Louisiana priests provide hurricane relief to parishes in need

Peter Finney Jr.
Catholic News Service

NEW ORLEANS — Louisiana priests that support each other with ongoing camaraderie and spiritual nourishment are now also providing very essential hurricane relief to priests and the parishes they serve in areas that were devastated by recent storm damage.

Just days after Hurricane Laura pounded the Diocese of Lake Charles in southwest Louisiana and damaged dozens of churches, eight members of a priests’ support board bolted into action to aid their ninth member — Father Jeffrey Starkovich of St. Pius X Church in Ragley.

On Aug. 31, priests from the Archdiocese of New Orleans and the Dioceses of Houma-Thibodaux, Lafayette and Baton Rouge arrived in Ragley just north of Lake Charles, driving U-Hauls packed with donated water, food, soft drinks, paper goods, diapers, canned goods, ice and gasoline.

The relief help also included hundreds of hot meals — mostly jambalaya and red beans and rice — cooked by the parishioners of Annunciation Parish in Bogalusa, where support group member Father Daniel Brouilette is pastor. Those staples of Cajun cuisine were passed out to hundreds of hot meals — mostly jambalaya and red beans and rice — cooked by the parishioners of Annunciation Parish in Bogalusa, where support group member Father Daniel Brouilette is pastor. Those staples of Cajun cuisine were passed out to thousands of people, and the people responded. It’s just the beauty of the priesthood.

Father Jonathan Hemelt, pastor of Our Lady of the Rosary Parish in New Orleans, and Father Bryan Howard, pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Violet, drove their U-Haul trucks 200 miles to Lake Charles, and Father Colin Brand, pastor of Vastation of Our Lady Parish in Marrero, drove his car in the caravan so they could make their way back to New Orleans.

Louisiana priests provide hurricane relief to parishes in need (Continued on page 13)
New Covington seminarians welcomed to Latrobe for new semester

**Messenger Staff Report**

St. Vincent Seminary, Latrobe, Pennsylvania, welcomed 12 new students to its graduate programs on Aug. 17, studying for ordination to the priesthood, in the ecclesiastical ministry program as well as the master of arts program and for continuing education. Five men are from the Diocese of Covington.

Henry F. Bischoff of Edgewood, Ky., is the son of Matthew and Cynthia Bischoff of Edgewood. He is a 2011 graduate of Covington Latin School. He earned a bachelor of arts degree in communication studies from Northern Kentucky University in 2015.

Joshua D. Heskamp of Elsmere, Ky., is the son of David and Therese Heskamp of Wadsworth, Ohio. He is a 2006 graduate of Wadsworth High School. He earned a bachelor of arts degree in philosophy from the University of Akron in 2015. He has also studied philosophy at Franciscan University of Steubenville and Ohio State University, and been enrolled in paralegal studies at Cuyahoga Community College, Parma, Ohio.

Michael J. Schulte of Minot Air Force Base, North Dakota, is a 2016 graduate of Covington Catholic High School, Park Hills. He has also studied at Minot State University, Minot, North Dakota. His parents are Joseph and Teresa Schulte of Crestwood.

Justin H. Schwarz of Renton, Washington, is the son of Paul and Thu Huong Schwarz of Renton. He is a 2016 graduate of Kennedy Catholic High School, Burien, Washington. He earned a bachelor of arts degree in philosophy/theology from Franciscan University of Steubenville in 2020.

Bradley S. Whittle of Union, Ky., is the son of Scott and Elaine Whittle of Union. He is a 2015 graduate of St. Henry District High School, Erlanger. He earned a bachelor of science degree in education from the University of Cincinnati in 2020.

In addition to these five new seminarians, seven men have returned to seminary studies for the Diocese of Covington. They are: Deacon Joseph Rielage, John Baumann, Michael Eilminger, A. J. Gedney William Papa, Zacharias Schoen and John Tarvin.

Parishioners called to support DPAA as service agencies see needs increase

**Messenger Staff Report**

The 2020 Diocesan Parish Annual Appeal (DPAA) continues to take donations after the week of Aug. 24, when follow-up letters were sent and calls made to parishioners. Every parishioner should have received a letter with instructions about how to donate, and they can continue to do so by sending donations to the Diocese of Covington Curia through the end of the year.

Mike Murray, director, Stewardship and Missions Services reminds donors to write the name of their parish on their check to make sure the funds go to the right place.

“As we continue to face uncertain times, our commitment to this mission is increasingly important to those in our faith community who rely on our funding,” said Mr. Murray. “We understand that many are feeling frightened during these uncertain times. Many of our neighbors are facing an additional burden as they are out of work and unable to provide for their families. We also know that people cannot give what they do not have. But if you are able, I ask you to please consider making a gift in support of our mission during this critical time. Your financial assistance will allow our ministries to provide much needed support.”

Therefore, appeals for this year’s DPAA are being conducted via the mail instead of in-person. The official 2020 DPAA campaign began in March and was shortly postponed due to suspending the public celebration Mass in parishes. Last month the DPAA resumed but under unique procedures. The obligation to attend Sunday Mass is still abrogated as many faithful are at increased risk of suffering adverse effects of the coronavirus. Therefore, appeals for this year’s DPAA are being conducted via the mail instead of in-person.

Now it’s up to parishioners to do their part, or “put their faith into action,” said Mr. Murray. “With each gift, we are making a declaration that we trust God, that we are working to join all of us together as one, today, during this crisis and always.”

**The Bestowal of Pontifical Honors**

Bishop Roger J. Foys installed Father Joseph Shelton as pastor of St. Augustine Parish, Augusta and St. James Parish, Brookville, Sept. 6. (top) Father Shelton renews his priestly vows before the congregation. (above) Bishop Foys presents Father Shelton to the Parish Council.
More students return to classrooms after quarantine and Labor Day weekend

**VIRTUS training takes on digital challenges**

Allegra Thatcher
Assistant Editor

With the fatigue of digital meetings mounting, it’s easy to find the disadvantages rather than count the blessings during this challenging time. Yet the team behind the VIRTUS program “Protecting God’s Children for Adults” believes it trains adults to create a safe environment, through virtual means.

Margie Schack, director and victim assistance coordinator for the diocese of Covington, said VIRTUS training is happening on the platform BlueJeans rather than in person this school year. She said the training remains almost exactly the same, with some changes in the numbers.

Since it’s very sensitive information, Mrs. Schack and her team like to see and communicate verbally with people to know how they’re receiving the information. Training sessions used to host groups of 75, and are now limited to 30.

“It’s too hard to track that many faces on a small computer,” said Mrs. Schack. “It’s 30 so that we can do a better job of what we’re doing. They miss seeing people in person, but the smaller numbers at meetings make it possible for them to engage participants more personally.

