



The MESSAGE

Southwestern
Indiana's Catholic
Community Newspaper

January 28, 2022

Volume 52, Number 21

www.evdiomessage.org

Mass for Life celebrates all stages of life



Bishop Joseph M. Siegel censes the Blessed Sacrament at the beginning of the Holy Hour, which followed the Jan. 21 Mass for Life at St. Benedict Cathedral in Evansville.

The Message photo by Tim Lilley

BY MEGAN ERBACHER
The Message assistant editor

On Jan. 21, Bishop Joseph M. Siegel celebrated a Mass for Life at St. Benedict Cathedral in Evansville. Bishop Siegel said despite the obstacles in today's world, it is important that we peacefully work to protect life at all of its stages.

Six priests of the diocese celebrated the Mass with Bishop Siegel, and a Holy Hour immediately followed Mass.

The Mass occurred on the eve of the 49th anniversary of the Roe v.

Wade Supreme Court decision that legalized abortion, which was issued Jan. 22, 1973. Bishop Siegel said as we commemorate the anniversary of that Supreme Court decision, we remember it has resulted in more than 61 million children who have lost their lives to abortion.

The Mass also coincided with the 2022 March for Life in Washington, D.C. For the second year, the Diocesan 2022 Pilgrimage for Life was canceled because of coronavirus restrictions. The Diocesan Office of Youth and

Young Adults has organized the local pilgrimage for several years. So, OYAYA and the Diocesan Office of Family and Life organized the Mass and Holy Hour as a way to pray for an end to abortion and remember the millions of innocent lives lost to abortion.

In his homily, Bishop Siegel cited St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta from her National Prayer Breakfast address, which she delivered in February 1994 at the Washington Hotel in Washington, D.C. The

See [MASS](#), page 3

ICC advocating for families in deepest poverty



BY VICTORIA
ARTHUR

Statehouse Correspondent
for Indiana's
Catholic newspapers

The Indiana Catholic Conference is out front on a number of bills at the Statehouse that would affect individuals and families considered among the poorest of the poor in the state.

Leaders of the ICC — the public policy voice of the Catholic Church in Indiana — support some of the proposed legislation while opposing other bills, in line with the long history of Catholic social teaching with respect to the most vulnerable.

"Some of these bills would benefit families in the greatest need and help lift them out of poverty, while we have serious concerns that others may have the opposite effect," said Angela Espada, executive director of the ICC. "We always want to stand with the most economically disadvantaged among us, especially our children."

The ICC strongly supports House Bill 1361, a bipartisan measure that would strengthen protections for those who qualify for the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program. TANF is a federal program that provides grants to states to administer cash-assistance payments to

See [ICC](#), page 16

Divine Mercy Parish helps Kentucky tornado victims



Photo by Deacon Charles Johnson, special to The Message

This photo looks northeast from Resurrection Parish along Frederick Road in Dawson Springs, and was taken about two blocks away from the parish. All the structures for 4-5 blocks were leveled by the tornado.



Photo by Deacon Charles Johnson, special to The Message
Father David Kennedy, left, pastor of Resurrection Parish in Dawson Springs, Kentucky, stands with Deacon Mike Marsili and Father Jose Thomas, administrator of Divine Mercy Parish in St. Anthony. On Dec 23, Father Jose and Deacon Charles Johnson delivered the check for \$18,500 Deacon Mike is holding. Divine Mercy parishioners donated the money during special collections Dec. 18-19 and in the days following. Note the visible significant tornado damage to Resurrection Church in the upper left of the photo.

BY DEACON
CHARLES JOHNSON
Special to The Message

Editor's note: Following the devastating tornado outbreak that ravaged hundreds of miles — including Western Kentucky — Catholics across the Diocese of Evansville and the region responded swiftly with support for those affected. This is one story of how our Catholic com-

munity responded, and we are grateful to Deacon Charles Johnson of Divine Mercy Parish for sharing it.

On Dec. 13, after having heard of the destruction in Western Kentucky from the tornados, I contacted Deacon Jay VanHoosier, a deacon classmate of mine assigned to St. John the Baptist Parish in Newburgh, who also works

for the diocese of Owensboro, to find out how bad things were. He informed me that Resurrection Parish in Dawson Springs was a total loss, and about 75 percent of the town was destroyed.

When I informed (Divine Mercy parish administrator) Father Jose Thomas and parish administrative assistant Janie Kempf, they agreed that we should take up a col-

lection to help out the parish. They contacted Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Evansville to see if we could make the donation directly to Resurrection Parish and were encouraged to do so.

We made plans to have special collections at all the Masses at Divine Mercy Parish on the weekend of Dec. 18-19. On Dec. 16, we sent out a Group Cast telephone message to all parishioners informing them of the special collections.

Up until the Dec. 18 Vigil Mass, we had not made any contacts directly with Resurrection Parish. As I entered St. Anthony of Padua Church for Mass that evening, one of our music ministers asked me about the special collection and about whom I knew at Resurrection Parish. I told him that I knew no one there and hadn't

reached anyone yet. He informed me that his brother-in-law was a deacon at a parish in Owensboro and was good friends with the deacon at Resurrection Parish in Dawson Springs.

The following Monday (Dec. 20), I called the deacon in Owensboro, who gave me the phone number for Deacon Mike Marsili of Resurrection Parish. Deacon Mike gave me the phone number for the pastor, Father David Kennedy. I spoke with Father David and made arrangements to deliver a check to them in Dawson Springs on Dec. 23.

By that time, the special collections had netted \$12,500. One parishioner made a \$5,000 donation at the Parish Office on Tuesday; and by Wednesday afternoon, we had collected a total of

See [TORNADO](#), page 2

Supply-chain issues impact this issue

BY TIM LILLEY
The Message editor

The supply-chain issues that have affected many facets of our lives over the past year or more have hit the company that prints **The Message**, which has not received a shipment of newsprint that has been on order for several weeks.

As a result, this issue of **The Message** comes to you in broadsheet format instead

of the traditional tabloid.

Our printer is working to resolve this as quickly as possible, and we believe the Jan. 28 issue will be the only one that requires a change in printing format. We are planning for the Feb. 4 and all future issues to return to our traditional tabloid format.

We thank you in advance for your understanding and patience, and we thank you for your ongoing support of **The Message**.

Following is a feature in *The Message*, designed to help draw together the People of God in southwestern Indiana.

• Retired Deacon Donald E. Haag, 82, of

Wheatland, Indiana, died Jan 18 at his residence. Donald was born on Aug. 19, 1939, in Vincennes, to the late Leo J. Haag and Elsie L. (Dunn) Haag.

On Sept. 27, 1958, Donald married the love of his life, the late Linda Lee (Shroader) Haag. Together, they had three children: Laura, Lisa, and LaDonna.

In 1976, Donald opened Haag’s Drugstore in Wheatland, and he owned and operated it for 20 years. He also worked for Vincennes Steel for 44 years before retiring as plant inspector. He was into affordable housing before it became popular, and he provided low-budget housing for many. He loved to mushroom hunt, grow strawberries and fresh tomatoes.

He was ordained a permanent deacon for the Diocese of Evansville on Sept. 24, 1983. His last assignment was at Sts. Peter and Paul Parish in Petersburg. He was also the chaplain of the Legion of Mary affiliated with Our Lady of Hope Parish in Washington.

Father Frank Renner, pastor of Sts. Peter and Paul Parish in Petersburg, and Father Bill Dietsch, senior priest of the diocese, concelebrated a Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 25 at Our Lady of Hope Parish in Washington.

Please keep Deacon Donald and his family in your prayers.



DEACON DONALD HAAG

We Remember in Prayer

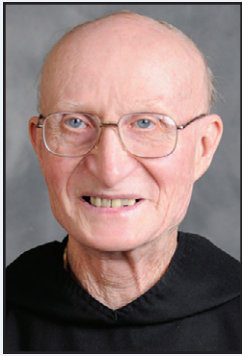
• Benedictine Brother Mario Ibison, 83, a

monk of St. Meinrad Archabbey, died Jan. 19. He was invested as a novice at St. Meinrad Nov. 5, 1960, and he professed simple vows on Nov. 12, 1961. He was in his 60th year of his monastic profession.

Brother Mario’s monastic assignments included stints in the plumbing department, the library, the sacristy, the tailor shop and the shoe shop. In 1970, he began working with Physical Facilities on the grounds and landscaping crew and in the monastery vineyard. Twenty-one years later, he took on the assignment of painter, work he would continue for the next 30 years until his death.

The funeral liturgy was celebrated Jan. 24 in the Archabbey Church. Interment followed in the Archabbey Cemetery.

Please keep Brother Mario, his family and the monks of St. Meinrad in your prayers.



BROTHER MARIO IBISON

• Benedictine Sister Joanna Trainer, 89, of Monastery Immaculate Conception in Ferdinand, died Jan. 22 at the monastery.

Sister Joanna was born Iona Marie Trainer Oct. 22, 1932, in Evansville, the eldest of four children of Howard and Mary Charlotte (Wheatley) Trainer. She entered the Sisters of St. Benedict of

Ferdinand in 1949 from St. Anthony of Padua Parish and made her monastic vows in 1951.

Sister Joanna earned a Bachelor’s degree in Elementary Education from St. Benedict College. She spent four summers at Cardinal Stritch College in Milwaukee while working at St. Coletta of Wisconsin, providing residential, day and vocational programs for those with developmental and other challenges.

She taught elementary and special-education students for 34 years, including service at St. Philip School in Posey County and the following Evansville schools: St. Joseph School, Marian Day School, St. John School, St. Vincent Day Care Center and St. Anthony School. In 1982, she co-founded a soup kitchen. From 1982 through 2004, she served homeless women and children at House of Bread and Peace in Evansville, which she was instrumental in establishing. She also worked at the switchboard and as a mail clerk at the monastery in Ferdinand. In 2021, she celebrated 70 years as a Sister of St. Benedict.

Private Evening Prayer with Committal was held Jan. 26. Interment was in the monastic cemetery. Please keep Sister Joanna, her family and the Sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand in your prayers.

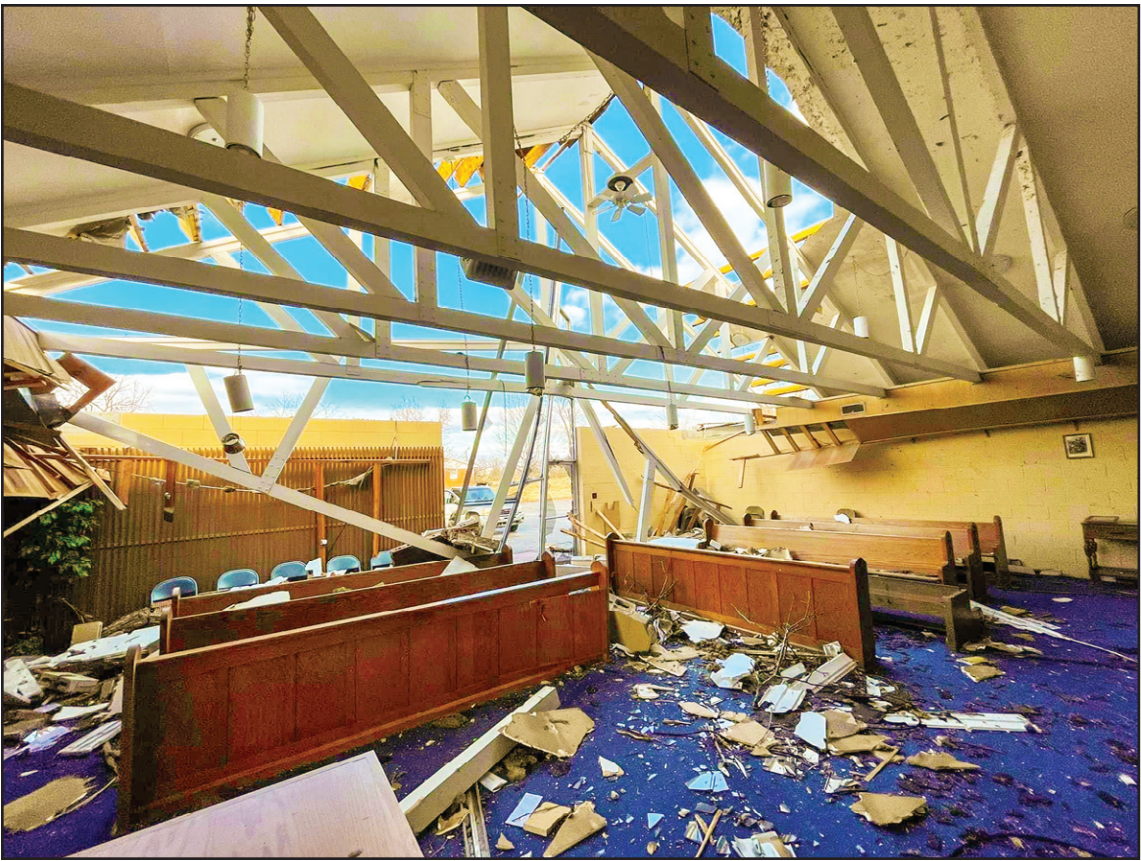


SISTER JOANNA TRAINER

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

Tornado

Continued from page 1



Submitted photo

This photo shows some of the significant damage to Resurrection Church in Dawson Springs.



Catholic News Service photo

Owensboro Bishop William F. Medley celebrated a Vigil Mass on Christmas Eve in this temporary worship space in Dawson Springs. A Resurrection parishioner made the small building, which had been used as an exercise gym, available to the parish. The space holds approximately 40 for Mass.



Photo by Deacon Charles Johnson, special to The Message

This is the outside of the building that was converted to a worship space for Resurrection Parish.

\$18,500 to deliver to Resurrection Parish the following day.

Father Jose and I made the roughly 2-hour trip from St. Anthony to Dawson Springs and met with Father David and Deacon Mike the afternoon of Dec. 23. We delivered the check and surveyed the damage.

The main structure of Resurrection Church was still standing, but the north wall and roof of the structure were severely damaged. The wall had collapsed into the nave. Engineers had determined that the nave and sanctuary of the building must be torn down and rebuilt. The attached parish hall at the south end of the building can, hopefully, be spared.

The town of Dawson Springs in the area of the church was mostly leveled by the storm. Directly west and south, across the road, an estimated 4-5-block-by-2-block area had no buildings and few trees standing — only large piles of debris that had been scraped together by the clean-up crews. Track-hoes and bulldozers were still active. To the east and south, only severely damaged homes and businesses remained for nearly a mile.

A driving tour of the rest of the town revealed other areas of severe damage interspersed by buildings with moderate to no damage. The estimate of 75 percent of the town damaged is probably accurate. In assessing the damage, it seems like a lot of miracles had to occur for only four people to have died in that town! I can’t imagine what it must have looked like immediately after the storm passed through.

We also examined the makeshift worship space that had been set up in a small outbuilding in the backyard of a Resurrection parishioner, in an area of town that was undamaged. What was formerly a small exercise gym had been transformed into a proper worship space with altar, tabernacle and (tight) seating for over 40 people. Owensboro Bishop William F. Medley celebrated a Christmas Vigil Mass in this chapel the following evening.

Through the experience, several things come to mind:

• It could have been us, had the storm tracked a bit farther north. We should not only be prepared always for our time to meet the Lord, but also prepared

to respond to severe weather warnings.

• There is so much more work and expense ahead for the residents of Dawson Springs and the other areas hit.

• The amount of clean-up that has already occurred is unbelievable, and the resiliency of the human species is amazing.

• Divine Mercy Parish is filled with good people who respond generously to the needs of others.

Resurrection Parish is in excellent hands with practical and spiritual leaders like Father David and Deacon Mike, and parishioners like the one who offered his property to the Church.

One final personal lesson: if we have compassion and are willing to respond to God’s call, he will make it easy for us to cooperate. He moved this insecure deacon into a position to help and pulled him along through it all, opening doors and providing contacts!

The Message

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The Message

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Mater Dei High School Senior Jessie Bacon of St. Philip Parish in Posey County helped lead the Rosary for Life during the Holy Hour.



Mater Dei High School Senior Morgan Wilmes of Corpus Christi Parish in Evansville helped lead the Rosary for Life during the Holy Hour.



During his homily, Bishop Joseph M. Siegel cited St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta from her 1994 National Prayer Breakfast address, when she said the greatest destroyer of peace today is abortion. In her remarks, Bishop Siegel said she reminded us that abortion is war against the child, an innocent child.



Bishop Siegel concluded the Holy Hour with Benediction.

The Message photos by Tim Lilley



Ed Walker of St. Mary Parish in Sullivan served as lector for the Mass.

Curt Welte

"Curt is a GREAT PERSON AND JEWELER!!! I've known him for years and have never been disappointed in ANYTHING purchased from him."
Susie A.

"I do all my business with Curt. He is very honest and will give you more for your silver/gold than anyone else in town. Very good man!!!"
Mary M.

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Camilla's Closet
QUALITY CONSIGNMENTS

Mass

Continued from page 1

bishop quoted St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta, who said the greatest destroyer of peace today is abortion. In her remarks, Bishop Siegel said she reminded us that abortion is war against the child, an innocent child.

St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta wondered how we persuade a woman not to have an abortion. Bishop Siegel recited her response that we must persuade the mother with love and remind ourselves that love means to be willing to give and help until it hurts.

As Catholics, the bishop said we affirm that each human life is precious and irreplaceable, and so must be protected from conception until natural death.

The bishop said it's important not to be discouraged by obstacles and the powerful opposition of government and the media. Despite the descending power of darkness, Bishop Siegel said the victory of life won by Jesus' death and resurrection will prevail.

We all can do something, Bishop Siegel said, and we must all do something.

Examples of outreach across the Diocese of Evansville include the "Walking with Moms in Need" program that serves women in crisis pregnancies; Project Rachel for women and others involved in abortion, to help bring them reconciliation and healing; the Knights of Columbus have provided sonogram machines to crisis pregnancy centers; Safe Haven Baby Boxes at fire stations to offer a safe place for mothers to leave babies when they feel they cannot care for them; and Catholic Charities and St. Vincent de Paul Societies, who assist countless people in need.

Bishop Siegel concluded by commending all efforts to build a culture of life. He prayed that Mary, the Mother of the Redeemer, intercede for us as we strive to be faithful missionaries of the Gospel of Life.

The Mass for Life was livestreamed on the Diocese of Evansville YouTube channel — Catholic Diocese of Evansville, IN — youtube.com/c/CatholicDioceseof-Evansville-Indiana, and the St. Benedict Cathedral Facebook page: facebook.com/saintbenedictcathedral/.

