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CNS photo/Patrick T. Fallon, Reuters

Protesters in Long Beach, Calif., demonstrate May 31, 2020. Demonstrations continued nationwide over the death of George Floyd, an African American, who later died at a hospital.

Gomez: Killing of Floyd is a ‘sin that cries out to heaven for justice’

WASHINGTON — The killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis was senseless and brutal, a sin that cries out to heaven for justice, and protests taking place nationwide “reflect the justified frustration and anger” of millions of Americans who today suffer because of racism, said the president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

“The violence of recent nights is self-destructive and self-defeating,” said Archbishop Jose H. Gomez of Los Angeles. “Nothing is gained by violence and so much is lost. Let us keep our eyes on the prize of true and lasting change.”

What the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. said is “true ... that roots are the language of the unheard,” the archbishop continued. “We should be doing a lot of listening right now. This time, we should not fail to hear what people are saying through their pain. We need to finally root out the racial injustice that still infects too many areas of American society.”

Archbishop Gomez asked, “How is it possible that in America, a black man’s life can be taken from him while calls for help are not answered, and his killing is recorded as it happens?”

Floyd, 46, was arrested May 25 by police on suspicion of forgery. Once he was handcuffed, a white officer pinned him down on the street, putting his knee on Floyd’s neck for eight minutes. A now widely circulated video shows Floyd repeatedly saying, “I can’t breathe.” He appears to lose consciousness or die and was later declared dead at the hospital.

The four officers involved in the arrest were fired, the former officer who put his knee on Floyd, Derek Chauvin, was arrested May 29 and charged with third-degree murder and manslaughter.

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Learn from people’s suffering, forge new ways of living

Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — As pain, fear and anger fueled riots across the United States, Pope Francis wrote to the priests of the Diocese of Rome, urging them to learn from the suffering of the coronavirus and start building new communities of care for one another.

“Dear brothers,” he wrote, “as a priestly community we are called to announce and prophesy the future, like the sentinel announcing the dawn that brings a new day: Either it will be something new, or it will be much, much worse.”

Pope Francis said he wanted to write the letter, released by the Vatican May 30, the eve of Pentecost, because he had not been able to celebrate the Holy Week chrism Mass with the priests of his diocese.

The letter made no mention of what was happening in the United States, but it did trace an outline of actions and attitudes Christians should have in facing the aftermath of the epidemic and forging a new way of relating to others.

Pope Francis also said he had heard from many priests about the suffering and challenges they faced as they watched parishioners die from the coronavirus or work to the point of exhaustion in health care and other essential services, yet the lockdown meant they could not celebrate Mass with their people or, in most cases, visit face to face with people who were hurting.

Yet, the fact that Easter occurred during the lockdown should make people think, he said. For Catholics, “the Resurrection is not only a historical event of the past to be remembered and celebrated; it is more, much more: It is the proclamation of the salvation of a new time ... the future that the Lord calls us to build.”

“Faith allows us a realistic and creative imagination, capable of abandoning the logic of repetition, replacement or preservation,” he said. “It invites us to establish an ever-new time: the time of the Lord.”

The coronavirus, “an invisible, silent, expansive and viral presence” put the whole world in crisis, the pope wrote. In response, Christians should let the “discrete, respectful and non-invasive” presence of the Holy Spirit “call us again and teach us not to be suffocated and devastate our communities and our sister earth,” he said, “let us not fear that it is the presence of the Risen One that traces our path, opens horizons and gives us the courage to live this historic and unique moment.”

As he often has done, the pope reminded priests that when Jesus appeared to the disciples after the resurrection, he still bore the wounds of his crucifixion.

And people should be doing a lot of listening right now. This time, we should not fail to hear what people are saying through their pain. We need to finally root out the racial injustice that still infects too many areas of American society.”

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(Continued on page 12)


A painting of George Floyd is on a business in southeast Minneapolis.

The wounds, he said, are a sign of the “harsh and unjust” treatment and anger some people are feeling and the hard work of building new communities of care for one another.


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(Continued on page 12)
Two jubilarians share their vocation in their priesthood

Allegra Thatcher
Assistant Editor

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This summer, what will you do with the time that's been given to you?

David Cooley

No one could have foreseen, for beginning of the 2019-
2020 school year how things would end abruptly before the
month of April. It is fair to say that many people are griev-
ing in some way and rightly so. Instead of the usual end of
the year excitement and celebrations, there has been isola-
tion and distance among friends. For us Catholics, the
most difficult thing has been away from our Lord in the
sacraments and being away from our parish communi-
ties. For many youth who were enjoying a significant year
in school, things came to a rather anti-climactic end. Of
course, none of this is to even mention those that have suf-
f ered through illness or have lost loved ones who were very
dear to them. Yet on the other hand, I think it is also fair to
say that 2020 will not fade away from our memories any-
time soon. At the very least it has been unique, caused us
to pause, and perhaps forced us to look at things in a differ-
ent way.

But now summer has crept in, virtually unnoticed, and
we are faced with a range of new set of dilemmas. For the most part
public Masses have opened up again -- a true blessing
but "to go, or not to go; that is the question." There is, after
all, still a dispensation in place from our bishop through
the end of the season. “But, Lord, how can we stay away
from the faith should be filled with joy because we know the good
world that I do as a priest, I don't have enough talent to
do, but they get done anyway. When I lack a talent, Jesus
makes up for it for me. He and I are doing this together.”

I congratulate Father Riesenb erg on the 60th anniver-
sary of his ordination to the priesthood,” said Bishop
Roger Foys. “For six decades Father Riesen berg has served
the Lord well by serving the people who were entrusted to his care. His fidelity to the promises he made at his ordi-
nation 60 years ago is an inspiration for all priests, young and old. I pray that he will have many more happy years as a priest. Ad multos annos!”

This year celebrating 40 years of priesthood, Father
Michael Comer reflected on his various assignments and how they each allowed him to use his gifts for the Church. Whether in social justice work or teaching religion, Father Comer puts his whole heart into his priestly ministry.

“My 12 years at my first parish, St. Bernard in Dayton, were some of the best years of my priesthood,” said Father Comer. “The people were incredibly wel-
coming, supporting and loving ... I still think and care about them a lot.”

He was called on to help merge the Bellevue and Dayton Catholic schools dur-
ning those years into Holy Trinity School, and eventually did so at what is now
Divine Mercy Parish, from Sacred Heart Parish and St. Anthony Parish, as well.

“It was painful going through that and yet, there are wonderful people going
through that. Just being with them — I think that’s what a parish priest is,” he
said. “You’re somebody who, you’re with them in their lives. We don’t pop in on Sundays, we’re part of the community itself.”

Whether in urban Dayton, suburban Burlington or rural Maysville, Father
Comer said teaching was one of the things he enjoyed most. He taught full time at St.
Henry School, Elymere, in the late 1980s, as well as high school religion at St. Patrick
School, Maysville, and is currently parochial administrator at Newport Catholic
Central High School.

Over the last 20 years, Father Comer has found joy in teaching the faith to adults. His third-time program “RCIA for Catholics” is an opportunity for him to
break open Scripture for his parishioners.

“I have known Father Comer for almost half of his 40 years as a priest,” said
Bishop Foys. “In that time I have come to know him as a caring, compassionate, and loving pastor. He is passionate about the faith and exhibits that passion in his teaching and preaching. He exemplifies the fact that in whatever ministry he is involved. He has served in small parishes and large and brings with him the same level of enthusi-
asiasm and charity.”

(Continued on page 13)

Two jubilarians share their vocation in their priesthood

Father John Riesenb erg
Father Michael Comer

This summer, what will you do with the time that’s been given to you?

(Continued on page 13)
St. Vincent de Paul finds new ways to reach neighbors from a distance

Allegra Thatcher
Assistant Editor

A global pandemic didn’t stop the Society of St. Vincent de Paul of Northern Kentucky from helping a multitude of those in need this spring — in fact, it bolstered their creative efforts.

