



The Criterion

Serving the Church in Central and Southern Indiana Since 1960

CriterionOnline.com

April 3, 2020

Vol. LX, No. 25 75¢



'With God, life never dies'

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Pope Francis issues historic address during 'extraordinary moment of prayer'

Following is the text of the meditation Pope Francis offered in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican during a March 27 prayer service on the meaning of the COVID-19 pandemic and its implications for humanity. At the conclusion of the prayer, Pope Francis gave an extraordinary blessing "urbi et orbi" ("to the city and the world").

"When evening had come" (Mk 4:35). The Gospel passage we have just heard begins like this. For weeks now, it has been evening. Thick darkness has gathered over our squares, our streets and our cities; it has taken over our lives, filling everything with a deafening silence and a distressing void, that stops everything as it passes by; we feel it in the air, we notice in people's gestures, their glances give them away. We find ourselves afraid and lost. Like the disciples in the Gospel, we were caught off guard by an unexpected, turbulent storm. We have realized that we are on the same boat, all of us fragile and disoriented, but at the same time important and needed, all of us called to row together, each of us in need of comforting the other. On this boat ... are all of us. Just like those disciples, who spoke anxiously with one voice, saying "We are perishing" (Mk 4:38), so we too have realized that we cannot go on thinking of ourselves, but only together can we do this.

It is easy to recognize ourselves in this story. What is harder to understand is Jesus' attitude. While his disciples are quite naturally alarmed

and desperate, he stands in the stern, in the part of the boat that sinks first. And what does he do? In spite of the tempest, he sleeps soundly, trusting in the Father; this is the only time in the Gospels we see Jesus sleeping. When he wakes up, after calming the wind and the waters, he turns to the disciples in a reproaching voice: "Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?" (Mk 4:40).

Let us try to understand. In what does the lack of the disciples' faith consist, as contrasted with Jesus' trust? They had not stopped believing in him; in fact, they called on him. But we see how they call on him: "Teacher, do you not care if we perish?" (Mk 4:38). *Do you not care?* they think that Jesus is not interested in them, does not care about them. One of the things that hurts us and our families most when we hear it said is: "Do you not care about me?" It is a phrase that wounds and unleashes storms in our hearts. It would have shaken Jesus too. Because he, more than anyone, cares about us. Indeed, once they have called on him, he saves his disciples from their discouragement.

The storm exposes our vulnerability and uncovers those false and superfluous certainties around which we have constructed our daily schedules, our projects, our habits and priorities. It shows us how we have allowed to become dull and feeble the very things that nourish, sustain and strengthen our lives and our communities. The tempest lays bare all our prepackaged ideas and

forgetfulness of what nourishes our people's souls; all those attempts that anesthetize us with ways of thinking and acting that supposedly "save" us, but instead prove incapable of putting us in touch with our roots and keeping alive the memory of those who have gone before us. We deprive ourselves of the antibodies we need to confront adversity.

In this storm, the façade of those stereotypes with which we camouflaged our egos, always worrying about our image, has fallen away, uncovering once more that (blessed) common belonging, of which we cannot be deprived: our belonging as brothers and sisters.

"*Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?*" Lord, your word this evening strikes us and regards us, all of us. In this world, that you love more than we do, we have gone ahead at breakneck speed, feeling powerful and able to do anything. Greedy for profit, we let ourselves get caught up in things, and lured away by haste. We did not stop at your reproach to us, we were not shaken awake by wars or injustice across the world, nor did we listen to the cry of the poor or of our ailing planet. We carried on regardless, thinking we would stay healthy in a world that was sick. Now that we are in a stormy sea, we implore you: "Wake up, Lord!"

"*Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?*" Lord, you are calling to us, calling us to faith. Which is not so much believing that you exist, but coming to you and trusting in you.

See POPE, page 12

Let us remain Christ-centered during this difficult time

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Greetings and peace in our Lord Jesus Christ! If there is any truth in the saying "absence makes the heart grow fonder," our fondness for the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, and one another should be growing leaps and bounds. Circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic seem to change by the hour. Since my last message to you, our governor, like those in other states, has issued a "stay-at-home" order at least through April 6.

Especially given the continued spike in confirmed cases throughout the Hoosier State, the suspension of public Mass as

well as all liturgical, sacramental and pastoral restrictions remain in place. Please understand that this is not so much to protect our priests, although we certainly need them to be healthy and able to serve, as it is to protect lives while maintaining our primary focus on the salvation of souls. In the case of this pandemic, there is a fine line between being heroic and being an agent of spreading the virus.

The effects of this pandemic in just a couple of weeks are already taking a great economic, emotional, mental and spiritual toll on many in our families and communities. We must remain particularly attentive and concerned for the poor, vulnerable and elderly. Even amid "social distancing" and the "stay-at-home" order, the archdiocese and parishes continue to provide services to those in great need, especially in terms of food and shelter. Each of us can do our part, even from a distance, checking in on family



Public Schedule of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

No public events scheduled at this time.

members, friends and neighbors. Let us be especially aware of those who may be overwhelmed with anxiety, depression, fear and loneliness.

Where some see challenge, others may see opportunity. Certainly, this is a time of challenge and hardship. For those of faith, this can also be a time of opportunity. Some people have told me about how they are taking the opportunity for spring cleaning, going through boxes of memories and looking at old photos. As both individuals and families, we might take the opportunity for deepening our prayer life, examining our conscience, spiritual reading, reflecting on Scripture, studying to better understand Catholic teaching and counting our blessings.

Let us not lose heart in these difficult days and even weeks. Let us hold each

other in prayer. Let us not forget that we are beloved children of God who have been claimed by Jesus Christ as co-heirs with Him in the everlasting Kingdom of God. In the last days of the Lenten season, let us remember that we continue to bear the cross with Jesus in this life so as to share in his victory and glory in eternal life. In every household, let us remain Christ-centered.

With assurance of my continued prayers and best wishes, I remain,

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ Charles C. Thompson

+Charles C. Thompson
Archbishop of Indianapolis

Mantengámonos centrados en Cristo durante este período tan difícil

Queridos hermanos y hermanas en Cristo:

Reciban un cordial saludo en nombre de Nuestro Señor Jesucristo. Si el conocido dicho de que "la ausencia aviva el cariño" encierra algo de verdad, nuestro cariño por los sacramentos, especialmente por la eucaristía, y por nuestros compañeros se avivará enormemente. La situación sobre la pandemia de COVID-19 pareciera cambiar minuto a minuto. Desde mi mensaje anterior para ustedes, nuestro gobernador, al igual que los de otros estados, ha emitido la orden de "quedarse en casa" por lo menos hasta el 6 de abril.

Especialmente a la luz de que han continuado aumentando drásticamente los casos confirmados en todo el estado de Indiana, continúa en vigor la suspensión de misas públicas, así como también todas las restricciones litúrgicas, sacramentales y pastorales. Debemos comprender que la finalidad de esta medida no es tanto para

proteger a nuestros sacerdotes, aunque ciertamente necesitamos que estén sanos para poder servir a los fieles, sino para proteger vidas en general y, al mismo tiempo, mantener el enfoque principal en la salvación de las almas. En el caso de esta pandemia, el límite entre comportarnos de manera heroica y ser vectores de contagio del virus resulta muy difuso.

Los efectos que ha producido la pandemia en tan solo un par de semanas ya han perjudicado considerablemente a muchas de nuestras familias y comunidades en lo económico, emocional, mental y espiritual. Debemos permanecer fundamentalmente atentos a los pobres, los vulnerables y los ancianos, y preocuparnos por ellos. Incluso a pesar del "distanciamiento social" y de la orden de "quedarse en casa," la Arquidiócesis y las parroquias continúan prestando servicios a los más necesitados, primordialmente en cuanto a alimento

y techo. Cada uno de nosotros puede hacer su parte, incluso a la distancia, y comunicarnos con parientes, amigos y vecinos. Estemos particularmente pendientes de aquellos que quizá se sientan abrumados por la ansiedad, la depresión, el temor y la soledad.

Donde algunos ven un desafío, otros tal vez vean una oportunidad. Por supuesto que esta es una época de desafíos y dificultades, pero para las personas de fe, esta también puede ser una época de oportunidades. Algunos me han contado que están aprovechando esta situación para hacer la limpieza de primavera, para revisar cajas llenas de recuerdos y mirar fotos viejas. Quizá esta sea una ocasión para profundizar en nuestra vida de oración, para hacer un examen de conciencia, para la lectura espiritual, para reflexionar sobre las Escrituras, estudiar para comprender mejor las enseñanzas católicas y para agradecer nuestras

bendiciones, tanto individualmente como en familia.

No nos descorazonemos en estos días e incluso semanas tan difíciles. Apuntámonos con la oración y no olvidemos que somos hijos amados de Dios que hemos sido declarados por Jesucristo coherederos del reino eterno de Dios. En estos últimos días de la Cuaresma, recordemos que seguimos llevando la cruz de Jesús en esta vida para poder compartir su victoria y su gloria en la vida eterna. En cada uno de nuestros hogares, mantengámonos centrados.

Con la certeza de mis oraciones continuas y mis mejores deseos quedo de ustedes en Cristo,

+ Charles C. Thompson

+Charles C. Thompson
Arzobispo de Indianapolis

Holy Week 2020 resources available for prayer at home

Due to the COVID-19 crisis which has prevented the faithful from participating at the Holy Week liturgies in their parishes, sample prayer services have been adapted from various texts and rituals of Holy Week to allow families to celebrate with the Church these sacred days of the year.

The resources, made available by the Diocese of Gary, Ind., can be downloaded and printed as a PDF file on our website by entering this address: www.archindy.org/HolyWeekAtHome.



Pope Francis' prayer intentions for April

- **Freedom from Addiction**—We pray that those suffering from addiction may be helped and accompanied.

(To see Pope Francis' monthly intentions, go to www.archindy.org/popessintentions.) †

Correction

Sue Weber, assistant facilitator of the Archdiocesan Pastoral Plan process and committee, was omitted from the list published in the March 27 issue. †

Official Appointments

Effective Immediately

Deacon David Reising, in ministry at St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Bedford and St. Mary Parish in Mitchell, appointed *pro tem* Parish Life Coordinator of St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Bedford and St. Mary Parish in Mitchell.

Very Rev. Eric M. Johnson, V.E., episcopal vicar for Clergy, Religious and Parish Life coordinators and sacramental minister for St. Agnes Parish in Nashville, appointed Priest Moderator *pro tem* at St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Bedford and St. Mary Parish in Mitchell, while continuing as

episcopal vicar for Clergy, Religious and Parish Life coordinators and sacramental minister for St. Agnes Parish in Nashville.

(These appointments are from the office of the Most Rev. Charles C. Thompson, Archbishop of Indianapolis.) †

The Criterion

Phone Numbers:
Main office: 317-236-1570
Advertising: 317-236-1585
Toll free: 1-800-382-9836, ext. 1570
Circulation: 317-236-1585
Toll free: 1-800-382-9836, ext. 1585

Price: \$22.00 per year, 75 cents per copy

Postmaster:
Send address changes to *The Criterion*, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367

Web site: www.CriterionOnline.com

E-mail: criterion@archindy.org

Published weekly except the last week of December and the first week of January.
Mailing address: 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367. Periodical postage paid at Indianapolis, IN. Copyright © 2020 Criterion Press Inc. ISSN 0574-4350.