The Diocesan offices of Catechesis, Education, Family Life, Hispanic Ministry and Youth and Young Adult Ministry collaborated on resources to use to Stand for Life. To access these resources, visit evdio.org, the homepage of the Diocese of Evansville.

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Truth in charity

Today, Catholics celebrate one of the great doctors of the Church: St. Thomas Aquinas. Although he was born some 800 years ago, his contributions to the Church are perennial. In fact, I think that if we all took a few pages out of his book, the whole world would be better off because of it — and a little less polarized. It goes without saying that he was a true intellectual giant in both philosophy and theology. However, the way in which he approached seeking and sharing the truth is incredibly important as well.

St. Thomas Aquinas represents the best of the philosophical and theological method known as Scholasticism. Without getting bogged down in technicalities, let it suffice to say that it is a very analytical, disciplined and rational method. Consequently, it is capable of expressing its results with great precision and clarity of language.

When I was studying philosophy and theology in Rome, the majority of my classes were Thomistic, so I became well acquainted with the method. Some of my fellow classmates fell head-over-heals in love with Thomism. However, if I’m being honest, it took me a while to learn to appreciate its value. I lacked the discipline to appreciate it; and, at first, I simply wrote it off as “splitting hairs” and tedious. That all changed one day during a conversation with a professor of mine. He said, “If you don’t learn anything else from Thomas, at least learn how to make good distinctions.” And to this day, that is the one thing — in addition to the excellent content of Thomas’ phi-



CONNECTING FAITH AND LIFE

JOEL PADGETT

losophy and theology — that I really took away from studying Aquinas.

The ability to make good distinctions is no little thing. It is capable of giving credit where credit is due, while always calling a spade a spade. And it never throws the baby out with the dirty bath water. In other words, it speaks the truth in charity. Always truth. Always charity.

In arguing philosophical or theological questions, Aquinas consistently took this approach. He wasn’t afraid of engaging anybody in conversation. He always sought to present his opponents’ arguments in the best light possible. He tried to understand where they were coming from, even when he seriously disagreed with them. It didn’t matter if they were pagan philosophers or other Christians. He could hear them out, and then say, “I agree with what you are saying up to this point, but I disagree with you regarding this precise aspect.”

And then, he could go on and express why. He had no need of “strawman arguments” that simply tear people down. His goal was to come to discover a deeper, fuller understanding of the truth. As Catholics, we have no need to fear the truth. We believe that the truth will set us free (cf. John 8:32),

and that, ultimately, Jesus Christ is the Truth (cf. John 14:6). In fact, we’re continually encouraged to seek the truth with determination, humility and sincerity.

However, to seek the truth in our relations with others requires more than simply going with one’s gut or throwing out emotional responses. The ability to make good distinctions and to foster good dialogue requires good formation, and good formation takes a lot of time and energy. It was the lesson that I resisted when I first picked up St. Thomas, but one that I have been striving to learn (however poorly) ever since.

Aquinas teaches us to build our foundation on faith and reason. He also teaches us to go to the sources. Today, it is easy to be led astray by a cacophony of charismatic voices that range from one extreme to the other; but we can never go wrong in relying on Sacred Scripture, tradition, and the official teachings of the Church.

At the end of the day, if we sincerely seek truth in charity, it will gradually bring about greater unity among everyone. It is something of a paradox that, by making good distinctions and being more precise about where true divisions lie, one can actually foster greater unity because ultimately, people have more in common than what divides them.

Joel Padgett is the Director of Catechesis for the Diocese of Evansville. Contact him any time at jpadgett@evdio.org.

About the Diocese of Evansville Coat of Arms

The crescent in the Catholic Diocese of Evansville coat of arms symbolizes two important elements.

Evansville, Indiana, is situated on a bend of the Ohio River. As a result, it can suitably be called a “Crescent City.” The crescent symbolizes the Blessed Virgin Mary, who is the patroness of the diocese.

Appearing immediately below the crescent is the representation of a crenellated battlement or fortification wall. This represents the original Fort Vincennes, established as a trading post, which suggests that the diocese derives from historic Vincennes, Indiana, and that the Catholic Faith is a mighty fortress.

The two waves at the bottom of the shield represent the waters of the Wabash and the Ohio Rivers. The Wabash forms the western boundary of the diocese, and the Ohio forms its southern boundary. Spiritually, the waves represent the cleansing waters of Baptism.



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.

The Message

WEEKLY NEWSPAPER OF THE DIOCESE OF EVANSVILLE
4200 N. Kentucky Ave. | Evansville, IN 47711
Published weekly except one week at Christmas time by the Catholic Press of Evansville.

January 28, 2022 — Vol. 52, No. 21 — Mailed January 27, 2022

Publisher Bishop Joseph M. Siegel
Editor Tim Lilley
Assistant Editor Megan Erbacher
Design Editor Sheila R. Barclay
Circulation Coordinator Kathy Henderson
Advertising Tim Lilley

Subscriptions:
Print: \$24/yr, includes digital edition
Digital edition only: \$12/yr
Single Copy Price: \$.50

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All urged to pray, work for ‘a post-Roe America’ that cherishes human life

BY JULIE ASHER
Catholic News Service

Editor’s note: This Catholic News Service report coincides with the 49th anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court decision in Roe v. Wade, which essentially legalized abortion.

WASHINGTON (CNS) — If Roe falls, “my hope is that we will come together and seize this opportunity to create a post-Roe America where human life is cherished and cared for, and where the family is recognized as the true foundation of a just and prosperous society,” said Los Angeles Archbishop José H. Gomez.

“Abortion was among the first social evils opposed by the early church,” the archbishop wrote in his column “Voices,” in ‘Angelus,’ the archdiocese’s online news outlet, ahead of the Jan. 22 anniversary of Roe. “That commitment has never changed down through the centuries.”

“In the past half-century of legal abortion in America, the Catholic Church has sought to create a culture of care and compassion for women facing challenging pregnancies, and to promote alternatives to abortion such as adoption,” he said. “At the heart of everything we do is our belief that human life is sacred, that every person is created in the image of God and redeemed by the love of Jesus Christ.”

Archbishop Gomez said that as Pope Francis stated, “we can never allow abortion to be regarded as simply a ‘private’ or ‘religious’ matter.”

“Abortion attacks the ‘sacredness of human life,’ the Holy Father reminds us,” he added, “and societies that deny life to the unborn threaten the foundation of all other human rights.”

The Catholic Church “has a

duty to bring this perspective to our national conversation about the kind of America we want to create after Roe,” added Archbishop Gomez, who is president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

“We need to insist on what St. Pope John Paul II called ‘the necessary conformity of civil law with the moral law,’” he added. “American history proves that when our laws do not reflect moral law, it leads to the worst injustices. We have seen this with slavery, segregation, abortion and euthanasia.”

He also called for “bold thinking” going forward “on how we can support women and children and promote strong marriages and families.”

The day after his Jan. 19 column appeared, the California Conference of Catholic Bishops issued a statement committing the church “to actively support and advocate for policies and services that enrich the lives of California’s women, children and families.”

The conference, which is the public policy arm of the state’s Catholic bishops, outlined several priorities for the state’s Catholic communities, including:

To accompany “our sisters . . . as you walk the journey of motherhood.”

To raise awareness of “the abundant life-affirming safety net resources available to women, children and families in California through faith-based, community, and public agencies, including food, housing, health care, mental health care, intimate partner violence intervention, paid leave, child care, education, employment, economic and material assistance.”

“To unite our state’s life-affirming pregnancy shelters, centers, and clinics, creating an accessible

statewide network to accompany women facing challenging pregnancies and in the early years of parenthood.”

The Catholic conference said it also will “advocate for transformative family policies,” including increased access to affordable housing, prioritization of homeless pregnant and parenting women and expanded paid leave for families.

Its list of priorities came as Gov. Gavin Newsom and the state’s “pro-abortion” legislative supermajority vowed to turn California — which already has no restrictions on abortion — into an “abortion sanctuary” for the nation if Roe is overturned when the Supreme Court issues its decision this summer in a case involving Mississippi’s law banning most abortions after 15 weeks.

In Texas, retired Bishop Michael D. Pfeifer of San Angelo issued a pastoral statement to mark the Roe anniversary saying that “the staggering magnitude and unbelievable worldwide numbers of abortions” makes abortion “the most urgent, greatest and gravest, moral pastoral issue facing the universal Catholic Church and the church in the USA.”

“As we pray and encourage all Catholics and pro-life Christians around the world to join efforts to stop the enormous magnitude of abortions,” he said, “we focus our attention on our country and working with our bishops, our priests, religious, deacons and all dedicated laypeople to make a super new effort to pull America back from the brink by those who believe in the constitutional principle of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness for all beginning with the tiny persons in their mother’s womb.”

“Choose life for both the moth-

See **LIFE**, page 5

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.

Catholic schools: Forming future saints

Next week, we will celebrate Catholic Schools Week here in the diocese and around the country. Catholic parochial schools have been a vibrant presence in the United States from 1809, when St. Elizabeth Seton founded the first school in Emmitsburg, Maryland. Since then, countless students have been formed in the Catholic faith in these institutions. Although I grew up on a farm a distance from town, I was blessed that my parents made the sacrifice, both in effort and finances, to provide my siblings and me with 12 years of Catholic education. It has often been said Catholic schools teach more than just the three “Rs.” Beyond the normal academic subjects, we aim to teach the children entrusted to our care to become holy, to become saints, as expressed by our 2021-22 theme, “Saints in the Making.” Catholic schools aim to assist parents in the responsibilities they accepted at their child’s baptism, namely to lead their sons and daughters to Jesus by word and example, and to raise them in the Catholic faith. Through the years of Catholic education, our schools help students to encounter Jesus, to be prepared to live, share and defend their faith, to know their vocation and to become the persons God has called them to be. Now, this might sound like a lot of pious talk — and someone may ask, “Is this going to prepare the kids for the “real world?” I would answer that, without knowing Christ, without being formed in His teaching and nurtured by the sacraments, children



THE BISHOP’S CORNER

BISHOP JOSEPH M. SIEGEL

are left defenseless when facing the challenges of the secular world and the counter-Gospel they will experience there. Without a firm grounding in the faith, young people are easily led down blind alleys by promises of immediate gratification in material things and pleasures. Catholic Schools exist in our diocese because we want our children, our young people — and yes, their parents — to know Jesus Christ. However, our Catholic community does not exist as an end in itself. The Church is fundamentally an evangelical movement. She exists to show God to the world and, thus, she exists for others. Our diocese and our ministries, including Catholic schools, exist to spread Christ’s name and make Him loved by the witness of our lives. This is the essential mission of every one of our schools here in the Diocese of Evansville as they play a critical role in the evangelization of our families. From my experience, both as a pastor and a bishop, I have found that our Catholic Schools are one of the most direct and effective means to share our Catholic faith. As the challenges of educating young people in an

increasingly complex, confusing and secular society grow, we are blessed to have, in Indiana, a generous scholarship program that allows parents to direct their education dollars to a school of their choice. We thank our state legislators for recognizing the right of parents to send their sons and daughters to schools that best serve their needs, and for providing for these vouchers to them. Without this program, Catholic education would be beyond the financial reach of many of our families. As we observe Catholic Schools Week, I want to recognize and thank our teachers, administrators and priests for their work with our young people. These dedicated individuals are committed to making the most of the opportunities made possible by the sacrifices of parents, parishes and state assistance to provide the best possible Catholic education. Even as we work to ensure academic excellence in our schools, our first priority is always to make sure that Catholic teaching, identity and values are infused in all aspects of our students’ experience. Ultimately, parents want to give their children all that they need for a good and happy life. But they and all of us know that if we don’t give them God, we give too little. Our Catholic Schools partner with parents to help provide a foundation of faith, on which our young people can build for the rest of their lives. May St. Elizabeth Seton intercede for us, that we might have her fervor and dedication in forming our children in the Catholic faith.

Escuelas católicas: Formando futuros santos

La próxima semana, celebraremos la Semana de las Escuelas Católicas aquí en la diócesis y alrededor del país. Las escuelas parroquiales católicas han sido una presencia vibrante en los Estados Unidos desde 1809, cuando Sta. Elizabeth Seton fundó la primera escuela en Emmitsburgo, Maryland. Desde entonces, numerosos estudiantes han sido formados en la fe católica en estas instituciones. A pesar de que yo crecí en una granja que estaba distanciada del pueblo, tuve la bendición de que mis padres hicieron el sacrificio, ambos de esfuerzo y financiero, de brindarnos 12 años de educación católica a mis hermanos y a mí. Con frecuencia se ha dicho que las escuelas católicas enseñan más que solo las tres “Rs.” Más allá de las asignaturas académicas comunes, nos proponemos enseñarles a los niños encomendados a nuestro cuidado a que se conviertan en beatos, a que se conviertan en santos, como se expresa en nuestro tema de 2021-22, “Santos en Desarrollo.” Las escuelas católicas tienen por objetivo asistir a los padres con las responsabilidades que aceptaron en el bautismo de su niño o niña, es decir guiar a sus hijos o hijas hacia Jesús a través de la palabra y el ejemplo, y a criarlos en la fe católica. A través de los años de educación católica, nuestras escuelas ayudan a los estudiantes a encontrar a Jesús, a estar preparados para vivir, compartir y defender su fe, a conocer su vocación y convertirse en las personas que Dios los ha llamado a ser. Ahora bien, esto puede sonar como una gran charla moralizadora — y alguien podría preguntar, “¿Preparará esto a los niños para el “mundo real?”” Yo respondería que, sin conocer a Cristo, sin ser formados en Sus enseñanzas y nutridos por los sacramentos, los niños quedan desprotegidos al



EL RINCÓN DEL OBISPO

OBISPO JOSEPH M. SIEGEL

enfrentar los desafíos del mundo secular y el contra-Evangelio que ellos experimentarán allí. Sin un fundamento firme en la fe, la gente joven puede ser llevada fácilmente a callejones sin salida con promesas de gratificación inmediata en cosas materiales y placeres. Las escuelas católicas existen en nuestras diócesis porque queremos que nuestros niños, nuestra gente joven — y sí, sus padres — conozcan a Jesucristo. Sin embargo, nuestra comunidad católica no existe como un fin en si misma. La Iglesia es fundamentalmente un movimiento evangélico. Ella existe para mostrar a Dios al mundo y, por consiguiente, ella existe para los demás. Nuestra diócesis y nuestros ministerios, incluyendo a las escuelas católicas, existen para difundir el nombre de Cristo y hacer que Él sea amado por el testimonio de nuestras vidas. Esta es la misión esencial de cada una de nuestras escuelas aquí en la diócesis de Evansville al desempeñar un papel crítico en la evangelización de nuestras familias. Desde mi experiencia, como pastor y obispo, yo he encontrado que nuestras escuelas católicas son uno de los medios más directos y efectivos para compartir nuestra fe católica. A medida que los desafíos de educar a la gente joven en una sociedad cada vez más compleja, confusa y secular aumentan, somos bendecidos de

tener, en Indiana, un programa de becas generoso que le permite a los padres dirigir sus dólares para la educación a la escuela de su elección. Agradecemos a nuestros legisladores de estado por reconocer el derecho de los padres de enviar a sus hijos e hijas a las escuelas que mejor sirvan sus necesidades, y por proveerles estos vouchers. Sin este programa, la educación católica estaría más allá del alcance financiero de muchas de nuestras familias. Al celebrar la Semana de las Escuelas Católicas, yo quiero reconocer y agradecer a nuestros maestros, administradores y sacerdotes por su trabajo con nuestra gente joven. Estos individuos dedicados estan comprometidos a aprovechar al máximo las oportunidades que han sido posible gracias a los sacrificios de los padres, parroquias y asistencia del estado para proveer la mejor educación católica posible. Aún cuando trabajamos para asegurar la excelencia académica en nuestras escuelas, nuestra primera prioridad es siempre asegurarnos de que la enseñanza católica, la identidad y los valores son infundidos en todos los aspectos de la experiencia de nuestros estudiantes. En definitiva, los padres quieren dar a sus hijos todo lo que necesitan para una vida buena y feliz. Pero ellos y todos nosotros sabemos que si no les damos a Dios, damos muy poco. Nuestras escuelas católicas se asocian con los padres para ayudar a proveer un fundamento de fe, sobre el cual nuestra gente joven puede construir por el resto de sus vidas. Que Sta. Elizabeth Seton interceda por nosotros, que tengamos su fervor y dedicación al formar a nuestros niños en la fe católica. — Translated by Dr. Daniela Abraham, St. Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology

Life

Continued from page 4

er and the child” must be “our constant pro-life motto,” he said. He added that “as followers of Jesus, we understand that when a nation abandons the conviction that all life matters

from its very beginning, the end result is barbaric” — a result “we must now work to overcome.” He urged his fellow bishops to “make a concerted effort as pastors and leaders of our people to speak out strongly with a united voice” against abortion and called for developing prayer programs, “centered on the Eucharist;” “constant praying” of the rosary in front of abortion centers; and being “much more proactive in promoting pastoral action, formulating pro-life plans for all the Catholic parishes of our country.” Bishop Pfeifer echoed the hope of many that the Supreme Court will overturn Roe but also called for support for the Life at Conception Act, introduced by U.S. Sen. Rand Paul, R-Ky., in early 2021. The legislation would implement equal protection under the 14th Amendment “for the right to life of each born and unborn human.” During the annual diocesan Mass for Life Jan. 21 in the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist, Cleveland Bishop Edward C. Malesic told the congregation: “We are all a part of God’s plan. Every unborn child is a part of God’s mysterious plan, too.” He called the Roe decision “a flawed judgment in 1973” and said “it remains flawed in its interpretation of the Constitution.” He, too, said the faithful should have hope the law will change, but “unless we

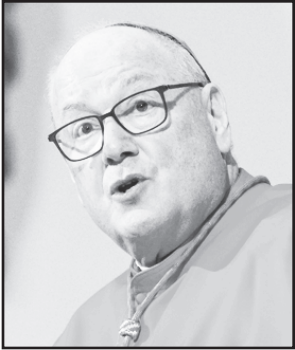
change minds and hearts,” we will not advance very far to be a type of society that mirrors God’s kingdom. People will not be converted to the Gospel of life “by arrogant voices of judgmental people, but by the persuasive power of love and forgiveness that we have found for ourselves in Jesus Christ, our Lord,” Bishop Malesic said. “And women will choose life only when we give them a way to choose it, alleviate their fears and give them a safe place to give birth.” “Keep those prayers coming for the unborn” and dream big, he added. “But we also must act. Our children are counting on us.” The Florida Conference of Catholic Bishops in Tallahassee, the public policy arm of the state’s Catholic bishops, said the church is “committed to accompanying all women, including those experiencing unplanned pregnancies or considering abortion.” Florida’s diocese, it said, are on board with the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ initiative Walking with Moms in Need, which connects parishioners with volunteer opportunities at community pregnancy resource centers.



