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CCK urges strong push for votes on scholarship tax credits

As the Kentucky General Assembly passes the midpoint of its 2020 session, the Catholic Conference of Kentucky is asking constituents to make a strong push for Scholarship Tax Credit legislation.

"A group of House Republican legislators have decided that they would prefer to avoid taking a vote on the issue at all," said Mr. Vandiver.

The CCK and EdChoice Kentucky, a coalition focused on bringing a scholarship tax credit program to the Commonwealth, say that every parent — regardless of income or address — should be able to choose the school that would provide their child with his or her best opportunity for success, a school that meets their child’s educational needs.

"For some families, the stakes are even higher," said Mr. Vandiver. "We have heard from multiple families this session whose children are facing severe bullying and are in desperate need of an alternative. These are situations that no member of the General Assembly would accept for their own child. We certainly expect others to want to watch their children fall through the cracks."

Mr. Vandiver said that the bill has many “champions” in the General Assembly — like Rep. Chad McCoy, Rep. Jerry Miller, Rep. Walker Thomas and Senator Ralph Alvarado — and encourages Kentuckians to contact their legislators to find out where they stand on Scholarship Tax Credits.

"It is time to know where everyone else stands,” said Mr. Vandiver. “Contact your senator and representative today, even if you have already done so, and demand that they put on their shoes and watch their children fall through the cracks.”

To contact legislators call 1-800-372-7181 or visit www.votervoice.net/CCKY/Home.

Preventing the spread of disease: liturgical guidelines issued; one school closes

Based on guidance from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Committee on Divine Worship, the United States Center for Disease Control, St. Elizabeth Healthcare, and the practice in a growing number of dioceses, Bishop Roger Foy announced liturgical guidelines to help prevent the spread of influenza and the coronavirus.

While we do not want to panic, neither do we want to be derelict in our duty to provide for the health and welfare of all those we serve,” said Bishop Foy.

The guidelines are:

1. All priests, deacons, altar servers and extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion must use an alcohol-based anti-bacterial solution before and after distributing Holy Communion.

Myth: STCs are backdoor vouchers

FACT: Voucher programs grant taxpayer-funded scholarships to families to send their children to nonpublic schools. Unlike vouchers, STCs allow individuals and businesses to contribute privately-funded donations that are used to award scholarships to.

Myth: STCs will harm public schools.

FACT: School Choice programs exist in most states, and the majority of studies find that public schools have improved academically in states with school choice programs by helping families find the school that best fits their needs.

Myth: STCs will only benefit wealthy Kentuckians.

FACT: Scholarships under the program are needs-based, meaning only those that demonstrate financial need are eligible. These scholarships could also be used to help disabled students cover the costs of other educational services like occupational therapy. Wealthy families already have choice and would not be eligible for this program.

Myth: STCs are fiscally irresponsible.

FACT: STCs will have a net positive impact on Kentucky's budget. Since the program is privately funded, education costs will be shifted to participating businesses and individuals. Taxpayers will not contribute a dime. Some states have even seen savings above the value of their scholarship tax credit programs. Most importantly, these programs empower low- and middle-income families, ensuring children can access the environment that best meets their needs.

Scholarship Tax Credits — myths vs. facts

Myth: A Scholarship Tax Credit program should not be passed because Section 189 of the Kentucky Constitutions prohibits the public funding of religious schools.

FACT: STCs use only private money to assist students to attend nonpublic schools. No public money is directed towards nonpublic schools under this program.

Myth: Wealthy Kentuckians can turn a profit by donating to a Scholarship Granting Organization.

FACT: STC legislation and recent changes in federal tax policy expressly prohibit donors from receiving more back on their federal and state taxes than their contribution to a scholar-ship program. The tax credit is non-refundable and the donor cannot choose the students who receive it.

This information was made available from the EdChoice KY website, www.EdChoiceKY.com.

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This information was made available from the EdChoice KY website, www.EdChoiceKY.com.
Deacon’s ministry in hospice mirrored Christ’s service to others

Laura Keener

Deacon Timothy Bruce Schabell, 57, of Cold Spring, passed away Wednesday, Feb. 26, at his residence. He was a chaplain with St. Elizabeth Hospice as well as a deacon at St. Joseph Parish, Cold Spring, where he was a lifelong parishioner and attended school as a child.

Deacon Schabell was a graduate of Newport Catholic high school and Northern Kentucky University. He also served in the army reserves. In 2003, Bishop Roger Foys ordained Mr. Schabell a permanent deacon for the Diocese of Covington. He and two others were the first permanent deacons Bishop Foys ordained.

In addition to his assignment at St. Joseph Parish, in 2011, Deacon Schabell was assigned chaplain at St. Elizabeth Hospice, Edgewood.

“We grieve the sudden death of our Deacon Tim Schabell,” said Bishop Foys. “Deacon Tim certainly took seriously his call to serve as a deacon. His work with hospice mirrored the ministry of Jesus himself, who ministered to the sick of his time and embraced those in need. Deacon Tim’s loving care of those in hospice is a legacy that will be long remembered. May he now rest in the peace of the Lord he served so well.”

Father Gerald Reinersman, pastor, St. Joseph Parish, said that Deacon Schabell lived out the Catholic Catechism’s definition of the ministry of the diaconate — a ministry of the Word and charity.

“Tim had a deacon’s heart as a man of the Word — the Word of God was very important to him — and in charity with his attention to those who are hurting in some way. He would often reach out to them with a comforting word or pat on the back,” Father Reinersman said.

Deacon Schabell was beloved by the parishioners of St. Joseph Parish, Father Reinersman said. His home, which was also the home where he grew up, was located directly behind St. Joseph Parish and many parishioners either grew up with Deacon Schabell or watched him develop from a child to a deacon. Deacon Schabell’s mother died when he was a young boy, which Father Reinersman suspects, “intensified his sensitivity to other people.”

That sensitivity was most evident in his hospice chaplaincy.

“His ministry in hospice was very natural to him,” Father Reinersman said.

Rev. Charles Myser, also a chaplain ministering at St. Elizabeth Hospice, said that he and Deacon Schabell were the “odd couple” of hospice.

“I’m a Protestant chaplain and he’s Catholic. He liked cats and I like dogs. He liked UK and I like Ohio State. But what really bonded us was that he always wanted to work in hospice care — it was a life calling fulfilled, which is where he and I were similar. He pursued his hospice ministry with a lot of compassion and commitment and really lived out that sense of call.”

Both Father Reinersman and Rev. Myser said that Deacon Schabell was known for his really silly jokes.

“He would use humor in appropriate ways to put people at ease or to make hard situations a little easier for people,” said Rev. Myser. “He would use humor, his unshredded attitude and spirituality to advocate openly for his patients and the families he cared for.

The Gospel reading at Deacon Schabell’s funeral is the familiar passage from Matthew’s Gospel, “I was hungry and you fed me; I was naked and you clothed me; I was cast and sad and you cheered me up with your silly jokes.”

