Diocece to celebrate awarding of pontifical honors

Laura Keener
Editor

“If one part of the body suffers, all parts suffer with it; if one part is honored, all the parts share its joy.” (1 Cor 12:26)

The Diocese of Covington has cause for joy as Pope Francis bestowed pontifical honors on 11 of its priests, religious and laity. Earlier this year, Bishop Roger Foys had requested that these individuals be honored and was recently notified of the Holy Father’s acceptance.

“The giving of papal honors is a time honored tradition of the Church. Following that time honored tradition we choose a broad spectrum of people who have contributed a wonderful service to the Church and by extension to the Holy Father,” said Bishop Foys in an interview about the announcement. “There are so many people in the diocese over the 165 years of its existence who have done remarkable work for the Church. When we work together as one we are always much stronger.”

Two honors have been awarded: the title “Chaplain to His Holiness’ and “The Cross Pro Ecclesia et Pontifici” (“For the Church and the Pontiff”)

Chaplain to His Holiness (monsignor) is an honor bestowed upon priests who have distinguished themselves in service and ministry to the Church and who are at least 65 years of age. The Holy Father has granted four diocesan priests the title “monsignor” — Msgr. Ronald Bertel, Msgr. Gerald Reinersman, Msgr. Gerald Twaddell and Msgr. Daniel Vogelpohl.

The Cross Pro Ecclesia et Pontifici is a papal award bestowed on clergy religious and lay faithful in recognition of distinguished service given to the Church. Pope Leo XIII, in marking his 50th priestly jubilee, established the award in 1888. He did not extend it for it to be a long-standing award but it has since become part of Church tradition. Two priests, one deacon, nine women religious and 16 lay men and women will receive the award. They are: Father Ryan Maher, V.G.; Father Daniel Schomaker, V.G.; Sister Janet Bucher, C.I.P.; Sister Odile Marie Downes, S.J.W.; Mother Margaret Mary Fields, C.P.; Sister Marla Menahan, S.N.D.; Sister Laura Keener, Assistant Editor

Bishop Foys will travel through Covington with a relic of St. Rocco. Bishop Roger Foys will travel through Covington with a relic of St. Rocco on the St. Rocco Saturdays, September 22 after 10 a.m. Mass at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington. The Mass is a conclusion of the Triduum of Prayer Aug. 20-22 to end the COVID-19 pandemic and all its effects, including an end of fear and division among God’s people. Bishop Foys will ask for St. Rocco’s intercession over Covington and the world to end the plague. During the Triduum, the Church honors Pope St. Pius X, the “Pope of the Blessed Sacrament” Aug. 21 (featured on this week’s “Did you know?” page 6) and celebrates the Coronation of Mary Aug. 22.

St. Rocco, or Roch, is the patron saint invoked against plagues and serious illness. What makes him such a powerful intercessor?

Rocco was born in Montpellier, France around 1295. His father was the governor of the city and their family was quite wealthy. It is said that he bore the bursar’s red cross on his chest, and was an extremely devout child. Rocco lost his parents at 20 years old. He then gave the guardianship to his uncle and distributed his goods among the poor, leaving for Rome on pilgrimage with no worldly possessions. During his journey, the Black Plague hit Europe, and the towns he passed through were stricken with illness. As he traveled, he tended to the sick and cured people with the sign of the cross. He continued to cure plague victims until he died.

The Bestowal of Pontifical Honors on Sunday, 27 September, 2 p.m. at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington

Due to COVID-19 protocol, attendance is by ticket admittance only. The general public is invited to virtually join the ceremony via live-stream from the Diocesan website, www.covdio.org.

Triduum of prayer to end with blessing of the city

Allegro Thatcher
Assistant Editor

Bishop Roger Foys will depart the Cathedral at 11:30 a.m. with a relic of St. Rocco, blessing the city and traveling to: St. Elizabeth Medical Center, Covington St. John the Evangelist Parish, Covington St. Ann Mission, Covington Mother of God Parish, Covington Our Savior Parish, Covington Holy Cross Parish, Latonia St. Anthony Parish, Taylor Mill St. Augustine Parish, Covington

The Mass will be live streamed from the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, online at covcathedral.com.

Procesion and blessing through Covington with relic of St. Rocco

The Triduum of Prayer, Fasting and Sacrifice culminates on September 22 after 10 a.m. Mass at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington. The Triduum of Prayer is being held for the end of the COVID-19 pandemic and all its effects, including an end of fear and division among God’s people through the intercession of St. Rocco.

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(Continued on page 9)
Democratic Party urged to be ‘big tent’ and welcome its pro-life members

Kurt Jensen
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — By the time of their online Zoom caucus Aug. 17, organizers of Democrats for Life knew their effort to modify the party platform language on abortion was a nonstarter.

They went ahead, anyway, with most speakers focusing on the party marginalizing pro-life advocates.

The draft of the 2020 Democratic platform, expected to be formally approved by the Democratic National Convention was to have been held in Milwaukee convention center. Democratic National Convention was to have been held. Due to COVID-19, convention sessions were virtual.

Committee at the party’s virtual convention in Milwaukee, states: “Like the majority of Americans, Democrats believe that every woman should be able to access high-quality reproductive health care services, including safe and legal abortion.”

The Democrats presumptive presidential nominee, former Vice President Joe Biden, and his running mate, U.S. Sen. Kamala Harris, have not called for modification of that language. They also support parts of the platform that

call for restoring federal funding for Planned Parenthood; opposing state laws that limit access to abortion on demand; and repeal of the Hyde Amendment, which bars the use of Medicaid funds to pay for abortions.

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call for restoring federal funding for Planned Parenthood; opposing state laws that limit access to abortion on demand; and repeal of the Hyde Amendment, which bars the use of Medicaid funds to pay for abortions.
Safe environment policies and procedures updated

Laura Keener
Editor
Bishop Roger Roys has released the updated Safe Environment policies and procedures for 2020. Each year the nine-person Diocesan Review Board, under the direc-
tion of Margaret Schack, victim assistance coordinator and director for the Diocesan Safe Environment Office, reviews the policies and procedures in light of diocesan objectives and recommends necessary adjustments. This year the updates addressed issues involving alter-
native tobacco and vaping products, including adding the Kentucky Revised Statutes regulating these products.

I am grateful to the Review Board for reviewing the policies and procedures every year to keep us on target.”

said Ms. Schack. The complete “Creating a Safe Environment: Policies and Procedures for Addressing Sexual Misconduct” which includes the Code of Conduct is available online at www.covdi-o.org/safe-environment.

