March 6, 2020
In This Issue

2 Ash Wednesday at the Cathedral
2 Memorial Mass for Loss of a Child
2 Celebrating VillaRama
3 Beloved Cathedral curator hangs up keys
Berry Mang retires
10 CRS Rice Bowl

Over 200 catechumens and candidates presented to Bishop Foys in two ceremonies at the Cathedral Basilica

Laura Keener, Editor

In two separate ceremonies, March 1, at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington, 92 catechumens and 128 candidates from the parishes and missions of the Diocese of Covington were presented to Bishop Roger Foys as this year’s elect. Catechumens are unbaptized persons converting to Catholicism. Candidates are Christians who have already been baptized and are seeking full communion with the Church through confirmation and/or first Communion. The Rite of Election takes place on the first Sunday of Lent each year. The word “election” refers to a name being formally announced among God’s chosen people. The elect will enter into full communion with the Church at the Easter Vigil, April 11.

In his homily Bishop Foys said that the first Sunday of Lent is known as Temptation Sunday. The first reading recounts the story of the temptation of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. The Gospel focuses on Jesus 40 days in the desert where he is tempted by the devil. “Everyone is tempted,” Bishop Foys said. “We are tempted not because we are bad — we are tempted because we are human. ‘Temptation is not a sin, giving into the temptation is a sin.’” Jesus’ time in the desert — in the silence of the desert — actually drew him closer to God, Bishop Foys said.

“Nothing and no one could dissuade him from his trust in his Father,” Bishop Foys said. “The devil is alive and is well and is working and would keep us from our mission; keep us from laying claim to eternal life. This is what makes today and our gathering here today in this church so significant. The devil would keep people from the Church — the Church founded by Jesus Christ — in which and through which we work on our salvation as individuals and as a community. Our faith must make us strong. Our faith must make us see that which is good, that which is holy that which is wholesome. We work together to make the Church what it is called to be: to repent of its sinfulness and of its sinners.”

Bishop Foys ended his homily welcoming the candidates and catechumens and thanking the pastors and all those who are working to bring people to God.

Members of the Diocese of Covington make Catholic voice heard in Frankfort

Allegria Thatcher
Assistant Editor

Approximately 140 people from the Diocese of Covington attended Catholics@TheCapitol in Frankfort Feb 27, making it the largest representation from any diocese for the annual event.

Sponsored by the Catholic Conference of Kentucky, the event invites Catholics to make their voices heard in the public square. “This year, the CCC chose separate days for each diocese for a chance to ‘hone in on a more local focus,’” according to executive director Jason Hall.

Bishop Roger Foys attended and the diocese arranged for several buses to bring interested laity to Frankfort for the day. After an opening prayer led by Bishop Foys, Ms. Hall and CCC assistant director Andrew Vandiver explained the bills currently in the House of Representatives and Senate that the CCC advocates for or against. They answered questions about the current legislation and offered tips on how to talk to legislators when advocating for a bill.

In addition to Curia members, students from Bishop Brossart High School, Covington Catholic High School, Holy Cross High School, Notre Dame Academy St. Henry District High School and Villa Madonna Academy attended as well. Mr. Hall said the diocese (Continued on page 11)
Ash Wednesday: ‘Return to the Lord with your whole heart’

Laura Keener
Editor

A large crowd attended Ash Wednesday Mass, Feb. 26, at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington. Bishop Roger Foys was the main celebrant. Concelebrating and distributing ashes were Father Ryan Maher, rector and vicar general; Father Daniel Schomaker, vicar general; Father Michael Norton, vocations promoter; and Father Joseph Shelton, administrative assistant to the Bishop.

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent, a season of penance and prayer. During the Mass, ashes — symbolizing the dust from which God created man — are placed in the form of a cross on the foreheads of the faithful. The priest says the words, “Remember man that you are dust and to dust you shall return” or a new form, “Repent and believe in the Gospel.”

In his homily, Bishop Foys said that the words of the prophet Joel proclaimed in the day’s first reading summarize the season of Lent, “Even now return to the Lord with your whole heart.” (2:12)

“Repent means to turn from,” Bishop Foys said. “We turn from something so we can turn to something. In Lent we turn from anything and everything that is a distraction from our relationship with the Lord and we turn to the Lord.”

Bishop Foys shared a list of 15 “Great Ways to Fast During Lent” that someone had shared with him. Some included: fast from anger and hatred, give your family extra love; fast from division, strive to be in unity with everyone; fast from low self-esteem, pessimism and negativity be positive in your outlook on life. On the 14th Great Way to Fast, “fast from too much of the world, give extra time to Jesus.” Bishop Foys affirmed Pope Francis’ recommendation for Lent given at his general audience that day.

“Pope Francis told people to turn off their television and open their Bible. Spend less time on social media and more time in prayer or with others — fast from the world,” he said.

Memorial Mass for the Loss of a Child

Thursday, April 2, 7 p.m.
Immaculate Heart of March Parish, Burlington
Hosted by the diocesan Pro-Life Office

This Mass is offered for anyone who has lost a child, regardless of situation, recent or years ago, born or unborn, to come together for healing and celebration of life. Each family is invited to have a representative participate in the opening candlelight procession. These candles will remain lit throughout Mass and may be taken home by a loved one. Sign the memorial book as you arrive. Light refreshments immediately following in the gathering space.

For information e-mail: ppicolai@cdio.org.
Beloved Cathedral curator retires, reflects on years of service

Laura Keener
Editor

For 28 years Berry Mang has been unlocking and locking the doors at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington. Last month he officially hung up his keys. Bishop Roger Foye, Father Ryan Maher, rector, and the Cathedral community joyfully celebrated, Sunday, Feb. 23, the retirement of the beloved curator.

“For over 28 years Berry Mang has served St. Mary’s Cathedral Parish with selfless dedication,” said Father Maher. “Berry has given those years of his life to faithful and outstanding service not only to the clergy and parishioners of the Cathedral, but also to an untold number of guests and visitors over his years of ministry at the Cathedral Basilica. Berry faithfully carried out his ministry every day and on weekends. He has done so much behind the scenes to help ensure that the Cathedral is a welcoming place and that everything was prepared and in order for liturgical services. On behalf of the Cathedral clergy, staff and parishioners, and many guests and visitors, I wish Berry a very blessed, grace-filled and healthy retirement.”

Mr. Mang’s daily presence and gentle care of the cathedral and the people who worship and visit there has earned him the moniker “Mr. Cathedral.” His official title was Facilities Manager and Director of Volunteers.

He began his ministry in 1993, not long after he and his wife, Carol, converted to Catholicism. The couple was married in 1986. They met at St. Elizabeth Hospital — she was in nursing school and he was working his way through college as an x-ray technician. The year after his graduation the couple married. That year they will celebrate their 50th anniversary together — a long time.

