes Jan. 29.

Each day's intercession is accompanied by prayers, a short reflection, and one or more suggested actions for novena participants to take to help build a culture of life — such as

pledging to participate in a parish-based program called Walking With Moms in Need.

Participants can go to the website www.9daysforlife.com to sign up for emails or texts about each day's intercession, in English and Spanish. The site also has a link to materials for the novena as well as

See **NOVENA**, page 5

Letter to the editor

To the Editor,

On behalf of Catholic Charities, Diocese of Evansville, I would like to extend my gratitude to the Independent Insurance Agents of Evansville for the generous donation they made to Catholic Charities to support our work in 2020. We appreciate this group recognizing the needs of the vulnerable members of our community and the efforts of Catholic Charities to serve those needs. Their contribution helped us continue to provide mental-health counseling, job- and life-skills training, and financial-assistance programs during the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic.

I am inspired by the generosity provided by our donors, including the Independent Insurance Agents of Evansville, to support the life-changing services offered by Catholic Charities. Thank you for recognizing and supporting the needs of our neighbors. Together, we can continue to strengthen our community.

Sincerely,
Denise Seibert Townsend
Executive Director
Catholic Charities Diocese of Evansville

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To the Catholics of the Diocese of Evansville: This edition is one of six issues of *The Message* to be mailed to every registered Catholic household this year. Two dollars of each Catholic Church member's contribution pays for these diocesan-wide subscriptions.

Diocesan policy: Report and inform

Report child abuse
Every allegation of child abuse must be reported to Child Protection Services, an agency of Indiana state government. Toll-free: 800-800-5556

Denuncie
Toda acusación de abuso de menores debe ser reportada al Servicio de Protección al Menor (Chils Protective Services, CPS), una agencia del gobierno de Estados Unidos que está localizada en el estado de Indiana. Puede llamar gratis al: 800-800-5556.

Report and inform
In the event of an allegation of sexual abuse of a minor (a person under 18) by diocesan personnel, report the allegation to authorities, and inform the Victims Assistance Coordinator for the diocese. Toll-free: 866-200-3004, local: 812-490-9565

To report allegations of sexual misconduct involving bishops of the United States, or to report their intentional interference in a sexual abuse investigation, contact the Catholic Bishop Abuse Reporting service. Toll-free: 800-276-1562, or report online at ReportBishopAbuse.org.

Denuncie e informe
En caso de una alegación de abuso sexual de un menor (una persona menor de 18 años) cometido por algún miembro del personal diocesano, reporte dicha alegación a las autoridades y también infórmele al coordinador diocesano de Asistencia para las Víctimas. Puede llamar gratis al: 866-200-3004, o al número local: 812-490-9565.

Para reportar alegaciones de conducta sexual inapropiada cometida por obispos en los Estados Unidos, o para reportar su interferencia intencional en una investigación de abuso sexual, contacte al Servicio de Abuso de Obispos Católicos. Puede llamar gratis al: 800-276-1562, o reportarlo en línea en ReportBishopAbuse.org.

The Message

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Today, listen for the voice of the Lord

It is hard to believe that we are already well into the month of January. It seems like just yesterday we were happily bidding farewell to the troubles of 2020 and looking to a fresh start in 2021. Then, there were the New Year’s resolutions that we made — exercise, diet, more time for prayer, reading and family. Well, January has already had its own share of crises and challenges, but what about the resolutions? If we haven’t already forgotten them, perhaps we have put them on the back burner for when we have more time, more energy — maybe during Lent. Our experience with these resolutions is a lesson on how hard it is to change habits and lifestyles.

Yet it is to just such change that we are called as followers of Christ. Jesus began his public ministry with a call to conversion. “Repent,” He proclaims, “for the kingdom of God is at hand” (Matt. 4:17). Christ was not calling people to just an external change, but a repentance that comes from the heart. Conversion literally means changing the direction of our lives so that we turn our whole perspective to God and put Him in charge. Of course, this is easier said than done. We tend to be independent. We want things to go our way, when we want them and how we want them. We want to decide what needs to be changed in our lives and on our own terms. But true repentance means letting go of our desire



THE BISHOP’S CORNER

MOST REV.
JOSEPH M. SIEGEL

to control and letting God take over. True conversion is opening our hearts and lives to God so that He can show us what He wants for us, where He wants us to grow and develop, and what areas of sin we need to weed from our lives. Such openness takes a great deal of trust in God and a willingness to listen, to follow God’s promptings and to open ourselves to His grace. We need to ask for this trust and a listening heart in our daily prayer.

Each year and each day, Christ calls each of us to conversion and to follow Him as His disciples, to be witnesses to His Gospel. Ultimately, it is up to each of us to respond to His invitation. Will we follow Him with our whole heart, putting Him first before all else, or will we keep our faith at a distance, where we think we are comfortable and safe? Yet, if we don’t fervently embrace our call to follow Jesus and announce His message of love, compassion, justice and reconciliation in our daily lives, how will people hear the Gospel? If we don’t challenge ourselves and our world to embrace the light of conver-

sion, truth, unity and peace, then how will people see their way out of the darkness? Our society and our nation need our witness now more than ever.

On Dec. 8, 2020, Pope Francis announced a special year dedicated to St. Joseph. St. Joseph is an example of a person like us who was asked by God to trust, to believe the unbelievable, namely that Mary, his betrothed, was carrying in her womb the Son of God, conceived by the Holy Spirit. As a man of faith, he accepted God’s word and His will, and took Mary as his wife and acknowledged her son as his own. He let go of the plans he undoubtedly had for himself, his marriage and his family life. He continued to follow God’s promptings in his life, fleeing to Egypt to evade Herod’s wrath, returning to Nazareth and even learning to deal with the unique challenge of raising a child who was the Messiah. Scripture does not record any of Joseph’s words, but his actions speak eloquently of his deep faith and trust in God. During this special year, along with the many opportunities for plenary indulgences, we are invited to seek more intently St. Joseph’s intercession and learn from his example of how to listen for God’s word and thus discern His will for us.

May we heed Christ’s call to repentance today — so that throughout this year of 2021, we may respond to His invitation to follow Him with our whole heart, soul, mind and body.

Hoy, escuchen a la voz del Señor

Es difícil de creer que ya estemos bien entrados en el mes de enero. Parece que fue ayer cuando felizmente despedíamos a los problemas del 2020 buscando un nuevo comienzo en 2021. Entonces, allí estaban las resoluciones del Año Nuevo que hicimos — ejercicio, dieta, más tiempo para la oración, la lectura y la familia. Bien, enero ya ha tenido su propia cuota de crisis y desafíos, pero ¿y qué hay de las resoluciones? Si todavía no las hemos olvidado, quizás las hemos dejado de lado para cuando contemos con más tiempo, más energía — tal vez durante la Cuaresma. Nuestra experiencia con estas resoluciones es una lección sobre lo difícil que es cambiar los hábitos y las formas de vida.

Sin embargo, este es justamente el cambio al que somos llamados como seguidores de Cristo. Jesús comenzó su ministerio público con un llamado a la conversión. “Arrepiéntanse,” Él proclama, “porque el reino de los cielos está cerca” (Mateo 4:17). Cristo no estaba llamando a la gente solamente a un cambio externo, sino a un arrepentimiento que viene del corazón. Conversión literalmente significa cambiar la dirección de nuestras vidas para dirigir toda nuestra perspectiva hacia Dios y ponerlo a Él a cargo. Por supuesto, es más fácil decirlo que hacerlo. Tendemos a ser independientes. Queremos que las cosas sean a nuestro modo, cuando las queremos y de la manera en que las queremos. Queremos decidir qué necesita ser cambiado en nuestras vidas y en nuestros términos. Pero el arrepentimiento verdadero significa dejar ir nuestro deseo de control y dejar que Dios tome el control. La conversión verdadera es abrirle nuestros corazones y vidas a Dios para que Él pueda



EL RINCÓN DEL OBISPO

MÁS REV.
JOSEPH M. SIEGEL

mostrarnos lo que Él quiere para nosotros, donde Él quiere que nosotros crezcamos y nos desarrollemos, y qué áreas del pecado necesitamos podar de nuestras vidas. Dicha apertura lleva una gran dosis de confianza en Dios y una voluntad de escuchar, de seguir las indicaciones de Dios y de abrirnos a Su gracia. Necesitamos pedir por su confianza y por un corazón que escucha en nuestra oración diaria.

Cada año y cada día, Cristo llama a cada uno de nosotros a la conversión y a seguirlo a Él como Sus discípulos, a ser testigos de Su Evangelio. En definitiva, depende de cada uno de nosotros responder a Su invitación. ¿Lo seguiremos a Él con todo nuestro corazón, poniéndolo a Él primero ante todo lo demás, o mantendremos nuestra fe a la distancia, en donde pensamos que estamos cómodos y a salvo? Aún, si no aceptamos fervientemente nuestro llamado a seguir a Jesús y a anunciar Su mensaje de amor, compasión, justicia y reconciliación en nuestras vidas diarias, ¿cómo escuchará la gente el Evangelio? Si no nos desafiamos a nosotros mismos y a nuestro mundo a aceptar la luz de la conversión, la verdad, la unidad y la paz, entonces ¿cómo verá la gente su salida de la oscuridad? Nuestra sociedad y nuestra nación

necesitan que seamos testigos ahora más que nunca.

El 8 de diciembre de 2020, el Papa Francisco anunció un año especial dedicado a San José. San José es un ejemplo de una persona como nosotros a quien Dios le pidió que confíe, que crea lo increíble, concretamente que María, su prometida, estaba llevando en su vientre el Hijo de Dios, concebido por el Espíritu Santo. Como hombre de fe, él aceptó la palabra de Dios y Su voluntad, y tomó a María por esposa y aceptó a su hijo como suyo propio. Él abandonó los planes que sin duda tenía para sí mismo, su matrimonio y su vida en familia. Él continuó siguiendo las indicaciones de Dios en su vida, huyendo a Egipto para evadir la ira de Heródoto, retornando a Nazaret e inclusive aprendiendo a lidiar con el singular desafío de criar a un hijo que era el Mesías. Las escrituras no registran ningunas de las palabras de José, pero sus acciones hablan elocuentemente de su profunda fe y confianza en Dios. Durante este año especial, junto con las muchas oportunidades de indulgencias plenarias, estamos invitados a buscar con más intención la intercesión de San José y aprender de su ejemplo de cómo escuchar la palabra de Dios y así discernir Su voluntad para nosotros.

Acatemos el llamado de Cristo al arrepentimiento hoy — para que a lo largo de este año 2021, podamos responder a Su invitación de seguirlo a Él con todo nuestro corazón, alma, mente y cuerpo.

— Translated by Dr. Daniela Abraham,
St. Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology

Bishop’s Schedule

Confirmation Mass, St. Francis of Assisi Parish, Dale, 9 a.m. CST, Sunday, Jan. 24.

Mass, Sarto Chapel, Evansville, 11:30 a.m. CST, Tuesday, Jan. 26.

Mass, Sarto Chapel, Evansville, 11:30 a.m. CST, Thursday, Jan. 28.

Meeting, Diocesan Finance Council, Catholic Center, Evansville, 4 p.m. CST, Thursday, Jan. 28.

Mass for Life, St. Benedict Cathedral, Evansville, 5:30 p.m. CST, Friday, Jan. 29.

Novena

Continued from page 4

resources for parishes.

The pro-life novena, sponsored by the Committee on Pro-Life Activities of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, encompasses the annual Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children Jan. 22, the day the Supreme Court handed down its decision in Roe and its companion case, Doe v. Bolton.

It coincides with the annual March for Life usually held in Washington every January to mark the anniversary of the Supreme Court’s 1973 Roe v. Wade decision legalizing abortion.

This year’s national rally and march is planned for Jan. 29 but it will be livestreamed, with pro-life advocates across the country asked to participate virtually.

An example of the novena intercessions is: “May all unborn children be protected in law and welcomed in love,” for Day Two (Jan. 22), followed by the Our Father, three Hail Mary’s and the Glory Be. The reflection for the day says in part: “Today, on this 48th anniversary of Roe v. Wade, we mourn the many children’s lives ended by abortion and remember in prayer those who suffer the aftermath.”

The suggested “acts of repara-

tion” for the first day include: Fast from one meal today. Or pray the short prayer “Prayer for Life.” Or offer some other sacrifice, prayer, or act of penance that you feel called to do for the day’s intention.

For “one step further,” novena participants are encouraged to learn more about the four steps of the L.O.V.E. Approach™ — Listen and Learn, Open Options, Vision and Value, and Extend and Empower.

Editor’s note: The L.O.V.E. Approach™ is trademarked by Heartbeat International, Inc., and may not be adapted or modified.

Annual Financial Statement Audit for Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2020, Completed

BY DEAN HAPPE
Diocesan Finance Officer

The annual audit of the financial statements of the Administrative Offices of the Catholic Diocese of Evansville has been completed. Included with this publication are the audited financial statements as of and for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2020, and June 30, 2019:

- Statement of Financial Position (Balance Sheet)
- Statement of Activity (Income Statement)
- Statement of Functional Expenses
- Statement of Cash Flows

The full financial report, with auditor’s opinion, footnotes and supplemental information can also be found on the diocesan website <http://www.evodio.org/> under Departments, Finance Office, Forms and Documents <http://www.evodio.org/forms—documents.html>.

The following paragraphs offer a brief explanation of each of the financial statements and the most important elements to take away from each of the statements.

As I prepared to summarize our financial results, I couldn’t help but be reminded of an old TV skit I watched when I was a kid. At the risk of revealing much about my age and background, I wonder if any of you may recall the Saturday evening telecasts of “Hee Haw?” And, in particular, the recurring sketch featuring Archie Campbell’s barber-shop and the “That’s good/That’s bad” routine? Archie would mention an event, to which the folks in the barbershop would comment, “That’s bad” only to have Archie clarify that it was actually good because of some other complementary event. As soon as the folks would then agree that it was “good,” Archie would clarify that it was “bad” because of yet another complementary event . . . and so on and so on.

Well, I couldn’t help feeling quite that same way as I summarized these results for you, as it was a pretty eventful year, to say the least. Suffice it to say, however, the net take-away is “good.” We continue to have much to manage and stay on top of and no shortage of challenges and uncertainties, but we continue with a solid and stable environment and the incomparable commitment and dedication of our Catholic faithful of the Diocese of Evansville . . . *That’s Good!*

While these financial reports are for the fiscal year ending on June 30, 2020 (six months ago) and therefore only include approximately four months of operating in the COVID-19 Pandemic environment, that was enough time to introduce real financial uncertainty and disruption to diocesan operations and all of the parishes and agencies across our diocese. Fortunately, through an abundance of continued hard work, dedication, faithfulness and stewardship of staff and our Catholic faithful across the diocese, we closed the fiscal year with relatively stable results and have continued into the first six months of the new fiscal year effectively maintaining that general stability.

I do hope within this financial report, especially in light of this challenging year, you will find some inspiration and continued calling to our ministry as Catholics, when you consider the ongoing financial sustainability we have accomplished and continue to strive for, together, as one church, through our time, talent, treasure, and management of the resources availed to us through God’s abundant grace. And, we would be remiss if we did not thank all members of our diocese that give tirelessly within their parishes, communities, and throughout the diocese as a whole.

“For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what one does not have.”

