Ash Wednesday, February 26, begins 40 days of preparation, both of body and of spirit, as Christians walk with Jesus on his journey to Calvary and share in the joy of his resurrection on Easter Sunday, April 12.

Bishop Roger Foys will celebrate Mass and bless ashes for distribution on Ash Wednesday, February 26, 10 a.m., at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington.

On the many forms of penance in Christian life, the Catechism of the Catholic Church observes, “The interior penance of the Christian can be expressed in many and various ways. Scripture and the Fathers insist above all on three forms, fasting, prayer, and almsgiving.” (CCC, n. 1434)

As a reminder, the rules of fasting and abstinence are as follows:

Catholics in the United States, ages 14 to the day after their 59th birthday, are obliged to fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. Only one full meal is allowed on these days, with no eating between meals.

Catholics in the U.S., from the age of 14, are obliged to abstain from meat on Ash Wednesday, the Fridays of Lent and Good Friday.

Illness or other circumstances might make it necessary for an individual to practice ways of doing penance other than fasting and abstinence.

Bishop Foys dedicates SHDHS’s addition, continues faith tradition for current and future students

Laura Keener

The St. Henry District High School community celebrated, Feb. 16, the blessing and dedication of its new $7.8 million addition—the school’s first major building project in over 20 years.

At the blessing and dedication Bishop Roger Foys, together with David Otte, principal, and Dan “Boone” and Karen Regler, campaign chairpersons, thanked all those who supported the project and the over 300 people who attended the dedication.

“I ain’t this terrific! Look at this,” Bishop Foys exclaimed as he began his final remarks after walking the entire addition, sprinkling each room with holy water.

“Our diocese has had a 167-year tradition of Catholic school education. What we are doing here today shows that we continue that tradition. Each generation has its own challenges and it meets those challenges not just for their own generation but also for future generations,” he said.

“My special thanks to Mr. Dave Otte who has given three decades to Catholic school education here at St Henry. And thank you to all of you,” Bishop Foys said. “There are alternatives to a Catholic school education but there is no substitute — you’ve proven that here today God bless you.”

The February 28 edition of the Messenger will include a special section devoted to the St. Henry District High School expansion.
Official assignment

Effective Thursday, Feb. 13, 2020

Randy Rawe
To: Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Covington Advisory Board
Term: Three years

By order of
the Most Rev. Roger J. Foys, D.D.
Bishop of the Diocese of Covington
Jamie N. Schroeder,
Chancellor

February's Day visit

Bassetts “Nubby” and “Nibbles” made their annual Valentine’s Day pilgrimage to the Curia, Feb. 14, to share some love with Bishop Roger Foys. The “therapy” dogs were accompanied by Marcie Newbold, owner and parishioner; St. Catherine of Siena Parish, Ft. Thomas; Terri Babey, fellow parishioner; and Patty Steger Ludwig, friend and mother of Father David Ludwig. The annual visit is an opportunity for Bishop Foys to stay connected to the dog breed he loves.

Catholic Relief Services Rice Bowl snack saves lives

Laura Keener
Editor

A snack. Thomas Awiapo said that he owes everything that he has today — including his very life — to a snack.

Mr. Awiapo works with Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Ghana, Africa, and was the keynote speaker, Feb. 13, at the annual diocesan CRS Rice Bowl kick-off event at Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium.

At the event student representatives from six high schools and 10 elementary schools come to learn more about the popular CRS Rice Bowl Lenten project and about local poverty and how 11 local social service agencies assist local families in meeting their everyday needs of food, clothing, shelter and security. The students can contribute spare change during Lent to provide for these needs.

Mr. Awiapo said he “brings a message of hope, for the gift of CRS Rice Bowl.”

Students were captivated as Mr. Awiapo recounted how he grew up in a village that did not have access to running water or electricity. His parents died when he was very young, leaving him and his three brothers orphaned. Hunger was a part of their everyday life. He said he watched his younger brothers die from hunger and the third, the oldest, left the village in search of food — he has not heard from him since.

Then, one day, CRS established a school five miles from the village, and while he did not have any interest in attending school, the school provided a snack.

“They tricked me into going ... I loved that snack. Unfortunately, they tied that snack to the school and I was taken hostage (by the snack),” he said.

Thanks to CRS, Mr. Awiapo received an (Continued on page 14)
Pope shares his ‘dreams’ for Amazon region, its Catholic community

Cindy Wooden

VATICAN CITY — Pope Francis said he dreams of an Amazon region where the rights of the poor and indigent are respected, local cultures are preserved, nature is protected, and the Catholic Church is present and active with “Amazonian features.”

In his apostolic exhortation “Querida Amazonia” (Beloved Amazonia), Pope Francis made no mention of the idea of ordaining married men to the priesthood so that the Church’s communities would have regular access to the Eucharist.

Instead, he said “every effort should be made to ensure that the Amazonian people do not lack this food of new life and the sacrament of forgiveness.”

“A specific and courageous response is required of the Church” to meet the needs of Catholics, he said, without dictating what that response would be.

However, Pope Francis opened the document saying he wanted “to officially present the final document” of October’s Synod of Bishops for the Amazon. The final document asked for criteria to be drawn up “to ordain as priests suitable and respected men of the community with a legitimately constituted and stable family who have had a fruitful permanent diaconate and receive an adequate formation for the priesthood, in order to sustain the life of the Christian community through the preaching of the word and the celebration of the sacraments in the most remote areas of the Amazon region.”

Speaking about the final document, Pope Francis wrote that the synod “profited from the participation of many people who know better than myself the Roman Curia the problems and issues of the Amazon region.”

Having a Church with “Amazonian features,” he said, will require greater efforts to evangelize, official recognition of the role women have and continue to play in the region’s Catholic communities, a respect for popular forms of prayer and greater efforts to inculturate the Catholic faith in Amazonian cultures.

In the document, Pope Francis did not mention the theft during the synod of wooden statues of a pregnant woman, usually referred to by the media as “pachamama” or described as a symbol of life and fertility by synod participants. But he insisted, “Let us not be quick to describe as superstition or paganism certain religious practices that arise spontaneously from the life of peoples.”

The pope devoted several long passages to the theme of “inculturation,” the process by which the faith becomes “incarnate” in a local culture, taking on local characteristics that are in harmony with the faith and giving the local culture values and traits that come from the universal Church.

“There is a risk,” he said, “that everyone who is part of a particular area may think that they must not only communicate the Gospel but also the culture in which they grew up.”

Instead, he said, “what is needed is courageous openness to the novelty of the Spirit, who is always able to create something new with the inexhaustible riches of Jesus Christ.”

One of the characteristics of many Catholic communities in the Amazon, he wrote, is that, in the absence of priests, they are led and sustained by “strong and generous women, who, undoubtedly called and prompted by the Holy Spirit, baptized, catechized, prayed and acted as missionaries.”

While the idea of ordaining women deacons was mentioned at the synod, it was not included in the bishops’ final document.

In his exhortation, Pope Francis said the idea that women’s status and participation in the Church could come only with ordination “would lead us to clericalize women, diminish the great value of what they have already accomplished and subtly make their indispensable contribution less effective.”

Instead, he called for including women in roles “that do not entail holy orders,” but that are stably established, publicly recognized and include “a commission from the bishop” and a voice in decision making.