“It’s been longer for her,” he laughs. “I get the better end of that deal.”

Mrs. Mang volunteers at the Cathedral as an usher and greeter.

“We work well together,” Mr. Mang said, noting that his wife is the oldest of 7 children and “a great organizer. I’m an only child. I come up with crazy ideas. That’s a good team — one has ideas and the other has organization.”

During his time at the Cathedral he was also head of the Cathedral Foundation for three years and Parish Council president for five years. When talking with Mr. Mang you quickly realize he prefers to talk about other people than himself. He has worked for three bishops — Bishop William Hughes, Bishop Robert Munich and Bishop Roger Foye — five rectors, Father Raymond Harnett, Father John Cahill, Msgr. William Cleves, Msgr. William Neuhans and Father Ryan Maher, respectively.

“It’s been a great experience, they are all good people,” he said.

Msgr. Stanley Fleming began Mr. Mang’s Christian liturgy instructions when he was entering the Church; Father Hartman was the rector who, in 1982, administered the sacraments of instruction. Not long after that Father Hartman was assigned to Mother of God Parish, Covington.

“I never imagined that as soon as I joined he decided to go elsewhere,” he said.

Father Cahill, Mr. Mang said, was instrumental in positioning the Cathedral as a welcoming place for visitors to worship and visit.

“He started the greeter program and the docent program; he built off of suggestions from parish council,” he said.

Recently the docent program has been reorganized and the number of docents has increased “thanks to Steve Krueweiler;” he said. Mr. Krueweiler was recently named Cathedral hematian.

Mr. Mang said that the Cathedral receives “a tremendous amount of visitors from around the country and the world.” A conservative estimate, he said, is about 15,000 a year. He said that visitors increased exponentially after the building of the “Ark” exhibit in Willamstown. “You might say we spilled over from The Ark,” he quipped.

And while the Cathedral may not have been first on the visitor’s list, Mr. Mang said that the Cathedral assesses visitors.

“Usually, they come through the door and look up. Some even say, ‘wow’. Then, after they settle down a little bit, the next question is, ‘Can we take pictures?’” he said.

About the current rector, Mr. Mang said, “Father Maher is a gentle and gracious man being, so gentle and so wonderful to people. He has been very good for this parish.”

In addition to booking tours, Mr. Mang’s duties at the Cathedral includes assigning ushers for each Mass. A typical weekend Mass will require six ushers, larger liturgical events require more. There are about 10 ushers on the roster at the Cathedral.

“We make sure the Communion line goes well so there is no confusion, help people get seated, especially if there is reserved seating,” he said.

One of the most important tasks is “Making sure the door is open so the Bishop can get in. I always try to meet him out at the gate.”

Mr. Mang said that the installation Mass of Bishop Munich and the ordination and installation Mass of Bishop Foye were among the highlights of his career.

At Bishop Munich’s installation heavy rain had exposed a leaky roof and a section of the cathedral had to be closed. That unfortunate incident may have been a driving factor in Bishop Munich’s restoration of the Cathedral — another highlight.

The recent entombment of Bishop Camillus Maes at the Cathedral was another historic event for Mr. Mang. “That was a wonderful thing that took place and Bishop Foye was totally responsible for making that happen,” he said. “It’s hard to say anything except good things about Bishop Foye; he has just been wonderful. He has reestablished the Church and got programs going again that we had years ago.”

Bishop Hughes, Mr. Mang said, “was exceptionally warm and gracious.”

Mr. Mang and Bishop Hughes shared a love for college football. Mr. Mang was a big school referee for 35 years and Bishop Hughes was a big University of Notre Dame fan.

“I would see Bishop Hughes and ask how are the boys going to do and he would say, ‘I don’t know’. Notre Dame had some tough years but he never gave up hope,” he said.

About the three bishops, Mr. Mang said, “I have experienced the kindest people I know in these three gentlemen.”

Adding, “All the rectors have been outstanding individuals and the Bishops have been unbelievable — we have been so blessed.”

Above all, Mr. Mang has enjoyed serving the people of the Diocese of Covington. “It’s amazing the spiritual wealth that our diocese has,” he said.

Mr. Mang’s favorite place inside the Cathedral is the Blessed Sacrament Chapel. “It’s quiet and the Eucharist is in the tabernacle. You can slide in and pray and just be, stay for a little breather then go back to work,” he said.

Another favorite place is the Cathedral garden — another place of tranquility Mr. Mang marveled at the development of the Cathedral square which includes not only the Cathedral and its garden but also renovations at Covington Latin School, the building of the Curia and establishing the Cathedral Parish Offices on the corner of 11th and Madison.

“This whole block has been developed beautifully,” he said. “One of the nice things that happened when we moved the offices out of the rectory is the cooperation between the Curia and the Cathedral staffs is more intimate now.”

While Mr. Mang does not have any immediate plans for his retirement, he said that he and Carol will continue to volunteer at the Cathedral. “We have been so blessed,” he said.

“Berry Mang has given almost three decades of uninterrupted service to our beloved Cathedral Basilica in Covington,” said Bishop Foye. “His ministry was far reaching and all inclusive. To call him Mr. Cathedral would not be a stretch! He has an intimate working knowledge of every facet of life at our Cathedral Basilica and has given himself selflessly in every way imaginable.”

“I offer him, on my own behalf and on behalf of every Cathedral parishioner and anyone and everyone who has ever visited our Cathedral, my profound gratitude for giving himself so fully over so many years. I know that his love of the Cathedral is sincere and that he will not be a stranger to us now that he is retiring from the day-to-day management of every detail of overseeing our Cathedral. I wish him well as he begins a well-deserved retirement!”
The Ratzingerian constants and the maintenance of harmony in the Church

Some years ago, my friend Mgr Francis Manning wrote an article concerning the three essential features of the Eucharistic liturgy: namely, the priest, the people, and the object. When these elements are in proper balance, rightly ordered liturgy obtains. Further, from these categories, he argued, we can discern the three primary distortions of the liturgy: clericalism (too much of the priest), ritualism (a fussy hyper-focus on the rites), and congregationalism (a disproportionate emphasis on the people). It was one of those observations that just manages to spread light in every direction.

A similarly illuminating remark was made by Pope Benedict XVI concerning the work of the Church, and I would like to spend a little time exploring it. Pope Ratzinger said that the Church performs three basic tasks: it worships God, it evangelizes, and it serves the poor. Religious activity of over a billion Catholics around the globe, he maintained, can be reduced finally to these three fundamental moves.

For example, the liturgy, the celebration of the sacraments, individual and collective prayer, the singing of music, the whispered prayers of closeted religious, prayer and worship songs, the recitation of the rosary — all belong under the heading of worshiping God.