2 Corinthians 8:12

Background

First, some quick background. For financial statement and federal and state reporting, the Catholic Diocese of Evansville is classified as a nonprofit organization. That designation dictates a number of requirements in the nature, form, and content of our financial statement reporting that you see here and the way in which we must operate.

Assets

	2020	2019
Cash	\$ 3,291,537	\$ 3,018,808
Receivables		
Stewards of God’s Grace contributions receivable, net	899,654	4,266,283
Catholic Parishes Campaign	530,480	389,756
Parishes and institutions, net of allowance;		
2020 and 2019 – \$2,060	282,690	620,309
Loans – parishes and institutions, net of allowance;		
2020 and 2019 – \$28,169	1,498,640	715,475
Interest receivable	15,518	19,865
Insurance services receivable	368,684	991,068
Other Diocesan operations	20,299	21,130
	3,615,965	7,023,886
Investments	48,916,193	48,482,209
Beneficial interests in Foundation	12,407,125	9,998,311
Prepaid expenses and other assets	1,444,795	1,318,625
	69,675,615	69,841,839

Liabilities and Net Assets (Deficit)

Liabilities

Accounts payable	\$ 778,415	\$ 342,609
Deposits held for parishes and other Diocesan operations	28,308,963	28,967,684
Due to related parties, net	1,054,916	1,338,660
Other accrued expenses and liabilities	1,733,043	1,412,156
Unearned service revenue	15,653	41,653
Accrued interest	-	22,298
Payroll protection program loan	850,000	-
Accrued pension liability	40,039,380	35,127,533
Payables to named beneficiaries	5,000	-
	72,785,370	67,252,593

Net Assets

Without donor restrictions – undesignated	(37,914,841)	(33,923,993)
Without donor restrictions – designated	25,850,409	21,779,217
	(12,064,432)	(12,144,776)
With donor restrictions	8,954,677	14,734,022
	(3,109,755)	2,589,246
	69,675,615	69,841,839

With that being said, it may be helpful to clarify the term “nonprofit” as it can be a little misleading. A nonprofit organization is allowed to make a profit and, in reality, a nonprofit must strive for some level of revenue that exceeds its expenses to ensure its ongoing stability and sustainability.

Without that stability and sustainability, it could not continue to perform its mission and ministry. So, while for-profit organizations are organized specifically to earn profits for distribution to its shareholders/owners and nonprofit organizations are organized specifically to execute its ministry, the nonprofit still must seek to earn posi-

tive revenues in order to continue in its ministry.

As such, we do not seek profit for profit’s sake, but we do seek financial stability to enable the ongoing ministry of our Catholic church.

It may also be helpful to recall that the Administrative Offices of the Catholic Diocese operates three major “businesses” for the benefit of the diocese as a whole to which these financial statements apply:

Ministries and Administration — 16 departmental operations such as Vocations and Seminarian support; Catholic Schools; Youth/Young Adult;

Charities; Clergy support; Family and Life, just to name a few.

Deposit and Loan Bank for Parishes — Source of Funds and Investments for parishes

Medical, Property, and Liability Insurance Program — Claims coverage for Parishes, Clergy, and Employees

SUMMARY FINANCIAL ASSESSMENT

The net asset position, near term liquidity, and availability of assets to cover diocesan obligations and to conduct the

See **AUDIT**, page 7



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Statements of Activities
Year Ended June 30, 2020 and 2019

	2020			2019		
	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
Revenues, Gains and Other Support						
Catholic community support	\$ 6,669,513	\$ 1,043,785	\$ 7,713,298	\$ 6,152,239	\$ 97,929	\$ 6,250,168
Stewards of God's Grace contributions	-	95,009	95,009	-	389,184	389,184
Insurance and medical fees	14,101,713	-	14,101,713	13,918,427	-	13,918,427
Service fees	212,444	-	212,444	240,963	-	240,963
Net investment return	2,583,467	30,343	2,613,810	2,281,691	33,689	2,315,380
Change in beneficial interests in Foundation	-	(48,309)	(48,309)	-	140,191	140,191
Change in beneficial interests in Foundation – designated	(115,742)	-	(115,742)	412,346	-	412,346
Distributions from Foundation and other	768,409	-	768,409	334,993	-	334,993
Net assets released from restrictions	6,900,173	(6,900,173)	-	3,837,289	(3,837,289)	-
Total revenues, gains and other support	31,119,977	(5,779,345)	25,340,632	27,177,948	(3,176,296)	24,001,652
Expenses						
Adult formation	216,545	-	216,545	219,547	-	219,547
Catholic Center and other operations	4,759,345	-	4,759,345	403,636	-	403,636
Chancery	721,272	-	721,272	680,263	-	680,263
Education	541,165	-	541,165	555,061	-	555,061
Insurance and medical programs	12,778,817	-	12,778,817	13,969,920	-	13,969,920
Spanish speaking ministry	53,335	-	53,335	160,286	-	160,286
Ministry to priests and clergy assistance	229,688	-	229,688	222,011	-	222,011
Newspaper and communications	413,761	-	413,761	377,100	-	377,100
Office of Worship	96,924	-	96,924	104,403	-	104,403
Permanent deaconate	56,816	-	56,816	57,148	-	57,148
Subsidies	706,630	-	706,630	602,653	-	602,653
Tribunal	184,683	-	184,683	178,878	-	178,878
Vocation office	412,461	-	412,461	577,220	-	577,220
Safe Environment	42,866	-	42,866	34,943	-	34,943
Youth ministries, including Newman Centers	366,525	-	366,525	358,869	-	358,869
Lay employee retirement plan	1,415,365	-	1,415,365	1,332,482	-	1,332,482
Employee 403(b) benefits	832,816	-	832,816	758,348	-	758,348
Office of Family and Life	81,441	-	81,441	14,428	-	14,428
Bad debt expenses	-	-	-	3,580	-	3,580
Total program services	23,910,455	-	23,910,455	20,610,776	-	20,610,776
Management and general	2,369,364	-	2,369,364	2,620,964	-	2,620,964
Fundraising	204,828	-	204,828	293,067	-	293,067
Total support services	2,574,192	-	2,574,192	2,914,031	-	2,914,031
Total expenses	26,484,647	-	26,484,647	23,524,807	-	23,524,807
Change in Net Assets from Operating and Investing Activities	4,635,330	(5,779,345)	(1,144,015)	3,653,141	(3,176,296)	476,845
Change in Minimum Pension Liability	(4,554,986)	-	(4,554,986)	(4,146,354)	-	(4,146,354)
Change in Net Assets	80,344	(5,779,345)	(5,699,001)	(493,213)	(3,176,296)	(3,669,509)
Net Assets (Deficit), Beginning of Year	(12,144,776)	14,734,022	2,589,246	(11,651,563)	17,910,318	6,258,755
Net Assets (Deficit), End of Year	\$ (12,064,432)	\$ 8,954,677	\$ (3,109,755)	\$ (12,144,776)	\$ 14,734,022	\$ 2,589,246

Audit

Continued from page 6

ministries of the diocese remain stable with a general upward trajectory over the last 6+ years.

That said, 2020 does reflect a reduction in net assets (a net loss). The reduction, however, is primarily driven by three

key, one-time/extraordinary items totaling approximately \$9.5 million in expenses:

- \$3.4 million planned usage of previously accumulated assets (income) from the Stewards of God’s Grace Capital Campaign collected over the last three years and now used this fiscal year for

several of its intended purposes, including but not limited to:

- Construction of the new Catholic Charities Offices
- Replacement and renovation to aging windows and doors at the Catholic Center

– Financial assistance in the renovation of St. Benedict Cathedral

By accounting standards, contributions to the SOGG campaign have been recorded as income in each of the prior three years but the expenses are not recorded until the funds are used. Therefore, \$3.4 million in expenses incurred in this fiscal year while the off-setting income has been recorded in prior years which gives this year’s income statement the appearance that we spent more money than we made (we really just made it in prior years).

\$1.5 million redistribution of SOGG income back to the parishes, on top of the parishes’ standard share of SOGG income, as a result of them exceeding their SOGG pledge goals and qualifying for a greater share of the SOGG funds — an expense on diocesan books but more income to the parishes!

\$4.5 million increase in accrued Pension liability for

the pension plan that exists for the benefit of employees across the diocese.

Absent these expected, but one-time, extraordinary expenses, the Income Statement would reflect approximately \$3.8 million in net income, fueled largely by lower than anticipated insurance claims expenses and other expense reduction efforts, which then helps us continue to combat employee pension liability shortfalls and to address other financial uncertainties brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The primary sources of revenue for the diocese remain primarily confined to:

Fees: Generated from administering diocesan-wide programs (50% - 60% of revenue)
A key example is our self-funded insurance programs whereby the diocese funds medical insurance for all clergy and lay employees across

See **AUDIT**, page 8

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Statements of Functional Expenses Year Ended June 30, 2020									
	2020					2020			
	Program Services					Support Services			
	Formation & Education	Sacramental & Ministerial Support	Social Outreach	Ecclesiastical Services to Parishes	Total Program Services	Management and General	Fundraising	Total Support Services	Total
Wages, taxes, and benefits	\$ 775,225	\$ 43,088	\$ -	\$ 1,239,698	\$ 2,058,011	\$ 310,376	\$ 144,431	\$ 454,807	\$ 2,512,818
Lay pension and 403(b) Plan	30,808	-	-	2,298,759	2,329,567	-	-	-	2,329,567
Property and liability claims	-	-	-	-	-	999	-	999	999
Clergy assistance	-	207,433	-	-	207,433	6,000	-	6,000	213,433
Seminary and theology tuition	-	-	-	312,149	312,149	-	-	-	312,149
Programs	283,852	33,207	3,074,521	813,986	4,205,566	391,513	-	391,513	4,597,079
Insurance premiums, fees and claims	-	998,421	-	11,780,396	12,778,817	11,950	-	11,950	12,790,767
Professional fees and services	7,893	-	-	8,816	16,709	209,294	1,499	210,793	227,502
Utilities	11,527	10,241	-	19,276	41,044	70,591	808	71,399	112,443
Technology	-	-	-	-	-	110,699	-	110,699	110,699
Travel, meals, and entertainment	16,082	1,886	-	15,513	33,481	77	12,429	12,506	45,987
Repairs and maintenance	5,904	6,019	-	5,960	17,883	75,041	-	75,041	92,924
Other occupancy expense	11,462	9,735	-	13,599	34,796	-	-	-	34,796
Training and development	16,575	41,200	-	13,130	70,905	67,415	-	67,415	138,320
Print production	287	-	-	85,621	85,908	-	11,073	11,073	96,981
Postage	848	-	-	67,452	68,300	1,399	10,528	11,927	80,227
Supplies and other	15,444	33	-	110,334	125,811	14,671	24,060	38,731	164,542
Interest expense	-	-	-	-	-	1,082,213	-	1,082,213	1,082,213
Contribution	-	-	-	1,522,412	1,522,412	-	-	-	1,522,412
Capital improvements	1,663	-	-	-	1,663	17,126	-	17,126	18,789
Total expenses included in the expense section on the statement of activities	\$ 1,177,570	\$ 1,351,263	\$ 3,074,521	\$ 18,307,101	\$ 23,910,455	\$ 2,369,364	\$ 204,828	\$ 2,574,192	\$ 26,484,647

Statements of Functional Expenses Year Ended June 30, 2019									
	2019					2019			
	Program Services					Support Services			
	Formation & Education	Sacramental & Ministerial Support	Social Outreach	Ecclesiastical Services to Parishes	Total Program Services	Management and General	Fundraising	Total Support Services	Total
Wages, taxes, and benefits	\$ 774,516	\$ 43,950	\$ -	\$ 1,095,732	\$ 1,914,198	\$ 311,149	\$ 22,448	\$ 333,597	\$ 2,247,795
Lay pension and 403(b) Plan	35,976	-	-	2,138,816	2,174,792	-	-	-	2,174,792
Property and liability claims	-	-	-	-	-	944	-	944	944
Clergy assistance	-	177,237	-	-	177,237	4,000	-	4,000	181,237
Seminary and theology tuition	-	-	-	379,831	379,831	-	-	-	379,831
Programs	381,242	55,739	933,642	7,096	1,377,719	39,484	1,015	40,499	1,418,218
Insurance premiums, fees and claims	-	1,318,470	-	12,686,028	14,004,498	11,526	-	11,526	14,016,024
Professional fees and services	7,900	-	-	15,571	23,471	290,659	5,702	296,361	319,832
Utilities	15,802	8,895	-	15,873	40,570	72,830	122	72,952	113,522
Technology	-	-	-	-	-	103,013	-	103,013	103,013
Travel, meals, and entertainment	31,893	815	-	24,322	57,030	-	1,293	1,293	58,323
Repairs and maintenance	1,912	7,001	-	85,367	94,280	63,661	-	63,661	157,941
Other occupancy expense	8,109	8,117	-	18,261	34,487	-	-	-	34,487
Training and development	21,953	41,445	-	16,647	80,045	64,073	-	64,073	144,118
Print production	320	-	-	90,535	90,855	-	5,320	5,320	96,175
Postage	687	-	-	57,815	58,502	273	7,014	7,287	65,789
Supplies and other	13,453	38	-	86,190	99,681	22,334	36,022	58,356	158,037
Interest expense	-	-	-	-	-	866,555	-	866,555	866,555
Bad debts	-	-	-	3,580	3,580	-	214,131	214,131	217,711
Capital improvements	-	-	-	-	-	770,463	-	770,463	770,463
Total expenses included in the expense section on the statement of activities	\$ 1,293,763	\$ 1,661,707	\$ 933,642	\$ 16,721,664	\$ 20,610,776	\$ 2,620,964	\$ 293,067	\$ 2,914,031	\$ 23,524,807

Audit

Continued from page 7

the diocese as well as providing property and liability insurance coverage for all property and activities conducted within the diocese

Investment income: (10% - 15% of revenue)
A key contributor to our financial stability but susceptible

to market volatility, for which there was a great deal during the course of fiscal 2020.

Contributions from the Catholic Parishes Campaign: (20% - 25% of revenue)
A primary element of funding and one managed extremely closely so as to control the burden on our

Catholic faithful and our parishes. While no small number, and despite continued inflationary pressures and growing fiscal needs in exciting areas like Vocations, seminary tuition, etc. for example, the intent focus has remained on holding the CPC assessments as low as possible. In fact, the 5-year average increase of 1.05% is well

lower than the same 5-year national inflation rate (Consumer Price Index) by more than 50 basis points, i.e. CPC is increasing at a much lower rate than typical inflation.

Other bequests and donations: Including in recent years, the SOGG (5% of revenue)

All of these revenue sources begin with the faith and generosity of all of us, the Catholic Faithful of the Diocese of Evansville.

The primary expenses (use of funds) come from executing the key ministries offered by the diocesan offices for the

See **AUDIT**, page 9

Audit

Continued from page 8

benefit of the diocese as a whole:

Formation and Education: Catholic Schools, Catechesis, Youth and Young Adult Ministries

Sacramental and Ministerial Support: Support of all clergy and lay that work within the diocese

Social Outreach: Serving the poor, poor in spirit, the underserved, and unseen

Ecclesiastical Services to Parishes: Vocations, Worship, Family and Life, Tribunal, Communications, etc.

