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St. Thomas More Society

Angela Espada receives Woman for All Seasons Award, page 3.

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Archbishop Charles C. Thompson elevates the Eucharist during a 200th parish anniversary Mass at St. Mary-of-the-Knobs Church in Floyd County on Oct. 15. Concelebrating with him are Father Michael Hilderbrand, left, Father Stephen Banet, Conventual Franciscan Father John Elmer and Father Steven Schafflein. Father William Marks, the parish's current pastor, is at right. (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)

Prayer is weapon against 'diabolical' power of violence, Pope Francis says

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Although it is easy to feel powerless in the face of war, "prayer is the meek and holy force to oppose the diabolical force of hatred, terrorism and war," Pope Francis said.

With violence continuing in the Holy Land, Ukraine and Nagorno-Karabakh,



Pope Francis

the pope repeated his calls for peace and for prayers on Oct. 15 after reciting the *Angelus* prayer with visitors in St. Peter's Square.

"I continue to follow with great sorrow what is happening in Israel and Palestine," he told

an estimated 22,000 people in the square.

Pope Francis again called on Hamas to release the nearly 200 hostages, including children, they have claimed to be holding since their assault on Israel on Oct. 7.

"I strongly ask that children, the sick, the elderly, women and all civilians not be made victims of the conflict," he said.

As Israel appeared to be preparing an invasion of northern Gaza, it ordered hundreds of thousands of civilians to move south and tightened its blockage on supplies into Gaza. Pope Francis insisted that "humanitarian law is to be respected, especially in Gaza, where it is urgent and necessary to ensure humanitarian corridors and to come to the aid of the entire population.

"Brothers and sisters, already many have died," he said. "Please, let no more innocent blood be shed, neither in the Holy Land nor in Ukraine, nor in any other place! Enough! Wars are always a defeat, always!"

Before reciting a Hail Mary for peace, the pope asked Catholics to join with Christians in the Holy Land and mark Oct. 17 as a day of prayer and fasting for peace.

The pope also expressed concern for the ongoing crisis in Nagorno-Karabakh, an Armenian-majority enclave captured by

See BICENTENNIAL, page 8

See PRAYER, page 9

St. Mary-of-the-Knobs bicentennial is call to 'gratitude' and to 'carry torch forward'

By Natalie Hoefler

FLOYD COUNTY—It was a touching, full-circle moment on Oct. 15 as Pat Byrne, a member of St. Mary-of-the-Knobs Parish, placed flowers on the grave of his great-great grandfather, Thomas Piers, in the parish's cemetery.

Piers donated one acre of his land for the new parish to build its first church in 1823.

Two-hundred years later, Byrne and his family walked from the cemetery to the Floyd County faith community's fourth church, built in 2012—a structure he helped make possible by co-chairing its \$12.5 million campaign.

It was in that church on Oct. 15 that Archbishop Charles C. Thompson presided at a Mass celebrating the bicentennial of St. Mary-of-the-Knobs Parish—the oldest existing parish in the archdiocese.

Byrne noted that his link to Piers is just one of thousands of faith connections in a parish where he said, since 1823, parishioners have been "committed to living as a Catholic community, passing on the faith from one generation to the next, providing not only for current needs but future needs as well."

Spurred by the Holy Spirit, woman feels chosen to lead Young Catholic Professionals

By John Shaughnessy

To get a sense of the commitment that Annie Harton is making as the president of a new group called Young Catholic Professionals, consider the dedication she has shown to "The Chosen," the television series about Christ and the Apostles that has touched her life in a powerful way.

She first became aware of the series just before COVID-19

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After appearing as an extra in the television series "The Chosen," about Christ and the Apostles, Annie Harton was inspired by the Holy Spirit to lead the newly formed Indianapolis chapter of Young Catholic Professionals. (Submitted photo)





Pope Francis carries a white rose as he approaches a reliquary containing the relics of St. Thérèse of Lisieux before the start of his general audience in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican on June 7. He announced he was planning on issuing an apostolic letter dedicated to her for the 150th anniversary of her birth. (CNS photo/Lola Gomez)

St. Thérèse teaches simplicity, love, trust, pope says in new document

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—St. Thérèse of Lisieux, long one of Pope Francis' favorite saints, teaches Christians "the little way" of love, self-giving, concern for others and complete trust in the mercy of God, the pope said in a new apostolic exhortation.

"At a time when human beings are obsessed with grandeur and new forms of power, she points out to us the little way," he wrote. "In an age that casts aside so many of our brothers and sisters, she teaches us the beauty of concern and responsibility for one another" (#52).

Published on Oct. 15, the pope's exhortation is titled, "*C'est la Confiance*," the opening words of her phrase, "It is confidence and nothing but confidence that must lead us to love."

The exhortation is subtitled, "On confidence in the merciful love of God."

"At a time of great complexity, she can help us rediscover the importance of simplicity, the absolute primacy of love, trust and abandonment, and thus move beyond a legalistic or moralistic mindset that would fill the Christian life with rules and regulations and cause the joy of the Gospel to grow cold," the pope wrote (#52).

In the letter, the pope explained that he chose not to release the document on her feast day, Oct. 1, or the 150th anniversary of her birth last Jan. 2 or the 100th anniversary of her beatification, which was celebrated in April, because he wanted to "transcend" those celebrations and emphasize how her life and writings are part of the "spiritual treasury" of the Church (#4).

Pope Francis has spoken often about his devotion to St. Thérèse of Lisieux, who also is known by her religious name, St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus and the

Holy Face, or as St. Thérèse, the Little Flower, because she described herself as a little flower in God's garden.

But there is another flower connection as well. While still archbishop of Buenos Aires, Pope Francis told journalist Sergio Rubin in 2010, "When I have a problem I ask the saint not to solve it, but to take it in her hands and help me accept it, and, as a sign, I almost always receive a white rose."

The pope closed his new exhortation with a prayer: "Dear St. Thérèse, the Church needs to radiate the brightness, the fragrance and the joy of the Gospel. Send us your roses! Help us to be, like yourself, ever confident in God's immense love for us, so that we may imitate each day your 'little way' of holiness" (#53).

Although she died at the age of 24 in a cloistered convent, her passion for sharing the Gospel through her prayers and example led Pope Pius XI to declare her patroness of the missions in 1927, and her writings led St. John Paul II to proclaim her a doctor of the Church in 1997.

"In the heart of Thérèse," Pope Francis wrote, "the grace of baptism became this impetuous torrent flowing into the ocean of Christ's love and dragging in its wake a multitude of brothers and sisters. This is what happened, especially after her death. It was her promised 'shower of roses'" (#13).

The "little way" of St. Thérèse is a path to holiness anyone can follow, the pope said. It is about recognizing one's own smallness and trusting completely in God's mercy.

"This is the 'sweet way of love' that Jesus sets before the little and the poor, before everyone. It is the way of true happiness," the pope said (#17).

In place of a notion of holiness that is individualistic and elitist, one "more ascetic



Public Schedule of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

October 22—October 31, 2023

October 22 – 1:30 p.m.

Confirmation Mass for youths of St. Anthony of Padua Parish, Clarksville; St. Joseph Parish, Corydon; Most Sacred Heart of Jesus and St. Augustine parishes, Jeffersonville; Holy Family and Our Lady of Perpetual Help parishes, New Albany; St. Mary-of-the-Knobs Parish, Floyd County; and St. John Paul II Parish, Sellersburg, at St. John Paul II Church

October 22 – 5 p.m.

Confirmation Mass for youths of St. Mary Parish, New Albany, at St. Mary Church

October 23 – 6 p.m.

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House Annual Dinner at The Marott, Indianapolis

October 24 – 10 a.m.

Fall clergy and parish life coordinator business meeting at St. Joseph Parish, Jennings County

October 24 – 2 p.m.

Council of Priests meeting at St. Joseph Parish, Jennings County

October 25 – 10 a.m.

Legal Team meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis

October 25 – 5:30 p.m.

Mass and dinner with Indiana University student leaders at St. Paul Catholic Center, Bloomington

October 26 – 10 a.m.

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

October 26 – 12:30 p.m.

United Catholic Appeal employee lunch at Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center

October 26 – 4:30 p.m.

Mass for Indiana Non-Public Education Association at St. John the Evangelist Church, Indianapolis

October 28 – 4 p.m.

175th Parish Anniversary Mass at St. Martin of Tours Church, Martinsville

October 29 – 1 p.m. CST

Confirmation for Mass youths of St. Isidore the Farmer Parish, Perry County; St. Pius V Parish, Troy; St. Paul Parish, Tell City; St. Michael Parish, Cannelton; St. Augustine Parish, Leopold; Holy Cross Parish, St. Croix, at St. Paul Church

October 31 – 10:30 a.m.

Visit to Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College, St. Mary-of-the-Woods

than mystical, that primarily emphasizes human effort," he said, "Thérèse always stresses the primacy of God's work, his gift of grace," trusting that he would bring her to heaven one day (#17).

Even in speaking about the Eucharist, her desire to receive Communion took second place to "the desire of Jesus to unite himself to us and to dwell in our hearts," the pope said. "Her gaze remained fixed not on herself and her own needs, but on Christ, who loves, seeks, desires and dwells within" (#22).

In his exhortation, Pope Francis focused on St. Thérèse's reflection of St. Paul's description of the Church in his First Letter to the Corinthians as the body of Christ with each part or member having a role to play in the functioning of the entire body.

But she did not see herself as the foot or the ear or the eye or the hand, as described in First Corinthians, the pope said. "In the heart of the Church, my mother, I shall be love," she wrote (#39).

"This heart was not that of a triumphalistic Church, but of a loving, humble and merciful Church," the pope wrote. "Thérèse never set herself above others but took the lowest place together with the Son of God, who for our sake became a slave and humbled himself, becoming obedient, even to death on a cross" (#40).

Rediscovering love as the heart of the Church can be "a great source of light" for Catholics today, Pope Francis said. "It preserves us from being scandalized by the limitations and weaknesses of the ecclesiastical institution with its shadows and sins, and enables us to enter into the Church's 'heart burning with love,' which burst into flame at Pentecost, thanks to the gift of the Holy Spirit.

"It is that heart whose fire is rekindled with each of our acts of charity," he wrote. "I shall be love." This was the radical option of Thérèse, her definitive synthesis and her deepest spiritual identity" (#41). †

Jerusalem cardinal offers himself in exchange for Israeli hostages

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—The Catholic Church's highest ranking prelate in the Holy Land offered his "absolute availability" to be exchanged for Israeli children taken hostage by Hamas.

Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa, the Latin patriarch of Jerusalem, told reporters during an online meeting on

Oct. 16 that he is willing to do "anything" to "bring to freedom and bring home the children" taken into Gaza during Hamas' Oct. 7 attack on Israel, in which more than 1,300 Israelis were killed. The Israeli military said on Oct. 16 that some 200 people, including children and elderly persons, are being held hostage.

Returning the hostages held in Gaza is "absolutely necessary" to stopping the ongoing violence between Israel and Hamas, the cardinal said. He expressed the Vatican's willingness to assist in de-escalation and mediation efforts, but said they had not been able to speak with Hamas leaders. †



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Espada is honored with society's Woman for All Seasons Award

By Sean Gallagher

Lawyers, judges, other legal professionals and law students from across central Indiana gathered on Oct. 2 at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis for the annual Red Mass of the St. Thomas More Society of Central Indiana.

Archbishop Charles C. Thompson was the principal celebrant of the Mass. As the liturgy took place on the memorial of the Holy Guardian Angels, he and the concelebrants and deacon assisting at the liturgy wore white vestments.

Red vestments are ordinarily worn at the Mass for legal professionals in a tradition going back to the Middle Ages in which they call upon the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in their work at the beginning of a new legal term in the fall.

'Something bigger than ourselves'

In his homily, Archbishop Thompson spoke about the day's feast to the congregation of legal professionals, marked by two rows of federal, state and local judges in their black gowns in the front of the cathedral.

"We need something bigger than ourselves," he said. "We need God's grace to fill up what is lacking in us. We need that grace that is represented by the Guardian Angels, who help us carry out our mission, our calling, our service to others."

The archbishop noted the difficult work of judges and attorneys and praised their dedication.

"But for the grace of God, we can become overwhelmed with the volume or weight of responsibility placed upon us," he said. "It is in those moments that we must be humble as children before the faithfulness of our God in prayer."

"That's why in our Red Mass we pray for our judges, both in thanksgiving and that God's grace will be with you and all in the legal system, a prayer as simple as calling upon one's Guardian Angel for guidance,

strength, wisdom and perseverance."

In a dinner at the adjacent Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center that followed the Mass, the St. Thomas More Society's Woman for All Seasons Award was presented to Angela Espada.

Currently the executive director of the Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC), Espada previously worked as a dean in the Indiana University McKinney School of Law in Indianapolis, as a deputy prosecutor for Marion County and as a staff attorney for the Indiana Supreme Court.

In remarks after being honored, Espada sought to take the spotlight off herself and put it on the ICC's work of legislative and public policy advocacy at the Indiana Statehouse in Indianapolis.

"If you have a [business] card, please leave it so that we can send you information about what we do," Espada said to the attendees. "Then, if you are so motivated to join us in our fight to advocate against bad laws and advocate for good laws, we can send you information and you can decide whether or not to lift up your voice and join us."

The need for humility

One of those taking part in the Red Mass and dinner was Justice Mark Massa, a member of the Indiana Supreme Court and a member of Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Indianapolis.

"It's a wonderful tradition," said Massa. "I think it says something about humility. It reminds judges that they need it. They have a place to turn for strength and guidance. That's not inconsistent with a secular approach and application of the law. The Catholic Church has a great legal tradition of its own."

Massa also introduced the speaker at the dinner, Judge Robert Conrad of the U.S. District Court of the Western District of North Carolina. Now retired and serving as a senior judge, Conrad is the author of *John Fisher and Thomas More: Keeping Their Souls While Losing*



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson and Judge David Certo of the Marion County Superior Court pose on Oct. 2 with Angela Espada, executive director of the Indiana Catholic Conference during a dinner at the Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center in Indianapolis following the annual Red Mass of the St. Thomas More Society of Central Indiana. Espada was honored with the society's Woman of All Seasons Award. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

Their Heads, which shares lessons of two 16th-century English martyrs who died for the faith after refusing to affirm King Henry VIII's claim to be supreme head of the Church in England.

In his introduction, Massa noted that Conrad himself had, like Fisher and More, endured the challenge of living the Catholic faith as a public servant. He recalled how the 2007 nomination of Conrad to serve on the U.S. Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals was scuttled likely by "his faith and candor."

"He endured this with grace and the spirit of More and Fisher," Massa said, "following their examples of fidelity to a well-formed conscience and a vision of eternal life with God."

'The divine voice within'

In his remarks, Conrad reflected on the importance of conscience, rightly understood, in the life and death of Fisher and More.

The 20th-century playwright Robert Bolt lionized More in his 1960 play about him, *A Man for All Seasons*, which became an Academy-award winning film in 1966. But Conrad pointed out that Bolt understood More's defense of conscience as focused on "the subjective fact that More the individual believed. To Bolt, it was that *I believe*, not that *I believe*."

This, Conrad argued, is not faithful to the way Fisher and More understood conscience.