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E-mail us: criterion@archindy.org

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The Criterion (ISSN 0574-4350) is published weekly except the last week of December and the first week of January.

1400 N. Meridian St.
Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367
317-236-1570
800-382-9836 ext. 1570
criterion@archindy.org

Periodical postage paid at Indianapolis, IN.
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The Criterion 04/03/20

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In wake of coronavirus epidemic, Holy Week liturgies and Easter Sunday Mass to be livestreamed online

By Sean Gallagher

The liturgies of Holy Week—including Masses of Palm Sunday and Holy Thursday, the commemoration of Christ's passion on Good Friday, and the Easter Vigil—as well as



Fr. Patrick Beidelman

the high point of the Church's liturgical year.

But Catholics across central and southern Indiana will not be able to gather to worship together in these liturgies because of the pandemic of the coronavirus, also known as COVID-19.

Decisions made by Archbishop Charles C. Thompson regarding public celebration of Holy Week liturgies and the celebration of the sacrament of penance were posted

on the archdiocesan website (www.archindy.org) on March 25.

Out of concern for the health of archdiocesan Catholics because of the pandemic, public celebration of Holy Week liturgies have been suspended. This follows the March 17 decision of the bishops of Indiana to suspend public celebration of

the Mass until further notice.

The most recent decision was made based on guidance from public health officials, the Vatican and the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

The annual chrisem Mass, ordinarily celebrated on Tuesday of Holy Week at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis, will be celebrated at a later date. This is the liturgy in which priests renew their ordination promises and the archbishop blesses oils to be used in the celebration of sacraments.

Holy Week liturgies

Holy Week liturgies such as the Masses on Palm Sunday and Holy Thursday, the solemn commemoration of Christ's passion on Good Friday, and the Easter Vigil will be celebrated by the archbishop and priests in the cathedral and parish churches around the archdiocese. The rest of the faithful, however, will not be able to participate in these liturgies in person.

These liturgies as celebrated at the cathedral, however, can be viewed and prayed with live online.

Father Patrick Beidelman, executive director of the archdiocesan Secretariat for Worship and Evangelization and rector of SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, spoke in a March 25 interview with *The Criterion* and said it was difficult for him knowing that the public celebration of Holy Week liturgies

would not take place.

"I think it will be most intense when we begin the prayer without our brothers and sisters in faith, at least physically present," Father Beidelman said. "Knowing that we'll be livestreaming those liturgies and that people will be connected to us in real time I think will help alleviate some of the intensity of how it will feel without them."

Videos of daily and Sunday Masses celebrated by the archbishop and archdiocesan priests are available at www.archindy.org. That is also where Catholics of central and southern Indiana can go to view livestreamed Holy Week liturgies, as well as those for Easter Sunday and Easter Monday.

Father Beidelman has heard from many archdiocesan Catholics about how grateful they are for the availability of such videos. "It's a reminder to me that the

Where and when to watch Holy Week and Easter Masses

All Masses can be viewed at www.archindy.org.

April 9 at 6 p.m. — Holy Thursday, Mass of the Lord's Supper; celebrant: Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

April 10 at 3 p.m. — Good Friday, Celebration of the Lord's Passion; celebrant: Archbishop Thompson

April 11 at 8:45 p.m. — Holy Saturday, the Easter Vigil in the Holy Night; celebrant: Archbishop Thompson

April 12 at 11 a.m. — Easter Sunday; celebrant: Archbishop Thompson; Homilist: Father Patrick Beidelman

April 13 at 9 a.m. — Easter Monday; Celebrant: Father Beidelman

Eucharist is the source and the summit of our unity with God and with one another," he said, "and that that communion can be expressed although we're not physically in one another's presence and not receiving the Eucharist together."

Father Beidelman said that resources **See SUSPENSION, page 11**

Pope Francis grants plenary indulgences tied to pandemic

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope Francis has granted plenary indulgences to those suffering from COVID-19, their caregivers, friends and family and those who help them with their prayers.

But what is this ancient practice of offering indulgences through prayer and penance and what is needed to receive them?

An indulgence is not a quick ticket to heaven, as St. John Paul II once said. Rather, it is an aid for the real conversion that leads to eternal happiness.

Sins are forgiven through the sacrament of penance, but then there is a kind of punishment still due the sinner, the late pope explained during a general audience in 1999.

God's fatherly love "does not exclude chastisement, even though this always should be understood in the context of a merciful justice which re-establishes the order violated," he said.

The pope had said the "temporal" punishment that remains after forgiveness

is a grace aimed at wiping away the "residues of sin," offering the reformed sinner the chance of complete healing through "a journey of purification" that can take place in this life or in purgatory.

By God's grace, participation in a prayer or action that has an indulgence attached to it brings about the necessary restoration and reparation without the suffering that would normally accompany it. It frees a person from the punishment their sinfulness warrants as it is a remission of the temporal punishment a person is due for sins that have been forgiven.

The granting of an indulgence by the Church is "the expression of the Church's full confidence of being heard by the Father when, in view of Christ's merits and, by his gift, those of Our Lady and the saints, she asks him to mitigate or cancel the painful aspect of punishment by fostering its medicinal aspect through other channels of grace," the late pope said.

An indulgence, then, is the result of the abundance of God's mercy, which he

offers to humanity through Jesus Christ and through the Church, he said.

But this gift cannot be received automatically or simply by fulfilling a few exterior requirements nor can it be

approached with a superficial attitude, St. John Paul said.

The reception of an indulgence depends on "our turning away from sin and our

See INDULGENCES, page 11

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Editorial



Pope Francis gives his homily during his livestreamed Mass from the chapel of his Vatican residence, the Domus Sanctae Marthae, on March 26. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)

Celebrating Holy Week and Easter *sine populo*

“Since the Solemnity of Easter cannot be transferred, in the countries which have been struck by the [coronavirus] disease and where restrictions around the assembly and movement of people have been imposed, bishops and priests may celebrate the rites of Holy Week without the presence of the people and in a suitable place, avoiding concelebration and omitting the sign of peace” (Vatican Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, March 25, 2020).

For the first time in the Church’s 2,000-year history, the sacred rites of holy week and Easter will be celebrated *sine populo*, without the presence of people. The liturgies will take place as scheduled, but the bishops and priests who celebrate them will be virtually alone—in most places without concelebrants, altar servers or congregations.

This is unprecedented and unimaginable. The very meaning of “Church” (*ecclesia* in Greek) is “gathering” or “assembly.” Gathering to celebrate Mass on Sundays and holy days is central to our self-understanding as Catholics. We worship God in communities of faith, and the sustenance we receive in these sacred assemblies (especially our reception of Christ’s body and blood in the Eucharist) is what enables us to carry out the Church’s mission “in the world.”

Private Masses, comprising a priest alone or with just a few participants, were prevalent before the Second Vatican Council’s liturgical reforms. Many churches had “side altars” where these individual Masses were celebrated. But these private celebrations never took the place of the community Mass where the people gathered for daily, Sunday and holy day Masses. What is happening now as a result of the coronavirus and the necessity of social distancing is completely new and unprecedented in our Church’s experience.

Thank God we have instruments of communication that can make these sacred liturgies and other prayers and devotions available—on television and radio as well as livestreaming to our computers and other devices. Through the modern miracle of social media, Pope Francis and our bishops and pastors can come into our homes, helping us remain connected (remotely) to the Church’s prayer and worship.

Some object that electronic liturgies are a poor substitute for being physically present. And, of course, it’s not possible to receive the body and blood of Christ

unless you are actually there to partake in this great sacrament. Most livestreamed or televised Masses suggest that viewers make a spiritual communion at the time when the Eucharist would normally be distributed but, of course, it’s not the same. Especially when we have recently been made aware of the need to help Catholics better understand the Real Presence of the Lord in the Eucharist, it’s awkward at best to have to replace actual reception of the sacrament with a sincere expression of desire.

Still, if you have had the opportunity to attend Mass virtually with your pastor, or with Archbishop Charles C. Thompson or one of the priests at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis, or to pray with Pope Francis livestreamed from an empty St. Peter’s Square in Rome, you probably have experienced a very special connection with our Lord. Without the benefit of electronic media, we would be completely isolated from the celebration of the Eucharist. These opportunities help us remain close to Jesus in spite of social distancing.

In a recent televised Mass, Father Patrick Beidelman, rector of SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, reminded his remote congregation that:

“The Lord is close to the brokenhearted; and those who are crushed in spirit he saves” (Ps 34:18).

“These days, we have all witnessed heartbreaking stories of people who have lost someone to this awful disease or whose lives have been ‘crushed in spirit’ by lost jobs or by being cut off from family and friends,” Father Beidelman said. “Today, it is more important than ever that we stay close to Jesus and, through him, to one another.”

The great writer G.K. Chesterton once said, contrary to the popular expression, that “Anything worth doing is worth doing badly.” Chesterton’s point was that the really important things in life are worth doing, even if we can’t do them perfectly. Attending Mass and other prayer services remotely is definitely not the same as actually being there, but it’s a whole lot better than nothing.

This Holy Week and Easter we have a choice: 1) Be isolated from some of our Church’s most sacred moments (such as Palm Sunday, Holy Thursday, Good Friday, the Easter Vigil), or 2) Participate remotely and open ourselves to the grace of God who is close to the brokenhearted. Let’s choose closeness rather than isolation.

—Daniel Conway

Shalom! A message for our Jewish brothers and sisters for the days of Pesach

My dear brothers and sisters of the Jewish faith:

As you, your families and friends gather for the days of Pesach, I extend to you the hope of God’s protection and deliverance. The God of the Covenant holds firm to His promises. He has made many promises! We rejoice with you in His *hesed*, and firmly offer our prayers for you.

As the great prophet Moses delighted in gathering his people before God at Sinai, and as your ancestors in faith have gathered for millennia to thank God for His saving actions, so your Christian brothers and sisters delight to hear of your coming together for prayer, feasting, and celebrating God’s goodness to His chosen people. Our world faces many challenges

today. It is ours to join with you in facing those challenges, finding solutions rooted in God’s goodness and faithfulness. As once He led your ancestors forth from bondage to freedom, from wilderness to promised land, let us invoke together His name that we might reveal God’s goodness and faithfulness in our own lives for the good of the world.

Shalom!

And at the end of your feasting, may the joy of “Next year in Jerusalem” ring in your homes and in your hearts.

+ Charles C. Thompson

Most Reverend Charles C. Thompson
Archbishop of Indianapolis

Reflection/John Shaughnessy

Go the extra mile on the road to walking together forever

Only moments remained before the players left the locker room for the game that would decide the championship.



Picking up a piece of white chalk, the head coach scrawled on the blackboard, “Win today, and we walk together forever.”

Hours later, the players stormed into that locker room again, smiling, shouting, hugging, dancing—knowing they had achieved a moment in time that would bind them all their lives.

Yet to “walk together forever” is not just reserved for championship teams or the world of sports. All meaningful friendships have the quality of “walking together forever.” Such friendships frequently begin in the challenging times and transitions of life. In our youth, the uncertainty, fear and intensity of a new beginning in high school and college often lead to bonds that last a lifetime. These friends welcome and support us when we desperately need someone to be there for us. And even if the years, miles and changes weaken that connection to some degree, there’s still a fondness for that person, still a sense that in the mind and the heart we “walk together forever.” It’s the same way with friendships later in life when people reach out to us, support us and stand beside us through the tough times.