Management and General Operating Expenses

FINANCIAL STATEMENT DETAILS

The four primary financial statements:

Statement of Financial Position (Balance Sheet)

The Statement of Financial Position reflects the financial status of the organization as of a specific point in time (in this case June 30, 2020) showing what it owns (assets), what it owes (liabilities) and its Net Assets available to continue to conduct its mission (Assets minus Liabilities = Net Assets). It is the primary indicator of the organization’s general stability.

Statement of Activity (Income Statement)

The Statement of Activity provides the summary of the organization’s transactions for the year, its total revenues minus its total expenses to arrive at the “bottom line:” Change in Net Assets (Revenue minus Expenses = Change in Net Assets or Net Income/Loss). Again, while not seeking profit for profit’s sake, we seek positive change in net assets each year to maintain stability in managing the ministries of the diocese.

Statement of Functional Expenses

This was a new statement in 2019 required by Accounting Standards Update 2016-14. It is designed to take the expense section of the Statement of

Activity and break it down into common expense categories and help track how the organization spends its money. Most importantly, it breaks down expenses between funds spent on its ministries compared to management and general expenses.

Statement of Cash Flows

The Statement of Cash Flows is designed to display where cash is coming from and how it is going out and allows an organization to monitor if it has an adequate supply of incoming cash to cover its program and support needs.

A few detailed notes from the financial statement . . .

- Cash balances improved in 2020 through continued strong collection of SOGG pledges and cash flow assistance provided by the Paycheck Protection Program, as well as implementation of several expense management and spending freeze measures during the fiscal year. Additionally, through continued expense management and spending freeze activity in the new fiscal year, coupled with steady collections from the current Catholic Parishes Campaign, cash balances through the first six months of the new fiscal year are up about 60% as of December 2020.

- Total liabilities held steady year over year if not for the significant increase in the accrued pension liability. The pension liability is a long-term item and its balance can be significantly influenced positively or negatively from one year to the next simply from the results of the annual actuarial assessment. That assessment involves several factors including projections of long-term investment returns, mortality table updates, and discount rates. In 2020 the liability increased \$4.5 million, on the heels of a \$4.1 million increase in 2019, both, however, through no specific action other than these updated actuarial assessments. While the pension liability must continue to be managed very closely, the fact that it is such a long-term item tempers concern for near and intermediate-term liability positions.

- Net Assets dipped \$5.7 million driven primarily by

Statements of Cash Flow Year Ended June 30, 2020 and 2019			
	2020		2019
Operating Activities			
Change in net assets	\$ (5,699,001)	\$	(3,669,509)
Items not requiring (providing) operating activities cash flows			
Net realized and unrealized gains on investments	(2,509,633)		(2,149,931)
Net investment return on beneficial interests in Foundation	48,309		(140,191)
Net investment return on beneficial interests in Foundation – designated	115,742		(412,346)
Contribution of beneficial interest to Foundation on behalf of the Diocese	(804,482)		(16,738)
Contributions restricted for long-term investment	(43,252)		(57,554)
Provision for bad debt	-		214,131
Change in minimum pension liability	4,554,986		4,146,354
Changes in			
Receivables, other than loans	824,457		(673,211)
Contributions receivable	3,366,629		3,253,973
Prepaid expenses and other assets	(126,170)		(73,828)
Accounts payable	435,806		181,093
Due to related parties	(283,744)		(954,311)
Payable to named beneficiary	5,000		-
Accrued expenses and other liabilities	655,450		186,774
Unearned service revenue – Catholic Parishes Campaign	(26,000)		288
Net cash provided by (used in) operating activities	514,097		(165,006)
Investing Activities			
Purchases of investments	(3,181,576)		(18,848,075)
Proceeds from disposition of investments	5,257,225		13,467,988
Contributions to beneficial interests in Foundation	(1,768,383)		(2,597,046)
Repayments from loans to parishes and institutions	887,476		846,674
Issuance of loans to parishes and institutions	(1,670,641)		(54,639)
Net cash used in investing activities	(475,899)		(7,185,098)
Financing Activities			
Proceeds from deposits held for parishes and institutions	5,558,505		5,663,825
Payments on deposits held for parishes and institutions	(6,217,226)		(9,247,397)
Proceeds from the issuance of long-term debt	850,000		-
Proceeds from contributions restricted for endowment and long-term purposes			
Investment in priests	14,125		23,601
Investment in seminarians	20,819		25,365
Investment in other endowments	8,308		8,588
Net cash provided by (used in) financing activities	234,531		(3,526,018)
Increase (Decrease) in Cash	272,729		(10,876,122)
Cash, Beginning of Year	3,018,808		13,894,930
Cash, End of Year	\$ 3,291,537		\$ 3,018,808
Supplemental Cash Flows Information			
Interest paid to parishes and institutions	\$ 1,104,511	\$	858,786

this increase in pension liability of \$4.5 million and the aforementioned usage of SOGG funds totaling almost \$4.9 million. Despite the pension liability increase, near term liquidity and asset availability remain stable and if the long-term pension liability were excluded, net assets are actually up over 230% since 2015. Additionally, through the first six months of the new fiscal year, the Net Asset position has improved \$5.4 million.

- Total revenue improved slightly in 2020 driven primarily by favorable investment returns, despite significant volatility in the market during the last 4-5 months of the fiscal year.

- Expenses were up about \$2.9 million driven by the

aforementioned, planned renovation expenses at the Catholic Center, planned construction expenses for Catholic Charities, Cathedral renovations, and redistribution of SOGG income back to the parishes, all in accordance with plans from the SOGG.

- The Statement of Functional Expenses reflects very nicely that 90% of fiscal 2020 and 88% of fiscal 2019 expenses were incurred in direct execution of the ministry of the primary programs of the diocese while only 10% and 12%, respectively, was incurred for Management and General and fundraising expenses.

NET TAKE-AWAY AND CLOSING COMMENTS

Increases in the unfunded pension liability and planned one-time spend of prior years’ SOGG income drove a net loss on the Statement of Activity (Income Statement) for fiscal 2020.

Absent those items, normalized operations were positive.

The unfunded pension liability continues to burden the Net Asset position in the long term and we must continue to monitor it closely

Near-term liquidity and Net Asset position, however, remains in stable condition

COVID-19 pandemic continues to drive uncertainty and volatility in our financial outlook that will require continued, close attention.

The insurance program remains in strong position and while Operation of the diocesan ministries remains on narrow margin, it still shows stable results while holding 5-year average CPC assessment increases to only 1.05% . . . *That’s Good!*

Challenges remain. The results are stable and good. It continues to reinforce our efforts for a strong financial plan, conscientious and diligent stewardship, and effective fiscal management of the resources you, the Catholic faithful of the Diocese of Evansville have entrusted to our care. Thank you once again for your continued commitment to your parishes, communities, and the diocese as a whole. *That’s Very Good!*

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House of Discernment

Winter Update

BY FATHER TYLER TENBARGE
Special to The Message

Even though the COVID-19 outbreak has changed normal routines and plans, the discernment and formation for the five residents at the Diocese of Evansville’s Father Deydier House of Discernment successfully presses on. Each of our men are moving forward in their prayer and decision-making as they discern the voice of Christ and the movement of the Holy Spirit. Here are some highlights from late fall and early winter.

House residents continued with Monday Night formation conferences each week. At each conference, residents learn about prayer, discernment, discipleship and begin to study some Catholic theology.

At Thanksgiving, House Director Father Tyler Tenbarge led the House on a Day of Recollection in Vincennes at the tomb of our first bishop, Servant of God Bishop Simon Bruté. Residents joined St. Francis Xavier Parish administrator and Associate Vocation Director, Father Tony Ernst, for Mass and a tour of Bishop Bruté’s library, and they enjoyed some time praying on their own.

Savio events also continue for teenage guys. Two early-morning-Saturday runs dotted this past fall with more than 50 attending for Mass and a 2-mile run followed by a picnic breakfast. To celebrate the Solemnity of All Saints, Savio guys dressed up like images of a Saint and submitted photos. The winner for the high school division was Nate Goebel who replicated a painting of St. John the Evangelist. A few Savio guys who have been joining some seminarians for virtual, weekly faith formation likewise got to have dinner and spend some time with House residents and the seminarians over Christmas break.

House residents also hosted the annual Christmas party. Several college guys joined them for dinner, games and a gift exchange. Each attendee brought

gifts, including beard supplies, books on Catholic virtue and lots of beef jerky.

Bishop Joseph M. Siegel and Father Tyler, who also serves as diocesan Vocation Director, hosted the diocesan seminarians for a Christmas gathering that included Mass at Sacred Heart Church in Evansville and dinner at the House. Each seminarian received a new copy of Bishop Robert Barron’s “Word on Fire Bible” thanks to a generous couple from the diocese.

Our Monday Night “Holy Hour and Mass for Vocations” continues to be strong at Sacred Heart Church. All are welcome every Monday for Adoration and Confession starting at 6:30 p.m. Mass follows at 7:30 p.m.

Applications for the 2021-2022 year at the House of Discernment are currently being accepted. If you know of a young man (age 18-30) who might benefit from a Catholic community of prayer and fraternity while continuing his career or college, please have him contact House Director Father Tyler Tenbarge (trtenbarga@evdio.org).

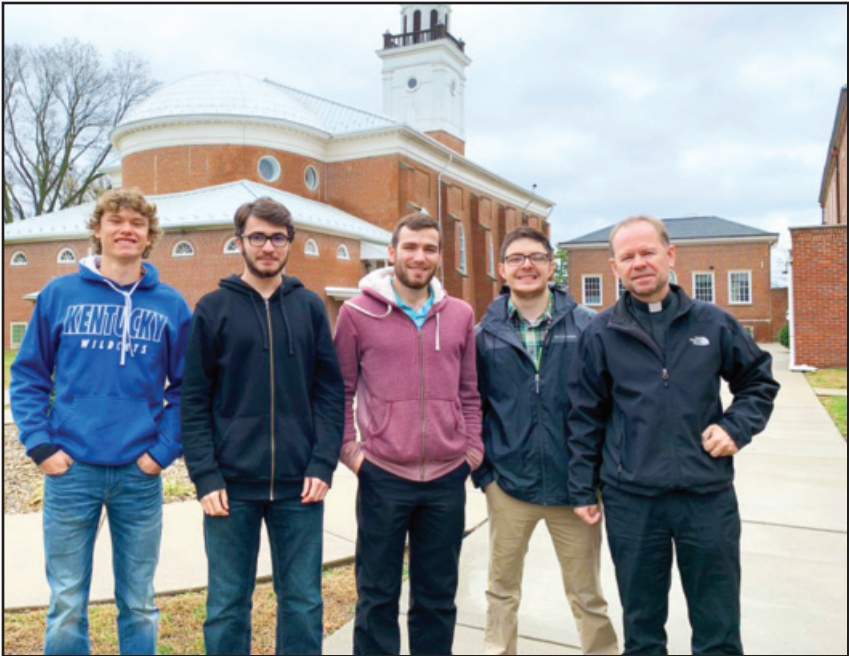
Father Tyler Tenbarge, at right, preaches to House residents in the crypt chapel of the Minor Basilica of St. Francis Xavier in Vincennes.



Photos courtesy of Father Tyler Tenbarge
Bishop Joseph M. Siegel blesses the Bibles given to the seminarians at their Christmas gathering this December.



Father Tony Ernst shows the House residents some books from Bruté’s library that contain the Servant of God’s signature.



Nick Folz, left, Kienan Corcoran, Jake Schneider and Jacob Greulich stand with Father Tony Ernst in front of the Minor Basilica of St. Francis Xavier (the Old Cathedral) in Vincennes as part of their Day of Recollection in November.



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COVID-19 impacts St. Joseph Haiti Outreach — again

BY TIM LILLEY
The Message editor

As I was preparing this article, Chad Martin, his family and some other members of the St. Joseph Parish (Vanderburgh County) Haiti Outreach Ministry were planning to visit St. Jacques Parish in Plaine de Nord, Haiti, for the first time since COVID-19 unleashed its dreadful ways on the world. But, as have been so many other things planned amidst the pandemic, their trip had to

be canceled at the last minute due to COVID-19 issues. Regular readers of **The Message** know that multiple parishes across our 12 counties are twinned with Haitian parishes. Catholics from Southwestern Indiana have made numerous trips to the Caribbean-island country, which is southeast of Cuba and bordered on the east by the Dominican Republic. Haiti is commonly known as the poorest country in the western hemisphere when you speak

of financial poverty, but they are some of the richest when it comes to their faith in Christ and their resiliency. They have assisted with necessary repairs due to earthquakes and flash flooding. They have helped their Haitian brothers and sisters obtain fresh water, educate their children, provide solar energy, grow their own food and create job enterprises to help the local economy. Their work has been impacted and travel restricted to protect both the travelers and to contain the spread of the virus in the vulnerable population without access to healthcare.

St. Joseph Haiti Outreach has had to cancel trips that were scheduled to visit St. Jacques in March 2020 and again later last year. COVID-19 shut them down. The story of the virus' impact across Haiti is fascinating. "From what we've been told, COVID-19 has not hit the country like we expected," Martin said. "The border with the Dominican Republic remains closed, and air travel into Haiti has been shut down. Haitians have been doing the same kinds of things we are here — wearing face masks, practicing social distancing and so on. I believe that the lack of travelers from outside the country has been helpful in minimizing the spread."

Located near the northern coast in the Archdiocese of Cap-Haitien, Plaine de Nord is remote. "It's only about 15 miles from Cap-Haitien, but the trip often takes 45 minutes or longer. The way of life there is far different," Martin said. Schools closed last spring because of COVID-19; and given the lack of infrastructure, virtual learning was not an option. Martin said schools reopened and finished the 2019-2020 school year last fall and began the current school year in November.

The need for isolation shut down airlines and disrupted food distribution across the entire country. But on the other hand, their living conditions are such that there are not a lot of confined indoor spaces that have amplified the spread of COVID in other parts of the world. Martin said that their pastor has told them that only by the grace of God have they been spared of the horrible loss of life that many in the medical community thought would develop after the virus made it to the island last spring. The isolation and disruptions of commerce have had a more significant impact on the people causing food shortages and hunger than has the virus.

The six members of the Outreach Ministry Team on this trip had quite a "to do" list for their journey. They are taking supplies, of course. But they also will have a chance to

Group seeking help for another Haitian parish

BY THE MESSAGE STAFF

The St. Joseph Parish (Vanderburgh County) Haiti Outreach Ministry is looking for another "twinned parish" in the Diocese of Evansville.

St. Joe's parish-ioner and SJHO member Chad Martin said, "Father Patrick Senecharles served as the associate pastor at St. Jacques Parish in Plaine de Nord, and we got to know him very well. He is a wonderful priest, and he was reassigned to serve as pastor at another parish that really doesn't have much of anything. Their Church building consists of wood



Father Patrick Senecharles stands with some youngsters in the open-air worship space at St. Roch Guasimal-Bucnabite Parish in St. Raphael, a small town less than 40 miles south of Plaine de Nord.

poles with blue tarps to provide shade. This just goes to show you that the Church is not the buildings we worship, but the people we worship the Lord with."

Father Patrick is now pastor of St. Roch Guasimal-Bucnabite Parish in St. Raphael, a small town less than 40 miles south of Plaine de Nord. According to Google Maps, driving that distance takes more than 2.5 hours.