Conscience, Conrad stated, "is not the right of self will, but the duty to obey the

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How has God made his presence known in your life? Share it with our readers

The Criterion is inviting you, our readers, to share your thoughts and stories about this question, "How has God made his presence known in your life?"


Maybe you routinely feel his presence in an everyday situation. Maybe you have known his presence in a life-changing moment. Maybe it's happened in your relationship with a family member, a friend or even a stranger. Maybe it was in a dark time

of your life or an especially joyful one.

Whatever the case may be, we would like to hear your thoughts and your stories. Send your submissions to John Shaughnessy by e-mail at jshaughnessy@archindy.org or by mail in care of *The Criterion*, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202. Please include your parish and a daytime phone number where you can be reached.) †

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– David Bethuram
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Editorial



Participants watch Pope Francis on a video screen as they work on their tablets with synod documents during the first session of the assembly of the synod in the Paul VI Audience Hall at the Vatican on Oct. 4. (CNS photo/Lola Gomez)

Synodality and the sounds of silence

“In a world full of noise, we are no longer accustomed to silence; indeed, sometimes we struggle with it, because silence forces us to face God and ourselves. Yet it lies at the foundation of the Word and of life.” (Pope Francis)

There are moments of silence when people are traveling together that are especially precious. These are the occasions when no small talk, idle chatter or gossip break through. When “heavy” subjects and passionate arguments have been set aside (if only temporarily), and a comfortable silence sets in.

Lovers and good friends know how to be together without constant conversation. People who pray fervently and from the heart long ago realized that talking with God requires attentive listening, which means disengaging from the noise and distractions that prevent us from hearing the “still, small voice” that brings us into direct contact with the Word of God.

Pope Francis has asked the participants in the synod now taking place in Rome to practice silence.

“Silence is essential in the life of the believer,” the pope said. “Indeed, it lies at the beginning and end of Christ’s earthly existence. The Word, the Word of the Father, became ‘silence’ in the manger and on the cross, on the night of the Nativity and on the night of his Passion.” In other words, the most impactful moments in Christian history—the Incarnation and the Resurrection—were anticipated by moments of profound silence.

If the synodal process is to achieve its desired outcome of increased communion and participation in the Church’s mission, we must find significant opportunities for silent reflection on what the Holy Spirit is saying to us today.

“Indeed, silence is important and powerful,” the Holy Father says. “It can express unspeakable sorrow in the face of misfortune, but also, in moments of joy, a gladness that goes beyond words.”

It’s sad, but it probably shouldn’t be surprising, that the pope’s efforts to unite all baptized Christians and to encourage greater participation by all in the Church’s mission are being used to further divide us. The amount of suspicion and negative commentary on the meaning and purpose of this synod is disheartening. Clearly the Evil One is

at work sowing doubt and seeking to set Christians against one another.

The stillness of prayerful listening overwhelms the shouting, arguing and chaos of the devil’s many voices. In the quiet of prayer and meditation, we can listen from the heart, so that when it comes time to speak, what we have to say will be cleansed of the vitriolic influences of prejudice and hatred.

Pope Francis insists that, to be authentic, a synod must be free from ideology, which the dictionary defines as “a system of ideas and ideals, especially one which forms the basis of economic or political theory and policy.” As long as we are proposing, debating or reacting to competing political theories, we are cut off from the attentive listening that is required to achieve genuine dialogue and mutual understanding.

“There is no place for ideology in the synod,” the Holy Father says. A synod requires “another dynamic. The synod is dialogue between baptized people in the name of the Church, on the life of the Church, on dialogue with the world, on the problems that affect humanity today. But when you think along an ideological path, the synod ends.”

Silence helps to keep the noise and distracting influence of competing ideologies (whether on the right or the left) from overpowering our ability to listen to the Word of God or to each other. The synod is not meant to be “a TV program where everything is talked about.” That’s why Pope Francis has asked that synod participants to refrain from commenting publicly on their discussions. The synod should be a religious experience, he says, “a moment of religious exchange. Without a spirit of prayer, there is no synodality, there is politics, there is parliamentarianism.”

Halfway through this particular synod, it’s clear that the commitment to maintaining silence will never be 100% successful. Still, many participants affirm that the effort to listen attentively and to allow the Holy Spirit to speak is bearing fruit—in spite of all the noisemakers who post negative, often vitriolic, personal attacks and divisive comments on social media.

Let’s observe a moment of silence for all who are participating in this synod. May they be open to hearing God’s Word and taking it to heart.

—Daniel Conway

Archbishop Thompson: Let us pray for peace in the Holy Land and an end to all violence

(Archbishop Charles C. Thompson issued the following statement in response to the violence in the Holy Land.)

“Violence and killing are deeply disturbing in any form, but especially disheartening in a place like the Holy



Land where persons of the three most prominent world religions—Judaism, Islam and Christianity—strive to live together while honoring the sacred places of their respective religions. Such aggression, torturing and killing of innocent people, young and old, cannot be tolerated. In fact, such actions must be condemned.

“Violence, retribution and reaction often beget violence, retribution and reaction. The only lasting humane outcome in such situations is that of response, one that is directed toward overcoming rather than succumbing to injustice. Such a response necessarily seeks to set aside weapons of destruction in order to cultivate a sacred space of listening, dialogue, healing and reconciliation.

“The standard for this response as

Christians is Jesus Christ and the Cross. Rather than react in kind to the violence and injustice of his time, particularly when it was directed toward him, Jesus chose to respond by absorbing such behavior so that it would die with him. In this way, he took the sins of humanity—the anger, bitterness, guilt, resentment, shame and vengeance—to hang upon the Cross and die there in his crucified body. Three days later, he would rise from the dead, having left the sin and evil on the cross to be transformed by divine grace and mercy. It was this response that ushered in our salvation and redemption.

“Together, we pray for all who are made to suffer violence and injustice, especially those who are victims of abuse, human trafficking, terrorism and war. We pray for all those in the Holy Land, both in Israel and Gaza, particularly the poor, the homeless, the grieving and the victims of torture. Let us pray for the end to all wars, violence and atrocities against the dignity of human life.

“May we never tire of praying and working toward cultivating a culture of response rather than a reaction to differences, injuries, injustices and violence. By the grace of Jesus Christ, our Savior, may it end with us.” †

Be Our Guest/Michael R. Heinlein

Amid busy lives, Jesus Christ’s presence matters; ours does, too

A quote attributed to St. Teresa of Avila often pops into my head as I start the day:

“Christ has no body now but yours. No hands, no feet on Earth but yours. Yours are the eyes through which he looks with compassion on this world. Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good. Yours are the hands through which he blesses all the world. Yours are the hands, yours are the feet, yours are the eyes, you are his body. Christ has no body now on Earth but yours.”

The underlying foundation here, of course, is that by baptism we’re each grafted as members of the body of Christ. And that’s what makes us Christ’s presence in the world, as St. Teresa (or someone) so beautifully described it. But baptism isn’t a magic formula. The grace of baptism transforms us more and more each day until we can say with St. Paul: “It is Christ who lives in me” (Gal 2:20). But this depends upon our cooperation.

Christ makes available to us through the Eucharist a great gift, one that aids us and reinforces and intensifies the relationship we’ve had with him since baptism. It’s in the Eucharist that we are given the opportunity to become more and more like Christ.

At each Mass, we offer ourselves with the bread and wine, which are transformed truly into the real presence of Christ among us. We pray we are changed, too, like our offerings, to be ever more like Christ. But it follows that the harder we work, by God’s grace, to grow in our similitude to Christ, the more we realize we need to spend time with him, the more we need to soak up what his real eucharistic presence ushers into our midst.

If we pause to think about it, Christ’s presence in every tabernacle throughout the world should stop us in our tracks. We drive by our churches, but do we stop to

visit him, to be with him, to adore him? Do we bathe in his light and absorb all that he wants to teach us?

The practice of eucharistic adoration can easily be misunderstood and miscast as something inferior, dismissed as a pious vestige of the past. But it is interesting to observe how the practice of adoration has only grown in the last few decades. As the world moves away from God, adoration has offered something the world cannot give. Adoration gives us the opportunity to sit at Christ’s feet and embrace our discipleship in its fullness.

One of the greatest gifts I have found about my spiritual family—the Pauline Family founded by Blessed James Alberione—is the centrality of eucharistic adoration. Alberione put a eucharistic “visit” at the heart of his spirituality: “Everything comes from the tabernacle; without the tabernacle there is nothing.”

How true it is. If we want to be so filled with Christ that he is truly present within me, then we need to make the tabernacle the heart of our lives. No relationship can advance if there is no investment of time. Nothing can be truly present amid absence. Nothing can grow unless it is nurtured and tended. As Alberione further explains, “In the Eucharist, Jesus becomes our nourishment, so that his divine heart may assimilate ours and make it one with his.”

Our lives are busy. Many demands are put upon our time. Making a daily holy hour might not be a possibility, but we should not let that deter us. Christ has no body now on Earth but ours, and we are members of his body. Rather than building our lives around our schedules, let’s build our schedules around the Lord—making time to bask in his presence, so we can bring his presence to the world.

(Michael R. Heinlein is author of Glorifying Christ: The Life of Cardinal Francis E. George, O.M.I. and a promised member of the Association of Pauline Cooperators.) †

ARCHBISHOP/ARZOBISPO CHARLES C. THOMPSON



Christ the Cornerstone

Jesus calls us to share our material and spiritual gifts

“Repay to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God” (Mt 22:21).

The Gospel reading for this coming weekend, the 29th Sunday in Ordinary Time, contains a familiar word of Jesus in response to the Pharisees’ attempt to trap him into saying something that would be politically incorrect. We know this familiar saying, but we don’t always understand it.

The questioners begin with an obviously insincere expression of flattery: “Teacher, we know that you are a truthful man and that you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. And you are not concerned with anyone’s opinion, for you do not regard a person’s status” (Mt 22:16).

Then, when they think he’s been sufficiently “battered up,” they ask Jesus a loaded question: “Tell us, then, what is your opinion. Is it lawful to pay the census tax to Caesar or not?” (Mt 22:17)

The dilemma is that if Jesus says, “Yes, it is lawful to pay the tax,” he appears to contradict Jewish law. But if he says, “No, it is not lawful to pay the tax,” he would be urging them to disregard Roman law. It’s a no-win situation.

But Jesus is smarter than the

Pharisees. St. Matthew tells us that he knew their malicious intent, and he avoided their trap by throwing the question back at them:

“Why are you testing me, you hypocrites? Show me the coin that pays the census tax” (Mt 22:18-19). Then they handed him the Roman coin. He said to them, “Whose image is this and whose inscription?” They replied, “Caesar’s” (Mt 22:20-21).

At this, Jesus says to them, “Then repay to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God” (Mt 22:21). St. Matthew then tells us that, “When they heard this, they were amazed, and leaving him they went away” (Mt 22:22).

What is so amazing about Jesus’ response to this question about whether or not it is lawful to pay the tax?

Throughout Christian history, many commentators, including some great saints, have reflected on this Gospel passage. St. Augustine observed, for example, that “we are the coins of God stamped with his image, and God demands the return of his coins as Caesar did the return of his.”

And St. Jerome said: “Let us give to Caesar the money which bears his inscription, since we cannot do otherwise,

but let us give ourselves freely and of our own accord to God, for what our soul bears is the glorious imprint of the face of a God and not the more or less majestic head of an emperor.”

These interpretations demonstrate the “both/and” perspective that is fundamental to the Christian worldview. Jesus is not saying that money and material things are bad and, therefore, can be given to Caesar. Nor does he suggest that only “spiritual” things belong to God.

In fact, everything belongs to God—“all things visible and invisible” as we affirm in the Nicene Creed. Everything that God created is good and belongs to God alone. We are but trusted servants, stewards of God’s creation.

So, when Jesus says, “Then repay to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God” (Mt 22:21), he is reminding the Pharisees (and all of us) that we are responsible for taking care of, and sharing, both our material possessions and our spiritual gifts.

“Let us give ourselves freely and of our own accord to God,” as St. Jerome says, because everything that we have belongs ultimately to our Creator.

Jesus refuses to fall into the trap of thinking that there is a radical division

between spiritual and material things.

Since everything belongs to God, responsible Christian stewards are called to treat all things as sacred and worthy of respect. We know that we will be held accountable for the way we care for all God’s gifts, and therefore we strive to demonstrate our stewardship responsibility by giving back both to God and to the community (represented in our modern democracy by the elected officials who levy taxes and ensure the public good).

When Jesus tells the Pharisees (and all of us) to repay to God what belongs to God, he includes both our material and spiritual gifts. Yes, we have to pay our taxes since, as St. Jerome says, “we cannot do otherwise.” But all of our financial transactions—buying, selling, saving, investing, giving to charities, and paying taxes—have a spiritual dimension because they reflect the profound but simple truth that, in the end, everything belongs to God.

“We are the coins of God stamped with his image,” St. Augustine reminds us. That means that our primary responsibility is to give ourselves wholeheartedly to God and to our neighbor. Let us never forget this all-important stewardship responsibility. †



Cristo, la piedra angular

Jesús nos llama a compartir nuestros dones materiales y espirituales

“Den al César lo que es del César, y a Dios lo que es de Dios” (Mt 22:21).

La lectura del Evangelio de este próximo fin de semana, el 29.º domingo del tiempo ordinario, contiene una frase conocida de Jesús en respuesta al intento de los fariseos de atraparle para que diga algo que sería políticamente incorrecto. Conocemos este dicho, pero no siempre lo comprendemos.

Aquellos que lo cuestionan comienzan con una expresión de adulación obviamente falsa: “Maestro, sabemos que eres amante de la verdad, y que enseñas con verdad el camino de Dios; sabemos también que no permites que nadie influya en ti ni te dejas llevar por las apariencias humanas” (Mt 22:16).

Entonces, cuando creen que ya lo han “endulzado” lo suficiente, le hacen a Jesús una pregunta capciosa: “Por tanto, dínos tu parecer. ¿Es lícito pagar tributo al César, o no?” (Mt 20:17)

El dilema es que si Jesús responde: “Sí, es lícito pagar tributo,” parecería contradecir la ley judía. Pero si responde: “No, no es lícito pagarlo,” los estaría instando a hacer caso omiso de la ley romana. Se trata de un callejón sin salida.

Pero Jesús es más listo que los fariseos. San Mateo nos dice que él conocía su mala intención, y esquivó su

trampa devolviéndoles la pregunta:

“¡Hipócritas! ¿Por qué me tienden trampas? Muéstrenme la moneda del tributo” (Mt 22:18-19). Entonces le entregaron la moneda romana. Les dijo: “¿De quién es esta imagen, y esta inscripción?” Ellos respondieron: “Del César” (Mt 22:20-21). A lo que Jesús les contestó: “Den al César lo que es del César, y a Dios lo que es de Dios” (Mt 22:21). San Mateo nos dice entonces que “Al oír esto, se quedaron asombrados y se alejaron de él” (Mt 22:22).

¿Qué tiene de sorprendente la respuesta de Jesús a esta pregunta sobre si es lícito o no pagar el tributo?

A lo largo de la historia cristiana, muchos eruditos, incluidos algunos grandes santos, han reflexionado sobre este pasaje del Evangelio. San Agustín observó, por ejemplo, que “somos las monedas de Dios grabadas con su imagen, y Dios exige la devolución de sus monedas como el César exigió la devolución de las suyas.”