We are in tough times again—times of uncertainty and fear caused by the coronavirus crisis. And once again, our shared humanity is shining through to support and uplift us. People are reaching out more and more to “be there” for friends, and to be a friend to people they have never met. My wife and I have increased our efforts to connect with

friends, and they with us. Our children share virtual “happy hours” with friends and virtual “holy hours” with strangers. Our younger neighbors stress that they will be there for us whenever we need them. Our parish offers an outlet for parishioners to keep in touch by phone or e-mail. Our neighborhood association puts a flyer in our mailbox that carries this message, “Reach out if you need ANY help.” The list goes on and on. At a time in our lives when 6 feet is the measuring distance of separation, people are going the extra mile to show we are all in this together.

Christ gave us the ultimate example of going the extra mile, of “walking together forever,” on his path to Calvary. That walk changed everything for us in our relationship with God, fulfilling God’s promise of salvation. It’s a walk that was also strikingly marked by the fact that Christ didn’t make it alone. The night before, none of his friends stood by him, two even betrayed him. Yet as he carried his cross to Calvary, some of the people he loved—and who loved him—were there for him. And a stranger helped him carry his cross.

That sharing of the cross adds another defining dimension to the connection between God and man—the two walking together toward a moment that would change the world forever. In the same way today, God is there to help us carry our cross.

As we prepare to enter Holy Week, go the extra mile in your relationships with God and others, knowing that when you do, you will walk together forever.

(John Shaughnessy is the assistant editor of *The Criterion*. This reflection has been adapted from his book, *Then Something Wondrous Happened: Unlikely Encounters and Unexpected Graces in Search of a Friendship with God.*) †

Letters Policy

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

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

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

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

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

Send letters to “Letters to the Editor,” *The Criterion*, 1400 N. Meridian Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367. Readers with access to e-mail may send letters to criterion@archindy.org. †



Christ the Cornerstone

Jesus' triumph and tragedy leads to our redemption

"The crowds preceding him and those following kept crying out and saying, 'Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord; hosanna in the highest'" (Mt 21:9).

This Sunday, we celebrate an unusual day in the liturgical calendar. It's a day of both triumph and tragedy, a day that demonstrates most clearly the fickleness of human behavior, especially when people gather in crowds.

On Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion, we recall Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem heralded by shouts of "Hosanna to the Son of David!" "Hosanna in the highest!" But we use this ostensibly happy day to reflect on this same Lord's cruel and undeserving passion and death on a cross. Once again, the Catholic "both/and" is used to reveal the truth about both sinful human nature and the extreme lengths that God will travel to redeem us and forgive our sins.

In the second reading for this Sunday (Phil 2:6-11), St. Paul proclaims the extraordinary selflessness of God:

"Christ Jesus, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. Rather, he emptied himself,

taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness; and found human in appearance, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross" (Phil 2:6-8).

What we celebrate on Palm Sunday is very far from "the lifestyles of the rich and famous." Jesus may have been greeted as a superstar by the crowd, but his true greatness lies in his humility.

All the power and majesty of God will be set aside in just a few days as he "empties himself" and takes on the lowliness of our human nature. All the joy and adulation of the crowd will quickly dissipate and become the ugly, rancorous cry: "Let him be crucified!"

This Sunday's remembrance of both the triumphant entry into Jerusalem and the tragic passion and death of the most innocent man who ever lived is important for us today. We live in a time when extremes of love and hate, infatuation and disillusionment dominate our society and our Church. Social media reflect these extremes on an hourly basis. Pope Francis posts words of challenge and hope on his Twitter account, and thousands of people reply with messages that range from gratitude to venomous attacks and

everything in between. As with Jesus, many greet the Holy Father with shouts of Hosanna, while others spit on him and say horrible things about him.

Fortunately, St. Paul reminds us that suffering and hardship are redemptive. We follow in the footsteps of Jesus whose self-sacrificing love has overcome sin and transformed our world from darkness to light.

"Because of this, God greatly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, of those in heaven and on Earth and under the Earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil 2:9-11).

The hosannas we sing this weekend—even as we meditate on our Lord's suffering and death—should express our genuine joy and gratitude for the presence of our Redeemer among us today, and every day, in the sacrificial banquet we celebrate with him during each Mass.

Yes, there is ugliness and pain all around us. Even Jesus gave voice to his suffering and sense of abandonment when

he cried out from the cross: *"Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?"* which St. Matthew tells us means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Mt 27:46)

Jesus was overcome with sorrow. He felt like giving up, but he did not. Instead, he forgave us our sins and commended his spirit to his Father.

The tragedy of Jesus' passion and death became his triumphant resurrection, his complete and total victory over the power of sin and death. Evil still exists, but it cannot—and will not—win in the end.

The first reading for Palm Sunday (Is 50:4-7) anticipates the final thoughts of Jesus:

"I gave my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who plucked my beard; my face I did not shield from buffets and spitting. The Lord GOD is my help, therefore I am not disgraced; I have set my face like flint, knowing that I shall not be put to shame" (Is 50:6-7).

As we conclude this Lenten season and prepare for the Paschal Triduum, let's ask our Lord to help us stand firm when we are faced with life's tragedies (large and small). May we always maintain our confidence in the triumphant love of God. †



Cristo, la piedra angular

La tragedia y el triunfo de Jesús nos llevan a la salvación

"Y las multitudes que iban delante de Él y las que iban detrás, gritaban: '¡Hosanna al Hijo de David!; Bendito Aquel que viene en el nombre del Señor!; Hosanna en las alturas!'" (Mt 21:9).

Este domingo celebramos algo inusual en el calendario litúrgico: se trata de un día de triunfo y tragedia, una jornada que demuestra con gran claridad la volatilidad de la conducta humana, especialmente cuando las personas se congregan en multitudes.

El Domingo de Ramos de la Pasión del Señor, recordamos la entrada triunfal de Jesús en Jerusalén anunciada por los cánticos de "¡Hosanna Hijo de David!" "¡Hosanna en las alturas!" Pero aprovechamos este día aparentemente feliz para reflexionar sobre la cruel e innecesaria pasión del Señor y su muerte en una cruz. Una vez más, se aplica el concepto de los "católicos del tanto y el como" para revelar la verdad tanto acerca de la condición pecadora del ser humano como de que Dios hace lo indecible para redimir y perdonar nuestros pecados.

En la segunda lectura de este domingo (Fil 2:6-11), san Pablo proclama la extraordinaria entrega de Dios:

"[Cristo Jesús] aunque existía en forma de Dios, no consideró el ser igual a Dios como algo a qué aferrarse,

sino que se despojó a Sí mismo tomando forma de siervo, haciéndose semejante a los hombres. Y hallándose en forma de hombre, se humilló Él mismo, haciéndose obediente hasta la muerte, y muerte de cruz" (Fil 2:6-8).

Lo que celebramos el Domingo de Ramos dista mucho del "estilo de vida de los ricos y famosos." Aunque las multitudes hayan recibido a Jesús como una superestrella, su verdadera grandeza se encuentra en su humildad. Todo el poder y la majestad de Dios quedarán a un lado dentro de unos pocos días en el momento en que se "despojó a sí mismo" y adoptó la pequeñez de nuestra naturaleza humana. Toda la alegría y la adulación de las multitudes se disipará rápidamente y se convertirá en un grito desagradable y rencoroso: "¡Que lo crucifiquen!"

El recuerdo que nos presenta este domingo de la entrada triunfal en Jerusalén y la trágica pasión y muerte del hombre más inocente que haya existido resulta importante para todos hoy en día. Vivimos en una época en la que los extremos del amor y el odio, el encantamiento y la desilusión dominan a nuestra sociedad y a la Iglesia. A toda hora vemos reflejados estos extremos en las redes sociales. El papa Francisco publica palabras de reto y esperanza en su cuenta de Twitter y miles de personas responden con mensajes que

van desde la gratitud hasta ataques ponzoñosos. Al igual que Jesús, muchos reciben al Santo Padre con cánticos de Hosanna, en tanto que otros lo escupen y dicen cosas horribles de él.

Afortunadamente, san Pablo nos recuerda que el sufrimiento y las vicisitudes nos redimen. Seguimos los pasos de Jesús cuyo amor abnegado ha superado el pecado y ha transformado nuestro mundo de oscuridad en luz.

"Por lo cual Dios también lo exaltó hasta lo sumo, y le confirió el nombre que es sobre todo nombre, para que al nombre de Jesús se doble toda rodilla de los que están en el cielo, y en la tierra, y debajo de la tierra, y toda lengua confiese que Jesucristo es Señor, para gloria de Dios Padre" (Fil 2:9-11).

Los Hosanna que entonamos este fin de semana, aun cuando meditamos acerca del sufrimiento y la muerte de nuestro Señor, deben expresar nuestra genuina alegría y agradecimiento por la presencia de nuestro Redentor entre nosotros hoy en día, todos los días, en el banquete sacrificial que celebramos con Él en cada misa.

Sí, estamos rodeados de dolor y sombras; incluso Jesús expresó su sufrimiento y su sensación de abandono cuando gritó desde la cruz: *"Eli, Eli, lema sabactani?"* que san Mateo nos dice que

significa "Dios mío, Dios mío, ¿por qué me has abandonado?" (Mt 27:46)

Jesús estaba sobrecogido por el dolor; sentía que iba a claudicar, pero no lo hizo. En vez de ello, perdonó nuestros pecados y encomendó su espíritu al Padre.

La tragedia de la Pasión y muerte de Jesús tuvo su epílogo en su triunfante resurrección, su victoria absoluta sobre el poder del pecado y la muerte. El mal seguirá existiendo pero al final no puede vencer y no lo hará.

La primera lectura del Domingo de Ramos (Is 50:4-7) anticipa los últimos pensamientos de Jesús:

"Ofrecí Mi espalda a los que me herían, Y Mis mejillas a los que me arrancaban la barba; No escondí Mi rostro de injurias y salvazos. El Señor Dios me ayuda, Por eso no soy humillado, Por eso he puesto Mi rostro como pedernal, Y sé que no seré avergonzado" (Is 50:6-7).

A medida que concluimos la temporada de la Cuaresma y nos preparamos para el triduo pascual, pidámosle al Señor que nos ayude a mantenernos firmes al enfrentar las tragedias de la vida (grandes y pequeñas). Que siempre mantengamos nuestra confianza en el amor triunfante de Dios. †

Priests offer a unifying message: 'It is in times like these that our faith really shines forth'

By John Shaughnessy

When Father Todd Riebe entered his parish chapel that late March morning, he had an “almost eerie” feeling as he prepared to celebrate Sunday Mass without any of his parishioners physically present there.

Then he looked at the photos of all the smiling parish families that Deacon Michael Prakasam had pinned to the chairs of the pews. And the pastor of Christ the King Parish in Indianapolis smiled as he felt again the special bond that connects pastors in the archdiocese with their parishioners.

“I began to feel a spiritual connection with all the people of the parish precisely during the celebration of so-called ‘private’ Masses,” Father Riebe recalled.