“Deacon Schabell responded to the needs of people and was an example of that Gospel passage,” he said. “As Christians we write the Gospel with our lives every day. Christianity is not a set of rules that restrict us but the Good News that frees us to love.”

Deacon Schabell was preceded in death by his parents, Bruce and Mildred (nee. Schilling) Schabell and his sister, Diane (Ed) Draud. He is survived by his sister, Peggy (Larry) Baum; brother, Larry Schabell; nieces, Carly (Will) Hausermann, Chelse (Chris) Donatelli and Starr Meehan; nephews, Kyle Raum and four great nieces and nephews.

Mass of Christian Burial was March 4 at St. Joseph Church, Cold Spring, with interment at St. Stephen Cemetery. St. Thomas Memorials are suggested to St. Elizabeth Hospice, 483 South Loop Rd., Edgewood, KY 41017 or St. Joseph Parish, 4011 Alexandria Pike, Cold Spring, KY 41076.

Parish Kitchen prepares new location

The Parish Kitchen, a ministry of Catholic Charities – Diocese of Covington, is moving from its current location on Pike St., Covington, to 16th St. and Madison Ave., Covington. Brian Harvey, assistant director, diocese buildings and properties office, said that renovations at the new location are nearing completion and are expected to be complete late spring.
The parable of ‘The Father with Two Sons’ – Jesus’ message of mercy

Miserere Vultus ("The Face of Mercy") is the title of Pope Francis’ second encyclical, where he made a declaration: "Jesus Christ is the face of the Father’s mercy."

Pope Francis opened that proclamation with a declaration: "Jesus Christ is the face of the Father’s mercy." He explained: "These words might well sum up the mystery of the Christian faith. Mercy has become living and visible in Jesus of Nazareth, reaching its culmination in him."

In this context, the pope referred to "the great teaching offered by St. John Paul II in his second encyclical "Dives in Misericordia" ("Rich in Mercy").

‘Dives in Misericordia’ imparts a definitive meaning to the concept of God’s mercy – since Jesus personifies God’s mercy, "He himself, in a certain sense, is mercy.

Cardinal Kasper comments on the Lord’s favor’ or ‘mercy” is a summons to make that proclamation with two sons (Luke 15: 1-32).

The fifteenth chapter of Luke is incorporated in a cumulative set of all three in me?" The pope cautioned: "Jesus reminds us that one does not remain in the Father’s house to have a compensation, but because one has the dignity of co-responsible child.

"My son, you are here with me always (v. 31) exemplifies "the logic of mercy.” Pope Francis affirmed: “The Father’s greatest joy is to see his sons acknowledge each other as brothers.

The second part of the parable is open-ended without a resolution as to whether the elder brother will share in the celebration. In other words, will the older son finally go into the celebration or will he remain outside alienated and angry?

Bishops Roger J. Foys, Bishop of Covington, and Brian D. Campbell, Auxiliary Bishop of Covington, invited the faithful to embrace the parable and its message of mercy.

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FATHER RONALD KETTELER

4 March 2020

4 March 2020

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Christ: the real thirst-quencher

The preachings of Jesus to the Samaritan woman are full of imagery. It is a privileged time to reflect on God's loving embrace of us, as John the Baptist writes, renders our hearts, minds and souls a "cavern" too deep to ever be fully understood. It's my belief that Christian spirituality, at least in its popular preaching and catechesis, has too often not taken the simple answer: Because we are born with a godly fire that is best inside you. It's what separates you from plants and animals. Their life and nature is simple, but having an immortal, infinite soul makes for lots of complications as you struggle to live out your life within the finiteness that besets us.

Never underestimate your complexity — even as you resist massaging it — to recognize and respect the "demons and demons" that roam freely inside your heart and mind.

But don't massage your complexity either: by fancying yourself as the existentialist who is heroically out of step with life.

Reframe your shadow: It's the luminosity you've split off. Slowly, with proper caution and support, begin to face the inner things that frighten you.

Hallow the power and place of sexuality within you. You're incurably sexual, and for a godly reason. Never deny or dignify the power of sexuality — even as you carry it with a poisoned chalice.

Name your wounds, grieve them, mourn your inconsummation. Whatever wounds you don't grieve will eventually smother you. Accept and mourn the fact that here, in this life, there is no finished sympathy.

Never let the "transcendental impulse" inside you become drugged or imprisoned. Your complexity continually lets you know that you're built for more than this life. Never demonize this impulse inside you. Learn to recognize, through your frustrations and fantasies, the ways you often imprison it.

Try to find a "higher love" by which to transcend the more immediate power of your natural instincts. All miracles begin with falling in love. Hallow your apocalyptic imagination and temper it for that higher love and higher value towards which you're pointing. Offering your heart, with the gaze of admiration, will feel so good and right that it will bring to fulfillment what you're really yearning for.

Let your own complexity teach you understanding and empathy. By being in touch with your own complexity you will eventually learn that nothing is foreign to you and that what you see on the newscasts each day mirrors what's inside you.

Forgive yourself often. Your complexity will trip you up many times and so you will need to forgive yourself many times. Live, knowing that God's mercy is a well that's never exhausted.

Live under God's patience and understanding. God is your builder: the architect who constructed you and who is responsible for your complexity. Trust that God understands. Trust that God is more anxious about you than you're anxious about yourself. The God who knows and appreciates why you struggle.

Oblate Father Ron Rolheiser, theologian, teacher and award-winning author; is President of the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, Texas.

IN EXILE

Father Ron Rolheiser

it needs to be respected and hallowed because it stems not from what's wrong in us but from what's best in us. We're com-

plex enough because we beguile us inside and temp us in every direction is not, first of all, the willness of the devil but rather the image and likeness of God. Inside us there's a divine fire, a greatness, which gives us infinite depth, im-

itable desires and enough luminosity to bewilder every psy-

chologist. The image and likeness of God inside us, as John of the Cross writes, renders our hearts, minds and souls "caverns" too deep to ever be fully understood. Moreover, because our complexity hasn't been recognized and honoured spiritually we often feel guilty about it. Why am I so complicated? Why do I have all these questions? Why am I so often confused? Why is sex such a powerful impulse?

Do I have so many temptations?

The simple answer: Because we are born with a godly fire within. Thus the source of so many of our confusions, temp-
tations and resistances comes as much of what is best in us as from the wiles of the Satan and the world.

What should we do in the face of our own bewildering complexity?

Some counsels for the long haul:

Honor and hallow your complexity: Accept that this is a God-given gift inside you and, at the end of the day, it's what's best inside you. It's what separates you from plants and

Lent as a time for embraces

Over time, certain passages of Scripture reach beyond the realm of the sacred to find a place in our culture's lexicon. Some colloquial expressions are born. "To every thing there is a season" is an example of such a passage. These words, from the third chapter of Ecclesiastes, were so popu-

lar a few decades ago that they inspired the lyrics of both a hit folk song and a popular Broadway show tune.