Y san Jerónimo dijo: “Demos al César el dinero que lleva su inscripción, ya que no podemos hacer otra cosa, pero démoslo libremente y por nuestra propia voluntad a Dios, pues lo que lleva nuestra alma es la huella gloriosa del rostro de un Dios y no la cabeza más o menos majestuosa de un emperador.”

Estas interpretaciones demuestran la perspectiva del “tanto y el como” que es fundamental para la visión cristiana del mundo. Jesús no está diciendo que el dinero y las cosas materiales sean malos y, por lo tanto, se puedan dar al César. Tampoco sugiere que solamente lo “espiritual” pertenezca a Dios.

De hecho, todo pertenece a Dios: “todo lo visible y lo invisible,” como afirmamos en el Credo de Nicea. Todo lo que Dios creó es bueno y pertenece únicamente a Dios. Apenas somos sirvientes de confianza, administradores de la creación de Dios.

Por eso, cuando Jesús dice: “Den al César lo que es del César, y a Dios lo que es de Dios” (Mt 22:21), les recuerda a los fariseos (y a todos nosotros) que somos responsables de cuidar y compartir tanto nuestras posesiones materiales como nuestros dones espirituales. “Entreguémonos libremente y por nuestra propia voluntad a Dios,” como dice san Jerónimo, porque todo lo que tenemos pertenece en última instancia a nuestro Creador.

Jesús se niega a caer en la trampa de pensar que existe una división radical entre lo espiritual y lo material.

Puesto que todo pertenece a Dios, los administradores cristianos responsables están llamados a tratar

todas las cosas como sagradas y dignas de respeto. Sabemos que tendremos que rendir cuentas por la forma en que cuidamos de todos los dones de Dios y, por lo tanto, nos esforzamos por demostrar nuestra responsabilidad como administradores al retribuir tanto a Dios como a la comunidad (representada en nuestra democracia moderna por los cargos electos que recaudan impuestos y velan por el bien público).

Cuando Jesús dice a los fariseos (y a todos nosotros) que devolvamos a Dios lo que es de Dios, incluye tanto nuestros dones materiales como espirituales. Sí, tenemos que pagar tributo ya que, como dice san Jerónimo, “no podemos hacer otra cosa.” Pero todas nuestras transacciones financieras—compras, ventas, ahorros, inversiones, donaciones a organizaciones benéficas y pago de impuestos—tienen una dimensión espiritual porque reflejan la profunda pero sencilla verdad de que, al final, todo pertenece a Dios.

“Somos las monedas de Dios grabadas con su imagen,” nos recuerda san Agustín. Eso significa que nuestra principal responsabilidad es entregarnos de todo corazón a Dios y a nuestro prójimo. No olvidemos nunca esta importantísima responsabilidad como administradores que somos. †

Events Calendar

For a list of events for the next four weeks as reported to The Criterion, log on to www.archindy.org/events.

October 23, 30, Nov. 6

St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) Parish, 4720 E. 13th St., Indianapolis. **Jesus and the Eucharist Bible Study**, 6:30-8 p.m., three through five of seven Monday evening stand-alone sessions (Nov. 13, 27), content also available through formed.org, free, registration preferred. Information, registration: 317-501-0060, cacdiehr@gmail.com.

October 25

Providence Spirituality & Conference Center, Foley Room, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Volunteer Open House**, 11 a.m.-1 p.m. and 2-6 p.m., learn about volunteer opportunities with Sisters of Providence. Information, registration: 812-535-2878, Events.SistersofProvidence.org, volunteer@spsmw.org.

October 26, Nov. 2, 9

St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) Parish, 4720 E. 13th St., Indianapolis. **Jesus and the Eucharist Bible Study**, 1-2:30 p.m., three through five of seven Thursday afternoon stand-alone sessions (Nov. 16, 30), content also available through formed.org, free, registration preferred. Information, registration: 317-501-0060, cacdiehr@gmail.com.

October 28

Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Parish, 520 Stevens St., Indianapolis. **Faithful**

Citizens Rosary Walk, 10:45-11:45 a.m., meet in front of church. Information: holyrosary.prolife@gmail.com.

Mary, Queen of Peace Parish, 1005 W. Main St., Danville. **Holiday Craft Fair**, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., more than 30 local vendors and artisans, autumn and Christmas decor, baskets, handmade crafts, all occasion gifts, home-canned items, homemade baked goods, raffle, appearance by Mrs. Claus, lunch available for purchase, free admission. Information: 317-745-4284, Oldbluechair9102627@gmail.com.

October 29

Mount Saint Francis Center for Spirituality, Pump House Studio, 101 St. Anthony Dr., Mt. St. Francis. **Bluegrass Jam**, 5:30 p.m., free. Information: franciscansusa.org/bluegrass-jam.

October 30

Christ the King Parish, 5884 N. Crittenden Ave., Indianapolis. **Fall Parish Mission**, 7-8 p.m., holy hour and talk by National Eucharistic Revival preacher and Dominican priest Father Patrick Hyde, free. Information: 317-255-3666, qjeffries@ctk-indy.org.

November 1

MCL Cafeteria, 5520 Castleton Corner Lane, Indianapolis. **Solo Seniors**, 5:30 p.m., Catholic, educational, charitable and social singles—separated, widowed or divorced—age 50 and older,

new members welcome, also call about regular Friday night dinner events. Information: 317-796-8605.

November 2

Our Lady of Peace Cemetery and Mausoleum, 9001 Haverstick Road, Indianapolis. **All Souls Day Mass**, noon. Information: 317-574-8898, catholiccemeteries.cc.

Calvary Mausoleum Chapel, 435 W. Troy Ave., Indianapolis. **All Souls Day Mass**, noon. Information: 317-784-4439, catholiccemeteries.cc.

November 3

Women's Care Center, 4901 W. 86th St., Indianapolis. **First Friday Mass**, 5 p.m., optional tour of center to follow. Information: 317-829-6800, womenscarecenter.org.

Our Lady of the Greenwood Church, 335 S. Meridian St., Greenwood. **First Friday bilingual celebration of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus**, Mass 6 p.m. followed by adoration until 9 p.m., sacrament of reconciliation available. Information: 317-750-7309, msross1@hotmail.com.

St. John Paul II Church, 2253 St. Joe Road W., Sellersburg. **First Friday Devotion**, 11:40 a.m., litany, consecration to the Sacred Heart, Divine Mercy Chaplet followed by noon Mass. Information: 812-246-2512.

November 3-4

St. Agnes Parish, 1008 McLary Road, Nashville. **Christmas and Craft Bazaar**, Fri. 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Sat. 9 a.m.-3 p.m., crafts, Christmas décor and gifts, silent auction of gift baskets and trees, home baked goods, youth group boutique, quilt raffle, free admission. Information: 812-988-2778, StAgnesNashville@gmail.com, StAgnesCatholicNashville.org.

November 3-5

Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, 1 Providence Way, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Come and See retreat**, 4 p.m. Fri.-2 p.m. Sun., single Catholic women ages 18-42 exploring religious life, includes housing and meals, free. Information, registration: ComeandSee.SistersofProvidence.org, 361-500-9505, jluna@spswm.org.

November 4

St. Mark the Evangelist Church, 535 E. Edgewood Ave., Indianapolis. **Eucharistic Revival Event**, 3:30-6:30 p.m., talk by National Eucharistic Revival preacher and Dominican Father Patrick Hyde, 3:30-4:30 p.m.; Mass, 4:30-5:30 p.m.; adoration with times of silence and music 5:30-6:30 p.m. Information: 317-787-8246.

St. Malachy School, 7510 N. County Road 1000 E.,

Brownsburg. **Christmas Bazaar**, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., gifts of all kinds available for purchase, homemade chicken salad or chicken and noodle lunches available, free admission. Information: 317-852-3195, altarsociety@stmalachy.org.

Holy Trinity Parish, 100 Keeley St., Edinburgh. **Parish Evangelization Enrichment Day**, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., open to all, lunch provided, parish assessed \$20 per person, register by Oct. 31. Information, registration: abardo@archindy.org, 317-236-1466, tinyurl.com/EvangHolyTrinity23.

St. Martin of Tours Parish, 1720 E. Harrison St., Martinsville. **Christmas Bazaar**, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., variety of items for sale, crafts, Christmas cookies and caramels by the pound, homemade baked goods, cash raffle, handmade quilt wall hanging door prize, hourly door prizes, food and drinks, carry-out available., free admission. Information: 765-342-6379, parishoffice@stmtours.org.

Holy Cross and St. Joseph Cemetery, 2446 S. Meridian St., Indianapolis. **Indulgence Walk**, 12:30 -1:45 p.m., earn plenary indulgence for poor souls (with the completion of other conditions), learn Catholic history. Sponsored by Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Parish in Indianapolis. Meet at Pleasant Run Pkwy. Gate, free. Information: 317-636-4478,

info@holyrosaryindy.org.

St. Charles Borromeo Parish, 213 W. Ripley St., Milan. **St. Charles Harvest Dinner**, 4-7 p.m., Mass at 5 p.m., pulled pork dinner, prize and cash raffle, quilts, 1/4 beef, 1/2 hogs, country store, split the pot, pull-tabs, kids' activities, \$15 adults, \$8 children ages 5-12. Information: 812-654-7051, st.charleschurch@yahoo.com.

Holy Family Parish, 129 W. Daisy Lane, New Albany. **Speaking the Five Love Languages**, 5-8 p.m., Kathy Wilt presenting, first of "Three Great Dates" events sponsored by Catalyst Catholic in New Albany Deanery (Feb. 17, 2024: "The Eucharist and Your Marriage" with Greg Schutte; May 11, 2024: "Supporting Your Spouse's Dreams" with Steve and Jenni Angrisano), \$20 per person per event or \$50 per person if purchase tickets for all three events together, includes dinner, childcare available, registration required by Oct. 29 for Nov. 4 event. Information, registration: catalystcatholic.org/3dates.

St. John Paul II Church, 2253 St. Joe Road W., Sellersburg. **First Saturday Devotion**, 8 a.m., rosary, litany, consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, confessions 8:10-8:30 a.m., Mass 8:30 a.m. Information: 812-246-2512. †

Nov. 14 fundraiser for pregnancy care center will feature former Heartbeat International worker Kirk Walden

A fundraiser dinner to support 1st Choice for Women's efforts to open a pregnancy care center in Indianapolis will take place at The Atrium, 3143 Thompson Road, in Indianapolis, from 6-9 p.m. on Nov. 14.

The goal is to raise \$250,000 to finish necessary construction projects to open 1st Choice for Women pregnancy care center on the southwest side of Indianapolis.

The keynote speaker will be Kirk Walden, a pregnancy help ministry worker for more than 30 years. Walden has worked for Heartbeat International, the world's largest affiliate network

for the pregnancy help community. He is also the author of *The Wall*, a book outlining a path to ending abortion.

There is no cost to attend, however the evening includes a call for donations.

Registration is required by Nov. 9. To register, e-mail a list of everyone in your group—including the name, address and phone for each person—to gpddinner2023@gmail.com.

For more information, e-mail gpddinner2023@gmail.org or call 317-213-4778.

To donate online, go to goangels.org. †

'A Father's Heart for Men: Celebrate St. Joseph' retreat for men in Greenwood on Nov. 18

"A Father's Heart for Men: Celebrate St. Joseph" morning retreat for Catholic men will take place at Our Lady of the Greenwood School, 335 S. Meridian St., in Greenwood, from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. on Nov. 18.

The retreat is sponsored by Cross Catholic Outreach. It will be led by Dominican Father Dave Caron, the ministry's director of spiritual outreach.

The four-hour retreat will include prayer, group discussions and Mass.

The event is free, although each participant is asked to bring at least two items to support Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish's food pantry. Items currently in need include toilet paper, soap, shampoo, peanut butter and canned and boxed food items.

To register, go to lnkiy.in/FathersHeartRetreat. †

Upcoming burial services in Indianapolis and New Albany honor lives lost to miscarriage

Two burial services for miscarried babies will take place in November in Indianapolis and New Albany. These services not only honor the precious lives lost but bring consolation to family, friends, medical personnel and all affected by miscarriage. All are invited to come. Details reported to *The Criterion* are listed here:

—Nov. 1, Indianapolis: Miscarriage Memorial and Burial of Ashes, Calvary Cemetery, Mausoleum Chapel, 435

W. Troy Ave., 2 p.m. Information: 317-784-4439.

—Nov. 7, New Albany: Burial Service for Miscarried Babies, Holy Trinity Cemetery, 2473 Green Valley Road, 4 p.m., quarterly service led by Conventual Franciscan Father Mark Weaver of St. Mary Parish in New Albany, blessing and burial of babies recently miscarried at local hospital. Information: Teri Popp, 812-944-0417, teri.ccna@gmail.com. †

Fundraiser for Missy's Hope Maternity Home is set for Nov. 3 in North Vernon

A fundraiser banquet to raise money for opening Missy's Hope Maternity Home will take place at St. Mary Parish Center, 212 Washington St., in North Vernon, starting at 5:30 p.m. on Nov. 2.

Doors will open at 5:30 p.m. for a meet-and-greet, dinner will be served at 6:30 p.m., and a silent auction will end at 8 p.m.

Dr. Lori Buzzetti will be the keynote speaker. Buzzetti is the founder and president of So Big maternity home in

Whitestown, Ind.

The goal of the banquet is to raise money to open a faith-based maternity home in Jennings County. According to Indiana's 2017 Natality Report, Jennings County has the second highest teen pregnancy rate in the state.

The cost is \$25 for the adults-only event. To register or for more information, call or text 812-767-2897.

To donate online, go to supportmissyshope.org. †

Wedding Anniversaries

KENNY AND SALLY (SCHOENTRUP) KOORS, members of St. Mary Parish in Greensburg, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on Oct. 20.

The couple was married in St. Mary Church in Greensburg on Oct. 20, 1973.

They have three children: Daniel, Patrick and Timothy Koors.

The couple also has six grandchildren. †

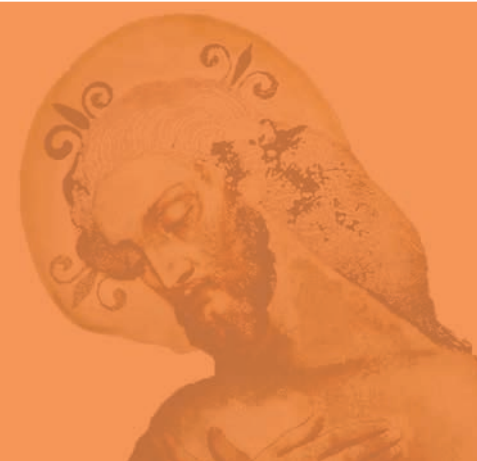


Announcements for couples celebrating 50, 55, 60, 65, 70 or more years of marriage are accepted. Go to cutt.ly/anniversaries or call 317-236-1585.



The Face of Mercy

By Daniel Conway



A time to listen, be open and let the Holy Spirit guide the Church

The 16th General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops has been underway in Rome since Oct. 4, the memorial of St. Francis of Assisi. This gathering is the culmination of three years of discussions in local dioceses and in continental groups that have worked hard to make “synodality” an experience that can transform the way the mission of the Church is carried out on a practical, day-to-day basis.