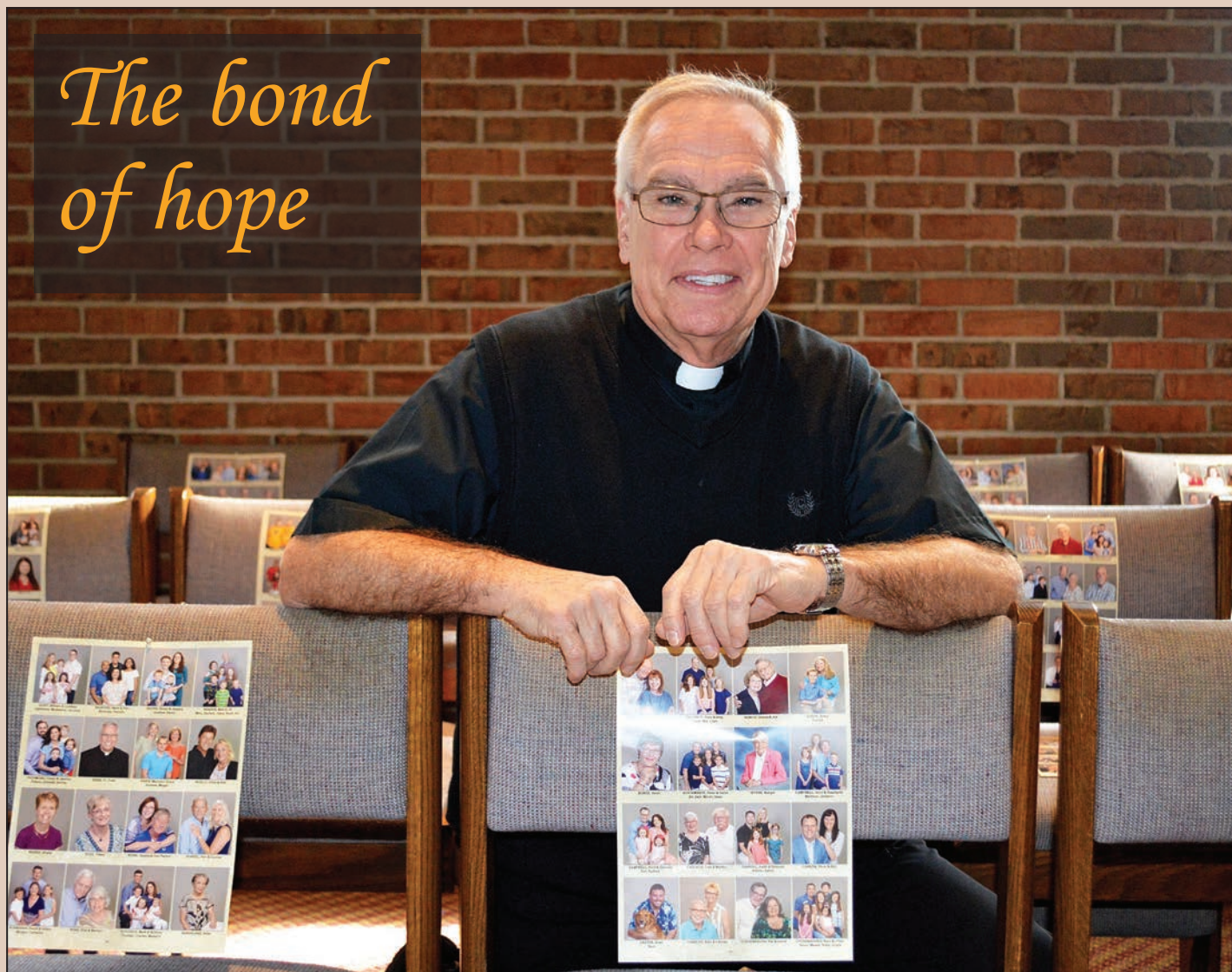
Then another surprising feeling overwhelmed him during this time when all public Masses and services in the archdiocese—including liturgies during Holy Week and on Easter—have been suspended indefinitely because of the coronavirus crisis.

“Even when the restrictions imposed on us by the virus are over, I will be more aware than ever of the presence of people at Mass who are not *physically* with us,” he said. “I think of people in nursing homes or hospitals who would love to be with us, people in jails or prisons who cannot be with us, and people who don’t feel welcome or who have been hurt by the Church or who are still finding their way.

“The Mass—and the love behind the sacrifice that takes place at every Mass—embraces the entire world. It’s ironic that I would come to experience the *presence* of so many people in an empty church.”

Father Riebe is one of three archdiocesan priests that *The Criterion* contacted to share their thoughts on how this uncertain and unprecedented time has impacted their lives and their connection to their parishioners. Yet something greater has come from the insights of Father Riebe, Father Chris Wadelton and Father Tony Hollowell.

The three priests, from different parts of the archdiocese, have essentially combined to provide an informal spiritual guide to help members of the Church in central and southern Indiana make the most of the upcoming Holy Week—and their faith life—during this difficult time.



During this time when public Masses have been suspended in the archdiocese, the photos of the families of Christ the King Parish in Indianapolis have been a source of connection for Father Todd Riebe when the pastor celebrates online Masses in the parish chapel. (Photo by John Shaughnessy)

Embracing the opportunity to sacrifice

“God’s word is always heard in a particular context,” Father Riebe noted. “The context of Lent 2020 is, undoubtedly, the coronavirus. How could the words of John’s Gospel from the Fifth Sunday of Lent not jump off the page at us in the context of the coronavirus? ‘*Lazarus come forth!*’ (Jn 11:43). How we long to hear those words addressed to us.

“In the overall context of Lent, the coronavirus has offered us the opportunity to sacrifice so many of the good things we enjoy, such as freedom of movement and association with friends, for a greater good—the protection of others, especially the most

vulnerable. It’s exactly what Jesus did for us on the cross.”

Staying spiritually connected

In this time when public Masses have been suspended, it’s important to make an act of spiritual communion, noted Father Hollowell, administrator of St. Paul Parish in Tell City and St. Mark Parish in Perry County.

“In fact, it has been practiced by many Catholics who, over the centuries, were not able to receive holy Communion,” he noted. “One of my favorite examples is Father Walter Cizek, who spent six years in a Soviet prison without bread or wine to say Mass. During this time, he made several

acts of spiritual communion each day by praying the rosary. He found great consolation in these daily rosaries.”

Father Hollowell encouraged people to make praying the rosary a part of their spiritual communion. He noted that there is “no more frequent prayer found on the lips of the saints.”

Sharing the hope during Holy Week

Father Chris Wadelton already knows the main theme he will share in his online homilies for Holy Week.

“It is in times like these that our faith really shines forth,” said the pastor of St. Bartholomew Parish in Columbus. “Because of our belief in

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Online Masses help priests continue to connect people to God

By John Shaughnessy

Father Chris Wadelton offered an interesting personal perspective as the archdiocese and many parishes across



Fr. Chris Wadelton

central and southern Indiana provide online Masses in response to the coronavirus crisis.

First, he acknowledged the challenge of not being able to celebrate Mass with his parishioners in the pews.

“I don’t think I realized how much I feed off the energy of the people during a Mass. When I am able to see people’s faces and their reactions, I can see I’m making a connection, and that motivates me.”

At the same time, he said he has received “a lot of good feedback” from people for the online Masses—five in English each week, three in Spanish—that he has celebrated since

March 18, the day when all public Masses in the archdiocese were ended until further notice.

“The music director even provided some basic music, and people commented that it was a comfort to watch Mass from the church and hear the familiar music,” said Father Wadelton, pastor of St. Bartholomew Parish in Columbus. “We have also expanded our Prayers of the Faithful to include more personal intentions, which also helps me and others to feel connected.”

Father Todd Riebe has been pleasantly surprised that many people have taken advantage of online Mass opportunities during this time.

“It points to a hunger in people for spirituality and a desire for that connectedness with God and with one another that parish life offers us,” said Father Riebe, pastor of Christ the King Parish and administrator of St. Thomas Aquinas Parish, both in Indianapolis.

“It doesn’t matter that the quality of our online services will most probably not win any Oscars for technical achievement. What matters is that it

brings us home to our parish. And we all know, ‘There’s no place like home!’ I think an increased use of technology at the parish level will be one of the blessings that will emerge from the present situation.”

Father Tony Hollowell shares an online Sunday Mass as the administrator of St. Paul Parish in Tell City and St. Mark Parish in Perry County. He said he misses the personal connection of celebrating Mass together with his parishioners in church.

“It is a real loss, but even in the midst of that loss, the Mass is very beautiful, because Christ remains truly present,” he said. Then he added, “I have heard from others that it does give them a sense of being connected, which in turn gives me a sense of being connected.”

While the coronavirus crisis has led to changing approaches in the Church, these priests say the heart of their lives are still focused on two goals: keeping their connection with their parishioners and keeping them connected to God.

“As a parish, we are trying our best to remain connected with as many

people as possible, even if it is just a quick phone call, to let them know they are in our thoughts and prayers,” Father Wadelton said. “This has been nice.”

Father Riebe views this time as an opportunity to find a new path of faith to be there for others.

“When people ask me what I love most about being a priest, ‘people’ is always at the top of that list,” he said. “We priests are blessed beyond measure as people open their lives to us in the happiest of moments of their lives and in the most difficult of moments of their lives. Our days are literally filled with people.

“While the pandemic has necessarily closed some doors to us, it has opened others. A good part of my day is now spent on the telephone, and sending and responding to text messages and e-mails. By the middle of every day, I am recharging my cell phone. Where there is a will, there is a way.

“In these days, only caller ID can protect parishioners from their pastors!” †

Faith *Alive!*

A supplement to Catholic newspapers published by Catholic News Service, 3211 Fourth Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20017-1100. All contents are copyrighted © 2020 by Catholic News Service.

Christ's passion calls believers to love and be loved until the moment of their death

By Elise Italiano Ureneck

Years ago when I taught high school theology, I was tasked with developing a curriculum for senior students focused on bioethics and the Church's moral tradition. The course explored issues informed by philosophy, biology, technology and theology.

It was challenging to teach since it dealt with controversial and divisive issues, from contraception to abortion, *in vitro* fertilization and organ donation.

At year's end, we covered end-of-life issues, physician-assisted suicide and euthanasia. It wasn't a happy way to end the course, but it was necessary. After all, the Church is concerned with the whole span of a person's life—from conception to natural death—as well individual and communal rights and responsibilities.

When introducing a new topic, I'd take a poll to gauge where students fell on an issue, to shape my approach and measure moral development. I found that teenagers' initial judgments tracked closely to popular opinion, since teens (as a demographic) favor unrestricted autonomy and are highly skeptical of authority.

I noticed two trends in polling on end-of-life issues: 1) they argued that researchers should pursue the development of cures by any means; and 2) when facing an incurable illness, a person should have the right to take his own life if he feels this is the only way to die with dignity.

The first position was easy to dismantle if the students were on board with the Church's position on abortion. If an embryo is a human person at the earliest stages of development, then the willful destruction of that life can never be considered a moral good, even if there are possible benefits to others.

It also didn't hurt to present them

with cases that proved that adult stem-cell research, which uses a person's own cells for treatment, was proving to be far more effective than embryonic stem-cell treatment for a host of illnesses and conditions.

The second position was harder to challenge. They rightly empathized with people who receive devastating diagnoses: those who will face the loss of control over bodily and cognitive functions, who anticipate experiencing severe pain and who will be rendered utterly dependent upon others.

To date, there are nine states (plus the District of Columbia) in which physician-assisted suicide is legal, with more possibly to follow.