Creating a Safe Environment: Policies and Procedures for Addressing Sexual Misconduct 2020 Updates

Code of Conduct

As someone who ministers where minors/vulnerable adults are present in the Diocese of Covington, I will maintain a professional role and be mindful of the trust and power I possess to provide a safe environment.

To achieve this I will

1. Treat everyone with respect, loyalty, patience, integrity, courtesy, dignity, and consideration.
2. Make a deliberate effort to affirm the child who is in visi-
bility and perceived as an outsider
3. Use positive reinforcement rather than criticism, competi-
tion, or comparison.
4. Support my coworker to attain the highest level of Christian behavior.
5. Be attentive to the warning signs of abuse.
6. Report all inappropriate behavior and signs of abuse to the appropriate authority.
7. Always use a team approach in dealing with minors and vulnerable adults.
8. Never touch a minor/vulnerable adult in a sexual way or other inappropriate manner.
9. Never be alone with a minor/vulnerable adult in a resi-
dence, rectory, sleeping facility, vehicle or in any isolated room.
10. Never take an overnight trip alone with a minor/vulner-
able adult. Never lie in bed with a minor or vulnerable adult.
11. Never participate in group activities for minors/vulnerable adults. Never engage in physical discipline for behavior manage-
ment of minors/vulnerable adults. No form of physical disci-
pline is acceptable. I will not use any discipline that frightens or humiliates.
12. Never give expensive or inappropriate gifts that single out specific minors/vulnerable adults.
13. Never introduce sexually explicit or pornographic topics, vocabulary, music, recording, films, games, websites, comput-
er software, or entertainment.
14. Never photograph or use photos of minors or vulnerable adults without the prior permission of their parents or guardian and the relevant supervisor.
15. Never participate in chat rooms such as Facebook and the like via personal electronic media with minors/vulnerable adults.
16. Never post compromising, inappropriate mate-
rival on public sites where minors also have access. Once mate-
rival is posted on a public site, I am aware that it is public information.
17. Send all regular electronic communication with minors through a business address or through parents with the com-
munication monitored by more than one responsible adult. It is particularly important for coaches to have a monitored means of communication.

Realities of opening schools under pandemic felt the first day

In an e-mailed letter, August 16, Mike Clines, superintendent of Schools, informed the Bishop Brossart High School community that they would be opening the school year with three of its administrators in self-quarantine.

The principal was notified Friday afternoon that he had been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19. The last he was in the school office was on Thursday, August 13. The assistant principal and secretary are self-quarantining due to possible exposure. All three will be tested before returning to school. BBHS continued its soft opening on Monday, August 17.

The principal notified the Department of Catholic Schools and we have been in communication with the Northern Kentucky Health Department and are following their guidance,” Mr. Clines said in the letter. “In the upcoming months these situations will occur in school communities where staff, faculty and students will need to self-quarantine, either because they are experiencing symptoms or have come in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19. In one, especially, students, should feel afraid to admit that they may have the coronavirus.”

Mr. Clines assured parents that students who are self-quar-
antine will not be considered absent if they continue at-
home instruction during quarantine.

“As we attempt to safely reopen our schools and to sustain in-person instruction all staff, faculty administrators, parents and students need to read and follow the Diocesan COVID-19 Return to School Requirements,” Mr. Clines said. “For a complete and updated copy of the “COVID-19 Return to School Requirements” visit covdio.org.”

KRS 438.305 Tobacco, Nicotine, Vapor Products

(1) (“Alternative nicotine product” means any noncombustible product containing nicotine that is intended for human consumption, whether chewed, absorbed, dis-
solved, or ingested by any other means.
(2) (“Tobacco product” means any cigarette, cigar, snuff, smokeless tobacco prod-
uct, smoking tobacco, chewing tobacco, and any kind or form of tobacco prepared in a manner suitable for chewing, smoking, or both, or any kind or form of tobacco that is

suitable to be placed in a person’s mouth. “Tobacco product” also means any product made or derived from tobacco that is intended for human consumption, including any component, part, or accessory of a tobacco product.
(3) (“Vapor product” means any noncombustible product that employs a heating element, battery, power source, electronic circuit, or other electronic, chemical, or mechanical means, regardless of the shape or size and including component parts and accessories thereto, that can be used to deliver vaporized nicotine or other substances to users inhaling from a device.

KRS 438.345 Use of Tobacco, Nicotine, Vapor Products

(1) The use of tobacco product, alternative nicotine product, or vapor product:
(a) Shall be prohibited for all persons and at all times on or in any property, including any vehicle, that is owned, operated, leased, or contracted for use by a local board of education (Diocese of Covington);
(b) Shall be prohibited for all students while attending or participating in any school-related student trip or student activity; and
(c) Shall be prohibited for school district employees, volunteers, and all other indi-
viduals affiliated with a school while the user is attending or participating in any school-related student trip or student activity and is in the presence of a student or stu-
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Appendix A — Kentucky Revised Statutes

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dents.
Letting go of false fear

be. Thunder and lightning were portents that warned us, religiously to be fearful. I nervously said the same fears about death, wondering where souls went after they died, some- times looking at a dark horizon after the sun had set and wondering whether people who had died were out there somewhere, haunted in that endless darkness, still suffering for what they had not gotten right in life. I knew that God was love, but that love also held a fierce, frightening, exacting justice.

Those fears went partially underground during my teenage years. I made my decision to enter religious life at the age of 17 and have sometimes wondered whether that decision was made freely and not out of false fear. Looking back on it now however, with 50 years of hind- sight, I know that it wasn’t fear that compelled me, but a genuine sense of being called, of knowing from the influ- ence of my parents and the Ursuline nuns who cate- chized me, that one’s life is not one’s own, that one is called to serve. But religious fear remained unhealthily strong within me.

So, what helped me let go of that? This doesn’t happen in a day or year; it is the cumulative effect of 50 years of bits and pieces conspiring together. It started with my parents’ deaths when I was 22. After watching both my mother and father die, I was no longer afraid of death. It was the first time I wasn’t afraid of a dead body since these bodies were my mother and father, of whom I was not afraid. My fears of God, however, remained. Then I tried to meet God with my soul naked in prayer and came to realize that your hair doesn’t turn white when you are completely exposed before God; instead you become unafraid. My fears lessened too as I ministered to others and learned what divine compassion should be, as I stud-ied and taught theology as two cancer diagnoses forced me to contemplate for real my own mortality, and as a number of colleagues, family and friends modeled how one can live more freely.

Inteletohally, a number of persons particularly helped me. John Shea helped me realize that God is not a law to be obeyed, but an infinitely energetic energy that wants us to be happy. Robert Moore helped me to believe that God is looking on us with delight. Charles Taylor helped me to understand that God wants us to flourish; the bitter anti-religious criticism of atheists like Friedrich Nietzsche helped me see where my own con- cept of God and religion needed a massive purification; and an older brother, a missionary priest, kept reminding me of the irreverent questions like, what kind of God would want us to be frightened of him? People of his and generations together.