Pope Francis shared his “dreams” for Amazon region, its Catholic community, 亚马逊地区的梦想，它的天主教社区

Catholic News Service

Copies of Pope Francis’ apostolic exhortation, “Querida Amazonia” (Beloved Amazonia), are pictured at a news conference for the release of the exhortation at the Vatican Feb. 12, 2020. The document contains the pope’s conclusions from the 2019 Synod of Bishops for the Amazon.

...the Amazon region has been presented as an enormous empty space to be filled, a source of raw materials to be developed (and) a wild expanse to be domesticated,” the pope wrote. “None of this recognizes the rights of the original peoples; it simply ignores them as if they did not exist or act as if the lands on which they live do not belong to them.”

The destruction of the forest, the polluting of the Amazon River and its tributaries and the disruption and contamination of the land by mining industries, he said, further impoverish the region’s poor, increase the chances that they will become victims of trafficking and destroy their communities and culture, which are based on a close and care-filled relationship with nature.

“The inescapable truth is that, as things stand, this way of treating the Amazon territory spells the end for so much life, for so much beauty, even though people would like to keep thinking that nothing is happening,” Pope Francis wrote.

Yet, he said, “from the original peoples, we can learn to contemplate the Amazon region and not simply analyze it, and thus appreciate this precious mystery that transcends us. We can love this land and the result that love can awaken a deep and sincere interest. Even more, we can feel intimately a part of it and not only defended it.”

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Cindy Wooden

VATICAN CITY — Pope Francis released his document on the Amazon region on the 15th anniversary of the assassination in Brazil of U.N. Nurse Dame Sister Dorothy Stang, a missionary who defended the poor and the environment.

Her life and sacrifice are emblematic of what many participants at the October Synod of Bishops for the Amazon had said: Women in the region are leaders of both community and religious life; their defense of the poor and the natural environment is consistent and consistently results in threats to their lives.

In his post-synodal apostolic exhortation, “Querida Amazonia” (Beloved Amazonia), which was published Feb. 12, Pope Francis said consecrated men and women in the Amazon are “closest to those who are most impoverished and excluded.”

The pope devoted an entire section of the document to praising the way women — lay and religious — have kept the faith alive in the Amazon region. But he flatly rejects a request made by several synod participants to consider ordaining women deacons; the request did not receive enough support to be included in the synod’s final document.

At the end of the Synod of Bishops for the Amazon, and on numerous other occasions, Pope Francis has said Catholics still have not understood how and why women’s status and participation in the Church could come only with ordination “would lead us to clericalize women, diminish the great value of what they have already accomplished and subtly make their indispensable contribution less effective.”

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“We have not yet realized what women mean in the Church,” but instead “we focus on the functional aspect” — what offices they are permitted to hold — “which is important,” but is not everything, he said at the end of the synod in October.

Throughout his pontificate, Pope Francis has acknowledged the essential and irreplaceable contribution of women to the Church, their equal dignity and the importance of having their voices and talents contribute to decision-making.

But the pope also understands that in the way the Catholic Church operates in most places today, the traditions...
Sister Constance Veit, L.S.P.

Elders shape the future

During February my thoughts turn to two of my favorite biblical figures, Simon and Anna.

Simon is named in St. Luke’s Gospel simply as “a man in Jerusalem” and Anna as an 84-year-old prophetess. “These two elderly people spent their lives in Jerusalem and in a small apartment in a neighborhood house,” according to the Presentation in the Temple website — referred to as the Presentation in the Temple. 

Simon and Anna are not just two paupers old people making a fuss over a baby. Each one had been waiting for the coming of the Lord for many years. Their whole lives were defined by their patient, prayerful waiting. When the moment came, they recognized Jesus as the Messiah and testified on his behalf before all the people.

 Pope Francis wrote, “When Mary and Joseph reached the temple to fulfill the law, Simon and Anna jumped to their feet. They were moved by the Holy Spirit. This elderly couple recognized the child and discovered a new inner strength that allowed them to bear witness.”

Simon and Anna were there to give an example of their faith for our time. They represent the cultural role of older people who have the courage to dream and our young people the wisdom to envision a future. “Without the witness of their lives,” the plans of young people will have neither roots nor wisdom,” he said.

“Today more than ever, the future generates anxiety, insecurity, uncertainty and strain. Our testimony of elders who help young people look above the horizon to see the stars. Just learning that it is worth fighting for something will help young people find their own future hope.”

We Little Sisters of the Poor are very proud to share our life with many successors of Simon and Anna — older people who have persevered in their faith throughout the years as they sought a better life for themselves and their loved ones. Among them is a woman I know who poured her life savings into the rehabilitation of a child who suffered from drug addiction, and who later sacrificed her own comfort to support three generations of her family members who were displaced after a hurricane ravaged their island home.

Another resident, a woman in her mid-80s, divides her time between helping in our chapel and working in the parish founded by her priest-brother — the only Vietnamese parish in our diocese — helping with Sunday tasks and taking holy Communion to the sick.

I recently attended the funeral of an Vietnamese parish as part of our annual fundraising appeal and enjoyed seeing our mums and dads — the backbone of the parish — who were their traditional Vietnamese tunics and flowing pants in bright hues and varied designs, most of the young people came from the church in the years past and baggy sweatshirts typical of American youth.

The liturgy was completely in Vietnamese. I saw what a difference one small group of people can make — one foot planted firmly in the land of their parents and grandparents and the other in the land of our country. I was touched to see that even the young people venerat- ed our resident. As she scurried around the church attending to the details of the eucharistic celebration, she would give the young people a quick word of direction in Vietnamese or a charming smile of encouragement.

Our residents embody Pope Francis’ dream of elders as “a choir of great spiritual sanctity, where prayers of supplication and songs of praise support the larger community that works and struggles in the field of life.”

Although I am not yet a senior it won’t be long before I am, and I am grateful for the example of our residents who, like Simon and Anna, are teaching me how to assume the mantle of a wise elder in the believing community.

Sister Constance Veit is director of communications for the Little Sisters of the Poor.

Moral courage and the story of the White Rose

The White Rose was a resistance movement formed by German students in 1942. The idea was birthed in Munich University in February 1942, when a secret group called “The White Rose” was created. This group was formed to express opposition to Nazi Germany’s policies and practices.

The members of the White Rose were young people who were determined to stand against the authoritarian regime of Nazi Germany. They believed that it was their duty to resist the injustices and atrocities committed by the Nazi government. The group’s name, “The White Rose,” was chosen to symbolize purity and innocence.

One of the most famous members of the White Rose was Sophie Scholl. Sophie was a student at Munich University and became involved in the White Rose movement in 1942. She was a member of a group that was formed to distribute leaflets and spread messages of peace and democracy.

Sophie and her brother, Hans, were part of a group of students who refused to participate in the Nazi regime’s policies and practices. They believed that it was their duty to resist the injustices and atrocities committed by the Nazi government.

Sophie and her brother were arrested in February 1943 and were sentenced to death by a People’s Court. She was executed along with her brother and another member of the White Rose movement.

The White Rose movement was a significant resistance movement that helped to inspire other groups to resist against the authoritarian regime of Nazi Germany. Their story is an inspiration to all who believe in the power of nonviolent resistance.
Holiness is foolishness


A college buddy of mine was fond of repeating this saying: "Fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice, shame on me." The implication, of course, was that I would learn from the first incident that you are a person who is not to be trusted. I would not allow myself, therefore, to trust you again. To do so would show that I had not grown wiser from the initial experience, at least not as the world accounts wisdom.