Martin said, "Father Patrick is a wonderful and energetic priest who wants what is best for the children in his parish, many of whom cannot afford to go to school. Going to school in Haiti is so important — not only for education, but for the fact that if the school is lucky enough to be able to provide lunch (a bowl of rice and beans), it may be the only meal the kids eat that day."

Martin told **The Message** that the Parish Twinning Program of the America's, the national organization that works to twin parishes, has developed a waiting list, so he is hoping that a more direct appeal could lead to help for Father Patrick and his new parish.

If you, anyone you know or your parish is interested in helping Father Patrick and St. Roch Parish on an ongoing basis, contact the St. Joseph Parish Haiti Outreach Ministry through the parish's online portal at www.stjoeco.org/contact, or you can contact Chad Martin at 812-549-5256 or email cmartin@empire-contractors.com to learn more about Father Patrick.


meet St. Jacques' new pastor for the first time. Dozens of priests were reassigned across the archdiocese late last year, and St. Jacques "traded" pastors with a parish in Cap-Haitien. They had planned to resupply their "New Hope" sewing school and coordinate the next school year with the local teachers and coordinator.

The travelers also had planned to catch up with as many sponsored students as possible for interviews that will provide information for their U.S. sponsors who are supporting them with tuition for elementary and secondary schools, and colleges. Martin said approximately 200 students are being sponsored for elementary and secondary education expenses, and more than 40 others are receiving help with college expenses and we are always looking for more sponsors or people who just want to get involved with

the outreach program. Martin and his 10-year-old son C.J. also planned to visit "Dr. Leo" at another school in Plaine de Nord. The Martins, with C.J. spearheading the effort, raised more than \$25,000 since the end of May 2020 to assist this Christian missionary in his work to repair a fish farm that had been severely damaged by a 2010 earthquake. Martin said, "The farm is running again. Through Dr. Leo's efforts, the people in the area — including those we are helping directly — are receiving protein in their diets from the fish grown there thanks to all the prayers and donations from many." They are trying to reschedule their trip at the earliest opportunity. Martin said, "God leads us to reach out to our brothers and sisters in Haiti and we will persevere in sharing our faith and love with them the best we can despite the Covid-19 impacts we face."




Photos courtesy of the St. Joseph Parish Haiti Outreach Ministry. These local residents proudly hold up some of the fish now being raised at the fish farm to feed school students and their families in Plaines de Nord and nearby towns.




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Holy Rosary announces Respect Life Art Contest winners



K-Grade 2 winners Anderson, Elijah and Elle with Mrs. Weisman.



Grade 3-5 winners Paige, Mallory and Maggie with Mrs. Weisman.



Grade 6-8 winners Hannah, Josslyn and Will with Mrs. Weisman.

SPECIAL TO THE MESSAGE

Editor's note: Holy Rosary School in Evansville holds an annual Respect Life Art Contest, and the winners usually are announced in October as part of Respect Life Month in the U.S. We all know that 2020 was anything but usual! The Message asked the fine folks at Holy Rosary if we could publish the winners in this issue of The Message, which is all-diocesan and is being published just before the annual March for Life — which will be anything but usual in 2021. We are grateful to Holy Rosary School for working with us on this announcement. Congratulations to the winners!

Holy Rosary's Respect Life Committee announces the winners of the 2020-2021 Respect Life Art Contest. This year's Respect Life theme is "Live the Gospel of Life."

Christ taking on human life, dwelling among us and sacrificing his life reveals the dignity of every human person. This year's theme offered ample opportunity for students to explore the dignity of life through art.

Holy Rosary art teacher Michelle Weisman helped students to incorporate works of Matisse and Chagall, well-known images of saints and the stained-glass window of Notre Dame with the foundation of our belief that "every person is made in the likeness and image of God." Students looked at our faith through paintings, sculptures, architecture, and natural beauty to draw inspiration for their artwork.

In the Kindergarten – second-grade category, the first-place winner is **Elijah Pickerill**, the second-place winner is **Anderson Schmitt**, and the third-place winner is

Elle McGowan. For the third – fifth-grade category, the first-place winner is **Mallory Titzer**, the second-place winner is **Paige Wilson**, and the third-place winner is **Maggie Mitz**. For the sixth – eighth-grade category, the first-place winner is **Hannah Gatz**, the second-place winner is **Will Diefenbaugh**, and the third-place winner is **Josslyn Wade**.

Photos **CONTINUED** on page 13

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K-Grade 2 — 1st place — Elijah Pickerill



Grade 3-5 — 1st place — Mallory Titzer



K-Grade 2 — 2nd place — Anderson Schmitt



K-Grade 2 — 3rd place — Elle McGowan



Grade 3-5 — 2nd place — Paige Wilson



Grade 3-5 — 3rd place — Maggie Mitz

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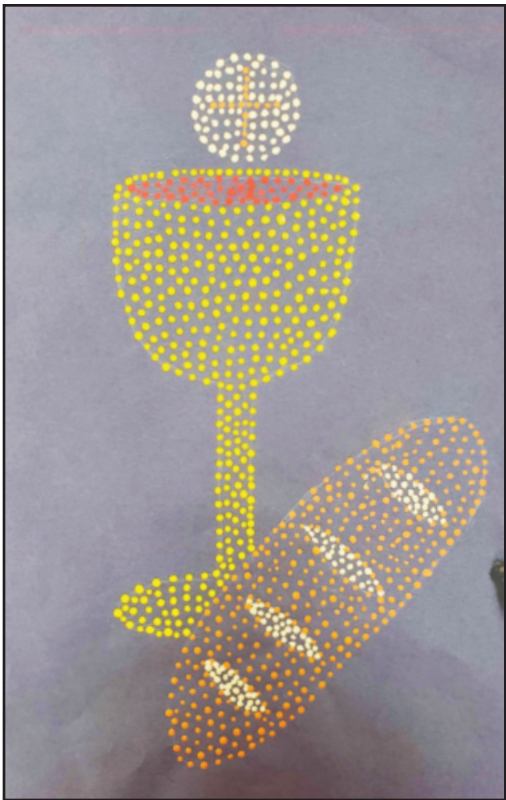
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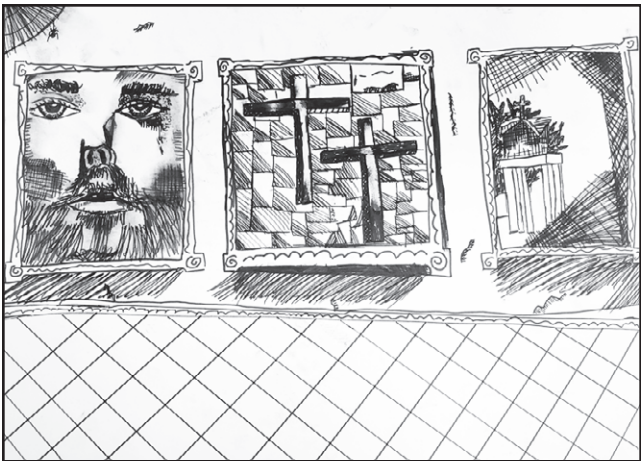
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Grade 6-8 — 1st place — Josslyn Wade



Grade 6-8 — 3rd place — Hannah Gatz



Grade 6-8 — 2nd place
Will Diefenbaugh

— Submitted photos

Plague saints for a time of COVID-19

Editor’s note: The Message has carried information about the Fourteen Holy Helpers in previous issues. This detailed feature from Catholic News Agency provides a deeper look into the saints.

DENVER, COLO. (CNA) — While the COVID-19 pandemic has turned life upside down for many people, it’s not the first time the Church has gone through a major health crisis.

In the middle of the 14th century, the plague — also called “The Black Death” — also called “The Greatest Catastrophe Ever” — ravaged Europe, killing 50 million people, or about 60 percent of the population (a vastly higher death rate than coronavirus), within a few years.

Lacking the advances of modern medicine today, the people had no choice but to cling to their faith.

It was at this time that the Fourteen Holy Helpers — Catholics saints, all but one of whom were early martyrs — came to be invoked by Catholics against the plague and other misfortunes.

According to New Liturgical Movement, devotion to these 14 saints started in Germany at the time of the plague, and they were called “Nothelfer,” which in German means “helpers in need.”

As bouts of the plague resurfaced over the decades, devotion to the Holy Helpers spread to other countries, and eventually, Nicholas V declared that devotion to the saints came with special indulgences.

According to New Liturgical Movement, this introduction to the feast of the Holy Helpers (celebrated Aug. 8 in some places) can be found in the Cracow Missal of 1483:

“The Mass of the Fourteen Holy Helpers, approved by Pope Nicholas . . . it is powerful on their behalf, however so much one is in great illness or anguish or sadness, or in whatsoever tribulation a man shall be. It is powerful also on behalf of the imprisoned and detained, on behalf of merchants and pilgrims, for those that have been sentenced to die, for those who are at war, for women who are struggling in childbirth, or with a miscarriage, and for (the forgiveness of) sins, and for the dead.”

The collect for their feast in the Missal of Bamberg reads: “Almighty and merciful God, who didst adorn Thy Sts. George, Blase, Erasmus, Pantaleon, Vitus, Christopher, Denis, Cyriacus, Acacius, Eustace, Giles, Margaret, Barbara and Catherine with special privileges above all others, so that all who in their necessities implore their help, according to the grace of Thy promise, may attain the salutary effect of their pleading, grant to us, we beseech Thee,

forgiveness of our sins, and with their merits interceding, deliver us from all adversities, and kindly hear our prayers.”

Here’s a bit about each of the Fourteen Holy Helpers:

St. George: While little is known definitively about his life, St. George was a fourth-century martyr under the persecution of the emperor Diocletian. A soldier in Diocletian’s army, St. George refused to arrest Christians and offer sacrifices to Roman gods. Despite bribes from Diocletian to change his mind, St. George refused the order and was tortured and eventually executed for his offenses. He is invoked against skin diseases and palsy.

St. Blase: Another fourth-century martyr, St. Blase’s death is very similar to that of St. George. A bishop in Armenia during a time of Christian persecution, St. Blase was eventually forced to flee to the forest to avoid death. One day a group of hunters found St. Blase, arrested him and brought him back to the authorities. At some point after his arrest, a mother with a son who had gotten a fishbone perilously stuck in his throat visited St. Blase, and at his blessing, the bone dislodged and the boy was saved. St. Blase was ordered by the governor of Cappadocia to denounce his faith and sacrifice to pagan gods. He refused, and he was brutally tortured and eventually beheaded for this offense. He is invoked against diseases of the throat.

St. Erasmus: A fourth-century bishop of Formia, St. Erasmus (also known as St. Elmo) faced persecution under the emperor Diocletian. According to legend, he fled to Mount Lebanon for a time to escape persecution, where he was fed by a raven. After he was discovered, he was arrested and imprisoned, but he made multiple miraculous escapes with the help of an angel. At one point he was tortured by having part of his intestines pulled out by hot rods. Some accounts say he was miraculously healed of these wounds and died of natural causes, while others say that this was the cause of his martyrdom. St. Erasmus is invoked by those suffering from stomach pains and disorders, and by women in labor.

St. Pantaleon: Another fourth-century martyr persecuted under Diocletian, St. Pantaleon was the son of a rich pagan, but he was instructed in Christianity by his mother and a priest. He worked as a physician to the emperor Maximianus. According to legend, St. Pantaleon was denounced as a



Public domain photo

This is a 19th century depiction of the Fourteen Holy Helpers that has been restored by Alois Liebwein.

Christian to the emperor by his peers who were jealous of his rich inheritance. When he refused to worship false gods, St. Pantaleon was tortured and his murder was attempted by various methods — burning torches on his flesh, a bath of liquid lead, being thrown into the sea tied to a stone, and so on. Each time, he was rescued from death by Christ, who appeared in the form of a priest. St. Pantaleon was only successfully beheaded after he desired his martyrdom. He is invoked as a patron saint of physicians and midwives.

St. Vitus: Also a fourth-century martyr persecuted by Diocletian, St. Vitus was the son of a senator in Sicily and became Christian under the influence of his nurse. According to legend, St. Vitus inspired many conversions and performed many miracles, which angered those who hated Christianity. St. Vitus, and his Christian nurse and her husband, were denounced to the emperor, who ordered them to be put to death when they refused to renounce their faith. Like St. Pantaleon, many attempts were made at killing them, including releasing them to lions in the Colosseum, but they were miraculously delivered each time. They were eventually put to death on the rack. St. Vitus is invoked against epilepsy, paralysis, and diseases of the nervous system.

St. Christopher: A third-century martyr originally called Reprobos, he was the son of pagans and had originally pledged his service to a pagan king and Satan. Eventually, the conversion of a king and the instruction of a monk led Reprobos to convert to Christianity, and he was called on to use his strength and muscles to help carry people across a raging stream where there was no bridge.

Once he was carrying a child who announced himself as Christ and declared the Reprobos would be called “Christopher” — or Christ-bearer. The encounter filled Christopher with missionary zeal, and he returned home to Turkey to convert nearly 50,000. Angered, the Emperor Decius had Christopher arrested, imprisoned and tortured. While he was delivered from many tortures, including being shot with arrows, Christopher was beheaded around the year 250. He is invoked against epilepsy and toothache, and he is the patron of a holy death.

St. Denis: There are conflicting accounts of St. Denis, with some accounts claiming he was converted to Christianity in Athens by St. Paul, and then became the first Bishop of Paris sometime in the first century. Other accounts claim he was a Bishop of Paris but a martyr of the third century. What is known is that he was a zealous missionary who eventually came to France, where he was beheaded on Montmartre — the Mount of Martyrs — a place where many early Christians were killed for the faith. He is invoked against demonic attacks.

St. Cyriacus: Another fourth-century martyr, St. Cyriacus, a deacon, was actually favored by the emperor Diocletian after he cured the emperor’s daughter in the name of Jesus, and then the friend of the emperor. According to Catholicism.org and The Fourteen Holy Helpers, by Father Bonaventure Hammer, O.F.M., after Diocletian died, his successor, emperor Maximin, increased the persecution of Christians and imprisoned Cyriacus, who was tortured at the rack and beheaded for refusing to renounce

Christianity. He is the patron of those who suffer from eye diseases.

St. Acacius: A fourth-century martyr under the emperor Galerius, St. Acacius was a captain in the Roman army when he heard a voice telling him to “Call on the help of the God of Christians,” according to tradition. He obeyed the voice and immediately sought baptism in the Christian faith. He zealously set about converting the soldiers of the army but was soon denounced to the emperor, tortured and sent before a tribunal for questioning, before which he again refused to denounce his faith. After many more tortures, from some of which he was miraculously healed, St. Acacius was beheaded in the year 311. He is the patron saint of those who suffer from headaches.

St. Eustace: Little is known about this second-century martyr, persecuted under the Emperor Trajan. According to tradition, Eustace was a general in the army who converted to Christianity after a vision of a Crucifix that appeared between the antlers of a deer while he was hunting. He converted his family to Christianity, and he and his wife were burned to death after refusing to participate in a pagan ceremony. He is invoked against fires.