What’s the importance of last words? They can mean a lot or a little. My dad’s last words to us were “be careful,” but he was referring to our drive home from the hospital in snow and ice. Last words aren’t always intended to leave a message; they can be focused on saying goodbye or simply be inanities of sighs and exhaustion, but sometimes they can be your legacy.

Given the opportunity to leave family and friends a few last words, I think that after I first tried to say a prop- er goodbye, I said, “Don’t be afraid.” Don’t be afraid of living or of dying. Especially don’t be afraid of God.

Obiatic Father Ron Rolheiser, theologian, teacher and author, is President of the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, Texas.
Sanger’s name being removed is the start

On July 21, Planned Parenthood of Greater New York decided to remove the name of Margaret Sanger, one of the main founders of this organization, from its Manhattan clinic. The reason it gave for removing the name of Sanger was that she possessed, in their own words, “harmful connections to the eugenics movement” and it was “both a necessary and overdue step to reckon with our legacy and acknowledge Planned Parenthood’s contributions to historial reproductive harm within communities of color.”

We should hope that this decision is not just an example of the wave of “canceling” historical figures left and right that we have recently seen, but the product of a serious reflection about the views Margaret Sanger shared and promoted. There is a stark difference between an organization deciding to change the name of one of its buildings — or a group of citizens asking through legal means to change the name of a street or remove a statue — and the move of an organization deciding to change its mission based on the beliefs of its founders.

The Catholic News Service described the move by Planned Parenthood as “sacrificial.” However, to change the name of a building is a very different business than changing the mission of an organization. For Planned Parenthood to be “completely pro-life in the conception to natural death” as it clearly teaches, that means that every life is precious, from the moment of conception, and that every form of contraception and abortion must be considered evil. Yes, the Church must be completely pro-life in the conception to natural death. She clearly teaches that all life is precious, from conception to natural death; she also teaches that the harm that it imposes in its abortion mills.

Perhaps this will spark the process of realizing that Margaret Sanger was clearly a woman who held views that were racist, classist, anti-poor, anti-immigrant and against people with disabilities. Planned Parenthood has recognized the evil and harm wrought by Margaret Sanger and we pray that this is a first step in coming to realize the slaughter of the innocents to which it is contributing.

This unsigned editorial appeared July 29 on the website of The Tablet, newspaper of the Diocese of Brooklyn, New York, and has been provided by Catholic News Service. The views or positions presented in this or any guest editorial are those of the individuals expressing them and do necessarily represent the views of Catholic News Service or of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.
Fran Moore, C.D.P; Mother Mary Christina Murray, S.L.W; Sister Mary Ethel Parrott, S.N.D; Sister Margret Stollmeyer, C.D.L; Sister Mary Catherine Werths, O.H.; Mary Brown, William and Anne Burleigh; William and Sue Butler; Charlie and Mary Sue Deters; Timothy Fitzgerald; Deacon Gerald Fransen; Mark and Casey Guiffoyle, Berry Mang; Clare Quigley; Karen Riegler; Clare Ruelh and Margaret Schuck. Each of these honorees will receive metal cross bearing the images of St. Paul and St. Peter suspended from a yellow and white ribbon.

The Diocese of Covington will host an investiture ceremony for the monsignors and The Cross will be distributed to honorees at a ceremony Sunday Sept. 27, 2 p.m., at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington. Due to capacity restrictions the event will be ticketed. The general public is invited to join the celebration online as it is live streamed on the Cathedral website, www.covcathedral.com. The ceremony will be recorded for future viewing.

This honor is a celebration for the Diocese of Covington, certainly for these individuals and their families, to highlight the good work that they have done for the Church, most often unrecognized and quietly.” said Bishop Foys.

The Messenger reached out to the honorees to gather their reactions.

Msgr. Ronald Ketteler, when asked about being named a Chaplain to His Holiness, said, “I think it was really an honor on the areas of ministry that I specialize in: campus ministry at the public universities — University of Kentucky and Eastern Kentucky University in particular, parish ministry of the beginning in ecumenicism, plus the Church’s mission in higher education.”

“A thought that occurs to me is one often offered to seminarians who are assigned to us at St. Joseph Parish. It is that, of course, each man brings his own talents, interests, personality and faith perspective that shapes his ministry as a priest. But it is just as true that the ministry shapes the priest’s life. While it is a great honor to be named a ‘Chaplain to His Holiness’, it also causes me to remember the people I have ministered with and ministered to over the years. Without a doubt, it is their generosity, strong faith, prayerfulness, patience and every other virtue that has made me a better priest/pastor. I have to mention also that my brother priests have inspired me by their many years of faithful ministry as priests. Any honor that comes to me by this designation is for the priests of the Diocese of Covington.” Msgr. Gerry Twaddell

“I want to thank Bishop Foys for considering me for this honor. Priests do not do their work for earthly rewards but for the service of God’s people, so I am humbled by receiving this papal honor. I hope that the title ‘Monsignor’ will not become a source of pride.” Msgr. Gerald Twaddell

“Quite by chance I was in Rome and in St. Peter’s Square on March 13, 2013 when Pope Francis was elected. When he eventually appeared on the balcony, after greeting the tens of thousands gathered in the square, he asked us to pause in silence and pray for him. I was stunned by the ensuing silence of such a throng. Though the crowd was massive, I could even hear the water running in the fountains in the square. I went everywhere else. I prayed for the newly elected Holy Father. And now this same Pope Francis named me ‘Chaplain to his Holiness.’ I see this honor as an extension and a formalization of that request to ‘pray for me’ made on that March evening several years ago. Though the title, ‘Chaplain’, the role of ‘Chaplain’ summons me to serious prayer for the Holy Father.” Msgr. Daniel Vogelpohl

“I am honored to receive this Papal Honor. This is truly among a group of people who have served the Church and the community with faith filled dedication over many years is very humbling for me. I am grateful to Bishop Foys for submitting my name to the Holy Father for this honor, and for the opportunities to work so closely with him over these years.”