The teaching of the kerygma, street preaching, catechism, university-level theology, the evangelization of society, training the faithful in the new media — all of that can be categorized as evangelization.

Finally, care for the hungry and homeless, outreach to immigrants, Catholic Worker soup kitchens, the work of Catholic charities, hospitals, and the like are expressions of the Church’s commitment to serve the poor. The life of the Church consists, Pope Benedict maintains, in the harmonious coming together of these three minimal units, no one of which can be reduced to the other two and each one of which implies the other two. Properly evangelized people want to worship God and long to help the needy; helping the needy is a way of proclaiming the Gospel and a vehicle for the teaching of Scripture. Liturgy, by its very nature, leads to theology (lex crandid, lex credendi) and the instantiation of the kingdom through service.

If I borrow from Mgr Manning, we can also read off of these three categories particular distortions in the life of the Church. When the worship of God is exaggerated or exclusively emphasized, the community becomes hyper-spiritualized, disincarnate, and at the limit, superstitious. What is required is the critical intelligence provided by theology as well as the groundedness provided by the concrete service of the poor.

When the evangelical mission is exaggerated, the Church runs the risk of falling into rationalism and of losing affective contact with God. What is particularly needed in that case is the visceral sense of the transcendent provided by the liturgical praise of God.

When outreach to the needy is one-sidedly stressed, the Church tends toward a reduction of the supernatural to the natural, becoming, as Pope Francis puts it, just another NGO providing social services. What is required in that case is the robust supernaturalism to which a healthy theology and liturgy give access.

I don’t want to oversimplify the matter: there are plenty of ideological battles within the three “groups” liberal, liturgical conservatives, liturgical left-wing approaches to evangelization, and other approaches, etc. But it might suggest that many of our disputes in the life of the Church today have to do with a kind of imperialistic reductionism. I mean that people who are particularly interested in the praise of God sometimes think that the praise of God is everything; and that all are really into evangelization sometimes think that the whole Church should be nothing but evangelism, and that people who are passionate about the service of the poor think that this ministry should take all the oxygen in the room.

At its best, the Church resists this kind of imperialism, and you can see it in the lives of the great saints, who seemed to have a feel for the manner in which these three moves — liturgy, teaching, Church, and service — meet one another as they tour herself out in service among the poorest of the poor in the worst slums in the world and passing hours and hours in contemplative prayer, or of Edith Stein, one of the premier intellectuals of the twentieth century and a woman who spent hours every day in silence before the Blessed Sacrament, and who, at the climax of her life, offered herself as a martyr on behalf of her people, or of Francis of Assisi, who was married to Lady Poverty and who, judging from some of the few authentic letters we have of his, was extremely concerned about altar linens and the proper maintenance of tabernacles and churches.

By nature, training, or personal predilection, each of the baptized probably gravitates more readily to one or other of the basic Ratzingerian tasks. I, for example, have long been oriented toward evangelical work — preaching, teaching, writing, communicating, etc. But I cannot tell you how often in the course of my priesthood I have had to battle an anti-intellectualism, unusually justified through appeal to the urgency and primary of social justice work. And I have certainly known advocates of that third path who have endured attacks from liturgical devotees, claiming that service of the poor is “secularist.” And indeed I have known passionate evangelists who have been forced to endure taunts for being a little lazy and out of touch with the “real” needs of the people of God, etc.

Could we please cut that out? It is not only stupid; it also cruelly underminds the work of the Church, which is a harmonious and mutually correcting interplay of these three Ratzingerian cards. I might charge close with a word of encouragement to the whole body of the faithful: you are all needed together, and the harmony among the three basic charisms remains vibrant in the lives of our bishops, priests, and any other ordained workers.

Bishop Robert Barron is an Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. Article originally published at WordOnFire.org.

God is with us and loves us through it all

Somewhere along the way today actually among many other things and odd happenings, Ash Wednesday was comprised of stock market blues, and remaining from a meter reader, assorted news piled upon more news (much of it sourdough), questionable advice from a financial guru, attempts to fix a little at this advanced age, track- ing down and trying to get to the bottom of — and fix — an insurance company’s huge computer error, rac- ing to the post office to beat or meet the six o’clock pick- up, enforcing an old reflex — no decision — phone call from a trusted advisor, and narr- avely avoiding a side-swipe accident in the darkened Lytle Tunnel before enter- ing Kentucky over the age, somewhat failing, Brent Spence Bridge with — I must confess — rosary in hand. Still with me? Hang on.

Please allow me to conclude that God does not send such days. Life does.

The redeeming factor, I believe without a doubt, is that we are continually blessed with God’s unearned, loving presence. God is with us and loving us through it all — whatever the days, weeks, months, years, end life is — might send our way. That’s a lot of love.

As evening drew near after a typical Ash Wednesday dinner — surely you can imagine the entire — I felt drawn to my favorite book of daily meditations, “Jesus Calling: Enjoying Peace in His Presence,” by Sarah Young. It never comes to amaze me how, no matter the date, February 26, for example, provides the needed and appropriate reflec- tion to help me understand, embrace and learn from the happenings the day might bring or in this instance, the day that had already occurred.

It was tenderly and lovingly See if you agree: I am leading you, step by step, through your life. Hold my hand in trusting dependence, letting me guide you through this day. Your future looks uncertain and feels dim — even precarious. That is how it should be. Secret things belong to the Lord, and future things are secret things. When you try to figure out the future, you are grasping at things that are mine. This, like all forms of worry, is an act of rebellion; doubting my promises to care for you. Whenever you find yourself worrying about the future, repent and return to me. I will show you the next step forward, and the one after that, and the one after that. I will and enjoy the jour- ney in my presence, trusting me to open up the way before you as you go.”

In her wisdom, Sarah provides a fitting passage from sacred Scripture: “The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our chil-

Along the Way

Ray Smith

Whatever it is Tuesday

I still have my favorite book of daily meditations, “Jesus Calling: Enjoying Peace in His Presence,” by Sarah Young. It never comes to amaze me how, no matter the date, February 26, for example, provides the needed and appropriate reflection to help me understand, embrace and learn from the happenings the day might bring or in this instance, the day that had already occurred.

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EIGHTH DAY

Father Daniel Vogelpohl

Creating space for the Lord


We often spend a great deal of time wrestling with difficult decisions: “Is this the right person for me to marry?” “Should I become a priest?” “Is this the right time for me to change careers?” “Should we buy a bigger house?”

And for the Christian, the underlying concern is how to discern the will of God in the matter under consideration.

I find it difficult to make such major decisions amidst all the clamor of everyday activity. When I need to really think and pray about something, I need to get away. Sometimes just a few quiet moments in church will do, or at other times a retreat may be required. The important thing for me is simply to create some space between my busy life and me so that I can completely discern the Lord’s will in the matter at hand.