ARCHBISHOP JOSÉ H. GOMEZ



BISHOP EDWARD C. MALESIC



CARDINAL TIMOTHY M. DOLAN

“We wholeheartedly support this ministry that offers tangible, life-affirming support for vulnerable families — fathers, mothers and their babies,” the state Catholic conference said. “The Catholic Church stands emphatically and unservedly for the rights of the unborn,” the conference said. “We look forward with the hope that God will soon bring our nation to a profound awareness of the dignity of human life and a recognition that all lives deserve protection under the law. In a Jan. 12 column in Catholic New York, the archdiocesan newspaper, Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan of New York said he still had Christmas on his mind as he looked ahead to the Jan. 22 anniversary of “the gruesome decision” Roe v. Wade — which he added makes January Respect Life Month “by default.” “At the center of history, when B.C. becomes A.D., is a mother and her baby,” he said. “Babies are what it’s all about Where would we be without babies? Well . . . extinct!

“Nothing brings hope and promise like the birth of a baby, the sure sign that creation, life, and civilization go on. Lord knows where we would be if babies were not at the center, if infants were looked upon as a curse.” “Yet . . . are we close to that?” he continued. “Folks far brighter than I’ll ever be speak about an ‘anti-natalism’ in culture, where pregnancy and babies are thought a burden, where conception and pregnancy are considered a threat to liberation and self-fulfillment.” Cardinal Dolan noted that right before Christmas, “Pope Francis lamented a ‘demographic winter.’ In his beloved Italy, he noted that the number of deaths last year were higher than the rate of births. That’s haunting! The late Robert Kennedy — “who beamed over” his children — said “the health of any society can be gauged by the way we treat babies, the fragile and the weak elderly,” the cardinal said. “We may be flunking!”

Bishop’s Schedule

- Confirmation Mass, Precious Blood Church, Jasper,** 10:30 a.m. EST, Sunday, Jan. 30.
- Habitat Home Dedication,** St. Theresa Place, Evansville, 4 p.m. CST, Monday, Jan. 31.
- National Catholic Schools Week Mass,** St. Benedict Cathedral, Evansville, 9:30 a.m. CST, Tuesday, Feb. 1.
- Meeting,** Clergy Personnel Board, Catholic Center, Evansville, 1:30 p.m. CST, Tuesday, Feb. 1.
- Mass,** Sarto Chapel, Evansville, 11:30 a.m. CST, Thursday, Feb. 3.
- Meeting,** Department Heads, Catholic Center, Evansville, 1:30 p.m. CST, Thursday, Feb. 3.

“The Merton Prayer” from Thoughts in Solitude

My Lord God,

I have no idea where I am going.
I do not see the road ahead of me.
I cannot know for certain where it will end.

Nor do I really know myself,
And the fact that I think I am following your will
does not mean I am actually doing so.

But I believe that the desire to please you
does in fact please you.

And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing.
I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire.

And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road,
though I may know nothing about it.

Therefore I will trust you always though
I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death.

I will not fear, for you are ever with me,
and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.

This prayer has been used by the board of directors of The Catholic Foundation of Southwestern Indiana Inc. over a period of many years to aide in the faithful process of providing sound direction and guidance to assist our brothers and sisters in faith in southwestern Indiana.

It is with a reverent, but congratulatory heart, that on behalf of our current and previous board of directors we can now announce that your foundation has grown in assets to over \$100,000,000.

The sacrifices and commitment in support of our Catholic faith in Southwestern Indiana by our more than 70,000 brothers and sisters have made this achievement possible: and it is with profound gratitude that we take this moment in time to thank each of our endowment holders for their foresight, devotion, and generosity, toward our shared future as one Catholic family.

Their generosity will continue to fund parish support, Catholic education, social justice initiatives, and vocational assistance, for our church in Southwestern Indiana into perpetuity.

Although we are thankful for our cumulative success thus far within the Diocese of Evansville, we are even more energized and pleased to serve moving into our next 30 years of service to you our brothers and sisters.

Thanks be to God.

In Service,

Todd Brock, *Executive Director*
The Catholic Foundation of Southwestern Indiana Inc.



AROUND THE DIOCESE

Lenten groups at St. John the Baptist, Newburgh

Father Henry Kuykendall, senior priest of the Diocese of Evansville, is facilitating two Lenten groups at St. John the Baptist Parish in Newburgh. Each will meet weekly on Tuesdays from Feb.1 through April 12. In-person meetings will be from Noon to 1:30 p.m. Central Time in the church library (face coverings and COVID vaccinations required), and Zoom meetings will be from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. Central Time. Both series will be based on the book “Reclaiming Vatican II: What It (Really) Said, What It Means, and How It Calls Us to Renew the Church,” by Father Blake Briton, a priest of the Diocese of Orlando, Florida. Cost of the book is \$20 and is available from the parish. To register, call the parish office at 812-490-1000 with your name, address, phone number and email address.

Ferdinand Benedictine Sisters temporarily halt public Masses, tours

Due to the increased transmissibility of the COVID-19 Omicron variant, and out of an abundance of caution for the members of their religious community and the

general public, the Sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand have announced that Mass and tours will not be available to visitors for the time being. The monastery gift shop remains open, although properly-worn masks are currently required for all who visit the shop. Those who are interested in attending Mass or taking a tour in the future can follow the Sisters at www.thedome.org, or on social media, for updates on when they might be able to visit.

Happy Birthday!

Deacon Michael Helfter of Holy Family Parish in Jasper celebrates his birthday Feb. 3. **Annie-Rose Keith**, parish catechetical leader at Resurrection Parish in Evansville, celebrates her birthday Feb. 5. **Joan Fredrich**, principal of Holy Rosary School in Evansville, celebrates her birthday Feb. 7. **Father Gene Schroeder**, pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Vanderburgh County, celebrates his birthday Feb. 7. **Father Jim Sauer**, senior priest of the Diocese of Evansville, celebrates his birthday Feb. 8.

Evansville Birthright seeks volunteers

Birthright of Evansville is seeking volunteers to serve the area. Birthright provides assistance to pregnant women and families in need of resources from 10 a.m. CST to

Project Rachel active here

SPECIAL TO THE MESSAGE

Project Rachel is a ministry of the Diocese of Evansville that operates through the Office of Family and Life. From the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops: “Project Rachel is an ongoing 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.” Remember . . . there is hope after abortion. For more information, please visit www.hopeafterabortion.com. All inquiries are confidential.



project rachel
post abortion healing ministry
peace starts here

begin to heal
email: projectrachel@evdio.org
phone: 812.483.7812



2 p.m. CST on Mondays, Wednesday and Fridays. Those interested should contact Betty Marcheschi at 812-424-2555 or email at birthright.evansville@gmail.com.

Big Bingo is back!

Mater Dei and Reitz Memorial high schools’ Big Bingo returns on March 13 at Old National Events Plaza in Evansville. Doors will open at 3:30 p.m. CDT. Get your tickets online at www.bigbingo.org.

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.

The Synod on Synodality: A Time to Listen

SPECIAL TO THE MESSAGE

A synod is a meeting or a gathering of bishops. In 2023, there will be a Synod of Bishops in Rome on the subject of Synodality or “journeying together.” In preparation for that Synod, every diocese is being asked to call upon the guidance of the Holy Spirit and to listen to the experience of their people. The Diocese of Evansville is currently hosting listening sessions across our 12 counties to better understand how God is working in our lives. We want to know how you, the people of our diocese, are encountering God, how you have seen God working in your lives and how you have been changed. These listening sessions are focused on the experience of our people, not on ideas or abstract concepts. We want to say to everyone, Catholic and non-Catholic alike, in the 12 counties of Southwest Indiana: **What God is doing in your life matters!** It matters to us, and it matters to the entire Church. You can find more information on the Synod and learn when your parish plans to meet at www.evdio.org/synod. Feel free to attend any session that best fits your schedule. If you cannot make it in person, please fill out an online survey, which will be available in late February on our website. We look forward to hearing about your experience of walking together on this path of faith. We are ready to listen.

Special Olympians return to the court

Special Olympics athletes returned to the basketball court at the Diocese of Evansville Catholic Center for action Jan. 15 and Jan. 22. This annual series of games was cancelled last year because of COVID-19, and teams from Gibson and Warrick counties chose not to participate this year because of the ongoing pandemic. As a result, teams from Knox and Vanderburgh counties played a number of games over the two dates.

The Message photos by Tim Lilley



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Contact us for Career Opportunities



The MESSAGE: Your Catholic community newspaper



BY TIM LILLEY
The Message editor

The Message truly is Southwest Indiana's Catholic community newspaper — working for you for more than 50 years. And now, as we continue to navigate the COVID-19 outbreak with all its challenges, *The Message* continues to be a constant across our 12 counties.

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

We need your support to continue producing this Catholic community newspaper for the Diocese of Evansville. This issue appears at the start of the Diocese of Evansville's annual "Message Weekend," when Catholics across our area have the opportunity to subscribe to the paper or renew their annual subscriptions.

To those who will renew, we sincerely thank you 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*.**

Sheila Barclay and Kathy Henderson serve on *The Message* staff with assistant editor Megan Erbacher and me, and they do great work for you on a daily basis. Sheila is responsible for the design and look of *The Message*, and Kathy handles subscriptions. 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 Siegel, Father Donald Dilger, Zoe Cannon, Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministry Steve Dabrowski, Director of Family and Life Eric Girten, Diocesan Coordinator of Catechetical Programs and Resources Mary Kaye Falcony, Director of Catechesis Joel Padgett, Brenda Hopf, Mary Ann Hughes, Kaitlin Klein, Director of Hispanic Ministries Bertha

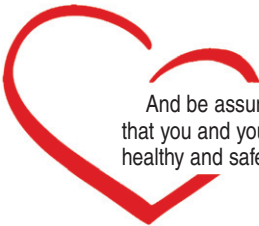
Melendres, Diocesan Director of Stewardship Matt Potter, Kristine Schroeder, Maria Sermersheim, members of the Southwest Indiana Guild of the Catholic Medical Association and Youth First counselors who are serving in our Catholic schools. Our priests and members of religious orders serving in the diocese also contribute.

[Contributing columnists](#) from outside the diocese include Christina Capecci and Father Kenneth Doyle. 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. And 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.



New bell tower at the Catholic Center



Photos by Bishop Joseph M. Siegel, Eric Girten and Tim Lilley, special to The Message



By THE MESSAGE STAFF

In late December, workers with KM Construction Services of Evansville installed an impressive new bell tower at the Diocese of Evansville Catholic Center. The bell from the old tower was cleaned, sealed and installed at the top of the new tower, which is located along the walk between the Catholic Center and the Sarto Retreat Center.

The old tower was located in the same spot, and it had deteriorated to the point where replacement was deemed necessary. The project was made possible by a generous bequest to the Diocese.

Evansville architect Michael Buente designed the new tower. His design honors the Holy Trinity, and the base of the tower will include symbols honoring God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Buente told **The Message**, “We knew that we wanted the tower to have more verticality than the old tower. So, when the diocese brought out an old cast iron cross that a parishioner had donated and asked if it could be incorporated, we knew that it had to be on top of the tower. The foundation is in the shape of a triangle with trefoil, which, with the three wood columns, are meant to represent the Holy Trinity. The triangle and trefoil shape is repeated at the top of the tower and supports the bell. Steel struts angle upward from the three corners of the triangle and apexes of the trefoil, supporting and leading to the cross, which, of course, is God’s plan for our salvation.”

An electronic striker will complete the installation. Once in place, the bell will toll daily for the Angelus at 6 a.m., Noon and 6 p.m.

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Donnelly is confirmed as U.S. ambassador to the Vatican

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Catholic lawyer Joe Donnelly of Indiana is the new U.S. ambassador to the Holy See.

The U.S. Senate confirmed Donnelly, a former member of the House of Representatives and the Senate, in a voice vote Jan. 20.

“Joe is a person of deep Catholic faith and commitment to public service, and I am confident that he will serve in this important new role with vision and integrity,” said Holy Cross Father John Jenkins, president of the University of Notre Dame, Donnelly’s alma mater.

“It comes as no surprise that there was broad bipartisan support for his confirmation as he has proven throughout his career that he is committed to building relationships and working across divisions. Joe has the prayers of his alma mater as well as our commitment to assist him in any way we can,” Father Jenkins said in a statement following the vote.

Donnelly, 66, served in the U.S. House of Representatives from 2007 to 2013, representing Indiana’s 2nd Congressional District, and was a U.S. senator from 2013 to 2019. A Democrat, he ran for reelection to the Senate in 2018, but he lost to Republican Mike Braun.

He is currently a partner at Akin Gump, a Washington firm specializing in public law and policy law.

When Donnelly was running for reelection to the Senate, Democrats for Life of America said he “has been a consistent pro-life voice as well as advocate for women and families, co-sponsoring many important pieces of legislation.”

Other pro-life groups, such as the National Right to Life Committee, gave him low marks for his votes on abortion-related issues.

Donnelly has said he is “committed to protecting the sanctity of life,” but believes exceptions should be made for abortion only in cases of rape, incest or to save the life of the mother.

He said he follows the “seamless garment” approach to pro-life issues, that “all life is critical from conception to natural death.”

“To me, pro-life is actually a broader discussion,” he said.

He was one of seven Democrats who initially opposed the Affordable Care Act in 2010 because the final version did not include a provision to bar coverage of abortion in the federally subsidized private insurance plans the bill would create.

But Donnelly and the others finally



CNS photo by Barbara Johnston, University of Notre Dame
Joe Donnelly, a Catholic lawyer and former U.S. senator from Indiana, is pictured in a March 4, 2015, photo at the University of Notre Dame. He was confirmed Jan. 20, as U.S. ambassador to the Vatican.

agreed to vote for the measure after President Barack Obama said he would sign an executive order clarifying that no taxpayer dollars could be spent on abortions.

Pro-life groups, though, were critical of Obama’s action, saying it would not be effective.

After leaving the Senate, besides working as a lawyer, Donnelly was a professor of the practice of law from 2019 to 2021, teaching courses on American politics, public policy and leadership at the University of Notre Dame’s Keough School of Global Affairs in Washington.

Donnelly met his wife, Jill, while attending Notre Dame and they were married in 1979. They have a son and a daughter.

Donnelly will assume the ambassador post from American diplomat Patrick Connell, who has served as chargé d’affaires ad interim since January when Ambassador Calista Gingrich’s tenure ended.

New Catholic parish strategic-planning book released

By TAD DICKEL
Special to The Message

The first portion of this feature is an excerpt from “Strategic planning for Catholic parishes: Listening, learning, and responding through the lens of Pope Francis’s teachings on synodality” (p 3-4):

“Master, we have worked hard all night and have caught nothing, but at your command I will lower the nets.

“When I think about Catholic parish strategic planning, Luke 5:1-11 comes to mind. Simon Peter and some of the other disciples had been fishing all night with nothing to show for their efforts. Jesus had been teaching a crowd on the shore and saw two boats at the water’s edge. He got in one boat with Simon Peter and after teaching the crowds from the lake, he instructed the disciple and his fellow fisherman to take it out to deeper water and lower their nets again.

“The disciples were tired after a long, unsuccessful night, and reluctant to cast their nets again. But Simon Peter clearly saw something in Jesus and told him, ‘at your command I will lower the nets.’ The gospel passage goes on to say that they caught so many fish that their nets were tearing. When the disciples saw this, they decided to follow Jesus.

“As parishioners, staff members and leaders of Catholic parishes, it’s easy to become discouraged at times about the future of our Church and parishes. We are called to spread the Good News, but

there are many things that get in the way. Like the disciples in this passage, we might be tired, feel unworthy, or be reluctant to open ourselves to the Holy Spirit.

“We might think we lack the financial resources or the expertise to determine how to plan for the future and move our parishes forward. As Catholics, we were never promised an easy path. Instead, we must have the faith to heed God’s call like Simon Peter did. While we will experience challenges at times, we need to look for those affirming moments when the parish community comes together in beautiful worship, support for the grieving, counseling for the afflicted, and outreach for those less fortunate.

“After decades of declining Mass attendance, membership and vocations, now is the time to embrace change and plan for the future of Catholic parishes. We can do this while staying true to the teachings of the Church.”

On Dec. 2, 2021, I published “Strategic planning for Catholic parishes: Listening, learning, and responding through the lens of Pope Francis’s teachings on synodality.” This book provides a flexible framework for an inclusive planning process that is rooted in the spirit of synodality as described by Pope Francis. The path of synodality involves people opening themselves to the Holy Spirit, listening to others and walking together. Instead of hiring a consultant to facilitate a planning process, this book offers parishes a



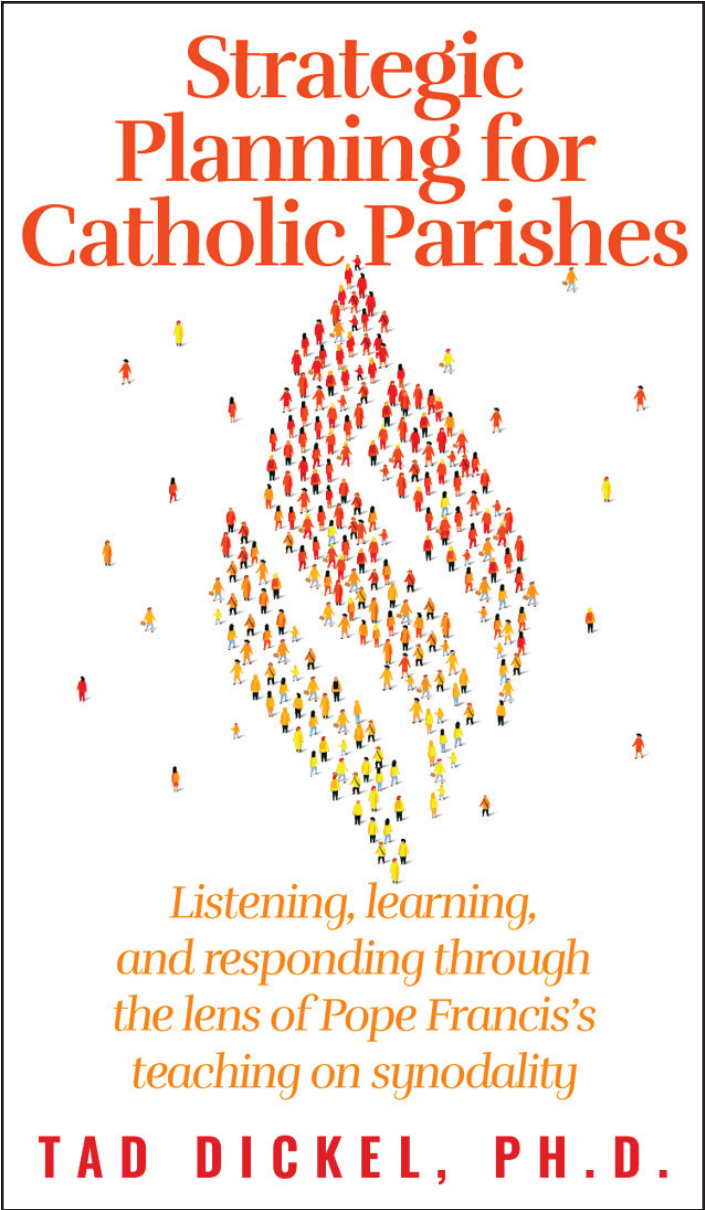
DR. TAD DICKEL

process and tools to help develop and articulate a bold vision for the future.