With stores reopening Monday, June 1, executive director Karen Zengel shared how the organization continued to assist its neighbors while their normal outreach methods were limited. “We were worried when we closed our stores in March,” she said. “But the stores fund a significant part of the outreach that we provide to the community,” said Ms. Zengel. “We knew that there was going to be so much need throughout this and initially we were worried about our ability to meet that need.”

But the local community “stepped forward and took care of us, and as a result took care of their neighbors,” she said. “Through the support of different regional response funds that came together as well as the support of our generous financial donors, they answered the call and came through and allowed us to continue to serve. We’ve done even more than we’ve done in the past in terms of Vincentian outreach. That whole experience was just amazing and absolutely significant part of the outreach that we provide to the community,” said Ms. Zengel. “We knew that there was going to be so much need throughout this and initially we were worried about our ability to meet that need.”

One of her major concerns was how to help those who reach out for emergency financial assistance, and those who usually receive home visits from Vincentians. That concern developed into a new vision for outreach. The Vincentians are now making phone calls instead of home visits, and they’ve even reached beyond the normal conference of their local St. Vincent de Paul.

“Some areas of Northern Kentucky where we don’t have an active conference, so what would normally happen is if someone called for help who lived in that area, we would have to refer them to another organization to be able to help them, especially with financial assistance,” said Ms. Zengel. Ms. Zengel said she couldn’t imagine turning people away during the current health and financial crisis. “Imagine if you’ve just lost your job. You hear about St. Vincent de Paul and you think, ‘Thank goodness, there’s someone who can help me,’ and we say, ‘We’re sorry, we don’t have a group of active volunteers who live in your area.’”

A group of Vincentians therefore made the commitment to address calls that fell outside of the areas where they typically served, and the difference was amazing, said Ms. Zengel. They helped 239 additional households for a total of almost $28,000 in emergency financial assistance, which includes rent and utility assistance.

Another way they stepped up service was by expanding Frazier and Falmouth food pantry services from walk-in to drive through as well as home delivery. Utilizing their contact list, the society had families drive through the donation line and the manager and another employee or clerical workers with your expertise and your experience are invaluable. These are uncharted waters for us and we can feel helpless and adrift as we make every attempt to steer the ship. Tossed by the waves of the unknown, we are asked questions that we never imagined and we look for the answers to quell the storm. Undoubtedly there were enough projects to work on, to complete and to initiate before the storm that is the pandemic hit us. But now we are being challenged to come up with new ways of living, new ways of acting, even new ways of worshiping. Now more than ever, diocesan and parish staffs with your expertise and your experience are needed and are invaluable.

“Safe distancing” has entered our vocabulary and is now — and more than likely will be for some time to come — the norm. How do we do that? How do we rearrange our church seating, our social halls, our classrooms to achieve the norm. How do we do that? How do we rearrange our church seating, our social halls, our classrooms to achieve the norm?

“For some time to come,” she said. “With stores reopening Monday, June 1, executive director Karen Zengel shared how the organization continued to assist its neighbors while their normal outreach methods were limited. ‘We were worried when we closed our stores in March,’ she said. ‘But the stores fund a significant part of the outreach that we provide to the community,’ said Ms. Zengel. ‘We knew that there was going to be so much need throughout this and initially we were worried about our ability to meet that need.’

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On this point, Ms. Zengel said it’s been a busy month of May to study Healthy at Work plans and train the team. “Kroger has been a wonderful example for protocols to implement for the business community,” she said. “We adopted a lot of their protocols: our employees go through temperature and wellness checks every day before they enter the building, the cleaning regimen is similar, wear- ing masks in the building, wearing gloves when handling donations, making sure we’re educating our team about their own wellness.”

She and her team have adjusted the layout of the stores to allow customers to maintain distance while shopping, and the number of people inside at any given time will be limited. They are also giving priority to voucher customers, who receive basic necessities through store credit. These neighbors make an appointment so they have the opportunity to get what they need before other shoppers come in. Ms. Zengel said they’ve already returned, by appointment, to the stores in last week. “We must have experience spe- cial, the staff has even extended special gestures like giv- ing children toys on their way out or picking out their own new shoes.

So while home visits are still suspended and the stores may look different upon opening, St. Vincent de Paul is baser than ever in meeting the needs of its neighbors in meaningful ways.

‘I can’t describe how wonderful our community has been through all of this,’” said Ms. Zengel. “I think that we all felt helpless and we wanted to help in some way, and when people stepped off of mandatory donations or con- tributed financially, or encouraged us on social media, the love that people shared during this time was overwhelm- ing. I want to thank everyone who helped us continue to march forward and not leave anyone behind.”

Facility managers face daunting challenges posed by COVID-19 with faith

Bishop Roger Foys is the episcopal moderator for the Conference for Catholic Facility Management (CCFM).

Begun in 1997, the CCFM is an association of professionals working for the Catholic Church in areas of real estate, construction, facility management and sustainability. There are 120 arch-diocese members, 35 religious order members and over 90 corporate members. Its annual conference, scheduled for May 4-6, was canceled due to the pandemic. Bishop Foys addressed CCFM members with the following written message.

Praised be Jesus Christ! Who would ever have thought that we would live to see a pandemic overtake the globe we inhabit, here we are. These are uncharted waters for us and we can feel helpless and adrift as we make every attempt to steer the ship. Tossed by the waves of the unknown, we are asked questions that we never imagined and we look for the answers to quell the storm.

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Faithful friendship

Writing and public lectures have brought thousands of people into my life. Though most of them passed through my life without meaningful connection, some became lifelong friends.

I share this not because I think it’s unique, but rather because it’s typical. Today that’s really everyone’s story. More and more friends pass through our lives so that at a point the question necessarily arises: how does one remain faithful to one’s family or old friends, former classmates, former students, former colleagues, and old acquaintances? What does fidelity to them ask for? Occasional visits? Occasional e-mails, texts, calls? Remembering birthdays and anniversaries? Class reunions? Attending weddings and funerals?

Obviously doing these would be good, though that would also constitute a full-time occupation. Something else must be being asked of me, notably some fidelity that’s not contingent on e-mails, texts, calls and occasional visits. But what can lie deeper than tangible human contact? What can be more real than that?

The answer is fidelity, fidelity as the gift of a shared moral, soul, fidelity as the gift of trust, and fidelity as remaining true to who you were when you were in tangible human community and contact with those people who are no longer part of your daily life. That’s what it means to be faithful.

It is interesting how the Christian Scriptures define community and fidelity. Acts of the Apostles we read that before Pentecost those in the first Christian community were “all of one mind and spirit.” And though physically together, ironically they were not in real community with each other; not really a family and not really faithful to each other. Then after receiving the Holy Spirit, they literally broke out of that one room and scattered all over the earth so that many of them never see each other again. Now, geographically at a distance from each other; ironically they become real family, become a genuine community and live in fidelity to each other.

At the end of the day, fidelity is not about now often you physically connect with someone but about living within a shared spirit. Betrayal is not a question of separation by distance, of forgetting an anniversary or a birthday, or of not being able to stay in touch with some- one you cherish. Betrayal is moving away from the truth and virtue you once shared with that person you cherish. Betrayal is a change of soul. We are unfailingly to family and friends when we become a different person morally so as to no longer share a common spirit with them.

You can be living in the same house with someone, share daily bread and conversation with him or her, and not be a faithful friend or family, just as you can be a faithful friend or family member and not see that friend or family member for 40 years. Being faithful in remembering something is wonderful, but fidelity is more about remembering who you were when that birth was so special to you. Fidelity is about maintaining moral affinity.

To the best of my abilities, I try to stay in contact with the family old friends, former neighbors, former classmates, former students, former colleagues and old acquaintances. Mostly it’s a bit beyond me. So put my trust in a moral fidelity. I try as best I can to commit myself to keeping the same soul I had when I left home as a young boy, the soul which characterized who I am and who I met when I met all those wonderful people along the way.