That’s what I believe Jesus is doing today in his Gospel when he takes Peter, James and John up on the mountain with him. Things were reaching the point of no return. It had already become clear to Jesus that the direction of his life was leading him to the cross. By getting away from all the crowds that were following him, Jesus was able to hear the Father’s will for him confirmed in the hearing of his three special friends.

Events that occur on the mountain in today’s Gospel serve as a model for the season of Lent, which we are now living. Moses had fasted for 40 days in preparation for his ascent of the mountain where he would encounter God and receive the law of the covenant. Elijah, too, fasted for 40 days before he went up the mountain and then was given the instruction to go down to dis- corn the Lord’s presence in the quiet whisper of the breeze.

Only after they had intensely prepared could Moses and Elijah meet the Lord. It comes as no surprise then, if the Church asks us to fast and do penance for 40 days. Such practice, because they force us to moderate our usual appetites, have the advantage of sharpening the inner senses for an encounter with God.

Peter, James and John were gifted with the glory of Christ’s transfiguration without any preparation being required. Peter was so moved that he wanted to preserve it indefinitely. “With your permission I will erect three tents here, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.”

But God made it quite clear that this brief experience of Christ’s glory was an exception to the rule and could only permanently come through the experience of the crucifi- xion and death.

God’s voice informed the three disciples that, “This is my beloved Son, listen to him.” They had been listening to him, Peter, and the others would have heard Jesus explaining (Matt 19) that he could come to glory only through the suffering and that anyone who wished to be with him in glory had to take up the same cross and follow him.

The opening words of today’s second reading remind us of the trial being united with Christ in his pas- sage to glory: “Bear your share of hardship with the Gospel with the strength that comes from God.” The path we dare to walk...to bear...

Today’s first reading provides us with the example of Abraham, “our father in faith,” as Eucharistic Prayer I calls him. At the age of about 75, the Lord, of whom he had little or no knowledge, called him to literally uproot his whole life from his homeland and go elsewhere. I’m sure it made no sense at all to Abraham just as Christ’s telling Peter of the necessity to die on the cross made no sense either. As Christians we spend the 40 days of Lent climbing the mountain for our experience of the transfigured Lord at Easter. We know that the mountain of glory can come only after prayer and fasting. We know that resurrection comes only after crucifixion and death.

Father Daniel Vogelpohl is pastor of Blessed Sacrament Parish, St. Mitchell.

Aventine meditations

George Weigel

Rome’s Aventine Hill has seen a lot. Legend has it that a dispute over the hill led to the fratricidal conflict between the city’s founders — Romulus and Remus.

During the Roman Republic, the Aventine was a working class neighborhood, high above the city’s most important port. In imperial Rome the Aventine was gentrified, becoming the neighboring-of-choice for knights and senators. Later still, great palaces were built on the Aventine, which offers an unparalleled city view.

In the fourth century, St. Jerome lived there with a circle of admirers until decamping for Jerusalem to translate the Bible into Latin. In Jerome’s day, Peter of Illyria built a great basilica dedicated to St. Sabina on the Aventine — patriotic Rome’s concept of the perfect church.

Today the Aventine is a posh residential neighborhood, home to the headquarters of the Knights of Malta (with its famous keyhole view of St. Peter’s dome) and that ugly aspargus patch of liturgical crankiness, the Pontifical Athenaeum of Sant’ Anselmo.

For all that it’s witnessed over the centuries, however, the Aventine hadn’t previously seen what’s happened there on the past 25 years or so — Ash Wednesdays. Then, as on Ash Wednesday 2020, hundreds of Irish speakers climb the Aventine before dawn to receive penitential ashes and cele- brate the first Mass of Lent. That “station Mass” at St. Sabina is the first stop in a Lenten station that dates back to the mid-first millennium — and that’s been revived in our time by Americans.

In the mid-centuries of the first millennium, the Bishop of Rome, his clergy, and his choir would gather every day of Lent at a starting point church (this is a collection) and proceed to the stations, the “station church” of the day, there, Mass was solemnly celebrated before the congregation broke its Lenten fast. Both the collecta and the station church were often outskirts of huge churches commemorating Roman martyrs. Thus the station church pilgrimage was an iter- nary of sanctity reminding Lenten penitents that the whole point of penance is purification for sanctification and Christian witness.

In the late sixth century, Pope St. Gregory the Great stan- dardized the station church itinerary, which was subse- quently expanded a bit but retained its essential Gregorian form. If you have an old daily missal at hand, you can find an echo of this pilgrimage tradition at the beginning of each Lenten day’s Mass. There, you’ll see a notation like “Ash Wednesday: Station at St. Sabina” or “Thursday after Ash Wednesday: Station at St. George.” These notations continue throughout Easter Week, as the traditional pilgrimage lasted until the Octave of Easter (which we know as Divine Mercy Sunday).

The Roman station church pilgrimage of Lent began to disappear in the late first millennium. But its memory remained in all those missals, penitential. And in the mid-1900s, that memory bore fruit: American seminarians in Rome began to walk the ancient paths of the station pil- grimage, to participate in Mass at the traditional station church of the day.

By the early 1980s, the station church pilgrimage had become a major feature of the pastoral activity of the Pontifical North American College. Now, seminarians, stu- dents from the Rome campuses of Angelicum universities, diplomats, English-speaking members of the Roman Curia, and alert tourists all participate in this striking contempo- rary revival of a venerable tradition. The North American College organizes the entire pilgrimage and takes up a daily collection at the station churches for the relief of hard- pressed Christians in some part of the world.

To offer others the opportunity to indulge something of the texture of this pilgrimage from home, I spent two months in the Eternal City in 2011, making the entire station church pilgrimage with my friend Elizabeth Le Rome’s pre- eminent art-and-architecture guide, and my son, Stephen, a gifted architectural photographer. The result was the book “Roman Pilgrimage: The Station Churches,” which includes Le’s brilliant descriptions of the churches, Stephen’s superb photography, and my own meditations on each station of each day of Lent. If you’ve yet to get a tablet, I recommend the ebook, every photograph in color and a zoom function allows closer study of each image.

I once asked another friend, Hannah Scholzack, then the Polish ambassador to the Holy See, why she regularly attended the English-language station church Mass at 7 a.m.; surely the evening station Mass sponsored by the Diocese of Rome would be more convenient?

“I found a living church here,” Ambassador Scholzack replied.

Something to ponder, this Lent, amidst so many concerns about the problems of U.S. Catholicism. We do get some things right. And they’re important things.

George Weigel is a senior fellow of the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, D.C.

Celebrating Black History

Mary C. Uhler

Perpetual Adoration whose motherhouse is in La Crosse. She was the first African American person I knew.