The topic is relevant as the universal Church embarks on the 2021-2023 Synod. You may have heard that listening sessions have begun in the Diocese of Evansville. The content from diocesan sessions around the world will be compiled into reports that will be reviewed at the Synod in 2023. This book provides a process for applying the spirit of synodality to strategic planning at the parish level and is not connected to the current diocesan listening sessions.

The book is available on Amazon.com, and you can learn more by visiting catholic.tadickel.com. When I was working with All Saints Parish in Evansville, one of the steering committee members commented, “we need to bottle this process and help other parishes apply it.” That encouragement inspired me to write this book.

I hope this book will be a valuable resource for many



Submitted photo

This is the cover of Tad Dickel’s book.

parishes as they examine their current state and create a plan for a renewed sense of mission and a vibrant future. This book is written for pastors, parish staff members, parish councils, and other lay leaders. Sample templates, letters, surveys,

prayers, and agendas are included to help parish leaders facilitate a successful planning process.

Dr. Tad Dickel is a strategy and leadership consultant who serves as President of T.A. Dickel Group, LLC.

TEC: 30 years of average people transforming lives

SPECIAL TO
THE MESSAGE

“Sure, I was instrumental in bringing TEC to the Evansville Diocese, but so was every other person who was involved in those first few TECs.” That was Rick Etienne’s response when asked about his part in this pivotal event in the Diocese of Evansville. Having previously experienced Teens Encounter Christ in the Owensboro Diocese, Rick knew the life-changing effects TEC could have on youth.

When he became director of youth ministry for the Evansville diocese in 1988, and met Jane and Paul Leingang, who had moved to the area after experiencing TEC in the Quad Cities area, plans for starting a TEC movement within our diocese began to come together.

Teens and adults from our diocese traveled to Owensboro and Belleville, Illinois, to experience TEC for themselves; they came back on fire for Christ and committed to bringing this incredible experience to our diocese.

St. Mary Parish in Ireland agreed to host TEC No. 1 and installed extra shower stalls in parish buildings. Volunteers from Owensboro agreed to be part of the first TEC teams. Many people from different parts of our

diocese worked to form the team and figure out the logistics. There would be no way to even begin to name all the people who helped start TEC in the Evansville diocese because everyone — even the teens and young adults who simply signed up and participated in the first TEC weekend — who had any part in those first TECs was instrumental in starting TEC in this diocese, according to Etienne. “When people use their gifts, great things happen,” he said.

TEC flourished. High school and college-aged youth are integral parts of each TEC team. They lead and facilitate many of the activities and discussions. Rick believes that this is a key component in TEC’s success. “People of similar ages can relate. They want to hear what their peers have to say.”

All this remains true today. “I didn’t expect to grow so close to the people there!” says Jaeden Wagner, at the end of the November 2021 TEC weekend. Madalyn Spindler said, “I feel like a completely different person, and I hope I can continue this retreat high!” Evaluations at the end of TEC weekends reveal that the youth are impacted in a variety of ways depending on where they are in their lives and what they



Submitted photo

This photo is from TEC No. 1, which was hosted by St. Mary Parish, Ireland.

are needing most; but most of their feedback can really be summed up with the words of Catherine Shockley, a team member on November 2021 TEC: “The weekend met and overcame any expectations I had!”

These sentiments have been echoed for the past 30 years. After 108 weekend retreats in the diocese, TEC continues to transform lives. Participants and team members continue to leave TEC weekends on fire and excited to share the experience with others; and

countless people of all ages continue to be instrumental in TEC.

What about you? How can you help transform lives through TEC? Could you apply to make or work a TEC? Invite a friend or relative to get involved? Pray for the TEC weekend? Donate food or money? Babysit for relatives so that young parents can work/attend TEC?

The next TEC weekend is Feb. 19-21 at St. Mary Parish in Ireland. Youth and adults who are juniors in high

school or older are welcome to attend. Applications can be found at www.switec.org.

Organizers also invite those who are not able to be a part of the weekend to commit to praying for the team and participants during one hour of the weekend. This can be done in your home, local church or wherever is most convenient for you. Sign-ups to pray for TECs can be found at www.switec.org. For more information, contact Julie Lagree at julielagree@gmail.com or 812-630-0174.



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Finance Office reports results of diocesan operations through June 30, 2021

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 and we have the opportunity to share with you the financial results of our Diocesan Operations for fiscal year ended 6/30/21.

The full financial report, with auditor’s opinion, footnotes, and supplemental information can also be found on the diocesan website at evdio.org under Departments, Finance Office, Forms and Documents.

While I frequently espouse that I will be brief, I’ve been advised on more than one occasion that I never am! So, I suppose I’ll refrain from even making such a statement. In any case, I’m hopeful that you find the enclosed information and narrative to be informative and helpful.

Admittedly, the format required for the audited financial statements can be a little overwhelming and there are so many “moving parts” it can be difficult to decipher what’s “Good” and what’s “Bad.” So, we’ve included some supplemental information, as listed here, that I hope will be helpful:

- Overview of how the Diocesan Offices are organized
- Chart showing the primary sources of revenue for the diocese
- Condensed Income and Expense Summary
- Audited Statement of Financial Position (Balance Sheet)
- Audited Statement of Activity (Income Statement)

ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW:

The Administrative Offices of the Diocese, and the accompanying financial statements consist of 3 primary “Lines of Business,” if you will, managed and operated by the Administrative Offices:

- 1) **Diocesan Ministries (Operations) — CPC helps fund these ministries**
- a. Chancery – Bishop’s Office and Administrative Functions

b. Tribunal

c. Safe Environment Management and Oversight

d. Stewardship and Development

e. Office of Catechesis (Adult Religious Formation)

f. Catholic Schools Office

g. Vocations and House of Discernment

h. Office of Worship

i. Ministry to Priests and Clergy Assistance

j. Office of Hispanic Ministries

k. Activities – Facilities, Grounds and Retreat House

l. Communications Office and *The Message*

m. Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry (including College Campus Ministries)

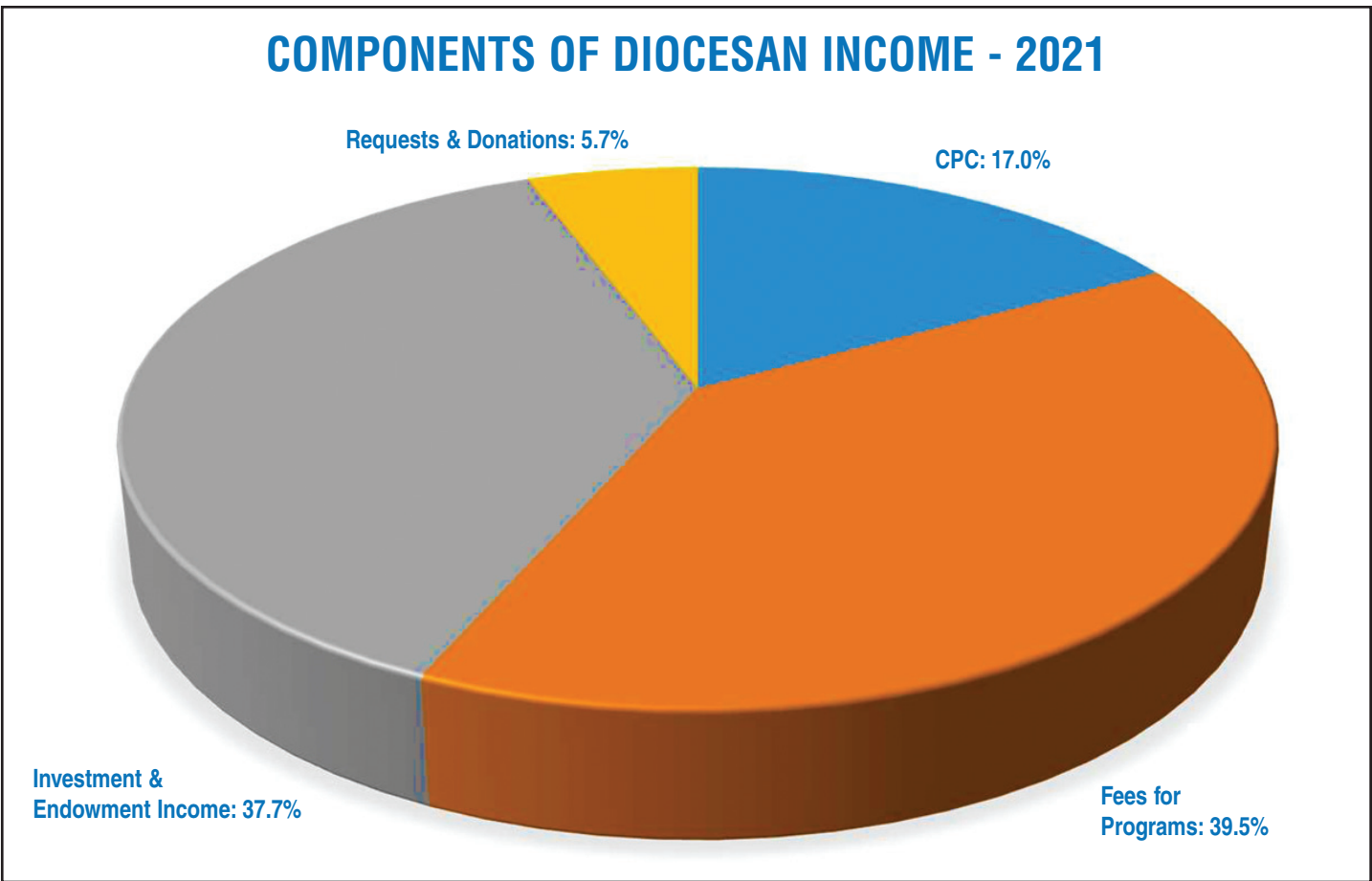
n. Family and Life Ministry
- 2) **Deposit and Loan Program — CPC helps fund this operation**
- a. Savings and Loan Bank for Parishes
- 3) **Self-Funded Insurance Program — CPC funds are NOT used to fund the Insurance Program**
- a. Insurance Program for Lay and Clergy Medical Plans and Parish Property, Liability, Casualty, and Workers Comp Insurance

The Audited Financial Statements represent these 3 lines of business — 1 Diocese — 3 Lines of Business serving:

- 45 Parishes
- Approximately 72,000 Registered Catholic Faithful
- Approximately 1400 Lay Employees
- Approximately 78 Clergy (50 Active; 28 Retired)
- 26 Catholic Schools (22 Elementary and 4 High Schools) serving 7,000 students
- Catholic Charities Operations

The Diocese has four primary sources of revenue to fund these 3 lines of business:

- **CPC Campaign** (CPC is Not used for the Insurance Line of Business)
- **Fees for Programs and Services** (Including the Insurance Line of Business)



- **Investment and Interest Income** (Including Returns on Endowment holdings)
- **Bequests and Donations** (Including cash distributions from Endowment holdings)

The pie chart, *above*, reflects each of these sources of revenue and their respective percentage of total revenue presented in the audited financial statements for 2021.

FINANCIAL RESULTS SUMMARY:

The table, *below*, represents a condensed summary of the audited income statement. The fiscal year ended with solid financial results, on a normalized basis, and we were fortunate to encounter a couple of extraordinary income items that further enhanced the results for the year. With and without the extraordinary items, Net Income, Balance Sheet Cash and Liquidity, and overall Net Asset positions were all strong and improved over prior year.

INCOME:

Extraordinary Item 1: Exceptionally strong market performance continued throughout the fiscal year which drove significant increases of almost \$12 million in the value of our investment assets and in turn created substantial income on the Income Statement. It should be noted that this sizeable increase in the asset value is certainly beneficial, but the gains are primarily “unrealized” meaning the value of the investments increased substantially, creating income on the income statement, but did not drive actual cash receipts to directly fund operations. It is income, but it can fluctuate significantly, up and down, month to month with the performance of the market. Our investment strategies are designed to smooth and protect against the effects of market fluctuations over the long-term but swings in the market in any given year can impact the income position positively or negatively. 2021 was especially positive.

Extraordinary Item 2: Additionally, we benefited from two, one-time events, including a sizeable and unexpected donor bequest plus income from the CARES Act PPP Program and those two events combined for \$1.7 million in extraordinary income.

Extraordinary Item 3: Lastly, after consecutive years of increasing Lay Pension Liability and negative impacts on the income statement of

\$4.5 million and \$4.1 million in 2020 and 2019 respectively, stabilized discount rates driven from the bond market, coupled with our ongoing efforts to improve the funded position of the Plan resulted in an \$8.4 million favorable adjustment to the Pension Liability, which in turn drove significant benefit to the income statement as well.

EXPENSE:

Overall, expenses were generally favorable to budget and slightly lower than spend in fiscal 2020. More precisely, the overall diocesan ministry expenses, which are those functions itemized in the Organization Overview section [1a through n Diocesan Ministries (Operations)], were flat year over year with most managed at or below budget for the year and several slightly below prior year spending levels.

You may also recall that 2020 fiscal year expenses included spend of \$3.4 million of Stewards of God’s Grace Capital Campaign (SOGG) funds for 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’s Cathedral

We did not incur those same expenses in 2021.

Finally, on the expense side, the insurance program generated another stable year of controlled claims losses and closely managed administrative costs allowing for overall spend to only increase slightly over prior year and come in nicely favorable to budget for the year.

THE FINAL ROUND-UP:

If we net all of these income and expense results together and look at more normalized operating results, excluding the exceptional unrealized gains on investments, the two one-time income items, and the favorable pension liability adjustment, our “normalized” operating results were still slightly better than breakeven (\$300K - \$375K) and slightly favorable to budget for the year. *That’s Good!*

All of these factors contributed to solid and stabilizing financial results for the diocese, coming out of the extreme uncertainties of 2020 and the

ongoing economic impacts of the pandemic.

We would be remiss if we did not thank all members of our diocese that give tirelessly of their time, talent, and treasure within their parishes, communities, and throughout the diocese, as one church.

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

Essentially, we were fortunate in fiscal 2021 to experience:

- Continued generosity of our Catholic Faithful giving tirelessly throughout the diocese as a whole
- Another successful CPC Campaign
- Continued strong expense management and favorable expense outcomes
- Exceptionally strong investment and endowment gains
- An unexpected, sizeable bequest
- Benefits from the CARES Act Paycheck Protection Program
- Favorable actuarial analysis of our Pension Plan driving a reduction in pension liability and expense

ADDITIONAL NOTES ON SOURCES OF INCOME:

Investment and Interest Income: With the tremendous generosity of our Catholic faithful through the Stewards of God’s Grace Campaign (SOGG) and other bequests and donations, the amount of funds available for investment, coupled with exceptionally strong performance of the market, even with much of the returns being “unrealized gains,” allowed a significant increase in investment income, lowering the burden on CPC to fund operations.

Bequests and Donations: While bequests and donations at the Diocesan level are typically modest, we were fortunate to garner generous gifts in fiscal year 2021 and 2020. But, beyond that, and more notable for the long-term, is that with the success of

See **AUDIT**, page 12

Income & Expense Summary		
	6/30/21	6/30/20
Income:		
Catholic Parishes Campaign Income	\$ 6,223,674	\$ 6,223,674
Net Investment & Endowment Income	\$ 13,772,337	\$ 2,449,759
Bequests & Donations - Contributions & Endowment Distributions	\$ 2,077,818	\$ 2,353,042
Fees for Programs - Insurance, Medical, & Service Fees	\$ 14,441,513	\$ 14,314,157
Total Revenue, Gains, & Support	\$ 36,515,342	\$ 25,340,632
Total Expenses	\$ 22,439,636	\$ 26,484,647
Change in Net Assets - i.e. Net Income/(Loss) - Operating	\$ 14,075,706	\$ (1,144,015)
Change in Pension Liability	\$ 8,453,477	\$ (4,554,986)
Total Change in Net Assets - i.e. Net Income/(Loss)	\$ 22,529,183	\$ (5,699,001)

Justice Barrett urges Catholic school students to work hard and dream

By **PETER FINNEY JR.**
Catholic News Service

METAIRIE, La. (CNS) — U.S. Supreme Court Associate Justice Amy Coney Barrett said her Catholic education helped her develop a passion for reading that served as a launching pad for her future endeavors as a law student, attorney, law professor and judge.

Barrett made the comments Jan. 24 to current students at St. Catherine of Siena Elementary School in Metairie, where she graduated in 1986.

“You don’t know where your life is going to lead you,” Barrett told 650 students in the school gym, which she jokingly remarked was far better than the one she once played in.

“I never expected in a million years that I would become a U.S. Supreme Court justice. So, my advice to you is to study very hard, work hard and dream.”

Barrett said Incarnate Word Sister Marceline O’Connell, a St. Catherine of Siena teacher, had books for her to read that were a little above her grade level. Her father, Deacon Michael Coney, who since 1981 has served as a permanent deacon at St. Catherine of Siena Church, bought her several Nancy Drew books at a parish fair to fuel her love for reading in first grade.

The Supreme Court justice answered nearly 40 questions that students had prepared in advance. Her 11-year-old daughter, Juliet, served as the emcee and pitched the questions to her mother at a microphone next to the main podium.

The students’ questions ranged from asking about Barrett’s interests as an elementary school student to broader questions about her new role on the nine-member court.