St. Giles: One of the later Holy Helpers and the only one definitively known to not be a martyr, St. Giles became a seventh-century monk in the area of Athens, despite his birth to nobility. He eventually retreated to the wilderness to found a monastery under the rule of St. Benedict, and he was renowned for his holiness and the miracles he performed. According to Catholicism.org,

The Message:

Working for you **now** more than ever

BY TIM LILLEY
The Message editor

Southwest Indiana's Catholic community newspaper has been working for you for **more than 50 years**. And now, in the midst of the COVID-19 outbreak and all its challenges, *The Message* is working for you **more than ever**.

We strive to bring you the news and information you need to stay informed about the guidelines in place for parish Masses and other worship services, and other parish events across our 12 counties. Be assured that *The Message* will get that news — and more — to you as quickly as we can.

And just as *The Message* staff is working for you more than ever, we need your support more than ever. This issue appears at the start of the Diocese of Evansville's annual "**Message Weekend**," when Catholics across our 12 counties have the opportunity to subscribe to the paper or renew their annual subscriptions.

To those who will renew, sincere thanks for your ongoing support. To everyone else, we hope you will decide to become a subscriber. You can receive 51 issues — **print and digital** — for only **\$24**. **We have not increased our subscription rate in more than 15 years!** Digital-only subscriptions are available for only **\$12**. Please consider one of these options if you are not already a subscriber.

You can **try the digital edition free** — and with **no obligation** — by visiting our website at evdiomessage.org. There, you can download the digital edition of this issue and see for yourself that this product provides you everything included in the print edition.

Over the next couple of issues, we'll focus on our Catholic schools. *The Message* will continue to provide updates from the [Catholic Education Office](#) regarding the impact of COVID-19 on our 26 Catholic schools. We also will cover the annual National Catholic Schools Week Mass and the "Come and See" events our schools are planning. **Schools will always be a major focus** for *The Message*.

We also will cover the ordination of [Deacon Garrett Braun](#) to the priesthood early June.

Ruth Bandas and **Sheila Barclay** serve on *The Message* staff with assistant editor **Megan Erbacher** and me, and they do great work for you on a daily basis. Ruth handles subscriptions and display advertising, and Sheila is responsible for the design and look of *The Message*. They join Megan and me in a commitment to serving our readers by delivering the best newspaper and the best service possible.

Our [local columnists](#) include Bishop Joseph M. Siegel, Father Donald Dilger, Zoe Cannon, Society of St. Vincent de Paul Director Joseph Cook, Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministry Steve Dabrowski, Diocesan Coordinator of Catechetical Programs and Resources Mary Kaye Falcony, Director of Catechesis Kathy Gallo, Brenda Hopf, Mary Ann Hughes, Kaitlin Klein, Director of Hispanic Ministries Bertha Melendres, Joel Padgett, Diocesan Director of Stewardship Matt Potter, Kristine Schroeder, Maria Sermersheim, Becky Siewers, members of the Southwest Indiana Guild of the Catholic Medical Association and Youth First counselors who are serving in our Catholic schools. Our priests and members of religious orders serving in the diocese also will contribute.

[Contributing columnists](#) from outside the diocese include Christina Capecchi, Father Kenneth Doyle and George Weigel. You can count on *The Message* to deliver you a variety of perspectives on many areas

through our outstanding lineup of columnists. **Subscribe today** to begin receiving this dynamic lineup every week.

The Message also brings you news from across the Catholic world using the resources of [Catholic News Service](#) and [Catholic News Agency](#). However, our focus is here — at home. **We are committed to being the best newspaper possible for our Catholic community in Southwest Indiana.**

Subscribers know that, with the generous support of longtime advertisers like G.D. Ritz's and Holiday World, we are able to offer a [Christmas coloring contest](#) for youngsters and [free passes](#) to Holiday World and Splashin' Safari. **Subscribe today** to make sure you don't miss out on all the fun.

From top to bottom, I hope you see that *The Message* works hard for you, our Catholic community, every week of the year. All of us hope you will renew your subscriptions or become new subscribers. We **thank you** again for your support and confidence. **Be assured of our commitment to bringing you the best community newspaper in our 12 counties.**

And be assured of our prayers that you and your families remain healthy and safe.



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Buckle up, buttercup: You’re not always right

For a few months now, I’ve been growing in the desire for people to tell me when I am wrong. I don’t wish to be wrong on anything — of course, I would much rather be right — but I am not perfect; and I would like my friends to help me see my errors so I can fix them. I desire holiness, and I know I have a long way to go; so I thirst for constructive criticism. Unfortunately, in these same months, I have found fewer and fewer people willing to be good models and admit when they’re wrong or charitably chastise their friends.

Everywhere, people cling to pride. This is not a game of “us” or “them,” a fiction of “we see” that “they sin.” We are all guilty. Forget the party lines you’ve drawn on any subject, from politics to COVID-19 restrictions to Harry Potter to the proper way to butter corn. I don’t necessarily care where your line is drawn — I care if it’s not subject to considered revision.

At Mass, just before we receive the Eucharist, we declare, “Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.” We are not worthy because we are human and he is God, and we are even less worthy because we are sinners. On our pilgrim journey of this life, though, we recognize the hope for healing and the need for lives marked by continual conversion. To conform our hearts and wills to Christ’s, we must continually refine ourselves in pursuit of truth and



MEDITATIONE IGNIS

MARIA SERMERSHEIM

goodness. Thus, I want to be told when I am wrong because I want to correct my ways. I want to see God more than I want to stand my ground for the sake of it. Show me the paths to walk, Lord, for I do not know the way.

Every Monday through Thursday, the Psalms for Compline (night prayer from the Liturgy of the Hours) implore God to show us the path of life. God’s Word does not assure us that we have everything figured out, and so everyone should follow us. Far be it from us to ever claim such a thing with our limited perspectives and our short, fleeting lives. Yes, we are human, made in the image of God, and he deems us “very good;” but we must be honest and give the full picture. The Bible introduces the Fall in the third chapter because sin (especially pride) pervades our current state of affairs. We must both recognize our goodness and admit our imperfection. This is why we need Christ; we are to follow him. So let us revoke our prideful selection of fruit and ask God what is good; let us step away from our personal attachments

"Jesus came with his disciples into the house. Again the crowd gathered, making it impossible for them to eat. When his relatives heard of this they set out to seize him, for they said, 'He is out of his mind.'"

— Mark 3:20-21

to our variety of positions and pray, “Teach me, Lord, your way, that I may walk in your truth, single-hearted and revering your name” (Ps 86:11). And then recall that he often works through people.

Perhaps we can take a page out of St. Catherine of Siena’s book. Sigrid Undset tells us of Catherine, “with her deep insight into the life of the soul, the fight to achieve perfect humility was one of profound importance . . . she considered her human enemies as her true benefactors [because] the fear of becoming self-satisfied must have throbbed like a wound in her inmost soul” (p.53). Let us fear self-satisfaction as she did and love those who justly rebuke us — whether kindly as we hope or not — and be grateful for the opportunities they afford us to draw ever closer to Christ.

Maria Sermersheim is a 2018 graduate of Reitz Memorial High School and a junior at the University of Notre Dame this year.

ADAM AND EVE, AND THE SNEAKY SNAKE

The words below have been written in code. Use the hints in the decoder to help break the code (the letters on top are the correct answers, the numbers on the bottom are the code). Write the correct word on the lines provided.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

5 - 22 - 9 - 12

5 - 4 - 5 - 14

20 - 18 - 5 - 5

1 - 4 - 1 - 13

7 - 1 - 18 - 4 - 5 - 14

7 - 15 - 15 - 4

5 - 22 - 5

8 - 21 - 19 - 2 - 1 - 14 - 4

6 - 18 - 21 - 9 - 20

19 - 5 - 18 - 16 - 5 - 14 - 20

ADAM
TREE

GOOD
EVIL

SERPENT
GARDEN

HUSBAND
FRUIT

EDEN
EVE

BEATITUDES

ACROSS

1. Blessed are the _____:
for they shall be called the children of God

2. Blessed are the _____:
for they shall obtain mercy

4. Blessed are the pure in _____:
for they shall see God

6. Blessed are the _____:
for they shall inherit the earth

8. Blessed are those that hunger and thirst after _____:
for they shall be filled

DOWN

1. Blessed are they which are _____
for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven

3. _____ are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake

5. Blessed are the poor in _____:
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven

7. Blessed are they that _____:
for they shall be comforted

Answers on page 23.

‘A failure’ of love and solidarity creates societal divisions, says archbishop

BY ANN CAREY
Catholic News Service

SOUTH BEND, INDIANA (CNS) — Love is the solution to the deep divisions that trouble societies, Archbishop José H. Gomez of Los Angeles, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, said in his Jan. 12 keynote for a virtual conference at the University of Notre Dame.

The archbishop focused on migrants and the global refugee crisis. But he also alluded to “the violence . . . at our nation’s Capitol, and the deep polarization and divisions in our country.”

All of these problems are more than a failure of politics or diplomacy, he said: “It’s a failure of human fraternity and solidarity. It’s a failure of

love.”

Archbishop Gomez’s keynote “What Do We Owe the Immigrant?” reflected the conference theme: “We Belong to Each Other,” a quotation from St. Teresa of Kolkata.

He related that he has worked for over 20 years on immigration reform and advocating for migrants and refugees, and he has come to realize these issues are part of deeper questions about God and the human person, namely that God is love and has created humans in his own image “that calls us to form one human family and to live together in love as brothers and sisters.”

“Unless we believe that we have a Father in heaven, there’s no necessary reason for us to treat one another as

brothers and sisters on earth,” Archbishop Gomez said.

Without these truths, we can’t understand our Christian commitments to migrants and refugees, the poor, the unborn, the imprisoned, the sick and the environment, he explained. Nor can we “understand how to create a society that will be good for human beings,” and he reminded the conference that “our society has lost its bearings.”

Currently, Western nations, corporations, agencies and other entities attempt to build a global economic and political order excluding traditional Judeo-Christian principles, he continued. And when those values are lost, we lose that principle of a loving God who creates persons in his own image, and the result, he said, is “an aggressively secular society.”



CNS photo

ARCHBISHOP JOSE H. GOMEZ

“Without belief in a Creator who establishes values, we have no authority higher than our own politics and procedures,” he explained. “We are left with no solid foundation for our commitments to human dignity, freedom, equality, and fraternity.”

This “crisis of truth” causes many hardships and injustices in society, he said; but we Christians know the truth and should proclaim it.

“We need to tell them the good news that we are all children of God, that there is a greatness to human life,” the archbishop said. “That every one of us is created in God’s image, endowed with God-given rights and responsibilities, and called to a transcendent destiny.”

Referring to the current national turmoil, Archbishop Gomez stressed that “we have an urgent duty in this moment to bear witness to the truth . . . This beautiful truth about

God and the human person is the key to healing and reconciliation; it’s the way forward, the way we can come together as one nation under God.”

By serving our neighbors and caring for each other, particularly the weak and vulnerable, he concluded, “We can change our country and we can change the world. We can help our neighbors to know this God, and to know his love.”

In a question-and-answer session after his keynote, Archbishop Gomez said he wants people to “love God and recognize that immigration is not a problem: It’s something good.” And he stressed that immigrants are an asset to society, bringing unique talents, gifts and aspirations that enrich all of us.

“They aren’t coming to take our places; they are coming to participate,” he said.

Responding to a question about how to understand migrants as our brothers and sisters when they come from so many different places, Archbishop Gomez compared a migrant to a college freshman who is unfamiliar with the place or the people. But, as he gets to know the place and the people get to know him, those differences and uncertainties fade.

This likewise happens in cities, neighborhoods, parishes and the workplace, he said, when we get to know migrants.

He also stressed that the United States should continue to help make life better for people all over the world, for most people prefer to stay in their own country but have difficulty surviving there, or even are forcibly removed. Thus, it is important to understand the movement of peoples, and if we can welcome and help migrants, we may

CROSSWORD

- ACROSS**

1 Tablet

5 Apothecary weights

10 Pedro’s home

14 Hosea, in the Douay

15 Fits

16 Father of Jesse

17 Adjective for God

19 Fill up

20 Alphabet string

21 Nights before holy days

22 Unit of energy

23 Actor Beatty

24 Cooked

26 Saint items

30 Languishes with longing

31 Beneficial

32 Members of an order of St. Angela Merici

36 Aquatic bird

37 Ram sign

38 Summer month in Paris

39 Location

41 Trap

42 Clerical wear

43 42a wearer

44 Highly original

47 OT book

48 Mock

49 Pre-_____

50 Microwave slang
- 53 Tasmanian peak

54 What Goliath was

57 Russian no

58 Buckets

59 Accustomed

60 Relaxation

61 Rustle, as silk

62 Prime rating
- DOWN**

1 “Blessed are the _____” (Mt 5)

2 Doctrines

3 Liturgical season

4 Diocese of Honolulu wreath

5 Herds

6 Given a G, say

7 “...all _____ to come shall call me blessed.” (Magnificat)

8 “...for us and for all _____”

9 Former JFK arrival

10 One of Paul’s epistles

11 Concerning

12 Chicago Eight defendant

13 Summed

18 Peter’s _____

22 She killed Sisera in the Book of Judges

24 He is _____!

25 Responsibility

26 Certain throws

27 Sewing case

28 Rhythmic swing

29 Light up

30 Head of a monastery

32 One of the Archangels

33 He pleased God

34 Continental money

35 Choreographer’s unit

37 _____ boy!

40 It’s in the dictionary now

41 Paul’s companion during his missionary travels

43 Expel

44 This was rolled in front of Jesus’ tomb

45 Good course for your GPA

46 Meditates

47 Shopping centers

49 103, in ancient Rome

50 Israel

51 St. _____ du Beaupre

52 Animal rights org.

54 Letter letters

55 Hesitation

56 Genesis animal number

SCRIPTURE SEARCH

Gospel for Sunday, January 24, 2021

Mark 1:14-20

Following is a word search based on the Gospel reading for the Third Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle B. The words can be found in all directions in the puzzle.

- | | | |
|-----------|------------|----------|
| DISCIPLES | EAT | THEM |
| AGAIN | CROWD | HIM |
| SET | THEY | GATHERED |
| HOUSE | JESUS | SEIZE |
| INTO | IMPOSSIBLE | MIND |
| HEARD | EVEN | MAKING |
| RELATIVES | OUT | CAME |

V F P Y D L J D O Y Y T A D Y
E U T R E E Q W B V H X I D O
G A A A S H V O S E I Z E D I
E E O U I U T R M H M M P N E
H G S D F I O C S X A V R I L
A F A D M S C E W H K N E M B
K U A T B V L M C K I I H X I
Y Z N H H P L Q E E N N N A S
M C I I I E S U O H G T F U S
B A A C A M R N E V E O Z E O
V X S M V G G E M I X U A W P
U I V W E Z A W D S Z T O N M
D Z Y O E D B M S V I C C D I
E K R F B W K B R R R Y Z B H
R E L A T I V E S E T W B P A

See answers on page 19.

www.wordgamesforcatholics.com

See LOVE, page 18

Pro-life includes natural-death considerations

When I volunteered to write the “Catholic Healthcare” column for this issue of *The Message*, I had planned to discuss the 48th anniversary of Roe v. Wade and some of the medical aspects of abortion and post-abortion complications.