The passage continues, "a time to give birth and a time to die; a time to plant and a time to uproot the plant . . . a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them; a time to embrace war and a time to be far from embers."

I believe that, at its heart, Lent is a season for embraces. It is a privileged time to reflect on the loving embrace of each of his children, from the dutiful son who never leaves his father's side to the prodigal returning home after squan-

dering his inheritance.

The pope concludes with this passage: "How good it feels to come back to him whenever we are lost! ... God never tires of forgiving us, we are the ones who tire of seeking his mercy."

Elsewhere he writes, "Time and again he bears us on his shoulders. No one can strip us of the dignity bestowed upon us by this boundless and unqualified love. With a tender affection which only a loving embrace of restoring his joy makes it possible for us to lift up our heads and to start anew."

(Continued on page 13)
Crispy Pancakes — Vietnam

**Pancake Batter**
- 1 cup rice flour
- 1 cup water
- 1 cup coconut milk
- 1 tsp cornstarch
- 1 scallion, sliced thin

Mix all pancake batter ingredients together in a large bowl until smooth. Set aside.

**Sauce (Nuoc Cham)**
- 2 Tbsp lime juice
- 6 Tbsp warm water
- 1 red chili, minced
- ½ tsp salt

Remove sprouts from the shelf during storms so it will not wash away or spoil.

Remove the lid and reduce the heat to medium, cooking until the bottom of the pancake is crisp, 3.5 minutes. Once the bottom of the pancake is golden and crispy, fold the pancake in half over the filling. Transfer to a plate and serve.

Crispy Pancakes — Vietnam

**The Filling**
- 2 cup fresh bean sprouts
- ½ lb small shrimp, peeled and sautéed
- 1 cup peanuts
- 1 tsp sugar
- 1 tsp fish sauce
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1 red chili, minced
- ¼ tsp turmeric

Remove the sprouts from the skillet with a lid over medium heat. Add the bean sprouts and cook until most of the moisture has evaporated.

Set aside. Increase the heat to medium high. Add 1 tsp of oil to the skillet. Add the shrimp and cook for 2-3 minutes, until cooked through. Add the scallions and sauté for 1-2 minutes. Remove the mixture from the pan and set aside.

Make the Pancake Dinner

Add ⅛ tsp of oil to the skillet (if it looks dry) and pour about ½ cup of the batter into the hot pan, tilting the pan quickly to fill the other half of the batter. Remove the lid and reduce the heat to medium, cooking until the bottom of the pancake begins to brown.

Once the bottom of the pancake is golden and crispy, fold the pancake in half over the filling. Transfer to a plate and serve.
For I was in prison and you visited me

Karen Horgan Kuhlman

Messenger Contributor

When we think of “home” we think of a place of comfort, a place where we can relax and enjoy the company of family or friends, a place where we renew ourselves and prepare for the opportunities of tomorrow. Our lives may not be perfect, but there is no place we would rather be.

Certain homes are the opposite of that idyllic portrait. They offer no freedom of movement and there is little for residents to do or to look forward to. Though crowded with others, they are lonely places, bereft of the companionship of family and friends. These are the homes of those choosing, but jails where they come face to face with the consequences of their actions. A jilted love affair; the catalyst for those actions. Catholic Charities in the Diocese of Covington extends a hand of spiritual friendship to those men and women — and to their loved ones who are also impacted by those consequences.

Dave Capella, coordinator for Catholic Charities’ Jail Ministry Program, said, “This ministry provides an opportunity to really make a difference in individual’s lives. You are meeting with them at their lowest point; they have lost everything and have no control over their own lives. Your presence affirms their human dignity. In a world where perfection is expected, we are not there to judge but to offer encouragement and to affirm their dignity.”

Deacon Jim Blayme put it this way: “We provide hope to the hopeless. They are praying seeds that you hope will grow.”

Deacon Bill Theis of St Therese Parish offers his friendship to those incarcerated in the Campbell County Detention Center. Several evenings every month, he visits the Center where 600 to 700 individuals reside. Similar to the status of those in the Boone or Kenton county detention centers, some will serve their sentences while their spirit reminded them of their ACUE schools in the diocese’s urban core, which has been identified as mission territory of the diocese. The teachers and students at ACUE schools face many challenges, and it is with determination that they succeed. Similarly, Bill Rechtin wasn’t always the admired National Guard and United States forces soldier with heart for children.

For information about volunteering for the Jail Ministry Program or the support group, Family and Friends of the Incarcerated, contact Dave Capella (859) 562-8974 or dcapella@CovingtonCharities.org.
The weekly TV Mass from the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption will be broadcast on Sunday, 5-6 p.m. on station WMTV WLWT, on channels: over the air 5-2; Spectrum 188 in Kentucky and Cincinnati Bell 26 or 29.

Have something to list in “People and Events”? The deadline for event notices is nine days prior to the desired publication date. E-mail messenger@covdio.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.covdio.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 13, 20, 27, April 3 and 10, 11 a.m.–1 p.m. Benefits local organizations. 1486 Ashwood Circle, Ft. Wright. Carry out available, contact 341-6555.

“Carvings” art display by River Valley Wood Carvers, presented by Bishop Bressart High School Art Gallery Free and open to the public March 15, 22, 29, 3–4 p.m.

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


“Telling on Ourselves: Stories about Wells, Pools and Tombs,” March 14, 9:30 a.m., sponsored by the Benedictine Sisters of St. Walburg. $20 fee includes snacks and materials. Participants must pre-register at schools@ohiou.com or 331-6771. No walk-ins.

ShamROCK Shuffle, March 14, 7 p.m. midnight, Gardens of Park Hills. Benefits Immaculate Heart of Mary School, Burlington, to provide more iPads, chromebooks and advance technology in classrooms.

Panake Breakfast, March 15, 9 a.m.–12 p.m., Holy Cross High School cafeteria. Benefits HCHS senior Kristen Robbins, sponsored by the Magnified Giving Club. Contact 435-3335.

“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., Munninghoff Family Performing Arts Center, Bishop Bressart High School. Free admission, sponsored by St. Joseph Parish, Cold Spring. Families for Life. Contact viklocke@stjoeparish.net or call 927-2281.

Dave Ueding Mathematics Competition, March 16, 5 p.m., Newport Central Catholic High School, Newport. Seventh and 8th grade students solve math puzzles and challenges for trophies and ribbons. Pizza and drinks follows individual competition. RSVP klbebaczko@ncchs.com or 528-6846.

“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., Butler 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 the Death Penalty (KCADP), 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 Netburn, Ph.D., sponsored by Thomas More University as part of its Marine Biology and Conservation Lecture Series. For more information, contact snyders@thomasmore.edu.

Healing Mass and service, March 19, 6:30 p.m., Mary Queen of Heaven Parish, Erlanger.