She also now has two presenters instead of one. While one is speaking or preparing a video to share, another can monitor the participation, help with the chat box, and help conversation flow. “One can pick up where the other left off,” said Mrs. Schack.

It’s been a transition, but people have responded well. “As far as people cooperating online, people are gracious and they participate,” said Mrs. Schack. “We’re so grateful they’re accepting this new and different venue to get the message out to people so that we can get another school year off to a good start.”

There’s only been one technical glitch, in connecting evaluation forms directly to the video and the viewer. They will soon have an evaluation form directly in the video that will provide the opportunity for users to give feedback. Right now, the form is more difficult to access. However, said Mrs. Schack, the forms she has received have given positive feedback.

“We’re not exactly tech savvy, everything we’re doing is a learning experience, so we’re grateful to people for being patient with us as we work through this,” she said.

As always, the focus is on engaging everyone to provide a safe environment. “It’s the need to be aware and speak up when something doesn’t look right or feel right,” Mrs. Schack said. “That’s why we’re training everyone.”

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**Coronavirus Report**

(as of Monday, Sept. 7)

| Positive Cases | Active positive cases: 5 |
|               | Recovered positive cases: 8 |
|               | Total ever positive cases: 13 |
| Self-quarantined | Symptoms/spacing testing: 1 |
| Contacts: 7 | Close Contacts: 79 |
| Returned to class after quarantine/self-quarantine: | From Sept. 2 - Sept. 8: 108 students (including 29 from Holy Cross District High School and 25 students from St. Mary School) |
| Total ever: 161 students |
| Schools reporting: (24 of 39 schools) |
| Bishop Brossart High School | Covington Catholic High School |
| Holy Family | Newport Central Catholic High School |
| Notre Dame Academy | St. Henry District High School |
| St. Agnes | St. Augustine, Covington |
| St. Cecilia | St. Edward |
| St. Henry | St. Joseph, Cold Spring |
| St. Joseph, Crescent Springs | St. Mary |
| St. Patrick | St. Paul |
| St. Pius X | St. Therese |
| St. Thomas | St. Timothy |
| Sts. Peter and Paul | Villa Madonna Academy |

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**Official assignment**

Effective Sept. 1, 2020

Rev. Msgr. Daniel J. Vogelpohl
To: Parochial administrator, St. Cecilia Parish, Independence
Parish, Independence
Continues retirement

By order of the Most Rev. Roger J. Foy, D.D.
Bishop of the Diocese of Covington

Elaine N. Schroeder
Chancellor

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**Bishop’s Schedule**

Sept. 11 Conference call with the Bishops of Kentucky, 2 p.m.
Sept. 12 Mass, Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington, 4:30 p.m.
Sept. 13 Mass, Cathedral Basilica, 10 a.m.
Sept. 14 COVID-19 briefing meeting, 9:30 a.m.
Sept. 15 St. Vincent Seminary Board of Regents virtual meeting, 10 a.m.
Sept. 16 COVID-19 briefing meeting, 9:30 a.m.

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**Reporting Misconduct in the Diocese of Covington**

Anyone who has experienced sexual misconduct by a cleric, employee or volunteer of the Diocese of Covington is asked to contact Ms. Margaret Schack, diocesan victims assistance coordinator (859) 392-1515. Professional assistance and pastoral support will be provided in confidence and with respect.

A copy of the “Diocesan Policies and Procedures for Addressing Sexual Misconduct” is available by contacting the Chancery, (859) 392-1510 or visiting www.covdio.org and going to “Sexual Misconduct Policy.”

**Informando sobre conducta inapropiada en la Diocesis de Covington**

Cualquier persona que haya experimentado conducta sexual inapropiada por parte de un clérigo, empleado o voluntario de la Diócesis de Covington está invitada a ponerse en contacto con Ms. Margaret Schack, coordinadora diocesana para dar asistencia a las víctimas. Teléfono (859) 392-1515. Asistencia profesional y apoyo moral serán ofrecidos de una manera confidencial y con respeto.

Una copia de “Normas y Procedimientos sobre Conducta Sexual Inapropiada” está disponible poniéndose en contacto con la Cancillería, Teléfono (859) 392-1510, o visitando www.covdio.org y marcando “Sexual Misconduct Policy.”
The dignity of work, the rights of workers and faithful citizenship

In this 1981 encyclical “Laborem Exercens” (“On Human Work”), Pope St. John Paul II identified the question of human work as the key to the entire social question. (L.E, n. 3)

“Laborem Exercens” commemorated the ninetieth anniversary of “Rerum Novarum” in assessing the structural injustices of working conditions in the 19th century. “The Encyclical names the conditions of salaried workers, which was particularly distressing for industrial laborers who languished in inhumane misery. The labor question is dealt with according to its true dimensions. It is explored in all its social and political expressions so that a proper evaluation may be made in the light of doctrinal principles founded on Revelation and on natural law and morality” (CSDC, n. 189).

According to the Compendium, “Rerum Novarum” historically “dealt with the labor question using a methodology that would become a lasting paradigm” for successive developments in the Church’s social doctrine. (CSDC, n. 90)

The Compendium also speaks of the prophetic value of “Rerum Novarum”: “The course of history is marked by the profound transformation and the exhilarating conquests of work, but also the exploitation of so many workers and an offens to their dignity. The Industrial Revolution presented for the Church a critical challenge to which her social Magisterium responded faithfully and prophetically affirming universally valid and perennially relevant principles in support of workers and their right.” (CSDC, n. 267)

Thus, at the end of the 19th century, Pope Leo XIII had laid the foundation of essential moral values and principles which are protective of a moral right to a just wage warranted by the dignity of the worker. In defense of the dignity of the worker, “Rerum Novarum” condemned the so-called “wage-contract” theory as immoral. In effect, to treat any human subject as a means to an end constitutes an injustice. Consequently, “Materialism” dictates “the primacy and superiority of “economism” with a form of “materialism.” “Market fundamentalism,” with its one-dimensional understanding of persons. Laissez-faire capitalism was corrupted by “the fittest” mentality that narrows morality in the economic sphere to protecting profits and market mechanisms. Therefore, in “Laborem Exercens,” Pope St. John Paul II linked the fundamental error of “materialism” with a form of “materialism.” “Market fundamentalism,” with its one-dimensional understanding of the human subject, stands at odds with Catholic social teaching on the economy. In the last analysis, the social doctrine of the Church upholds the subject of work—the human person—as much more significant than the objects of work—the product.

Moreover, “Laborem Exercens” introduces an important corollary—the distinction between “work in the subjective sense” (L.E, n. 9) and “work in the subjective sense.” (L.E, n. 6) Whereas the former concept describes the technology; the latter notion refers to the human person as “the subject of work.”