Barrett was confirmed after a rigorous Senate hearing and took the bench as the fifth woman Supreme Court justice Oct. 27, 2020.

When asked if she had any hesitation about accepting the nomination to the Supreme Court, Barrett said she and her husband, Jesse, the parents of seven children, did have concerns about how the workload, the confirmation process and the loss of privacy would impact them and their children.

“We talked and prayed about that,” she said.

Barrett and Justice Brett Kavanaugh are the only two justices who have children still living with them at home.

Barrett told the students she rarely reads positive or negative comments about her in print or on social media, adding that her mother told



CNS photo by Peter Finney Jr., Clarion Herald
U.S. Supreme Court Associate Justice Amy Coney Barrett speaks to 650 students at her alma mater, St. Catherine of Siena School in Metairie, Louisiana, Jan. 24. Barrett encouraged students to study, work hard and remain committed to their faith. The biggest challenge in her new role, she said, was “a loss of privacy.”

U.S. bishop urges dialogue to ‘peacefully resolve’ crisis over Ukraine

WASHINGTON (CNS) — As the United States and its NATO allies consider how best to respond to Russia’s massive buildup of military forces and equipment along its border with Ukraine, the chairman of the U.S. bishops’ international-policy committee urged all parties to seek peace.

“With the alarming situation in Ukraine, we appeal to all leaders to respect the territorial integrity and political independence of Ukraine and to engage in constructive dialogue to peacefully resolve this conflict that impacts the lives and livelihoods of 43 million Ukrainians,” said Bishop David J. Malloy of Rockford, Illinois.

The chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Committee on International Justice and Peace made the comments in a Jan. 25 statement.

He noted that Pope Francis proclaimed Jan. 26 as a day of prayer for peace in Ukraine “given the growing concerns over the situation in that country and in Europe in general.”

Saying he was worried about Ukraine and how a possible Russian-Ukrainian conflict could spread, the pope announced the day of prayer after reciting the Angelus prayer Jan. 23.

“I am following with concern the rising tensions that threaten to strike a new blow at peace in Ukraine and put into question the security of the European continent, with even wider repercussions,” Pope Francis said.

In his statement, Bishop Malloy urged Catholics and all people of goodwill to “join with the Holy Father, who, in his 2022 address to the diplomatic corps, said, ‘Reciprocal trust and readiness to engage in calm discussion should inspire all parties at stake, so that acceptable and lasting solutions can be found in Ukraine.’”

Bishop Malloy said Ukraine’s and Poland’s



BISHOP DAVID J. MALLOY

Catholic bishops issued an appeal Jan. 24 for government leaders to “refrain from war and ‘withdraw ultimatums immediately.’ They called on ‘the international community to join efforts in solidarity and actively support those under threat in all possible ways.’”

“In this time of fear and uncertainty, we stand in solidarity with the church in Ukraine and offer our support,” the Illinois bishop added. “We call on all the faithful and people of goodwill to pray for the people of Ukraine, especially on Jan. 26, that they may know the blessings of peace.”

In a Jan. 25 interview with Catholic News Service’s Rome bureau, Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk of Kyiv-Halych, Ukraine, major archbishop of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, said his people are frightened.

“People are overwhelmed with a great fear, and this is normal in the face of such danger” as Russia continues to deploy troops all along the Ukraine border and as the United States and other NATO countries place troops on notice for possible deployment, he said.

At the same time, the archbishop said, “as Christians, we possess hope of the victory of good over evil. We especially pray for those who want to harm our people, that the Lord will avert their evil intentions and guide them to the path of peace.”

her a long time ago “that what people say doesn’t define who you are as a person.”

One of the things that most people may not know about the Supreme Court justices is that despite having to rule on complex and divisive issues, they maintain friendly interpersonal relationships.

She noted that the court hears about 60-65 cases a year; and on the days they hear oral arguments, the justices eat lunch together.

“The only rule is we can talk only about our family or sports or other things that are not work-related — and not about the cases that are before us,” Barrett said.

She said a few days after she began work at the Supreme Court in October 2020, Justice Sonia Sotomayor walked into her office with bags of Halloween candy for her children. Sotomayor also gave one of Barrett’s daughters a birthday present.

Barrett said the most challenging aspect of her job is the “loss of privacy.”

She said she realized how much of a public figure she had become when she went to Home Depot one day to buy some brooms, with her hair in a ponytail and dressed in workout clothes, and she still was recognized by a customer.

Barrett said her deep Catholic faith is important to her, and she does not shy away from the public knowing about it. But, as she told the Senate under oath, her job as Supreme Court justice is to review and follow the U.S. Constitution and case law in order to make proper decisions.

She encouraged students to understand that they also might be criticized for their Christian beliefs, although probably not on such a national scale.

At the end of the gathering, one of the students came to the podium and asked Juliet what it was like to have a mom as a Supreme Court justice.

“It’s really nice, but it’s also kind of weird,” Juliet replied, smiling. “Some people look at my mom as one of the most important people in the country; but to me, she is still just my mom.”

At the end of the hourlong assembly, students surprised Barrett by singing “Happy Birthday” to her along with presenting a king cake, a New Orleans tradition, with 50 candles on it for her 50th birthday Jan. 28.

They also named her St. Catherine of Siena Distinguished Graduate for 2022.

Finney is executive editor/general manager of the Clarion Herald, newspaper of the Archdiocese of New Orleans.

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Statements of Activities
Year Ended June 30, 2021 and 2020

	2021			2020		
	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
Revenues, Gains and Other Support						
Catholic Parishes Campaign	\$ 6,223,674	\$ -	\$ 6,223,674	\$ 6,223,674	\$ -	\$ 6,223,674
Contributions and other community support	937,417	83,977	1,021,394	445,839	1,138,794	1,584,633
Insurance and medical fees	14,331,089	-	14,331,089	14,101,713	-	14,101,713
Service fees	110,424	-	110,424	212,444	-	212,444
Net investment return	9,584,368	81,004	9,665,372	2,583,467	30,343	2,613,810
Change in beneficial interests in Foundation	-	1,202,164	1,202,164	-	(48,309)	(48,309)
Change in beneficial interests in Foundation – designated	2,904,801	-	2,904,801	(115,742)	-	(115,742)
Distributions from Foundation and other revenue	206,424	-	206,424	768,409	-	768,409
Paycheck Protection Program income	850,000	-	850,000	-	-	-
Net assets released from restrictions	1,247,028	(1,247,028)	-	6,900,173	(6,900,173)	-
Total revenues, gains and other support	36,395,225	120,117	36,515,342	31,119,977	(5,779,345)	25,340,632
Expenses						
Adult formation	173,158	-	173,158	216,545	-	216,545
Catholic Center and other operations	544,594	-	544,594	4,759,345	-	4,759,345
Chancery	702,255	-	702,255	721,272	-	721,272
Education	545,786	-	545,786	541,165	-	541,165
Insurance and medical programs	12,854,912	-	12,854,912	12,778,817	-	12,778,817
Spanish speaking ministry	82,396	-	82,396	53,335	-	53,335
Ministry to priests and clergy assistance	278,756	-	278,756	229,688	-	229,688
Newspaper and communications	387,108	-	387,108	413,761	-	413,761
Office of Worship	96,876	-	96,876	96,924	-	96,924
Permanent diaconate	44,193	-	44,193	56,816	-	56,816
Subsidies	718,500	-	718,500	706,630	-	706,630
Tribunal	183,729	-	183,729	184,683	-	184,683
Vocation Office and House of Discernment	576,452	-	576,452	412,461	-	412,461
Safe Environment	24,897	-	24,897	42,866	-	42,866
Youth ministries, including Newman Centers	298,493	-	298,493	366,525	-	366,525
Lay employee retirement plan	1,657,050	-	1,657,050	1,415,365	-	1,415,365
Employee 403(b) benefits	927,503	-	927,503	832,816	-	832,816
Office of Family and Life	67,468	-	67,468	81,441	-	81,441
Bad debt recoveries	(28,169)	-	(28,169)	-	-	-
Total program services	20,135,957	-	20,135,957	23,910,455	-	23,910,455
Management and general	2,091,644	-	2,091,644	2,369,364	-	2,369,364
Fundraising	212,035	-	212,035	204,828	-	204,828
Total support services	2,303,679	-	2,303,679	2,574,192	-	2,574,192
Total expenses	22,439,636	-	22,439,636	26,484,647	-	26,484,647
Change in Net Assets from Operating and Investing Activities	13,955,589	120,117	14,075,706	4,635,330	(5,779,345)	(1,144,015)
Change in Minimum Pension Liability	8,453,477	-	8,453,477	(4,554,986)	-	(4,554,986)
Change in Net Assets	22,409,066	120,117	22,529,183	80,344	(5,779,345)	(5,699,001)
Net Assets (Deficit), Beginning of Year	(12,064,432)	8,954,677	(3,109,755)	(12,144,776)	14,734,022	2,589,246
Net Assets, End of Year	\$ 10,344,634	\$ 9,074,794	\$ 19,419,428	\$ (12,064,432)	\$ 8,954,677	\$ (3,109,755)

Audit

Continued from page 11

the SOGG, the Diocese was able to establish 8 new endowments earmarked for key operations functions of the diocese. Those endowments have now reached a material balance which is allowing a meaningful increase in cash available for distribution to assist in funding operations, and therefore, also helping manage the burden on CPC.

CPC: Due to the improved income results from the other sources of revenue, (Investments and Bequests), CPC as a percentage of total revenue dropped from 24.6 percent in 2020 to 17 percent in 2021 (as reflected in the pie chart) i.e. lesser reliance on CPC dollars in 2021 as a result of better income results from other sources. These other income sources along with continued expense management efforts, were key contributors in what allowed the CPC assessment to be held flat, **NO INCREASE**, from fiscal year 2020 to fiscal year 2021. \$6,223,000 in both years. Additionally, these favorable results also allowed

the 2021-2022 CPC assessment to increase only 1 percent (\$62,000 for a total of \$6,285,000). Furthermore, the CPC assessment has averaged only a 1.1 percent increase over the last 5 years while the inflation rate for the same 5-year period has been 1.8 percent (CPC 70 basis points lower than inflation).

Reduced Pension Liability: You may recall from the last two financial reports and as discussed above, our balance sheet and income statement have been materially impacted in a negative way by sizeable increases in the estimated unfunded pension liability to the tune of \$4.5M in 2020 and \$4.1M in 2019. Much of these “swings” in the liability are out of our control, driven by actuarial assessments of the plan in conjunction with discount rates dictated by the bond market. Falling discount rates means increased liability and expense. With steadily falling discount rates in the last several years, despite our efforts to increase plan funding levels, we’ve been forced to recognize sizeable increases in the unfunded liability and expense.

In 2021, however, we finally encountered a stabilization in the discount rate, which allowed the efforts we began in 2013 designed to address the funding status of the plan, to actually take hold and chip away at the liability. While the discount rates remain challenging, the fact that they held flat in 2021 and the overall managed investment returns on plan assets in 2021, coupled with cash management and pension plan funding initiatives, drove an 18 percent increase in the overall funded percentage of the Lay Pension Plan and reduced the unfunded pension liability approximately \$8.4 million dollars for the year. While there are several factors relative to the pension plan liability that remain outside of our control (namely discount rates driven by the bond market), the levers that we do control showed very favorable results for the year and we will con-

Statements of Financial Position
June 30, 2021 and 2020

Assets

	2021	2020
Cash	\$ 10,420,980	\$ 3,291,537
Receivables		
Stewards of God’s Grace contributions receivable, net	22,405	899,654
Catholic Parishes Campaign	490,519	530,480
Parishes and institutions, net of allowance; 2021 and 2020 – \$2,060	790,875	282,690
Loans – parishes and institutions, net of allowance; 2021 – \$0 and 2020 – \$28,169	1,323,298	1,498,640
Interest receivable	21,066	15,518
Insurance services receivable	417,628	368,684
Other Diocesan operations	22,678	20,299
	3,088,469	3,615,965
Investments	58,539,085	48,916,193
Beneficial interests in Foundation	17,329,630	12,407,125
Prepaid expenses and other assets	1,649,666	1,444,795
Total assets	\$ 91,027,830	\$ 69,675,615

Liabilities and Net Assets (Deficit)

Liabilities

Accounts payable	\$ 203,194	\$ 778,415
Deposits held for parishes and other Diocesan operations	37,296,421	28,308,963
Due to related parties, net	391,974	1,054,916
Other accrued expenses and liabilities	2,171,162	1,733,043
Unearned service revenue	15,799	15,653
Payroll Protection Program loan	-	850,000
Accrued pension liability	31,524,852	40,039,380
Payables to named beneficiaries	5,000	5,000
Total liabilities	71,608,402	72,785,370
Net Assets (Deficit)		
Without donor restrictions – undesignated	(21,611,631)	(37,914,841)
Without donor restrictions – designated	31,956,265	25,850,409
Total net assets without donor restrictions	10,344,634	(12,064,432)
With donor restrictions	9,074,794	8,954,677
Total net assets (deficit)	19,419,428	(3,109,755)
Total liabilities and net assets	\$ 91,027,830	\$ 69,675,615

tinue best efforts to positively influence those items over the next several years.

THE FINAL
TAKE-AWAYS
AND CLOSING
COMMENTS:


- Normalized income and expense, excluding extraordinary items, was stable and in-line with prior year and budget.
- Diocesan ministries, excluding the extraordinary income items in 2021, continue to operate on narrow but stable profit margins, and have continued to stabilize while holding 5-year average CPC assessment increases to only 1.1 percent compared to 1.8 percent average inflation over the same 5-year period.

- Efforts to manage other income sources coupled with expense management have shown good results and continue in order to manage the burden on CPC revenue
- The insurance program remains in strong position
- Exceptionally strong Investment returns boosted net income beyond normal expectations.
- Pension Liability reduction of \$8.4 million further boosted net income beyond normal expectations.
- Near-term liquidity and Net Asset position has been strengthened and sits in stable condition . . . **That’s Good!**

Normalized operating margins are stable but several challenges and uncertainties remain. Market volatility will

continue to drive unpredictable results in investment income, uncertainty of the bond market discount rates will continue to drive uncertainty in the pension liability status, and growing, national inflationary pressures will be an item to monitor closely during this year.

All of these items continue 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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Hope, trust and my faith for 2022

The last two years have been really difficult to most of us. We have lost so many loved



BECAUSE I AM CATHOLIC!

BERTHA MELENDRES

ones; we have suffered the effects of living through a pandemic, socially, emotionally and financially. Unfortunately, COVID-19 seems to be relentless and started our 2022 with a new variant; and it is an understatement to say that our lives have been transformed and modified in many ways. How should we Catholics look forward to this new 2022? Afterall, this is a new beginning and it also brings us hope that things will be better. For us Catholics our faith should be renewed as we trust our Lord with our lives.

We have just celebrated the coming of our Lord Jesus, the biggest gift we could ever have. Our God, who became one of us to offer us salvation. How can we not be hopeful, when we are loved to such magnitude? How can we not trust him to be here for us in 2022 when he has been there from the beginning and will be there for eternity? So in faith, we know that he is walking right beside us even in the midst of these difficult times. No matter what dark valley we might be passing through he is there by our side as we are reminded in Psalm 123.

The last couple of months have been extremely difficult for me, as I have some health issues that have altered my life again. I was diagnosed with it back in 2015, and I have been blessed for the last five years or so. But my disease came back strong in November, not to mention I also contracted COVID-19 for Christmas, right after I got out of the hospital. It has not been

prayed and who offer me kind words of encouragement, I know that I am not alone even in my darkest moments and that my suffering is nothing compared to what Jesus suffered and continues to suffer on my account.

Pope Francis mentioned, during the Angelus of Jan. 2, 2022, to his audience *“Through thick and thin, let us trust in Him, who is our strength and our hope. And do not forget: let us invite the Lord to dwell in us, to come to our reality, however ugly it may be.”* He continues *“In the face of our fragility, the Lord does not back down. He does not remain in his blessed eternity and in his infinite light, but he becomes close, he becomes flesh, he descends into darkness, he inhabits lands foreign to Him. He does so because He does not resign Himself to the fact that we can go astray from Him, away from eternity, away from the light.”* These words should bring us hope and comfort.

As Catholics, we always begin our New Year on Jan. 1 with the solemnity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Mother of God, she who was the first to believe the one who always shows and leads us to her Son Jesus. Mary brings life out of the everyday events, discovers the presence of God hidden in the ordinary. We are truly blessed to have a faith that comforts and guides us by the Loving presence of Christ and our gentle Mother. So my 2022 resolution is to hope, to trust my Lord and to live by the beautiful gift of faith I have been given.

Bertha is the Director of Hispanic Ministry for the Diocese of Evansville.

easy, but I have felt his presence and love for me, through the many people who have

Esperanza, confianza y mi fe para el 2022

Los últimos dos años han sido realmente difíciles para la mayoría de nosotros. Hemos perdido a tantos



PORQUE SOY CATOLICO!

BERTHA MELENDRES

seres queridos, hemos sufrido los efectos de vivir una pandemia, físicamente, socialmente, emocionalmente y financieramente. Desafortunadamente el Covid 19 parece ser implacable y comenzó nuestro 2022 con una nueva variante, y es muy poco decir que nuestras vidas se han transformado y modificado de muchas maneras.

¿Cómo debemos los católicos esperar este nuevo año 2022? Después de todo, este es un nuevo comienzo y también nos trae la esperanza de que las cosas serán mejores. Para nosotros, los católicos, nuestra fe debe renovarse al confiar nuestra vida a nuestro Señor.

Acabamos de celebrar la venida de nuestro Señor Jesús, el regalo más grande que podríamos tener. Nuestro Dios que se convirtió en uno de nosotros para ofrecernos la salvación. ¿Cómo no tener esperanza, cuando somos amados a tal magnitud? ¿Cómo no confiar en que él estará aquí para nosotros en 2022 cuando ha estado allí desde el principio y estará allí por toda la eternidad? Así que en la fe sabemos que Él está caminando a nuestro lado incluso en la niebla de estos tiempos difíciles. No importa por qué valle oscuro podamos estar pasando, él está allí a nuestro lado como se nos recuerda en el Salmo 123.

Los últimos meses han sido extremadamente difíciles para mí, ya que tengo algunos problemas de salud que han alterado mi vida nuevamente. Me diagnosticaron en 2015, y he sido bendecida durante los últimos cinco años más o menos. Pero mi enfermedad volvió fuerte en noviembre, sin mencionar que también contraje covid 19 esta Navidad, justo

después de salir del hospital. No ha sido fácil, pero he sentido su presencia y amor por mí, a través de las muchas personas que han orado y que me ofrecen amables palabras de aliento, sé que no estoy sola ni siquiera en mis momentos más oscuros y que mi sufrimiento no es nada comparado con lo que Jesús sufrió y sigue sufriendo por mi cuenta.