Despite the important cautions being put forward about how these bills threaten the doctor-patient relationship; stand in contrast to suicide prevention campaigns; and will exert economic pressure on patients, the bills' language appeals to compassion, choice, dignity and mercy.

Against that cultural framework, I found it hard to make a case for why helping a person to die was not a compassionate or merciful thing to do.

I set aside polemical arguments in exchange for a viewing of *Of Gods and Men*, a film that chronicles the story of the Trappist monks at Thibirine, who lived among and served the Muslim population in Algeria during a civil war and who were kidnapped and killed in 1996 by the Armed Islamic Group, an Islamist insurgent organization in the north African country.

My students were understandably confused: Why were we watching a foreign film about French monks during a lesson on assisted suicide?

I told them that I wanted to explore the question, "If you knew you were going to die, what would it mean to die with dignity?" from another perspective.



A woman carries a large wooden cross during a Palm Sunday procession in Dili, East Timor. Christ's free embrace of his suffering and death calls believers to love and be loved until the moment of their deaths. (CNS photo/Lirio Da Fonseca, Reuters)

While execution is not the same as illness, I was hoping it would benefit them to witness the monks'

deliberate decision, both individually and communally, to remain with the community they served, to love them and be loved by them until the brutal end that they foresaw and expected.

The exercise worked for many students. A majority of them came to conclude that in our culture, one in which autonomy is sacred and natural communities have broken down, to suffer until the end makes little sense.

But for Christians, dying with dignity means using every last bit of time that we are given, no matter our quality of life or the kind of death that we will meet, to love and to allow others to love us. "Compassion" is

rooted in a Latin word that means "to suffer with." Death is not meant to be a solitary act.

It's the lesson that the Lord leaves us with in this season of Lent, most visibly beginning on Palm Sunday and ending on Calvary.

Jesus enters Jerusalem, fully aware of what is to befall him. And yet, as St. Paul writes, he was "obedient to death, even death on a cross" (Phil 2:8). Crucifixion was both painful and humiliating. Jesus, who "was in the form of God," but who came "in human likeness" shows that God enters fully into our mortality, including the very worst of it (Phil 2:6-7).

To those arguing for a person's right to take his or her life, the model of being "obedient to death" would seem like the ultimate loss of freedom.

But the word "obey" is rooted in a Latin word that means "to listen." Death is a teacher, with its own wisdom to impart. That wisdom, for the Christian, consists of paying attention to the Lord's final earthly lesson: That while there is still life, there is still time to love.

(Elise Italiano Ureneck, associate director of the Center for the Church in the 21st Century at Boston College, is a columnist for Catholic News Service.) †



A re-enactment of the crucifixion of Jesus is seen in Bensheim, Germany. As St. Paul writes, Jesus was "obedient to death, even death on a cross" (Phil 2:8). (CNS photo/Kai Pfaffenbach, Reuters)

Pastoral Ministry/Saul Llasca

As Christians, we must follow Jesus' example of love

Easter Sunday comes with Jesus Christ's resurrection. It is also a time to resurrect our hearts and remember our forgotten brothers and sisters.



In the New Testament, Jesus brings us good news. Through his life, he spent time doing good, loving, caring and consoling the afflicted. People came to him from

everywhere (Mk 1:45), but who were those people? They were separated from the main groups. The poor and isolated found in Jesus, somebody who loved and defended them. They saw somebody that spoke with authority and conviction. Jesus not only loved the poor and afflicted, but he also took defense on their behalf.

Jesus shows us the way; what is the call as Christians that we should follow? It certainly is the loving and caring of people. But sometimes it is hard to take defense of the one that is being left out. Many saints teach us how to love. St. Teresa of Calcutta taught us the way

to care and love the forgotten ones, and St. Oscar Romero is an example of defending the poor and the oppressed. He died celebrating holy Mass. His life was marked by the defense of the poor and those afflicted by injustice and tyranny.

It seems that nowadays, there is indifference—an insensitivity for our brothers and sisters in need around the world. Protests around the globe marked the year 2019. Conflicts and tensions arose more than ever in countries like Venezuela, Chile, Bolivia, Honduras and others. The number of people dying and incarcerated keeps rising. It seems that violence keeps escalating.

Our task as part of the Christian community is to follow Jesus' example. The impact he made in the world needs to be imitated. It is not enough to know our faith well, but humankind needs to take action. The *ecclesia*—the Church—needs to put their faith in action and to listen to the voice of the oppressed. 14 Jesus spoke about the majority who were and continue to be oppressed. He saw them as a flock with no shepherd and with hunger. Jesus also talked about the minority who oppressed others

(Mt 23:13). Jesus defended the weak and exposed the oppressors by his words. He lived in times of internal and external crisis. But his fidelity for the people who were less fortunate was an act of pure love.

Jesus calls us to look with mercy to our struggling brothers and sisters. He wants us to assist ending their misfortune, even if they do not thank us. Jesus didn't do good for recognition. He wanted those who followed him to receive happiness (Mt 5:3-12, the Beatitudes). He continues to embrace the marginalized and sinners and sits with them. He is happy that God is revealed to them, and through metanoia, many achieve a radical change of heart.

Jesus is asking us to look to others with brotherly and sisterly love. He is appealing to our hearts to share what we have and to follow him (Mt 10:17). The peace of the world depends on each of us. Our communities cannot be indifferent to the suffering of others. This is our call: to "take up the cross and follow him" (Mt 16:24). Let us make Jesus the center of our lives.

Jesus have mercy on me and guide me!

Amid the Fray/Greg Erlandson

A crisis that may be an opportunity

"Never let a serious crisis go to waste," said former Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel. His adage came to mind as I surveyed the



human and economic wreckage strewn in the wake of the coronavirus.

Also known as COVID-19, the virus is slashing its way through the world's countries, continent by continent. Some countries have done a good job of

testing and identifying those likely infected.

Ours is not one of them. This leaves us a bit in the dark, with some people saying millions may eventually be infected and others disbelieving the concern of the experts.

Governments and organizations can no longer wait for definitive data, however, and are taking dramatic steps to curb the spread of the disease. If this is our new reality—standing six feet apart and giving each other elbow bumps—let's not let this crisis go to waste.

There was another crisis not long ago. The 2008 recession at first prompted a wave of articles about the upside of a stock market down slide. People were going to stop being materialistic, pundits predicted.

We looked at the vanished fortunes and the jobs lost after the wealth-obsessed frenzy of the early 2000s, and we felt remorse. This is not who we wanted to be, people said.

For a moment, people talked about focusing on families and friends, getting their priorities in order and dropping out of the rat race.

That seems like a long time ago. The gap between rich and poor, in fact the gap between rich and not so rich, has grown more acute, and until recently the stock market was soaring into the stratosphere, showing at times the same irrational exuberance of bull markets past.

Until now.

Which brings us to our current crisis and the social upheaval it is causing. Disneyland closing, sports arenas shuttered, stocks doing a backflip into the 1930s.

If it lasts, we will see the newest hired to be the first fired, as major industries and small businesses try to "right size" themselves. People will be hurting not just from the disease, but from the shockwaves of the disease.

The doctors and the scientists are tackling the virus, and we must pray for their success. But maybe we are getting a second chance at not wasting the crisis. Let's count the ways.

First, gratitude. For those of us who can wait until the stocks rebound, for those of us whose families have not been harmed badly by the virus or its shockwaves, for those of us who have had the luxury of feeling inconvenienced by the closures and the social distancing, let's give thanks. Gratitude is our spiritual immune system telling us we really do have all we need.

Second, resist the fear. When a crisis hits, we have two choices: give in to the fear or resist it. There is a moment early in a crisis when the news media and social media can whip us into a frothy mess of speculation and rumor. It's one thing to be mixing kooky recipes for hand sanitizer in the kitchen. It's more serious when we start pointing fingers and looking for scapegoats.

Third, stop thinking about ourselves and start thinking about others. That is the antidote to fear. Protect the elderly and the sick. Help those who are economically hurting. Look out for the people who may have no safety net. In short, do what is needed for the common good.

In a time of polarization and social division, maybe it takes a serious crisis to remind us to stand together and care for each other.

(Greg Erlandson, director and editor-in-chief of Catholic News Service, can be reached at gerlandson@catholicnews.com.) †

It's All Good/Patti Lamb

Finish Lent strong, be ambassadors of Christ and spread the Good News

Because of the global pandemic and mandated social distancing, this Lent looks far different than any most of us have



ever experienced. At the time I'm writing this column, Masses, penance services, Stations of the Cross and everything that makes Lent more meaningful are not happening due to mandates put in place to protect our health.

I've always appreciated these Lenten customs, including services during Holy Week, as I feel that they are powerful in helping us more fully appreciate Easter Sunday.

This year, however, I just learned Holy Week liturgies are not occurring, and we also will not have the privilege of coming together on Easter Sunday to celebrate Jesus' resurrection.

But I recently heard something I hear every week—in a totally new way—when streaming Sunday Mass on my computer. And what I heard gives me hope for a spiritually productive end of Lent.

It was the priest's last line of the Mass: "Go in peace, to love and serve the Lord."

It's sometimes said a bit differently, such as "Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life."

That day, for some reason, the priest's last words served as a call like I've never heard before.

This is an opportunity for us all to finish Lent strong, and glorify God by prayers, fasting and almsgiving, and service. I believe this is our call to be ambassadors for Christ and spread the Good News in ways each of us can.

Now, especially, there are many worthy organizations that would benefit from our stewardship. In addition to giving online at our parishes or dropping our envelopes off at church offices to keep everything in order until we're back together, there are many others needing assistance at this time. Opportunities to share our time, talent and treasure abound.

So many are in need of our prayers. How about turning off "screen time" and calling the family together to pray the rosary, offering it up for a special prayer intention.

When we can't gather to worship, we can still bring Christ to others in our acts of service. Everything is being delivered these days, and we are called to deliver Christ's message of love.

This will look entirely different for each of us. But here are a few examples I witnessed in my own community when I recently took a walk.

Our neighbors, in their late 80s, had

grocery bags on their porch dropped off by a friend from church.

My daughter Margaret created a sign on our driveway with vibrant sidewalk chalk. It said, "Pray, hope, don't worry," words once spoken by Padre Pio. That was the adopted mission statement of her religious education class last year at our parish. She was inspired to do this when she saw other sidewalk chalk messages on the trail near our house. One said, "Let's help each other!"

On my walk, I bumped into a friend. She's a hairdresser whose business has been negatively impacted since her business is temporarily closed. She shared that one client put a Target gift card on her porch, and another just purchased salon gift cards for the next two appointments to help her cash flow.

A church on the trail where I walked posted this on its message board: "We serve a risen Christ. He lives."

This year, especially, we are called to proclaim the Gospel by our witness.

How will your family actively make the end of Lent—and Easter—meaningful? How will you deliver the message of resurrection and hope?

(Patti Lamb, a member of St. Susanna Parish in Plainfield, is a regular columnist for The Criterion.) †

The Human Side/Fr. Eugene Hemrick

Securing our nation's future through embracing the power of virtue

One positive way of coping with our topsy-turvy world is to do soul-searching on how better to secure a wholesome future.



Theologian Father Romano Guardini does this, starting with a reflection on the awesome powers of our postmodern age. How do we get power over those powers so they serve humankind for

the best and don't lead to a horrific calamity? he asks.