“Arms Open Wide: An Encounter with God’s Mercy.” a Lenten evening of reflection, March 19, 7 p.m., St. Joseph Parish, Cold Spring. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. music from 6:40-7 p.m. Contact viklocke@stjoeparish.net or 927-2281 with questions.

“Lenten Mission” with Steve Angrisano, March 22–25, 7 p.m., St. Mary of the Assumption Church, Alexandria.


“Panda Preview Night,” March 24, 6–8 p.m., Notre Dame Academy, Park Hills, for 8th and 7th grade girls, and 8th grade girls who have not yet made a high school decision. Pizza and a chance to meet with faculty and staff.

“How To Succeed In Business Without Really Trying,” March 27, 8 & 28, Munninghoff Family Performing Arts Center, Bishop Bressart High School, Alexandria. Friday and Saturday, 7 p.m.; Sunday 2 p.m. Tickets $15. e-mail Denise at bbhasenorpay@gmail.com starting March 9th. Saturday
Fish fry 2020

St. Agnes Parish, Ft. Wright. March 13 and 20.
St. Augustine Parish, Covington, 4-7 p.m., March 15, 20, 27, April 3 and 10, in the gym. Call 431-3943.
St. Barbara Parish, Erlanger, 4:30-8 p.m., March 13, 20, 27, April 3 and 17. Drive thru available.
St. Benedict Parish, Covington, 4:45-7 p.m., March 15, 20, 27 and April 3. Carryout available.
St. Bernard Parish, Dayton, 6-7 p.m., March 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., March 13, 20, 27, April 3. Call 431-3943.
St. Francis Xavier Parish/Knights of Columbus, Falmouth, 4-7:30 p.m., March 13, 20, 27 and April 3. Carryout available.
Holy Cross High School, 5-8 p.m., March 13, 20, 27, April 3. Eat in or carry out.
Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish, Burlington. Hosted by Father Kehoe Council #1764, March 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 13.
Mary, Queen of Heaven Parish, Erlanger, 4:45-7 p.m., March 13, 20, 27, April 3. Dine-in, drive thru or call ahead 371-2622.
St. Patrick Parish, Taylor Mill, March 13, 20, 27 and April 3, 4:30-7:30 p.m. Call 356-5151.
St. Paul Parish, Florence, 5-8 p.m., March 13, 20, 27, April 3.
Our Savior Parish, Covington, April 3, 12-6 p.m. Limited delivery to near by neighbors available, call the day before, 491-5872.
Prince of Peace School, 5-8 p.m., March 13, 20, 27, April 3. Live music, bake sale, carryout available. Call 451-5153.
St. John the Evangelist Parish, Covington, 4-7 p.m., April 3.
St. Joseph Parish, Camp Springs, 4-7:30 p.m., March 13, 20, 27, April 3. Dine-in or carry-out, 635-2491.
Knights of Columbus, Eminence, March 13, 20, 27, April 3 and 10. Lunch 11 a.m. - 2 p.m., dinner 4:30 p.m. - 8 p.m. 605 Lyle Avenue. Carryout orders: Knights of Columbus Father Kehoe Council #1764.
St. Mary Parish, Alexandria, 4:30-7:30 p.m., March 13.
Mary, Queen of Heaven Parish, Erlanger, 4:45-7 p.m., March 13, 20, 27, April 3. Dine-in, drive thru or call ahead 371-2622.
St. Patrick Parish, Taylor Mill, March 13, 20, 27 and April 3, 4:30-7:30 p.m. Call 356-5151.
St. Paul Parish, Florence, 5-8 p.m., March 13, 20, 27, April 3.
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Prince of Peace School, 5-8 p.m., March 13, 20, 27, April 3. Live music, bake sale, carryout available. Call 451-5153.

NKU Catholic Newman Center Women’s Group, March 29 and April 19. Workshops and discussion, accountability partners. Email Kathryn at russellk14@nku.edu.
Memorial Mass for the Loss of a Child, April 2, 7 p.m., Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish, Burlington. Hosted by the Pro-Life Office. Contact ppicoala@covdiocese.org.
Holy Cross District High School is selling 3 kinds of mulch ($4.25/bag) and pine straw ($6/bale) with free delivery to addresses in Kenton, Boone and Campbell Counties. Deliveries April 24 – May 9. All proceeds benefit Holy Cross High School, Latvia. Go to www.hcmulch.com or call 899-1999.
“Swing into Spring,” DCCH Center for Children and Families gala fundraiser, April 25, St. Elizabeth Training and Education Center, Ballroom. Erlanger. E-mail apelican@DCCHCenter.org for details.
“Walking with Purpose” women’s Catholic Bible study information session, May 5, 7 p.m., St. Thomas Parish, Ft. Thomas.
Care Net Pregnancy Services of Northern Kentucky annual banquet, May 7, Receptions Event Center, Erlanger.
“Socktober collection”
Under the leadership of the 8th grade teachers and students at St. Pius X School, Edgewood, the school held a month long event called Socktober. By the end of the month the students brought in over 4,000 pairs of socks, the K-2 class leading the way with 450 pairs. The socks were delivered to the Brighton Center, Women’s Crisis Center, Parish Kitchen and the Emergency Shelter of Northern Kentucky.

Guest speaker is Crissy Stanley, pro-life advocate and mother of “Twin Miracle Babies.” Visit www choiselifenkyorg or contact Julie at developmentassistant@ carenetnky.org or 431-9178 for more information.

Wulfeck family honoring, May 8, 11:35 a.m. The Covington Catholic High School 2020 Northern Kentuckians of the Year will be honored at Northern Kentucky Convention Center. For reservations visit www.covcath.org: NKYL or call 448-2267 ext. 3.
St. Thomas Travelers, St. Thomas Parish, Ft. Thomas, are planning the following trips: May 14, Carroll Park trip to Dayton’s Heritage Center of Manufacturing and Entrepreneurship. Lunch included. Depart 9:30 a.m. Cost $72. May 28, Derby Dinner Dearly Beloved, cost $85. Call Shirley Murray 441-8587.
Bingo every Friday, St. Mary’s undercroft, Alexandria. Jitney games, 7 p.m.; regular games, 8 p.m.
Volunteer medical interpreters are needed to help Spanish speakers with specialist appointments. Rose Garden Center for Hope and Healing, 265-5121. Must be VR-US compliant and able to meet patients at various locations.
After leading ‘virtual’ Angelus, pope blesses crowd in St. Peter’s Square

Cindy Wooden Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Pope Francis did not recite the Sunday Angelus from the window of his studio overlooking St. Peter’s Square March 8, but he did go to the window to wave and to bless the pilgrims who showed up anyway.

The Vatican had announced the day before that the Angelus prayer and the pope’s weekly general audience March 11 would be livestreamed from the papal library “to avoid the risk of spreading the COVID-19 (coronavirus),” especially given the crowding that occurs at the security checkpoints on entering the square.

The Italian government and Vatican City State health services have asked people throughout Italy to avoid large gatherings, particularly indoors, and to keep a yard’s distance between people in public in the hopes of slowing the spread of the virus.