The message of today's liturgy, however, prompts us to move beyond becoming wise to the ways of the world. "If any one of you thinks he is wise in a worldly way he had better become a fool. In that way he will really be wise, for the wisdom of this world is absurdity with God." (Second Reading)

Can you imagine what our plight would be if God took the attitude that he could forgive us just one wrongdoing; that is, he fooled only once? The story of all the Scriptures, indeed probably the story of each of our lives, is one that shows God's ways and wisdom to be entirely different. Eucharistic Prayer IV tells of God's wisdom when it states that even when people through disobedience "had lost his friendship." God did not abandon them "to the domain of death." Instead God offered a covenant, not once, but "time and again." In the way in which the world accounts wisdom, God's just another old fool.

I can take God being a fool. He's got the infinite patience that can allow him to be really helpful. After all, God is the ultimate in holiness. But the real stumbling block is that he expects me to be just like him. "Be holy for I, the Lord, your God, am holy." (First Reading) In a word, you must be perfected as your heavenly Father is perfect. (Today's Gospel) God wants me to be a fool along with him.

The Hebrew law of retaliation — "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth" — was originally introduced to keep lawbreakers from exacting punishments that were more severe than the crime. In other words, the punishment could not go beyond an "eye for an eye" or a "tooth for a tooth." Jesus reminds us that mercy was the original intent of that law which did not demand an "eye for an eye" but only allowed it as maximum penalty.

Instead of such exacting retribution, the Lord challenges his followers to focus more on mercy and love. But what I say to you is offer no resistance to injury." "My command to you is love your enemies and pray for your persecutors." In short, be a fool in the eyes of the world.

Being holy, it would seem, means being foolish. There are times when the Church speaks of being foolish out of itself. While those times may be embarrassing, they are understandable. But it is quite another matter to willingly make a fool of myself such as when Jesus tells us if a "person strikes you on the right cheek, turn and offer him the other." Strong motivation is required to willingly act so foolishly. St. Paul provides us with an insight that may tell us what I say to you is offer no resistance to injury." "My command to you is love your enemies and pray for your persecutors." In short, be a fool in the eyes of the world.

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The brutal assault on Pope Emeritus Benedict and abuse were taken off the board, permanently. The second point to ponder involves celibacy and the broader reform of the priesthood. The brutal assault on Pope Emeritus Benedict and Cardinal Robert Sarah over their book, "From the Depths of Our Hearts" obscured one of the crucial points these two eminent churchmen were trying to make: namely, that the priesthood is in crisis throughout the world. It was said openly during the Amazonian synod, and it's often muttered in other contexts, that celibacy makes no sense to many people. Which is quite true — if those people are living in pagan societies that haven't heard the Gospel or in post-Christian societies that have abandoned the Gospel and haven't been re-evangelized. Celibacy — a total gift of self to God — only makes sense in a Kingdom context. So if celibacy doesn't make sense in Amazonia or Dusseldorf or Hamburg, that likely has something to do with a failure to preach the Gospel of the inbreaking Kingdom of God in Amazonia, Dusseldorf and Hamburg.

All of which is to say that the failures of Catholic Lite and Catholic Zero aren't going to be addressed by lighter Catholic Lite or less than zero Catholic Zero. The second point to ponder involves celibacy and the broader reform of the priesthood.

The brutal assault on Pope Emeritus Benedict and the broader reform of the priesthood.

Recently I was knitting the heel of sock and found myself struggling with this yarn. I realized bears in my grip had increased, making my stitches too tight for the yarn to pass freely through. In the art of knitting a balance of tension and freedom is needed for the creation of an even gauge throughout the project. Realizing what was happening, I eased my tension and the heel was created with much more ease. Recently, I've been experimenting with what would happen if I held other things with a lighter touch. In a conversation with a co-worker, holding lightly to my own opinion created a space for understanding and creativity problem solving together.

Holding lightly to my list led to a fun evening of cards with my sisters. In both of these experiences, I walked away with a sense of connection and joy at the exchange. I also experienced a sense of being energized rather than drained from the tension of my own agenda.

I'm going to continue to be curious — to experiment with holding life with a lighter touch in serious, light and mundane moments. I look forward to seeing what emerges in myself, with others and in my relationship with God.

Care to join the experiment? Benedectine Sister Kimberly Porter is a member of the monastic council at St. Wulfran Monastery, a member of the Federation of St. Scholastica council, a member of the Board of Directors for Villa Madonna Academy and works at Beech Acres in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Beyond Amazonia

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Women in Amazon church

(Continued from page 9)

tional Catholic tie between ordination and power has meant that sometimes women are consulted and sometimes they aren’t.

In his exhortation, Pope Francis tried again to lay out his vision for a Church in which priesthood is equated with service, not power.

But clearly, until that vision becomes more of a reality, it will be up to priests and bishops to determine the extent to which the contributions and expertise of women — and laypeople, in general — will be welcomed.

Cardinal Michael Czerny, who served as secretary of the Synod of Bishops for the Amazon, said Pope Francis’ caution in the apostolic exhortation about thinking women will be valued only if they can be ordained must read within his “extensive magisterium” stressing “the need to separate power from the priestly ministry, since this combination is at the origin of clericalism.”

“This relationship between ministry and power is what leaves women without a voice, without rights and often without the possibility to decide,” the cardinal told Vatican Media. “So, it is not a question of giving them access to an ordained ministry in order to have them gain a voice and a vote, but of separating power from ministry.”

Pope Francis frequently has told people that ordination and the offices that go with it are not a measure of a person’s importance in the Church; in fact, he often insists “Mary is more important than the apostles.”

In the exhortation, Pope Francis said, “in the Amazon region, there are communities that have long preserved and handed on the faith even though no priest has come their way, even for decades.” That happened, he said, “because of the presence of strong and generous women who, undoubtedly called and prompted by the Holy Spirit, baptized, catechized, prayed and acted as missionaries. For centuries, women have kept the Church alive in those places through their remarkable devotion and deep faith.”

Their example, the pope said, “summons us to broaden our vision” beyond seeing ordination as the best way to encourage and recognize women leaders in Catholic communities.

Still, while warning about the temptation “to clericalize” women or focus solely on functions, Pope Francis did say in the document that women “should have access to positions, including ecclesial services, that do not entail Holy Orders and that can better signify the role that is theirs.” Those positions, he said, should be established in a stable manner, be publicly recognized and include a formal “commission from the bishop.”

While the positions should make it possible for women to have “a real and effective impact” on decision-making, he said, it should be done “in a way that reflects their womanhood.”

Pope Francis does not explain in the document what he means by that other than by saying, “Women make their contribution to the Church in a way that is properly theirs, by making present the tender strength of Mary, the Mother.”

Reparatrix Sister Augusta de Oliveira, a Brazilian and vicar general of her order, was the only woman chosen by the Vatican to present the pope’s document to the press Feb. 12.

Throughout the Amazon and in Amazonian Catholic communities, she said, women are “conquering and occupying spaces for decision making, reflection and service in defense of threatened life.”

In the most difficult areas of the Amazon basin, she said, “we find the female presence” in religious communities “animating, supporting and serving.”

Pope Francis, in his document, urged Catholics to trust that the Holy Spirit is alive and active in the Catholic communities of the Amazon. “For wherever there is a particular need, he has already poured out the charisms that can meet it.”