The U.S. Catholic bishops ended their six-day Eucharistic Fast of the First African American at the Church of St. Augustine Tolton, the first known African American priest in the Catholic Church.

February was Black History Month — an annual celebra- tion of achievements by African Americans and a time for recognizing the central role of blacks in U.S. history. Also known as American History Month, the event grew out of “Negro History Week,” the brainchild of noted histori- an Carter G. Woodson and other prominent African Americans.

Since 1975, every U.S. president has officially designated the month of February as Black History Month. Other coun- tries around the world, including Canada and the United Kingdom, also devote a month to celebrating black history. Each president has also endorsed a specific theme. This Black History Month 2020 theme, “African Americans and the Vote,” was in honor of the centennial anniversary of the granting of women’s suffrage (1920) and the sesquicentennial of giving black men the right to vote (1870).

Black History Month is also an opportunity to read the U.S. Catholic bishops’ pastoral letter against racism: “Open

Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call to Love.” The document was approved in November of 2018 at a general meeting of the U.S. bishops.

The bishops point out, “Racism arises when — either con- sciously or unconsciously — a person devalues or dehumanizes someone because of his or her race or ethnicity is superior, and therefore judges persons on the basis of their race or ethnicity, as if it were a sin to be trapped in this view. They reveal a failure to acknowledge the human dignity of the persons offended, to recognize them as the neighbors Christ calls us to love (Matt 22:39).

The bishops call on all members of society to end racism. “Racism can only end if we confront it with the policies and institutional barriers that perpetuate and preserve the inequality — economic and social — that we still see all around us. With renewed vigor, we call on the members of the body of Christ to join others in advocating and promoting policies at all levels that will combat racism and its effects in our civic and social institutions.”

Mary C. Uhler is editor of the Catholic Herald, newspaper of the Diocese of Madison, Wisconsin. Her commentary has been provided by Catholic News Service. The view or positions presented in this or any past editorial are those of the individ- ual publication and do not necessarily represent the views of Catholic News Service or of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.
Newsworthy

Happy Birthday to Deacon Michael Keller, St. John the Evangelist Parish, Carrollton, March 9; Father Robert Rodgers, pastor, St. Philip Parish, Melbourne, March 11; and Deacon Paul Yancey, All Saints Parish, Walton, March 12.

Note Dame Academy science research students had an outstanding performance at the Science and Engineering Fair of Northern Kentucky (SEFNK), Feb. 22. Under the direction of Bill Stamen, NASA received top honors as the best of Fair high school. Additionally, 13 students qualified to compete at the Kentucky Science and Engineering Fair in March.

The universal prayer intention for March, as recommended by Pope Francis, is for Catholics in China. We pray that the Church in China may persevere in its faithfulness to the Gospel and grow in unity.

The weekly “TV Mass from the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption” will be broadcast on Sunday 5-6 p.m. on station MeTV WJIN, on channels: over the air 5.2; Spectrum 188 in Kentucky and Cincinnati Bell 21 or 291.

Have something to list in “People and Events”? The deadline for event notices is nine days prior to the desired publication date. E-mail messages@crovdo.org no later than the Wednesday before the week you would like the information to appear.

Planning an event featuring a speaker or minister from outside your parish? In the Diocese of Covington, before contracting the services of a priest or deacon, man or woman religious, or lay person, a request for verification in good standing must be submitted to the Chancery office no later than four weeks before the desired date of service. Screening applications and instructions can be found at www.crovdo.org/chancery/.

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 clergy 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.

Brooks Flooring Fish Fry, March 6, 11, 20, 27, April 3 and 10, 11 a.m.–3 p.m. Benefits local organizations. 1840 Ashwood Circle, Ft. Wright. Carry out available, contact 361-6555.

From palms to Lenten ashes

Father Eric Andrzej, pastor, St. Anthony Parish, Taylor Mill, leads a burning of palms prayer service, Feb. 22. Students at St. Anthony School participated in the service. Ashes from the burnt palms were placed on the foreheads of the faithful at Ash Wednesday Mass the following day.

Toy drive for Cincinnati Children’s Hospital

The Student Council at St. Agnes School, Ft. Wright, recently completed its “Have a Heart” toy drive. With the support of many families and friends, 188 toys, books and gift cards were delivered to Cincinnati Children’s Hospital for children needing long-term care.

“Carvings” art display by River Valley Wood Carvers, presented by Bishop Brossart High School Art Gallery Free and open to the public March 8, 15, 22, 29, 12-4 p.m.

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

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.


“Eucharist: Rediscovering the Hope at the Heart of Worship,” presented by Divine Providence Sister Lucy Zientek, March 7, 9-11 a.m., St. Anne Province Center, Melbourne. Continental breakfast served. Register by e-mail annaasmliller@gmail.com or call 250-8133.

Trivia night, March 7, 8 p.m., hosted by the Knights of Columbus Father Kohse Council. Details available on Facebook. Register by e-mailing bill.young111@gmail.com. Benefits Sts. Boniface and James Church, Ludlow.

Euchre tournament, March 7, 7 p.m., St. Joseph Parish, Cold Spring, Activity Center, sponsored by the Catholic Order of Foresters combined courts. Cost $20; skims $10. Food and drinks provided. Call 635-3888 or (513) 535-6743.

3rd annual Ladies High Tea, Blessed Sacrament Parish, Ft. Mitchell, March 8, 2 p.m. in the undercroft. Tickets $10; reservations, call 561-6514.

12th annual “Music In Our Schools Month” concert, March 8, 3 p.m., Muminghamhoff Family Performing Arts Center, Bishop Brossart High School, Alexandria, featuring student musicians from St. Joseph Parish, Cold Spring, St. Mary Parish, Alexandria, St. Philip Parish, Melbourne, Sts. Peter and Paul Parish, California, and Bishop Brossart High School. Admission is free; donations encouraged. Contact bcharf@sbhsparrish.org or call 635-2308.

Lenten Concert, March 10, 6:30 p.m., Mother of God Parish, Covington, featuring the University of Notre Dame Honors Handbell Ensemble. Benefits Music Ministry at Mother of God Parish.


Fenians’ annual St. Patrick’s Day Mass, March 12, 7 p.m., Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington. Music by local groups. Gathering follows at Molly Malone’s.

Information session for Israel pilgrimage in Feb. 2021, March 12, 6:30-8 p.m., Broadway Hall at St. Timothy’s Parish, Union.

“Telling on Ourselves; Stories about Wells, Pools and Tombs (The Geeks of the Last Three Sundays of Lent),” March 14, 9-10 a.m., sponsored by the Benedictine Sisters of St. Walburg. $95 fee includes snacks and materials. Participants must pre-register at silhouet@ymail.com or 513-6773. No walk-ins.