Following the lead of the Italian government, the Vatican also announced March 8 that the Vatican Museums, the necropolis under St. Peter’s Basilica and the papal villa at Castel Gandolfo would be closed until April 3 to reduce situations where people crowd together.

Pope Francis began his Angelus address acknowledging that “it’s a bit odd, today’s Angelus prayer with the pope ‘caged’ in the library,” but he said he could see there were people in the square and he was with all those who were praying with him.

“I am close in prayer to the people who are suffering from the current coronavirus epidemic and all those who are caring for them,” the pope said. “I join my brother bishops in encouraging the faithful to live this difficult moment with the strength of faith, the certainty of hope and the fervor of charity.”

“May this season of Lent help us give everything a Gospel sense, even this moment of trial and suffering,” Pope Francis said.

After his Ash Wednesday services Feb. 26, Pope Francis began cancelling events because of a cold, according to the Vatican press office. While he was not coughing during the Angelus March 8 and while his voice was not as hoarse as it had been, the microphone did pick up the sound of wheezing.

The tradition of the pope reciting the Angelus with visitors in St. Peter’s Square began with Pope Pius XII in the fall of 1944; he had done a special radio broadcast of the Angelus on the feast of the Assumption, Aug. 15, that year and decided it was a practice he wanted to expand.

Since then, the popes have kept the Sunday noon appointment except when they were traveling or, in the case of St. John Paul II, when he was hospitalized. However, even after being shot May 13, 1981, he recorded a brief message broadcast in St. Peter’s Square.

In his main Angelus address March 8, Pope Francis spoke about the day’s Gospel account of the Transfiguration.

“Jesus took Peter, James and John up Mount Tabor,” the pope said. “And as he called those three disciples, today he asks nothing in return.”

“A member of the Italian police told CNS that all forms of assembly in public places or places under the colonnade — both indoor and outdoor — are forbidden all across Italy. Even though the square is under the jurisdiction of Vatican City State, it is subject to Italian laws, the police officer said.

There was an “impressive silence” inside the basilica, according to a CNS reporter who was allowed inside. Only a few people for the city’s homeless were operational, but officials were too busy to pray or to help out in the parish or to assist a neighbor in need, the pope said. “But Jesus does not choose according to our criteria, but according to his plan of love,” the pope said.

“Being witnesses of Jesus is a gift that we have not deserved,” the pope said. “We feel inadequate, but we cannot withdraw with the excuse of our incompetence.”

People often are tempted to say that they are too busy to pray or to help out in the parish or to assist a neighbor in need, the pope said. “But Jesus’ love has no limit.”

After leading the Angelus through video the pope said he wanted to see the crowd in “real time” and came to the window of his studio to greet people in the square.

Vatican closes St. Peter’s Square, Basilica to tourists through April 3

Carol Glatz Catholic News Service

In cooperation with Italian emergency measures, the Vatican has closed St. Peter’s Square and Basilica to tourists starting March 10 through April 3.

The new measure, announced March 10, was the latest move by the Vatican to help stop the spread of the coronavirus by reducing access to places that attract large groups of people. On March 8, the Vatican closed the Vatican Museums, the necropolis and other museums connected with the Vatican. In coordination with measures introduced by Italian authorities, the Vatican said in a communique, “starting today St. Peter’s Square and Basilica will be closed to guided tours and tourists.

Italian police were located as usual at the perimeter of the square, and a group of priests and nuns were praying in side chapels before the Blessed Sacrament. A nun and a man were seen praying in front of a side altar.

The Vatican said the Angelus broadcast online on Vatican media outlets.

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UN report on gender equality attacks religious freedom

Carol Glatz
Catholic News Service

GENEVA — A United Nations report addressing gender-based violence and discrimination connected to religious beliefs “is now attacking the very reality it is called to defend,” a Vatican representative told a U.N. meeting in Geneva.

The report, at least in part, is actually an attack on freedom of religion or belief as well as freedom of conscience,” said Archbishop Ivan Jurkovic, the Vatican observer to U.N. agencies in Geneva.

Archbishop Jurkovic made his remarks March 2 during a session of the Human Rights Council that was discussing a 2020 report by the U.N.’s Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief. The Vatican mission released a copy of the speech March 3.

Archbishop Jurkovic said the Vatican delegation was greatly concerned with the report.

“Particularly unacceptable and offensive are the numerous references that recommend that freedom of religion or belief and conscientious objection must be surrendered for the promotion of other so-called ‘human rights,’ which certainly do not enjoy consensus, thus being a sort of ‘ideological colonization’ on the part of some states and international institutions.”

The Vatican, he said, defines “gender” and related terms “according to the ordinary generally accepted usage of the word ‘gender,’ based on the biological identity that is male and female.”

“My delegation cannot but lament that the report seems to focus less on the protection of men and women, of any faith or personal belief, that are persecuted or discriminated against — a still too vivid reality for millions of persons worldwide — and more on pushing a vision of social roles for men and women, and who oppose ‘gender ideology’ in ways that intimidate or stigmatize critics.”

The report noted ongoing gender-based discrimination that is defended or perpetrated in the name of religion or belief, such as with forced genital mutilation, forced virginity tests, marital rape, child and forced marriage, polygamy, forced sterilization and abortion, domestic violence, “honor killings,” the criminalization of adultery, particularly ending in death by stoning, compulsory restrictive garments or veils and banning access to religious temples or one’s own home for women during their menstrual period.

The report, however, also expressed concern with states banning or limiting access to abortion, contraception and artificially assisted reproduction — policies the Catholic Church speaks out against in promoting the sanctity of life.

The report supported conscientious objection by individual healthcare or medical providers, but expressed concern with private persons terminating employment or denying services, such as housing or insurance coverage, to women and LGBT persons due to religious objections.

The special rapporteur said, “The right to freedom of religion or belief belongs to individuals, not religions,” and states should not interfere with a religious community’s practices or internal organization. States are prohibited from imposing beliefs on individuals and communities, however, “religious actors can and should, in upholding their institutional autonomy, be exempted from complying with government regulations where doing so would not inordinate discrimination against others on the basis of gender.”

Nashville tornado

(Continued from page 1)

Cathedral. Assumption served the German immigrants of Nashville and was occupied by Union troops during the Civil War.

“We pray for the families of those who have lost loved ones and friends, for all who have been injured, and for those who have lost their homes in the tornado,” said Bishop Swales.

“We pray for the families of those who have lost loved ones and friends, for all who have been injured, and for those who have lost their homes in the tornado,” said Bishop Swales.

“May those who have suffered damages or lost homes in the tornado be comforted and know that they are not alone,” the bishop continued.

In the Diocese of Covington, Bishop Roger Foys announced that a second collection will be taken up at all parish Masses the weekend of March 14-15 for those affected by the tornadoes in Tennessee.