The Church, the pope wrote, simply must “be open to the Spirit’s boldness, to trust in, and concretely to permit, the growth of a specific ecclesial culture that is distinctively lay” (See related articles pages 10 and 16.)
The Super's Spotlight

Department of Catholic Schools honors kindergartners and freshmen

Welcome to the 2019-2020 “Super’s Spotlight,” a Messenger feature created in collaboration with the diocesan Department of Catholic Schools to celebrate Catholic education. This year, the Super Spotlight shines its light on elementary school kindergartners and high school freshmen.

(above) Through the culture of innovation at Notre Dame Academy, Park Hills, freshmen Pandas are becoming critical and creative thinkers, effective communicators and skillful collaborators. These two freshmen are learning how to use a 3-D printer in the new Collaborative Learning Center.

(above) Kindergarteners at Holy Family School, Covington, are investigating water. They are studying the properties of water and what objects will float or sink when put into water.

(right) Jennifer Parnitzke’s and Valere Whisman’s kindergarten classes at St. Cecilia School, Independence, celebrate the 100th day of school with hat making, certificates, 100 snacks, music and more.

(right) Kindergartners at St. Patrick Elementary School, Maysville, participate in the excitement and pageantry of homecoming as crown bearers for the homecoming court.

(far right) A kindergartner at St. Patrick Elementary School, Maysville, is proud of her elephant hat. Each student was given an animal hat to represent the animal they researched, learning about habitats and what each animal needs to survive and thrive.

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For more information about the Department of Catholic Schools, call (859) 392-1500 or e-mail pmeirose@covdio.org.

‘First step’ students begin spiritual and academic journey

This year on the first day of school we witnessed the “first step” of approximately 650 kindergarteners to our Catholic elementary schools and 740 freshmen to our Catholic high schools. Now their journey is well underway and they are counting their steps.

In Catholic schools we have the unique privilege of being able to connect with students, each other and the entire community in a faith-filled environment that nurtures a sense of belonging. We do this most simply by how we treat the person in front of us. We celebrate our newest students to our K–12 grades and their new beginning of spiritual formation, academic advancement, social development and physical growth.

Yours in Catholic education,

Michael Clines
Superintendent of Catholic Schools
Diocese of Covington

Welcome to the 2019-2020 “Super’s Spotlight,” a Messenger feature created in collaboration with the diocesan Department of Catholic Schools to celebrate Catholic education. This year, the Super Spotlight shines its light on elementary school kindergartners and high school freshmen.

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**People and Events**

**Young archers**

Archers from St. Henry School, Elsmere, recorded their best team score of the year in regional competition. The team represented well the entire year at numerous school tournaments all across Northern Kentucky.

**Fat Tuesday feast,** Feb. 25, 6:30 p.m., Buono Vita Pizzeria, 5442. Society Fat Tuesday celebration with the Cathedral Ladies’ Group lectio divina, Tuesdays beginning ages 3–6. Call 341-5145 or e-mail VillaMadonnaMontessori@gmail.com.

**Fat Tuesday celebration with the Cathedral Ladies’ Society,** Feb. 25, 5-8 p.m., at Covington Latin School. Call 295-5442.

**Fat Tuesday Feast,** Feb. 25, 5:30 p.m., Brunno Vita Pizzeria, for young adults 18-35. Live music provided by Will & Catie Panagakos. Contact stories@covdio.org.

**Ash Wednesday — day of recollection,** Feb. 26, 9 a.m.—2 p.m., sponsored by the Sisters of Notre Dame at the Sisters of Notre Dame Provincial House. Cost $20 includes lunch. Speaker is Notre Dame Sister Mary Kathleen Grach from Covington, Ohio. Call Sister Margie Schnelle 292-6228 or e-mail mschnelle@sndky.org.

**“Colleen’s Concert,”** performed by Brian Malley and The Friendly Sons of St. Patrick Glee Club in memory of Brian’s deceased daughter, Feb. 28, 7 p.m., Mother of God Parish, Covington.


**Lent Bible Study,** St. Agnes Parish. Ptl. Wright, March 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 and April 6, 7–8 p.m. in Murphy Hall. Join Father Jason Bertke for a journey through the Gospel of St. Luke.

**“Lenten Jecto,”** group Jecto divina, Tuesdays beginning March 3, 7:30 p.m., St. Walburg Monastery. E-mail marytewes@gmail.com or call (859) 531-6324 for more information.

**Young Adult Candlelight Mass,** March 6, Divine Mercy Parish, Bellevue. Confessions at 6:30 p.m., Mass 7 p.m. Social following Mass with free food and drinks.

**“More Than One Way To Pray,”** Sisters of Notre Dame Women’s Retreat, March 6-8 and April 3-5. Limited reservations. Call 392-6228.

**“Ecucharist: Rediscovering the Hope at the Heart of Worship,”** presented by Drue Providence Sister Lucy Ziemek, March 7, 9–11 a.m., St. Anne Province Center.

**“Telling on Ourselves: Stories about Wells, Pools and Tombs (The Gospels of the Last Three Sundays of Lent),”** March 14, 9:30 a.m., sponsored by the Benedictine Sisters of St. Walburg. $30 fee includes snacks and materials. Participants must pre-register at sbhobs@yahoo.com or 331-6771. No walk-ins.

**“Expeditions in Ocean Exploration,”** March 19, Newport Aquarium. Featuring Amanda Netburn, Ph.D., sponsored by Thomas More University as part of its Marine Biology and Conservation Lecture Series. For more information, contact Snyder@catholichs.org.


**Silent directed retreat for men and women,** March 27-29, Benedictine Sisters of St. Walburg Monastery $375 fee. For more information contact dorthyssob@gmail.com or (859) 443-8513.

**Special visitors at St. Joseph School**

Students at St. Joseph School, Cold Spring, spent a recent morning welcoming some cherished guests — several Sisters of Notre Dame. The sisters — who had taught at St. Joseph School in the past — went to Mass with the students and visited classrooms. After a busy morning answering questions the sisters were treated to lunch in the cafeteria. It was a special day, rich in history and heritage. (above left) Sister Mary Dennisse visits with Jill Gat’s first-grade class. (above right from left) Sister Mary Dennisse, Sister Mary Margaret Agnes, Sister Mary Evelyn, Sister Mary Lynette, Sister Mary Betette, Sister Mary Shannon, Sister Mary Margaret and Sue Griss, principal.

The weekly TV Mass from the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption will be broadcast on Sunday, 5–6 p.m. on station Me-TV WKYP, on channels: over the air 5-2; Spectrum 188 in Kentucky and Cincinnati Bell 25 or 39.

There will be a Holy Hour on the third Thursday of every month, at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington, 3-4 p.m., to pray for victims of sexual abuse by clergymen and to pray for the Church. All priests of the diocese will be in attendance; the lay faithful are invited to join. The Blessed Sacrament will be exposed, concluding with the Chaplet of Divine Mercy and benediction. The sacrament of reconciliation will be available during the Holy Hour. The next Holy Hour will be held Thursday, March 19.

**NKU Catholic Newman Center Women’s Group,** 2-4 p.m., workshop and discussion, Feb. 21, March 29, Apr. 28. E-mail russellki@nku.edu to RSVP.

**Spaghetti dinner and fine arts festival,** Feb. 21, 4-6:30 p.m., Covington Catholic High School. Sponsored by the Parents Club. Featuring a performance by the award winning CCH Chamber Choir and the Covington Catholic and Notre Dame Academy Band. CCH student artwork will be exhibited as well.