Pope Francis is eager to make synodality much more than a meeting, or series of meetings, of bishops and other Church leaders. He is convinced that the synodal process—which involves prayerful discernment, attentive listening, and respectful dialogue—is more important than any Church gathering regardless of its outcome. “Synodality is an ecclesial journey that has a soul, which is the Holy Spirit,” Pope Francis says. “Without the Holy Spirit, there is no synodality.”

Many are saying that “synodality” may be the most important achievement of Pope Francis’ 10 years as the Bishop of Rome. Clearly, the Holy Father wants to overcome what he perceives as rigidity, prejudice and closed-mindedness

in those who insist on maintaining the *status quo*.

The Holy Father says:

Synodality is not a chapter in an ecclesiology textbook, much less a fad or a slogan to be bandied about in our meetings. Synodality is an expression of the Church’s nature, her form, style and mission. We can talk about the Church as being “synodal,” without reducing that word to yet another description or definition of the Church. I say this not as a theological opinion or even my own thinking, but based on what can be considered the first and most important “manual” of ecclesiology: the Acts of the Apostles.

As the pope sees it, we are taught how to be the Church by paying close attention to the way the Apostles resolved important questions—by listening to one another and by allowing the Holy Spirit to guide and direct them.

“There is no place for ideology in the synod,” Pope Francis insists. “It’s another dynamic. The synod is dialogue between baptized people in the name of the Church, on the life of the Church, on dialogue with the world, on the problems that affect humanity today. But when

you think along an ideological path, the synod ends.”

Thinking along ideological paths (whether on the right or on the left) is unacceptable because it is pre-decided thinking that is prejudicial to any kind of open-minded discussion or to listening from the heart.

A synod is by definition a religious experience grounded in prayer. “Without this spirit of prayer,” the pope says, “there is no synodality. There is politics, there is parliamentarianism.” Pope Francis does not want to change doctrine, but to revitalize the way baptized Catholics are engaged in the Church’s mission. He believes that synodality is the best way to accomplish this.

Pope Francis expresses his vision as follows:

Synodality, as a constitutive element of the Church, offers us the most appropriate interpretive framework for understanding the hierarchical ministry itself. If we understand that “Church and Synod are synonymous,” inasmuch as the Church is nothing other than the “journeying together” of God’s flock along the paths of history toward the encounter with Christ the Lord, then we

understand too that, within the Church, no one can be “raised up” higher than others. On the contrary, in the Church, it is necessary that each person “lower” himself or herself, so as to serve our brothers and sisters along the way.

Communion, mission and participation are the three terms that are used to describe the synod that is taking place in Rome this month. Pope Francis takes these three words quite seriously.

“Communion” speaks of our unity—with Christ and with one another.

“Mission” is the work we are called to do as baptized disciples of Jesus Christ. And “participation” by all (or as many as possible) is the key to success in carrying out the mandate we were given by our risen Lord as he ascended into heaven.

Pope Francis believes that with a more synodal approach, the majority of Catholics can move from being passive observers to playing an active role in the Church’s life. Let’s pray that the Holy Spirit will truly guide us and inspire all of us to participate fully and prayerfully in our Church’s mission.

(Daniel Conway is a member of The Criterion’s editorial committee.) †

“Jesus of Nazareth, by his words, his actions, and his entire person reveals the mercy of God.”

—Pope Francis, “*Misericordiae Vultus*” (“The Face of Mercy”)

“Jesús de Nazaret con su palabra, con sus gestos y con toda su persona revela la misericordia de Dios.”

—Papa Francisco, “*Misericordiae Vultus*” (“El rostro de la misericordia”)

El rostro de la misericordia/Daniel Conway

Un tiempo para escuchar, estar abiertos y dejar que el Espíritu Santo guíe a la Iglesia

La XVI Asamblea General del Sínodo de los Obispos se ha estado llevando a cabo en Roma desde el 4 de octubre, el memorial de san Francisco de Asís. Este encuentro es la culminación de tres años de debates en las diócesis locales y en los grupos continentales que han trabajado arduamente para hacer de la “sinodalidad” una experiencia que pueda transformar la forma en que se lleva a cabo la misión de la Iglesia en la práctica, día a día.

El Papa Francisco está ansioso por hacer de la sinodalidad mucho más que una reunión, o una serie de reuniones, de obispos y otros líderes de la Iglesia. Está convencido de que el proceso sinodal—que implica un discernimiento piadoso, una escucha atenta y un diálogo respetuoso—es más importante que cualquier reunión de la Iglesia, independientemente de su resultado. “La sinodalidad es un camino eclesial que tiene un alma, que es el Espíritu Santo”—afirma el Santo Padre—. “Sin el Espíritu Santo, no hay sinodalidad.”

Muchos dicen que la sinodalidad puede ser el logro más importante de los 10 años del Papa Francisco como obispo de Roma. Está claro que el Sumo Pontífice busca superar lo que percibe como rigidez, prejuicios y estrechez de

mente en quienes insisten en mantener el *statu quo*.

Tal como nuestro Santo Padre lo plantea:

La sinodalidad no es un capítulo de un libro de texto de eclesiología, ni mucho menos una moda o un eslogan que blande en nuestras reuniones. Se trata de una expresión de la naturaleza de la Iglesia, de su forma, estilo y misión. Podemos hablar de la Iglesia como «sinodal», sin reducir esa palabra a una descripción o definición más de la Iglesia. Digo esto no como una opinión teológica, ni siquiera como mi propio pensamiento, sino basándome en lo que puede considerarse el primer y más importante “manual” de eclesiología: los Hechos de los Apóstoles.

Tal y como lo ve el Papa, aprendemos a ser Iglesia al prestar mucha atención a la forma en que los Apóstoles resolvieron las cuestiones importantes, escuchándose unos a otros y dejando que el Espíritu Santo les guiara y dirigiera.

“No hay lugar para la ideología en el sínodo”—insiste el Papa Francisco—. “Es otra dinámica. El sínodo es un diálogo entre bautizados en nombre de la Iglesia, sobre la vida de la Iglesia, sobre el diálogo con el mundo, sobre los problemas que afectan hoy a la

humanidad. Pero cuando se lo enfoca desde una perspectiva ideológica, se acaba el sínodo.”

Pensar en función de ideologías (ya sean de derecha o de izquierda) es inaceptable porque se trata de un pensamiento decidido de antemano que perjudica cualquier tipo de debate abierto o de escucha desde el corazón.

Un sínodo es, por definición, una experiencia religiosa basada en la oración. “Sin este espíritu de oración”—asegura el Papa—“no hay sinodalidad sino política, parlamentarismo.” El Papa Francisco no desea cambiar la doctrina, sino revitalizar la forma en que los católicos bautizados se comprometen con la misión de la Iglesia y considera que la sinodalidad es la mejor manera de lograrlo.

Expresa su visión de la siguiente manera:

La sinodalidad, como elemento constitutivo de la Iglesia, nos ofrece el marco interpretativo más adecuado para comprender el propio ministerio jerárquico. Si entendemos que “Iglesia y sínodo son sinónimos,” en la medida en que la Iglesia no es otra cosa que el “caminar juntos” del rebaño de Dios por los caminos de la historia hacia el encuentro con Cristo el Señor, entonces entendemos también que, dentro de la

Iglesia, nadie puede ser “elevado” por encima de los demás. Por el contrario, en la Iglesia es necesario que cada uno se “rebaje” a sí mismo para servir a nuestros hermanos y hermanas en el camino.

Comunión, misión y participación son los tres términos que se utilizan para describir el Sínodo de los Obispos que se celebra este mes en Roma. El Papa Francisco se toma estas tres palabras muy en serio.

“Comunión” habla de nuestra unidad: con Cristo y entre nosotros. “Misión” es el trabajo que estamos llamados a realizar como discípulos bautizados de Jesucristo. Y la “participación” de todos (o de tantos como sea posible) es la clave del éxito para llevar a cabo el mandato que nos dio nuestro Señor resucitado al ascender al cielo.

El Papa Francisco cree que con un enfoque más sinodal, la mayoría de los católicos pueden pasar de ser observadores pasivos a desempeñar un papel activo en la vida de la Iglesia. Recemos para que el Espíritu Santo nos guíe de verdad y nos inspire a todos a participar plenamente y en oración en la misión de nuestra Iglesia.

(Daniel Conway es integrante del comité editorial de The Criterion.) †

BICENTENNIAL

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‘Sitting behind tombstones, guns sticking out’

Indiana was still a territory when Thomas and Ellen Piers immigrated from Ireland to Floyds Knobs, a range of hills northwest of New Albany.

Other Catholic families joined them from Ireland as well as Belgium, England, France, Germany and Switzerland. Many of those early settlers’ names still fill the parish roster, names like Banet, Batlinger, Byrne, Duffy, Didat, Receveur and Sprigler.

The faith community soon outgrew the 1823 log church. A new church was built on seven donated acres in 1837 with bricks made by parishioners.

That church came under threat of attack by the members of the Know Nothing political party, who were prejudiced against foreign-born citizens, in the mid-1850s.

“There was a group of about 50 who came from Corydon on horseback to burn down the church,” said John Merck, who recorded fellow parishioners’ stories for an anniversary video.

“Men of the parish learned of it, and I was told over 100 went to the church with guns,” positioning themselves “behind tombstones” and “sticking guns out of [the church] windows to protect it.”

When the priest told the band they were outnumbered, they left without incident.

By the early 1900s, the parish again needed a larger church. A new structure was built in 1909, and the former church was razed to expand the parish cemetery.

“It was my grandfather who, with a team of horses, cut the road to the [new] brick church and carried the rock to make a road for the parishioners and their horses and buggies,” said lifelong parishioner Mary Ann Duffy, 87.

She recalled the same church sustaining heavy exterior and interior damage in 1955 when a tornado tore off a portion of its roof.

But the church was restored, and she celebrated her nuptial Mass with fellow lifetime parishioner Richard Duffy there in 1959.

‘What a beautiful church it is!’

By the early 2000s, the parish had outgrown the nearly 100-year-old structure. So began the campaign Byrne co-chaired that led to the construction of the current church, parish office, activity center and parish hall in 2012.

“No doubt I’m very proud of my great-great-grandfather” who helped

found the parish, said Byrne. “But all through our [parish] history, whether it was the log chapel, the first or second brick church or our school, our members have always been willing to step up and help.”

Duffy admitted she was initially dubious about the need for a new church.

“But after seeing the parish come together and the number of new people who became active members—it was really incredible,” she said. “And what a beautiful church it is!”

Still, Duffy is happy the parish decided to keep as a chapel the 1909 church “where I was baptized and married and went to so many Masses with my family.”

‘A beacon of evangelization and catechesis’

Roughly 1,000 people filled St. Mary-of-the-Knobs Church for the anniversary Mass on Oct. 15.

The sanctuary was just as crowded: 12 priests concelebrated the Mass with the archbishop—including current pastor Father William Marks and two former pastors, Father John Geis and Father Michael Hilderbrand.

Archbishop Thompson noted in his homily that many local, national and global events have transpired since 1823.

Through them all, he said, “the priests, religious and lay people have gathered at St. Mary-of-the-Knobs to pray, to worship, to proclaim the Gospel, to draw upon the grace of the sacraments—especially the Eucharist—and to serve those in need throughout this community and beyond.

“Thus, the parish continues to serve as a beacon of evangelization and catechesis, providing a means of encounter with the person of Jesus Christ.”

For decades, a bell made in 1865 was used to call people to that encounter in Mass. But also for decades it remained broken and silent in the 1909 church belfry. As part of the parish’s bicentennial, it was removed and restored.



Mary Ann Duffy

Immediately after the Mass, the refurbished bell was unveiled on its new stand outside of the entrance to the current church. Archbishop Thompson blessed it, then the bell—now fitted with an electronic mechanism to move the clapper—rang again for the first time in at least 60 years.



Pat Byrne, left, his wife Brenda, right, and their daughter Andrea Byrne, all members of St. Mary-of-the-Knobs Parish in Floyd County, pose by the grave markers—which they adorned with flowers—of Pat’s great-great-grandparents, Thomas and Ellen Piers, in the parish cemetery with the parish’s 1909 chapel in the background. Thomas Piers donated the land upon which the parish’s first church was built in 1823. (Photos by Natalie Hoefler)

“The bell was full of memories for me,” Duffy reflected. “The strongest boys would ring it every noon while I was in grade school, and my grandmother told me it would ring at funerals.”

She arranged to have the bell rung for her May 30, 1959, wedding to Richard.

“That was the last time I heard it until today,” she said. “My husband died in October 2019, so it also brought a tear as well as a smile.”

‘Jesus is so present in our school’

Since John Coleman taught classes in his cabin in 1825, St. Mary-of-the-Knobs has provided education in some form for most of its existence.

But in 1864, the school became a lay-staffed, public institution funded by the local township and county. The arrangement continued even when Benedictine sisters from Ferdinand, Ind. (now in the Diocese of Evansville), took over management and instruction for the school in 1891.

For 134 years, the school remained a public institution until it closed in 1998 when it was merged with another elementary school.

After many discussions about what to do with the empty building, the parish community “narrowly voted to support

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Priests listen as Archbishop Charles C. Thompson delivers his homily during a 200th parish anniversary Mass at St. Mary-of-the-Knobs Church in Floyd County on Oct. 15. (Photos by Natalie Hoefler)



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson offers a prayer of blessing before sprinkling the parish's restored 1865 bell with holy water outside of St. Mary-of-the-Knobs Church in Floyd County on Oct. 15. Standing to his left are former parish pastors Father Michael Hilderbrand, left, Father John Geis, and current pastor Father William Marks. Holding the prayer book is transitional Deacon Samuel Rosko. Deacon Robert Stout stands at right.

(Photos by Natalie Hoefler)

BICENTENNIAL

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reopening it as a parish elementary school," said Brittany Geswein, assistant principal of the current school after teaching there for 16 years.

The Catholic school opened in 2001. In the 22 years following, "we've just exploded," she said. "We've added on to the [1949] building several times, and in 2017 we opened a middle school."

Geswein said people "are drawn to the family atmosphere here—you feel it as soon as you walk in the door. Jesus is so present in our school."

Jesus is part of the school's theme this year: "JOY," which she describes as "first Jesus, then others, then yourself. It fits our mission and the joy of celebrating the parish's 200th anniversary."



Nick Geswein, second from left, and his wife and St. Mary-of-the-Knobs School assistant principal Brittany, in the flowered shirt, sit with their children Noah, left, Julian (blue shirt) and Hallie, front center, during a banquet at the parish's activity center after a Mass celebrating the Floyd County faith community's 200th anniversary on Oct. 15.

(Photos by Natalie Hoefler)

'Look back' but 'carry torch of faith forward'

Geswein became a member of St. Mary-of-the-Knobs 17 years ago when she married her husband Nick. The couple, whose three children are now in eighth grade, sixth grade and kindergarten at the school, call St. Mary-of-the-Knobs "the center of our family's universe," said Brittany.

Nick views the bicentennial through the eyes of a lifelong parishioner.

"My time in the parish is so short when you look at its 200-year history," he said. "Still, looking back, it's amazing to think of all the people who came before and humbling to be even a small part of the long history of this parish."

Brittany sees the milestone as being "like a

call to action," she said. "Knowing that our parish is 200 years old and it's up to us to keep it going and evangelizing—it's humbling but also inspiring."