“Chaplain’ summons me to serious prayer for the Holy Years ago. Though the title is honorary, the role of ‘Monsignor’ will not become a source of pride, I could even hear the water run through the square, he asked us to pause in silence and pray for him. I was stunned by the ensuing silence of such a throng. Though the crowd was massive, I could even hear the water running in the fountains in the square. Like everyone else, I prayed for the new Holy Father for this honor, and for the service of God’s people, so I am humbled by receiving this papal honor. I hope that the title ‘Monsignor’ will not become a source of pride.” Msgr. Gerald Twaddell

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“I am deeply blessed by the friendships made with so many other dedicated Catholics united in service. Through these ministries and many other Catholic agencies and endeavors that have been committed volunteers have made a real difference in our Church and in our community.” Mark and Casey Guiffoyle

“I have always found strength in my ministry in the belief that ‘we are in this together.’ That is the spirit in which I accept this honor.” Notre Dame Sister Marla Monohan

“Father Ryan Maher

“Thank you for your encouragement and support.” Deacon Gerald Fransen

“Charity Minister at the parish and the diocese. I am very grateful to the Lord for this new vocation, which allows me to be that for which I was made, but this vocation would have no effect if there were not his people to serve, I am grateful to all of them, for their faith in the Lord and their witness to his love. I am of course very grateful that Bishop Foys felt that I was deserving of such a recognition and to the Holy Father, Pope Francis for honoring the bishop’s request.” Father Daniel Schomaker

“I firmly believe in the wisdom of St. Paul when he said, “We rejoice always in the Lord who leads and guides us.” We are extremely grateful for the servant leadership of Bishop Foys. From the moment he became our bishop, he has been a faith-filled shepherd and a constant reminder of Christ’s love for His Church.” Bill and Anne Burleigh

“I want to thank Bishop Foys for his work in procuring this honor from the Holy Father. It was truly a work of effort and love.” St. Joseph the Worker Sister Celeste Marie Downes

“I want to thank Bishop Foys for considering me for this special honor. I want to share the recognition with the hundreds of colleagues and students that I’ve been lucky to know and collaborate with over the years.” Father Daniel Schomaker

“I thank the always considerate Bishop Foys for nominating me for this honor. ‘Monsignor’ has made me a better priest/pastor. I have tried to use the gifts that the Holy Spirit has given me for the betterment of the community, the Church — it has been a joy to do that. I have treasured every minute of the time I have served with Bishop Hughes, Bishop Foys, with the wonderful priests and deacons I have been privileged to know, with the faith filled members of religious orders and with the great faith of the Diocese of Covington. All of you, and especially my family, have been a part of my receiving this honor. Thank you for your encouragement and support.” Deacon Gerald Fransen

“We would first like to thank Bishop Foys for this honor, his leadership and friendship. We cherish the Catholic ministries that have given us the opportunity to work with many others to promote Catholic education at Thomas More College, Covington Latin School and the inner city Catholic ACUE schools. We have been blessed to be able to so minister to the spiritual, temporal, and religious life through the Serra Club and the Seminary Hall. And, we are grateful for the opportunity to serve vulnerable neighbors in need through the St. Vincent de Paul Society and Catholic Charities. In all of these activities, we have been personally blessed by the friendships made with so many other dedicated Catholics united in service. Through these ministries and many other Catholic agencies and endeavors that have been committed volunteers have made a real difference in our Church and in our community.” Mark and Casey Guiffoyle

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“I am overwhelmed. Bishop Foys has been very supportive of this. This honor is a wonderful recognition for our community and for the whole congregation of the Passionists. Our charism is one of care and praise of God — we keep prayer going through our lives, through our liturgy, through our Divine Office and prayer. I am so grateful.” Deacon Gerald Fransen

“Msgr. Daniel Vogelpohl

“I am deeply honored and totally surprised by the awarding of this honor.” Berry Mang

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Filmmaker led to Church by Fatima now bringing its story to big screen

Agnieszka Rock
Catholic News Service

VANCOUVER, British Columbia — For B.C. film producer Natasha Howe, “Fatima” is more than just her latest screen project.

“I am very grateful and humbled by this award. Being raised in Campbell County and as a member of the Sisters of Divine Providence, my entire life has been woven within the fabric of the Diocese of Covington. It has been a privilege for me to minister to the people of this Diocese in various roles for over 50 years. Thank you, Bishop Foys, for this honor.”

“I am both honored and humbled by this papal award. My life and work in the Church was shaped and guided by those who called, assigned, assisted, and, eventually, became confessors. This number includes past and current members of St. Walburg Monastery who certainly share in this award.”

Stephanie Gil stars in a scene from the movie “Fatima.”

Catholic News Service

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“It is part of the legend of the Portuguese ‘Chapeu’,” Howe said, “and that’s so incredible to me.”

“Everybody on set had a story to tell about Fatima,” Howe said. “Everybody knew, their uncle, aunt, or grandparent was there to experience the Miracle of the Sun.”

New, in a world not rocked by a world war but by pandemic, fear, discrimination, and division, the visionaries’ message of prayer and peace is as relevant as ever, said Howe.

“Howes hopes Fatima can ‘meet the audience where they are and give them many opportunities to experience and see this Fatima movie in this much-needed time.’

“Developing the script was an intricate and sensitive process that involved working with an advisory committee from Portugal’s Shrine of Fatima, led by Fatima’s sister Angela Coelho, postulator for the canonization cause of Francisco and Jacinta; and reading eyewitness accounts and Lucia’s memoirs.”

“Fatima” is not meant to be a documentary, said Howe. “Although inspired by true events, it does not follow them exactly. For example, only four of the six apparitions reported by the children are depicted.”

Fictional elements were inserted to add historical context. In the film, Lucia’s brother is sent off to fight in the war, when in reality he was never conscripted. As a narrative device, it heightens the emotional dynamic within Lucia’s family and helps place them firmly in that era, said Howe.

The team behind the film is working with Picturehouse, a film distribution company whose parent company was behind “The Passion of the Christ.”

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Students returned to the Diocese of Covington’s schools the week of Aug. 17 to begin the 2020-2021 school year. The decision was made last week after careful consideration and consultation with the Kentucky bishops of Lexington, Louisville and Owensboro. The diocese will reevaluate Sept. 6 after a few weeks of classes and will make any necessary changes.

Many schools used a “soft opening” process to stagger start days based on class or last name in order for students to become familiar with protocols such as safe distancing within the school building, wearing masks, and having their temperature checked before entering the building. Schools have creatively found ways to stagger class times to ensure no crowding in hallways or in pick up and drop off.

Students, staff and teachers were thrilled to see each other and eager to begin instruction in the classroom this week.
Pope St. Pius X and devotion to the Eucharist

Weekly and even daily Holy Communion is standard in the Catholic Church today but only for the last 100 years has this been the case. Before Pope St. Pius X in the 20th-century reception of the Eucharist only occurred about once a year for the average layperson. Who was Pope Pius X and why did he make this change? And what can we learn from him about the Eucharist during this time when many are contemplating returning to the public celebration of Mass?