“We reach out to our brothers and sisters in the Diocese of Nashville who are suffering as a result of the tornadoes that wreaked such havoc and destruction,” said Bishop Foys.

“Along with our prayers we ask that those who can to make a contribution which will be used to assist those in need from this tragedy. One hundred percent of any monies donated will provide direct care to those in need, in some cases to those who have lost everything.”

All collected funds will be sent to Bishop Mark Spalding and the Diocese of Nashville as a gift from the people of the Diocese of Covington.

Parishioners may also send contributions directly to the Diocesan Office of Stewardship and Mission Services if they please. The mailing address to send gift checks to is: Diocese of Covington, Office of Stewardship and Mission Services, 1125 Madison Ave., Covington, KY 41011-3115. Write on the memo line: Nashville Tornado Relief. Questions regarding the collection can be directed to the Diocesan Office of Stewardship and Mission Services at (859) 392-1500.

The Diocese of Nashville’s Catholic Charities agency was in the process of contacting parishes to assess needs that they and their people may have. “Once this information is gathered, we will share a further update and offer ways in which we may all work together to offer support,” the diocese said.

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March 13, 2020

11

Nashville tornado

(Continued from page 1)
CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

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. K.M.D.

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.
Together, let's sing of God's wondrous love! savor God's loving embrace, despite our sins and faults. prayer and active, practical love. And let's allow ourselves to embrace their lives, their deepest troubles and their loftiest dreams."

That's really what Lent is all about — returning to God so that he may restore us in his love. These passages from our Holy Father reminded me of a lesson I learned from a Little Sister of the Poor many years ago. I was a novice in our community at the time and we were reaching the end of Lent. The Little Sister who directed the singing and taught us about liturgy arrived at our music practice one Sunday evening and told us she had just scorned everything she had planned for the coming week's liturgies because in prayer it had suddenly struck her that what we should sing about as Lent reached its climax was God's unbelievable love in giving his life for us.

"You never know where the check you're going to write tonight, the person you help, where that's going to lead," said Mr. Rawe. He said he departed from his script after being so moved by the video that he had to speak from the heart. "You're here for one reason. You're the leadership in our parishes," he said. "I look at this video tonight . . . these are the faces of your generosity . . . these are the folks that you're helping," he said.

"Death Penalty: Yes or No?"

Michael VonAllmen, a wrongly convicted felon who served 12 years in prison for a crime he did not commit.

Mr. VonAllmen was found guilty of rape in 1983 sentenced to 15 years in prison. He was paroled in 1994 and lived quietly until eventually he was exonerated in 2010. His life has been shadowed by that sentence and he now advocates for just dealings in court and against practices such as the death penalty.

"Time for embraces"

Sister Constance Veit is director of communications for the diocese, beyond the larger organizations. "This campaign can also be a real help to parishes that need money to carry on the mission. Your generosity has enabled us to do that," he said. He spoke to the significance of hope in today's society “People have been faithful and that is a testament to your faith, and that brings hope. The world around us is never hopeless as long as we have faith . . . Thank you for giving hope to so many people who, without your generosity, with out your caring and your compassion, might feel hopeless and live in a hopeless way"

Father Daniel Schomaker, vicar general, Father Ryan Maher, vicar general and Father Joey Sheldon, administrative assistant to the bishop led attendees in prayers during the evenings.

The second night officially closed the leadership gifts phase, ending with an appeal from Randy Rawe, 2020 Leadership Gifts Chair, to donate to this year’s cause. "You never know where the check you're going to write tonight, the person you help, where that's going to lead," said Mr. Rawe. He said he departed from his script after being so moved by the video that he had to speak from the heart. "You’re here for one reason. You’re the leadership in our parishes," he said. "I look at this video tonight . . . these are the faces of your generosity . . . these are the folks that you’re helping,” he said.

"Death Penalty pledges can be made online at www.coordin.org. A pledge can be paid over 36 months, running from June 2020 – March 2021. One hundred percent of all gifts collected over a parish’s goal will be returned to the parish for proj-ects and ministries.

"Wrongly convicted felon to speak out against death penalty"

The faults of the current justice system are the topic of the upcoming talk, “Death Penalty: Yes or No?” on March 18. Hosted by the Northern Kentucky University Newman Center, the talk will feature Michael VonAllmen, a wrongly convicted felon who served 12 years in prison for a crime he did not commit.

Mr. VonAllmen was found guilty of rape in 1983 sentenced to 15 years in prison. He was paroled in 1994 and lived quietly until eventually he was exonerated in 2010. His life has been shadowed by that sentence and he now advocates for just dealings in court and against practices such as the death penalty.

Twenty-two states have removed the death penalty, but Kentucky is not one of them. Father Patrick Delahanty, chair of the Kentucky Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty and former executive director of the Catholic Conference of Kentucky, said this presentation will challenge the flawed system used to condemn many innocent people. Nationwide 364 people have been sentenced to death and subsequently exonerated, Father Delahanty said. Twenty of those people are in Kentucky.

“Death Penalty: Yes or No?” He’s not just one or two people, we made a mistake or something, it happens over and over again,” he said.

300 years in the parish. There is evidence of bribery with favors. Only around 1 percent of people on death row are able to pay for attor-neys, and they end up represented by overworked public defenders. It just shows how faulty a sys-tem can be, and as the question for people seriously concerned about innocent life is: ‘should we risk tak-ing innocent life by the use of our death penalty’?” he said.

“Time for embraces” (Continued from page 5)

That’s really what Lent is all about — returning to God so that he may restore us in his love. These passages from our Holy Father reminded me of a lesson I learned from a Little Sister of the Poor many years ago. I was a novice in our community at the time and we were reaching the end of Lent. The Little Sister who directed the singing and taught us about liturgy arrived at our music practice one Sunday evening and told us she had just scorned everything she had planned for the coming week’s liturgies because in prayer it had suddenly struck her that what we should sing about as Lent reached its climax was God’s unbelievable love in giving his life for us.

He spoke to the significance of hope in today’s society . “It’s not just one or two people, we made a mistake or something, it happens over and over again,” he said. Oftentimes in the courtroom, said Father Delahanty, racial bias, income bias and even bribery with favors. Only around 1 percent of people on death row are able to pay for attor-neys, and they end up represented by overworked public defenders. It just shows how faulty a sys-tem can be, and as the question for people seriously concerned about innocent life is: ‘should we risk tak-ing innocent life by the use of our death penalty’?” he said. “It’s not so much whether people are innocent, it’s because people have human dignity and no matter what they’ve done, that dignity is still there. We have to respect it.” Mr. VonAllmen will present his story and his case against the death penalty 7-8:30 p.m. in Budig Theater in the University Center at NKU. The event is sponsored by the Kentucky Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty (KCADP), along with the Diocese of Covington Pro Life Office, Catholic Charities and Northern Kentucky Conservatives Concerned About the Death Penalty.