Pancake Breakfast, March 15, 9 a.m. –12 p.m., Holy Cross

League winners

The 2nd grade boys basketball team from St. Pius X School, Edgewood, had a great year with a 12-1 record and then capped off the season with winning the league tournament. Led by head coach Jesse Jett, and assistant coaches were Erich Kroeger and Jay Johnson (missing). Players are (in alphabetical order): Kai Christensen, Gabe Farra, MJ Jett, Rory Johnson, Wyatt Kroeger; Brewer Noll, Jude Peters, Martin Scholz, Christian Spears Schickman and Wesley Unger.
Fish fries 2020

St. Agnes Parish, Ft. Wright, in Murphy Hall. March 6, 13 and 20.
St. Augustine Parish, Covington, 4-7 p.m., March 6, 13, 20, 27, April 3 and 10, in the gym. Call 411-3443.
St. Barbara Parish, Erlanger, 4:30-8 p.m., March 6, 13, 20, 27, April 3 and 10. Drive thru available.
St. Benedict Parish, Covington, 4:30-7 p.m., March 6, 13, 20, 27 and April 3. Carryout available.
St. Bernard Parish, Dayton, 5-7 p.m., March 6, 13, 20, 27, April 3. Carryouts available, 638-4513.
Blessed Sacrament Parish, March 27 and April 3.
St. Catherine of Siena Parish, Ft. Thomas, 4:30-7:30 p.m., McCrystal Hall, March 6, 13, 20, 27, April 3.
St. Cecilia Parish, Independence, March 6, 13, 20, 27, April 3.
St. Francis Xavier ParishKnights of Columbus, Falmouth, 4-7:30 p.m., March 6, 13, 20, 27, and April 3. Carryout available.
Holy Cross High School, 5-8 p.m., March 6, 13, 20, 27, April 3. Eat in or carry out.
St. John the Evangelist Parish, Carrollton, 4-7 p.m., April 3.
St. Joseph Parish, Camp Springs, 4-7:30 p.m., March 6, 13, 20, 27, April 3. Drive-in or carry-out, 635-2691.
Knights of Columbus, Elsmere, 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 Lytle Avenue. Carryout orders: 342-6643.
Knights of Columbus Father Kehos Council #1764, March 6, 13, 20, 27, April 3 and 10. Carryouts are available by calling 261-2704.
St. Mary Parish, Alexandria, 4:30-7:30 p.m., March 6 and 13.
Mary, Queen of Heaven Parish, Erlanger, 4-7 p.m., March 6, 13, 20, 27, April 3. Drive-in, drive thru or call ahead 371-2622.
St. Patrick Parish, Taylor Mill, March 6, 13, 20, 27 and April 3.
St. Paul Parish, Florence, 5-8 p.m., March 6, 13, 20, 27, April 3.
Our Savior Parish, Covington, April 3, 12-6:30 p.m. Limited delivery to nearest neighbors available, call the day before, 491-5872.
Prince of Peace School, 5-8 p.m., March 6, 13, 20, 27, April 3. Live music, bake sale, carryout available. Call 431-5153.


*Unplanned* movie showing, March 15, 7 p.m., St. Pius X Parish, Edgewood. Free admission, refreshments served.

*Unplanned* movie showing, March 15, 2 p.m., Manninghoff Family Performing Arts Center, Bishop Brossart High School. Free admission; sponsored by St. Joseph Parish, Cold Spring, Families for Life. Contact Vklocke@epogeparish.net or call 857-2299.

Dave Ueding Mathematics Competition, March 16, 5 p.m., Newport Central Catholic High School, Newport. Seventh and eighth grade students solve math puzzles and challenges for trophies and ribbons. Pizza and drinks follow individual competition. RSVP k.hebruzk@nchs.com or 628-6846.

“Death Penalty: Yes or No?” Michael VonAllmen, who served 12 years in prison for a crime he did not commit will share his story. Wed., March 18, 7-8:30 p.m., Budig Theater, University Center, Northern Kentucky University. The circumstances of wrongful convictions make a strong case for overturning the death penalty. The NKU Catholic Newman Club, The Kentucky Coalition to Abolish this Death Penalty (KCDAP), the diocesan Pro-Life Office and Catholic Charities, Diocese of Covington are co-sponsoring this event. No reservation required; free and open to the public. Parking available at 20 Kenton Dr.

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

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Pregnancy Services of Northern Kentucky
A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held Friday, Oct. 19, to formally dedicate the new building at St. Cecilia Parish School, Independence. The project, which was completed under the leadership of Father Ryan Mahler, vicar general, and Bishop Robert Virgo Pyle, drew a large and enthusiastic crowd.

The new building, which was designed by the architectural firm KNSA Architects of Kansas City, Mo., has been in the works for several years. The project was initially proposed in 2012, and the groundbreaking ceremony took place in 2014. The new building includes a 10,000-square-foot multipurpose hall, a gymnasium, a meeting room, and a kitchenette.

Father Mahler, who is the pastor at St. Cecilia Parish, said the new building will provide much-needed space for the school.

"We've been trying for years to expand our facilities," he said. "This is a big step forward for us."
CRS Rice Bowl — a story of hope from Honduras

Maria Ana, whose favorite subjects are math, science and physical education. In school, Maria Ana also learns about ways she and her family can stay healthy, including washing fruits and vegetables before eating them. And, Maria Ana is able to bring some of that nutritious food home with her thanks to the CRS school lunch program.

Maria Ana is especially grateful to her father, Don Cristobal, for working hard to send her to school. "My father works every day to support us, to provide the food that we need and to earn money to pay for school."

Maria Ana also wants to help people; she wants to be a nurse. To do this, she will need more education and training beyond the opportunities available in her community.

She's already preparing. Several times a week, she travels two hours to the nearest city where she earns money cleaning homes. She is very careful to save money and spend it only on what's necessary.

Maria Ana feels called to help people be healthy, especially the children she sees in her community who suffer from malnutrition and lack of proper hygiene.

"I want to make my family proud," she says. "And I want to help my family move forward."

### Baleadas — Honduras

Rinse the kidney beans and then blend them with a bit of water until creamy. Heat oil in medium skillet over medium-high heat. Add onion and cook, stirring occasionally, until onion is lightly browned, and oil absorbs flavor from onion, about 5-7 minutes; discard onion, retaining oil in pan. Add beans to skillet with oil. Cook, stirring often, until oil is absorbed, and beans are heated through, about 5 minutes; season with salt to taste. Remove beans from heat and keep warm. In medium bowl, stir together sour cream, heavy cream and 1/4 tsp. salt; set aside. To assemble, spread a thin layer of refried beans onto warm tortillas; drizzle with sour cream mixture, sprinkle with cheese and top with desired garnishes and then fold in half. Serve immediately. Makes 4 servings.