Born as Giuseppe Sarto in 1835, the future saint was soon after to be known as the “Pope of the Blessed Sacrament.” He always had a special devotion to the Eucharist, and as a cardinal in 1879, he organized a Eucharistic Congress of Reformation. This multi-day event included grand processions, passionate, informative sermons and stunning Eucharistic liturgies. It closed with a Eucharistic Exhibition at the Church of St. Rocco. His devotion and commitment to orthodoxy did not go unnoticed, for he was elected pope six years later.

During his reign from 1903 to 1914, Pope Pius X’s motto was *Instaurare Omnis in Christo*, to restore all things in Christ. He led the Church in publishing the first Code of Canon Law, and advocated for prioritizing the definition of the Church’s beliefs with precision and clarity. He compiled the first Catechism, and imposed the teaching of it as a priority on the whole Church.

Pope Pius X brought back Gregorian chant to the liturgy and advocated for reading of the Bible among the laity. He led the Church in publishing the first Code of Canon Law, and advocated for prioritizing the definition of the Church’s beliefs with precision and clarity. He compiled the first Catechism, and imposed the teaching of it as a priority on the whole Church.

Pope Pius X condemned this idea through his approach to the Eucharist. In December 1906, he published the *Exegetical Concerning Frequent and Daily Communion*. In it, he says: “Frequent and daily communion, as a thing most earnestly desired by Christ our Lord and by the Catholic Church should be open to all the faithful of whatever rank and condition of life, so that no one who is in the state of grace, and who approaches the holy table with a seeking and desirous of the remission of sin to be desired, it is sufficient that the communicant be free from mortal sin, provided he has a firm purpose of avoiding sin for the future.”

Not to downplay the reality of the gap between God and man by man’s sinfulness, Pope Pius X also advocated ardently for frequent reception of the sacrament of penance to prepare for frequent Communion. These sacraments, he said, would fortify the laity’s relationship with Christ. The Eucharist should be seen as “an antidote whereby we may be freed from daily faults and be preserved from mortal sins,” according to the Council of Trent. It is a tremendous responsibility and gift to have it so readily available.

In August 1910, Pope Pius X officially lowered the age of first communicants to 7, the age of reason, in his decree *Quam Plurimum*. In spite of many people’s opinions, the pope insisted that children could only benefit from the practice rather than be harmed. Some argued that children might stop learning about their faith after receiving the sacrament so young, or they might not understand sufficiently. Yet Pope Pius wrote: “It happened that children in their innocence were forced away from the embrace of Christ and deprived of the food of their interior life; and from this it also happened that in their youth, destitute of this strong help, surrounded by so many temptations, they lost their innocence and fell into sin.”

In trying times, Pope Pius X took recourse in the Eucharist before all things. When World War I loomed on the horizon at the end of his papacy and life—some even say he died of a broken heart because he could see what destruction it would bring to humans—he knew that the sacraments would sustain the Church. Even today, during great uncertainty and trouble in the world with unrest and disease, the Church continues to offer the Eucharist to sustain her people.

Pope St. Pius X’s feast day is August 21.

St. Rocco

(Continued from page 4)

became ill himself with sores and retreated to a hut in the forest, alone. A dog came upon him, and sustained him for a time, bringing him food and licking his sores. Eventually, the dog’s owner followed the dog to Rocco’s hideout and cared for him upon his recovery. This is why Rocco is commonly prayed to, since plague was far more common. His patrons and family could be founded.

Roccos was the Church and hospital erected during the 1414 Council of Constance. The town prayed to him, and the plague left them. Under the invocation of Rocco, Pope Paul III instituted a confraternity to have charge of the church and hospital erected during the pontificate of Pope Alexander VI. Because of its quick popularity, Pope Paul IV raised it to an archconfraternity so that other such confraternities could be founded.

He is the patron saint of dogs, the falsely accused and against contagious diseases. His feast day is August 16.

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He eventually traveled back to his native France after his recovery and returned home. Upon his arrival, he discovered Montpellier at war, and since he would not explain his identity, he was arrested as a spy. His appearance was greatly altered by his illness, and he was still dressed as a poor pilgrim. Instead of explaining himself and revealing his identity, he entrusted himself to God’s will.

He spent five years in prison, where he died in 1327. Upon his death, his birthmark vanished and his identity was forgotten. His relics were carried to Venice high above human sinfulness.

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Pandemic has revealed how often human dignity is ignored

Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — The coronavirus pandemic has shed light on “more widespread social diseases,” particularly attacks on the God-given human dignity of every person, Pope Francis said.

“The pandemic has highlighted how vulnerable and interconnected we all are. If we do not take care of each other, starting with the least — those who are most affected, including creation — we cannot heal the world,” the pope said Aug. 12 at his weekly general audience.

Pope Francis had announced a week earlier that he would begin a series of audience talks about Catholic social teaching, especially in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The audience, which was livestreamed from the library of the Apostolic Palace, began with a reading from the Book of Genesis: “God created man in his image; in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.”

The dignity of the human person, the pope said, is the foundation of Catholic social teaching and all its attempts to apply Gospel values to the way people live and act in the world.

Pope Francis said that while there are many “heroes” who are caring for others during the pandemic, even at the risk of their own lives, the pandemic also has revealed economic and social systems influenced by a “distorted vision of the person, a gaze that ignores the person’s dignity and relational character” by seeing others as “objects, objects to be used and discarded.”

Such an attitude is contrary to the faith, he said. “The Bible clearly teaches that God created every person with a unique dignity inviting us into communion with him, with our sisters and brothers (and) with respect for all creation.”

“As disciples of Jesus,” he said, “we do not want to be indifferent or individualistic — two ugly attitudes, which are against harmony. Indifferent, I look the other way; and individualistic, ‘only for me,’ looking only at one’s own interests.”

Instead, God created human beings “to be in communion,” the pope said. “We want to recognize the human dignity of every person, whatever his or her race, language or condition.”

Taking seriously the dignity of each person and recognizing the God-given gift of creation should give rise to both a sense of responsibility and a sense of awe, Pope Francis said.

But it also has “serious social, economic and political implications” for those who recognize that responsibility, he said.

Pope Francis urged people to continue working to contain the virus and find a cure, but said that in the meantime, “faith exhorts us to commit ourselves seriously and actively to combating indifference in the face of violations of human dignity.”

A “culture of indifference,” he said, “accompanies the throwaway culture: things that do not affect me, do not interest me,” and Catholics must counter such attitudes.

“In modern culture, the lack of respect for the unique dignity of the person is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,” the pope said.

After the audience, Pope Francis held a private meeting with Michelle Bachelet, the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Most Catholic universities, colleges sidelining 2020 fall sports

The Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities, which operates in the Southern States Athletic Conference, is on hiatus for all sports this fall except for cross-country.