El Papa Francisco mencionó durante el Ángelus del 02 de enero de 2022 a su audiencia: *“En las buenas y en las malas, confiemos en Él, que es nuestra fuerza y nuestra esperanza. Y no se olviden: invitemos al Señor a habitar en nosotros, a venir a nuestra realidad, por fea que sea”.* Continúa: *“Ante nuestra fragilidad, el Señor no retrocede. No permanece en su bendita eternidad y en su luz infinita, sino que se acerca, se hace carne, desciende a las tinieblas, habita tierras extrañas a Él. Lo hace porque no se resigna al hecho de que podemos desviarnos de Él, lejos de la eternidad, lejos de la luz.”* Estas palabras deben traernos esperanza y consuelo.

Como católicos siempre comenzamos nuestro Año Nuevo el 01 de enero con la solemnidad de la Santísima Virgen María Madre de Dios, ella que fue la primera en creer, la que siempre nos muestra y nos lleva a su Hijo Jesús. María saca vida de los acontecimientos cotidianos, descubre la presencia de Dios escondida en lo ordinario. Somos verdaderamente bendecidos de tener una fe que nos consuela y nos guía por la presencia amorosa de Cristo y nuestra gentil Madre. Así que mi resolución para 2022 es tener esperanza, confiar en mi Señor y vivir con el hermoso don de la fe que se me ha dado.

Bertha es la Directora del Ministerio Hispano de la Diócesis de Evansville.

Neighbor to Neighbor Program offers opportunities

The Neighbor to Neighbor Program offered by Catholic Charities strengthens families and the community. The goal of this faith-based, life-skills-education program is to help participants move away from financial dependence on social-service agencies and toward self-sufficiency.

Participants focus on goal-setting in the areas of finance, faith, health and community. Upon the successful completion of the Neighbor to Neighbor program, participants earn a voucher toward their rent, utilities or other appropriate expense that will move the person forward to help achieve their goals.

Hundreds of people have participated in the program over the years, and we have seen firsthand the impact it can have. When Josh (not his real name) contacted Catholic Charities, he was facing several financial challenges. He had large amounts of medical and credit-card debt. He was living on a friend’s couch, and his possessions were being stored by a local church. His part-time job was not enough to support his needs. As Josh participated in the Neighbor to Neighbor program, he set goals to move forward. He developed a budget and became more confident that he could become financially stable. After a couple months, Josh obtained a full-time job to provide him additional income. He



CATHOLIC CHARITIES

DENISE SEIBERT TOWNSEND

developed payment plans and made progress in paying off his debt. He even saved enough to sign a lease for an apartment. Through his successful completion of the Neighbor to Neighbor program, Josh not only gained skills and knowledge, but he also received a stipend toward a bill that was holding him back. Josh now has hope for the future.

Catholic Charities currently offers the Neighbor to Neighbor program in Vanderburgh County and is planning to expand the program to at least three additional counties in the Diocese during the next two years. To accomplish this, we are looking for volunteers who are interested in working with Catholic Charities staff members to be trained as facilitators. Volunteers need to possess a desire to serve their communities and a willingness to work with participants as they develop goals in the areas of finance, social, health and faith. The Neighbor to Neighbor curriculum helps participants move

beyond current negative behaviors by replacing them with productive, healthy behaviors. By engaging volunteers as facilitators, the program is truly neighbors helping neighbors. The program is a journey of strengthening families and building relationships. For both facilitators and participants, Neighbor to Neighbor encourages personal growth and spiritual connection.

Time commitment for volunteers of the Neighbor to Neighbor program is approximately five hours a week when the program is in session. Catholic Charities staff members will provide training, instruction and support to volunteers. The average Neighbor to Neighbor class has 10-15 participants, and 3-4 facilitators.

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer or attending the Neighbor to Neighbor program, please call Catholic Charities at 812-423-5456. Also, if you want to learn more about starting a Neighbor to Neighbor program at your parish or in your community, please contact Denise at 812-428-5456.

With your support, we can work together to serve the needs of our Diocese and communities.

Denise Seibert Townsend is director of Catholic Charities.

2022: Expecting the unexpected

No New Year’s resolutions for me!

After the many twists and turns of the past several months, the notion of being able to set fixed goals in 2022 seems almost laughable. Just when life seems to be returning to “normal,” another challenge or obstacle arises.

So, instead of making a list of “musts” that will be obsolete by midmonth, I’m going to hold fast to faith and God’s abiding love and proceed with one, simple, overarching resolve: Expect the unexpected.

It’s not a comforting thought.

Unexpected external events upset our routines and can prompt anxiety as we face something sudden that we’re unprepared for.

However happy they might be, unexpected events can make us feel frightfully inadequate, even a little silly, much like realizing we’ve set a dinner party table for 11, but have invited 12 people instead.

Unexpected internal events might also be unsettling; the nudge of the Holy Spirit, when it turns into outright “change-your-life-direction” realization is exciting yet translating this into practical steps can be nerve-wracking as the inspiration we feel inside meets with resistance and “practical considerations” on the outside.

Difficult challenges, such as health crises or natural disasters, bring stresses that can hit us with a force that sets us reeling, turning joy to tears. The tornadoes and wildfires that have caused so much destruction for so many of late are examples of this.



LIVING WELL

MAUREEN PRATT

When the unexpected occurs to loved ones, our own level of worry and stress can rise, too, understandably.

We cannot prepare for every eventuality, nor set dates and times on our calendars for the unexpected.

However, in keeping with my one “resolution” this year — expect the unexpected — there are some actions we can take to be better able to navigate 2022 with confidence.

The better we know ourselves, the more we can nurture helpful habits that support us through unexpected occurrences.

If we know, for example, that we might react angrily to sudden snags in our carefully planned lives, we can take steps now to learn to constructively cope, be less apt to erupt and bring overall calm to the situation instead of more stress.

To gain better insight on ourselves, regular prayer is helpful, as is a practice such as the Examen, which offers an opportunity to reflect on our actions and reactions in light of God’s mercy.

Knowing our environment at home and in our communities is important at all times, but especially

if unexpected events occur.

Do we know what kinds of local weather events occur, and do we know where our tools for coping with them are? Do we have our neighbors’ contact information, do our children know the drill if a weather event suddenly separates family members?

Is our legal paperwork (health care directives, insurance documents) updated and accessible? Are our mobile devices charged and close by?

January of a new year is an excellent time to review these practical preparations. We hope never to have to use them but will be in better shape if the need for them arises.

Faith gives us countless inspiring examples of people who faced unexpected events with God’s grace and protection. Sacred Scripture and song uplift us in times when we experience detours and need clarity and strength.

Among the wise words from the saints is a phrase attributed to St. Francis of Assisi and included in my book, “Don’t Panic! How to Keep Going When the Going Gets Tough:”

“First, do the necessary. Then the possible. And soon, you are doing the impossible.”

An apt framework for coping with whatever might unexpectedly occur as 2022 unfolds!

Maureen Pratt writes for the Catholic News Service column “Living Well.” Her website is www.maureenpratt.com.



Bees, butterflies and earthworms

Editor’s note: This series takes a deeper look at Pope Francis’ 2015 encyclical On the Care for Our Common Home, “Laudato Si”.

In 1963, Peter, Paul and Mary (an American folk group) released their version of the Bob Dylan song “Blowin’ in the Wind.” In it, they sing, “Where have all the flowers gone?” Today, these lyrics could easily become, “Where have all the bees, butterflies and earthworms gone?” These animals may be considered sentinel species used to detect risks to humans, very much like a canary sent into a coal mine. If it died, that was an early warning.

Bees are well-known pollinators. Few of us know that one out of every three mouthfuls of food in America is a product of honeybee pollination. The Natural Resources Defense Council said “42 percent of the bee colonies collapsed in the United States alone in 2015, causing our food supply to be at serious risk.” Bees can be affected by pesticides (especially neonicotinoids), loss of habitat, climate change and disease. The rusty-patched bumblebee was federally listed as endangered in 2017 after losing 90 percent of its population. It is very important that we eliminate these factors and plant more grasslands for bee conservation.

Butterflies are decreasing, too. An example of an



OUR MOTHER EARTH

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

at-risk butterfly is the monarch butterfly. “Save Our Monarchs” said, “Their numbers are down 90 percent from what they were in 1992. And the milkweed plant population, which is indispensable to the monarch, is also down 90 percent.” The best way to help the monarchs is to rebuild their habitat and provide the food they need to survive — in a pollinator garden at school, home or park; or in a hedge, fencerow, highway or utility right-of-way. Like bees, butterflies are pollinators, and affected by similar factors. Butterfly conservation also depends upon increasing grasslands.

In addition, earthworms are decreasing in intensely tilled agricultural fields [Briones and Schmidt, May 2, 2017, Conventional tillage decreases the abundance and biomass of earthworms and alters their community structure in a global meta-analysis, Global Change Biology, Vol. 23 (1): 4396-4419]. Charles Darwin called earthworms “nature’s plough” because they consume soil and excrete castings, which enhance soil fertility. He found about 54,000 earthworms inhabited each acre of land, and that each of these populations turned over tens of tons of topsoil every year (University College Dublin, Tillage farming damaging earthworm populations: Reduced tillage practices will restore productive earthworm populations and help maintain soil structure and nutrient recycling. Science Daily. May 8, 2017).

Earthworms mix, aerate and loosen the soil, which improves water reten-

tion and soil health. They also create burrows and tilth (fitness as a seedbed) that make suitable habitats for smaller soil animals and micro-organisms. Earthworms are food for many animals, and can be affected by pesticides, herbicides and metal residues (Reynolds, John, The Earthworms of Ontario, Life Sci. Misc. Pub., R. Ont. Mus., June 15, 1977). Worm farms are excellent ways to compost household food scraps, and they can increase soil fertility in yards by incorporating leaves into the soil.

- What can we do?**
- Plant milkweed and other grassland plants, and promote no-till farming practices.
 - Support organizations that help bees, butterflies and earthworms.
 - **Visit:** www.purdue.edu/newsroom/releases/2017/Q2/corn-seed-treatment-insecticides-pose-risks-to-honey-bees,-yield-benefits-elusive.html for more information.
 - **Learn/Register:** www.monarchjointventure.org/mjvprograms/education/monarch-classes-and-training
- William Cowper said in “The Task” (1784), “I would not enter on my list of friends, (Tho’ grac’d with polish’d manners and fine sense, Yet wanting sensibility) the man who needlessly sets foot upon a worm.”
- Bees, butterflies and earthworms are God’s special creatures. How can we help them — help us?

Dr. Tom Cervone is a deacon at Holy Redeemer Church in Evansville with 50 years of experience in ecology, and a graduate of St. Bonaventure University, a Franciscan College; Daughter of Charity Sister Maureen Houlihan is a support sister on the Seton Harvest Farm, a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) Farm that grows all natural produce for shareholders and the poor, started by the Daughters of Charity in response to the Communities – Care of Mother Earth; Nicole Cervone-Gish, Ed. MS., is an award-winning ELL (English Language Learner) teacher, who lives in Evansville with her family.

THIS WEEK’S ANSWERS

D	I	O	N		P	I	P	E	S		P	E	C	S	
E	D	D	O		I	R	O	N	Y		E	L	L	A	
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Spiritual leprosy

The Bible makes numerous mentions of the disease called leprosy. Although rarely seen today, it was very common in ancient times. In fact, any skin ailment was commonly labelled leprosy. Unfortunately, an individual thought to have contracted leprosy was banished from society. They had no or very limited contact with family and friends.

Bodily disfigurement, often accompanying the disease, only strengthened the argument for isolation. A person touching anyone believed to have leprosy would render themselves unclean. What a shock it must have been to the apostles and disciples of Jesus when He touched the lepers He cured.

We don't have to look back to antiquity to find the same push to isolate present today — different diseases, same societal response. In the 1980s, the AIDS epidemic gave rise to widespread fear of contracting the virus even though it was mainly found in a specific population of men and women.

Now, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, we fear the SARS-CoV-2 virus and its variants. Once again, distance and isolation are maintained — similar to what transpired in Biblical times. I am not suggesting these maneuvers are outdated, only that these actions are not new.

Fear of contagion is not the only reason we separate ourselves from others. We mustn't forget the political and social reasons that allow for segregation. Sadly, this division, for many reasons, may extend even into our church communities.

As damaging as this can be, how much more



CATHOLIC HEALTHCARE
DR. PETER ROSARIO

injurious is our separation from God through sin or wanton choice. One of my sons described this as spiritual leprosy. Often, when society segregates, the individual is pushed away by other people or forces. But when we sin, divorcing ourselves from God, we are doing the pushing-away.

The Lord, in His mercy, always allows us to reconnect if we wish. A story recounted in the first chapter of Mark's Gospel, describing Jesus' cure of a leper (Mk 1:40-42), offers hope and a solution for reunion with Almighty God.

The leper approached our Savior and, kneeling down before Jesus, begged to be made clean. He humbly begins the request with, "If you wish . . ." This statement suggests the leper's faith allowed him beforehand to know that he could be cured. How do we approach God? How faithful are we to trust in God?

More than ever, we need to reach out to the Lord through prayer and the sacraments. Through prayer and the sacraments — especially the sacrament of reconciliation — Jesus comes to us. He touches us, just as He touched the Leper in Mark's story, to render us clean. We should know that He wills it. But our Lord will not come uninvited.

You say, "I pray but don't receive what I ask for." Our prayers must be a surrender to His will. This takes real faith. What we wish may not be what is best for us. Do we preface our requests with, "If you wish" or end with Jesus' words spoken in the garden of Gethsemane, "Your will, not mine?" Do we have the necessary faith to accept God's plan for our lives?

Sadly, more and more people are physically separating from God — and not merely through sin. Church attendance among Catholics is collapsing. More and more people are resorting to trusting themselves or turning toward a secular dimension to cure their problems. Trusting in ourselves over trusting in God will never bring us the grace we need for a healing. And grace is the fuel that feeds our faith.

At times, it may seem that God has abandoned us; that He does not want what is good for us. This is a test of faith. It is in these times that we need to approach the Lord even more vigorously, with greater desire.

Let us realize that sin cannot be ignored or minimized. To do so only further disfigures our consciences and souls, worsening our spiritual leprosy. All the more reason to seek our Lord with greater participation in the sacraments. It is the time to cry out all the more; a time to seek to be made clean no matter how diseased with sin we may be. A cure awaits us.

Dr. Rosario is President of the Southwestern Indiana Guild of the Catholic Medical Association.

ICC

Continued from page 1

families in deepest poverty.

But those families often face barriers in receiving that help because of outdated state guidelines, according to Rep. Chuck Goodrich (R-Noblesville), the primary author of House Bill 1361. That includes the current asset limit of \$1,000 for families qualifying for TANF to continue receiving those temporary benefits, which have a lifetime cap of 24 months for adults.

The measure that Goodrich calls "hand-up legislation" would increase that asset limit to \$10,000 — and would exempt \$20,000 of total equity value of the family's motor vehicles from eligibility guidelines. Because these families need reliable transportation for getting to and from work and child care services, this provision is critical, according to the ICC, other advocates and co-authors of the legislation.

"This bill allows people to better themselves and stay on the program until they are in a position to no longer need assistance," said Rep. Cherrish Pryor (D-Indianapolis), among the co-authors of House Bill 1361 and a longtime collaborator with Rep. Goodrich on TANF-related legislation.

The bill passed unanimously Jan. 20 in the House committee on Family, Children and Human Affairs, and is now awaiting action by the

full House of Representatives.

A broader TANF-related bill backed by the ICC and other advocates for the poor, including the Indiana Community Action Poverty Institute, was awaiting a committee hearing at press time. Senate Bill 327 marks the latest attempt to update major provisions of the TANF program in Indiana, which hasn't seen substantive change in more than three decades.

As in previous years, Sen. Jon Ford (R-Terre Haute) is leading the charge to modernize TANF in Indiana by pushing for the first monthly increase in cash payouts in 34 years and dramatically expanding eligibility for the program.

For those in deepest poverty, TANF's cash-assistance payments are lifelines. But those monthly payouts — \$288 for a family of three, for example — have not been increased since they were set by state law three decades ago.

Moreover, only a fraction of the poorest families in Indiana currently receive even those modest benefits from the federal program because of outdated eligibility guidelines — another issue that Senate Bill 327 is designed to address.

Indiana's eligibility level for TANF is the fourth-lowest in the United States, behind



REP. CHUCK GOODRICH
(R-NOBLESVILLE)

Louisiana, Arkansas and Alabama. To be eligible for TANF, the maximum income of a Hoosier family must be less than 17 percent of the federal poverty level. Indiana set its income requirements to qualify for TANF in the mid-1990s, when welfare reform was signed into law by then-President Bill Clinton. Those eligibility guidelines have not been adjusted for inflation since then.

While the ICC and its allies continue to advocate for these long-awaited changes, they are working to oppose another TANF-related measure. House Bill 1410 would transfer oversight of the mandatory job-search guideline for TANF eligibility to the state level from the local level, where it is currently administered.

ICC leaders argue that local



REP. CHERRISH PRYOR
(D-INDIANAPOLIS)

agencies providing support services for families in deep poverty are best equipped to understand each family's unique needs and circumstances and, therefore, are in the best positions to oversee and monitor their job-search activities.

"We want to be clear that we are not opposed to the concept of the applicant job-search requirement, as the Church greatly values the dignity and transformative power of work," said Alexander Mingus, associate director of the ICC. "Our primary concern is based on the Church's understanding of subsidiarity, which means that decisions should be made at the lowest competent level, especially when decisions affect the poor and most vulnerable." Jessica Fraser, an advocate



SEN. JON FORD
(R-TERRE HAUTE)

for the poor who has worked on TANF-related issues for 10 years, shared similar concerns with legislators about House Bill 1410.

"This bill doesn't really change policy," said Fraser, director of the Indiana Community Action Poverty Institute, formerly the Indiana Institute for Working Families. "But it changes the state's ability to be flexible when people are going through tough times."

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

‘How long, Lord?’

"My soul too is shuddering greatly — and you, Lord, how long?" (Ps 6:4).

"The Lord has heard the sound of my weeping . . . they will turn back in sudden disgrace" (Ps 6:9,11).