In accord with “Laborem Exercens,” the Catechism of the Catholic Church notes: “In work, the person exercises his calling to be a cooperator with God in the work of creation.” In doing so, the encyclical affirms that “it is equally true that capital is being unnecessarily created through the work done with the help of means of production, and these means can be seen as a great waste of human labor at which the present generation of workers is working day after day.” This interpretation of the concept of work broadens its meaning beyond that of industrial workers. Obviously, we are dealing here with different kinds of work, not only so-called manual labor, but also the many forms of intellectual work, including white-collar work and management.” (L.E, n. 14)

The encyclical “Centesimus Annus” (“On the Ninetieth Anniversary of ‘Rerum Novarum’,”1891) marked the centenary of “Rerum Novarum.” Pope St. John Paul II concluded that “the main thread and, in a certain sense, the guiding principle of Pope Leo’s Encyclical, and of all of the Church’s social doctrine, is a correct view of the human person and his unique value, inasmuch as ‘man,’ is ‘the only creating subject on which God willed it for itself.’” (C.A, n. 11) Consequently, having been impressed with the image of God, workers in their personhood are are created for their own ends and not merely to contribute to them and not granted by the work produced. Such inalienable rights are grounded in the very sacredness and the essential dignity of the worker as a person.

The Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church sums up the core of Pope St. John Paul II’s vision on the dignity of work: “‘Laborem Exercens’ outlines a spirituality and ethic of work in the context of a profound theological and philosophical reflection. The dignity of work broadens its meaning beyond that of industrial work; activity in work is expression of human self-realization, a response to fulfilling the needs of persons, and a contribution to serving the common good. Thus, human work is ‘for one’s family, the nation, and indeed for the benefit of the entire human family.’” (Bd, n. 97)

“Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship: A Call to Political Responsibility,” the 2001 statement of the Catholic Bishops of the United States, places the theme “The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers” among the seven key themes of Catholic social teaching which provide a moral framework for decisions in the public order. The dignity and rights of workers of the economy rest on the following moral principle: “The person is the center and the subject of any economic activity; work is an expression of human self-realization, a response to fulfilling the needs of persons, and a contribution to serving the common good. Thus, human work is ‘for one’s family, the nation, and indeed for the benefit of the entire human family.’” (Bd, n. 97)

Mag. Ronald Ketteler is director of ecumenism, episcopal liaison to the Messenger and professor of theology at Thomas More University.
Why we need to forgive

The readings for the twenty-fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle A are: Sirach 27:30—47; Romans 14:7–8; and Matthew 18:21–35.

A certain married couple had many sharp disagreements. Yet somehow the wife always stayed calm and collected. One day her husband commented on his wife’s restraint. “When I get mad at you,” he said, “you never fight back. How do you control your anger?”

The wife said, “I work it off by cleaning the toilet.” The husband asked, “How does that help you? I use your toothbrush!”

A motorcycle patrolman suffered a minor accident that put him in the hospital for a couple of days. His injuries had been to his foot and his ankle. Then why, he wondered, did he feel what seemed to be a large bandage on his chest? With some effort he was able to pull his hospital gown down far enough so he could examine the bandage and figure out its purpose. When he did, he saw it was a large bandage, the kind that is exceedingly painful to tear off of a hairy chest. On the bandage was written this message: “A gift … from the nurse you gave a ticket to last week.”

Our Gospel this weekend is about forgiveness. How many times must I forgive someone who does not return me a kindness against me in some way? That is Simon Peter’s question. How many times? Would seven times be enough?

Peter thought he was being generous. After all, the rabbis of his day taught that only three times were required. They said, “Forgive three times, but not the fourth.” That was Peter’s measure. Seven times, Peter thought, should be plenty enough forgiveness.

But it was not enough for Jesus. In answer to how many times we should forgive Jesus said, “I tell you, not seven times, but seventy times seven.” In other words, forgiveness is limitless. This is important because some of you are probably thinking, “That’s a lot, seventy times seven. But what about the forty-nine, the one hundred, the four hundred ninety-first time? I can hop him one real good.”

We miss Jesus’ point. There is to be no limit to our forgiveness. Forgiveness is at the heart of Christian faith. We are not to hold grudges, carry resentments, harbor bitterness. It’s a good time for us to get our priorities straight.

The Church has been here before and done amazing things

It seems like a growing number of people that I’ve spoken to have a difficult time seeing joy in life. This worries me, especially as fall creeps in and the cold months of winter set closer. I am sure there are cynics, defeated and tired of the way things have been this year. Anxieties are even higher than usual as tough decisions and sacrifices are being asked of almost everybody. These feelings are all very understandable. The midst of the coronavirus, ongoing restrictions, civil turmoil, natural disasters, unseasonable disasters and an election season. But, what’s needed in times like these? The answer is always the same — super-natural faith.

As Catholics, we are at our best when we are desperate for God. At first, that statement might seem obvious or strange. But think about it, in the United States, in the 20th century besides occasions of personal grief, recognizing our desperation for God is not something that we as a society do very often. And yet God is always the same — without God, we can do nothing (cf. John 15:5-6).

When we seek God’s help we can do amazing things. We need God, the world needs our prayers and we need each other. Our troubles are numerous, but we have a lot to hold onto — our Catholic worldview for one thing, and most importantly, the sacraments instituted by Christ, by which we get the graces we need.

This is a good time for us to get our priorities straight. The question we need to ask ourselves is: What is God asking of us to do — as individuals and as a Church — in this time? Sometimes it feels like our hands are tied and we can’t do anything, but I am sure the answers will come in the silence of prayer. There are plenty of opportunities to be Christ-like.

I recently read an inspiring document produced by Word on Fire, entitled “Catholicism in the time of Coronavirus.” It was written by Dr. Stephen Bullivant, a former Oxford researcher and Fellow of the Word on Fire Institute, and in it he tackles the questions of what the long-term impact of this pandemic might be, not only on our spiritual lives but also on the Church’s institutions and programs. Even when such a pandemic was not among the many good and practical aspects to this piece, I found myself really intrigued by the historical perspective he presents. Dr. Bullivant notes some dark points in Church history times when the world faced grave illnesses that wreaked terror throughout the known world, and not for one year but many years. For example, in 251 AD the Church’s records gives us a first-hand testimony from St. Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, who writes of the horrible symptoms that people experienced during an outbreak. Another bishop, contemporary of Cyprian, St. Dionysius of Alexandria, wrote, “Now, indeed, everything is tears, and everyone is mourning, and wailings resound daily through the city because of the multitude of the dead and dying.”