Father Marks agreed with both of the Gesweins' perspectives.

"Celebrating a bicentennial calls [us] to look backward with gratitude to God and the faithful who came before us," he told *The Criterion*.

"But we are also reminded that our mission continues. We are called to carry the torch of faith forward, to inspire future generations, and to ensure that the legacy of our parish endures as we follow the way of Christ and the Holy Spirit." †

HARTON

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started to spread globally, when she was hit hard by a respiratory infection that kept her bedridden for 10 days.

"There was this Facebook ad about a Jesus show that continued to nag at me,"



Annie Harton

recalls Harton, who is 35. "I thought it would just be another cheesy Christian media project, but laying on the couch gave me the time to find out what it was all about.

"I had recently been diagnosed with ADHD [Attention Deficit, Hyperactivity

Disorder] and autism so I was particularly touched when Matthew was portrayed as being on the spectrum, too. God knew that I needed Matthew's character in 'The Chosen' to remind me that God can work all things for good, and that he calls people like me to follow him.

"I binged the whole series and soon found myself praying holy hours online with the devout Catholic man who plays Jesus. That group of virtual prayer warriors was an incredible support of getting me through the pandemic as a single person at home alone."

Fast forward to earlier this year when Harton's involvement with "The Chosen"—which relies on funds from fans and donors to be produced—added another dimension.

The foundation that financially

supports the production of the series held a fundraiser that let people create a profile sharing how "The Chosen" has impacted their lives. Then donors chose which profile most resonated with them and were invited to make a contribution in honor of that impact.

When Harton created a profile and emerged as one of the top earners for the fundraiser, she was invited to come to Utah to be an extra on the show during four days of filming.

"The experience was a dream come true," says Harton, a member of Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Indianapolis. "The environment on set was incredibly hospitable, and everyone felt connected with not only the mission of the show but the mission of heaven.

"Being around that cast and crew was a glimpse of heaven. I pray that I can bring a piece of that to my work as president of Young Catholic Professionals. If we could all run our businesses or show up to work the way 'The Chosen' cast and crew does, this world would most certainly be a better place."

That's her goal for the newly formed Indianapolis chapter of Young Catholic Professionals, the largest professional networking organization for Catholic young adults in the United States.

It's "a group where young people can connect through their faith across different fields of work," Harton says. "I hope that this will encourage people to know that they are not defined by their work, and they can learn ways to bring their authentic self to the work God has called them to do."

Harton believes she was called—

maybe even chosen—by God to lead the Indianapolis chapter.

'As the body of Christ, we can make the world a better place'

"I became a business owner in February, around the time the Indy chapter was announced," says Harton, a marriage and family counselor whose private therapy practice is named You Are More. "I've always been in supporting roles, but never in the lead position. I felt a strong urging from the Holy Spirit to apply for president. In the interview, they asked me why I was applying, and I said, 'because the Holy Spirit said so.'"

She has also tapped into the Holy Trinity for her inspiration in leading the group.

"I never want to live in such a way where Christ is not involved or included," says Harton, a graduate of Saint Mary's College in northern Indiana who also has a master's degree in theology from the University of Notre Dame. "As a new entrepreneur, I want Jesus to be the CEO, not me. His way is better than mine.

"As I stepped into this new chapter of my career, I felt called to cultivate leadership skills while making networking connections with other Catholics. As the body of Christ, we can make the world a better place not only by building strong families at home but by building a strong community that serves with love."

She found that strong community with a group of "virtual prayer warriors" in a time of vulnerability in her life.

She also witnessed that "strong community that serves with love" during her experience on the set of "The Chosen."

She wants that same foundation of

community for this young adult group.

"My work as a counselor will influence my approach to accompanying others, noticing their strengths and encouraging them to accomplish their goals. This is our group.

"As someone who has been pretty self-sufficient my whole life as a single person, I have asked the national team and the local team to keep me accountable in delegating and sharing responsibilities with others. I think that's the area where I will grow the most as I prepare for a marriage and family of my own."

Once again, she turns to her Catholic faith for the example she wants to follow, the role models that will lead her to a deeper relationship with Christ.

"Everything that Mary and Joseph did was to serve the Holy Child," she says. "Following their example helps me to encounter Christ authentically in my personal life with family and friends, and in my professional life with clients.

"As a counselor, I try to remember that Christ is the ultimate counselor who is present in the room. I want to help encourage other professionals to see the face of Christ in their clients and customers—and to know that their employment is an avenue to be the hands and feet of our Lord."

(For anyone interested in learning more about the Indianapolis chapter of Young Catholic Professionals, send an e-mail to, ycpindianapolis@gmail.com. The group is also seeking a priest to serve as a chaplain for the chapter and board members to help support the group's mission and to mentor young professionals.) †

PRAYER

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Azerbaijan's troops in late September. More than 100,000 ethnic Armenians fled.

"In addition to the humanitarian situation of the displaced people—which is serious—I would also like to make a special appeal for the protection of the monasteries and places of worship in the region," Pope Francis said. "I hope that, starting with the authorities and

all the inhabitants, they can be respected and protected as part of the local culture, expressions of faith and a sign of a fraternity that makes it possible to live together despite differences."

In his main audience talk, Pope Francis looked at the day's Gospel reading, St. Matthew's parable of the wedding feast where the invited guests thought they were too busy to show up.

"Brothers and sisters, how many times do we fail to heed God's invitation because we are intent on our own affairs?" the pope asked.

"Often," he said, "we struggle to have free time, but today Jesus invites us to find the time that frees: the time to dedicate to God, time that lightens and heals our hearts, that increases peace, confidence and joy in us, that saves us from evil, loneliness and loss of meaning."

Opportunities to be with God and with the people he loves are plentiful, the pope said, pointing to the Mass, to personal Bible reading, helping the poor, keeping a lonely person company or consoling someone who is suffering. †

Archbishop says annual appeal is about ‘carrying out Christ’s mission’

By Leslie Lynch

Special to The Criterion

JEFFERSONVILLE—Archbishop Charles C. Thompson’s remarks at the annual United Catholic Appeal (UCA) Mass and dinner in the southern part of the archdiocese on Oct. 5 revolved around the theme “One mission, one Church, all centered in Christ.”

The UCA supports numerous ministries in central and southern Indiana, including serving the poor, providing Catholic education to students, helping refugees, preparing seminarians for the priesthood, and caring for retired priests.

About 90 people from as far away as St. Bartholomew Parish in Columbus and St. Michael Parish in Cannelton gathered at St. Augustine Church in Jeffersonville for Mass and dinner with the archbishop.

During his homily, Archbishop Thompson spoke of the 72 disciples sent out in pairs by Jesus (Lk 10:1-12).

“For whom were the 72 sent out?” he asked. “They were carrying out Christ’s mission, not theirs. That was so important to them, and to us today.

“And he sent them out together. United. They took healing and reconciliation out to the world. Now, today, in this time of polarization, when people dehumanize and demonize each other, we are called to bring healing and reconciliation to the world.”

Archbishop Thompson recalled a poster that left a lasting impression on him—a photo of a shopping cart in the middle of an empty parking lot with the caption: “If you’re too big to do small things, you’re too small to do big things.”

“A lot of the things we do are unseen,” he said. “A lot of what we do is listening. We need to be intentional about listening. It’s a lot like the Synod on Synodality. Listening. It’s how we discern the Holy Spirit. Our listening should be a Spirit-permeated encounter.

“As we move into our second year of the [National] Eucharistic Revival, more Catholics believe that the Eucharist is the real body and blood of Jesus. Only a third of active Catholics believed that [truth] a year ago. Now, according to a new survey, two-thirds do.

“Ultimately, it is Christ working in us, the Holy Spirit that carries on his mission in us. In my opinion, we are living in a time of paganism, trying to

create God in our image,” Archbishop Thompson said. “Our Church has always taught us that every human being is created in the image of God. We need the Eucharist to keep us Christ-centered. When we keep him at the center, nothing’s impossible. Nothing’s too small for us, nothing’s too big.”

‘Your gift matters’

At a reception following the Mass, Jolinda Moore, executive director of the archdiocesan Office of Stewardship and Development, told the audience, “We are called to bring the people of our archdiocese closer to Jesus Christ. We are called to teach, shepherd, serve, support and love. The ministries and programs of our archdiocese continue to grow because the need continues to increase. Every dollar raised during the campaign goes to support these ministries. None of the ministries can charge a fee that offsets the real cost of the services.

“Your gift matters. Reaching our goal [of \$6.3 million] means that we won’t have to turn anyone away from being served. It means the ministries will continue to grow, which means we are able to serve more people and bring more people closer to Jesus Christ, thereby fulfilling our call.”

Archbishop Thompson referred to the story of the widow’s mite told in the Gospels of St. Mark and St. Luke. “The widow’s mite represents complete submission to God. She gave everything she had, in complete trust.

“No matter what you contribute financially, your support of the United Catholic Appeal enables us to make a difference in the lives of tens of thousands of our friends and neighbors throughout the archdiocese.

“As Pope Francis said during a papal audience in 2014, the Eucharist affects the way we see others. Jesus manifested his love by being with people, and sharing their desires and problems. So, too, the Eucharist brings us together with others—young and old, poor and affluent,

neighbors and visitors. The Eucharist calls us to see all of them as our brothers and sisters, and to see in them the face of Christ.

“It is from the Eucharist that the Church receives continually her identity and mission. Supporting the United Catholic Appeal makes it possible for the archdiocese to share the good news and all of the blessings we receive from the Eucharist.”

Archbishop Thompson noted there are 32 archdiocesan seminarians in priestly formation this year, the most the archdiocese has had since 1997. “We offer a heartfelt thanks for supporting our future priests and ask for your continued prayers,” he said.

“All of our Catholic Charities’ agencies are experiencing an increased demand for homeless services, utilities and rent assistance, exceeding the capacity for resources available in every county,” he added.

‘Connectedness ... through the Eucharist’

In response to Archbishop Thompson’s remarks, Robert Gettelfinger, a member of St. Anthony of Padua Parish in

Clarksville, said the UCA “is what supports the whole Church. It’s part of our Catholic faith.” His wife JoAnn, a 40-year volunteer for the Society of St. Vincent de Paul conference at their parish, added, “We all need to work at [being] the Church.”

Lyn Carter of St. Francis Xavier Parish in Henryville spoke of her and her husband Philip’s lifetime involvement with their parish. But they support the United Catholic Appeal “so [the archdiocese] can do good work” beyond what any one parish can accomplish, said Philip.

Giving to the United Catholic Appeal is important to Barbara Nicol, a member of St. John Paul II Parish in Sellersburg, “because I used to be on the archdiocese’s Education Commission. I know the work they do. It’s very important.”

Charles Ledbetter, a member of St. Michael Parish in Charlestown, said the UCA shows “the connectedness that we [Catholics] have with each other. That only comes through the Eucharist.”

(Leslie Lynch is a freelance writer for The Criterion. She is a member of St. Mary Parish in Lanesville.) †



Lyn Carter, left, and her husband Philip Carter, members of St. Francis Xavier Parish in Henryville, left, and Charles Ledbetter, a member of St. Michael Parish in Charlestown, smile with Archbishop Charles C. Thompson during a United Catholic Appeal dinner on Oct. 5 at St. Augustine Parish in Jeffersonville. (Photo by Leslie Lynch)

Synod discussions include addressing pain Church has caused people

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—The synodal way is not an invention of Pope Francis, but it is based on Jesus’ way of inclusivity and listening, and on divine revelation itself, said Redemptorist Father Vimal Tirimanna, a leading moral theologian from Sri Lanka.

As participants in the assembly of the synod on synodality begin their third week on Oct. 16, continuing with their small group discussions, “the round tables themselves are a symbol of the ecclesiology of ‘*Lumen Gentium*,’” he said, referring to the Second Vatican Council document on the nature of the Church and the role of its members.

“This synodal process is not a private agenda of Pope Francis. It is a continuation of Vatican II,” said Father Vimal, who teaches theology at a number of pontifical universities in Rome and is a voting member of the synod. He and others spoke to reporters on Oct. 16 about their synod experience.

Father Vimal spoke about sitting at different round tables, made up of 10 to 12 cardinals, bishops, religious and lay people, and how lay people are “rubbing their shoulders with the hierarchy in a concentric Church, not a pyramidal Church.

“Not that the pyramidal Church is bad, we need that, but the ecclesiology of ‘*Lumen Gentium*’ is lived. The synodal way, the culture of synodality is lived here. The challenge is to take it outside the synodal hall,” he said.

A reporter asked the panel of synod participants whether discussions had included recognizing the hurt or pain the Church may have caused people in the LGBTQ+ community and others as well.

Loreto Sister Patricia Murray, executive secretary of

the International Union of Superiors General, responded saying, “there is a deep awareness of the pain and suffering that has been caused,” and “the question of hurt and the woundedness of people both individually and collectively” has been brought up “and listened to.”



Sr. Patricia Murray, I.B.V.M.

There has also been discussion about “how to symbolically, in a sense, represent that hurt. Some people have said, ‘sorry’ is not enough,” she said.

The question becomes “how does the Church, in her own pastoral and liturgical way, give sign and symbol of seeking forgiveness for hurts that have been caused,” she said. “And this is something under reflection.”

Father Vimal responded, “I can assure you that everybody is included. The effort is to include everybody,” and not just the LGBTQ+ community. “There are so many other groups” that are marginalized and wounded and need pastoral attention, such as the extreme poor.

“The synodal process is an effort not to exclude anyone, because Jesus’ vision was inclusion,” he added.

Auxiliary Bishop Zdenek Wasserbauer of Prague also responded, saying the damage caused by colonialism has been raised “a lot” by participants representing Asia and Africa. “We are trying as members of the synod to have an open heart to all the pain of all groups and individuals of the world today.”

When asked how big of a role divine revelation and apostolic tradition were playing in the synod process, given the many different issues being raised, such as blessing same-sex couples or the ordination of women deacons, Father Vimal said, “divine revelation is playing a leading role.

“The discussions are fully enwrapped if not fully

covered by both the elements of apostolic tradition” and revelation, he said, as “the word of God, apostolic tradition, the magisterium, these are all part of revelation.

“This is not something that suddenly fell down from heaven, or something that Pope Francis has invented. These are all based on divine revelation, the synodal way itself,” he said.

And while it is true “different people have their particular issues” they would like addressed, he said, “let’s not forget, we are here as a communion of believers” and “once the firm foundation of the synodal way of life is laid, those things can be built up on that.

“The most important thing is not to address whether a woman can be ordained, whether LGBTQ should be accepted, whether gay marriage should be blessed. Not that they are not important, but if we are serious about the Church, a universal Church, a Church that is worldwide, we have to lay a firm foundation that includes everybody’s interest,” he said.

“So first we lay the foundation, the foundation of the synodal way, a synodal culture, a listening culture, a culture that includes [all people] automatically, [then] these issues are bound to come sooner if not later,” the priest said.

Cardinal Blase J. Cupich of Chicago told Catholic News Service on Oct. 16, “There is really a serenity in the group, where people especially appreciate the fact that they’re free to speak their mind.

“There really is absolutely no attention to people’s positions or titles in the Church,” but everyone can talk about issues and raise concerns, he said. “This freedom, the internal freedom of people, is really going to allow us to raise the critical issues of the day, the issues that people are talking about.”