### Tostada — Mexico

1. Pre-heat oven to 375°F.
2. Place the tostada shells on a baking sheet and bake for about 5 minutes, or until crispy.
3. In a small bowl, mix together the refried beans, cheese, and salsa.
4. Place the mixture on the tostada shell and top with the desired toppings.
5. Serve immediately.

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Stump Removal — Drainage & Grading

Tree Trimming and Removal

Stump Removal — Drainage & Grading

Seeding & Sodding — Retaining Walls

Walks & Patios — Decks
Catholic voice heard in Frankfort

(Continued from page 1)

tripled the record for a diocesan visit.
A notable bill the CCK supported is HB 67, the Abortion Neutrality Amendment, sponsored by Representative Joe Fischer of Campbell County. Thais would clarify that there is nothing in the state constitution to necessitate a right to an abortion, should Roe v. Wade be overturned in the federal court.

Mr. Hall said that CCK is also advocating for SB 9, sponsored by Senator Whitney Westerfield, protecting infants born alive; HB 237/SB 154, sponsored by Representative Chad McCoy, preventing the death penalty for the severely mentally ill; and HB 39, sponsored by Rep. Chad McCoy, advocating for Scholarship Tax Credits.

Many of the attendees observed the session debating SB 154, which would prohibit the death penalty for those with a severe mental illness. It was passed, but with a request for clarification of language on many points and definitions that remained vague, such as the time of the documentation of the mental illness.

Representatives and senators engaged in candid discussions before and after these sessions with the representatives from the diocese.

“I enjoyed listening to the arguments for and against the bills,” said Jennifer Cox, Diocesan Office of Stewardship and Mission Services. “I was impressed by those politicians who explained why they voted for or against a particular issue. It was nice to hear that some would support it if some of the verbiage was changed or made clearer.”

Kate Holle, a student from Notre Dame Academy, Park Hills, said, “It was a great learning experience, where I not only got to see the Kentucky legislature in action, but I was also exposed to current issues that relate to the Catholic faith.”
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. Commensurate 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 email to ayoung@stpatschool.com.

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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. B.W.

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. M.A.I.

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Shut off cellphone, open Bible for Lent

Carol Glazt
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Lent is a time to remove all distractions and bitterness from one's life in order to better hear God and those who suffer silently and need help, Pope Francis said.

"It is the right time to turn off the television and open the Bible. It is the time to disconnect from cellphones and connect ourselves to the Gospel," the pope said at his weekly general audience Feb. 26. As Wednesday and the beginning of Lent for Latins and Catholics.

"It's a time to give up useless words, idle chatter, rumors, gossip" and speak intimately with the Lord, he said.

It was the first general audience of the year held outside in St. Peter's Square given the mild temperatures.

However, given increased concern in Italy about the spread of the coronavirus, the pope reduced his contact with people in the square, shaking hands with only a few people before beginning his talk. In the pope-mobile, the pope circled the square, waving and blessing people from afar, and the driver and the pope's security detail did not step to pick up any children as is customary.

In fact, at the end of his audience, the pope assured all those affected by the virus of his closeness and prayers. He said his prayers were also with the health care professionals and public officials who were working hard to help patients and stop the spread of the disease.

In his main audience talk, the pope explained "the spiritual significance of the desert," where Jesus spent 40 days praying and fasting to prepare for his public ministry.

"Jesus often headed off to "deserted" places to pray, "teaching us how to seek the Father who speaks to us in silence," the pope said.

"The desert is a place to get away from the racket that surrounds us. It is the absence of words in order to make room for another, the Word of God, who like a light breeze, caresses the heart," he said.

"Just as Jesus spent time in the desert, we said Catholics must spend Lent creating similarly sparse surroundings and a "healthy environment of the heart.

"These places need a thorough "cleaning," he said, because "we live in an environment polluted by too much verbal violence, by so many offensive and harmful words, which the internet amplifies.

"People today julk insults with the same frequency and nonchalance as if they were saying "hello," he said.

"We are buried under empty words, advertisements, decisive messages," the pope said. "We are used to hearing everything about everybody and we risk slipping into a

(Continued on page 16)
“Brahms: The Boy II” (STX) After being traumatically by a violent home invasion, a British businessman, his American wife and their young son temporarily relocate from London to a house in the English countryside where the lad unearths an antique doll that turns out to be more terrorist than toy. Returning director William Brent Bell’s follow-up to his 2016 film alternates between the occasional good joke and long periods of tedium, with the silliness of the premise never out of the frame. While there’s little to object to in a horror flick that most temps can likely handle, there’s not much entertainment value to the proceedings either. Occult themes, some stylized violence, a few gruesome images, veiled references to marital sexuality a single instance each of profane and crude language. CNS A-3; MPAA: PG-13.

“The Invisible Man” (Universal) Shortly after escaping her maniacally possessive live-in boyfriend, a cutting-edge optics researcher, a former architect learns that he has killed himself and left her a sizable portion of his vast wealth. But a series of unsettling events soon convinces her that he faked his death and is somehow stalking her, even though she can’t see him. Understandably, both her sister, who aided her getaway, and the childhood friend, in whose home she has taken refuge, refuse to accept this outlandish idea and, with her former lover apparently intent on ruining her life, her plights becomes increasingly desperate. Though far more intelligent than many thrillers, writer-director Leigh Whannell’s remarkably absorbing monster movie, which bears only a very distant relationship to H.G. Wells’ 1897 novel, includes intense bloodletting while its conclusion appeals to viewers’ basest instincts. Only the guilt separating the film’s sci-fi scenarios from anything in the real world makes it acceptable for a narrow swath of grown-ups. Much gore violence, including gunplay, vigilantism and vengeance themes, cohabitation, at least one use of profanity, about a half-dozen rough terms, fleeting crude and crass language. CNS L; MPAA: R.

For full reviews of each of these films — go to catholicnews.com and click on “Entertainment” then choose “Movies.”

Catholic News Service (CNS) classifications are:
• A-1 — general patronage;
• A-11 — adults and adolescents;
• A-11 — adults;
• L — limited adult audiences;
• O — morally offensive.

Shut off cell phone

worldliness that stophes the heart. And there is no bypass (surgery) to fix that, only silence.

For Christians, the desert isn’t a place of death, but life, “because being in silence, in dialogue with the Lord, gives us life again,” he said.

Pope Francis asked that people strip away the superficia-

tious and unnecessary in their lives so they could find what really counts, what is essential and even rediscover the people already by their side.

Fasting is part of that process, he said, because it exercises the ability to go without things that are excessive or frivolous. Making time for silence and solitude will also help the faithful become more aware of those who suffer silently around them, the pope said. Lent is a time to draw near to those who are alone, abandoned, poor or elderly and anyone in need of help, he said.