Then, on Dec. 30, 2020, my mom Kathleen died peacefully in her sleep. She had lived most recently in a wonderful home for individuals with dementia where she was well-loved and cared for. Hospice was involved briefly at the end of her life. My dad died just over three years ago; and my siblings and I have been praying that when it was Mom’s time to die, she would go to sleep one night and not wake up. Thank you, St. Joseph, the patron saint of a peaceful death!

One theme of the pro-life movement is “protecting life from conception to natural death.” In this column, I will focus more on the natural-death end of the spectrum. Those familiar with my practice know I am the “crazy conservative Catholic” who actually believes what our Church teaches about natural family planning and openness to life.

Something you may not know, however, is that I am the Medical Director for Heritage Hospice, a private hospice agency, and have worked with this wonderful company for eight years. I have the privilege of working with patients and families at the end of life.

Some have questioned if hospice care is consistent with Catholic pro-life teaching. I freely admit that many in healthcare are not comfortable with the con-



CATHOLIC HEALTHCARE

DR. BILL BLANKE

cept of “natural death” and believe that we should use every available resource to maintain life as long as possible. I encourage you to read the book “Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End,” by Atul Gawande, M.D., a general surgeon. This book has helped shape my hospice practice.

The “Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services” from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops provides guidance for Catholic Healthcare institutions; and specifically, one of the chapters addresses issues in care for the seriously ill and dying.

In early December, I “just happened” (aka closest moment to Christ in Cursillo language) to start reading a book my wife Dana had about near-death experiences. For those who have read this genre of a book before, it is so reassuring to read what people have experienced and then tried to describe. While it is not morally acceptable to speed up death (recall the reference against suicide and euthanasia above), it is absolutely morally acceptable to care for people in hospice and attend to them through the natural-

death process. We can only imagine what awaits us. As the third chapter of Ecclesiastes reminds us, “There is an appointed time for everything, and a time for every affair under the heavens. A time to give birth, and a time to die . . . a time to weep, and a time to laugh.” We of faith give thanks when a newborn arrives safely and there is much celebration, and we of faith also trust that in heaven even greater things await us.

Kathleen Blanke was blessed with a life of 87 years, a marriage to Jay for 64 years, and six children. She celebrated our weddings, supported us through our divorces and was thrilled with being a grandma. By the time this article is published, I will have already laughed and cried with my family in St. Louis. But it is our belief in heaven and the promise of eternal life that will help ease our sorrow. I still remember and pray for my younger sister Barb, my Dad, and now my Mom in my daily rosary.

“O Lord, life has not ended, but has merely changed; and when this earthly abode dissolves, an eternal dwelling place awaits them in heaven” (From the preface of the Mass for Christian Burial).

May Kathleen Blanke and all the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen!

Dr. Bill Blanke practices family medicine in Evansville, and he serves as medical director for Heritage Hospice. He is a member of Evansville’s Good Shepherd Parish.

We need grace to succeed in our resolutions

I learned the Act of Contrition in second grade. Mrs. Tartamella would patiently practice with us every day. We’d go through the prayer line by line, and when we’d get to “I firmly resolve, with the help of thy grace, to sin no more . . .” there’d be a huge emphasis on the middle part of the phrase.

“With the help of **THY** grace . . .”

It was almost sing-song the way we’d say it, a gaggle of 7-year-old kids learning a prayer we will hopefully say thousands of times throughout the course of our lives, emphasizing “thy grace,” as if we fully comprehended what it meant. I’m not sure I even know what it means now.

It’s an emphasis on God’s grace — freely given, abundantly bestowed. It’s what truly matters, and in the grand scheme of things, it is God’s grace that transforms us, spurs us on, heals deep wounds and helps us make good on that resolution to sin no more.

As 2021 begins — a year so many of us are relieved has finally arrived, hoping it’ll be better than the year we’ve just left behind — we are making resolutions. Firmly resolving a lot of things, we may find ourselves in this early part of the new year trying to think of ways to make things easier, happier, holier and healthier.

Some of our resolutions are probably boilerplate: eat healthy, exercise, pray more, go to bed before midnight. Maybe they’re quite significant resolutions, involving bigger investments than just not swinging by Chick-fil-A for an iced coffee every morning after school drop-off.

Wherever those resolutions fit on the “I’ll do better this year” spectrum, I dare say that most of us launching into this year with at least a small desire to do some things differently will need significant help to actually make good on our resolutions.



WINDOW SEAT WISDOM

KATIE PREJEAN MCGRADY

And the help will come with “thy grace.” It has to.

Because whether it’s choosing fruit over ice cream for dessert or working to root out implicit bias and defeat racism in our homes and communities, the good work we resolve to do in this new year is only done because we are spurred on, transformed, healed and aided by the free, abundant, life-changing gift of God’s grace.

We can each make the resolution. We can each declare the good thing we want to do. We can even post those resolutions on social media. On our own, with just a desire and some commonplace habit building, we won’t get very far.

But with the Lord, we can become holy.

In him, we can accomplish remarkable things. Not by our own power, and certainly not simply because we grit our teeth and get to work, but because we have been given, and gratefully receive, his grace, which aids us in the work.

Is that not what Scripture tells us? On decorative signs hung in homes across America, we read, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”

Those words from St. Paul, written to

the Philippians, aren’t just pithy, meant to make us feel like we can conquer the world. It comes as St. Paul tells his audience about generosity of spirit, instructing them how to give of ourselves to the task, the moment at hand, the same way he has done. And he was able to do it, and we will be able to as well, because of Jesus Christ.

With the help of his grace, we can face and take on — and even succeed — with the resolutions before us, whether those of our own making or those we feel called to because of circumstances, tensions and challenges within our country and world.

We firmly resolve and hope for a better year with the help of his grace.

Katie Prejean McGrady is a speaker, award-winning author and host of the Ave Explores podcast. She lives in Louisiana with her husband and daughters.



The Diocese of Evansville announces the opening of a search for the next Principal for St. Joseph Catholic Elementary School in Princeton, IN

St. Joseph Catholic School, our faculty/staff, parents, and the entire parish community are collectively dedicated to providing a faith-filled Catholic education that fosters the growth of the whole child. Through developmentally appropriate academics, we facilitate social growth in a safe environment and inspire self-discipline, personal responsibility, love of learning and compassion for others in the world.

The school holds accreditation by AdvancED/Cognia as well as the Indiana State Board of Education. The school earned an “A” letter grade from the Department of Education. The school is a member in good standing with the Indiana Non-Public Education Association and the National Catholic Education Association. Current enrollment is 128 in PK – 5th grade.

Please send a cover letter and current resumé to:

Dr. Daryl C. Hagan, Superintendent of Schools
Diocese of Evansville, Catholic Schools Office
4200 North Kentucky Avenue, PO Box 4169
Evansville, IN 47724-0169
or cso@evdio.org

Applications will be accepted until the position is filled.

School Website: <http://www.evdio.org/catholic-schools.html>

Love

Continued from page 17

make it possible for them to fulfill their desire to return to their own countries.

The archbishop acknowledged that all countries have a right to control their borders, and the United States needs to find a way for people who want to come to this country to do so legally.

Clarifying this point “helps people to calm down and just get it done,” Archbishop Gomez added.

Notre Dame’s de Nicola Center for Ethics and Culture sponsored the conference.



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Giving Alms

Two weeks ago in this space, I shared with you a reflection on Christmas, as we were still in the Christmas season. Today I am shifting gears and looking ahead a few weeks to the next big thing on the Liturgical calendar. Ash Wednesday is Feb. 17, which means that Easter will be upon us shortly — and now is the time for us to get ready.

One of the Lenten practices we are encouraged towards is giving alms, which is the act of freely giving money, food or other donations to the poor. Rather than discuss where we can drop off our canned goods, let’s talk about what prevents us from dropping them off, giving some cash and/or signing up to help out.

We live under the impression that the stuff we have is ours. I have written about this in the past, but it’s so key to understanding stewardship that I want to talk about it again. The fact is, the stuff that surrounds us is not ours at all; it belongs to God. It is merely on loan to us.

When I read about stewardship, the discussion inevitably points to the “gifts” we are given by God. If I could change one thing in our stewardship language, it would be that word. A gift is something given to us that is unfettered by conditions. What God provides us with are not gifts, because they are loaded with conditions. Chief among them is the fact that He wants them all back, with increase, and there is a penalty for non-compliance.

That, my friends, is a loan.
When you get money from a bank to buy a home, you have to pay it back with interest. That is also a loan. Try telling your mortgage company that the



RADICAL JOY CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP AND ABUNDANCE

MATT POTTER

big bundle of money they handed you is a gift and see how far it takes you.

Try telling God that what he has given us is a gift and does not need to be paid back. Scripture tells us that the result of that action will be wailing and gnashing of teeth for eternity.

What we receive from God are not gifts. On its face, that statement is nearly heretical. Gifts are permanent, but we can make no claim to permanence on anything that God provides to us.

Pope Francis once quoted his grandmother, stating, “Burial shrouds have no pockets.” When we die, we take nothing with us. As Job told us, naked we came into the world and naked we leave it. All the stuff we have in this world is transitory. While we may claim ownership of it, the stuff is only in our care. It belongs to God.

In Scripture, Jesus is asked by a young man what he must do to get to heaven. Jesus tells him to follow the Ten Commandments and sell everything he had and give it to the poor. That last part was too much for the young man and he walked away. Jesus then told His disciples that “. . . everyone who has given up houses or brothers or sisters or father or

mother or children or lands for the sake of my name will receive a hundred times more, and will inherit eternal life” (Mt 19:29).

It is impractical for us to sell all we have and give it to the poor because then someone would have to take care of us. Rather, we must change our view regarding all that we receive from God. Remember, all things come from God. God still owns them. He wants them back with increase. We do that by sharing the things entrusted to us with those whose needs are greater than ours.

St. Thomas Aquinas said, “Man should not consider his material possessions his own, but as common to all, so as to share them without hesitation when others are in need.” St. Augustine simplifies that, writing, “Find out how much God has given you and take from it what you need; the remainder belongs to others.”

Look at all that God has provided you. Go ahead and take those canned goods to the food pantry. But to live up to God’s expectations, leave some cash and sign up for a shift to help out.

That’s giving alms, and that is being a Christian steward.

As always, thanks for reading. I would love to hear from you. Write to me at mpotter@evdio.org.

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Matt Potter is Director of Stewardship for the Diocese of Evansville.

Good news — preparing the way of the Lord!

“This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel” (Mark 1:15).

In the Old Testament, the prophet Isaiah foretold of a messenger who would cry out in the wilderness by proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. The first chapter of Mark in the New Testament speaks about the arrest of John the Baptist and the ministry of Jesus in Galilee with the same message prophesized by Isaiah. This preaching tour is still happening today, but are we listening?

God gave us the Scriptures not just to inform or motivate us; more than anything, he wants us saved. The New Testament did not abolish the Old; rather, the New fulfilled the Old, and both are concerned with our salvation! *“The Church has illuminated the unity of the divine plan in the two Testaments through typology, which discerns in God’s works of the Old Covenant prefigurations of what he accomplished in the fullness of time in the person of the incarnate Son” (CCC 128).*



GRATITUDE FOR THE GIFT OF FAITH

ZOE CANNON

derful resource for all things Catholic. From CCC 1994: *“Justification is the most excellent work of God’s love made manifest in Christ Jesus and granted by the Holy Spirit. It is the opinion of St. Augustine that ‘the justification of the wicked is a greater work than the creation of heaven and earth,’ because ‘heaven and earth will pass away but the salvation and justification of the elect . . . will not pass away.’”*

Our protection from a sinful life comes from the grace of God because grace is a participation in the life of God. The gift of sacramental graces infused by the Holy Spirit, through the ministry of the priesthood, sanctifies our soul and heals our sins. This free initiative from God demands a free

response. How often during the past 10 months have you thought about the importance of sacramental grace in your life? What if the opportunity to receive

the sacraments was not regularly available, and not because of a virus or social distancing, but because we had fewer priests to administer the sacraments? This blessing should never be taken for granted! We need to pray for vocations to the priesthood, religious life and strong marriages in the society we live in today!

Will the pews be filled when our concerns for COVID-19 are gone, and everyone has the chance to return to Holy Mass and the sacraments? I pray every baptized Catholic will return with gratitude and a better understanding of what we missed in our relationship with Christ during this time. Not just our physical presence in the pews, but spiritual awareness of the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

Father Mike Keucher, Vocation Director for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, issued an appeal for help in painting thousands of wooden peg dolls into priests with Roman collars. These will be passed out at parishes for vocation awareness. My finished masterpieces were sitting on the table when our grandsons came to visit. I explained the purpose of the project, and they thought each priest should be given one as a thank you, and a reminder of how special it is to be a priest. I was so touched by their sentiment that I allowed them to paint one for both

of their parish priests. The resemblance was perfect, but the look on their faces as they presented the gift was precious. If every child grew up understanding how important a priest is to the life of the Church and the life of all families, there would be more priests and happier families! Prepare a way for the Lord! Believe in the good news! Amen!

Zoe Cannon lives in Morgantown, Indiana, and is a member of Sts. Francis and Clare Parish in Greenwood, Indiana.

THIS WEEK’S ANSWERS

P	I	L	L		D	R	A	M	S		C	A	S	A
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Pollution, waste and a throwaway culture

Editor’s note: This series takes a deeper look at Pope Francis’ 2015 encyclical on the care for our common home, “Laudato Si.”

Did you know air pollutants can cause health problems, like cancer, and change the Earth’s climate too? For instance, greenhouse gases, like carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide absorb heat and increase air and ocean temperatures resulting in global warming. It is global warming, warmer temperatures, melting glaciers, and increasing sea levels that causes climate change, which forces people and animals from their homes.

Concurrent with global warming, COVID-19 has taken many precious lives; and being sheltered in place, we’ve had time to think about what is important and to examine how we live our lives. We’ve seen air quality improve, and we’ve helped many friends and family each day survive. Through these acts of mercy, we’ve shown many holy moments.

We urge you to take to heart Pope Francis’ wisdom from Chapter 1 of “Laudato Si,” specifically: Pollution, Waste and a Throwaway Culture. Just think of the frequency, severity and magnitude of storms, floods, earthquakes, tornadoes, wildfires and hurricanes. Our goal is to respond, resolve and repair causes of global warming; and, thus, undo climate change. Just like there is social justice, so too, there is climate justice.

But pollution is not just limited to the air. Our water and soil have been polluted by mining, burning of fossil fuels, and contaminated dumps, landfills, and brownfields. Our laws do protect us, but there is also a powerful force destroying us; and frankly, it’s us! Albert Einstein once said, “Our task



OUR MOTHER EARTH

DEACON TOM CERVONE,
SISTER MAUREEN HOULIHAN,
NICOLE CERVONE-GISH

must be to free ourselves by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature and its beauty.”

“The waste problem is a vast and growing problem, and impacts the health of our planet and everyone,” says Nicole Richards, CEO of Allonnia. What’s exciting about this company is its mission to facilitate a “waste-free, pollution-free environment.” Allonnia copies natural processes to recycle wastes. It uses enzymes, proteins and/or microbes to break down contaminants, rendering them inert or binding valuable elements such as metals and plastics for upcycling. Nature already contains the “ingredients” to do this work, but it takes time. Allonnia takes these ingredients and improves them so the process is done quickly and efficiently. As Aristotle said more than 2,000 years ago, “In all things of nature, there is something marvelous.”