**Villa Madonna Montessori open house,** Feb. 21, 1-3 p.m. Learn more about the Montessori learning environment for ages 3-6. Call 341-5145 or e-mail VillaMadonnaMontessori@gmail.com.

**Nativity celebration with the Cathedral Ladies’ Society,** Feb. 25, 5-8 p.m., at Covington Latin School. Call 295-5442.

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**Fish Frys 2020**

- **St. Agnes Parish, Ft. Wright**, in Murphy Hall, Feb. 28, March 6, 13 and 20.
- **St. Augustine Parish, Covington**, 4-7 p.m., Feb. 28, March 6, 13, 20, 27 and April 3, in the gym. Call 431-3943.
- **St. Francis Xavier Parish, Falmouth**, 4-7:30 p.m., Feb. 28, March 6, 13, 20, 27 and April 3.
- **Knights of Columbus, Elsmere**, Feb. 28, March 6, 13, 20, 27, April 3 and 10. Lunch 11 a.m. – 2 p.m., dinner 4:30 p.m. – 8 p.m. 605 Sytle Avenue. Carryout orders: 342-6643.

- **St. Henry School, Elsmere**. The kindergarten through second-grade students at St. Henry School, Elsmere, held their “Storybook Parade” recently. The students dressed as their favorite storybook character and paraded through school. Even the teachers enjoyed participating.

**PrimeWise at St. Elizabeth Healthcare** provides a free network of valuable services especially suited to their needs and interests. It’s not a club and there are no membership dues or meetings, just lots of benefits, information, programs and special discounts. PrimeWise can provide information on topics like advance directives and living wills, Medicare and many health related concerns. Call 301-8899 or email primewise@stelizabeth.com.

- **3rd annual St. Paddy’s Pub Night and Irish concert**, Molly Malone’s Irish Pub & Restaurant, March 20, 7 p.m., for young adults 18-35. Featuring the music of local Irish band Easter Rising.
- **Holy Cross District High School is selling 3 kinds of mulch** ($4.25/bag) and pine straw ($8/bale) with free delivery to St. Agnes Parish, Ft. Wright, in Murphy Hall.

**Storybook parade**

- **PrimeWise at St. Elizabeth Healthcare** offers adults, age 50 and over, a free network of valuable services especially suited to their needs and interests. It’s not a club and there are no membership dues or meetings, just lots of benefits, information, programs and special discounts. PrimeWise can provide information on topics like advance directives and living wills, Medicare and many health related concerns. Call 301-8899 or email primewise@stelizabeth.com.

For couples in troubled marriages, Retrouvaille is a program of healing and renewal consisting of one weekend and six follow-up sessions over the course of three months. Contact: www.cincyretrouvaille.org or (513) 456-5431.

**Free support group**, Parents of Addicted Loved Ones (PAL), meets every Wednesday, 6:30 p.m. – 8 p.m., at Catholic Charities, Latonia. Group provides continuing education and support, at no charge, for parents with a son, daughter or spouse suffering from addiction to alcohol or drugs. No cost. Information, 581-8871 or www.covingtoncharities.org.

**St. Vincent de Paul, Erlanger**, needs volunteers for the call center and food pantry for just a few hours each week. Food pantry volunteers help set up bags of food that are provided to those in need. Call center volunteers assist with answering calls for assistance and data entry, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. For information call (859) 446-7721.


**Madonna Manor “Project Keep Warm”** donate new and gently used blankets, scarves, hats, gloves and socks (new) for local missions and homeless shelters. Drop off Monday, Friday, 8 a.m. – 4 p.m., weekends 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. Call 428-6489.
Pope says there is no quick fix for priest shortage in Amazon region

Junno Arocho Esteves
Catholic News Service
VATICAN CITY — Pope Francis acknowledged the serious shortage of priests in remote areas of the Amazon, but he insisted not all avenues have been exhausted to address the issue.

In his apostolic exhortation, “Querida Amazonia” (“Beloved Amazonia”), which was released by the Vatican Feb. 12, the pope said that confronting the priest shortage simply by “facilitating a greater presence of ordained ministers who can celebrate the Eucharist” would be “a very narrow aim.”

The members of the Synod of Bishops for the Amazon in October asked Pope Francis to open the way for the priestly ordination of married permanent deacons so that Catholics in the region could go to Mass and receive the sacraments regularly.

In response, Pope Francis wrote in his new document that the priest shortage must be seen as an opportunity for the Catholic Church to “awaken new life in communities.”

“We need to promote an encounter with God’s Word and growth in holiness through various kinds of lay service that call for a process of education — biblical, doctrinal, spiritual and practical — and a variety of programs of ongoing formation,” he said.

In an interview with Vatican News Feb. 12, Cardinal Michael Czerny, who served as secretary of the synod in October, said Pope Francis believes that “the question is not one of numbers and that a greater presence of priests is not the only requirement.”

“What is needed is a presence of laypeople at the local level who are animating by a missionary spirit and capable of representing the authentic face of the Amazonian Church. This, he seems to indicate, is the only way that vocations will return,” he said.

The synod is a journey “with long roads ahead as well as roads already traveled,” Cardinal Czerny said Feb. 12 during a briefing at the Vatican press office. “So, if there are questions that you feel are open or that the Church feels are open, thanks to the exhortation they will continue to be debated, discussed, discerned, prayed over and when mature presented to the appropriate authority for decision.”

Pope Francis urged bishops, especially in Latin America, to encourage those who wish to be missionaries “to opt for the Amazon region.”

Much like in past exhortations, the pope drove the point home in the footnotes.

“It is noteworthy that, in some countries of the Amazon Basin, more missionaries go to Europe or the United States than remain to assist their own vicariates in the Amazon region,” he said.

While the shortage of vocations is an issue felt throughout the Church, even the severe shortages in places like the United States pale in comparison to their Amazonian counterparts.

The Diocese of Fort Worth, Texas, for example, has an estimated 900,000 Catholics and a total of 116 priests, which is an average of one priest for every 7,817 people. It has one of the lowest priest-to-Catholics ratios in the United States. In comparison, the Diocese of Caxias do Maranhao, Brazil, has only 25 priests for a population of 825,000, an average of one priest for every 33,000 people.

And remote villages, such as the Kichwa indigenous community in the Ecuadorian Amazonian region, are difficult areas for priests to visit since they are accessible only by small plane or canoe.

In his exhortation, the pope said that priests are essential for the full life of Catholic communities since they are the only ones who can consecrate the Eucharist and grant absolution in the sacrament of reconciliation.

“If we are truly convinced that this is the case, then every effort should be made to ensure that the Amazonian peoples do not lack this food of new life and the sacrament of forgiveness,” the pope said.

Nonetheless, Pope Francis also called for a renewal “of both initial and ongoing priestly formation” before considering other suggestions.

While priests are necessary, religious women, lay people and permanent deacons — “of whom there should be many more in the Amazon region” — could perform other functions necessary for Catholic life “with the aid of suitable accompaniment,” he said.

(See related articles pages 3 and 16.)

Julie O’Keeffe, MD
Joseph T. Mando, MD
Michael S. Halpin, MD
Jean Noll, MD
Sall Jawer, MD
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NEW YORK — Widespread confusion about a recent change to the so-called “public charge” law that limits immigrants’ use of government benefit programs will have a chilling effect on people, including those who are not covered by the ruling, according to staff at Cabrini Immigrant Services of NYC.