Rockhurst University in Kansas City, Missouri, which plays in the Great Lakes Valley Conference, also will compete in cross-country, while men’s and women’s golf and tennis will compete in non-championship play in the fall, and participate in conference championship play next year.

Football, volleyball and men’s and women’s soccer will have their fall seasons deferred until the spring.

The University of Mary in Bismarck, North Dakota, is one of 16 member schools of the Northern Sun Intercollegiate Conference, which announced Aug. 13 it has decided to terminate the 2020 fall sports season due to the pandemic.

The conference, which operates in the western region of the Midwest, also suspended all-outside competition in all sports through Dec. 31.
Cincinnati archbishop calls cathedral becoming minor basilica ‘great blessing’

CATHOLIC NEWS SERVICE

CINCINNATI — Archbishop Dennis M. Schnurr of Cincinnati called it “a great blessing and honor” for all living and worshipping in the archdiocese to have Pope Francis elevate the city’s Cathedral of St. Peter in Chains to the status of a minor basilica.

It is the first such designation for any church in the Cincinnati Archdiocese.

Archbishop Schnurr announced the designation Aug. 15, the feast of the Assumption of Mary, at the beginning of Mass he celebrated with Father Jan Schmidt, the rector, and Father Roy Langer, parochial vicar of what is called the Cathedral Basilica of St. Peter in Chains. It is the 190th basilica in the United States.

“Let us pray on this day, as we honor Our Lady in her Assumption, that the Church of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, her dignity and faithful, along with all the people of this great city may benefit from this blessing and give thanks for all that the Lord has brought to fruition,” the archbishop said.

The Mass was open to the public but included social distancing and other safety precautions due to COVID-19. The Mass was also livestreamed.

In 2018, with Archbishop Schnurr’s permission, Father Schmidt, requested the Vatican’s Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments grant the title of minor basilica to the historic church in Cincinnati.

The cathedral, which will celebrate its 175th anniversary in November, is the oldest cathedral, built as a cathedral, that is still in use in the United States. Its designation as a minor basilica is both an honor for the region and a reason for the local faithful to celebrate, said Father Schmidt, who has been the cathedral’s rector since 2017.

“It’s the quality of the cathedral’s structure, the absolute beauty of its architecture, the biblical symbolism throughout, the quality and prayerfulness of its liturgy and ecclesiastical significance as a cathedral that make it very important and very special for the archdiocese and in the American Catholic scene,” he said.

Designed by Henry Walter, architect of the Ohio Capitol in Columbus, the cornerstone of St. Peter in Chains was laid May 20, 1841. It was formally dedicated Nov. 2, 1845. Its single spire, constructed of pure white limestone and soaring 220 feet above street level, was the tallest man-made structure in the city for many decades.

The cathedral’s interior is dominated by a large mosaic portraying three scriptural events from the life of St. Peter. Its design style also incorporates artistic inspiration from diverse sources, including Art Deco, ancient Greek, Eastern Christian and early Roman Christian basilica architecture.

A significant renovation of the structure, overseen by well-known Cincinnati architect Edward Schulte, was completed in 1937.

The Catholic Church and the large number of Catholics in our region have helped make the Greater Cincinnati area the great place it is to live, work, play and pray,” said Cincinnati Mayor John Cranley, who was at the Mass with his family when Archbishop Schnurr made the announcement.

From starting the major hospitals that have cared for the sick, to feeding the hungry and helping the poor; to educating generations of Catholics who have risen out of poverty and to the heights of civic and business leadership; “he said in a statement, “the Catholic Church has provided a living testament to its core beliefs, and this basilica has served as a beautiful physical embodiment — a sort of Statue of Liberty — of these good works and serves as an ever-present reminder to Catholic Cincinnatians that they have a proud spiritual home.”

Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine and his wife, Fran, congratulated Archbishop Schnurr and the entire archdiocese on the honor, calling the cathedral “a historic place special to Cincinnati and to Ohio.”

“It is an honor that the Catholic faithful across Ohio should celebrate!” he said.

Prior to the decrease in Mass schedules due to the pandemic, over 1,000 Masses a year, including the archdiocese’s liturgies, were celebrated at the cathedral basilica. It is a pilgrimage site for many local Catholics and has hosted many tours.

A special Mass of thanksgiving will be celebrated at the Cathedral Basilica of St. Peter in Chains Nov. 7 to mark the 175th anniversary of the church. During the Mass, the symbols granted to the church because of its new status, will debut for the first time and be enshrined in the cathedral basilica.

One of those symbols is a “conopaeum,” a canopy resembling an umbrella with silk panels of red and yellow carried in processions or placed over an altar.

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For facts about naming a basilica, see page 12.
Basilica Fact Sheet
Compiled by Christopher Buschar
The Catholic Telegraph
The Holy Father may grant the title of “basilica” to a church based on its historical or cultural importance, its art or beauty, its significance in the liturgical life of the Church, or a variety of these attributes.

There are various requirements a church must meet before it can be considered for basilica status:
— The church must have regular celebration of the sacraments.
— The church must be of sufficient size.
— The church must be historically significant.
— The church must have an adequate number of priests to serve its needs.
— The church must have a sufficient number of lay ministers.
— The church must have an adequate sacred music schola.

In total, there are over 1,800 basilicas around the world, many of which are in Italy. There are now 89 basilicas in the United States (87 in the States and 2 in Puerto Rico). Cathedral Basilica of St. Peter in Chains is the sixth basilica in Ohio, but only the first in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.

Privileges of a Basilica
— Basilicas have the right to keep special items such as the Ombrellino (a ceremonial umbrella) and the Tintinnabulum (a little bell), which are symbols of a basilica’s special connection to the papa.
— Each basilica has its own unique coat of arms and is permitted to display the Papal Cross Keys— another special sign of unity with the papacy.
— A person can receive a special indulgence for devoutly visiting a basilica.

Major and Minor Basilicas
— There are only four major basilicas, all of which are in Rome. These churches are known as major basilicas due to their preeminent status within the Catholic Church. The four major basilicas are:
  St. Peter’s Basilica
  St. John Lateran
  St. Paul Outside the Walls
  St. Mary Major
— Virtually all other basilicas around the world are considered “minor basilicas,” including the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington and now Cathedral Basilica of St. Peter in Chains, Cincinnati.
Local Eagle Scouts give back to Church with service projects

Allegra Thatcher  
Assistant Editor

To earn their final rank, Eagle Scouts choose a project to display leadership and help the community. There are as many options as there are scouts, but some young men chose to use their project to serve the Church.