Changes in society are happening so fast, leaving us with more products, choices, wastes and pollutants. Littering, dumping of wastes and deforestation are major concerns; and, regrettably, we are called a throwaway culture. The Earth is our home, and we can no longer take it for granted. To help our Mother Earth, we encourage more interest in conservation, preservation, restoration

and remediation.

Climate change is a global problem that won’t get better until humans make it their first priority. The use of renewable energy sources like water, wind, solar and geothermal will help. Excellent habitats for capturing and storing atmospheric carbon dioxide are healthy soils, wetlands, forests and oceans. If we are resolute not to pollute, our legacy of hope for our children and grandchildren will be clean air, clean water and healthy soils.

What can you do?

Please consider the following:

- Visit www.conserve-energy-future.com/causes-effects-solutions-of-air-pollution.php to learn more ways of conserving energy.
- Use less energy; reduce, reuse and recycle; drive fewer miles; drive energy-efficient vehicles; telecommunicate more; and reduce utilities.
- In addition, donate money to reliable global efforts to plant trees, maintain rainforests, invest in clean water, and empower people in caring for themselves, crops, and livestock.

Let us show compassion for all our neighbors throughout the world!

Deacon Tom Cervone, Ph.D. is an ecologist (St. Bonaventure University — Franciscan College); Daughter of Charity Sister Maureen Houlihan is a support sister on the Seton Harvest Farm started by the Daughters of Charity in response to the Communities — Care of Mother Earth. This CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) Farm grows all-natural produce for shareholders and the poor. Nicole Cervone-Gish, Ed. MS. is an award-winning ELL teacher.

Care for the Earth: Making the essential connections

“Everything is interconnected.” Those three words serve as a key to unlocking the purpose of Pope Francis’ 2015 encyclical “Laudato Si” on the urgent need to give care to the planet Earth, “our common home.”

Those three words also help explain why the encyclical’s range of concerns is far wider than it may at first appear to be.

Things go very wrong in this world when we overlook essential points of connection, the pope suggests. His thought sticks with me like a simple truth often taken for granted in other areas of concern.

Doctors, for instance, hope patients will develop clarity about the interconnections between exercise, sound nutrition and bodily well-being. Counselors advise that happiness may evade us if we focus only inward upon ourselves. We fail, then, to connect with others whose needs may be great but whose considerable gifts might nonetheless nourish us if only we noticed them.

Pope Francis bases his thinking about essential interconnections in human life on Scripture. The creation accounts in the book of Genesis “suggest that human life is grounded in three fundamental and closely intertwined relationships: with God, with our neighbor and with the earth itself,” he observes (No. 66).

None of these can be deleted from the “care for our common home” equation, so to speak. The pope says:

“Disregard for the duty to cultivate and maintain a proper relationship with my neighbor, for whose care and custody I am responsible, ruins my relationship with my own self, with others, with God and with the earth” (No. 70).

The encyclical encourages “a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet” (No. 14). In the spirit of St. Francis of Assisi, his namesake, Pope Francis refers to our planet as a “sister” who “cries out to us.” The earth today, “burdened and laid waste,” is, he declares, “among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor” (No. 2).

In this way, the pope speaks almost as if the earth constitutes a personal presence that should elicit a personal, caring response from us.

In any event, if the earth is to receive the care it



FAITH ALIVE

deserves, its human element cannot be neglected. Care for the earth encompasses what the encyclical terms “human ecology.” It must foster conditions that favor human well-being.

The encyclical holds that “our relationship with the environment can never be isolated from our relationship with others and with God” (No. 119).

In urging heightened care for nature, for the environment in this world, the encyclical does not overlook God’s vast creation witnessed in the heavens above. The pope recalls words of St. John Paul II in the year 2000:

“Alongside revelation properly so-called, contained in sacred Scripture, there is a divine manifestation in the blaze of the sun and the fall of night” (No. 85).

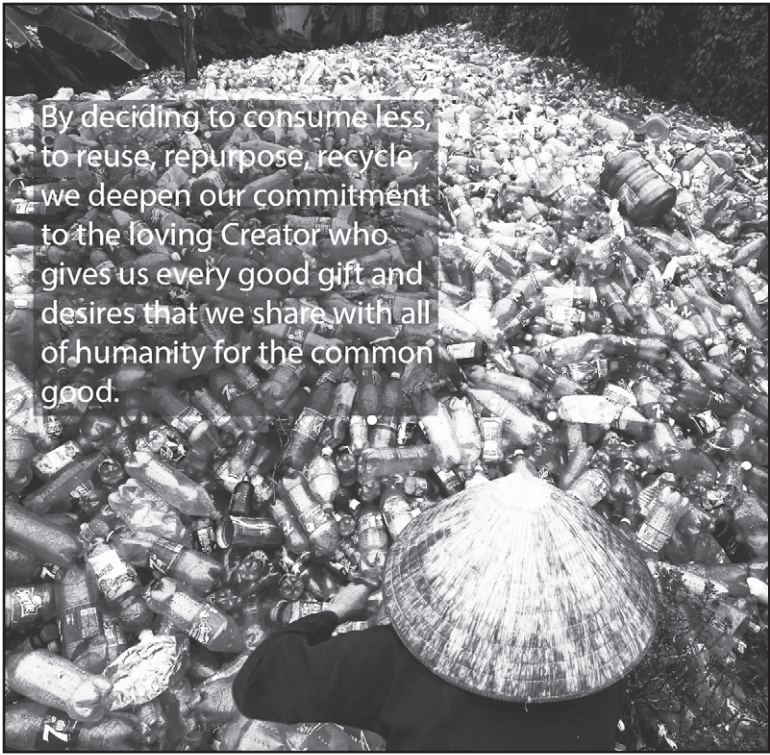
I wonder if my as-yet-unborn great- and great-grandchildren might hear from a future pope about the urgent need to extend caring, respectful, informed attention to distant planets and their moons.

In a section of “Laudato Si” titled “The Mystery of the Universe,” Pope Francis offers this underlying rationale for all creation:

“Creation is of the order of love. God’s love is the fundamental moving force in all created things” (No. 77).

Accenting the term “creation” in discussions like this one has a way of affirming with particular force that all life is “a gift from the outstretched hand of the Father of all,” Pope Francis proposes (No. 76).

Few will be surprised that the encyclical makes the pope’s concern for the poor abundantly clear. Because the Lord is their maker, he says, “the rich and the



CNS file photo

poor have equal dignity” (No. 94).

Gratitude and generosity are ways of acknowledging creation as God’s “loving gift,” the pope makes clear. His hope is that such attitudes will lead to “a loving awareness that we are not disconnected from the rest of creatures, but joined in a splendid universal communion” (No. 220).

Gibson served 37 years on Catholic News Service’s editorial staff.

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Find out how much God has given you and from it take what you need; the remainder is needed by others. — St. Augustine

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The Epiphany of the Lord

La Epifanía del Señor

The Epiphany of the Lord is present, it is manifested to the Three Wise Men who come to Bethlehem to worship and offer gold, incense and myrrh to the baby Jesus. The word Epiphany means manifestation of something or someone particularly divine.

In Mexico we celebrate the Epiphany of the Lord on January 6. I remember when I was a child, I looked forward to the arrival of the Magi as it was when I received new toys. I wrote my letter to the Three Wise Men hoping that they would bring me everything I had asked for as long as I had been good all year. The arrival of the Magi is a very beautiful tradition, but unfortunately, we focus on the material and not so much on the spiritual and most



BECAUSE I AM CATHOLIC
FATHER JUAN RAMIREZ

importantly on the very special message of the arrival of the Magi.

Hopefully we continue with this tradition, but we have to remember that the arrival of the Magi is a gift in which God manifests salvation for all nations. May this Epiphany be an opportunity for each of us to experience the presence of God in our lives and thus be able to be manifestations of Christ in our lives and make present the love, mercy, and peace of the child Jesus in our daily lives; especially in this time of pandemic where we need the hope that God is with us.

Father Juan Ramirez is pastor of Our Lady of Hope Parish in Washington Indiana.

La Epifanía del Señor se hace presente, se manifiesta a los tres reyes magos quienes llegan a Belen ha adorar y ofrecer oro, incienso y mirra al niño Jesús. La palabra Epifanía significa manifestación de algo o de alguien particularmente divino.

En México celebramos la Epifanía del Señor el 6 de enero. Recuerdo cuando era niño, esperaba con ansia la llegada de los Reyes Magos pues era cuando recibía nuevos juguetes. Escribía mi carta a los Reyes Magos esperando que me trajeran todo lo que yo les había pedido siempre y cuando me hubiera portado bien todo el año. La llegada de los Reyes Magos es una tradición muy hermosa, pero desgraciadamente nos enfocamos en lo material y no tanto en lo espiritual y lo más importante en el mensaje tan especial



PORQUE SOY CATOLICO!
FATHER JUAN RAMIREZ

de la llegada de los Reyes Magos.

Ojalá que sigamos con esta tradición, pero tenemos que recordar que la llegada de los Reyes Magos es un regalo en el cual Dios manifiesta la salvación para todas las naciones. Que esta Epifanía sea una oportunidad para cada uno de nosotros de experimentar la presencia de Dios en nuestras vidas y así poder ser nosotros manifestaciones de Cristo en nuestras vidas y hacer presente el amor, la misericordia, y la paz del niño Jesús en nuestro diario vivir; especialmente en este tiempo de pandemia donde necesitamos la esperanza de que Dios esta con nosotros.

Es padre Juan Ramirez es párroco de la parroquia Our Lady of Hope en Washington, Indiana.

‘The Bible in a Year’ podcast is No. 1 in U.S.

BY MARIA WIERING
Catholic News Service

ST. PAUL, MINN. (CNS) — If great minds had brainstormed how to create a podcast that would jump to No. 1 in Apple’s podcast rankings, they never would have landed on “The Bible in a Year,” joked Jeff Cavins, a Bible scholar and creator of the Great Adventure Bible Timeline.

Yet, two weeks into 2021, “The Bible in a Year” with Father Mike Schmitz tops the charts — and has since 48 hours after its Jan. 1 launch.

With the backing of Ascension Press, a multimedia Catholic publisher, Cavins and Father Schmitz, a priest of the Diocese of Duluth, Minnesota, and popular Catholic speaker and author, created “The Bible in a Year,” a daily podcast that leads listeners through the Bible’s narrative.

The show’s 365 total podcasts will cover every verse of the Bible.

The aim is for listeners to understand how God’s plan for mankind’s salvation undergirds biblical events and the lives of its central figures.

“Instead of just knowing stories of the Bible, we’re trying to get people to know the story of salvation, of salvation histo-



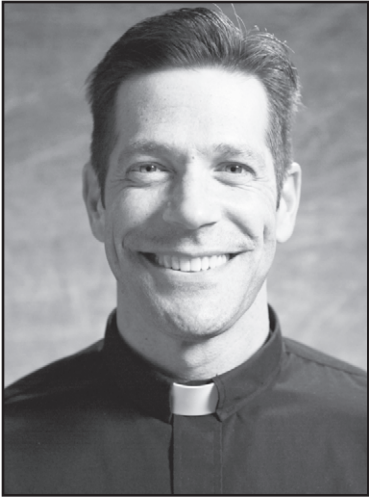
JEFF CAVINS

ry,” said Cavins, a member of St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Brooklyn Park, Minnesota.

Each episode is about 20 minutes and includes Father Schmitz reading several chapters from Scripture, often from different books, and then giving a short reflection on the readings.

The reading chronology is based on the Great Adventure Bible Timeline reading plan, which organizes the 14 narrative books of the Bible into 12 periods in order to help readers understand how they relate to one another and to God’s plan for salvation. That plan is designed for three months, so Cavins expanded it for “The Bible in a Year.”

What makes the reading plan for “The Bible in a Year” — and the Great Adventure Bible Timeline — successful is that they help readers follow the story without losing a



FATHER MIKE SCHMITZ

sense of the narrative in a non-narrative book, Cavins told The Catholic Spirit, newspaper of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis.

Many people approach the Bible as a book to be read from cover to cover, and when they start at the beginning, they read through Genesis and Exodus — narrative books — only to get stuck in Leviticus — a non-narrative book — and abandon the project.

Rather than a single book, the Bible is better understood as a library, Cavins said; and people benefit from a “librarian” to help them understand how it works together.

“People are lost about how to read the Bible, and we feel that it’s a crisis in the church today,” he said. “God wants us to know his heart . . . and he wants us to know his plan.”

Cavins and Father Schmitz expected to meet a need

among Catholics for an entry point into understanding Scripture, but Cavins said he was amazed the program is so popular, with more than 1 million downloads in its first five days, and more than 3.5 million by Jan. 12.

Apple Podcasts listed it at No. 1 Jan. 3, above chart-toppers “The Daily” from The New York Times, “Crime Junkie” and “The Joe Rogan Experience.”

There’s widespread hunger for the word of God and people want to find — and do — something positive after the hardships of 2020, Cavins said.

In a Jan. 5 news release, Ascension founder and president Matthew Pinto said the company is “overwhelmed by the staggering response to this podcast.”

“We had hoped that this program would be exciting to our listeners, but this huge level of response is truly unbelievable,” he said. “People are hungry for God, and we’re honored to help them encounter God’s word through a daily podcast, especially as so many of us continue to be cut off from our parishes, communities, and loved ones during these difficult days.”

Cavins attributes the podcast’s out-of-the-gates success to the simplicity and mobility of the medium itself, Catholics’ familiarity with the Great Adventure Bible Timeline learning system and Father Schmitz’s popularity as a speaker, which includes a large following for his catechetical YouTube videos, “Ascension Presents.”

“We wanted to shine a light in the darkness,” Cavins said. “The greatest message that people need in their life right now is that God loves them and has a plan for their life. They are two things that we’re trying to emphasize.”

The podcast format makes it simple for subscribers to listen to the daily episode while commuting, making dinner or starting their day, Cavins said. And because most listeners are likely accessing it from their smartphones, it’s “salvation history in your pocket,” he said.

In Ascension’s Jan. 5 news release, Father Schmitz said he wanted to create the podcast “because my own mind was being filled with a lot of chaotic voices.”

“Some were wise, many were merely distracting,” he said. “I think that a lot of people are tired of those same distracting and temporary voices. And they want what I want: to allow our hearts and minds to be shaped by something eternal — God’s eternal word.”

He said that Cavins’ Great Adventure Bible Timeline changed his own relationship with Scripture and called it a “phenomenal resource” for organizing the 73 books of Scripture.

“The Bible in a Year” includes a reading plan so subscribers can also read the day’s readings themselves, but Cavins said that “there is something powerful about hearing the word of God that goes into your heart.” He pointed to Romans 10:17, “so then faith comes by hearing the word of God.”

“We really do truly believe that if people will listen to God’s word, it has a way of changing your life and your thinking,” he said.

“The Bible in a Year” is available on Apple Podcasts, Spotify and other podcast platforms, and through Hallow, a Catholic prayer app.

Wiering is editor of The Catholic Spirit, newspaper of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis.