The heart of the synod, Cardinal Cupich said, is the question, “How is the mission going to be the priority as we carry on the work today?” †

SIMPLY CATHOLIC

Michigan grandfather, stigmatist being considered as possible saint

By Joseph O'Brien

(OSV News)—Irving “Francis” Houle’s death in 2009 didn’t make national news. He wasn’t what the world would consider either a mover or a shaker.

But his death touched many in the Michigan Upper Peninsula Diocese of Marquette and around the country—those who knew Houle through his prayer ministry and as a healer of bodies and souls.

By all accounts, Houle led a relatively normal life. He was survived by his wife of 61 years, Gail Houle, and their five children, seven grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. He was raised on a rural farm in upper Michigan, graduated from a Catholic high school and served in the Army during World War II with an honorable discharge in 1946. He was a factory worker and a member of the Knights of Columbus.

And he also apparently had the stigmata.

Could Houle have a place among the great stigmatist saints of the Church’s history—including Catherine of Siena, Francis of Assisi, Rita of Cascia and Padre Pio of Pietrelcina?

Catholics may find out soon enough. In November 2018, Bishop John F. Doerfler of Marquette, Mich., opened the cause of canonization for Servant of God Irving C. Houle. In June 2019, the Catholic bishops in the U.S. indicated their support for the advancement of the cause at their spring meeting that year in Baltimore.

Irving Houle had prayed for, and apparently received throughout the last 16 years of his life, the privilege to share in Christ’s sufferings as a disciple in a particularly unique way.

As affirmed by the Second Vatican Council, the Church teaches that Jesus Christ is “the one Mediator and the unique way of salvation,” with followers of Jesus being united to his sufferings as members of his mystical body, “suffering with him, that with him we may be glorified.”

St. John Paul II, in his 1984 apostolic letter “*Salvifici Doloris*,” explained that “each man, in his suffering, can also become a sharer in the redemptive suffering of Christ” (#19). This realization caused St. Paul to tell the Galatians, “I have been crucified with Christ, it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me: and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me” (Gal 2:20).

However, some followers of Christ have manifested this profound truth of the Christian life in their own bodies in a mystical way, through the stigmata. Sometimes described as “victim souls,” these people intend that Jesus transform their sufferings into grace for others in most need of God’s love.

Houle may be one such person.

Father Robert J. Fox, founder and former director of the Alabama-based Fatima Family Apostolate International, probably knew as much about Houle’s life as anyone. He’d written a book about his life titled *A Man Called Francis*, and he had come to know Houle well since they first met in 1992.

“Irving would go into ecstasies between midnight and 3 a.m.,” Father Fox said prior to his death in 2009. “After Good Friday 1993, when he received the stigmata, his wounds would bleed every Holy Thursday night into Good Friday. All during Lent, every Lent, there was extra suffering. He also had visions of Christ and locutions, although these only in the first years of his ministry.”

Locutions are a form of private revelation. Unlike apparitions, which are seen, locutions are spiritual messages communicated interiorly, through a person’s hearing, imagination or intellect.

In fact, it was Houle’s experience of the Blessed Virgin Mary speaking to him through locutions, Father Fox said, which defined Houle’s mission to souls.

“You said ‘yes’ to my good Jesus,” Our Lady allegedly told Houle in an Oct. 2, 1995, locution, which Father Fox printed in his book on Houle. “All hurts, persecution, betrayals and pain is the Passion. You will continue to suffer. This is all for conversions; many, many will be saved.”

After confirming that his prayers to suffer like Jesus Christ had been answered, the message reveals the exact nature of his ministry.

“Continue to touch my children whom you are led to and to whom I lead you,” the message reads. “Continue to pray for those who have gone astray.”

Ordained a permanent deacon in 2010, Terry Saunders was a police detective with the Michigan State Police from 1987 until his retirement in 1993. Covering everything from murders to burglaries and sex crimes, Saunders also served on the State Police SWAT team,

taking part in hostage situations and other high-pressure crime scenarios.

As a close friend and member of Houle’s prayer group, Saunders witnessed enough healings to fill up “three notebooks,” he said. But it was Deacon Saunders’ own healing, after being diagnosed with lung cancer in 1992, that had the most profound effect on him.

“Every time Irving would see me, he would greet me and put his arm around me and his hand on my chest,” he said. “Every time he did that, bolts of white heat would course through my chest. I could feel it immediately.”

Not long after his failing health forced him to stop chemotherapy, Saunders attempted a last-ditch effort at removing the cancer through surgery. After the procedure, his doctor informed him of a remarkable discovery—the cancer was completely gone.

“I asked him how he could explain that, and he said he couldn’t,” Deacon Saunders recalled.

Looking back, Deacon Saunders realized that his healing had begun soon after Houle received his wounds in 1993.

“He looked haggard that day, and I said to him, ‘Irving, what happened to you?’” he said, noting that Houle held up his hands to show the wounds and in a calm voice said, “I don’t know what’s happening to me.”

At that point, Deacon Saunders fell over involuntarily on his side.

“My very first thought was, ‘Thank you, Jesus, for showing that you died for me on the cross and that no matter what happens to me, I’m going to be OK.’”

As the most conspicuous sign of Houle’s own mystical manifestation of the redemptive suffering of Christ, his hands were used to heal—but had themselves a constant reminder of Christ’s eternal wounds.

According to Father Fox, Houle first detected pain in his hands on Holy Thursday evening at the Mass of the Lord’s Supper.

“In the morning, he woke up and here were these big marks on the palms on his hands,” the priest said. “The tops of his hands were different too. He never showed the tops to anyone and he never called himself a stigmatist.”

In 1997, Father Fox asked Dr. David Wachs, a family practice physician from South Dakota, to examine Houle’s wounds. In summarizing his findings, Wachs noted that Houle’s circulation was “excellent,” and there was no evidence of “self-mutilation” or infection.

“I cannot understand medically why these wounds would not heal or open up at different times,” Wachs concluded in his letter to Father Fox. “I am not able to explain the source of his pain.”

In an interview with *Our Sunday Visitor*, Wachs said he stands by the results of the 1997 examination and remembers it well.

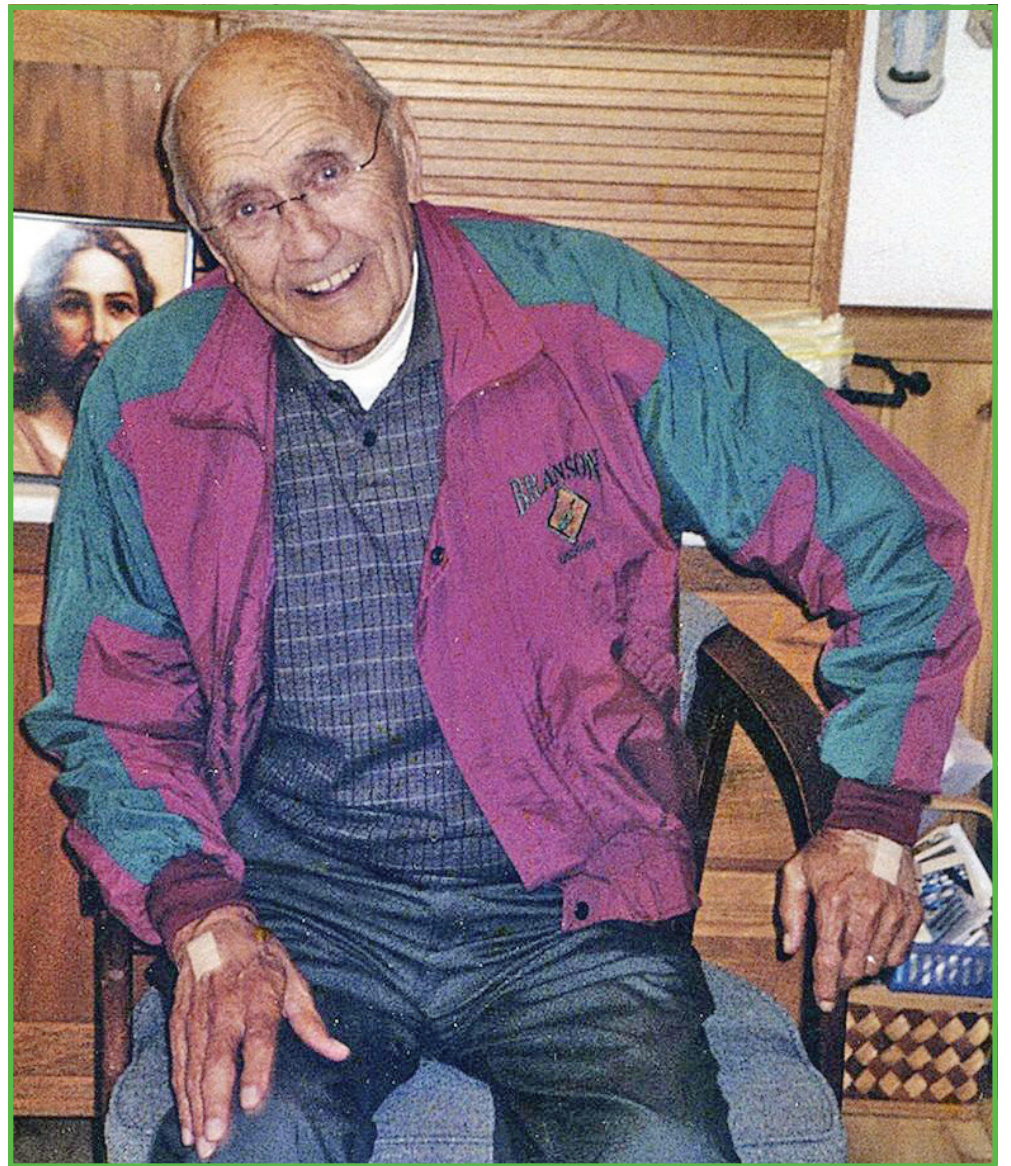
“I remember that examination, absolutely,” he said. “It’s the kind of thing you only see once in your life.”

Certain features of the wounds, Wachs said, indicated that this was not a natural occurrence.

“If you look at the symmetry of the wound in the wrist area, for instance,” he said, “it’s very difficult to self-inflict a wound like that.”

Also of interest, Wachs added, was the fact that the wounds neither healed nor seemed to become infected.

“They didn’t seem to change or show up anywhere else on his body either, like other sores might,” he said. “They would continue to ooze blood, too.”



The Servant of God Irving “Francis” C. Houle is pictured in this undated photo. In November 2018, Bishop John F. Doerfler of Marquette, Mich., opened Houle’s cause of canonization. In June 2019, the Catholic bishops in the U.S. indicated their support for the advancement of the cause at their spring meeting that year in Baltimore. (OSV News photo/courtesy Irving Houle Association)

Wachs, who was received into the Catholic Church before meeting Houle, said he would willingly stake his entire medical career on the claim that these wounds had no natural medical explanation.

“And if the Church ever needed a person to testify about these wounds, I would gladly do it,” he said.

Archbishop Alexander K. Sample of Portland, Ore., served as bishop of Marquette from 2006 to 2013, and had followed his predecessor, Bishop James H. Garland, in granting Houle approval to continue his work of healing among the faithful. A native of the Marquette Diocese, Archbishop Sample said he first met Houle while serving the diocese as a priest.

He said he doesn’t remember much about their first conversation, but like many people—including Deacon Saunders and Father Fox—he experienced something about him he would never forget.

“I remember distinctly the aroma of roses about him,” he said.

Archbishop Sample’s second meeting with Houle took place shortly after he was ordained and installed as bishop of Marquette. He said he was impressed by Houle’s desire to seek his bishop’s blessing of his ministry.

“He was respectful that way, and wanted to be in communion with his bishop,” he said. “He wanted to make sure his bishop approved of what he was doing.”

“He didn’t draw attention to himself,” Archbishop Sample said. “He gave the glory to God and not to himself. That was a confirmation for me that he was authentic.”

As for the stigmata, the archbishop said neither he nor Bishop Garland sought official confirmation of the wounds, satisfied that the man himself was blessing enough for the Diocese of Marquette.

“He clearly touched the lives of many people,” Archbishop Sample said. “He helped many people, and that certainly was a blessing to the Church and to our diocese.”

“I think Irving would be the first to say he wouldn’t want any further attention drawn to himself. He wasn’t the kind of guy that wanted some sort of official spectacular recognition as a stigmatist or extraordinary person of healing prayer.”

(Joseph O’Brien writes from Soldiers Grove, Wis.) †

Worship and Evangelization Outreach/Tim Rathz

Listen because God speaks his love to us in many ways

Can we hear God speaking to us through silence? I think we all know the answer to that question, but still, it is something worth pondering.



I was sitting in my office at Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House in Indianapolis, trying to come up with some inspiration for this column. The phone was ringing off the hook, and there was noise all throughout the house. I figured my best chance to really tune out the world and tune into

God would be to walk our wooded trails on this beautiful autumn day.

As I entered one of our wooded trails, I was immediately startled by several thumps on the ground. It seemed the trees were dropping crabapples on my head. I tried to keep my senses open to what God was saying to me in these moments, so I decided this was the way he wanted me to go. Of course, he could have been telling me to stay away or I'd get plunked on the head! I had a feeling I'd be OK, so I ventured on.

I looked down and saw the trees were dropping yellowish-green balls everywhere. I picked some broken ones up for further inspection. It seemed I was incorrect about these being crabapple trees, as they look more like walnuts. I'm no "tree-ologist," so I never know these things for sure. When I looked at my hands, I noticed they had been stained by the walnuts. It reminded me of the blood Jesus spilled for us. I was definitely going the right way. I continued.

As I crossed a bridge, I noticed a rather large spider web. I couldn't help but admire its flawless complexities. I couldn't build something this intricate and symmetrical if I tried. I thought, *only God could come up with this kind of elegance.* I continued on.

I walked past the Holy Family shrine. There was a clearing in

the trees just above, and the sun's rays shone luminously onto the shrine. *There's God again.* I continued.

I made my way past the Butterfly Garden, which is dedicated to the survivors of suicide loss. *God always seems to be able to create beauty, even through the worst of pain.* I kept going.

I arrived at the Our Lady of Fatima Shrine.

Here, Mary is looking upon on the three children of Fatima, to whom she appeared. I observed the children were all looking in different places. All three are kneeling, but one is looking up at Our Lady in awe, one is looking straight forward, and one has her head bowed in prayer. I have been to that shrine a million times and never noticed that previously. *It reminded me that we are all in different places in our lives, but God always meets us right where we are.* I smiled and continued on.

I emerged from the woods. Walking around the building, I noticed a stepping stone that reads, "How Lovely is the Silence of Growing Things." *Once again, God was speaking through silence.* I continued to my final stop.

As I looked at Fatima's outdoor prayer labyrinth, I noticed several rocks in the middle. If you have ever had a chance to visit the labyrinth, you probably know that the rocks symbolize prayers. People pray for God to take away the pain they are carrying, and they drop that pain (the rocks) when they get to the middle. I realized I was staring at the intense and heavy prayers of others. My heart was full, knowing so much healing has happened right where I stood.

At the end of my short journey, I learned that God speaks his love to us in so many ways. Through nature. Through beauty. Through silence. Through contemplative thought. Through the pain

of others and ourselves. And, of course, through prayer.