GUEST COMMENTARY
By MARY MARROCCO
Catholic News Service

This new year, perhaps more than most, stirs up awareness of time and its strange ways. Through the unsettling days of 2020 and 2021, some have found the time long and heavy, waiting for the lonely burdensome time to pass so they can regain their lives.

For others, time has come to an end as COVID-19 or other painful happenings claimed their lives. Still others have found time opening up for them, enabling them to do or explore new things. Some have spent more time in prayer.

Time, our invisible companion, has grabbed our attention in new ways, raising again an ancient question that has haunted humans at least as far back as the writing of the psalms: How long, O Lord?

God so often takes his time when we need action now or takes away the time we thought we had when we need it most. The enslaved Israelites groaned to God for over 200 years in Egypt before anything tangible occurred. How long, O Lord? This is a question we recognize instantly.

How long must we suffer, how long must we wait, how long do we have, are questions forever

in our hearts. No wonder we often are seduced into skipping ahead, ending the suffering, escaping the wait.

Time, Augustine thought (in the fourth century), is not our enemy, as it often seems, but rather God's gift. It is the container God creates for us, so that we can receive God's life. And by receiving God in time, we learn to live and come to be more and more like God.

If God gave us everything all at once, without the protection of time, Augustine thought, it would be too much for us. We would be shattered by the limitlessness of God. Instead, God gives us a way to receive and come into the divine life, as we move through time.

We can come to an awareness of ourselves as beings-in-time — not as prisoners completing a sentence, but as guests being offered life eternal. Still we must ask, How long, O Lord?

How long? As long as it takes for us to encounter God. From verse 4 to verse 11, as David shows in Psalm 6. That time can also come in an instant, suddenly (verse 11).

God, who is beyond eternity, descends into time, choosing to be contained by it so that we can be held within it and come to life. We touch one another, as we touch God, within time — so that we can go beyond time. When the time is right.

We sense this in the deep encounters of our lives, when we feel time breaking open. Between "I love you" and "I love you too." Between "let it be done unto me" and the Incarnation. In the encounter

between the paintbrush and the canvas, between the baby and the breast, is the infinite moment in which God offers himself and waits for our "yes."

In the encounter with the Beloved, we discover what time is for. And we discover that it is not so much we who are waiting, as God. "For God, time means the duration of the expectant waiting between his knocking on the door and our act of opening it" (see Rv 3:20), writes Dumitru Staniloae.

Time is painful no matter what, and can carry greater pain still, such as the anguish of separation from the beloved who went ahead of us into eternity. Yet time is brushed with the divine and intertwined with eternity.

Time and eternity aren't parallel or opposing things, after all. We absorb this most intensively in the Eucharist, where time and eternity meet.

That's why there can be unity among us, between one person and another, one group or nation and another. Unity among Christians means all Christians around the world, but also all Christians across time. This is the "apostolic" faith, the faith of the apostles who walked the Earth a long time ago.

God, the same God, meets humanity down through the ages. The God who met Moses in the burning bush and David in his writing of Psalm 6 is the same God who took flesh in Bethlehem, was pierced by nails in Jerusalem, harrowed hell — and waits for you and me to open to his knock.

So let us be at peace in our time.

Marrocco can be reached at marrocco7@sympatico.ca.

On guitars and Stewards

This is Hank Williams’ 1944 Martin D-28 guitar.

Hank Williams is often called the King of Country Music, and his influence on musicians is enormous. He led a tortured life, dying at a tragically young 29-years-old.

The guitar was made by C.F. Martin Co. from Nazareth, Pennsylvania. Martin has been making guitars since 1833. Their guitars are considered one of the best brands in the world, and vintage Martins can command sale prices of six figures.

Hank’s guitar resides at the Country Music Hall of Fame in Nashville. A 1944 D-28 is a highly prized instrument on its own as it is both rare and coveted for its incredible sound quality. The connection with Hank Williams is what makes this particular special guitar that much more special.

For us Catholics, guitars have been used to provide music during Mass for many years. Not everybody appreciates a guitar at Mass, but sometimes it’s the only option. I love the ground-shaking capacity of a cathedral-sized pipe organ playing something sacred from Haydn or Bach, but in small churches in small towns, parishes can be fortunate to have an electric piano and someone who can play it. I have been at Mass where, at the appropriate time, a commercial recording of a hymn was played through the speakers with parishioners being encouraged to sing along. That is not better than a guitar.

People have strong opinions about the music at Mass. I am treading very lightly here because I am not an expert in the area and, personally, I’m far more of a chant guy than a St. Louis Jesuit fan. But either, or both, can be done with beauty, respect and joy.

Guitars, and stringed instruments in general, have a very long history when it comes to praising God. The song “Silent Night” was written for a guitar when the organ in an Austrian church broke down at Christmas time, and the only instrument available was a guitar. The playing of stringed instruments goes back to ancient times and is encouraged in the Psalms:

“Give thanks to the Lord on the harp; on the ten-stringed lyre offer praise. Sing to him a new song; skillfully play with joyful chant” (Ps 33:2-3).



RADICAL JOY CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP AND ABUNDANCE

MATT POTTER

“Give praise with tambourines and dance, praise him with strings and pipes” (Ps. 150: 4).

Stringed instruments did not look like Hank Williams’ D-28 when David was king 3,000 years ago, but they were used to praise God then like they are today.

I have a guitar that was made in 1979. It is a Guild D-25 that I bought brand new while I was in college. It cost \$600 that I didn’t have, so I borrowed the money from a bank and bought it. If you don’t play guitar, that sounds like poor judgment. Guitar players, on the other hand, would not see a problem with that scenario.

While the guitar is still in my possession, I treat it as though it does not really belong to me. I am just taking care of it. Like Hank’s guitar has outlived him, my Guild will outlive me. Good musical instruments have that quality. The next owner will receive a guitar that will have a better sound than the day I bought it, as well as some tell-tale bumps and scrapes that prove it was used to play music and not just hang on a wall.

That guitar, like everything we have, was a gift from God. It has gotten me through good times and bad. I have used it to praise God at Mass and to sing around a campfire. I played it in coffeehouses and on street corners with the case open, looking for free-will contributions. I have played for friends and family at weddings. I played cowboy songs on it for my kids. It was right next to me when I had my God moment. I even used it to write a love song about the time I met my wife.

God expects us to use our gifts and then return them to Him with increase. Hank took his musical gifts and his guitar and gave joy to millions who have heard him sing and play. The gift of my guitar has provided music for many people over the years.

Gifts we receive from God don’t all look the



Submitted photo

Hank Williams’ 1944 Martin D-28 guitar.

same. Sometimes those gifts have six strings and spruce tops.

As always, thanks for reading. I would love to hear from you. Write to me at mpotter@evdio.org; check out our blog: radicaljoy.blog/.

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

Finding and sharing joy!

The joy of the Lord is my strength” (Nehemiah 8:10).

In the Old Testament Book of Nehemiah, we read about his finding joy after much suffering in captivity. Nehemiah was the Jewish leader from the 5th century BC. He supervised the rebuilding of Jerusalem and restored the spiritual lives of the Jews following their exile in Babylon. Nehemiah prayed for the discernment of God’s holy will and followed God’s call to rebuild the walls of the city of Jerusalem. He knew exactly what he had to do and, like Jesus in the New Testament, he got busy doing the work of God the Father. There are many Old Testament examples of God’s Word pointing to Jesus.

The prayer from Nehemiah to God could be ours today: “Please, Lord God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who keeps the covenant and faithfulness for those who love Him and keep His commandments: let Your ear now be attentive and Your eyes open, to hear the prayer of Your servant which I am praying before You now, day and night, on behalf of the sons of Israel Your servants, confessing the sins of the sons of Israel which we have committed against You; I and my father’s house have sinned. We have acted very corruptly against You and have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the ordinances which You commanded Your servant Moses” (Nehemiah 1:5-7).

In the New Testament letters from Paul to the



GRATITUDE FOR THE GIFT OF FAITH

ZOE CANNON

Philippians, there is a dominant theme about the importance of happiness. “Rejoice in the Lord always; I shall say it again, rejoice!” (Philippians 4:4). The word joy and rejoice are mentioned 16 times in the Epistle, where Paul is expressing gratitude for the Church in Philippi. The Philippians were strong supporters of Paul’s ministry. How are you building up the Kingdom of God today?

We are all called to be disciples of Jesus by accepting the mission of the Church, which is to help one another get to heaven! The spiritual meaning of joy communicates the goodness of God. This requires a deep-rooted and very intentional type of happiness! However, it is sometimes difficult to be cheerful in a disordered world.

Both Nehemiah and Paul spent their lives restoring the Church when it met opposition or was confronted by injustice. God uses all kinds of people to achieve His plans on earth. When Nehemiah heard about the state of the temple in Jerusalem, he fasted and prayed. He didn’t sit around and

complain, but decided to get busy; and in love, he encouraged others to do the same.

I believe our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that are central to the teachings of Jesus. If these matters are not important enough in our own lives — and we do not speak up, support, or guide the lost — then the light of Christ in our soul will not shine. Our hope of eternal life fades away when we are not following Jesus. I find that joy always radiates a sense of purpose and hope. What brings joy into your life?

Our grandsons play basketball. When we walk in the gymnasium and look across the floor, we find waves with big smiles from our grandsons, as if they were waiting for us to arrive. We cannot help them with their skills on the court, but being there to encourage and cheer is so important. Supporting them in all their activities is very special, but teaching our grandchildren religion and helping to prepare them for each sacrament gives me the greatest joy! I love watching them grow in knowledge of faith and Church teaching. I will never take for granted an opportunity to share my faith because I know the joy of the Lord is my strength! Amen!

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

Supreme Court rejects request from Texas abortion providers

By CAROL
ZIMMERMANN
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON (CNS) — The Supreme Court Jan. 20 rejected a request from Texas abortion providers to immediately send their challenge of the state’s abortion law to a federal District Court, where a judge had previously blocked the law.

The high court’s action — in its one-sentence order — means the state law that bans most abortions after six weeks of pregnancy will remain in effect.

The Supreme Court’s refusal to grant the providers’

request was not unanimous. Justices Stephen Breyer, Sonia Sotomayor and Elena Kagan said they would have granted the request.

Sotomayor, in a seven-page dissent, joined by Breyer and Kagan, said the court’s action in this case meant it “accepts yet another dilatory tactic by Texas.” She also said the federal District Court “will remain powerless” to address the state law’s “unconstitutional chill on abortion care, likely for months to come” and added that she could not look the other way while, she said, her colleagues on the bench did.

Texas Right to Life praised

the Supreme Court’s action, saying in a Jan. 20 statement that the “lawsuit will continue in the appropriate venue and the Texas Heartbeat Act will continue to save preborn lives.”

While the Supreme Court was considering the appeal from the state’s abortion providers, the challenge to the state’s law that had been before the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals was sent to the Texas Supreme Court Jan. 17.

The state’s abortion law has been in effect since Sept. 1, 2021, and has faced multiple court battles since then. A major part of the law that has been challenged is its reliance on private citizens to enforce it, encouraging them to sue people suspected of performing or aiding with abortions.

Last December, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that a

portion of the abortion providers’ challenge to the law, against a group of state medical licensing officials, could go forward but the court left the law in place while the legal battle over it continued.

The 2-1 decision issued by the federal appeals court in mid-January said the state should examine if the Texas attorney general, the state’s medical board and other licensing officials can take action to enforce violations of the abortion law.

When the Supreme Court first ruled against blocking the Texas abortion law last September, the Texas Catholic Conference, the public policy arm of the state’s Catholic bishops, said this was the first time since Roe v. Wade that the nation’s high court “has allowed a pro-life law to remain while litigation proceeds in lower courts.”

The other major abortion decision that hangs in the balance is the Supreme Court’s pending decision, likely in June, on Mississippi’s ban on most abortions after 15 weeks of pregnancy.

If the court ultimately sides with Mississippi, it would be the first time the court would allow an abortion ban before the point of viability — when a fetus can survive on its own that most consider to be at 24 weeks.

A ruling allowing Mississippi’s law to go forward could lay the groundwork for abortion restrictions in other states.

Texas Right to Life said Jan. 20 that it was eagerly awaiting this ruling, which it said “could weaken or overturn Roe v. Wade” and that it hoped the Supreme Court justices “will recognize the grave legal and ethical errors of its 1973 decision.”

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Hypocrites in the morning twilight

It's that time of year. New Year's resolutions have fallen to the wayside in many cases, have been admirably retained by others; and procrastinators have finally decided whether they're going to make resolutions.

This column is neither about keeping resolutions nor neglecting them. Rather, this column is about a posture of humility when faced with others' imperfections. Let us be more loving.

According to common wisdom, nobody likes a hypocrite. Integrity of life is regarded as one of the highest goods across boundaries of religion, politics and ideology. It is a standard we esteem, but we are hard-pressed to uphold it in our own lives. New Year's resolutions are a publicly accepted example of hypocrisy. No one calls them such; instead, everyone jokes about the short lifespan of said resolutions.

But in any other category of life, such profession of intention and failure of execution would provoke serious suspicion of a person's moral character. We would question everything else the person said or did, and not consider their advice as valuable. It is the frustration of a patient whose obese doctor strongly recommends that he or she go on a diet.



MEDITATIONE IGNIS

MARIA SERMERSHEIM

According to common practice, everybody is a hypocrite.

I do not excuse hypocrisy or degrade the value of integrity. I could never! Years ago, integrity was my catchword; I aspired to be a person of integrity above all else in middle and high school. I do ask, though, that we look at the situation with new eyes, with the eyes of the Gospel. Perhaps we should not decry hypocrites so harshly.

In the Gospel of John, Nicodemus comes at night to Jesus and seeks his teaching and truth. However, Nicodemus seems to be tentative and does not commit entirely to following Jesus. He is later seen among the Jewish leaders, where they question his loyalty as if for the first time. But in the end, Nicodemus helps bury Jesus, bringing 100 pounds of myrrh and mixed spices to anoint his body. When practically everyone else leaves, Nicodemus helps Mary and

Joseph of Arimathea lay Jesus to rest.

Nicodemus problematizes the classic black-and-white picture of discipleship and salvation in John. He lives in the gray morning twilight, showing the reader that even he who puts on appearances with the authorities harbors a great love for Jesus in his heart, and he demonstrates that love in a moment of dire need. The reader cannot be sure of Nicodemus's salvation, but he can hope — and it is just the same for each of us.

Human hearts are not ours to judge. They are God's.

Perhaps, next time we face the temptation to denounce someone as a hypocrite and discount their other words and actions, we should see such Nicodemean figures with a little more sympathy. We should see the Nicodemus in ourselves and strive to be more faithful and forgiving.

Yes, integrity is a great virtue. But charity is the greatest.

Maria Sermersheim is a 2018 graduate of Reitz Memorial High School. She attends the University of Notre Dame this year.

Hawaii Catholic school superintendent says schools thrived in pandemic

BY PATRICK DOWNES
Catholic News Service

HONOLULU (CNS) — On Jan. 18, the day the COVID-19 infection rate roared to a new single-day record of 6,252 in Hawaii, the congregation at the annual Red Mass at the Cathedral Basilica of Our Lady of Peace in Honolulu heard how Hawaii's Catholic schools faced down the pandemic.

The Mass, celebrated by Honolulu Bishop Larry Silva, took place during the week of the opening of the Hawaii Legislature and is the annual prayer to the Holy Spirit for guidance and wisdom for Hawaii's civic leaders.

The superintendent of Hawaii Catholic Schools Office, Llewellyn Young, was this year's guest speaker. He spoke of how local Catholic schools, with a vigorous combination of faith and science, made the conscious decision to thrive during the pandemic rather than merely survive.

In fact, he said, just surviving wasn't an option.

The first step in their strategy was prayer, said Young, a Kauai-raised administrator with a doctorate in education.

"(We) needed to start with our faith," he said. "We asked all schools to continue to pray for healing, understanding, wisdom and knowledge about the virus and how we could effectively respond."

Then came the science: "masking, physical distancing, hand-washing, cleaning and sanitizing, defining bubbles or cohorts, etc. from our partners at the Department of Health."

The schools planned for in-person classes, plus "effective alternatives," Young



CNS photo courtesy Dann Ebina via Hawaii Catholic Herald
Llewellyn K. Young, superintendent of the Hawaii Catholic Schools Office of the Honolulu Diocese, speaks Jan. 18 at the Cathedral Basilica of Our Lady of Peace in Honolulu during the diocese's annual Red Mass. He said the Catholic schools were determined to thrive during the pandemic, not merely survive.

said, noting that the majority of Catholic schools across the state opened in the fall of 2020 for in-person instruction. Hawaii has 27 Catholic schools with a total enrollment of about 7,000.

"They did this with tremendous care and caution taking every recommended mitigation and strategy very seriously," he said.

"At the end of the 2020-2021 school year, we saw a total of just over 30 cases of COVID among all Catholic schools contracted by staff and students," he said. "But all of these cases were contracted off campus."

He also pointed out that for the first time in 14 years, Catholic schools in Hawaii saw a significant increase in enrollment adding 288 students this school year.

"Our schools have led with faith, science, love, wisdom,

compassion, understanding and innovation," he said, "staying true to our mission of evangelization, being witnesses to Jesus and stewards of the Gospel."

He thanked his staff and "all our awesome Catholic school administrators, faculty, and staff."

He also noted that "there is still so much uncertainty with this pandemic, but the Lord saw us through and he is at the heart of our successes."

In his homily, Bishop Silva contrasted the impact of the invisible coronavirus with the powerful but invisible force of faith and said: "Faith in God keeps us grounded; faith in God drives us on."

Downes is editor of the Hawaii Catholic Herald, newspaper of the Diocese of Honolulu.