What’s extraordinary is how early Christians responded to this pandemic and how later generations of Christians followed in their footsteps. These actions resulted in Christianity spreading throughout the known
**Part 3 – How to talk about euthanasia: Pandora’s box, effects on others and the human-animal difference**

Caitlin Dwyer  
**Messenger Contributor**

Over the course of the last two months, we have discussed how to engage someone who supports euthanasia or physician-assisted suicide (PAS). In July, we addressed the “consent makes right” argument for euthanasia/PAS by demonstrating that consent is not enough to make an action loving. In August, we addressed the “suffering is meaningless” argument by discussing the meaning of suffering and showing that eliminating suffering by intentionally terminating innocent life violates basic human rights and constitutes a false mercy. (Both issues are available at www.covdio.org/messenger/.)

In this final article, we will explore three other arguments in favor of euthanasia:

1. **There should not be an absolute prohibition against the taking of innocent human life.** It should depend on the circumstances in which the taking of innocent life is allowed.

2. **Euthanasia/PAS does not affect anyone but the person choosing it; therefore, it should be morally acceptable.**

3. **We euthanize animals when they are in extreme suffering that cannot be relieved; therefore, we should allow humans the same method of pain relief.**

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**True Compassion and Mercy**

Euthanasia and PAS are often mistakenly called acts of compassion or mercy. Looking at the true meaning of these words helps us understand why this is not the case.

“Compassion” literally means “to suffer with.” It involves entering into another’s suffering and taking it as one’s own suffering, not ending a person’s suffering through illicit means that violate her dignity.

“Mercy” comes from the Latin word misericordia, whose root words are misericor (meaning “pity” or “misery”) and cor (meaning “heart”). To have mercy is to have one’s heart moved by the plight of another and to act to “relieve” (meaning “to cure” or “to make well”). To have mercy is to have one’s heart moved by the plight of another and to act to help relieve their suffering. But again, to genuinely “help” another, we must act in ways that respect her dignity and rights.

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**Science can point to a difference in degree between humans and other animals, but it is only when science works in tandem with theology that we get a complete picture of the identity of the human person.** As stated in Part 2, every person is made in God’s image and likeness. We are a dual unity of body and soul which endows us with the capacities of freedom and love that separate us from the rest of creation. This unique identity is the source of the inalienable dignity from which our basic rights flow, and (for the reasons discussed previously), euthanasia and PAS completely reverse the role of the medical caregiver. She becomes a person seeking to harm one who wants to end her life rather than nurture it and preserve it. This can have profound effects. For example, there is evidence that some medical personnel and family members directly involved with acts of euthanasia/PAS suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

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First, it affects the medical staff directly, inversely proportionate to the amount they take the Hippocratic Oath, the fundamental tenet of which is to do no harm to one’s patients. Euthanasia/PAS completely reverses the role of the medical caregiver. She becomes a person seeking to harm one who wants to end her life rather than nurture it and preserve it. This can have profound effects. For example, there is evidence that some medical personnel and family members directly involved with acts of euthanasia/PAS suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

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Second, it affects society at large. Hearing about the euthanasia of others may encourage more people to choose this for themselves or lead more caregivers to pressure sick loved ones to pursue euthanasia. The more euthanasia is legitimate, the more we run the risk of communicating to sick people that they are unnecessarily prolonging their lives. This may increase their already intense feelings of being a burden to others. An analogous situation to consider is the widespread abortion of babies with Down syndrome. Having a baby with Down syndrome is often perceived as an unnecessary self-imposed burden, arguably leading to a high abortion rate (75-92 percent) of these children.

Legitimizing euthanasia/PAS may also affect insurance coverage. If these practices are widely legalized and legitimized, insurance companies may cover it and possibly even encourage it by refusing or limiting coverage for longer term palliative care.

No man is an island. Our actions always affect other people. Finally, let’s address the argument that because we euthanize animals, we should allow the same practices with humans.

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This argument rests on the assumption that there is no meaningful difference between animals and people. In reality, we recognize the inherent difference between human life and animal life in countless ways. For example, all rational people agree that it is never acceptable to hunt and kill people for food. Though most would claim that it is acceptable to hunt and kill animals for food if done in moderation. Nonetheless, the claim of the equivalence of people and animals has become increasingly common as our society has lost a sense of the nature of the difference between human beings and other animals.

Finally, let’s address the argument that euthanasia/PAS advocates are essentially positing that the value of human life is relative to the person’s quality of life rather than absolute. Thus, the norm prohibiting the taking of innocent human life should also be relative, meaning it should apply in some cases but not others. Essentially, they argue that sometimes it is good to take innocent human life.

This stands in contrast to the position taken by advocates of human dignity and human rights (including Christians) that points that human beings have an absolute value and intrinsic dignity from which inalienable human rights flow (rights that are innate and cannot be taken away). Therefore, there is an absolute prohibition against the taking of innocent human life; meaning the norm applies in every case regardless of the end or the circumstances.

To demonstrate the problem with the euthanasia/PAS advocates’ position, let’s assume it is true: the value of human life is not absolute, but is relative to the person’s life circumstances. In other words, some people’s lives are not worth living.

Instantly, we can see the myriad ethical issues that arise from such a claim. Who gets to decide whose life is worth living? The individual? What are legitimate reasons to deem her life unworthy? Terminal illness? Intense suffering? How intense? Only physical? Or also emotional? Once you relativize this norm and legitimate the taking of innocent life for any reason, you open Pandora’s box and the “legitimate” circumstances inevitably become even more expansive.

Further, what if the individual is incapacitated? What does “incapacitated” mean? Unconscious? Demised? Demented? Depressed? Can a minor make this decision? Can parents make this decision for a minor? Can the government decide whose lives are worth living? What about doctors? This is particularly dangerous ethical territory since allowing one person or group to be the arbiter of another’s fitness to live is a grave violation of human equality.

If a person makes the “relative norm” argument, you can invite her to carry the logic of her position all the way through. She may not like this, but you can invite her to follow it to its conclusion. She may not like it, but she can defend her position. If she relativizes this norm, she can base her position on it.

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**True “compassion” leads to sharing another’s pain; it does not kill the person whose suffering we cannot bear.**

— The Gospel of Life, No. 65

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**Pro-Life Office**

of the Diocese of Covington

**Mission Statement**

The Pro-Life Office of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Covington, guided by our bishop, promotes the sanctity and legal protection of human life from conception to natural death through prayer, pastoral care, public policy and education.

**We Choose Life**

Caitlin Dwyer  
**Messenger Contributor**

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**Science can point to a difference in degree between humans and other animals, but it is only when science works in tandem with theology that we get a complete picture of the identity of the human person.** As stated in Part 2, every person is made in God’s image and likeness. We are a dual unity of body and soul which endows us with the capacities of freedom and love that separate us from the rest of creation. This unique identity is the source of the inalienable dignity from which our basic rights flow, and (for the reasons discussed previously), euthanasia does not protect but rather violates that dignity.