God teaches us in every minute of every day. It's our job to recognize it and spread that love to others.

(Tim Rathz is guest services manager at Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House in Fatima.) †

I walked past the Holy Family shrine. There was a clearing in the trees just above, and the sun's rays shone luminously onto the shrine. There's God again.

Feeling IV/Effie Caldarola

Grandma still uses cash, but updates as needed

It was a beautiful morning for a walk. As I made my way home, I spotted three young boys manning a lemonade stand.



They were enthusiastic salesmen, loudly hollering "lemonade" at everyone who passed. It brought back memories. With three kids, I went through a lot of lemonade with my gang of entrepreneurs. It was a ritual of summer—the

sign-making, the marketing, the sense of camaraderie with neighborhood friends. And, oh yes, the profit motive.

"Wow, guys, I haven't even had coffee yet," I tell the boys.

"That's what everybody says," one of them replies. It was barely 8 o'clock.

"And," I continue, "I don't have money but I can get some. I'm almost home."

One pipes up: "We accept Venmo!"

Armed with money, I went back, wishing they were selling lattes. As I paid—Grandma still uses cash—I noted the barcode taped to their table. Yep, Venmo.

Here's another thing I noticed: Mom had provided huge, single-use plastic glasses for their project. I'm sure back in my day, I did the same thing. But now, I cringed.

Lemonade-stand moms, please: try to find some completely paper, compostable cups.

I know, I know, we are all weary of apocalyptic climate messaging—and no one likes a lecture—but there are small things we can do and we must. Cutting down on single-use plastic is undeniably tough. Here's a couple of things I'm trying: I order laundry sheets, little dissolvable rectangles that come in compostable packaging and eliminate the need for those huge plastic bottles, a major landfill item.

New Jersey, where I now live, has banned plastic bags. I admit, I once used those plastic grocery bags as kitchen garbage bags, but now we grab canvas bags on our way out the door, and we've found inexpensive compostable bags online for our kitchen garbage.

If a few people forgo plastic bags, it's helpful. But if a city or state mandates it, it makes a tremendous difference in plastic usage. You have to advocate for that.

That's why it was a good thing in 2006 when the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops helped form Catholic Climate Covenant, a project of education, advocacy and prayer. Their advocacy work encourages our legislators, the Environmental Protection Agency, and other agencies to get on board to do the right things for our Earth.

By googling Catholic Climate Covenant, you can learn how to be part of advocacy for change on a national scale. Maybe you can even encourage your parish to get on board.

In his environmental encyclical, "*Laudato Si'*": On Care for our Common Home," Pope Francis wrote, "When we fail to acknowledge as part of reality the worth of a poor person, a human embryo, a person with disabilities—to offer just a few examples—it becomes difficult to hear the cry of nature itself; everything is connected" (#117).

Yes, all of us are connected, and we're intimately connected to the natural world that is now under such duress.

Jesuit Father Daniel Berrigan said, "About practically everything in the world, there's nothing you can do ... however, about a few things you can do something. Do it, with good heart."

Help ensure that for another generation, little kids will still have beautiful, mild mornings where lemonade stands beckon, with Venmo or without.

(Effie Caldarola is a wife, mom and grandmother.) †

Senior Standing/Lisa Hendey

Faith calls us to drop to our knees instead of dropping out

"The Lord must love you very much," a wise friend recently encouraged me.

I'd just shared with her that a close relative of mine was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. My confidante has been paying close enough attention to my life to know that I was now adding "caregiver" back into my daily job description. This situation on top of a diagnosis of Type 2 diabetes earlier in the month and my cancer recuperation struck her as a lot for one person to bear.

"The Lord must love you very much to trust you to carry all of this without falling or failing or dropping away from the weight," she wrote to me. "Instead, you'll just drop to your knees."

To be honest, her words gave me pause.

Just a few days earlier, I'd had a fairly severe conversation with God at daily Mass. "What the heck, heavenly Father?" I whined mentally in that fragment of silence during the intercessory prayers. "Wouldn't one of these situations be sufficient? I don't know if I can deal with all three of them right now."

That day after Mass, I lingered in my pew to chase down a portion of Scripture that had popped into my head. Into my phone I typed, "sufficient grace." A flurry of clicks led me to St. Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians, where the saint begged God three times for release from a challenging situation. St. Paul's epistle offers the divine words he heard in response from God: "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor 12:9).

I wish I could say I left the pew that day no longer questioning God's current will for my life. I still struggle—on a daily basis—with trying to balance everything. But my time in Scripture that afternoon led me to copy Paul's following words into my prayer journal.

"Therefore, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and constraints, for the sake of Christ; for when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Cor 12:10).

Confronting my physical and emotional weakness and being open and honest about it with myself and others has turned out to be a blessing in disguise. I've long prided myself on being

a "glass is 99% full" person. Until this year, if I had a problem, I was unlikely to say much about it to anyone else. I recognize now that a good deal of what I thought was simply positivity and coping might also be pride and mistrust in the fullness of God's mercy.

Dropping to our knees, whether it's because of a burden of our own or one borne by a loved one, places us in a position of weakness. I don't like feeling weak.

But if we are paying attention when we hit our knees, we might also realize that in our smallness, we enter into greater solidarity with all of the souls around our world who are already there.

In his apostolic letter "*Salvifici Doloris*," St. John Paul II encourages each of us to ponder the Christian meaning of human suffering. "In bringing about the Redemption through suffering, Christ has also raised human suffering to the level of the Redemption," he wrote. "Thus each man, in his suffering, can also become a sharer in the redemptive suffering of Christ" (#19).

Whether I am literally or figuratively driven to my knees in my moments when I feel overwhelmed, I am now trying to intentionally make note of this posture of humility and weakness. I am more purposefully inviting God into these moments.

But I am also, more than ever before, sharing honestly and openly with faithful friends about my true emotions. Doing this is partially about asking them to lift our family in prayer in the moments when I feel too overwhelmed to pray for myself.

But it's also my attempt to be more truthful about where I actually am in my relationship with God.

Intellectually, I trust God implicitly. Spiritually, I have some work to do on becoming a sharer in Christ's redemptive suffering and that of my brothers and sisters around the world.

On my knees, content in my weakness and begging for God's grace, I am realizing how very much God loves me.

(Lisa M. Hendey is the founder of CatholicMom.com, a best-selling author and an international speaker. "Senior Standing" appears monthly at OSV News.) †

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Twenty-ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time/Msgr. Owen F. Campion

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, October 22, 2023

- Isaiah 45:1, 4-6
- 1 Thessalonians 1:1-5b
- Matthew 22:15-21

The second part of the Book of Isaiah provides the first reading for Mass this weekend. The context is a bad time



for God's people. The two Hebrew kingdoms no longer existed, both having been victims of a military onslaught from neighboring and very strong Babylonia.

The invasions swept away the structures of the two kingdoms. Their ruling dynasties were eradicated. They lost their independence. Many people died. Survivors were at the mercy of the invaders.

Victorious invaders took many of the survivors to Babylon, the capital of the empire. While the Hebrews were not exactly hostages there, their lives were miserable.

Times eventually changed, however. The Babylonians themselves fell before the intrusion of a powerful neighbor, Persia.

Cyrus, the Persian king, had no interest in the exiles from the once Hebrew kingdoms. So, he allowed them to return home. For the exiles, it was a day of unequalled joy.

A most novel turn of phrase was the prophet's depiction of King Cyrus as an instrument of God. It was a novelty since Cyrus was a pagan. He was not in any sense a son of Abraham. He had no knowledge of, or regard for, the God of Israel. His ancestors had never followed Moses across the Sinai Peninsula in the Exodus.

Yet, God used Cyrus to accomplish his divine will. The divine will was responsible for the survival of the children of Abraham, for their return to peace and security.

This weekend's second reading is from St. Paul's First Epistle to the Thessalonians. Thessalonica was a city in northern Greece. It is one of the few New Testament cities still existing as an important center, the site of the modern Greek city of Saloniki.

The epistle comes from Paul, along with his disciples Silvanus and Timothy.

Paul had to reassure, encourage and strengthen Thessalonica's Christian

community, trying to exist amid a hostile pagan culture. He also had to assert his own credentials. Paul insisted that he was a most devout believer in the message of the Lord Jesus.

He was an Apostle, specially chosen by Christ. So, his authority came from the Lord.

St. Matthew's Gospel provides the last reading. It is one of the best-known passages in the New Testament. In it, Jesus is asked about the morality of paying taxes to the Romans who occupied the Holy Land.

Again and again, this text is used to defend the principle of separation of Church and state, as if to say that two reservoirs of authority exist on Earth, equal but distinct—the state and God.

This is not the Gospel's message. Jesus faced a question. Detractors thought that they could trick the Lord. By opposing paying taxes, Jesus would have insulted Roman law. The Romans were unforgiving. Jesus would be doomed. If Jesus approved paying taxes, then the Lord seemingly would endorse the hated Roman conquest and occupation.

Jesus fell into neither trap. He bluntly stated that God's law is supreme. Consider first and last the kingdom of God.

Reflection

Sadly, this magnificent lesson from Matthew's Gospel often is distorted into arguing for the separation of Church and state, in the modern context, seeing God on one side, civil authority on the other, each with equal standing.

This is the actual message: Reigning supreme over everything is the Gospel. Even civil authority must submit to God's law and revelation. Church-state relations, freedom of conscience and individual political opinion create differences that are not necessarily bad. In the end, though, all are called to "render to God the things of God" (Mt 22:21).

Since everything is subject to God, first, last, and always, God deserves homage in any human decision.

The image on the coin was important. It bore Caesar's profile, making it contemptible for Jews because Caesar was an oppressor. Give the emperor the detested, filthy coin, only a piece of metal. Give God total devotion of the heart. †

Daily Readings

Monday, October 23

St. John of Capistrano, priest
Romans 4:20-25
(Response) Luke 1:69-75
Luke 12:13-21

Tuesday, October 24

St. Anthony Mary Claret, bishop
Romans 5:12, 15b, 17-19, 20b-21
Psalm 40:7-10, 17
Luke 12:35-38

Wednesday, October 25

Romans 6:12-18
Psalm 124:1-8
Luke 12:39-48

Thursday, October 26

Romans 6:19-23
Psalm 1:1-4, 6
Luke 12:49-53

Friday, October 27

Romans 7:18-25a
Psalm 119:66, 68, 76-77, 93-94
Luke 12:54-59

Saturday, October 28

St. Simon, Apostle
St. Jude, Apostle
Ephesians 2:19-22
Psalm 19:2-5
Luke 6:12-16

Sunday, October 29

Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Exodus 22:20-26
Psalm 18:2-4, 47, 51
1 Thessalonians 1:5c-10
Matthew 22:34-40

Question Corner/Jenna Marie Cooper

While private revelations may occur, Church does not obligate belief in them

QI have a question on discernment of private revelations. I don't mean big ones like Medjugorje, etc., but individuals who say they "have had a word from the Lord." Couldn't this be just their own opinion interpreted as God talking? (Ireland)

AYes, this is a concern. With these kinds of more personal private revelations, we always need to be aware of the possibility that a person could be mistaking their own opinion for God's will. The Church never expects us to take such revelations uncritically and at face value.

Even the "big" approved private revelations such as those that happened at Lourdes, France, and Fatima, Portugal, are never obligatory

for the faithful to believe in, despite being a recognized part of the life of the Church to the point of having feast days on the general liturgical calendar. After very careful objective investigations, the Church only ever acknowledges them as "worthy of belief"—i.e., that we may believe in and follow them, not that we have to.

Because very personal, supposed private revelations like the one you mentioned do not go through any formal approval process, it's important to regard them with a healthy skepticism.

A theological term for such revelations, where a person has an interior sense of words coming to them, is "locutions." Locutions are considered extraordinary phenomena. As such, they are not necessary to our life of faith—unlike the essentials of prayer, catechesis, growth in virtue and the sacraments.

In fact, St. John of the Cross, a doctor of the Church and one of our foremost authorities on the theology of the spiritual life, goes so far as to counsel those who think they are receiving locutions to basically ignore them. In his work *The Ascent of Mount Carmel*, he notes that, on judgment day, God will call to task many of those who received (or thought they were receiving) locutions, because they

neglected their actual obligations and duties of their state in life.

If people believe they are receiving private revelations, they should be mindful of the possibility that they may be misinterpreting their own interior experience on the one hand; or, on the other, of the danger of becoming prideful or letting their presumed locutions distract them from the normal responsibilities of a faithful Christian.

It's important for such people to bring up their perceived revelations in an honest and open way with a confessor or qualified spiritual director. And any spiritual experience that leads someone to commit a sin, to disobey legitimate authority in the Church or believe something contrary to the Church's teachings, should automatically be rejected as a false revelation.

That all being said, we as Catholics do believe that God can and does communicate his particular will for us in the unique circumstances of our lives, whether this be discerning our vocation or state in life or discerning how to apply the teachings of the Gospel in specific concrete situations.

Another great spiritual master, St. Ignatius of Loyola (most famous as the founder of the Jesuits), wrote extensively on the process of discerning God's will.

St. Ignatius acknowledges the possibility that God might, in rare situations, make his will known in extraordinary ways, such as through locutions and visions. But it's far more common that God will communicate with us in subtle ways and in the context of a regular and devoted prayer life.

Namely, when we are striving for holiness and make a point to be open to God in prayer, we will know something is of God by the sense of peace we feel; and we will likewise know that something is not God's will for us when it induces a sense of anxiety.

(Jenna Marie Cooper, who holds a licentiate in canon law, is a consecrated virgin and a canonist whose column appears weekly at *OSV News*. Send your questions to CatholicQA@osv.com.) †

Praying from dusk to dawn



The Indiana Knights of Columbus held its annual 40 Days for Life nighttime prayer vigil on Oct. 6-7 outside of the Planned Parenthood facility in Indianapolis, with more than 50 participants signing up for hour-long slots. Father Joseph Vargese of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish in Carmel, Ind. (Diocese of Lafayette), second from right in the back row, led an opening prayer service. Some of those who participated in the prayer service are pictured here, including Indiana Knights of Columbus state life director Larry Kunkel, back row at far left, and students of Brownsburg High School, starting in the first row at second from left, who are members of St. Malachy Parish in Brownsburg. (Submitted photo)

Rest in peace

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

BIEHLE, Alberta J., 90, St. Mary, North Vernon, Sept. 30. Mother of Dorothy Bailey, Marie Baurle, Donna Gerringer, Ed, Marvin and Tom Biehle. Sister of Deloris Wagner. Grandmother of 14. Great-grandmother of 24.

CRAWFORD, Deborah, 79, St. Michael, Brookville, Oct. 1. Wife of Gerald Crawford. Mother of Terry Joe Dare. Sister of Karen Huffine. Grandmother of two. Great-grandmother of three.

ELLENBRAND, Norman, 97, St. John Paul II, Sellersburg, Sept. 30. Husband of Rita Ellenbrand. Brother of Julia Dearing, Irene Ellenbrand, Eva Hodges, Rita Howlett and Thelca Sinkhorn. Uncle and great-uncle of several.

ELLIOTT, Sr., William, 100, St. Anthony of Padua, Clarksville, Sept. 30. Father of Karen Kennedy and John Elliott. Grandfather of seven. Great-grandfather of seven.