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

I miss sports. I miss the end of basketball season. I miss horse racing. I miss baseball. I miss coaching children. And mostly I miss watching my own children play. I have two school-aged children of my own who need sports. But the recent return to visit to my parents’ house, my 11-year-old son had a basketball goal to use for the first time since the pandemic began. I saw a rejuvenation in him. He is his best self when he’s playing a sport.

We are well into our third month of quarantining, social distancing, wearing masks and sanitizing, and young people either are or will be back to participating in sports again. I have sat in on webinars and been involved in discussions, and read articles related to kids’ sports, the return to youth sports. One of the common questions is, “What will youth sports look like when they return?” We will soon find out.

But a moral responsibility still exists because the virus still exists. The reality is that exposure to the illness is still very prevalent and increasing the population’s mobility will further the exposure. The “most vulnera- ble” still exist. Coaches must make social distancing and enhanced cleaning and maintenance an additional — and most important — part of practice planning.

Yet with the return of youth sports another moral responsibility, likely less thought about but one that could impact the future of our country, exists. Recent events in our country have many angry, upset, saddened — you name it — and want change in our country. As racism, violence, and discovered among people continues to exist, it is just as important as ever to find ways for young people to participate and to connect through sports.

It is always a golden opportunity to be fortunate to have grown up in a relatively diverse part of Indianapolis. I attended diverse schools and played sports with people who looked and grew up differently than me. Three of the most formative years of my life were my first three years as a teacher in inner-city Cincinnati to students, almost all of them, who lived in poverty. For these reasons, I have always appreciated diversity. But these recent events have caused me, like many, to ask myself, “What can I do? How can I use my platform to make our country better?”

The Aspen Institute’s Project Play, a national initiative, serves to build healthy communities through sports while working with organizations throughout the country so even the child living in a household with an income less than $25,000 did not participate in sport.

Yet sports identification that 34.4 percent of youth ages 6-12 who live in a household with an income less than $25,000 did not participate in a sport. This gap increased from 10 percent in 2012 to 23.5 percent just six years later.

Impact on sports participation is well documented. Studies have shown that participation correlates to better graduation rates, grades, happier families and better physical and emotional health. These studies show that girls especially benefit from sports. Participation reduces the chances of heart disease and breast cancer; decreases rates of unplanned pregnancies, and boosts self-esteem.

The implications of a sport participation gap between income levels are not only in opportunities but all youth, in their most formative years, have significantly less of an opportunity to learn and work side by side with those who would not otherwise have them, to find ways to connect people through sports. So much can, and should, be done at the local level to provide these opportunities and connect our young neighbors with young neighbors.

As we return to sports post-COVID-19, we must keep the health and safety of our youth as a priority. But our other obligation is to make sports more inclusive, provide less of a socioeconomic divide in youth sports, and allow our young people the opportunity to grow up playing sports with kids who are not like them.

Rich Hoyt is an assistant professor at the University of Cincinnati, a parishioner at St. Agnes Parish, P. Wright, and a longtime youth and high school coach. He is the lead trainer for the Play Like A Champion Today program in the Diocese of Covington.
The Trinity — idle words or active belief

The readings for Trinity Sunday — Cycle ‘A’ are: Exodus 34:4-6, 8-9; 2 Corinthians 13:11-13; and John 3:16-18. An American is one who either native by birth or a naturalized citizen. If I am neither, I am not an American no matter how many other American principles of government or ways of living I may espouse. Similarly, a Christian is one who, by definition, believes in the trine God. If I don’t believe in the Trinity I’m not a Christian. It’s that simple.

Considered from that point of view, today’s Solemnity of the Trinity is a statement of the obvious. The more we that we gather as Christians on this or any Sunday is itself a com- memoration of our faith, which is in a trine God. The understanding of the Church has always been that every Sunday — indeed every Christian celebra- tion — is a celebration of the Trinity.

For that reason, the Church effectively resisted for over 13 centuries any moves to establish a special feast honoring the Trinity. As late as 1077 Pope Alexander II refused to establish a feast in honor of the Trinity. He con- tended that every Sunday paid sufficient honor to the Trinity and that no special feast was required. (Recall that until the reforms of Vatican II we used the preface of the Trinity nearly every Sunday.)

In the 13th century, Pope John XXII accepted the Feast of the Holy Trinity. There appear to be two reasons for his acceptance of the feast.

First, it was extremely popular with the religious orders who were exerting a lot of pressure on the Holy Father to officially sanction the feast. Secondly at that time the feast of any saint supplanted the usual Sunday celebration. The feasts of saints were becoming so numerous that the liturgy of Sunday, with its commemoration of the Trinity, had almost never celebrated. By establishing a feast in honor of the Trinity, John XXII guaranteed that the doctrine of God’s trune nature would be remembered at least once a year.

But we remember the Trinity every Sunday. We as Christians on this or any Sunday can and should. Our faith is rooted in the three persons of the Trinity who share in the life of the Trinity and so proclaim it are those who “share their ways” and “encourage one another” and “live in peace and harmony.” The Gospel reminds us that the Son of God did not come into the world to condemn it. The implication is that if we share in the Son’s life, we don’t condemn either. Rather, we work with the Lord for the salvation of all through the way we live in peace and harmo- ny and encourage each other.

Today’s celebration can be the dry recollection of a doc- trine we routinely profess; or it can be a challenge to a way of life that demonstrates what we believe. Our belief can be merely idle words or active living.

Father Daniel Vogelpohl

The readings for Trinity Sunday — Cycle ‘A’ are: Exodus 34:4-6, 8-9; 2 Corinthians 13:11-13; and John 3:16-18.

Federal Twitter

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

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Eighth Day

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Eighth Day

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Father Daniel Vogelpohl
Knights ‘praying for years’ for beatification

Kurt Jensen
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — Father Michael McGivney, the founder of the Knights of Columbus, may be an ideal prospective saint for the current age, said Carl A. Anderson, supreme knight of the international fraternal order.

“We’ve been praying for years for this to occur, and finally this day has arrived,” he told Catholic News Service May 27.

First, he’s a pro-life hero. The miracle recognized by the Vatican paving the way for his beatification occurred in 2015 and involved an U.S. baby still in utero, with a life-threatening condition that, under most circumstances, could have led to an abortion.

He was found to be healed after his family prayed to Father McGivney: “The Vatican likes to be the one to discuss more details than that,” Anderson said.

The Vatican announced early May 27 that Pope Francis, who met with the board of directors of the Knights of Columbus in February, had signed the decree recognizing the miracle through the intercession of Father McGivney. Once he is beatified, he will be given the title “Blessed.”

Father McGivney (1852-1890), ordained a priest for what is now the Archdiocese of Hartford, Connecticut, founded the Knights of Columbus at St. Mary’s Church in New Haven. At the time, Father McGivney, the son of Irish immigrants, was an assistant pastor at St. Mary’s Parish. He is buried in New Haven.

Father McGivney did not want to be the leader of the Knights of Columbus, “Anderson observed. “He was at first the group’s secretary and then the chaplain.”

Further, Father McGivney’s legacy also includes “the empowerment of the laity” through service projects, Anderson said. “His work anticipated the Second Vatican Council. He created a universal call to holiness that gave the laity a way to be more faithful Catholics. He provided a mechanism for them to go into society and make a difference.”

The priest’s great foresight of involving the laity as leadership of the Knights also was cited by Baltimore Archbishop William E. Lori, who is supreme chaplain of the fraternal order.

“Father McGivney was a Pope Francis priest before there was a Pope Francis,” a comment he said he thought the pope enjoyed when the board of the Knights met with him at the Vatican earlier this year and the archbishop presented a biography of the priest to the pope.

Archbishop Lori also noted the priest’s connections to Baltimore: He was formed for priesthood at St. Mary’s Seminary on Paca Street and ordained a priest in 1877 at the Basilica of the Nativity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary by Archbishop James Gibbons for Hartford.

Generally, two miracles attributed to the candidate’s intercession are required for sainthood—one for beatification and the second for canonization.