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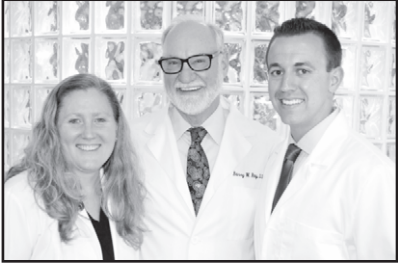

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Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

First Reading: *Jonah 3:1-5, 10*; Response: *Psalm 25:4-5, 6-7, 8-9*; Second Reading: *1 Corinthians 7:29-31*; Gospel: *Mark 1:14-20*

Our first reading is from the Book of Jonah. A rule of interpretation or understanding of a biblical document is to know the form of literature in which it has been written. Jonah is not written as a history. It is a story or parable. Like Jesus’ parables, it is a creative teaching story aimed at a situation or perhaps the correction of a situation at the time of its composition. Jesus was not narrating a history in his parables. He made them up. The same must be said of the author of Jonah. The date of the book is uncertain, but sometime after the end of the exile of Israel in Babylon, so after 540 B.C. Although we cannot be certain, the story of Jonah could be a worthy response to the ethnic cleansing policy of two Jewish leaders in mid-fifth century B.C. Jerusalem. They were the priest Ezra and the governor Nehemiah. It was their policy to destroy all marriages between Jews and non-Jews to rid the land of the foreign spouses and the children of such marriages. See *Ezra 9 and 10 and Nehemiah 9:2*.

There is no connection between this fictional Jonah with the 8th century B.C. prophet Jonah ben Ammitai mentioned in 2 Kings 14:25. Giving the chief actor in the story the name *Jonah* ben Amittai begins the irony of the story. The word *Jonah* means *dove* with its implication of a dove-like personality — gentleness, trustworthiness. The Lord calls Jonah to go to Nineveh, capital city of Assyria, to preach repentance. A similar situation would be God sending an American missionary to preach repentance to Nazi Germany. Assyria was a centuries long enemy of Israel. Jonah disobeys and goes on a cruise to Tarshish (Spain). A violent storm on the sea causes the sailors to pray to their gods. Jonah was asleep while the storm was raging. They awaken him telling him to appeal to his god. Jonah identifies himself as a disobedient prophet. At his request they throw him overboard, “and the sea grew calm.” Details are well known — 72 hours of singing psalms in the belly of a large fish, becoming fish vomit, and a second chance to obey God.

Jonah obeys. After just preaching in the suburbs of Nineveh, the whole kingdom repents. Jonah is furious because he hates these foreigners. He sits on a hill under a hot sun hoping God would still destroy the city. God causes a castor oil plant to grow over night to give Jonah shade the next day. Then God deputizes a worm to destroy the plant. Jonah is madder than ever. God teases him. Then the moral of the story: “You are upset about the castor oil plant. And should I not feel sorry for Nineveh, in which there are more than 120,000 people, who can’t tell their right hand from their left, besides all the cattle?” End of story! God loves all people, even those we consider our enemies. Reason for selection of this reading: in



SUNDAY SCRIPTURE

FATHER DONALD DILGER

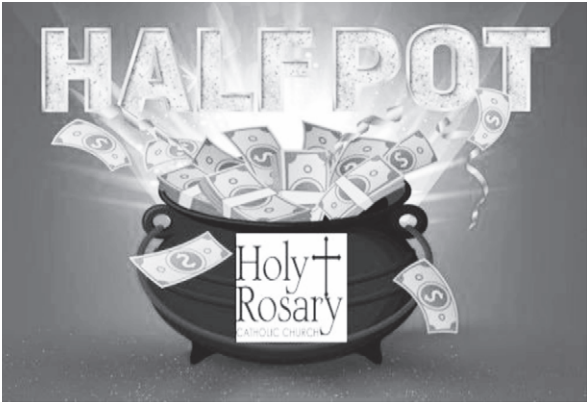
today’s gospel Jesus *calls* his first disciples.

Psalm 25 does not seem to pick up the theme of vocation or calling, though one phrase could describe Jonah, “God shows the sinner his ways.” The people’s response is “Teach me your ways, Lord.” To this could be added, “just like you taught Jonah, but no fish, please.” In the second reading Paul is concerned with the imminent end of time and the return of Jesus. Therefore, the time is too short to change one’s status in life — from single to married or vice versa. He writes, “Let those who have wives act as though not having them.” Isn’t there too much of that already? Paul of course thinks Jesus’ return is imminent. Let’s face it. Paul was wrong! The world did not pass away, nor did Jesus return. The same could be said for the author of the Book of Revelation. In 22:20 he depicts Jesus saying, “Surely I am coming soon.” We are in trouble indeed if we fail to understand that not every word in the Scriptures is revelation!

Today’s gospel opens with a reference to John the Baptizer’s arrest by Herod Antipas, ruler of Galilee. We know that after his baptism by John, Jesus and his disciples engaged in their own baptism of repentance ministry. See *Gospel of John 4:1-2*. They must have been operating along the northern part of the Jordan River, which formed the eastern border of Galilee, Herod’s territory. The connection between Jesus and the Baptizer was well known. It was time to change tactics in ministry, or Jesus could expect the fate of the Baptizer. This was not just suspicion but a real danger as can be seen from Mark 6:14-16, Matthew 14:1-2 and especially Luke 13:31, where Jesus was warned by friendly Pharisees that Herod sought to kill him. For his new ministry, preaching and healing, Jesus settled in Capernaum on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee. From there, if necessary, he could easily escape by land or sea from Herod’s police. Though we learn from the Gospel of John that Jesus called disciples in Judea before returning to

Galilee. Mark does not seem aware of this, but depicts Jesus calling his first disciples in Galilee. Jesus comes across the fishing company of two brothers, Simon and Andrew, sons of John. In our time their business would be called Johnson Bros., Ltd. They were wealthy, as archaeology has shown in what is thought to have been the Johnson home next to the Capernaum synagogue. Jesus calls the two brothers. “They abandoned their nets and followed him.” Grace builds on experience, so Jesus says to these fishermen, “I will make you fishers of men.” Their instant and complete response to Jesus’ call is a problem because we know they were family men. St. Paul in 1 Corinthians 9:5 tells his readers that Simon Peter and the other apostles were married and took their wives with them in their ministry as apostles. Whatever the situation in history, in our gospel of this liturgy Jesus moves on. He comes across another fishing company, the Zebedee family. Two teenagers, James and John Zebedee were in their father’s boat mending nets. Jesus calls them to follow him. They left their father and his hired men in the boat and ran after Jesus. Is this possible? Yes, if we understand that Jesus was known to Zebedee, was in fact his nephew, (on Jesus’ mother’s side of the family). With his new disciples Jesus settles in Capernaum, and the ministry of preaching and healing begins.

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Splitting revenue: Parish and diocese; How are non-Catholics forgiven?

Question: I heard on a Catholic channel that on holy days of obligation, all proceeds from the collection plate stay with the parish — as distinguished from Sunday offerings, where there is a split with the diocese. Is this true? (City and state withheld)

Answer: Although there is some variation among dioceses, I am not familiar with any place that has the arrangement you describe — where holy day revenue would go to the parish, while Sunday collections would be divided with the diocese.

Instead, all collections typically go first to the parish, where they are used to keep the lights and heat on in the parish church, pay the salaries of parish staff, provide Catholic education through a parish school and/or religious education program, etc. The parish then forwards to the diocese a yearly tax, called an assessment, that is used to run the chancery office and the marriage tribunal, to train seminarians, etc.

That assessment, according to Georgetown University’s Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, averages about 13% of the monies collected at parish Masses throughout the year.

Question: Catholics are blessed to have the sacrament of reconciliation. But what about other faiths? How do non-Catholics have their sins forgiven? (Honolulu)



QUESTION CORNER

FR. KENNETH DOYLE

Answer: The Catholic Church has a long history of the confession of sins. In the earliest centuries, confession was actually done in public, the thinking being that when we sin, we damage not only our own friendship with God but our relationships within the community of faith; but around the sixth century Irish monks began hearing confessions one on one, and that practice spread to the church universal.

Though most Catholics may not know this, there are types of individual confession in other religious groups as well. Eastern Orthodox priests, for example, hear confessions not in a confessional but in the main part of the church, before a Gospel book and an icon of Jesus Christ. (This serves as a reminder to the penitent that the confession is really made not to another human being but to God himself.)

Lutherans have a form of confession known as “Holy Absolution,” that is done privately to a cleric upon request. After the penitent has confessed his or her sins, the minister declares: “In the stead and


by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”

In the Anglican tradition, confession and absolution is usually done by an entire congregation as part of a eucharistic service, but certain Anglicans, particularly Anglo-Catholics, do practice private auricular confession.

The Catholic Church teaches that lesser sins can be forgiven by prayer and acts of charity, but it requires individual confession at least annually for grave (mortal) sins and encourages penitents to confess lesser (venial) sins also, as a way to grow in holiness.

It’s noteworthy to mention that during the pandemic, in March 2020 the Apostolic Penitentiary (the Vatican tribunal that deals with matters of conscience) urged Catholic priests to remind the faithful that, when they find themselves with “the painful impossibility of receiving sacramental absolution,” they can make an act of contrition directly to God in prayer. If they are sincere and promise to go to confession as soon as possible, said the Vatican tribunal, they “obtain the forgiveness of sins, even mortal sins.”

Questions may be sent to Father Kenneth Doyle at askfatherdoyle@gmail.com and 30 Columbia Circle Dr., Albany, New York 12203.



The Diocese of Evansville announces the opening of a search for the next President for Reitz Memorial High School

Since 1925, Reitz Memorial High School students are provided a faith-based education rooted in the Roman Catholic tradition. We strive to educate the whole child by blending learning with faith and by making faith an integral part of the school day. Reitz Memorial offers a comprehensive academic program with over 95% of its students going on to college. The Indiana Department of Education has recognized the school as a “Four Star School” and “A” school.

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Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. The anticipated start date is July 1, 2021. Please send a cover letter and current resumé to:

Dr. Daryl C. Hagan, Superintendent of Schools
Diocese of Evansville, Catholic Schools Office
4200 North Kentucky Avenue, PO Box 4169
Evansville, IN 47724-0169
Email: cso@evdio.org

Reitz Memorial High School Strategic Plan 2020: <https://reitzmemorial.org/strategic-direction/>

Reitz Memorial High School Website: <https://reitzmemorial.org>

Reitz Memorial School Profile: <https://reitzmemorial.org/school-profile.org/>

Reitz Memorial President Profile: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1fuhTgR8Mcotsds0W8RkuRDHs1cfhrtPl/view?usp=sharing>

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Helpers

Continued from page 14

he also once counseled Charles Martel, grandfather of Charlemagne, to confess a sin that had been weighing on him. Giles died peacefully around the year 712, and he is invoked against crippling diseases.

St. Margaret of Antioch: Another fourth-century martyr persecuted by Diocletian, St. Margaret, like St. Vitus, converted to Christianity under the influence of her nurse, angering her father and causing him to disown her. A consecrated virgin, Margaret was tending flocks of sheep one day when a Roman spotted her and sought to make her his wife or concubine. When she refused, the Roman had

Margaret brought before a court, where she was ordered to denounce her faith or die. She refused, and she was ordered to be burned and boiled alive, and miraculously she was spared from both. Eventually, she was beheaded. She is invoked as a patron of pregnant women and those suffering from kidney diseases.

St. Barbara: While little is known of this third-century martyr, St. Barbara is thought to have been the daughter of a rich and jealous man who sought to keep Barbara from the world. When she confessed to him that she had converted to Christianity, he denounced her and brought her before local authorities, who ordered that she be tortured and beheaded.

According to legend, her own father did the beheading, for which he was struck by lightning shortly thereafter. St. Barbara is invoked against fires and lightning storms.

St. Catherine of Alexandria: A fourth-century martyr, St. Catherine was the daughter of the Queen of Egypt, and converted to Christianity after a vision of Christ and Mary. The Queen also converted to Christianity before her death. When Maximinus started persecuting Christians in Egypt, St. Catherine rebuked him and attempted to prove to him that his gods were false. After debating with the emperor’s best scholars, many of whom converted due to her arguments, Catherine was scourged, imprisoned and eventually beheaded. She is the patron saint of philosophers and young students.

This feature originally appeared on CNA in March 2020.

BEATITUDES ANSWERS —

ACROSS: 1) peacemaker, 2) merciful, 4) heart, 6) meek, DOWN: 1) persecuted, 3) blessed, 5) spirit, 7) mourn

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Footprints of Our Catholic Brethren

The birds were roosting in the trees. The incessant cackling was audible up and down Wabash Avenue underneath the dual, towering spires. As the door opened to the grotto, we descended into 100 years of history beneath the church floor. The grey, stucco-like walls welcomed us into the tiny chapel, where people had come for marriages, baptisms and solemn prayers for a century.

REFLECTION
BY JIM SCHROEDER
St. Boniface Church, Evansville

After exploring the hollowed cavity, our kids began the Rosary — one Glorious Mystery at a time. Louis lay asleep on my shoulder, hidden beneath a heavy coat to ward off the morning chill. Above, we could hear faint noises of the congregation assembling, and as our Rosary concluded we made our way to the nave of the church.

From the time I was a small boy and grew into junior high at St. Boniface, I entered the church with my chin held high and neck arched. On this day, I was again taken to splendid sites and horrific realities as my eyes scanned the interior again. The sun gleamed off the newly laid tile, and the numerous statues and scenes peered over us. Louis remained asleep as the choral voices rose from our right.

It would be a day of challenges put forth by St. Paul, “Do you not know that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?” But none was greater than the one that Christ proclaimed, “Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up.” Twenty-five years ago this day, the Berlin Wall had crumbled. Around us, the seasons were changing and our diocese was continuing to discern just how its temple would appear.

I looked across the way. My grandparents had arrived in their frailty — and in their wit-

ness. My aunt and uncle were there — she with her neurological challenges and he with his stoic struggles. I loved them deeply. I wondered what their temples would become.

The temple on my shoulder stirred. His head swung upward. His brilliant blue eyes widened and he stared at the choral sector. I waited for the exhausted cry. It never came. His eyes remained fixed; yet slowly, a discerning smile crept on his face. His pupils began to bounce in a registered way, and as his chubby cheeks tightened; a familiar face snuck a kiss to him. He had risen from his sound slumber to behold this sacred place for the first time. Joy emanated from his face. I wondered what his temple would become.

As the Mass closed and many of the congregants shuttled to the Christmas bazaar, four generations posed for a picture on the front steps. The birds had gone quiet for the moment. Later



JIM SCHROEDER

that evening, Amy and I attended a Cursillo closing as her sister walked in to the sounds of “Oh, when the saints, oh when the saints, oh when the saints go marching in. Oh, I want to be in that number . . .” Tears flowed, friends had grown old. What would their temples become?

As the festivities ended, I walked past the pictures of many of the churches we had seen, many of the temples that now hung in the balance as our diocese evolved. A late fall chill greeted me outside. The full moon had just passed. Another week was gone.



Submitted photo

This is the cover of Jim Schroeder’s book.

Just how would my temple carry on?

This reflection is from Jim Schroeder’s book “The Evansville Diocese Historical Tour: Footprints of Our Catholic Brethren.” Jim, his wife, Amy, and their kids live in Evansville. They are parishioners at Holy Redeemer Parish. Jim is a pediatric psychologist and Vice President of the psychology department at Easterseals Rehabilitation Center. “The full story, including illustrations, is available on Amazon or with his other books and articles at www.james-schroeder.com.”

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