“Prayer, fasting and acts of mercy — this is the path of the Lenten desert,” because it is only in the desert that one finds the way from death to life, the pope said. “Let us follow Jesus in the desert and with him our deserts will bloom.”

At the end of the general audience, the pope gave special greetings to visitors from Iraq, emphasizing how his prayers were with them and all people in the nation, which is a “battleground” of war and conflict.

“I pray for you and pray for peace in your country, which I had been scheduled to visit this year,” he said. It would have been the first visit by a pope to Iraq, where tradi-
tion holds Abraham was born.
Visit with immigrant detainees shows bishops the love of family
WASHINGTON — A pair of bishops who spent two hours at a Maryland detention center praying and talking with a small group of immigrants facing deportation hear how strong family bonds are. The 16 detainees, all Spanish speakers, asked the bishops foremost to pray for their wives and children who are seeking for themselves in daily life without them, Auxiliary Bishop Mark E. Desmon of Baltimore, chairman of the U.S. Bishops’ Committee on Migration, said after the March 2 visit: “How sad it is to see this drama of broken families,” the bishop told Catholic News Service. “Most of them were in tears,” he added. “It has been a very painful experience for all of them. We realized that this is the time to work with them and pray for them. It is important to have this kind of human encounter and to continue to advocate for them.” The meeting included time for prayer, Scripture reading and discussion with the men, who have been held for various lengths of time. One man had 40 years-old and 3-year-old children, he said, while another man revealed that his mother had died in the last day or two. Retired Auxiliary Bishop Dennis J. Madden of Baltimore joined the meeting, which was arranged by Deacon Chris Schwartz, coordinator of prison ministry for the Washington Archdiocese, and Louise Ellis, executive director of In Solidarity, a Washington-based Catholic advocacy organization. “These men come from Central America mostly. They’re looking for whatever is going to give them hope,” Deacon Schwartz said.

Hundreds of thousands forced to flee as attacks continue in Burkina Faso
OXFORD, England — Hundreds of thousands of people have been forced out of their homes in Burkina Faso as Christian communities are targeted in a spiral of Islamic killings. The surge of attacks has forced some families to flee and lose everything behind, and the violence is threatening to spread to other countries, and Jennifer Ovort, West Africa regional director for Catholic Relief Services. “Burkina Faso is home to some of the world’s poorest communities — even without this violence, people face chronic food shortages, high unemployment, climate change and environmental degradation,” Ovort told Catholic News Service Feb. 8. She said the violence of Christian schools had been forced to close after their teachers fled. Ovort, who toured affected areas, said she had met a former in the northern Kaya Diocese who had allowed more than 500 displaced families to settle on his land and another one-groperous landholder who was living in a loan to his children after escaping repeated shooting sprees. A Christian woman had taken shelter with her daughters at a government encampment in a large town. Ovort said, only to be driven out when an armed gang attacked the facility and shot up the local church. “We want people to have productive lives, set up work and send their kids to school,” she said. “But that won’t happen if we see more chaos and crisis. It’s in everyone’s best interest to stop this violence before it gets worse.”

English Catholics to rededicate nation as ‘Mary’s Dowry’
MANCHESTER, England — Catholics are preparing for the historic rededication of England as “Mary’s Dowry” in the hope that it will spur the re-evangelization of their country. The English bishops decided to rededicate the country at a meeting in November 2017 and are now encouraging Catholics to pray for the Anglican-faithful leaders ahead of the March 29 National Day of Rededication. The event involves English Catholics making a personal “Angela promise” to God in union with the “yes” of Mary at the Annunciation. The original dedication of England was carried out in 1306 by Richard II. With the title of “Mary’s Dowry,” the intention of Richard was that England and her people would be set aside for the special attention and protection of Mary. On March 29, communal acts of entrustment will be made in cathedrals, renewing the vows of dedication made by King Richard. Schools are invited to join the rededication March 30.

Number of immigrants in U.S. without documents in steady decline
WASHINGTON — A report from the Center for Migration Studies of New York said the population of immigrants living in the United States without documents has declined 15% in eight years. In 2011, the center said, the total “U.S. undocumented popu- lation” was estimated to be 11.7 million, a drop of 1.2 million since 2010. The figures show a steady downward pattern as immigration from Mexico to the U.S. has decreased and Mexican nationals have returned home, the report said. The report “Reverse Migration to Mexico Led to U.S. Undocumented Population Decline: 2011 to 2018,” released Feb. 28, says that from 2010 until 2018, a total of 2.6 million Mexican nationals “left the U.S. undocumented population” and 4% of “those left voluntarily.” The document says it shows that “improving social and economic conditions in sending countries would not only reduce pressures at the border but also likely cause a large decline in the undocumented population.” It mirrors the policy position and recommendations of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, which has said that improving “sustainable and equitable development in sending nations, especially Mexico and the countries of Central America” can help address the root causes of the present immigration crisis in the U.S., “so that migrants can remain in their homelands and support their families in dignity.”

Dominican brothers use ultramodem techniques to teach order’s ancient music
Fribourg, Switzerland — Dominican Brothers Stefan Asenij panczak and Alejandro Fernandez, both 30-year-old Spanish-speaking brothers through free weekly lessons on their YouTube channel called OPChant. Internet users around the world are following the brothers’ video lessons, and they are getting positive feedback on the project from all over the world. “The amount of positive feedback from all sides is very impressive, it shows that we are responding to a current need,” said Brother Fernandez, a recent convert. Launched last November, OPChant is the first channel on the internet that teaches Latin chant in the Dominican tradition in a systematic way. This ancient musical tradition through ultramodem means is entirely free, going to OPChant on YouTube and clicking the red button marked “Subscribe.”

NEWS BRIEFS

National/World

‘My life just isn’t as valuable as others’: Woman sues British government
MANCHESTER, England — A woman with Down syndrome will take the British government to court in an attempt to change a law that permits abortions up to birth of children considered to be “seriously handicapped.” Heidi Creutzer, 24, says it is wrong to treat unborn children differently because of perceived disabilities. “At the moment in the U.K., babies can be aborted right up to birth if they are considered to be seriously handicapped,” she said in a Feb. 23 statement emailed to Catholic News Service. “They include me in that definition of being seriously handicapped — just because I have an extra chromosome — and what it says to me is that my life just isn’t as valuable as others, and I don’t think that’s right.” she added. “I think it’s discrimination.” Creutzer, who lives in County has launched her legal action jointly with Cheryl Billimore of Preston, whose 2-year-old son, Hector, has Down syndrome. “They hope to pay their legal costs — including the 20,000 pounds ($25,600) required to initiate the case — through an online crowdfunding appeal. Both object to the provisions of the 1988 Abortion Act that permit abortions of healthy babies as no later than 24 weeks gestation but permit the abortion of disabled babies to term, including those with Down syndrome, caff lip and cleft palate.

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