He answers that humankind needs to develop a new order based on three spiritual powers within us: earnestness, gravity and asceticism.

"Earnestness," he states, "is the will to know what is really at stake; it must

brush aside empty rhetoric extolling progress or the conquest of nature; it must face heroically the duties forced upon man by his new situation."

Note how Father Guardini speaks of "willingness," a heartfelt desire to cut through that which hinders and sidetracks truth.

"The virtue of gravity is personal courage devoid of the pathetic, a courage opposed to the looming chaos. Gravity and courage must be purer and stronger even than the courageous man needs to face either atom bombs or bacteriological warfare because it must restrain the chaos rising out of the very works of man. It will find itself—as true courage always does—opposed by an enemy, the masses, ranged against its public organizations clouded with catch words."

In addressing courage and the masses, General Douglas MacArthur

wrote, "Last, but no means least courage—moral courage, the courage of one's convictions, the courage to see things through. The world is in a constant conspiracy against the brave. It's the age-old struggle—the roar of the crowd on one side and the voice of your conscience on the other."

Father Guardini states asceticism and humility are needed to cope with our new age because we must first master our self to master our newly developed powers. Avoiding being a know-it-all and practicing docility, which is an essential part of prudence, is imperative.

Imperfect societies have always existed. Only through embracing the power of virtue do nations survive.

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

Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord/Msgr. Owen F. Campion

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, April 5, 2020

- Matthew 21:1-11
- Isaiah 50:4-7
- Philippians 2:6-11
- Matthew 26:14-27:66

This weekend, the Church observes Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord, recalling with such great reverence and intense drama



Christ's entry into Jerusalem, bringing us into Holy Week.

The liturgy includes two readings from the Gospels. The first occurs at the blessing of the palms, and as the procession of the faithful bearing the palms assembles. It

reveals both the Lord's divine power, seen through Christ's knowledge that a donkey and colt are in the village ahead, and the mission of Jesus as Messiah.

Jesus is approaching Jerusalem, more than just a city in pious Jewish minds, but the holiest place in which God's temple stands, where David once reigned as king, and where the prophets spoke in the name of God. It was, and still is, the center of Jewish faith and culture. It was to be the site of the culmination of the Lord's mission on Earth.

The crowd proclaims the Lord as "son of David," greeting Jesus as their own legitimate king, David's heir, repudiating the detested Roman emperor (Mt 21:9). It sets the stage for Good Friday. The Romans allowed no one to short-change the emperor.

For its next reading, the Church gives us a passage from the third part of Isaiah, one of those eloquent and expressive sections of Isaiah called by biblical scholars the "songs of the suffering servant." Poetic and descriptive, these four songs laud an unflinchingly faithful servant of God, who despite abuse and persecution, remains steadfastly loyal. Christians have always seen Jesus refigured in these beautiful poems.

In the next reading, from St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians, the stress again is on Jesus and again in the literary genre of poetry. Experts believe that this passage was an early Christian liturgical hymn.

Its deep understanding of the person and place of Christ is clear and compelling.

Finally, the liturgy presents the passion narrative of St. Matthew's Gospel. Matthew's depiction of Jesus, even in the horrifying circumstances of the passion, conveys powerful lessons.

First, even at this time, Jesus is the Christ. Far from being overwhelmed and helpless, the Lord is majestic and in control. He is a victim, of course, but completely complying and committed to his mission as the Savior.

While the Apostles do not come across as heroic, to say the least, Jesus never repudiates them. He called them. Despite their fear and cowardice, especially in Peter's case, their call endures, as the call stands for all called to discipleship. Believers sin and fall, but they can return. Their vocation is not cancelled.

Finally, all the intrigue, conspiracy and prejudice that surrounded Jesus fall away before the fact that the Lord triumphs. He is always in control.

Reflection

Matthew's passion narrative is the centerpiece of this weekend's Liturgy of the Word. It is easy to lose its deep meaning by concentrating on the awfulness of all that was brought to bear upon Jesus.

Certainly, the treachery and cruelty cannot be dismissed or understated. These elements underscore the evil that genuinely exists in the world and overtakes many people.

Next week, the Church will celebrate Easter. Jesus rose. Never forget. Even in the dark hours of Good Friday, the Lord was almighty and victorious. Nothing occurred without ultimately lending itself to the fulfillment of the divine plan of salvation.

The praise of the people who acclaimed Jesus' entry into Jerusalem does not illustrate fickleness just on their part long ago. We all are fickle.

The reading from Philippians illustrates not only that Jesus is Lord, but that we can be good disciples, even if we fall. Christ awaits us with forgiveness. No sin breaks our relationship with God, unless we choose to reject God ultimately and finally. The Lord, living and victorious, always offers us mercy, if simply we ask. †

Daily Readings

Monday, April 6
Monday of Holy Week
Isaiah 42:1-7
Psalm 27:1-3, 13-14
John 12:1-11

Tuesday, April 7
Tuesday of Holy Week
Isaiah 49:1-6
Psalm 71:1-4a, 5ab-6ab, 15, 17
John 13:21-33, 36-38

Wednesday, April 8
Wednesday of Holy Week
Isaiah 50:4-9a
Psalm 69:8-10, 21-22, 31, 33-34
Matthew 26:14-25

Thursday, April 9
Holy Thursday
Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper
Exodus 12:1-8, 11-14
Psalm 116:12-13, 15-16bc, 17-18
1 Corinthians 11:23-26
John 13:1-15

Friday, April 10
Good Friday of the Passion of the Lord
Celebration of the Lord's Passion
Isaiah 52:13-53:12
Psalm 31:2, 6, 12-13, 15-16, 17, 25
Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9
John 18:1-19:42

Saturday, April 11
Holy Saturday
Holy Saturday Night—The Easter Vigil
Genesis 1:1-2:2
or Genesis 1:1, 26-31a
Psalm 104:1-2, 5-6, 10, 12-14, 24, 35
or Psalm 33:4-7, 12-13, 20, 22
Genesis 22:1-18
or Genesis 22:1-2, 9a, 10-13, 15-18
Psalm 16:5, 8-11
Exodus 14:15-15:1
(Response) Exodus 15:1-6, 17-18
Isaiah 54:5-14
Psalm 30:2, 4-6, 11-13
Isaiah 55:1-11
(Response) Isaiah 12:2-3, 4-6
Baruch 3:9-15, 32-4:4
Psalm 19:8-11
Ezra 36:16-17a, 18-28
Psalms 42:3, 5; 43:3-4;
or, when baptism is celebrated,
(Response) Isaiah 12:2-3, 4bcd, 5-6
or Psalm 51:12-15, 18-19
Romans 6:3-11
Psalm 118:1-2, 16ab-17, 22-23
Matthew 28:1-10

Sunday, April 12
Easter Sunday of the Resurrection of the Lord
Acts 10:34a, 37-43
Psalm 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23
Colossians 3:1-4
or 1 Corinthians 5:6b-8
John 20:1-9
or Matthew 28:1-10
or, at an afternoon or evening Mass,
Luke 24:13-35

Question Corner/Fr. Kenneth Doyle

Jesus' human and divine natures are seen in his tears for Lazarus

QI have always been attracted to the verse in St. John's Gospel that says that, learning of the death of Lazarus,



"Jesus wept" (Jn 11:35). It shows, I think, how much Christ loved Lazarus and all of humanity. But reflecting further on that passage, I'm wondering just why Jesus wept.

Do you think it was because Jesus was actually grieving over the death of his friend? Or do you think that he wept tears of joy, knowing that Lazarus was not suffering from his illness anymore and that Christ was going to use the occasion to show forth the power of God? (Hawaii)

AThat short and simple verse from the Gospel reflects a complex truth, a truth that prompts your excellent question and makes the answer difficult. Jesus had two natures: He was truly human and truly divine, and both natures were at work in the matter of Lazarus.

Pope Leo the Great, reflecting on this same passage, is thought to have said: "In his humanity Jesus wept for Lazarus; in his divinity, he raised him from the dead."

Jesus felt deeply the pain of Lazarus' death. When Martha and Mary sent word to Jesus of the impending crisis, their message had been, "Master, the one you love is ill" (Jn 11:3).

Clearly, Jesus knew in advance what he was going to do, for he told them, "This illness is not to end in death, but is for the glory of God" (Jn 11:4). But his awareness of that eventual outcome did not relieve Christ's human sorrow, and this is the mystery of his two natures. And so, the answer to our letter writer's questions is "Yes."

Jesus was truly grieving over Lazarus' passing and the pain it was causing Martha and Mary, but just as surely he knew that the situation would serve ultimately to glorify God.

The mystery of that duality will only lift fully when we, one day, rest in God's house. But meanwhile, it may help to think that, right now, we ourselves struggle to balance those twin feelings. When someone we love dies, our faith promises the joy of reunion; yet, even so, we feel deeply the sting of loss. We believe in eternal life, but that doesn't stop our tears.

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

My Journey to God

The Way of the Cross

By Thomas J. Rillo

Jesus carried the wooden cross to Calvary
He shouldered the load for you and me
On the wood of the cross he was crucified
There on the cross he was nailed and died.

Scripture reveals that the cross we bear
Will be heavy and burdensome and not fair
The way of the cross is the way to God
With faith in our hearts this way we trod.

Growing closer to God is always our goal
Listening to God's word is to save our soul
Prayers on the way to God are the steppingstone
The way of the cross is always clearly shown.

The way of the cross is the way to eternal life
Eternal life in the heavenly realm free of strife
The way leads to the home of the living Lord
There a trouble-free existence is our reward.

The way of the cross is the way to the Lord
Obstacles are met and the river of doubt we ford
We carry our heavy cross and we do not despair
We journey the way of the cross with love and care.

(Thomas J. Rillo is a member of St. Charles Borromeo Parish in Bloomington and a Benedictine oblate of Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad. Photo: Lifesize sculptures at the Shrine of Christ's Passion in St. John, Ind., depict the Fifth Station of the Cross in which Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus carry his cross.) (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)

Send material for consideration to "My Journey to God," *The Criterion*, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367 or e-mail to nhoefler@archindy.org. †

PRIESTS

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Christ, we are better able to accept adversity without losing hope, and share that hope with others.

“It is when it gets dark that you can see the smallest flickers of light. We can be that small light that will help someone else who is struggling in the dark. The overall message will be one of looking forward with hope, not fear; patience, not despair; love, not guardedness.

“There are a lot of silver linings in the storm clouds above if we can help people by pointing them out.”

Celebrating Easter

Father Riebe believes that “Easter will be experienced by many of us in a new and a much deeper way this year.”

“Easter is the story of new life, new beginnings,” he said. “It’s the story of the power of a love that conquers even death.

“While we may not be able to celebrate Holy Week in our usual manner this year, all the same, paschal candles around the world will be blessed and lit in the early darkness of Holy Saturday night, with or without a congregation. That light and the victory that it symbolizes will be carried into our churches and will be waiting for us when we return—whenever that may be.”

Relying upon the grace of God

For Father Hollowell, this period of “social distancing” has been a blessing in some ways, giving him the opportunity to experience increased times of “quiet

and stillness.” But that blessing has also involved challenges.

“There have been some periods of boredom, fear, doubt and confusion, but ... every cross given has also come with a corresponding grace to carry it. And there are many friendships and relationships which have been a source of renewal right when I needed it, especially my relationship with God.