"Wrongly convicted felon to speak out against death penalty"

Michael VonAllmen, a wrongly convicted felon who served 12 years in prison for a crime he did not commit, will speak March 18, 7-8:30 p.m., Budig Theater in the University Center at NKU. The event is sponsored by the Kentucky Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty (KCADP), along with the Diocese of Covington Pro Life Office, Catholic Charities and Northern Kentucky Conservatives Concerned About the Death Penalty.
“Emma” (Focus) Delightful screen version of Jane Austen’s classic novel in which the young British gentlewoman of the title tries her hand at matchmaking on behalf of a forlornly friend while fluctuating between a visit to her small country town and repeatedly locking horns with an old friend. Director Autumn de Wilde’s feature debut captures perfectly Austen’s droll insights into human nature, from the meditative personalities of Emma’s father, with his perpetual fear of drafts, to the good-humored, discerning female nudity and sensuous behavior, drug references, a couple of uses of profanity, a mild oath, at least one rough term, considerable crude and crass talk.

“I Am Patrick” (CRN) Written and directed by Jarrod Anderson, this docudrama — subtitled “The Patron Saint of Ireland” — seeks to debunk many of the myths and legends that have grown up around its subject over the centuries and back to Britain, his ordination and his voluntary return by Irish raiders marauding in fifth-century Roman Empire-controlled Britain, through his six years of slavery, his escape from the Asian slave market, his return to Britain, his ordination and his voluntary return to Ireland as a missionary bishop. The live-action and documentary elements blend well, keeping the pace moving along as historians and authors weave a narrative that reveals Christ. The film follows Patrick from his abduction as a teen to his for the amazing evangelist he was. Brief stylized violence and making a good confession.

“Impractical Jokers: The Movie” (Warner Bros.) Director Gavin O’Connor’s sports drama tells a story of hope and redemption after devastating loss. When the basketball coach at the Catholic high school he attended suffers a heart attack, a former hoops star turned alcoholic-construction worker reluctantly agrees to take over the program. As he exerts a positive influence on the players, he finds a new sense of purpose and begins to heal. The film, penned by Brad Ingelsby, does nothing to free the film from the traditional formula of sports movies. Yet the cast gives believable performances. An upbeat tale, though one punctuated with off-color dialogue. Mature themes, including alcoholism, a few instances of profanity, frequent crude and crass language, a vulgar sexual reference.

“Catholic News Service” (CNS) classifications are:

• A — general patronage
• A-I — adults
• A-III — adults and adolescents
• L — limited audience; includes a few instances of profanity, frequent crude and crass language, a vulgar sexual reference

Cardinal’s reflections provide much food for spiritual thought

Brian T. Olszewski
Catholic News Service


Anyone who has ever heard Cardinal Dolan can’t write. Among his reflection subjects are gratitude, freedom, Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen, patience, friendship, Stan Musial and pasta.

“Impractical Jokers: The Movie” (WarnerMedia) On a road trip from their northern New York to Miami, the four comedians of the eponymous truTV series compete in playing pranks on unsuspecting members of the public and on one another. The quality of the escapades in director and co-writer Chris Henchy’s adaptation, which has a thin backstory involving singer-songwriter Paula Abdul, who plays herself, varies noticeably and some veer into bad taste. But the air of camaraderie that underlies the silly proceedings and the pals’ efforts to good each other into ever-greater outrageousness goes a long way to keep this bit of fluff amiable enough for most grown-ups. Glimpses of rear male nudity and sensuous behavior, drug references, a couple of uses of profanity, a few mild oaths, at least one rough term, considerable crude and crass talk.

“The Way Back” (Warner Bros.) Director Gavin O’Connor’s sports drama tells a story of hope and redemption after devastating loss. When the basketball coach at the Catholic high school he attended suffers a heart attack, a former hoops star turned alcoholic-construction worker reluctantly agrees to take over the program. As he exerts a positive influence on the players, he finds a new sense of purpose and begins to heal. The film, penned by Brad Ingelsby, does nothing to free the film from the traditional formula of sports movies. Yet the cast gives believable performances. An upbeat tale, though one punctuated with off-color dialogue. Mature themes, including alcoholism, a few instances of profanity, frequent crude and crass language, a vulgar sexual reference.

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

Catholic News Service (CNS) classifications are:

• A — general patronage
• A-I — adults
• A-III — adults and adolescents
• L — limited audience; includes a few instances of profanity, frequent crude and crass language, a vulgar sexual reference

CNS: A-II, MPAA: not rated.


CNS: A-I, MPAA: not rated.

CNS: A-III, PG.

CNS: A-II, MPAA: PG.

CNS: A-I, MPAA: not rated.

CNS: A-IV, MPAA: not rated.

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CNS: A-II, MPAA: not rated.


CNS: A-I, MPAA: not rated.

CNS: A-IV, MPAA: not rated.

CNS: A-II, MPAA: PG.

CNS: A-IV, MPAA: not rated.

CNS: A-I, MPAA: not rated.

CNS: A-IV, MPAA: not rated.

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CNS: A-I, MPAA: not rated.
Pope chooses ‘syndodality’ as theme for 2022 synod

VATICAN CITY — Pope Francis has decided the next world Synod of Bishops at the Vatican, which will take place in October 2022, will have the theme: “For a synodal Church, Communion, participation and mission.” The Vatican announced the choice of “synodality” as the theme in a brief communiqué March 7. “Synodality,” which literally means “walking together,” has become a key topic of Pope Francis’ pontificate, but one which has raised questions and even confusion. The basic idea in the pope’s teaching is that the grace of baptism makes one part of the body of the Church and, therefore, responsible for its life and mission. In a hierarchical Church, that shared responsibility calls for regular, serious and structural forums for listening to all members of the Church. At the same time, as the pope has said, it does not mean putting decisions to a vote as if a synod were a parliament.

In 2018, the International Theological Commission, which advises the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, published a document on the topic, “Synodality In the Life and Mission of the Church.”

Lack of faith can impact validity of marriage, commission finds

VATICAN CITY — A lack of faith and a misunderstanding of marriage can mean no sacramental marriage occurred, even if both the husband and wife had been baptized, said a new document. The International Theological Commission, whose members are appointed by the pope, wrote the document in response to questions repeatedly raised since the 1970s and addressed by St. John Paul II, Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Francis. “The existence today of ‘baptized nonbelievers’ raises a new theological problem and a grave pastoral dilemma, especially when the lack of or rather the rejection of the faith seems clear,” the document said. In the document, “The Reciprocity Between Faith and Sacraments in the Sacramental Economy,” members of the theological commission did not claim to resolve completely the question of the validity of sacramental marriages in the absence of faith. Nevertheless, the authors said, much greater care must be taken to educate Catholics in the meaning of faith, the significance of the sacraments and the meaning of marriage. The document was approved by Cardinal Luis Ladaria, prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, and its publication in early March was authorized by Pope Francis.