Frequently, euthanasia advocates have simply not considered the ramifications of their arguments and they have adopted them by default as they have become the mainstream positions in our culture. By familiarizing yourself with these arguments, you can prepare to invite a person to re-evaluate their position, seeking always to speak with humility out of love. As St. Peter wrote, “Be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you a reason for your hope, but do it with gentleness and reverence.” (1 Peter 3:15-16)

Prof Caitlin Shaugnessy Dwyer is assistant professor of Theology, Thomas More University. She and her family are members of St. Plus X Parish, Edgewood.
Anniversary couple: Growing love for 25 years

Allegra Thatcher
Assistant Editor

The annual diocesan Wedding Anniversary Vespers, scheduled for Sept. 27, has been cancelled due to COVID-19. The event honors couples celebrating significant anniversaries this year, such as one year, 25 years, 50 years or 50 plus. These couples will still receive a congratulatory certificate signed by Bishop Roger Foys. Certificates will be sent to parish offices in September and the names of the couples will be published in the Messenger in late September.

In lieu of celebrating in person, the Messenger reached out to three anniversary couples to hear how their love has persevered over the years and flourished through lives of faith. This is the final installment.

“You think you can’t love anyone more than you do on your wedding day, yet love just keeps on growing,” said Maria Martini.

She and John Martini have been married for 25 years this October, and the Edgewood couple says they can’t believe how quickly those 25 years have gone. They met at Mr. Martini’s brother’s wedding, where the future Mrs. Martini had been invited after befriending his sister at Thomas More University. She and Mr. Martini were introduced at the reception.

The couple dated for two years, and were married on Oct. 14, 1995. When asked how they knew they were right for each other, they both agreed that “it’s one of those things that you just feel.” Mrs. Martinez said, “I just knew he was the one.”

Mr. and Mrs. Martini shared that they both had wonderful examples of marriage from their parents growing up. Mr. Martini’s parents were married for over 50 years before their passing, and Mrs. Martini’s parents were married almost 46 years before her father passed in 2011. Her mother is still living and just recently moved from Maysville into a home right down the street from them.

“They’ve followed in their parents’ footsteps by making faith the foundation on which their marriage has been built,” said Mrs. Martini. “They attend Mother of God Parish, Covington, and said their faith is “interwoven into our everyday life.”

They have three daughters, who were always busy while growing up, as much free time, you’re running from activity to activity. can be more stressful,” said Mr. Martini. “You don’t have the luxury of having free time, unlike other families. It’s a big path to follow, really.”

The girls are the Martini’s pride and joy, since the first week of their marriage. They started their family right away, and now their daughters are 24, 22 and 19. All three attended Villa Madonna Academy for 12 years and then they all went to Xavier University, Cincinnati. The older two have already graduated and the youngest is a sophomore.

“What a wonderful blessing our children have been in our life,” said Mrs. Martini. “Our family, our daughters, have always been such a focus in our lives. They’re precious to us.”

There were always so many activities the girls were involved in, from Girl Scouts to theatre, sports, academic team, student council and volunteering, that Mr. and Mrs. Martini spent most of their time invested there. Looking forward, they’re excited for the next 25 years to be a little calmer.

“Always communicating, that’s key,” said Mrs. Martini. “Making sacrifices for each other, they both agreed that “It’s one of those things that you just feel.” Mrs. Martinez said, “I just knew he was the one.”

Mr. Martini also said they’re hoping for some grandchildren when the time is right.

The Martinis said there are many little things that make up a good marriage. They emphasized the importance of faith: “Make it the foundation, build on that for all of your time together,” they said.

“I think respecting each other from day one is important,” said Mrs. Martini. “Making sacrifices for each other and our children and the family unit. Following the example of Jesus and Joseph and the example that was set for us. It’s a big path to follow really.”

“Always communicating, that’s key,” said Mrs. Martini. While some people say it all goes downhill after the wedding day, the Martinis disagree. “Honestly I believe it gets easier from the start when you’re trying to figure out different daily habits and all,” said Mr. Martini. “Being together for so long you kind of become one: you finish each other’s sentences, you know each other’s expectations, you become more aligned.”

“Our love has just grown,” said Mrs. Martini. “Love just keeps on growing because you have children and as you go through life together, the love becomes deeper and deeper.”

Their advice for the next generation of young couples is to give of yourself. “I think the more you give, the more you get in a relationship,” said Mr. Martini. “The more you put it into, the more bountiful it is.”
Franciscan daughter professes perpetual vows

Allegra Thatcher
Assistant Editor

The Franciscan Daughters of Mary celebrated the perpetual profession of vows, also called final vows, of one of its own at Mass Sept. 5 at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption.

Sister Mary Elizabeth of the Holy Family Poulin professed vows of poverty, chastity, obedience and to uphold the dignity of all human life before Bishop Roger Foys, the celebrant, and the congregation. Concelebrants included Father Ryan Maher, vicar general and Cathedral rector; Father Allen Frederick, Father Michael Grady, Father Ethan Moore, Father Rey Taylor and Father Andrew Young.

The perpetual profession comes five years after the first vows taken by a sister of the order. Bishop Foys called Sister Mary Elizabeth forward for an examination with her superior, Mother Seraphina Quinlan, to question her readiness to consecrate herself to God according to the Rule of the Franciscan Daughters of Mary.

She then professed her vows and was presented with a ring. The ring is a symbol of singular fidelity to Jesus Christ. Bishop Foys also presented her with a crown of thorns, signifying unity with her spouse who wore the same crown. Sister Mary Elizabeth lay prostrate before the altar, to signify her total gift of self, and was solemnly blessed.

“It is not a question of numbers but of quality,” said Bishop Foys, in reflecting on the rarity of professions in today’s world. “It is the radical promises that one makes … and in making those radical promises the witness that they give to God’s people … of total commitment.”

The Franciscan Daughters hosted a drive-by reception at Rose Garden Mission, Covington, for Sister Mary Elizabeth following the Mass.

The optional memorial to the Most Holy Name of the Blessed Virgin Mary finds its roots in an epic tale of battle and Mary’s intercession for her faithful people. Though not commonly well-known, the memorial (Sept. 12) follows the memorial of her nativity, Sept. 8, by four days. This is in keeping with the Jewish custom of having a naming day shortly after a child was born.

The memorial’s counterpart is the Feast of the Most Holy Name of Jesus, celebrated shortly after Jesus’ nativity in December.