“It’s a bad rule, like a bad immigrant version of the old telephone game,” Oscar Montes said. “Information filters down and people are getting scared about things that don’t affect them.”

Montes is immigration staff attorney for Cabrini Immigrant Services. He led a Feb. 13 workshop about the change at the organization’s basement headquarters in a building behind St. Teresa’s Church on New York’s Lower East Side.

The public charge test has been a feature of U.S. immigration law since 1882, when it was first used to deny admission to the country to people who might depend on the government as their main source of support. It is also applied to noncitizens who seek lawful permanent residence, familiarly known as green card status.

The new regulation promulgated by the Department of Homeland Security redefines public charge more broadly than in the past. Starting Feb. 24, it will assess whether a noncitizen receives or is likely to receive one or more certain nonimmigrant visas.

Most public benefit programs are not included in the new rule, but the changes are too scary and not scary enough, Montes continued. The idea that public charge has moved from the realm of the poor to middle-class immigrants is discriminatory. “It’s a joke and not based on fact,” he said.

Hector Arquínones, co-founder of Venezuelans and Immigrants Aid, participated in the workshop. He said his group works closely with Cabrini and its clients are of color, “My parents’ experience is why I am an immigration attorney,” Montes said. “Like most immigrants, they were driven to achieve. The idea that people who use public benefits won’t be self-sufficient is discriminatory. It’s a joke and not based on fact.”

Montes said the rule changes are “worrying because they impact who can access what we think of as the American Dream. They will have the effect of leaving out people who will contribute.”

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The ruling is not retroactive. Benefits other than cash assistance and long-term medical care at government expense used before Feb. 24 will not be considered in the public charge determination.

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Implementation of the public charge law in the past did not have an effect on most people because the majority of immigrants who applied for permanent residency did not access the programs that could have disqualified them, according to Ella Nimmo. She is the director of community programs and development at Cabrini Immigrant Services of New York City.

“The rule change expands the benefits that are included in the calculation and gives more weight to things that most people cannot change, like age, family size, disability and income. The implementation targets low-income people of color,” she said.

Montes and Nimmo said confusion about the effect of the rule changes is compounded by questions about how they apply to homes that include people of mixed immigration status and those who access benefits that are not subject to the changes, including supplemental nutrition, school lunches and health clinics.

Montes told the workshop participants that benef-

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PART-TIME SCHOOL CAFETERIA POSITIONS
St. Augustine, Covington, School Cafeteria is in need of a part-time staff member from 10:00 am to 2:00 p.m. Monday through Friday during the school year. Duties include food preparation, serving, daily cleanup, helping with deliveries, and other tasks as needed. St. Agnes, Ft. Wright, School Cafeteria is in need of a part-time dishwasher for three hours per day, Monday through Friday during the school year. Candidates interested in either or both positions may contact Diocesan School Food Service Director Jackie Kaiser at jkaiser@covdio.org, or call 859-392-1536.

ST. PATRICK SCHOOL PRINCIPAL
Saint Patrick School has a vacancy for the position of Principal beginning with the 2020-2021 school year. Our school is a growing Pre-K through 12th grade Catholic parochial school in beautiful Maysville, Kentucky. As the only Catholic school offering high school courses within a 50-mile radius in Kentucky and Ohio, we strive to form our students to be intentional disciples of Jesus Christ as they prepare to assume their adult responsibilities. Candidates must be actively practicing Catholics with a demonstrated commitment to Catholic education. A Master’s Degree in Education or an Education related program is required for the position, as well as a Kentucky teaching and/or Administrative Certificate. Candidates should have at least five years of teaching experience with some of that time spent in Catholic education. Administrative experience as a Principal and/or Vice Principal is preferred in Candidates but is not required to apply for this position. Commitments experience or credentials may be accepted for teaching, Catholic education, and/or administration. All wishing to apply for this position need to submit a cover letter, resume, and a copy of all relevant transcripts and certifications to Father Andrew Young at 110 E. 3rd St., Maysville, KY 41056 or by e-mail to ayoung@stpatschool.com.

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Lead Carpenter Opening
Local faith-based non-profit org in NKY is searching for a highly skilled person to serve as lead carpenter on single-family rehabs and new construction while assisting with maintenance of housing units. Position is full-time with some Saturdays as needed. Valid driver’s license, auto insurance & reliable transportation needed. Paid Holidays & Personal Time Off. Eligible for Retirement Plan after 1 yr. $18-$22/hr depending on experience. Visit www.honkhomes.org/carpenter for more info and send resume or detailed experience, availability, salary requirements & contact info to: David Hastings, HONK, 502 Fry St., Covington, KY 41011; or dhastings@honkhomes.org

Chapel Mausoleum Crypt For Sale
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Office Coordinator Needed
Part-time Office Coordinator for faith-based non-profit lease-to-own homeownership program in NKY. Duties include scheduling repairs; ordering materials; maintaining residential unit services; monitoring contracts; submitting reimbursement requests; keeping up-to-date; property records; maintaining org. database; helping plan/ implement events; assisting w/ marketing effs; coordinating mailings, maintaining org. supplies; answering phones; and maintaining exemplary customer service relationships. 12 hrs/wk @ $12.50/hr with opportunity to work more hours if desired. Visit www.honkhomes.org/OfficeCoordinator for more info and send resume to: David Hastings, HONK, 502 Fry St., Covington, KY 41011; or dhastings@honkhomes.org

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ACTIVITIES ASSISTANT
Work with persons diagnosed with intellectual and developmental disabilities in a social, leisure, and recreational based Adult Day Training program. Part-time hours available. Forward resume to: BAWAC, Inc. Attn: Director of Services, 7970 Kentucky Dr., Florence, KY 41042, email: hr@bawac.org E.O.E.

DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR
Care Net Pregnancy Services of Northern Kentucky is seeking to advance its development efforts and is in search of a part-time (25 hour) Development Director. The Development Director is responsible for planning, management, and execution of development strategies as outlined in the annual development plan: annual banquet, fundraiser events, major gifts, planned giving, grant writing, and capital campaigns. This entails active engagement with donor base including prospecting, development and procurement of financial gifts. The Development Director is responsible for managing special events and donor marketing. The Development Director supervises the Development Assistant, Social Media Coordinator, Baby Bottle Campaign Coordinator, and works in close partnership with the Executive Director, Development Committee and Board members. Candidates must possess strong verbal and written communication skills and demonstrate advanced PC skills in Microsoft Office.

Applicants should include resume, cover letter and salary requirements to info@carenetknky.org

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NOVENA

SACRED HEART PRAYER. Dear Heart of Jesus — In the past I have asked for favors. This time I ask you for this very special one (mention favor). Take it, dear Jesus, and place it within your own heart where your Father sees it, then in your merciful eyes it will become your favor, not mine. Amen. H.W.

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Step 2: Go to www.virtus.org and click on Registration. Follow the prompts to create an account and request a background check. Selection.com is a secure site; the background check is posted on your account and you receive a copy if you request it during the registration process. You will also sign up for a VIRTUS class during the registration.

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Step 4: Your account becomes active when your background check, VIRTUS session and Acceptance Form are posted on your account. You will receive 12 bulletins per year. You will receive e-mail notices at system@pub.virtus.org unless your computer program blocks them.

Bulletin

February bulletin: posted Sunday, Feb. 2; due Tuesday, March 3.

VIRTUS Trainings

Dioecesan Catholic Children’s Home, Ft. Mitchell training room Monday, March 9, 6:30-10 p.m.