Nick Csordas, a member of St. Joseph Parish, Camp Springs, completed a project for his parish to fulfill work toward the rank of Eagle Scout in Troop 86. On July 25, he led a group of volunteers to construct shelving units for the preschool at St. Joseph School to maintain CDC guidelines due to COVID-19.

A Scout for 11 years, Mr. Csordas said to earn his final rank, he must complete a project demonstrating leadership qualities. He knew he wanted to do something for his parish, so he talked with Father Ryan Stenger, who suggested he help make the school COVID-19 friendly. Mr. Csordas attended the school himself, so he knows how important it is to the children there. He’s now approaching his junior year at Bishop Brossart High School, Alexandria.

“The preschool has to expand into multiple classrooms and there is an increase in enrollment, so there has to be a way to spread the children out and have room for their toys,” said Mr. Csordas. The project includes a total of 18 shelving units, in different sizes and configurations depending on needs of the preschool. It involves cutting, measuring and assembling the boards, which will be sanded, stained and coated in polymer thane to be presentable and durable for the children.

Mr. Csordas reached out to parishioners and asked for donations of their time and money to assist the school.

“People have responded and said they want to help as much as they can,” he said. “I wanted to help the parish in any way that I could because they’ve been so supportive of me over the years. I wanted to give back to them.”

Daniel Litteral, Troop 779 from St. Pius Parish, Edgewood, also completed his final Scout project by assisting the Diocese of Covington.

On the corners of Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. and Scott Blvd. along the Cathedral Basilica parking lot, Mr. Litteral turned barren dirt and dying shrubs into a healthy and flourishing plot.

“My troop had a lot of local projects in our parish and I wanted to get away from that and expand, so I asked the Bishop what the diocese needed,” said Mr. Litteral. “He tasked me with fixing up the plot.”

Mr. Litteral went to several nurseries and talked to them about plant types, then drew up a zealous and high maintenance plan for the space. After talking with Don Knochelmann from Buildings and Properties, he simplified the plan to grasses and hearty trees, Golden Armstrong Maples, which wouldn’t require as much upkeep when he finished.

He said it took more effort to prepare the soil than to actually plant, because he had to remove stones and bro-

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Salvadoran priests call for bishops to investigate murder of rector

David Agren
Catholic News Service

MEXICO CITY — Priests in El Salvador have called on the nation’s bishops to conduct their own investigation into the murder of a Salvadoran seminary rector.

In an Aug. 17 statement, a cooperative of priests known as COOPESA “exhorted” the Salvadoran bishops’ conference to speak out prophetically on the slaying of Father Ricardo Cortez, who was found dead Aug. 7.

The statement, signed by Father Juan V. Chopin, COOPESA president, also asked that the bishops’ conference “do its own investigation of the homicide, (so) results can be compared with the public ministry’s investigation.”

The murder of Father Cortez, 45, from the Diocese of Zacatecoluca, has caused pain and consternation for churchmen in El Salvador, where three priests have been slain over the past 18 months. None of the crimes has been solved — the norm in a country with a falling homicide rate but still wracked by gang violence.

“As in the times of Archbishop Romero”— St. Oscar Romero— “now we can say, ‘Enough playing with life in El Salvador.’”

Authorities in the Central American country found Father Cortez’s lifeless body in the early morning hours near a road and close to a car he had been driving. El Salvador’s bishops say he was driving to the seminary after celebrating Mass in his home community Aug. 6.

Father Cortez was not robbed and had been shot in the head, according to the COOPESA statement. Bishop Elías Bolaños Avelar mentioned previously that one or more persons linked to the slain priest’s parish might have been involved.

Sister Helen Louise Bartlett, C.D.P.

Divine Providence Sister Helen Louise Bartlett died peacefully at Holy Family Home, August 14. She was a professed member of the Congregation of Divine Providence for 70 years. Born in Newport, Ky, in 1931 to Louis and Helen Bartlett, she made her first profession of vows in 1950 and professed final vows in 1955.

Sister Helen Louise began her min-
istry of teaching in 1950 at St. Aloysius School, Elmwood Place, Ohio, where she served for a year. She taught at Assumption, Mt. Healthy, Ohio for the next 11 years and in 1976 moved to St. Edward School, Cynthiana, Ky. From 1978-1986 she taught at Corpus Christi School, Newport and then moved to Our Lady of the Mountains in Puntville where she was elementary teacher for three years. Her final teach-
ing assignment was at St. Philip School, Melbourne where she also served as librarian, and school secre-
tary for 23 years. She often joked about the fact that she was one of those few sisters who stayed long periods of time in one place.

She retired to Holy Family Home in 2012 and offered her services in whatever way she could up to the past week when she became too ill. She was a quiet person, who main-
tained good order in whatever she did — as an elementary teacher, librarian and secretary. Her precise handwriting and attention to details were appreciated as was her kindness and positive attitude. An avid user of the internet to commu-
nicate with friends and family or to enjoy word games and puzzles, she was alert and active until the past week.

She will be missed by her religious community — the Sisters of Divine Providence — her sisters Joan Miller, Jackie Darpel and Jean Bartlett and her brother Louis. Her sister, Janet Ampfer preceded her in death.

A private Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated in Immaculate Conception Chapel, Holy Family Home, Melbourne, August 18. Her burial was in the convent cemetery following Mass. A public celebration of her life will take place at a future date.

Memorials suggested to the Congregation of Divine Providence, 5300 St. Anne Drive, Melbourne, KY 41059.
National/World

Thanking God for his gifts brings joy, pope says on Marian feast day

VATICAN CITY — Taking time out each day to be thankful for God and his gifts will lead to greater joy and mark a great step forward for humanity, Pope Francis said. Mary, the mother of Jesus, “acknowledges that she is small and exactly the ‘great things’ the Lord has done for her,” the pope said before praying the Angelus Aug. 15, the feast of the Assumption of Mary With her assumption — body and soul — into heaven, she “gives us hope,” he said. “We understand that we are precious, destined to rise again. God does not allow our bodies to vanish into nothing. With God, nothing is lost!” he said to those gathered in St. Peter’s Square. “In Mary the goal has been reached and we have before our eyes the reason why we journey: not to gain the things here below, which vanish, but to achieve the home- land above, which is forever. And Our Lady is the star that guides us,” he said.