The particular celebration of Mary’s name finds its roots in Spain and was approved by Holy See as a feast day in 1513. It was popularized by a siege of mythical proportions and great historical significance. Pope Innocent XI extended the feast to the entire church in 1683 after the Catholic troops defeated the Islamic forces at the Siege of Vienna. Poland’s King Jan Sobieski led his troops, greatly outnumbered by the Turkish forces, into battle but they were powered by prayers and devotions to the Blessed Virgin Mary from Vienna to Rome, including novenas of rosaries and fasting and prayer. The soldiers even sang a Polish hymn to the Mother of God as they marched into battle. The defeat of the Turks was accomplished on her feast, the 30th day after the Assumption, and was thus attributed to her.

Eventually, the celebration was removed as a feast day in 1970 from the universal calendar but reinstituted as an optional memorial by Pope St. John Paul II in 2003. It stands as a reminder of the power of her name to invoke victory for her Son’s faithful.

The invocation of her name has led to innumerable graces when the faithful pray for her intercession in the recitation of the rosary. We honor her in the Divine Praises and list many of her famous titles in the Litany of Loreto.

Did you know?

The Most Holy Name of the Blessed Virgin Mary

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In this Messenger file photo, a window in the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption depicts the Coronation of Mary.
Newly professed sister finds fulfillment in answering God’s call

Allegra Thatcher
Assistant Editor

Franciscan Daughters of Mary Sister Mary Elizabeth of the Holy Family Poulain professed perpetual vows Sept. 5 at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption for the public to witness.

Five years after first vows, and eight years since she joined the community Sister Mary Elizabeth is more confident than ever that this vocation to be espoused to Jesus Christ answers all the desires on her heart. She’s originally from Massachusetts and visited twice before entering the community of the Daughters.

“It wasn’t like I had to settle for anything, it was perfect and all right here,” she said. “… I felt very called to pray for priests and to work in a crisis pregnancy center with moms and babies and not only to serve the poor but to be poor with the poor like Jesus was … when I got here it was like everything that was already on my heart, it was here.”

The public profession of vows, said Sister Mary Elizabeth, is “a public way of showing the world that this is what makes you happy. Not everyone is called to religious life, but when you make yourself happy is abandoning your heart to God and letting him fill it.”

This is different from the first profession because “when we make our first profession of vows, we’re saying before our friends and family that I’m going to do this and I’m going to renew it each year. The final profession is even more directed towards the broader public and it says in our constitution that we invite the people around us, the wider society to see our faith, to see as a public witness, this is my vow forever to do this.”

Sister Mary Elizabeth kneels in prayer after professing her perpetual vows Sept. 5 at the Cathedral Basilica. Her crown of thorns is meant to symbolize her unity with Jesus Christ and his crown during his passion and crucifixion.

“Leading up to her profession, Sister Mary Elizabeth has been praying with the Gospel passage of the Annunciation, especially the words of Mary: ‘I am the handmaid of the Lord, let it be done unto me according to thy Word.’ Especially with the uncertainty in the world due to the COVID-19 pandemic, she’s following Mary’s example of surrendering every moment to God as it comes. Even though she had dreams for how her profession would go, which did not include masks and social distancing, she has realized that letting it go and trusting is much easier and better.”

“I think when you trust, it’s like everything is getting taken away, just like how it seemed for Mary,” she said. “But really the Lord was showing me that it’s about surrendering to his will, and that seems like a constrictive thing, but it’s really not, it’s really freeing. And I have to trust that everything that happens he’s guiding me in his hands.”

Sister Mary Elizabeth gave thanks to Bishop Foys and all the priests of the diocese for their support, as well as so many other people who have prayed for her and truly been there for her along the way.

People and Events

Hands-on science

(above, left) Second and third grade students at St. Edward School, Cynthiana, created “bees” to transfer pollen (lemonade mix) in science class.

Derby Day celebration

(above) St. Henry School, Elsmere celebrated Derby Day at home. Students and teachers dressed in their Derby finest. Pictured is one of the first grade teachers as a horse and her two children.

5-star PRE-K

(above) Congratulations to St. Edward Preschool, Cynthiana, for being recognized by the Cabinet for Health and Family Services Department for Community Based Services as a Level Five provider in the Kentucky All STARS Quality Rating and Improvement System. This is the fourth year St. Edward Preschool has been a Five STAR provider.

Ozobot

This week, third grade students from Holy Trinity School, Bellevue, worked with Ozobots in the school’s new STREAM room.

In more ways than technology, at-home learners connect with classmates

One of the key strategies for home learners from St. Henry School, Elsmere, is making sure they are ready to learn. Wearing their uniforms, having a dedicated space to work and engaging with their classmates through technology is key to their success.

All college-aged students in school or the work force are invited to join The Catholic Newman Center at Northern Kentucky University for virtual Bible Study, Tuesdays, at 7 p.m.; Book Study at 8 p.m., and in-person Mass, Thursdays, at 7 p.m. at St. Joseph Church, Cold Spring. E-mail Donna Heim, campus minister, at heimd2@nku.edu to receive weekly Newman information.

Newly professed sister finds fulfillment in answering God’s call

Allegre Thatcher
Assistant Editor

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VATICAN CITY — Gossip is “a plague worse than COVID,” Pope Francis said, asserting that while speaking ill of others comes almost naturally, it is a tool of the devil to divide the church.

Commenting Sept. 6 on the Sunday Gospel reading about Jesus telling his disciples what to do when a member of the community errs and requires correction, Pope Francis said that rather than helping the other mend his or her ways, “when we see a mistake, a fault, a slip, in that brother or sister, usually the first thing we do is to go and recount it to others — to gossip.”

“Gossiping sows division,” he told people gathered in St. Peter’s Square for the midday recitation of the Angelus prayer.

“The great gossiper is the devil, who always goes around recounting bad things about others, because he is the liar who seeks to divide the church, to distance brothers and sisters and not create community,” the pope said. “Please, brothers and sisters, let us make an effort not to gossip.”

The day’s Gospel reading (Mt 18:15-20) is often cited as a lesson in “fraternal correction,” urging people to speak directly and privately to a person they believe is in the wrong. If that doesn’t work, Jesus tells the disciples to take “one or two others along with you” and try again. If that, too, is unsuccessful, then the community of the church should be informed.

The goal, the pope said, is not to embarrass or punish, but to rehabilitate.

“The pope is clearly inspired by Francis of Assisi who, in following Jesus, recognized in fraternity, lived under the sign of mutual and loving service, the horizon of a fulfilled and happy humanity,” Father Gambetti added.

Pope Francis is scheduled to arrive at the Assisi convent at 3 p.m. to celebrate Mass at the tomb of St. Francis and sign the document. Because of ongoing concerns and restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Mass and the rest of the pope’s visit will be private, the Vatican press office said.