Court sides with migrants seeking asylum before ‘Remain in Mexico’ in effect

SAN FRANCISCO — The U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit in San Francisco March 5 refused to lift a lower court’s injunction blocking the Trump administration from applying its “Remain in Mexico” policy to those who arrived at U.S. ports of entry before the policy took effect. The injunction will remain in place pending an appeal by the Trump administration. The administration’s 2019 Migrant Protection Protocols, as the policy is formally known, require asylum-seekers to stay in Mexico while their cases make their way through U.S. immigration courts. After the policy went into nationwide effect, immigrant advocate groups filed a motion to protect the thousands of asylum-seekers they said would have crossed into the United States before the ban’s effective date of July 16, 2019, if the government had not forced them to wait in Mexico before being inspected and processed — or undergoing what the groups call “illegally metered” — at ports of entry.

CRS reviews allegations that educational materials breach Church teaching

BALTIMORE (CRS) — Catholic Relief Services said it is reviewing allegations that educational materials and workbooks produced by partner agencies include practices that are contrary to Church teaching. The response from CRS March 9 comes after Michael Hichborn, president of the Lepanto Institute, charged that a project operating in Africa affiliated with the U.S. bishops' overseas development and relief agency promotes the use and distribution of condoms to prevent sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS, and pregnancy.

“CRS has, in the past, discovered errors, taken them extremely seriously and corrected them immediately. Should we discover any such inconsistencies with Catholic teaching, CRS will take immediate corrective action,” the agency said in referencing a “recent report” without naming the Lepanto Institute. The CRS statement noted that it regularly participates in humanitarian initiatives with “a wide range of groups,” including other Catholic institutions, faith communities, governments and secular institutions in an effort to deliver much-needed services around the world. “Although some positions and practices of these institutions are not always consistent with the full range of Catholic teaching,” CRS association with them is always and only focused on activities that are fully consistent with Catholic teaching,” said CRS, which has its headquarters in Baltimore.

Alabama executes inmate after Supreme Court denies last-minute stay

WASHINGTON — Nathaniel Woods, a 45-year-old inmate in Alabama was executed by lethal injection March 9 after the U.S. Supreme Court, which initially granted a temporary stay, denied the inmate’s petition to put his execution on hold. Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey also denied Woods' request for clemency. Woods was convicted, along with Kerry Spencer, in the 2004 killings of three police officers in Alabama. The prosecution argued that Woods was an accomplice and Spencer has repeatedly claimed to be the only shooter. A groundswell of support built up for Woods prior to his execution. Supporters included Martin Luther King III, who argued that Woods had received an unfair trial and should not be executed. U.S. Sen. Doug Jones, D-Alabama, sent a letter to Ivey saying that because of the discrepancies in the case, “a delay is warranted.” “This is not a decision that I take lightly, but I firmly believe in the rule of law and that justice must be served,” Ivey said in a statement after the execution.

Poll: Fewer Catholics see Christian persecution as an urgent issue

NEW YORK — Over half of U.S. Catholics are “very concerned” about global Christian persecution, but this group accounts for 6% of Catholics today compared to 18% in winter 2019 — a decline of more than 50%, according to a new poll. It also showed the number of U.S. Catholics who think Christian persecution is “very severe” declined by 11% compared to a year ago, dropping from 46% to 41%. Results of the third annual nationwide poll examining the views of U.S. Catholics on the global persecution of Christians were released March 4. The poll was conducted by McLaughlin & Associates for Aid to the Church in Need USA, an international papal agency that supports suffering and persecuted Christians in more than 140 countries. Respondents also ranked global Christian persecution as a less urgent issue than human trafficking, poverty, climate change and the global refugee crisis. “While 81% of American Catholics show strong concern about the persecution of Christians, it is nevertheless disheartening to see the drop in their number compared to a year ago,” George Marlin, chairman of Aid to the Church in Need USA, said in a statement.

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MATAMOROS, Mexico — From a row of tables set up amid a sea of tents, volunteers in teal shirts distributed bags of basics such as beans, rice and cooking oil to a long line of asylum-seekers in this makeshift camp along the banks of the Rio Grande.

Dressed in a navy habit, blue Oxford shirt and Birkenstock sandals, Sister Norma Pimentel greeted the asylum-seekers and listened to their concerns. She also heard stories of hardship from a people living in the squalor of tents with little governmental assistance, surviving in an unsafe Mexican border town and trying to navigate the U.S. asylum system.

The people there “seem to be a nuisance to the government, (a) problem that they have to make go away,” Sister Norma said from the camp, which formed last July in response to a program known as “Remain in Mexico.”

“It was done in a way that they swept it under the rug: send it to Matamoros. Now it’s Mexico’s problem,” she said of “Remain in Mexico.”

“It’s sort of like turning their backs on this reality... As long as the problem is not in the United States, it is resolved, according to them.”

The “Remain in Mexico” program has forced more than 60,000 asylum-seekers to wait on the Mexican side of the border as their claims are heard in U.S. courts. It has proved controversial as critics contend it destroyed the traditional asylum system.

Immigration lawyers interviewed by Catholic News Service also say the rules are vaguely written and rife with irregularities, with people ineligible for the program — such those suffering illnesses — being sent to Mexico.

The 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals invalidated the program, formally known as Migrant Protection Protocols, Feb. 28, but later stayed its ruling.

Sister Norma welcomed the initial ruling and said of the “Remain in Mexico” scheme, “We cannot be OK with policies that contribute to the human suffering of people. If they hurt a human being, then they’re wrong and need to be replaced with something more humane.”

Sister Norma has long sought to ameliorate the suffering of migrant families arriving at the United States border. As the director of Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley, she opened a relief center in 2014 in the city of McAllen, which receives migrants from the Border Patrol. Catholic Charities then helps coordinate travel to destinations throughout the United States, places where they would be cared for by family.

But when “Remain in Mexico” was rolled out in the Rio Grande Valley, migrants stopped arriving. Sister Norma subsequently started crossing into the violent state of Tamaulipas to tend to them.

“(It) took the migration crisis to an even more severe level,” she said of “Remain in Mexico.”

“What we were talking about before was a humanitarian crisis. This is even worse,” she said. “It is total abandonment of these families in conditions that are so terrible.”

The Mexican government promised to provide the asylum-seekers with access to health care, work and education. But many of the migrants have been forced to fend for themselves and have suffered indignities such as kidnap-ping, as gangs seek ransom from their relatives already in the United States.

Civic organizations and kind-hearted individuals have provided for the tent-city residents, who until recently lacked toilets — resulting in illnesses — and were forced to wash and bathe in “the polluted waters of the Rio Grande,” Sister Norma said.

Roughly 3 percent of the participants in “Remain in Mexico” have a lawyer and the rate of those winning their cases is around 1.4 percent — with those having legal representation are six times more likely to win, said Jodi Goodwin, a Brownsville immigration attorney. Most of those winning are from Venezuela, Cuba and Nicaragua, whose cases are “more straight-up political,” Goodwin said.

Churches work to alleviate suffering of people who ‘Remain in Mexico’