Father McGivney, who will be the first American parish priest to be beatified and has long been a hero of working-class Catholics, can be venerated as a martyr of a pandemic. When he died from pneumonia complications at age 38 in 1890, it was during an outbreak of influenza known as the Russian flu in Thomaston, Connecticut. Some recent evidence, according to the Knights, indicates the outbreak may have been the result of a coronavirus.

Anderson praised Father McGivney’s modesty and “dedication to charity and unity and the way he embodied the good Samaritan” after founding the Knights of Columbus, originally a service organization to help widows and orphans, in New Haven.

The initial work on his sainthood cause began in 1982 on the Knights’ centenary. His cause was formally opened in 2005.

His beatification ceremony will be held in Connecticut sometime this fall — like all other events, scheduling is uncertain because of the COVID-19 pandemic — “and some time after that, we’ll be looking for another miracle,” Anderson said.

Pope Francis has approved a miracle attributed to the intercession of Father Michael McGivney, founder of the Knights of Columbus, clearing the way for his beatification. Father McGivney is pictured in an undated portrait.

Archbishop Lori also said Father McGivney was a visionary leader in creating the Knights organization as a life insurance company, because the priest saw the need to help families left destitute when the breadwinner died, as often happened in the 19th century.

“But he also saw the need, even more importantly, for men and their families to deepen their commitment to the faith, their knowledge of the faith and their participation in the faith,” the archbishop said.

“So, he made the Knights a tremendous avenue for the spiritual growth of Catholic men and their families.”

He called Father McGivney a model parish priest who “knew his people” and “loved them.”

“Having engaged being with his people. He provided opportunities for spiritual growth, but also for families and parishioners to come together. He loved the poor and the outcast. He preached convincingly and beautifully,” said Archbishop Lori.

The archbishop said Father McGivney was “a Pope Francis priest before there was a Pope Francis,” a comment he said he thought the pope enjoyed when the board of the Knights met with him at the Vatican earlier this year and the archbishop presented a biography of the priest to the pope.

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‘Ut Unum Sint’ at 25: Learning to recognize, welcome others’ gifts

Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Twenty-five years ago, St. John Paul II’s encyclical on ecumenism, “Ut Unum Sint,” put the papal seal of approval on a shift in the Catholic Church’s approach to the search for Christian unity.

For the 30 years from the Second Vatican Council to the publication of St. John Paul’s encyclical May 25, 1995, official ecumenical dialogues tended to focus on comparing and contrasting Catholic teachings or practices with the teachings or practices of its dialogue partners.

The search for what Christians held in common was a necessary first step in recognizing each other as Christians, called by Jesus to be one. But in “Ut Unum Sint” (Latin for “that they may be one”), St. John Paul said that dialogue is more than “comparing things,” said Bishop Brian Farrell, secretary of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity.

Dialogues, St. John Paul said, is “an exchange of gifts.”

In the new approach, which has become known as “receptive ecumenism,” Christians say to each other: “What I have is a gift to you and what you have is a gift to me,” Bishop Farrell said.

Recognizing that other Christians have gifts and being willing to accept them as something that could help one’s own community grow in faith takes both individual and collective conversion, the bishop said.

For Catholics, one of the gifts it wants to offer is the ministry of the bishop of Rome — the papacy.

St. John Paul made headlines around the world when, in “Ut Unum Sint,” he invited “church leaders and their theologians” to engage with me in a patient and fraternal dialogue on how the bishop of Rome could exercise his ministry of unity among all Christians.

The papacy and the power involved in exercising papal ministry have been at the center of division and debate for millennia. It was the key issue in many of the fractures of the Catholic Church itself.

While Anglican, Lutheran, Presbyterian and other Protestant churches published responses to St. John Paul’s invitation, the most sustained focus on the papacy has come in the official Orthodox-Roman Catholic dialogue.

Since 2006, the Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue Between the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church has been focusing on the history and exercise of the papacy. And the dialogue is ongoing.

But one point St. John Paul made in “Ut Unum Sint” is that the search for Christian unity, which needs theological reflection, cannot stop there. It is not simply an intellectual exercise.

“The theological discussions have to solve the question of the balance between jurisdiction and communion,” Bishop Farrell said. “But at the practical level, we are living a communion that is normal and positive and visible” every time the pope and other Christian leaders come together to pray to call for prayers and to advocate for action to benefit the common good, the end of violence and the care of creation.

“The pope always has been the pope because he is the bishop of Rome, not vice versa,” Bishop Farrell said.

But Pope Francis’ constant referrals to himself as the bishop of Rome also have had a positive ecumenical impact.

“I’m sorry that some Catholics think that this is some sort of diminution, some lessening of the dignity or the power of the papacy or something,” Bishop Farrell said. “It really is not.”

Pope Francis is “theologically correct” to refer to himself that way, the bishop said. “And from the ecumenical point of view, it helps to put the papacy in its proper perspective.”

“I would dare to say some Catholics have this idea that the pope is somehow outside the Church, above it, separate, isolated, whereas Pope Francis keeps reminding us that the pope is a bishop within the Church but with particular responsibilities,” Bishop Farrell said.

The vision of the papacy and the Catholic Church’s ecumenical commitment itself are rooted in the Second Vatican Council’s understanding of what the church is, he said.

“It changed the perspective of the church from being a structured institution held together by its laws more than anything else,” he said, “to being the church, which is a communion of all those who profess the faith and live the Christian life.”

Pope Francis’ vision of “synodality” flows from that notion of the church as a communion. The term means “walking together” with every member of the church, recognizing that the grace of baptism makes each part of the body of the church and, therefore, responsible for its life and mission.

“Ut Unum Sint” did not refer to the ecumenical importance of synods, but “synodality” has been one of the traits of the Orthodox churches in particular that Pope Francis sees as a gift for the Catholic Church.

And, Bishop Farrell said, Pope Francis is not looking only at the functioning of the Synod of Bishops, but in living synodality in many aspects of the life of the church around the world would be studied, prayed about and decided “in the particular historical, cultural and political situation of the different countries.”

Many of the Catholic Church’s ecumenical partners see Pope Francis’ focus on synodality as a sign of hope that when Catholics get to the point of declaring full communion with each other, real “unity with diversity” will be possible.

At the beginning of the ecumenical movement, many churches saw the Catholic Church “as a huge, well-organized, centralized, dominant organization,” Bishop Farrell said. “And most of the other churches felt afraid that the Catholic Church wanted to impose on them our way of doing things, and that that was the kind of ecumenism we were going to follow.”

“We had to learn to show them that is not the case; we don’t want to make them be like us,” he said. “We want to respect them in all that they are, and we are not looking for some kind of transplantation.”

“Ut Unum Sint” is and continues to be important because it clearly stated that “the end game” of the Catholic Church’s ecumenical commitment “is not some sort of Catholic uniformity,” Bishop Farrell said. When two ways of thinking or expressing the faith are complementary, “there’s room for them. If they become contradictory, then they have to be overcome.”

“The end game,” he said, “is ‘the fidelity of all of us to Christ and the Gospel, and respect for the ways in which that fidelity has been lived out down the centuries in all the different cultural circumstances.’"
Church united by Spirit, not personal beliefs, pope says on Pentecost

Jumno Arocho Esteves
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Just as the apostles were united once they received the Holy Spirit, the Church is united by that same spirit and not by keeping company just with those who agree on a certain interpretation of Christian teaching, Pope Francis said on Pentecost.

Celebrating Mass May 31 at St. Peter’s Basilica, the pope said that those who give in to the temptation to firmly “defend our ideas, believing them to be good for everybody and agreeing only with those who think as we do,” adhere to a faith created in their own image and “not what the Spirit wants.”

“We might think that what unite us are our beliefs and our morality. But there is much more. Our principle of unity is the Holy Spirit. He reminds us that, first of all, we are God’s beloved children,” he said. “The Spirit comes to us, in our differences and difficulties, to tell us that we have one Lord — Jesus — and one Father, and that for this reason we are brothers and sisters,” he said.

In February, the Vatican had announced that the pope would celebrate Pentecost in Malta. However, the trip was canceled due to the coronavirus, and instead he celebrated the Mass with a limited congregation present at the basilica’s Altar of the Chair.