The encyclical is expected to echo many of the themes Pope Francis has been discussing in his general audience talks on Catholic social teaching in light of the pandemic: human fraternity, the equal dignity of all people, the preferential option for the poor, the universal destination of goods and the obligation of solidarity. Care for the environment and the virtue of peacemaking also are expected to be part of the encyclical.

After Pope Francis signs the document on the eve of the feast of St. Francis, the text is expected to be published in a variety of languages the first week of October.
Mission work will be needed when churches reopen, cardinal says

Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Many Catholics in Europe will not return to Mass or parish activities once the COVID-19 restrictions are lifted, which demonstrates the urgency of a new evangelization based on Catholics actually living their faith, said Cardinal Jean-Claude Hollerich.

In countries where Christianity has been preached for centuries and even millennia, the first stage of a new evangelization must be for Christians to embrace biblical simplicity and help those who are poorest and most defenseless, said the cardinal, who is archbishop of Luxembourg and president of the Commission of the Bishops’ Conferences of the European Union.

“Too often when Christians preach, ‘people tell us, ‘We’ve heard these words, but they say nothing to us because you do not live what you proclaim,’” Cardinal Hollerich told L’Osservatore Romano, the Vatican newspaper.

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“We've heard these words, but they say nothing to us because you do not live what you proclaim,” Cardinal Hollerich said. “This would have happened even without the pandemic, although perhaps it would have taken another 10 years.”

In the face of the situation, he said, “the Church must be inspired by a humility that will allow us to organize ourselves better, to be more Christian, because this culture of Christianity this only cultural Catholicism, cannot endure because it has no life force behind it.”

However, the cardinal said, “I think it will be a great opportunity for the church. We must understand what’s at stake, and we must react by deploying new missionary structures. And when I say missionary, I mean action and word at the same time.”

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‘Faithful Citizenship’ reminder: Gospel cannot be parsed in partisan terms

Dennis Sadowski
Catholic News Service
CLEVELAND — The U.S. bishops’ quadrennial document on political responsibility is rooted in the Catholic Church’s long-standing moral tradition that upholds human dignity and the common good of all, Archbishop Paul S. Coakley of Oklahoma City said.

“The document is meant to give Catholic voters an opportunity to reflect upon how their faith intersects with their political and civic responsibilities,” said the archbishop, who chairs the bishops’ Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development.

Titled “Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship: A Call to Political Responsibility From the Catholic Bishops of the United States,” the document has been offered as a guide to Catholic voters every presidential election year since 1976.

It has been updated and revised at four-year intervals to reflect changes in the issues confronting the country since it first appeared.

One thing “Faithful Citizenship” is not a mandate on which candidate for public office to vote for, Archbishop Coakley said.

Voting, he added, is a responsibility to be taken seriously and that requires prudential judgment in determining who can best serve the common good.

“No candidate will likely reflect all of our values,” he told Catholic News Service Aug. 18. “But I think we need to begin in prayer. We need to know our faith. We need to study our faith. We need to have recourse to the catechism and what it might teach about certain questions.”

“This document is intended to be that, an official guide for the formation of consciences that Catholics can utilize as they weigh these questions,” the archbishop said.

Furthermore, he continued, “the Gospel cannot be parsed in political or partisan terms. The Gospel calls us to live by standards and our Catholic faith calls us to embrace standards that are unassailable unto left or right, Republican or Democratic terminology.”

The document went through no major revisions for this year, according to the archbishop, who said it was being updated by an introductory letter, which underwent a long debate before its adoption by the full body of bishops during their fall general assembly in November.

This time around, the document also is accompanied by a series of five videos that highlight vital public policy issues. The document has three parts.

The first part outlines the responsibility of Catholics to incorporate Catholic teaching as they consider their vote as well as their support for myriad public policy issues that confront society.

The text explores a series of questions related to why the Church teaches about public policy issues; who in the Church should participate in advocating in public life; how the Church helps Catholics to speak about political and social questions; and what the Church says about social teaching in the public square.

Part two outlines policy positions of the bishops on numerous issues. Topics addressed include human life and dignity, promoting peace, marriage and family religious freedom, economic justice, health care, migration, Catholic education, promoting justice and countering violence, combating unjust discrimination, care for the environment, communications media and culture and global solidarity.

The bishops said they wanted to “call attention to issues with significant moral dimensions that should be carefully considered in each campaign and as policy decisions are made in the years to come.”

Part three lists goals for Catholics’ participation in political life, whether they are citizens, candidates or public officials. Notably, it invites Catholics to assess moral and ethical questions emanating from public policy issues. It also lists nine goals for Catholics to weigh in public life.

“Faithful Citizenship” also draws from the teaching of Pope Francis, Pope Benedict XVI, St. John Paul II, St. John XXIII, the Second Vatican Council, and “Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church.”

The letter also says, “The threat of abortion remains our preeminent priority because it directly attacks life itself, because it takes place within the context of the family and because of the number of lives destroyed. At the same time, we cannot dismiss or ignore other serious threats to human life and dignity such as racism, the environmental crisis, poverty and the death penalty.”

It concludes by reminding Catholics to “bring their faith and our consistent moral framework to contribute to important work in our communities, nation, and world on an ongoing basis, not just during election season.”

The full document also is available in Spanish.

The text of “Faithful Citizenship” can be downloaded as a free PDF from USCCB.org, or it can be purchased by going to St beet.USCCB.org.

In addition to English, the videos were produced in Spanish, Tagalog and Vietnamese.

The productions explore various aspects of Catholic social teaching while reflecting on the teaching of Pope Francis.

The videos are posted on the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ website at faithfulcitizenship.org and the USCCB’s YouTube channel at bit.ly/1YHb62N. They are part of the bishops’ effort to broaden their outreach through the document.

Each video was produced with young people in mind, said Jill Ruah, director of education and outreach in the USCCB’s Department of Justice Peace and Human Development.

Along with the images and voices of young people, each piece features one bishop narrating an aspect of Catholic social teaching. Each production closes with a different prayer specifically written for the series.

Scenes showing people feeding the hungry, protecting God’s creation, comforting the elderly, caring for children, migrant people and families, and engaging in civil discussions are prominent in the productions.

“The videos are meant to reflect the teaching of the bishops in ‘Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship,’” Ruah said. “The videos are really trying to make that teaching more accessible.”

Other wide-ranging resources are being made available to parishes, schools, prayer groups and other interested parties through the faithfulcitizenship webpage. As summer ends and Election Day, Nov. 3, nears, resources and Jan 2020, bishops have been gearing up their use of “Faithful Citizenship” resources, according to social ministry directors across the country.

Archbishop Coakley said the bishops expect the guidance offered in the “Faithful Citizenship” materials will gain wider attention this year.