Catholic Charities, Latonia (Mary Moser Room) Parking at Latonia Baptish Church NOT Holy Cross School lot Wednesday, March 11, 1:30-5 p.m.

St. Therese School, Southgate (cafeteria) Thursday, April 23, 6:30-10 p.m.

Play Like A Champion
Coaches Only Training

Elementary Coaches Training:

St. Pius X Parish, Edgewater (Church meeting rooms 1-2-3) Wednesday, Feb. 26, 6:30-9:30 p.m.

Note: If your Training Tab is missing or you cannot access your account, contact your parish, school or institution. For other difficulties, contact Marylu Steffen at (859) 392-1500 or msteffen@covdio.org.

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“Downhill” (Fox Searchlight) Awkward moments abound in this comedy about a husband and father whose momentary act of cowardice suddenly alters how his spouse and two sons view him. In adapting Ruben Ostlund’s 2014 film “Force Majeure,” directors and co-writers Nat Faxon and Jim Rash quietly uphold martial fidelity though a minor dalliance on the part of the wife and its aftermath are among the elements that restrict the appropriate audience for their largely unsatisfying remake. Considerable sexual content, including a brief scene of masturbation and numerous sexual jokes, elicits marital sensuality, drug references, fleeting irreverence, about a dozen rough terms, occasional crude language. CNSL: L; MP AA: R.

“The Photograph” (Universal) Mature, though morally flawed, romantic drama interweaves the burgeoning current-day relationship between a museum staffer and a journalist with flashbacks to the 1980s bond between the curator’s mother, then an up-and-coming professional photographer, and her less ambitious boyfriend. Writer-director Stella Meghie works at a leisurely pace to weave a tale emphasizing the importance of communication, openness and commitment and evokes some potent performances. But her script not only takes premonitory relations for granted but romanticizes them. Semi-graphic premarital sexual activity, partial and fleeting rear nudity, at least one mild oath, references to drug use and sexuality. CNS: A-III; MPAA: R.

Capsule
Movie Capsule

For full reviews of each of these films — go to catholic-news.com and click on “Extras,” then choose “Movies.” Catholic News Service (CNS) classifications are:

• A-I — general patronage;
• A-II — adults and adolescents;
• A-III — adults;
• L — limited adult audience;
• O — morally offensive.

“Les Miserables” (Amazon) Set in a rundown Paris suburb with a large community of Muslim immigrants, this drama traces the slow breakdown of its public order. Director Ladj Ly, who co-wrote the screenplay with Giordano Gederlini and Alexis Manenti, uses the outline of a police procedural — the film mostly takes place over a single day in the work of a three-man street crime unit — to form a powerful message about bigotry, suspicion and the abuse of authority. After a boy with a talent for theft is accidentally shot by the cops, they have to keep him out of sight while they hunt for the memory card of a drone camera owned by another lad that recorded the incident. In French, English subtitles. Some physical violence, frequent racist and sexual slurs, pervasive rough and fleeting crass language. CNS: A-III; MPAA: R.

Rice Bowl snack saves lives
(Continued from page 2)

education, obtaining a master’s degree in public administration from the University of California, and working with CRS — “trucking children to go to school,” he said.

He shared his amazement at the abundance of clean water that is readily available in the United States, while in the village he grew up in people struggle to find clean water — even sharing water sources with animals, which leads to life-threatening illnesses like cholera.

“What is life if not for clean water?” Pray for those who struggle every day for clean water,” he said.

Mr. Awiapo encouraged the students — especially if they are tempted to waste food — to “remember my face,” and to think about his deceased brothers and others in America and around the world who experience hunger every day. He ended his talk encouraging students to find small ways they might be able to help others.

“God blessed us all so that we can bless one another. I think Rice Bowl is one of those little ways we can bless one another,” he said.

Referring to the cardboard “rice bowl” boxes students use to collect spare change during Lent through the CRS Rice Bowl program Mr. Awiapo said, “When you assemble the little rice bowl what you are actually doing is assembling many, many broken lives around the world.”

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MESSGER
Pope says new Vatican finance laws, norms are working

VATICAN CITY — The decades-long process of updating the laws of Vatican City State is part of the Vatican’s support for international commitments to protect people and safeguard vulnerable groups, which are “frequently the victims of new and old forms of illegality,” Pope Francis said. Retired Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Francis have made major changes to Vatican City legislation to strengthen laws against money-laundering, tax evasion, child sexual abuse and child pornography.

Meeting officials of the Vatican City State court Feb. 15, Pope Francis repeated his conviction that the latest financial scandal being investigated by the Vatican City police and tribunal is a sign of progress because the report of suspicious activity originated with the Vatican general auditor. While the investigation continues into the financing of a London real estate investment and while the parties involved have the right to a presumption of innocence, the pope said the flagging of the irregular activity “shows the efficiency and efficiency of the counter-actions as requested by international standards.”

The new Vatican City legislation, the pope who enforces the laws and the judges who try those accused of breaking the laws, the pope said, are meant to ensure not only a well-ordered life within Vatican City, but to promote a sense of responsibility “for the quality of interpersonal relationships lived within our territory.” The path of justice, he said, makes possible “an authentic brotherhood in which all are protected, especially the weakest and most fragile.”

Pope adds year of missionary service to Vatican diplomats’ training

VATICAN CITY — Pope Francis, adopting a suggestion made at the Synod of Bishops for the Amazon, has decided that every priest preparing for service in the Vatican diplomatic corps must spend a year in ministry as a missionary. In a letter released Feb. 17, Pope Francis wrote in the letter released Feb. 17. In a special way, he said, “I am convinced that the year of missionary service should be added to the academy’s curriculum beginning with students studying for a doctorate, then their time at the academy is only two years. In addition to their university courses, the students study diplomacy, Vatican diplomatic relations, languages, international law, papal documents and current affairs.

Sasse bill is about providing care for abortion survivors, says supporters

WASHINGTON — Former nurse Jill Stanek recalls 20 years ago holding “a precious child who had been abandoned to die alone in the hospital’s soiled utility room after surviving an abortion.” Today “we are still fighting for the basic care those little ones deserve,” she said. Stanek, who is national campaign chair for the Susan B. Anthony List pro-life organization, made the comments ahead of her testimony at a Feb. 11 hearing on Capitol Hill sponsored by the Senate Committee on the Judiciary on the Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act. U.S. Sen. Ben Sasse, R-Neb., is the lead sponsor of the measure, which he reintroduced in mid-January. The bill would protect newborns who survive abortions by requiring appropriate care and admission to a hospital. “As extremists in New York, Virginia, Illinois and other states push to expand abortion on demand through the moment of birth,” Stanek said, “abortion survivors desperately need Congress to pass the Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act, to provide them with legal and medical protections and not leave open the decision whether they live or die.” Other pro-life witnesses who testified included Dr. Bob Pierucci, a clinical neonatologist and associate scholar with the Charlotte Lozier Institute, the research arm of the Susan B. Anthony List, and Patricia Mesolea, the director of life, culture and women’s advocacy at the Family Research Council.