After celebrating Mass, the pope spoke to the socially distanced faithful gathered in St. Peter’s Square before praying the “Regina Coeli.” It was the first time the pope prayed the “Regina Coeli,” without resting in the quiet life or locking ourselves up in sterile habits.”

The pope also recalled the seventh month anniversary of the conclusion of the Synod of Bishops for the Amazon and offered prayers for the people of the Amazon region where the pandemic, along with deforestation and pollution, have added to the suffering of indigenous people.

“Make an appeal so that no one may lack health care assistance. Take care of people; don’t save up for the economy. Care for people who are more important than the economy. We, the people, are temples of the Holy Spirit, the economy isn’t,” the pope said.

Earlier, in his homily at Mass, the pope reflected on the second reading from St. Paul’s First Letter to the Corinthians, in which the apostle says that the Church, while composed of many different parts, is one body.

“Despite the many differences and difficulties, the pope said, the Holy Spirit is what unites the Church’s members as brothers and sisters. He also called on Catholics to “look at the Church with the eyes of the Spirit and not as the world does.”

“The world sees us only as on the right or left; the Spirit sees us as sons and daughters of the Father and brothers and sisters of Jesus,” he explained. “The world sees conservatives and progressives; the Spirit sees children of God. A worldly gaze sees structures to be made more efficient; a spiritual gaze sees brothers and sisters pleading for mercy.”

Pope Francis said that the secret to unity is that it is a gift of the Holy Spirit and that it is important to understand that God “acts not by taking away, but by giving.”

“Why is this important?” the pope asked. “Because our way of being believers depends on how we understand God. If we have in mind a God who takes away and imposes himself, we, too, will want to take away and impose ourselves: occupying spaces, demanding recognition, seeking power.”

“But if we have in our hearts a God who is gift, everything changes. If we realize that what we are is his gift, free and unmerited, then we, too, will want to make our lives a gift,” he said.

The pope also warned Christians of the “three enemies” of God’s gift that lurk “at the door of our hearts” and impede people from giving themselves to others.

The first enemy, narcissism, “is the tendency to think only of our own needs, to be indifferent to those of others and not to admit our own frailties and mistakes.” However, victimhood, the second enemy, is “equally dangerous,” because people close their hearts and become concerned only with their own sufferings.

Pessimism is the final enemy, and it sees everything in “the worst light” and repeatedly says that nothing will return as before.

“When someone thinks this way,” the pope said, “the one thing that certainly does not return is hope. We are experiencing a famine of hope, and we need to appreciate the gift of life, that God has given us. We need the Holy Spirit, the gift of God who heals us of narcissism, victimhood and pessimism.”

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Panel explores how encyclical promotes connection between people, nature

Dennis Sadowski
Catholic News Service

CLEVELAND – Pope Francis’ message in his 2015 encyclical on the relationship of people to the environment is simple, agreed a panel of speakers during an online dialogue.

“It’s a message that focuses on how each person is connected to each other and to the natural environment, while recognizing there is a call to be good stewards of God’s creation by respecting each other and the communities in which people live,” said the pope’s call in the encyclical, “Laudato Si’, on Care for Our Common Home,” was the starting point for the hourlong discussion sponsored by the Initiative on Catholic Social Thought and Public Life and Georgetown University May 28.

The encyclical builds upon the teaching of the pope’s predecessors, including St. Paul VI, St. John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI, said Cardinal Peter Turkson, prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development. The document focuses on an “integral ecology” that incorporates the “ecology of the human person, the ecology of nature and the ecology of peace,” he said.

“The word ecology is not something academic, far away from us,” he said. “It is the environment in which we live. Let us recognize we all create the environment in which we live. Let us recognize we all play a role in building and maintaining a clean environment,” Cardinal Turkson said.

The document also draws from the experiences and teachings of bishops around the world who have witnessed the struggles of people who have lost land, seen access to water reduced, live with heavily polluted air and are threatened by industries eyeing critical natural resources, the cardinal said.

Throughout the dialogue, the pope invites people to dialogue with each other and from that dialogue can come the desire to care for the earth, he explained.

Further, he continued, a deep sense of care for all of creation — people and nature alike — can emerge and lead to deep conversion to work for social, economic and environmental justice and to institute changes in lifestyle from one of waste and overconsumption to one of stewardship.

Other panelists unpacked the encyclical by exploring the connection of people to each other while citing specific actions in response to the threats of climate change on poor and vulnerable people around the world.

“The ecology is not just about the environment,” said Christiana Zenner, associate professor of theology, science and ethics at Fordham University. “That document stressed the importance of people thriving in life, he said.

Christiana Zenner urges viewers of the livestreamed broadcast to step back to reflect on “who do we understand ourselves to be and who are we beholden to.”

Participant Kim Wasserman, executive director of the Little Village Environmental Justice Organization, argued that the community organization worked for 12 years to close a pair of outdated coal-fired power plants that dumped pollution across a wide expanse of the southwestern part of the city.

Utilizing their own air and water samples, the organization managed to convince utility officials and Chicago city officials the plants were harming the community of 95,000 people, she said.

The properties have since been bought by a company seeking to build a department store warehouse, and Wasserman said residents are concerned that pollution from tractor-trail er rigs will raise pollution levels in the neighborhood again.

So people are organizing to block the project, especially since a demolition crew tore down a smokestack on the property April 11 — Holy Saturday and in the middle of a government-imposed stay-at-home orders — without informing the strongly Catholic community.

Such disrespect for the lives of the working-class people who live in Little Village is a prime example of the kind of challenges Pope Francis addresses in his encyclical, she explained.

“We believe people should be part of the conversation, that there’s dignity in our voice being heard,” Wasserman said.

Dan Misleh, executive director of the Catholic Climate Covenant, called for more actively bringing people together to address the world’s environmental crisis, even during the time of the pandemic, “and creating a sense of urgency.”

He stressed that as the world is depending on science to find a solution to the coronavirus pandemic, it also must depend on science to chart climate change.

Misleh pointed to the existence of more than 500 “creation care teams” at parishes across the country as one sign the encyclical is taking root in the lives of everyday Catholics. Such efforts can demonstrate to young people the Catholic Church cares about promoting environmental justice, Misleh said.

“If we want young people to come back to the Church, we need to have a strong creation care program ministry. They care about that,” he said.

Cardinal Turkson said such work illustrates the message of St. Paul in his 1967 encyclical “Papalorum Progressio” (“The Progress of Peoples”), which emerged in the years following the Second Vatican Council.

That document stressed the importance of people thriving in life, he said.

Explaining there is a need to maintain an environment that protects the wealth of nature, Cardinal Turkson said the result is an understanding that humanity “must respect water, the forests, the land so that these can thrive.”

Such respect extends to the “cry” for justice being sought in the May 25 death of George Floyd while in police custody in Minneapolis. Police had stopped Floyd, an African American, on suspicion of forgery.

Once Floyd, 46, was handcuffed, a white officer pinned him down on the street, putting his knee on Floyd’s neck for eight minutes. A now widely circulated video shows Floyd repeatedly saying, “I can’t breathe.” He appears to lose consciousness or die and was later declared dead at the hospital.

“The cry of the earth and the cry of the poor are reaching us,” Cardinal Turkson said.

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The Neri chasuble is a Roman vestment — meaning it is used for the Roman Rite. Neri's contemporary, St. Charles Borromeo (who has a cut of chasuble all his own), was influential at the Council of Trent and its liturgical reforms, especially those regarding vesture. Borromeo saw the fiddleback as a break in tradition. In an effort to preserve tradition, he always used a style of chasuble that was popular throughout Italy in the 16th and early 17th centuries. Because of this, the cut of the chasuble became intrinsically linked to Neri and is widely known today as a “Philip Neri chasuble.” His feast day is May 26.