Fr. Tony Hollowell

“Through these graces, I continue to believe what I have always experienced ... [that] my ultimate source of hope does not lie in sociological or medical strategies. My hope lies in the Providence of God who is always at work in the world as a healer and a savior.”

Taking our direction from Christ

In conversations about the coronavirus crisis, Father Wadelton said that many people have asked him, “Does God have a plan in mind for all of this?” Here’s his answer:

“I don’t believe that God sent the coronavirus into the world with some plan in mind. However, we can take direction from Christ on how to deal with adversity. We can choose to work with God to bring something positive out of the situation. We can resist the tendency toward fear, and instead turn toward God to pray for a cure.

“Also, I feel a strange sense of being united with people right now in a special



The signboard of Christ the King Parish in Indianapolis offers an encouraging message amid the coronavirus crisis. (Photo by John Shaughnessy)

way because we all have this common enemy we are trying to defeat. There are all sorts of lessons we could learn from that.”

Living the Mass

During this time and always, Father Hollowell said, the greatest goals we have as Christians are, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength and mind, and to love your neighbor as yourself” (Mk 12:29-31).

“At the end of the day, the most important thing is *living* the Mass,” he said. “It is always possible to live in our

very bodies the love of the one whose sacrifice we commemorate at every Mass.

“Even outside of this current pandemic, most Catholics do not become holy by attending or watching daily Mass. They become holy by surrendering to the will of God, which often looks like getting up early to go to work, taking care of children when they are sick or need help, and never having a moment to yourself.

“The summit of the Mass is found in Christ’s words, ‘This is my body, given up for you.’ And we always have the opportunity to *live* these words.” †

USCCB effort will help parishes assist pregnant and parenting moms

By Natalie Hoefler

Eleven months ago, Brie Anne Varick gave birth to a little girl, her and her husband’s first child. Her recuperation was an eye-opening experience.



Brie Anne Varick

Having a flexible job, maternity leave, the help of a husband with paternity leave and meals from a supportive faith community were “a blessing,” she says.

“But it was still hard,” Varick admits. “Try recovering physically when you haven’t slept a solid four hours in weeks!”

The experience made her reflect on single mothers without similar support:

How do single moms earning minimum wage afford all the costs of having and caring for a baby? How do they get child care when most day care centers have a 3-month minimum age requirement? How do single mothers handle the stress of pregnancy and parenting if they don’t have a network of support?

Such concerns make Varick, archdiocesan Office of Human Life and Dignity coordinator, excited about the launching of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops’ (USCCB) “Walking with Moms in Need” year of service. The effort began on March 25 and will end on the same date in 2021.

“This effort is definitely needed,” she says. “We have a lot of organizations, non-profits, parishes, and archdiocesan programs that are waiting to be utilized, and want—and need—to share these resources.”

Parishes best know local needs and resources

The year of service provides parishes, deaneries and dioceses “an opportunity to assess, expand and communicate resources to pregnant moms and families in need,” according to the USCCB’s web page about “Walking with Moms in Need.”

The effort coincides with the 25th anniversary of a hallmark pro-life encyclical. On March 25, 1995, St. John Paul II released “*Evangelium vitae*” (“The Gospel of Life”), concerning the value and inviolability of human life.

Accordingly, the USCCB’s pro-life committee is coordinating the year of service. Its chairman, Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann of Kansas City, Kan., announced the effort in a letter to U.S. bishops late last year.

“The challenges can be immense for women in difficult pregnancies, especially women in poverty,” the letter states. “According to 2014 statistics from abortion providers, women who chose abortion were poor, young, and unmarried: 75 percent were low income, 60 percent were in their 20’s, and 86 percent were unmarried.”

The letter notes that women in difficult or crisis pregnancies “should see the Church as a place where they can find help, especially with its myriad of social services and organizations dedicated to meeting the needs of people in crisis.

“But do we have an accurate picture of what is available, and how we communicate it?”

The U.S. bishops were encouraged to invite the parishes in their dioceses to take part in the “Walking with Moms in Need” effort.

In February, Archbishop Charles C. Thompson sent a letter to priests in the archdiocese encouraging them to enlist their parish’s participation in the effort.

“Every region is different, every community is unique, and every parish is one-of-a-kind,” Archbishop Thompson states in his letter. “Your parish is best positioned to identify the local pregnancy [and parenting] help resources that are currently available, and to recognize potential gaps that may need to be addressed.”

‘A central place to go’ to find local resources

The first stage of the initiative for participating parishes includes praying for single pregnant and parenting mothers, and raising awareness of the challenges they face.

Each participating parish will then create a core team. Using tools, tips and resources on the USCCB’s “Walking with Moms in Need” website, they will identify and report local resources that help such mothers. Examples include



parish- and Catholic-sponsored ministries, faith- and secular-based food banks, pregnancy care centers, adoption services, maternity homes, hospitals, social service agencies and more.

The results will be reported to Varick. Ultimately, she says, “The archdiocese will have a website that will highlight resources in each deanery so that there will be a central place for people to go if they are looking for help” for themselves or a mother in need.

She admits that the temporary closing of parishes in response to the coronavirus has delayed the progress of the initiative’s first steps.

“But we can start praying now, while we’re in our homes waiting through this uncertain time,” Varick says. “And we can start using social media to raise awareness of the challenges these women face and the places we know of in our local communities who can help.”

‘We do support them and their choice for life’

This year of service for pregnant and parenting moms “is so needed,” says Varick. “The pro-life movement is making an emphasis on loving *both* the baby and the mother. This [initiative] gives people a way to live out this message.”

Finding and identifying resources will be helpful, she says. But no inventory will be of use if it is not communicated and promulgated.

“I hope that each parish will look at ways to better communicate the list of resources they identify, so that anyone in any particular parish or neighborhood would know where to send a pregnant woman or mother in need if she were to ask for help.”

When information is lacking about available resources, Varick continues, “programs can be duplicated, while other areas of need will not be met.

“If we can have a better idea of what is available, we can share our resources with each other and focus our efforts, time, finances and volunteers to fill the areas where we see needs.

“This [year of service] is our opportunity to show these women they are loved, and that we *do* support them and their decision to choose life.”

(For more information on the USCCB’s “Walking with Moms in Need” year of service, tools, resources and a suggested timeline, go to www.walkingwithmomsinneed.com. For questions or help in implementing this project in your parish, contact Brie Anne Varick at 317-236-1543 or e-mail bvarick@archindy.org. To order “Walking with Moms in Need” prayer cards, go to shorturl.at/dfjv9.) †

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REPORT SEXUAL MISCONDUCT NOW

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

- 1 Ethics Point**
Confidential, Online Reporting
www.archdioceseofindianapolis.ethicspoint.com or 888-393-6810
- 2** Carla Hill, Archdiocese of Indianapolis, Victim Assistance Coordinator
P.O. Box 1410, Indianapolis, IN 46206-1410
317-236-1548 or 800-382-9836, ext. 1548
carlahill@archindy.org

SUSPENSION

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“rooted in the liturgies themselves” are being developed to facilitate the prayer of Catholics across the archdiocese during Holy Week. They will be available at www.archindy.org in the coming days and can be used on their own or while viewing livestreamed celebrations of the liturgies.

“These are our most significant days of celebration for us as Catholics,” he said. “We can mark those moments by uniting remotely through the prayer of the Church in the liturgies of Holy Week and make them very personal in homes where families pray together with the resources that we’ll provide.”

Recognizing that not all archdiocesan Catholics may have the capability to view livestreamed liturgies, Father Beidelman said the archdiocesan website will be updated in the coming days to include additional resources available on the Internet to help the faithful enter more fully into Holy Week.

Forgiveness of sins

In another statement posted at the archdiocesan website on March 25, Archbishop Thompson announced that, because of the pandemic, “until further notice requests for individual confession should be postponed unless it is requested by one who is in imminent danger of death.”

The same statement also noted the Church’s teaching that, when sacramental confession and absolution are unavailable, forgiveness of sins, even mortal ones, is available through what the Church calls “perfect contrition” (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* #1452).

Perfect contrition occurs when the following conditions are met:

- A person is sorry for his or her sins out of their love of God.
- That sorrow is expressed by a sincere request for forgiveness (such as an act of contrition).
- There is an intention to go to sacramental confession as soon as it is offered.

“The Church never asks us to do the

impossible, and always is interested in the salvation of souls,” Father Beidelman said. “And so, even in this extraordinary time where we don’t have widespread availability to individual confession and absolution, the Church still allows for that option for perfect contrition.”

Although Indiana Gov. Eric Holcomb issued a stay-at-home order that became effective on March 25, the ministry of priests in cases of imminent death is still allowed.

Father Beidelman said that, in such circumstances, priests can minister “with an abundance of caution and in great collaboration with health care professionals who can make that happen in whatever way they determine.”

“Hopefully those situations are few and far between, but we know that there are going to be some,” he said. “Some people are really going to be putting themselves in harm’s way. The more people that can stay at home, the better.”

The archbishop’s statement regarding the forgiveness of sin also included

information about plenary indulgences made available by Pope Francis that are specifically related to the coronavirus pandemic. (See related article on page 3.)

Father Beidelman said the indulgences are “a wonderful offer” made by the pope in response to “the heaviness of this time, with all its restrictions and the sacrifices people are having to make.”

“The opportunity for a spiritual load to be lifted is expressed beautifully in pursuing a plenary indulgence,” Father Beidelman said.

Decisions made by Archbishop Thompson related to the suspension of public celebration of the liturgy and the sacrament of penance, said Father Beidelman, have been motivated by the desire to help stop the spread of the virus.

“It’s an act of charity when we embrace staying at home and uniting ourselves spiritually to one another, the works of the Church and especially to our Lord in prayer and sacrifice,” he said. “It’s a great opportunity for us to participate in the great good of caring for others.” †

INDULGENCES

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conversion to God,” he said.

That is why there are several conditions for receiving an indulgence:

- A spirit detached from sin.
- Sacramental confession as soon as possible.
- Eucharistic communion as soon as possible.
- Prayer for the Holy Father’s intentions.

Those who are sick and their caregivers can unite themselves spiritually whenever possible through the media to the celebration of Mass or the recitation of the rosary or the Stations of the Cross or other forms of devotion, according to Cardinal Mauro Piacenza, head of the Apostolic Penitentiary, a Vatican court that deals with matters of conscience and with indulgences.

If this is not possible, “they are asked

to recite the Creed, the Lord’s Prayer and an invocation to Mary,” he told Vatican News on March 21.

“All others—those who offer prayers for the souls of the dead, those who suffer and plead for an end to the pandemic—are asked, where possible, to visit the Blessed Sacrament or to participate in eucharistic adoration. Alternatively, [they can] read the Holy Scriptures for at least half an hour or recite the rosary or the Way of the Cross,” he said.

The faithful can claim the indulgence for themselves or offer it on behalf of someone who has died.

The website of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) has also created a special link on its website to a page offering various resources for the nation’s Catholics as they weather the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

The webpage, titled, “Together in Christ: Responding to the Coronavirus,” can be found at usccb.org/coronavirus.

Among the many resources on the USCCB page are lists of websites for Mass being livestreamed by various outlets, such as Catholic TV and EWTN, on various Internet platforms; links to prayers for an end to COVID-19,

including from the pope and Los Angeles Archbishop Jose H. Gomez, USCCB president; and daily reflections “to help us all during this trying time.”