FESSEL, Benjamin R., infant, St. Michael, Bradford, Oct. 1. Son of Kevin and Michelle Fessel. Brother of Abigail, Brody and Bryce Fessel. Grandson of John and

Susan Knoll and Robert and Vickie Fessel.

HEEKE, Bernard I., 98, St. Lawrence, Indianapolis, Sept. 25. Husband of Myra Heeke. Father of Laura Patridge, Eric and Neil Heek. Grandfather of four. Great-grandfather of two.

HOLTHOUSE, Joy, 88, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Richmond, Oct. 4. Mother

of Debra Brown, Annette Oeschle, Jeffrey and Michael Holthouse. Grandmother of nine. Great-grandmother of four.

MAXWELL, Margaret M., 98, Good Shepherd, Indianapolis, Sept. 27. Mother of Catherine Bonadurer, Jane Hughes, Margaret, Mary, John III and Thomas Maxwell. Grandmother of 10. Great-grandmother of five.

MCALLISTER, Joyce A., 82, St. Mary-of-the-Knobs, Floyd County, Oct. 1. Mother of Laura Eskridge and Lisa Short. Grandmother of one.

SIMON, Randal J., 64, St. John the Baptist, Osgood, Oct. 2. Husband of Rita Simon. Father of Carrie and Jeremy Simon. Son of Dolores Simon. Brother of Marilyn Linville, Cheryl Meyer,

Marcia Moore, Chris, David, Gary and Greg Simon. Grandfather of five. Great-grandfather of one.

WHITE, Sr., Clay T., 82, Holy Angels, Indianapolis, Oct. 3. Father of Leesa Hutchins and Clay White, Jr. Brother of Nancy Grant, Dorothy Reed and Ida Taylor. Grandfather of three. Great-grandfather of four. †

In memoriam of unborn lives



Small crosses dot the lawn of St. Susanna Parish in Plainfield on Oct. 3, each representing 1 million of the nearly 63.5 million unborn lives aborted between 1973-2021, according to National Right to Life. October is honored by Catholics as Respect Life Month. (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)

Despite prejudices, Catholics helped rescue Jews in Nazi-occupied Italy

ROME (CNS)—Generosity and compassion for those fleeing persecution prevailed over racial laws and centuries-old anti-Semitic prejudices in Nazi-occupied Italy, some Jewish and Catholic historians said at an international conference.

Before anti-Semitism was declared a sin with the Second Vatican Council, it was commonplace for Catholics “to think of Jews and Judaism as something dangerous, something different,” said Suzanne Brown-Fleming, director of international academic programs at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, opening the conference on Oct. 9.

However, many Catholics overcame these prejudices to rescue and save Jewish people in danger, “sometimes at the cost of their lives. Others did not. And that’s

fascinating ... somehow, those who were able to break out of this thinking brought us to the Second Vatican Council,” she said.

Brown-Fleming was one of dozens of scholars speaking at an Oct. 9-11 conference at Rome’s Pontifical Gregorian University focused on recent research into



Suzanne Brown-Fleming

the Vatican archives of Pope Pius XII’s pontificate before, during and after World War II.

Liliana Picciotto, a Holocaust historian at the Jewish Contemporary Documentation Center Foundation in Milan, said on Oct.

10, “There were 38,994 Jews in Italy on the eve of the German occupation,” [on] Sept. 8, 1943. Some 81% of them were saved, she said. Unfortunately for more than 7,000 Jews across Italy, “there was nothing to be done,” and they were arrested and deported to extermination camps.

After years of war and now with the Italian Fascist state becoming a Nazi-German puppet state, there were also tens of thousands of others needing help: escaped Allied prisoners of war, Italian civilians and young Italian soldiers who all risked being labeled enemies of the state and deportation by German authorities, she said. In addition to waves of destitute citizens flooding the capital from the south,

Rome’s population went from about 850,000 to 1.5 million people in this short period of time, and they all needed clothing, food and protection.

Many laypeople and the Catholic Church “abundantly distributed assistance to all of them and without distinction,” she said, “including taking in Jews,” who had already been unjustly discriminated against by Italian racial laws since 1938, but now faced mass arrests and deportations after the German invasion.

Neighbors, hospitals, parishes, religious houses, seminaries, papal institutes and other Church-owned structures opened their doors while some laypeople and clergy ran organized clandestine networks that helped smuggle thousands of Jews into Switzerland, procure false documents or hide them in their communities.

“Thousands of people were helping thousands of other people,” in a kind of underground popular movement after decades of dictatorship, said Picciotto.

Rome had the largest Jewish community of 12,000 people and “the largest concentration of religious houses in Italy,” she said. Many of Rome’s Jews, especially after the Nazi raid on Rome on Oct. 16, 1943, “were saved thanks to the hand extended to them by Church structures.” Some 1,259 people, mainly members of the Jewish community, had been taken by the Nazis that day.

A total of 27,500 Jews were rescued in all of German-occupied Italy, she said, and “between a quarter and a fifth of them were saved thanks to the outreach of the Church,” she said.

Picciotto said a number of documents she found suggest initiatives were taken by the “middle tier” of the Church hierarchy, where leaders let their superiors know they were aiding the

persecuted, but without waiting for their permission and “without getting them involved.”

Sister Grazia Loparco, a Salesian sister of St. John Bosco, who spoke at the conference on Oct. 10 told Catholic News Service on Oct. 9 that religious superiors decided individually what their house would do, with many helping, and some not.



Sr. Grazia Loparco, F.M.A.

Cloistered convents and monasteries, however, did need permission from their bishop or his representative to let in outsiders, she said. For Rome, this would be the pope’s representative, called an apostolic visitor, who documented there had been 99

Jews hidden in 11 cloistered convents. Picciotto said the visitor, identified only as Father Giovanni, directly found shelter for 176 people—civilian fighters and Jews—in the monasteries and convents he oversaw.

Sister Grazia, a professor of Church history at Rome’s Pontifical Faculty of Educational Sciences “*Auxilium*,” said it is highly unlikely Pope Pius XII directly wrote an order to hide Jews and others because a written directive would have been too risky. “However, that he was aware and that he supported this is very clear” since the cloistered monasteries had been given permission to do so.

She told the conference that oral communication in the Church hierarchy “worked very well in Rome.” Every morning a priest from the Vatican or the Diocese of Rome visited each women’s religious house in order to celebrate Mass, making it “very easy” to pass along information. †

Online Lay Ministry Formation

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

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

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- 2 Victim Assistance Coordinator**, Archdiocese of Indianapolis
P.O. Box 1410, Indianapolis, IN 46206-1410
317-236-1548 or 800-382-9836, ext. 1548
victimassistance@archindy.org

ALL SEASONS

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divine voice within.

“That divine voice, conscience,” he continued, “speaks to issues of right and wrong, reconciliation, justice, truth, wisdom, sanctity, benevolence and mercy properly formed and sovereign, irreversible, absolute in its authority.”

“Fisher and More recognized their respective duty to properly inform their conscience, to ascertain the divine voice within. But, once informed, they understood their duty to act according to it. To do otherwise meant the potential loss of their soul.”

‘A present-moment vision of heaven’

Conrad happily noted that, while Fisher and More faced death squarely in the eye for remaining faithful to their well-formed conscience, these circumstances did not sadden them or fill them with despair.

“Both men exhibited a sense of merriment that sprung from their deeply rooted faith in Jesus Christ and his Church,” Conrad said. “To be merry summarized their individual responses to adversity.”

He recalled the words that More said to the judges who unjustly condemned him to death: “I verily trust and shall right-heartedly pray that, though your lordships have now here on Earth been judges to my condemnation, we may yet hereafter in heaven all merrily meet together to everlasting salvation.”

Conrad told his listeners how More was telling jokes right up to the moment of his execution.

“More asked his executioner for help up the steps of the scaffold, telling him that he could see to his own way down,” Conrad said. “He adjusted his beard to the side, claiming that it had not committed treason against the king. He kissed his executioner and told him, ‘Thou will give me this day a greater benefit than any mortal man could ever give me.’”

Conrad closed his remarks by encouraging his listeners to imitate Fisher and More in the circumstances of their own personal and professional lives.”

“More and Fisher possessed a present-moment vision of heaven,” Conrad said. “Eternal life was more real to them than the adversities staring them in the face. That accounts for their bravery, good humor and serene disposition in their last days.” †



Judges kneel in prayer on Oct. 2 at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis during the annual Red Mass of the St. Thomas More Society of Central Indiana. They are Justice Mark Massa, left, of the Indiana Supreme Court, Judge Elizabeth Tavitas of the Indiana Court of Appeals, Judge Robyn Moberly, a bankruptcy judge for the U.S. District Court of the Southern District of Indiana, Judge James Sweeney of the U.S. District Court of the Southern District of Indiana, and Judge Robert Conrad, a senior judge of the U.S. District Court of the Western District of North Carolina. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

President of University of Notre Dame to step down at end of academic year

(OSV News)—The longtime president of the University of Notre Dame in northern Indiana will step down at the end of the current academic year to return to teaching and ministry at the school.

Father John Jenkins, a Holy Cross priest, announced the news on Oct. 13, according to a media release posted by the university.

Elected in 2005 as the university’s 17th president, Father Jenkins was most recently re-elected by Notre Dame’s trustees to his fourth five-year term effective on July 1, 2020.



Fr. John Jenkins, C.S.C.

In the same release, the university also noted that John B. Veihmeyer, the retired chairman of KPMG International, has been elected as chair of Notre Dame’s board of trustees, effective June 2024 and succeeding current chair John J. Brennan.

Father Jenkins said his tenure as president had been “both a privilege and a calling.”

Brennan said that the university “is and has been incredibly blessed by Father Jenkins’ courageous and visionary leadership,” which had been directed toward building “a great Catholic university for the 21st century.”

A search is now underway for the university’s next president, who will be elected by the trustees from among the priests of the Congregation of the Holy Cross, which

founded the school in 1842. The school’s governance was transferred in 1967 from the congregation to a two-tiered board of lay and religious trustees and fellows.

Under Father Jenkins’ leadership, Notre Dame saw significant growth and expansion, particularly in its research initiatives, global engagement, student diversity and financial resources. The school was admitted this year to the Association of American Universities, which represents the nation’s leading research universities.

In addition, Notre Dame enjoys partnerships with a number of schools throughout the nation and the world. The university operates Global Gateways in Rome, Dublin, Jerusalem, Beijing and London, as well as six Global Centers in Hong Kong, Ireland, Mexico City, Mumbai, São Paulo and Santiago.

At the same time, Father Jenkins faced criticism at points during his tenure. Following a lawsuit filed by the university, he applauded a 2017 Trump administration expansion of the religious freedom exemption from a 2012 U.S. Health and Human Services mandate requiring most employers to include contraceptives, abortifacients and sterilizations in their employee health plans. However, Father Jenkins opted to allow third-party administrators to provide such coverage, saying the “university’s interest has never been in preventing access to those who make conscientious decisions to use contraceptives,” but was rather “to avoid being compelled by the federal government to be the agent in their provision.”

A 2016 decision by Father Jenkins to award

then-Vice President Joe Biden the Laetare Medal—the oldest and most prestigious award for American Catholics—was rebuked by Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Ind., who said in a lengthy statement that it was “wrong for Notre Dame to honor any ‘pro-choice’ public official with the Laetare Medal.”

Similarly, a 2009 commencement address by President Barack Obama (part of the university’s custom of having U.S. presidents speak at the school graduation while in office) sparked backlash.

Father Jenkins has throughout his career promoted civil discourse and has served as a longtime member of the Commission on Presidential Debates.

Bishop Rhoades, who is presently in Rome attending the Synod on Synodality, gave a statement to OSV News extending his “prayerful best wishes” to Father Jenkins “after 19 years of dedicated leadership and service.”

“I am grateful that, in promoting the growth of research at the university, Father Jenkins has promoted the moral, spiritual, and religious dimensions of that research, an important part of Notre Dame’s distinctive Catholic identity,” he said. “I am also grateful for Father Jenkins’ commitment to the pastoral ministry at Notre Dame and the spiritual welfare of the students, his dedication to Notre Dame’s service of our local Church as well as the wider Church throughout the world, and for his advocacy of civility in public discourse, so much needed in our nation and world today.” †

Employment

Archdiocese of Indianapolis Maintenance Technicians

The Archdiocese of Indianapolis is seeking to hire part-time and full-time maintenance technicians.

The person hired for this job will work as a member of the Catholic Center Staff. This person may be asked to do maintenance at any one of our associated properties in Indianapolis. The part-time position can have flexible hours. The full-time position can be either a four day or five day a week position totaling forty hours a week.

The major responsibility of the person in this position is to keep the Archdiocese’ buildings and property in good working condition. Knowledge in the areas of: Mechanical, electrical, HVAC, plumbing, carpentry, and painting is a plus.

The person in this job will need to be an independent thinker.

- This person is responsible for the security of the buildings where they work.
- Good communications are required to prevent scheduling conflicts and insure access to work.
- A candidate for the position needs to have had some prior building maintenance experience.
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If you are interested, please contact Daniel Herbertz at dherbertz@archindy.org.

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Celebrating a Filipino saint

Filipino members of St. Lawrence Parish in Lawrenceburg, St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception Parish in Aurora and St. Luke Parish in Nicholasville, Ky., pose in front of the altar of St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception Church on Sept. 28 after a Mass celebrating the feast day of St. Lorenzo Ruiz, the first saint from the Philippines. The Mass was celebrated in the Tagalog language by Father Aldrin Tayag, pastor of St. Luke Parish in Nicholasville. He was assisted by Deacon Kevin Daily of St. Lawrence Parish. (Submitted photo).

Love, forgiveness liberate, break cycles of violence, Pope Francis says

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—The life of St. Josephine Bakhita, a former slave from Sudan who became a nun, demonstrates how love liberates people from oppression and frees them to forgive their oppressors and break cycles of hatred and violence, Pope Francis said.

“Often, a wounded person wounds in turn; the oppressed easily becomes an oppressor,” the pope said on Oct. 11 at his weekly general audience in St. Peter’s Square.

In contrast, he said, St. Josephine teaches people that “forgiveness takes away nothing but adds dignity to the person; it makes us lift our



St. Josephine Bakhita

gaze from ourselves toward others, to see them as fragile as we are, yet always brothers and sisters in the Lord.”

Continuing a series of audience talks highlighting saints who demonstrate zeal or passion for evangelization, Pope Francis said St. Josephine’s life story shows how “forgiveness is the wellspring of a zeal that becomes mercy and calls us to a humble and joyful holiness.”

St. Josephine, who lived from 1869-1947, was abducted and enslaved at the age of 7. “She suffered cruelty and violence. On her body she bore more than a hundred scars,” the pope said.

And yet, she wrote, “I never despaired, because I felt a mysterious force supporting me.”

Later she was given a crucifix—the first thing she ever owned—and, the pope said, “looking at it, she experienced a profound inner liberation, because she felt understood and loved and therefore capable of understanding and loving in turn. This is how it begins. One feels understood, loved and is then able to understand and love others.”

Having compassion, he said, “means suffering with the victims of the many forms of inhumanity present in the world as well as pitying those who commit errors and injustices—not justifying them, but humanizing them.” †

Gala

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R.S.V.P. at:
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