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Why is your chasuble named after St. Philip Neri?
The name of this chasuble’s style is taken from Rome’s “third apostle,” St. Philip Neri. Ministering to Rome’s pilgrims just after the Renaissance and during the Council of Trent, Neri sought to reinvigorate the Church’s clergy and laity. His influence and admiration became renowned, making devotional images of him prolific. In them, he is always shown in a style of chasuble that was popular throughout Italy in the 16th and early 17th centuries. Because of this, the cut of the chasuble became intrinsically linked to Neri and is widely known today as a “Philip Neri chasuble.” His feast day is May 26.

Why did you order your vestments from Rome’s Gammarelli?
The first set of vestments is important to every ordination. A reminder that the saints are not only with us through their writings and vitae, but through the art and vesture we continue to make today. What is the importance of sacred vestures today?
Vesture has been foundational to sacred worship since the time of Moses and Aaron (cf. Exodus 28) and it continues in our liturgy today. Any cursory search of the web will reveal many liturgical tailors, from the revival of antique embroidery techniques to the looming of antique fabric patterns. The renewed interest we see in liturgical vestures reveals man’s perennial desire to give the best to God through the work of our hands, and the visible expression of it offers us a foretaste of the beatific vision God promises for his faithful.

I chose this style of chasuble for my First Mass set because I find it to be not only a beautiful cut, but one that is firmly grounded in Church tradition and history. It is one that would have been worn for Masses in the time of Trent, and familiar to so many of our beloved saints and artists. It also is a tangible reminder of St. Philip Neri. Neri was widely known for deep piety, sense of humor, and joyful disposition — qualities I think are important for every priest to have, cultivate, and remember.

What’s a chasuble and are there different styles?
The chasuble is the sleeveless outer garment worn by the priest during the celebration of Mass. To celebrate his Mass of Thanksgiving May 17, newly ordained Father Jordan Hainsey wears a Philip Neri chasuble. The Messenger interviewed him to find out more about his choice in vestments.

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Supreme Court rejects appeals to lift restrictions on congregation size

WASHINGTON — A divided Supreme Court May 29 chose not to intervene in an emergency appeal by a church in Southern California to lift COVID-19 restrictions that limit congregation sizes.

The justices responded just before midnight with a 5-4 vote in the case filed May 26 by South Bay United Pentecostal Church in Chula Vista, California, near San Diego. The church had argued that California Gov. Gavin Newsom’s reopening orders violated the Constitution because they placed fewer restrictions on some secular businesses than they did on houses of worship.

The church wanted to hold its regular services Sunday, May 31, on Pentecost. Currently, the state’s restrictions limit church attendance to 100 attendees or 25 percent of the church capacity, whichever is lower.

“The precise question of when restrictions on particular social activities should be lifted during the pandemic is a dynamic and fact-intensive matter subject to reasonable disagreement,” wrote Chief Justice John Roberts in an opinion concurring with the unsigned ruling.

In his five-paragraph opinion, Roberts stressed these guidelines appear “consistent with the free exercise clause of the First Amendment.”

“Similar or more severe restrictions apply to comparable secular gatherings, including lectures, concerts, movie showings, spectator sports and theatrical performances,” he wrote. “The chief justice also noted that COVID-19 has killed thousands of people in California and more than 100,000 in the United States with still “no known cure, no effective treatment and no vaccine.” He also noted people “may be infected but asymptomatic” and could unknowingly infect others. The state’s order restricting crowd sizes, he said, was a means to “address this extraordinary health emergency.”

A three-page dissent written by Justice Brett Kavanaugh, joined by Justices Clarence Thomas and Neil Gorsuch, argued that restrictions on the number of participants at church services did violate the Constitution.

Kavanaugh argued that businesses that are not subject to size restrictions, such as supermarkets, restaurants, hair salons and cannabis dispensaries, are comparable to gatherings at houses of worship.

“The church and its congregants simply want to be treated equally,” he wrote, adding that California “truits its residents and any number of businesses to adhere to proper social distancing and hygiene practices.”

Richard Garnett, law school professor at the University of Notre Dame and director of the university’s Program on Church-State and Society, said the court’s decision shows how “it can be challenging to identify discrimination or unequal treatment.”

“Religious freedom is not absolute, and it is subject to limits, but regulations may not single out religious exercise for disadvantage,” he said.

In a statement, Garnett said arguments about equality and discrimination involve the question: “compared to what?” And in this case, the justices disagreed about what kinds of activities church services should be compared to for public health purposes.

Kavanaugh said the same rules for stores should apply to churches and the court’s majority said the same restrictions on churches also are applied to gatherings like concerts, movie showings, spectator sports and theatrical performances.

Garnett said the ruling “does not necessarily mean that California’s current regulations are justified or constitutional or that they would be upheld after more developed and careful review.”

Charles LiMandri, special counsel to the Thomas More Society, a national nonprofit law firm based in Chicago that represented the California church, said the court’s ruling was disappointing, but the case is “far from over.”

He said the decision was based on “the high standard required to get an emergency injunction” but the case would likely make its way to the high court again and the next time it should get “a better result for religious liberty.”

On May 29, the court also, without noted dissent, turned down a request from two Romanian American Christian churches in the Chicago area arguing that Illinois’ reopening guidelines, with its 10-person limit for houses of worship, violated the Constitution.

In a two-paragraph order, the court said the state’s public health department had just issued new guidance on church participation restrictions May 28 and the churches could file “a new motion for appropriate relief” if circumstances warrant.

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Franciscan friars pray at St. Anthony of Padua Church in Butler, N.J. on April 11, 2020. The U.S. Supreme Court rejected appeals to lift restrictions limiting congregation sizes May 29 during the coronavirus pandemic.
Gomez: Killing of Floyd
(Continued from page 1)

but the investigation into Floyd’s death is ongoing by state prosecutors and by the U.S. Department of Justice.

Archbishop Gomez’s May 31 statement followed a joint statement from the chairmen of seven USCCB committees issued late May 29. The committees include the Ad Hoc Committee Against Racism, the Subcommittee on African American Affairs and the pro-life, domestic policy, cultural diversity, ecumenical and interreligious affairs, and the Catholic Campaign for Human Development committees.

The committee chairmen said they “are broken-heart- ed, sickened and outraged to watch another video of an African American man being killed before our very eyes. … This is the latest wake-up call that needs to be answered by each of us in a spirit of determined conversion,” the chairmen said.

In his statement, Archbishop Gomez said he is praying for Floyd and his loved ones, “and on behalf of my brother bishops, I share the outrage of the black community and those who stand with them in Minneapolis, Los Angeles and across the country.”

“The cruelty and violence he suffered does not reflect on the majority of good men and women in law enforce- ment, who carry out their duties with honor,” the arch- bishop said. “We know that. And we trust that civil author- ities will investigate his killing carefully and make sure those responsible are held accountable.”

The protests that are ongoing in many U.S. cities “reflect the justified frustration and anger of millions of our brothers and sisters who even today experience humil- iation, indignity, and unequal opportunity only because of their race or the color of their skin,” Archbishop Gomez stated. “It should not be this way in America. Racism has been tolerated for far too long in our way of life.”

But he called the violence of recent nights “self-destruc- tive and self-defeating.”

“Legitimate protests should not be exploited by persons who have different values and agendas. Burning and loot- ing communities, ruining the livelihoods of our neighbors, does not advance the cause of racial equality and human dignity,” he said.

“We should not let it be said that George Floyd died for no reason,” Archbishop Gomez said. “We should honor the sacrifice of his life by removing racism and hate from our hearts and renewing our commitment to fulfill our nation’s sacred promise — to be a beloved community of life, liberty and equality for all.”

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SHOPPER’S GUIDE

12 June 5, 2020 Messenger
Jubilarians share confidence in their vocation

(Continued from page 2)

He's currently pastor at Mother of God Parish, Covington, which he said has been an incredible outlet for becoming more involved in social justice over the last three years. Not to mention that the church itself is one of the most beautiful ones he's ever seen.

“One of the reasons I wanted to come to Mother of God is that it has a history of investment in the community,” he said. “It was Mother of God that started Parish Kitchen, which was very involved with Welcome House, and there's some people from the parish who were very involved with the Emergency Shelter of Northern Kentucky (ESNKY) ... I want to see more of that, I want to do more. I'm hoping that as a parish, we can be very supportive of these ministries.”