Lists on the page will be updated as more resources become available. †

Vatican confirms Pope Francis does not have COVID-19

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Neither Pope Francis nor any of his closest collaborators have the COVID-19 virus, said Matteo Bruni, director of the Vatican press office.

In a note on March 28, Bruni confirmed that a monsignor, who works in the Vatican Secretariat of State and lives in the Domus Sanctae Marthae, where Pope Francis lives, did test positive for the coronavirus and, “as a precaution,” was hospitalized.

The Italian newspaper *Il Messaggero* and the Jesuit-run *America* magazine published reports on March 25 about the monsignor testing positive.

Bruni said that as of March 28, the Vatican health service had conducted more than 170 tests for the virus. No one else who lives at the Domus Sanctae Marthae tested positive, Bruni said.

As soon as the monsignor tested positive, he said, his room and office were sanitized and all the people he had come into contact with over the preceding days were contacted.

“The health authorities carried out tests on the people in closest contact with the positive individual,” Bruni said. “The results confirmed the absence of other positive cases” among the residents of the Vatican guesthouse, but another employee of the Holy See who was in “close contact with the official” did test positive.

That brings to six the number of people in the Vatican who have tested positive, he said.

The Vatican press office had confirmed the first four cases on March 24. The first,

already confirmed by the Vatican on March 6, was a priest from Bergamo who had a routine pre-employment exam at the Vatican health clinic. After he was discovered with symptoms, the clinic was closed temporarily for special cleaning, and the five people the priest came into contact with were put under a preventive quarantine.

There were reports at the same time that the offices of the Secretariat of State were closed temporarily for a thorough cleaning.

The Vatican did not say when the next three people tested positive, but it said one worked in the Vatican warehouse and two worked at the Vatican Museums.

All four, the Vatican said on March 24, “were placed in precautionary isolation” before their test results came back. “The isolation has already lasted more than 14 days; currently they are receiving care in Italian hospitals or in their own homes.”

Both *America* magazine and *Il Messaggero* said Pope Francis was unlikely to have had contact with the monsignor from the Secretariat of State who tested positive. Both reported that Pope Francis has been eating his meals in his room rather than the dining room since coming down with a bad cold after Ash Wednesday, Feb. 26.

While the Vatican has canceled all group meetings, Pope Francis continues to meet with individuals each day.

News reports said the pope and his guests use hand sanitizer before and after the meetings. †

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Cardinal vicar of Rome hospitalized after testing positive for COVID-19

ROME (CNS) -- Cardinal Angelo De Donatis, the papal vicar for Rome, was hospitalized after testing positive for the COVID-19 virus, the Diocese of Rome announced.

“After showing some symptoms” on March 30, the 66-year-old cardinal was tested, the diocese said; when the test came back positive, he was hospitalized at the Church-owned Gemelli hospital.

“He has a fever, but his general condition is good, and he has begun anti-viral therapy,” the diocesan statement said.

Those who have been working in close contact with Cardinal De Donatis are in preventive self-isolation, it added.

According to Vatican News, the cardinal had very few meetings in recent days and “declared that he had not been at the Vatican” since the coronavirus outbreak began; instead, he has maintained “only

telephone contact with the pontiff.”

While the pope is the bishop of the Diocese of Rome, the papal vicar exercises most of the powers of a local bishop and presides over a vicariate with most of the usual offices found in the chancery of a large archdiocese, including a diocesan Caritas and offices for personnel, religious education and ecumenism.

“I, too, am living this trial,” Cardinal De Donatis said in a statement on March 30. “I trust the Lord and the support of the prayers of all of you, dear faithful of the church of Rome.”

“I am living this moment as an occasion providence has given me to share the suffering of many of our brothers and sisters,” he said. “I offer my prayers for you, for the entire diocesan community and for the inhabitants of the city of Rome.” †



Above, Pope Francis arrives for a prayer service in an empty St. Peter's Square at the Vatican on March 27. At the conclusion of the service the pope held the Eucharist as he gave an extraordinary blessing "urbi et orbi" ("to the city and the world"). The service was livestreamed in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)

POPE

continued from page 1

This Lent your call reverberates urgently: "Be converted!" "Return to me with all your heart" (Jl 2:12). You are calling on us to seize this time of trial as a *time of choosing*. It is not the time of your judgment, but of our judgment: a time to choose what matters and what passes away, a time to separate what is necessary from what is not. It is a time to get our lives back on track with regard to you, Lord, and to others. We can look to so many exemplary companions for the journey, who, even though fearful, have reacted by giving their lives.

This is the force of the Spirit poured out and fashioned in courageous and generous self-denial. It is the life in the Spirit that can redeem, value and demonstrate how our lives are woven together and sustained by ordinary people—often forgotten people—who do not appear in newspaper and magazine headlines nor on the grand catwalks of the latest show, but who without any doubt are in these very days writing the decisive events of our time: doctors, nurses, supermarket employees, cleaners, caregivers, providers of transport, law and order forces, volunteers, priests, religious men and women

and so very many others who have understood that no one reaches salvation by themselves. In the face of so much suffering, where the authentic development of our peoples is assessed, we experience the priestly prayer of Jesus: "That they may all be one" (Jn 17:21). How many people every day are exercising patience and offering hope, taking care to sow not panic but a shared responsibility. How many fathers, mothers, grandparents and teachers are showing our children, in small everyday gestures, how to face up to and navigate a crisis by adjusting their routines, lifting their gaze and fostering prayer. How many are praying, offering and interceding for the good of all. Prayer and quiet service: these are our victorious weapons.

"Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?" Faith begins when we realize we are in need of salvation. We are not self-sufficient; by ourselves we flounder; we need the Lord, like ancient navigators needed the stars. Let us invite Jesus into the boats of our lives. Let us hand over our fears to him so that he can conquer them. Like the disciples, we will experience that with him on board there will be no shipwreck. Because this is God's strength: turning to the good everything that happens to us, even the bad things. He brings serenity into

our storms, because with God life never dies.

The Lord asks us and, in the midst of our tempest, invites us to reawaken and put into practice that solidarity and hope capable of giving strength, support and meaning to these hours when everything seems to be floundering. The Lord awakens so as to reawaken and revive our Easter faith. We have an anchor: by his cross we have been saved. We have a rudder: by his cross we have been redeemed. We have a hope: by his cross we have been healed and embraced so that nothing and no one can separate us from his redeeming love. In the midst of isolation when we are suffering from a lack of tenderness and chances to meet up, and we experience the loss of so many things, let us once again listen to the proclamation that saves us: he is risen and is living by our side. The Lord asks us from his cross to rediscover the life that awaits us, to look toward those who look to us, to strengthen, recognize and foster the grace that lives within us. Let us not quench the wavering flame (cf. Is 42:3) that never falters, and let us allow hope to be rekindled.

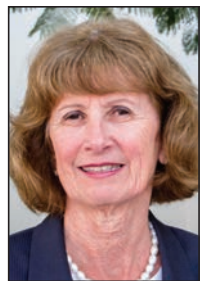
Embracing his cross means finding the courage to embrace all the hardships of the present time, abandoning for a moment our eagerness for power and possessions in

order to make room for the creativity that only the Spirit is capable of inspiring. It means finding the courage to create spaces where everyone can recognize that they are called, and to allow new forms of hospitality, fraternity and solidarity. By his cross we have been saved in order to embrace hope and let it strengthen and sustain all measures and all possible avenues for helping us protect ourselves and others. Embracing the Lord in order to embrace hope: that is the strength of faith, which frees us from fear and gives us hope.

"Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?" Dear brothers and sisters, from this place that tells of Peter's rock-solid faith, I would like this evening to entrust all of you to the Lord, through the intercession of Mary, Health of the People and Star of the stormy Sea. From this colonnade that embraces Rome and the whole world, may God's blessing come down upon you as a consoling embrace. Lord, may you bless the world, give health to our bodies and comfort our hearts. You ask us not to be afraid. Yet our faith is weak, and we are fearful. But you, Lord, will not leave us at the mercy of the storm. Tell us again: "Do not be afraid" (Mt 28:5). And we, together with Peter, "cast all our anxieties onto you, for you care about us" (cf. 1 Pet 5:7). †

McChesney, advocate for abuse victims, to receive Laetare Medal

WASHINGTON (CNS) -- Kathleen McChesney, a former FBI executive assistant director and the first person to lead the U.S. bishops' Office of Child and Youth Protection, will receive the 2020 Laetare Medal from the University of Notre Dame.



Kathleen McChesney

"It is often the Church's darkest moments that call forth great faith and courage," said Notre Dame's president,

Holy Cross Father John Jenkins, in announcing the award.

He said the university is recognizing McChesney's efforts in response to the Church's abuse crisis and honoring her "courage, tenacity and love for the Church in a tireless pursuit of justice for victims, accountability for abusers and measures that prevent this crisis from continuing."

When she heard she was to receive the award, McChesney said it would further challenge her.

"I think there is a significant

responsibility with such an honor that one has to live up to every day forward. The Laetare Medal will inspire me to work harder, more effectively and with greater compassion on behalf of those who have been wounded by persons in Catholic ministries," she said in a statement.

The announcement was made on March 22, Laetare Sunday, which is the fourth Sunday of Lent. The medal, which has been given to Catholic leaders since 1883, is presented during graduation ceremonies, a date which is currently in question in the minds of many college students and faculty members due to coronavirus shutdowns.

Past Laetare Medal recipients include President John F. Kennedy; Dorothy Day, co-founder of the Catholic Worker Movement; Chicago Cardinal Joseph L. Bernardin; labor activist Msgr. George G. Higgins; jazz composer Dave Brubeck; Jesuit Father Greg Boyle, founder and executive director of Homeboy Industries; and Sister Norma Pimentel, a member of the Missionaries of Jesus, who is executive director of Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley in Texas and a longtime advocate for immigrants and refugees.

McChesney was hired by the U.S. bishops in November 2002 as the first to lead the child and youth protection office set up to help dioceses and eparchies apply prevention policies and to monitor their implementation. The office was established by the bishops in their 2002 "Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People," which detailed the Church's policies for the prevention of child sex abuse.

The former FBI official stayed in the job two years. When she announced she would be leaving the position in 2004, she told Catholic News Service the major achievements of the still-new office at the time were "public accountability" and "public accounting" by the bishops regarding sex abuse.

"That didn't exist before," she said.

She cited new procedures such as the annual audit process, which includes data on new allegations and the amount of money spent yearly on sex abuse issues, a study on the nature and scope of the problem by the John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York covering the period 1950-2002. Other new policies included background checks for thousands of clergy and lay church employees and

volunteers and sex abuse prevention courses for thousands of church workers and millions of children.

When she left her office, she was quick to warn the crisis was not over.

"We're beginning to establish the mechanisms that will tell us whether the crisis is abating. It's never going to go away as long as you have victims," she said.

She said, at the time, that her 31-year career in law enforcement was helpful in her work, especially in providing guidance and referrals to victims who contacted her office.

McChesney worked for seven years in the King County Police Department in Seattle. Then for nearly 25 years she worked with the FBI. When she left the FBI in 2002, she was executive assistant director for law enforcement services and the organization's highest-ranking woman.

She founded Kinsale Management Consulting, where she continues to serve dioceses, religious organizations and others around the world in the protection of children and vulnerable adults and in preventing ministerial misconduct and abuse. †