Nebraska governor signs bill that bans dismemberment abortions

LINCOLN, Neb. — Saying Nebraska is “a pro-life state,” Gov. Pete Ricketts Aug. 15 signed into law a ban on dismemberment abortions, which he said stops a “horrible procedure” and is “an important step to strengthen our culture of life.” The new law, passed by the state Legislature Aug. 13, bans a second-stage abortion procedure that removes the fetus in pieces. With the ban in place, if this type of abortion is performed, it will be a felony that comes with a punishment of up to two years in prison and/or a fine of $10,000. “This brutal procedure has no place in a humane, civilized society,” Ricketts said during the signing ceremony on the steps of the Nebraska Capitol. Several pro-life leaders joined him for the signing, including the main sponsor of the measure, state Sen. Suzanne Geist.

Md. county official rescinds previous directive blocking school reopening

WASHINGTON — The Archdiocese of Washington’s Catholic Schools Office hailed an Aug. 7 announcement by a Maryland county official that also noted alarming levels of corruption. After a government minister said that the letter was written under the “evil-minded” leadership of Archbishop Robert Niflore of Harare, there was a rush of support for the bishops’ justice and peace commission. The government’s response to the Aug. 14 letter has “directed people toward a climate of fear,” the bishops’Matemu said. “Fear runs down the spine of many of our people,” the bishops said, noting that the latest crackdown on dissent is unprecedented. “Suppression of people’s angry can only serve to deepen the crisis,” said the letter, signed by the southern African country’s seven bishops. Information Minister Monica Mutsvangwa accused Archbishop Niflore of “spreading disinformation” and threatened legal action if thebisop was not asked to appear before a parliamentary committee.

Church social worker who had received threats shot dead

MANILA, Philippines — A human rights activist and church social worker was shot dead in the Philippines Aug. 10. Alvarez was affiliated with leftist groups Anakpawis — of which Echanis was chair of many of our people,” the bishops said, noting that the latest crackdown on dissent is unprecedented. “Suppression of people’s angry can only serve to deepen the crisis,” said the letter, signed by the southern African country’s seven bishops. Information Minister Monica Mutsvangwa accused Archbishop Niflore of “spreading disinformation” and threatened legal action if thebisop was not asked to appear before a parliamentary committee.

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Beating peaceful demonstrators is ‘grave sin,’ says Belarusian archbishop

VATICAN CITY — Since many of the celebrations of the Our Lady of Loreto jubilee year were grounded because of the coronavirus pandemic, Pope Francis has extended the celebration to December 2021. “In this difficult time for humanity, Holy Mother Church has gifted us another 12 months to start again from Christ, allowing ourselves to be accompanied by Mary, a sign of consolation and certain hope for all,” said Archbishop Fabio Dal Cim, the pontifical delegate for the Shrine of Our Lady of Loreto, Italy. The jubilee year began Dec. 8, 2019, to mark the 100th anniversary of the declaration of Our Lady of Loreto as the patron saint of aviation, aviators and air travelers. According to pious tradition, Mary’s house in Nazareth was flown by angels to Italy in 1294 after a brief stop in Yugoslavia. Special pilgrimages and prayer services were scheduled for the Loreto shrines, but also at military air bases and in civil aviation chapels around the world. The jubilee celebrations were to conclude this year on the Dec. 10 feast of Our Lady of Loreto, but many of the events never took place.

Teens hide in cellars: Aid official tells of conditions in eastern Ukraine

WARSAW, Poland — A senior Catholic aid worker said humanitarian conditions are deteriorating in eastern Ukraine and urged Western governments and churches not to forget the continuing six-year conflict. “We thought we’d overcome war in Europe, but a whole generation here now knows only war — teenagers who look like teenagers everywhere, but will build their future only barely hide in cellars to escape gun- fire,” said Andrzej Waskowycz, president of Caritas in Ukraine. He said with multiple world crises, officials of the Catholic charitable agency did not expect attention to stay focused on Ukraine, “but it’s crucial European countries, institutions and churches continue showing solidarity with the Ukrainian people in its suffering.” He supplied said had been disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, and though aid was still flowing, it was also running short because of infrastructure damage.

Zimbabwe’s bishops say government crackdown terrifies people

CAPETOWN, South Africa — The Zimbabwean government’s crackdown on dissent terrifies people, the country’s bishops said in a pastoral letter that also noted alarming levels of corruption. After a government minister said that the letter was written under the “evil-minded” leadership of Archbishop Robert Niflore of Harare, there was a rush of support for the bishops’ justice and peace commission. The government’s response to the Aug. 14 letter has “directed people toward a climate of fear,” the bishops’ Matemu said. “Fear runs down the spine of many of our people,” the bishops said, noting that the latest crackdown on dissent is unprecedented. “Suppression of people’s angry can only serve to deepen the crisis,” said the letter, signed by the southern African country’s seven bishops. Information Minister Monica Mutsvangwa accused Archbishop Niflore of spreading disinformation” and threatened legal action if thebisop was not asked to appear before a parliamentary committee.

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It’s a different kind of return this year, but excitement is in the air at St. Cecilia School, Independence as it begins its 100th year educating champions for Christ.

With enrollment up this year, administration has worked hard to divide classes into safe sizes and take time to ensure that the children understand their role in protecting each other’s health. In-person classes began Aug. 17.

St. Cecilia pastor Father Mario Tizziani said the school is holding off on celebrations for now, but they’re finding creative ways to plan to uphold the school’s rich history this year. While there won’t be any large gatherings, the administration is planning a walkathon, frequent school Masses and a month of prayer. During the month of November, the entire school will be praying for all the faculty and staff and alumni that have come through its doors over the years.

Father Tizziani said his biggest blessing right now is seeing how excited the children are to be back at school this week.

“This is my 15th opening of school,” he said. “It’s neat because a lot of these children in the school I baptized and I know their families — it’s a blessing to see the children as they go forward in their education, from our early childhood learning center through eighth grade. The children are great; we have a wonderful faculty and it’s a blessing to be a part of it.”

Father Tizziani highlighted the importance of faculty making sure the children know they are loved and cared for both spiritually and physically.

“I have so much confidence in our faculty just from knowing them. They get it, they understand the importance of us doing our best to protect the students from anything that comes their way. We’re looking forward to enjoying our school year.”

Principal Kenny Collopy said teachers spent the last week in professional development to be trained in safety protocols. Teachers and students alike have “really bought into the idea that we’re all in this together and we’ll get through this and we’ll come out stronger, it’ll bring us closer,” he said.

Mr. Collopy, starting his second year as principal, said he can tell the tradition of the school goes back to the community and he’s blessed to be part of it. He hopes to honor the people who have made a significant impact along the way.

“Everybody is really here for each other; it’s such a selfless place to be. It’s neat to be part of such a tradition. We’ll find unique ways during this time to celebrate it.”

The evolution of the St. Cecilia School building since its first 1919 brick building to the newly opened 2020 addition. As the school has grown and expanded, its administration continually credits the faithful surrounding community with its success.

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