Father Comer takes inspiration from Dorothy Day, who advocated for social justice during the 20th century. “I'd like to see not just Mother of God, but the whole Church embrace the values (Dorothy Day) was all about, which was serving the needy and the poor and working for peace and justice,” he said.

During his time as pastor at Mother of God Parish, he’s helped house overflow from ESNKY during the cold winter months in the parish basement. He’s also worked with recovering alcoholics and drug addicts, ministering them toward recovery. He wants to continually be more of a presence of Christ to the surrounding community. “That’s what it means to be a Christian, to be invested in these things,” he said.

“I feel blessed that God called me to this,” said Father Comer. “I hope I can do a good job for whatever time I have left.

His priesthood has been characterized by a quiet confidence that he’s doing exactly what God wants from him.

“I have never seriously questioned whether I was in the right place,” he smiled. “It has been clear to me from the time I was ordained that this was the place where I could use whatever gifts I have.”

“Father Comer has drawn many to the faith because of the depth of his faith,” said Bishop Foys. “I congratulate him on 40 years of faithful ministry and wish him many more!” Ad multos annos!”

This summer, what will you do?

(Continued from page 3)

and demonstrate how God is at work in the world today. Read a small section of the Catechism of the Catholic Church every day and discuss it as a family. All these thoughts just scratch the surface of the possibilities.

One final idea, and I wish I could tell you that I came up with this because I love it so much. There is a website called freemake.com (and I’m sure there are others). On this website users can import photos, movie clips and audio files to create videos/slideshows, etc. Early in the week, look at the Scripture readings for the following Sunday; then, as a family, make a video that tells the entire Gospel story. The great thing about this project is that you can then share the video your family makes each week on social media and evangelize to others without leaving your house. And, of course, you are well prepared for Sunday’s Mass.

In preparing to write this article one of my favorite passages from J.R.R. Tolkien’s “Lord of the Rings” kept popping into my head. In dealing with challenging times and a cross to bear, Frodo the Hobbit says to Gandalf the Wizard: “I wish the ring had never come to me. I wish none of this had happened.” To which Gandalf replies: “So do all who live to see such times, but that is not for them to decide. All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given to us.”

How true! Seasons come and go. Typically in the summer we have a little bit more time on our hands; that might be particularly true this year. So what will you decide to do with the time that is given to you?

David Cooley is co-director and office manager of the Office of Catechesis and Evangelization in the Diocese of Covington.

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SACRED HEART PRAYER.

Dear Heart of Jesus — In the merciful eyes it will become your favor, not mine. Amen.

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The best things in life are free — like film classics in public domain

John Mulderig
Catholic News Service
NEW YORK — All films made prior to 1925 have fallen out of copyright due to the passage of time. But numerous more recent movies also have lost their protection for a variety of reasons.

Following, in alphabetical order, are capsule reviews of eight pictures from Hollywood’s golden age that are currently in the public domain, along with links for viewing them online. Unless otherwise noted, they have not been rated by the Motion Picture Association.

1. “Algiers” (1938) Exotic romance set in the Casbah, the native quarter of French Algiers, where a suave Paris crook takes refuge until a policeman uses a woman to lure him out into the open. Directed by John Cromwell, this remake of “Pepe Le Moko” relies on moody visuals, tense emotions and a fine cast to hold interest in the melodramatic story of a criminal undone by love. Stylized violence, unsavory characters and romantic situations. CNS: A-II. https://archive.org/details/Algiers

2. “Angel and the Badman” (1947) Enjoyable low-key Western in which a wounded outlaw is nursed back to health by a Quaker family whose daughter tries to get him to hang up his guns rather than square accounts with a bushwhacker. Directed by James Edward Grant, the unpretentious yet thoughtful story features a very likable cast, including Harry Carey as the sagesheriff. Solid social values with some meaningful stylized violence. CNS: A-I. https://archive.org/details/AngelAndTheBadManVideoQualityUpgrade


4. “D.O.A.” (1950) Involving thriller in which a vacationing accountant discovers he has been given a lethal dose of a toxic poison, then backtracks trying to find his killer before he dies. Directed by Rudolph Mate, the premise is simple but effective. Stylized violence and emotionally intense situations. CNS: A-II. https://archive.org/details/D.o.a.VideoQualityUpgrade

5. “The Front Page” (1931) Fast-paced comedy from the Charles MacArthur-Ben Hecht play in which a top Chicago reporter quits his job to get married, then keeps his fiancée waiting after his scheming editor tricks him into covering the escape of a convicted killer. Director Lewis Milestone punctuates the action with the cynical wisecracking of reporters at the city jail while highlighting the battle between the crafty editor and his shrewd reporter, with hilarious results despite the poor quality of the sound track. Stylized violence, sexual innuendo and comic cynicism. CNS: A-III. https://archive.org/details/TheFrontPage1931?start=486AdolphMenjouPatO’BrienLewsmiles

6. “Gulliver’s Travels” (1939) Fine Fleischer’s classic version of Jonathan Swift’s tale of the shipwrecked Englishman who is washed ashore in Lilliput, a diminutive land by whose scale Gulliver is a full-blown giant. The adaptation — a landmark in animation — still goes over well with youngsters bemused by the images of tiny people coping with an oversized man, the movie’s comic invention more than compensates for the subplot of neighboring kingdoms warring over a royal wedding and the songs, including the Oscar-nominated “Fairies Forever,” are quite nice. CNS: A-I. https://archive.org/details/gullivers_travels1939

7. “Life With Father” (1947) Fine adaptation of the Howard Lindsay-Russel Crouse play about the domineering head of a New York City household at the turn of the century who sees no need of baptism to be a good Episcopalian, until his wife makes him see the light. Directed by Michael Curtiz, the droll proceedings are based on the reminiscences of Clarence Day Jr., who recalls his father’s foibles as well as his own adolescent antics with nostalgic fondness and much good-natured irony. Domestic tensions and youthful hijinks. CNS: A-II. https://archive.org/details/LifeWithFather

8. “The Little Princess” (1940) Delightfully sentimental children’s story of a poor little rich girl put to work as a servant in a ritzy boarding school when her father is reported dead during the Boer War but she persists in searching for him among the convos of wounded. Directed by Walter Lang, the story is not only a good heart-tugger but gives Shirley Temple a chance to sing, dance and dream of being a queen. Charming family movie. CNS: A-I. MPAA: G. https://archive.org/details/little_princess

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

Planning Ahead In Times of Crisis

The coronavirus pandemic has added anxiety to our already stressful lives. In a world with many unknowns, it can be scary thinking about getting sick or not being able to make important decisions. A properly executed estate plan may ease your mind, knowing that you have made sure to protect your assets.

What Things Do I Need to Consider?
Do you have a medical power of attorney and living will? Who are your powers of attorney? Have you appointed guardians for your children? Who will raise them in the event of an unfortunate accident? What does it mean to fund your revocable trust and what is the importance? Do you have the appropriate beneficiaries designated on your life insurance policies, pensions and IRAs?

Getting all these questions answered and put in writing beforehand will help eliminate a lot of headache, and possibly heartache, in the future.

What Happens If I’m Not Prepared?
Your family may have to endure a lengthy, public and possibly costly probate in order to administer the estate. Further, your assets may end up being distributed based upon the laws of the state in which you reside, and disputes may arise relative to the appointment of the guardian of your minor children, both of which may render results which do not necessarily reflect your personal preferences.

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Pandemic calls Christians to ‘change course,’ pope says

VATICAN CITY — As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, Pope Francis joined an initiative of the Anglican Church, praying that people would be converted and use the pandemic’s disruption to begin anew: “The Holy Spirit bestows wisdom and good counsel. In these days, let us invoke his aid upon those charged with making complex and pressing decisions, that they may defend human life and the dignity of the work,” the pope said in a video message on Pentecost, May 31. “This is what must be invested in health, employment and the elimination of inequalities and poverty,” he said in the message that was part of Anglican Archbishop Justin Welby’s “Thy Kingdom Come” prayer service. “Thy Kingdom Come” is a program that began in the Church of England in 2016, asking Anglicans to pray intensely the 10 days from Ascension Thursday to Pentecost that people would come to know the love of Jesus. The project has become ecumenical, and because of the coronavirus lockdown, the prayer service concluding the 26th campaign was held online.