Remains of aborted babies now in final resting place in Indiana cemetery

SOUTH BEND, Ind. — A cold, gray, wintry day in South Bend seemed like an appropriate setting for the burial of 2,441 aborted babies, whose remains were interred in Southern Cemetery in the city Feb. 12. The babies had been aborted between 2000 and 2003 by the late Dr. Ulrich “George” Klopfer, who operated abortion clinics in Indiana since the 1970s and performed an estimated 31,000 abortions before having his license revoked in 2016. The medically preserved remains of those fetuses had been transported across state lines and stored for years on Klopfer’s Illinois property, in his garage and in the trunk of a car. The grisly discovery of the remains was made after his death Sept. 1 last year. Neither his family nor authorities have been able to determine why Klopfer kept the remains instead of properly disposing of them. Indiana law now requires fetal remains to be cremated or buried. Records found with the remains indicated the abortions had taken place in South Bend, Fort Wayne and Gary, as Indiana Attorney General Curtis T. Hill Jr. took possession of them. Originally, an effort was made to determine in which city such abortion took place so that the remains could be returned home for burial. The state received several offers of burial locations, including an offer by Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades of Fort Wayne-South Bend for space and services at Catholic Cemetery in Fort Wayne.

Spanish, Portuguese bishops reject moves to legalize euthanasia

OXFORD, England — Spanish and Portuguese church leaders rejected plans to legalize euthanasia in their traditionally Catholic countries, and urged broad discussions of such proposals before they are considered by lawmakers. “It is painful to see this law begin its process when we were celebrating the World Day of the Sick,” Auxiliary Bishop Luis Arguello of Valladolid, secretary general of the Spanish bishops’ conferences, told a Forum Feb. 11. “In witnessing human life in all circumstances, the Church does not defend therapeutic cruelty in keeping life going mechanically at all costs. But solutions cannot lie in making the suffering person disappear,” he said at the event organized by the Valladolid-based El Norte de Castilla daily. The bishop’s comments came as the Spanish parliament voted 208 to 140 to advance draft legislation by the government of Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez.

Architect of China’s cross removal to oversee Hong Kong, Macau affairs

HONG KONG — The architect of the three-year cross removal and church destruction campaign in the Chinese province of Zhejiang, Cardinal Joseph Zen Ze-kiun, has been appointed to head the Office of Hong Kong and Macau Affairs, in what many see as a signal that Beijing intends to take a firmer hand in the financial hub that has been bypassed by many of China’s political reforms. Xie Guangyi, 67, a close ally of Chinese leader Xi Jinping, was his deputy in Zhejiang when Xi ran the province. In 2013, Xi became the Communist Party secretary of the province, one of China’s more heavily Christian regions. Xie began the campaign to tear down crosses and some churches, using China’s dense property codes as a shield, from 2013 until he stopped it in 2017. More than 200 crosses were removed and an unknown number of churches torn down, a tactic that has been emulated in other Chinese provinces and is further promoted for its efforts and has been serving since 2017 as a vice chairman of the Chinese People’s Consultative Committee, which has traditionally included religion—as well as ethnic minorities—as part of the sections of society it oversees.
In Amazon document, pope calls for action rooted in conversion of heart

Carol Glatz  
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Like so many of Pope Francis’ teachings and major documents, his apostolic exhortation on the Amazon is built on a call for conversion — a new way of seeing, thinking and doing.

“We need to feel outrage,” he wrote, underscoring his concern that the world has become too indifferent, too numb or too much in denial about what is happening to the environment, the world and the people in it.

In his apostolic exhortation “Querida Amazonia” (Beloved Amazonia), Pope Francis urged people to recognize how much injustice and cruelty has taken place in the Amazon region, and he pleaded for attention to “current forms of human exploitation, abuse and killing.”

Following in the footsteps of “Laudato Si’,” his 2015 encyclical on the environment, the pope said people must approach the Amazon aware that “everything is connected,” which means that care for people and care for ecosystems are inseparable.

In the document, released Feb. 12, he called on political leaders and governments in the Amazon region to take more seriously their responsibility to preserve the environment and resources and to protect the rights and cultures of all its citizens.

An unusual suggestion Pope Francis made in the document was that people turn to poetry and delve into Amazonian stories to discover how unique the region is and to feel more deeply its importance.

“Those poets, contemplatives and prophets help free us from the technocratic and consumerist paradigm that destroys nature and robs us of a truly dignified existence,” he said.

Poetry helps give voice to beauty and to pain, he said, and it should help people see what is under threat. Reflection is needed to bring about the true conversion needed to hear and respond to the cry of the region’s peoples and the cry of the earth, he said. “From the original peoples, we can learn to contemplate the Amazon region and not simply analyze it, and thus appreciate this precious mystery that transcends us.”

“We can love it, not simply use it, with the result that love can awaken a deep and sincere interest,” he wrote. “Even more, we can feel intimately a part of it and not only defend it, then the Amazon region will once more become like a mother to us.”

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The key to all of Pope Francis’ appeals in the document is to not “look at the world from without but from within, conscious of the bonds with which the Father has linked us to all beings.”

“A sound and sustainable ecology, one capable of bringing about change, will not develop unless people are changed, unless they are encouraged to opt for another style of life, one less greedy and more serene, more respectful and less anxious, more fraternal,” he said. (See related articles pages 3 and 10.)

True sorrow for sins leads to renewed love for God, others

Carol Glatz  
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Recognizing and repenting for one’s own sins and errors is difficult, but essential, Pope Francis said.

“To understand (one’s) sin is a gift from God, it is the work of the Holy Spirit” who helps each person realize “the evil I have done or that I may do,” the pope said Feb. 12 during his weekly general audience.

The pope continued a new series of talks on the Eight Beatitudes by reflecting on Jesus’ second “paradoxical” proclamation, “Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted.”

This kind of mourning is more than mere grief, he said, it is “an inner sorrow that leads to a new relationship with the Lord and with each other.”

The Bible distinguishes between two types of sorrow, the pope said. One is the pain felt when facing the suffering or death of someone else and is a pain that comes from a place of love and empathy. The second is sorrow for one’s own sin.

Just as there are sorrows to be comforted, he said, sometimes there are people who are too comforted, and they need some sorrow to “wake up” and remember how to cry for their brothers and sisters.

Mourning for another is a “bitter” but important journey that reveals “the sacred and irreplaceable value of every person” and is a reminder of how fleeting life is.

“The sorrow people should experience over their sins is not the same thing as getting angry when they make a mistake. That, he said, is pride.

Instead people should truly mourn for what they have done, for their failure to do what was right or for betraying God by not living the way indicated by the Lord, “who loves us so much.”

“This is the sense of sin — it makes us sad knowing the good we did not do,” he said. It is the sorrow of realizing “I have hurt the one I love,” leading to the precious “gift” of tears.

This lies at the heart of facing one’s own errors, which is “difficult, but vital,” he said. “Look at the tears of St. Peter, which led him to a new and more authentic love,” versus Judas, who did not accept he did anything wrong, “and poor thing, he commits suicide.”

Mourning purifies and renews the heart and one’s relationship with God, the pope said, highlighting St. Ephraim the Syrian, who spoke of the beauty of a face washed with tears of repentance.

The pope asked people to pray for the grace to grieve for their sins and to be open to the healing grace of the Holy Spirit.

“Do not forget. God always forgives, even the worst sins. The problem is we tire of asking forgiveness,” he said.

At the end of the audience, the pope led a moment of silence after he asked people to pray for Syria, which has been “shredding blood for years.”

“So many families, so many elderly people, children have to flee from war,” he said. He also asked for prayers for people in China who are suffering from illnesses caused by the “vicious” coronavirus. “May they find the path to healing as soon as possible.”