CROSSWORD

ACROSS			54	Those who exercise the public power of the Church	21	Bride of Boaz
1	French-Canadian Catholic singing phenomenon				22	On sheltered side
5	Biblical instruments	56	Mil. hooky	25	Purloined fruit in Augustine's Confessions	
10	They're above abs	57	Coniferous evergreen forest	26	Curves	
14	Root of the taro	59	Two together	27	Center starter	
15	Satirical dialogue	60	Son of Leah	28	The Immaculate ____ of Mary	
16	Singer with Louis and Duke	61	Highway to Fairbanks	29	South American Indian	
17	Offers a price	62	Queen of the Nile, to her friends?	30	OT book	
18	Escapade	63	Genesis plot	31	Drunkards	
19	Adjoin	64	Leguminous plants	32	Prayer ender	
20	Put up with			33	"...the Lord, the giver of ____."	
22	Middle Easterners	65	Withered	34	Verge	
23	Oinker's abode	DOWN			35	Pope St. ____
24	Script conclusion?	1	In some versions of The Lord's Prayer, trespasses are called these	38	Early movie mogul	
25	Altar linen	2	Utterly stupid person	39	Police call letters	
27	Airport letters	3	Strangely	41	Shelter for honeybees	
28	Arianism and Gnosticism	4	Facial feature	42	Type of history	
32	First letter of the Hebrew alphabet	5	An orbiting solar observatory is named after this Catholic scientist, not the Star Trek character	44	St. Lawrence	
35	"____ be with you"				O'Toole was archbishop of this city and is now its patron saint	
36	Sgt., for one			45	Vast seas	
37	Longish skirt			47	Church instrument, sometimes	
38	Tellers of tales	6	Angry	48	A deacon wears this over his left shoulder	
39	Bookkeeper (abbr.)	7	Catholic poet whose works include "The Rape of the Lock"	49	Apostle who denied Christ	
40	Alphabet string	8	Vane reading	50	Dwelling for an old lady?	
41	Forty ____	9	Leb. neighbor	51	Green vegetable	
42	Gemstones	10	What you should not cast before swine	52	Was indebted to	
43	The least of our brothers			53	One of the theological virtues	
45	Globe	11	"Able was I ere I saw ____"	54	Size of type	
46	Alphabet string	12	Heavy stick	55	The Alphabet	
47	Wood sorrel	13	HS seniors' exams	57	Label	
48	Mineral spring			58	Brewery product	
51	Priest-Saint who offered his life for another's in a Nazi prison camp					

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63							64					65				

www.wordgamesforcatholics.com

See answers on page 15.

SCRIPTURE SEARCH

Gospel for Sunday,
January 30, 2022

Luke 4:21-30

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

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

BROW
DROVE
SKY
JESUS
NATIVE

GRACIOUS
ISRAEL
PHYSICIAN
SYNAGOGUE
LEPERS

FAMINE
SPOKE
MIDST
FURY
LAND
AMAZED

JOSEPH
PROVERB
SCRIPTURE
WIDOWS
PROPHET

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Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C

First Reading: Jeremiah 1:4-5, 17-19; Response: Psalm 71:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 15, 17; Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 12:31-13-13; Gospel: Luke 4:21-30

The ministry dates of the prophet Jeremiah were approximately 626-582 B.C. He was of a priestly family living in the settlement of Anathoth about 2½ miles northeast of Jerusalem. There, the word of the Lord came to him in 626 B.C. The Lord, knowing that young Jeremiah would object to his calling, begins by justifying his calling of him to be a prophet. “Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you. Before you were born, I dedicated you. A prophet to the nations I appointed you.” Could any-one object to that kind of intro? Yes, and Jeremiah did just that because his teenage brain was not yet fully developed. His objection, “Ah, Lord God! Behold, I do not know how to speak, for I am only a youth.” But the Lord was unmoved, “Don’t say, ‘I am only a youth,’ for to all to whom I send you, you will go. What I tell you to speak, you will speak. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you.” A symbolic ritual follows. The Lord touched Jeremiah’s mouth, and said, “See, I have put my words in your mouth”

All this was only a prelude to a long speech by the Lord enclosing visions of future invasion of the Kingdom of Judah. At the end of his speech, the Lord attempts to put some steel into Jeremiah’s backbone and surrounding areas. “Gird your loins!” Loins indicate any location between the waist and the knees. The Lord is telling him to tighten his belt and pull up the long flowing garments people wore to get ready to run. The Lord knows how to flatter Jeremiah’s teenage brain, “I have made you a fortified city, a pillar of iron, a wall of brass against the whole land, kings, princes, priests and people. They will fight you but they cannot win, because I am with you” We may assume that Jeremiah was, by this time, flexing his biceps and tightening his abs. He does not respond. If, however, he had known his future troubles brought on by his prophetic role, he would have had plenty to say. Later in his career, he will have a rebellious conversation with the Lord and attempt again to escape from his vocation.



SUNDAY SCRIPTURE

FATHER DONALD DILGER

Responsorial Psalm 71 can serve as a reflection on the future troubles of Jeremiah or of anyone who finds himself in the role of a prophet of the Lord. The Psalmist begs the Lord to not let him be put to shame, to be his refuge, his stronghold, his rock, his fortress, to deliver him. The Psalm also reflects on the Lord’s introduction to the call of Jeremiah noted above. “On you I depend from birth, from my mother’s womb you are my strength.” We also see a reflection on Jeremiah’s age when the Lord called him, “O God, you have taught me from my youth until the present” The people respond with assurance of God’s protection, “I will sing of your salvation.”

The second reading is Paul’s tribute to love. It is often used as a reading during wedding Masses. Throughout this chapter of 1 Corinthians, Paul spoke of the charisms (gifts of the Spirit) found among the Christians of Corinth. He noted their great variety and their unity. He was trying to bring unity into this congregation. He compared the charisms to various parts of the human body. As each part of the body has its function assigned by nature, so each part of the congregation has its function assigned by the Spirit. Each member should function in the gift given rather than invade the function of someone else’s gift. Rather than striving to invade another’s spiritual territory, all should strive for the higher gifts — faith, hope, love (charity). The Greek word is agape. The hymn tells us what love is and what it is not. Just as we know God only vaguely at this time but will someday know him as he is, so the present charisms will fade away. What will take their place? “So faith, hope, love remain, these three, but the greatest of these is love.”

In last Sunday’s gospel, we accompanied Jesus on his visit to Nazareth, his hometown in Galilee. On the Sabbath, he went to the local synagogue. He signaled his willingness to publicly read a selection of

Scripture. From the scroll of Isaiah, he read what we call Isaiah 61:1-2. The reader could also interpret the reading, which Jesus did. At first, the audience was amazed and spoke highly of his gracious words. They asked, “Is this not the son of Joseph?” Before Jesus left Nazareth, he had been engaged in the carpenter trade with Joseph, who was Jesus’ adoptive father. They could not understand how their former tradesman was now speaking like a learned scribe. They heard that he worked some miracles of healing at Capernaum in northern Galilee. Was this rumor true? If so, “Do the same here.” Jesus knew their doubts, perhaps combined with unbelief and sarcasm. His response to the replied request for proof won him no friends. He quoted a proverb, “No prophet is accepted in his hometown.” Two examples of prophets followed.

During a long drought in the Kingdom of Israel, despite the great need of widows in Israel, God sent Elijah to a heathen widow in Sidon which was not part of Israel. Even though there were many lepers in Israel, the prophet Elisha cured the leprosy of Naaman, a general of the army of Syria often at war with Israel. These patriotic Nazarene rednecks were not pleased to be reminded that God also helped Gentile heathens. They rushed upon Jesus, chased him out of town to a cliff from which they intended to throw him to his death. If this attempt on Jesus’ life is historical, why do Mark and Matthew have a very different outcome? We do not know how much of Luke’s additions are historical. We do know that biography was not his main objective. It was catechetical instruction. A major thrust of Luke’s teaching is that Jesus’ mission from God was intended not just for his own people but for all people. Luke’s addition of Jesus’ sermon and the violent outcome seem influenced by the experience of the prophet Jeremiah. He too, visited his hometown to proclaim God’s word, but the men of the town threatened to kill him for his efforts. See Jeremiah 11:18-23. Jeremiah responded with curses. Jesus responded by walking away. What is Luke teaching? The Christian mission is universal. God loves all people, not just a chosen race. The Books of Ruth and Jonah teach the same. Matthew does the same by the story of the Magi.

Effect of ‘last rites’; What justifies natural family planning?

Question: My husband died suddenly and did not receive the last rites of the Catholic Church. We had just come back from Mass and Communion about three hours earlier. I am very upset that he was not able to receive the last rites, and this has been very difficult on me. I would be grateful for your thoughts on this. (Columbus, Georgia)

Answer: I would not be worried about your husband’s salvation. I suspect strongly that he was wonderfully prepared to meet the Lord — having just shared in the celebration of Mass, together with receiving the Lord in the Eucharist.

God is not bound by the sacraments; if one has led a good, prayerful and charitable life, he has little to fear when the moment of death arrives — even if that should come suddenly. At the same time, though, I don’t want to minimize the importance of the anointing of the sick.

As the Catechism of the Catholic Church says, the conferral of that sacrament has several effects: “the uniting of the sick person to the passion of Christ, for his own good and that of the whole church; the strengthening and courage to endure in a Christian manner the sufferings of illness or old age; the forgiveness of sins, if the sick person was not able to obtain it through the sacrament of penance; the restoration of health, if it is conducive



QUESTION CORNER

FR. KENNETH DOYLE

to the salvation of his soul; (and) the preparation for passing over to eternal life” (No. 1532).

Given the salutary effects of this sacrament, the church recommends not waiting until death is imminent before requesting to be anointed. Any serious illness, even early in its course, qualifies a person to ask for this sacrament.

Question: My wife and I are planning to take our two children on a trans-Atlantic trip next spring to visit my grandmother. We expect that it will be her only opportunity to meet her great-grandchildren, as she is in poor health.

However, my wife has expressed concern about taking that long plane trip if she should then be pregnant. Additionally, general medical advice seems to be that women are better off waiting for a year after birth before becoming pregnant again. (Our youngest is 8 months old.)

Pope Paul VI’s “Humanae Vitae” allows for the use of natural family planning to avoid pregnancy when there are “well-grounded reasons” (also translated as “just cause”), while Pope Pius XII’s “Address to Midwives on the Nature of their Profession” required “grave reasons” for such use. Has the church clearly settled which of these standards to apply? (Wichita, Kansas)

Answer: Your question is answered in the Catechism of the Catholic Church: “For just reasons, spouses may wish to space the births of their children. It is their duty to make certain that their desire is not motivated by selfishness but is in conformity with the generosity appropriate to responsible parenthood” (No. 2368).

Even Pope Pius XII’s 1951 address to midwives, which you referenced, mentions “medical, eugenic, economic and social” reasons as possible justification for licit use of the sterile period. In your own circumstances, my pastoral judgment would allow natural family planning. Your motive is certainly not one of selfishness, but kindness to your grandmother.

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

COVID-19 and scientism

At the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, I was puzzled about how our reactions to it divided along party lines. There is no obvious reason why Democrats should fear sickness and death more than Republicans. But the division has persisted, indeed hardened; there is clearly something else going on.

One possible cause is that a pandemic invites government intervention, something Democrats are fond of. We’ve seen more of that from President Joe Biden, blue-state governors and big-city mayors than from their Republican counterparts.

Another reason for our division is not political, though I missed it for a long time because it aligns with party affiliation. It has to do with beliefs about science.

The cognoscenti say that those who object to vaccines, masks, quarantines, tests, crowd controls and school closings fail to “follow the science.” Mainstream media see those objectors as mouth-breathing nimrods who lack the wit or the education to know what’s good for them.

This is unfair. There is much we don’t know about the progress of the infection or the efficacy of our responses. We used to worry about door-knobs and surfaces; now we don’t. We’ve gone



INTELLECT AND VIRTUE

JOHN GARVEY

back and forth about masks.

It now seems that the vaccines, although they help prevent severe outcomes from infection, are much less effective at preventing transmission of the omicron variant than they were the delta variant.

It’s not that science isn’t helpful, but there is a kind of scientism on the secular left that helps explain our disunion on this subject. And it’s better aligned with religion than with politics. The division is not confined to public health policy. We see it in disputes over climate change and gender identity and abortion.

In each of these cases, the adherents of scientism argue that experts in the field have fully comprehended some matter of social concern.

For COVID-19, it’s the infectious disease experts at the Centers for Disease Control. For climate change, it’s NASA, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the U.N. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

Gender identity is the concern of the American Psychiatric Association. In recognizing a constitutional right to abortion in Roe v. Wade, Justice Harry A. Blackmun, former counsel for the Mayo Clinic, mentioned the word “physician” 48 times.

I say “scientism” rather than “science” because there is an almost reli-

gious commitment to the creed defined by the experts. And a corresponding resolution to stamp out heresies.

Last year, President Biden’s press secretary said the White House was working with Facebook to prevent disinformation about vaccines. Google and YouTube banned ads from videos contradicting “well-established scientific consensus” about the causes of climate change. Amazon pulled Ryan Anderson’s book about transgenderism.

And as with other varieties of religious commitment, scientism commits us to a moral code. You’re not just mistaken if you don’t follow the directions of the experts; you’re a bad person. Hence the phenomenon of COVID-shaming and Greta Thunberg’s denunciation of the “injustice” of climate change.

But science can’t tell us anything about moral responsibility. Its tools are logic and empirical measurement. It can assess whether mRNA vaccines work, and how fast the omicron variant spreads.

But it has no way to solve moral equations like how to weigh the risk of this infection against the importance of visiting the sick, going to church, educating your children, respecting privacy, kissing your grandmother.

Experts tend to picture the world with their own specialty in the foreground. My nephrologist tells me not to drink milk, lest I get kidney stones. He forgets that I need calcium and vitamin D for bones and teeth. Scientism suffers from the same cognitive bias in dealing with COVID-19. Minimizing the risk of infection is not our only challenge in life.

John Garvey, president of The Catholic University of America, writes the Catholic News Service column “Intellect and Virtue.”

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Footprints of our Catholic brethren

There was silence all over the church. Not a creak of the pew. Not a cough could be heard. Not even a mouse.

REFLECTION
By JIM SCHROEDER
St. Philip Neri Church, Bicknell

Other than a few sounds of children (mostly our own) who had retired to the cry room, the congregation didn't make a peep as the big, booming voice of Father Pascal proclaimed the good news of how Mary became known as "blessed among all women" whose "fruit of thy womb" was Jesus.

Minutes earlier, the gospel proclaimed the miracle of Elizabeth's pregnancy despite being barren and advanced in age. As Father Pascal would movingly explain, by the time Mary had reached her cousin's home, centuries of prophecy with previous tales of blessed women would be fulfilled. Then, the Holy

Spirit came down upon Mary to conceive in her a child, making this young illiterate girl the Ark of the Covenant for all ages.

It was the Fourth Sunday of Advent on the eve of the winter solstice. We had come to St. Philip Neri in Bicknell, Indiana, for the last historical visit of our fourth year. The Jubilee of Mercy had just begun as the Christmas season was closing in. National Geographic had just declared in its cover story that Mary was the most powerful woman in the world. Millions of people sought her counsel and her intercession from different creeds, cultures and communities. Known by numerous titles and adored by popes and paupers alike, the young teen girl had captured the heart and soul of a world often possessed by fleeting figures and passing trends. Yet she remained; and for those seeking a quiet, unimposing presence or the Queen of the Universe, she was the symbol and incarnation of the moth-



JIM SCHROEDER



Submitted photo

This is the cover of Jim Schroeder's book.

er who many felt they never knew, or wish they had.

In the little town of Bicknell this day, in a parish that had served its congregation since 1908, people came to the Eucharistic sacrifice to hear a story about life begun anew; where once a child leapt in the womb when the voice of the mother of the Savior of the world could be heard resounding over all nations, embracing maternity in its most divine fruition, bearing the weight of salvation until Christ was born.

"Gentle Woman, quiet heart. Morning star, so strong and bright. Gentle Woman, peaceful dove, teach us wisdom,

teach us love" (Hail Mary, Gentle Woman).

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."

Pro-lifers' energy, enthusiasm are 'palpable,' says march official

BY KURT JENSEN
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON (CNS) — One aspect of the annual March for Life that never changes is the loud cheering when the lead group, carrying the banner, arrives in front of the Supreme Court.

That tradition was sustained Jan. 21 as groups from Christendom College in Front Royal, Virginia, and Immanuel Lutheran School in Alexandria, Virginia, joined by Bishop Michael F. Burbidge of the Catholic Diocese of Arlington, Virginia, arrived from the pre-march rally held in subfreezing temperatures on the National Mall.

The march up Constitution Avenue to the court had taken them slightly more than two hours.

The crowd, not quite the more than 100,000 who attended in 2020 when President Donald Trump addressed the rally in person, nonetheless appeared robust, and easily was within the estimate march organizers always give as being in the tens of thousands.

And that was just fine with Jeanne Mancini, president of the March for Life Education and Defense Fund.

"Every year is unique," she told Catholic News Service before the rally began. "But the energy and enthusiasm of the marchers is palpable."

Mancini wouldn't speculate on the future of the national march if, later this year, the U.S. Supreme Court effectively overturns the 1973 Roe v. Wade decision by upholding the Mississippi abortion law in Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization.

But there's one plan in place if that occurs.

Overturning Roe would return all abortion restrictions to the states. So Mancini said the plan is to have statewide marches established in all 50 states over the next seven years. There are currently a handful of state marches, an effort that began six years ago.

Jeff Hunt, director of the Centennial Institute, a think tank attached to Colorado Christian University, said he thought legalized abortion was a nonstarter with the young people who have dominated March for Life for many years.

"Many of them grew up with their brother's or sister's sonogram taped to the refrigerator door," he said. "I think that's shaping the idea that a child is not a bunch of cells



People carry a banner past U.S. Supreme Court building while participating in the 49th annual March for Life in Washington Jan. 21, 2022.

you can kill."

He thought the current generation of young people is "naturally more pro-life than previous generations."

Marianne Hofer, coordinator of the student pilgrimage from the University of Mary in Bismarck, North Dakota, said, "We're extremely excited. We're very honored to be here at a time when Roe could be overturned."

The university sent 230 students. Hofer estimated that about half were at their first March for Life.

The march was briefly delayed after it got underway when members of Patriot Front, known as a white nationalist hate group, attempted to march alongside. But they were quickly dispersed.

"March for Life promotes the beauty, dignity and worth of every human life by working to end the violence of abortion. We condemn any organization that seeks to exclude a person or group of people based on the color of their skin or any other characteristic," Mancini told CNS later in reaction to Patriot Front's effort to join the march.

"Such exclusion runs counter to our mission which recognizes that all human lives are equal from the moment of



A man carries a crucifix outside the U.S. Supreme Court while participating in the 49th annual March for Life in Washington Jan. 21, 2022.

conception: equality begins in the womb," she said.

In a statement issued ahead of the march, Bishop Burbidge said the March for Life "is a powerful witness to essential truths that unite us: All of life is sacred and, thus, the life of the unborn child must be protected from the horror of abortion and life at every stage must be revered, cherished and treasured."

"We march peacefully each

year in our nation's capital to give witness to these truths to a nation in which many in public office and others throughout our communities continue to reject them. Yet we will never despair nor tire of proclaiming the Gospel of Life, with firm belief in the power of God to transform hearts," he added.

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