Some European Catholic leaders echo pope’s call for universal basic wage

OXFORD, England — Catholic groups across Europe have echoed Pope Francis’ call for a universal basic wage as part of recovery plans after the coronavirus pandemic. “No one in the Church should be against a decent minimum wage that saves people from destitution, which should be defended by Catholics worldwide,” said Peter Verhaeghe, policy and advocacy officer with Caritas Europa. “Its level would need to be clarified by governments, trade unions and employer organizations. But the idea of paying contributions and building up social rights represents a solidarity system in line with Catholic social teaching.” Verhaeghe told Catholic News Service poverty among working families had risen sharply in Europe, where not all countries had a legal minimum pay structure. He added that a universal basic wage should be distinguished from the centuries-old ideal of an automatic state income for all citizens, which raised more complex issues. He said a basic wage would provide a “safety net of last resort” for those with no jobs and no entitlement to unemployment benefits, enabling them to “get out of poverty and remerge with the labor market. In an April 12 letter to social movements and organized groups of casual laborers, Pope Francis said the COVID-19 pandemic should give rise to consideration of “a universal basic wage” to guarantee people have the minimum they need to live and support their families.

House passes bill condemning China’s treatment of religious minorities

WASHINGTON — In a late vote May 27, the U.S. House overwhlemingly passed a measure condemning the Chinese Communist Party for forcing Uighurs, ethnic Kazakhs and other Muslim minorities into indoctrination camps in the country’s Xinjiang region. The Uighur Human Rights Policy Act, which passed 431-1, also recommends a tougher U.S. response to the human rights abuses suffered by these religious minorities. Rep. Thomas Massie, R-Kentucky, was the only opponent. “Communist Party General Secretary Xi Jinping’s ongoing genocide against the approximately 10 million Uighurs living in Xinjiang in northwestern China demands action,” Rep. Chris Smith, R-New Jersey, said in comments from the House floor before the vote. “Today, more than a million Uighurs are in concentration camps. Millions more are harassed, beaten, raped and tortured.” Smith, a Catholic, is ranking member of the House Global Human Rights Subcommittee, a senior member of the Congressional-Executive China Commission, and co-chair of the bipartisan Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission. Served in Congress since 1981, he has chaired over 60 hearings on Chinese human rights abuses. The Senate approved its version of the bill May 14. With the House vote, it now goes to President Donald Trump for his signature.

Burundian bishops say election was marred by irregularities

NAIROBI, Kenya — Bishops in Burundi criticized the nation’s May 20 presidential election standards, saying it was marred by widespread irregularities and general lack of freedom to choose. “We deplore many irregularities with regard to the freedom and transparency in the electoral process as well as fairness in the treatment of candidates and voters,” said Bishop Joachim Ntahondereye, president of the Burundian bishops’ conferences. He particularly highlighted that pressure was exerted on electoral agents to sign in advance results of ballot boxes, stuffing of the boxes and voting by the deceased people and refugees. Some administrators reportedly intimidated voters whom they accompanied at voting booths, and some people voted more than once. Other concerns include exclusion of observers from vote-counting centers, intrusion into counting centers by unauthorized people, and failure to guarantee secrecy of the ballot. “Faced with all these irregularities and many others, we wonder if they do not prejudice the result,” Bishop Ntahondereye said in a statement May 28. On May 25, Evrastio Mlayishimire, the ruling party’s candidate, was declared the winner of the elections with 69 percent of the vote. The main opposition leader, Agathon Rwasa, rejected the result. He has challenged the outcome in the country’s constitutional court, which has until June 5 to make a decision.

From Vatican Gardens, pope leads rosary to pray for pandemic’s end

VATICAN CITY — With a religious sister who survived COVID-19 and a woman who lost her mother to the coronavirus, Pope Francis led the recitation of rosary and asked Mary to intercede to save the world from the pandemic. More than 100 people joined Pope Francis May 30 for the early evening prayer in the Vatican Gardens at a replica of the grotto at Lourdes, France. More than 50 Marian shrines around the world, including Lourdes and the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, were connected by satellite. Pope Francis did not make remarks or offer a meditation during the service. Instead he opened and closed the evening with the prayers he had asked Catholics to pray during the month of May, a month traditionally dedicated to Mary. He began by entrusting everyone to Mary under the title “Health of the Sick.” Each decade of the rosary was led by a person directly impacted by the virus, including COVID-19 survivors Giovanni De Cerce and Sister Zelia Andrighetti, superior general of the Daughters of St. Camillus.

Washington nonprofit warns against pandemic restrictions on immigration

WASHINGTON — The Washington-based American Immigration Council said restrictions issued by the Trump administration during the coronavirus pandemic are being used to implement immigration limitations White House officials have sought for a long time. These limits could have wide-ranging repercussions, particularly for immigrant families, and eliminate legal pathways into the U.S., the council said. In a panel presentation announcing its May 27 report titled “The Impact of COVID-19 Across the U.S. Immigration System,” the organization outlined directives from the White House, such as halting asylum applications at the southern border as well as the process to reunite refugees into the country, increasing deportations, including deportations of children, and suspending visas that would have allowed for the reunification of families. Administration officials have said the steps were necessary to stop the propagation of the coronavirus. Panelists, howevet, said the measures long had been priorities for the administration, but the White House could not easily pursue them until the pandemic. Some of them had been tied up in the nation’s courts. The Trump administration has used the pandemic to justify travel restrictions and a suspension of immigration to the United States, said Royce Murray, the council’s managing director of programs, who moderated the panel. “The Trump administration has used the COVID-19 outbreak to pursue restrictive policy changes that it has sought to implement for many years,” added Jorge Loureiro, the council’s policy director.
Prayer is powerful, life-giving, pope says

Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Prayer is powerful not because it changes God or God’s plans, but because it changes individuals and communities, one heart at a time, Pope Francis said.

“Prayer is powerful because it attracts the power of God, and God’s power always gives life, always,” the pope said May 27 during his weekly general audience, which was live-streamed from the library of the Apostolic Palace.

Continuing his series of audience talks about prayer, Pope Francis looked at the Bible’s accounts of how sin entered the world and seemed to spread like “an oil stain,” sowing violence and death in the world.

“God’s plan for humanity is good, but in our daily lives we experience the presence of evil,” he said. “It’s an everyday experience.”

With the sin of Adam and Eve, Cain murdering Abel and countless other biblical accounts of murder and mayhem, the pope said, “one has the impression that prayer is the bulwark, the refuge for humans beings against overwhelming waves of evil that are growing in the world.”

And, he said, “When you think about it, we also pray to be saved from ourselves. It is important to pray, ‘Lord, please, save me from myself, from my ambitions, from my passions.'”

By calling upon the power of God to change human hearts, “prayer cultivates seedbeds of rebirth in places where human hatred is able only to enlarge deserts,” the pope said.

“In the first pages of the Bible, those who pray are peacemakers,” he said. “In fact, prayer, when it is authentic, frees one from the instinct for violence and is a gaze turned toward God so that he would once again take care of the human heart. Even when the world seems to be overcome by evil and evil-doers, he said, there always have been and will be people who pray, ‘attracting God’s power.’

“Prayer is a chain of life, always. The many men and women who pray sow life,” he said. Even the smallest prayer, even the sign of the cross, is a statement that God is in charge.

God acts in the world thanks, in part, to this “remnant of humanity that has not adapted to the law of the strongest, but asks God to do miracles and, especially, to transform our hearts of stone into hearts of flesh,” Pope Francis said.

Summarizing his talk for Arab speakers, the pope said “prayer does not change God but changes us and makes us more docile to his holy will.”