“My hope and prayer is that Catholics who really want their faith to influence their decision making when it comes to politics will find the resources in this document consideration rather than just going to their favorite news source,” he said. “That’s going to be a very different kind of guidance than what they receive from their favorite cable news anchor or pundit.”

“This is our chance to bring a different light to bear to a very important fundamental civic responsibility.”

The full document also is available in Spanish.
Coronavirus and creation: Bringing lessons learned into prayer, action

Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — During the height of the COVID-19 lockdowns in Europe and North America, city-dwellers — including Pope Francis — were struck by the harsh on the streets, the blueness of the skies and the songs of birds.

The experience gives added meaning to the theme of the 2020 celebration of the Season of Creation, “Jubilee for the Earth: New Rhythms, New Hope.”

The Season of Creation begins Sept. 1, the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, an observance initiated by the Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople in 1989 and adopted by Pope Francis for the Catholic Church in 2015. The season runs through Oct. 4, the feast of St. Francis of Assisi.

The theme, “Jubilee for the Earth,” refers to the biblical jubilee years in Leviticus 25 — a sacred time every 50 years for renewing one’s relationship with God, restoring justice to individuals and letting the land recuperate.

Father Joschtron Isaac Kureethadam, an official at the Diocese for Promoting Integral Human Development, said the theme was chosen by an ecumenical organizing group before the COVID-19 pandemic began. They wanted to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Earth Day April 22.

But, “the theme has become so relevant in the context of lockdown, and the pandemic is still raging across the world,” he said. While the lockdown had a hugely negative impact on the poor, who could not work from home, “gave us a taste of an environment with much less pollution, the skies were clear, the dolphins came back” to the waters off of Italy.

The “small gap” of the lockdown, he said, showed that, if given a chance, “nature can flourish again.”

In a joint letter urging Christians to mark the celebration, the Ecumenical Conference of European Churches and the Catholic Council of European Bishops’ Conferences said the biblical call to a jubilee “underlines changes, which is different from ‘green washing.’”

“The lesson from the biblical concept of jubilee points us toward the need to restore balance in the very systems of life, affirming the need for equality, justice and sustainability and confirming the need for a prophetic voice in defense of our common home,” said the letter released Aug. 25.

Celia Deane-Drummond, director of the Laudato Si’ Research Institute at Campion Hall at England’s Oxford University, said a jubilee implies rest for the land — by for example, letting a field lie fallow for a year — and rest for human beings, especially those enslaved by others, but also those who feel driven to work almost 24/7 for earnings or status.

“That’s what integral ecology is all about; bringing together the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor means not focusing on one or the other but both at the same time,” she told Catholic News Service Aug. 25. “Trying to get a balance between those aspects is sometimes quite challenging, but a jubilee is sort of like, ‘Let’s stop and listen and think about how we need to do things differently.’”

The professor, who has doctoral degrees in both biology and theology, said she thinks there are things people learned during the lockdown that will endure. For example, she expects online meetings to continue to replace many international conferences, reducing the carbon footprints of people who fly all over the world for meetings.

Also, she said, many people will continue to enjoy beauty they discovered in their own neighborhoods and the joys of walking, hiking or running near home.

But another important aspect of a jubilee is forgiveness, she said. “The tendency is to put too much emphasis on blaming people for the crisis we’re in and not enough on the mercy of God and forgiveness and the possibility of starting again or of doing things differently.”

“I would always want to go back and say, ‘Well it’s not too late’ if an individual or business owner takes responsibility for harming the environment and truly changes, which is different from ‘green washing,’ the practice of marketing a company as environmentally friendly when it is not.

Pope Francis’ call to “listen to the cry of the poor or of our ailing planet” has been consistent since the publication five years ago of his ecological encyclical, “Laudato Si’, on Care for Our Common Home.”

But that call has been more insistently during the coronavirus pandemic.

At his weekly general audience Aug. 19, Pope Francis defined as a “scandal” government pandemic assistance to companies that “do not contribute to the inclusion of the excluded, the promotion of the least, the common good or the care of creation.”

“Greedily for profit, we let ourselves get caught up in things, and hared away by haste,” Pope Francis said during a special prayer service in an empty rain-soaked St. Peter’s Square in March.

People did not “listen to the cry of the poor of our ailing planet,” he said. “We carried on regardless, thinking we would stay healthy in a world that was sick.”

Father Kureethadam said invoking a jubilee and encouraging prayer is a holistic approach to environmental concern; it includes asking forgiveness of God and of one another.

“Our real hope and prayer is that it will allow us to renew humanity, renew solidarity, renew ourselves in our relationship with God and with one another and the environment,” he said.

Marking the fifth anniversary of Laudato Si’, the pope published a prayer that asked God to “enable us to succeed in listening and responding to the cry of the Earth, and the cry of the poor. May your current sufferings become the birth-pangs of a more fraternal and sustainable world.”

Hurricane relief to parishes

Aug. 30, and 65 people showed up.

“What really touched me is the people are so filled with hope and happiness,” Father Starkovich said. “Today everyone was joyous. We were short on volunteers, and we sent out a text message, and 50 volunteers came to the church in 10 minutes. They all left their own homes, which they were working on, to give food and water and supplies to everyone else.”

He said the group planned to work from 12-2 p.m. but ended up helping from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. instead.

Because there is no water or power at the parish plant, Father Starkovich is living temporarily with nearly two dozen family members at his parents’ home.

In addition to donations from the respective parishes of each support group members, Our Lady of Prompt Succor Parish in Chalmette and St. Luke the Evangelist Parish in Slidell also donated supplies.

“Most of our parishes are taking up collections to help with financial assistance,” Father Hemelt said. Father Howard noted that as one of his parishioners put it: “After Katrina, we were hit so hard, and help was coming from all over the country Now it’s our turn to return some of that help and support them.”

That message is lost on Lake Charles Catholics, Father Starkovich said.

“Our diocese helped New Orleans during Katrina,” he said, “and now receiving that gift in return is a beautiful reality.”

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Mother of God Cemetery
announces
VISITATION DAY
September 2020
CANCELED
The Church has been here

(Continued from page 5)

world. While the pagans abandoned their friends, left the dead unburied and lied, the Christians took care of those in most need. History shows us that it was both the early martyrs and the faithful who showed extraordinary love that paved the way for the Church to flourish in spite of having the odds stacked against her. “Stainless heroism won both admiration and converts,” writes Dr. Bullivant. Another term for this “stainless heroism” is true charity — love. One of the most striking examples of true charity to me, was St. Charles Borromeo in the 16th century. A plague descended on Milan and he was the city’s bishop. To fund the city’s relief effort he sold everything he had, took up a collection and persuaded those who could to give generously. He found ways to make sure that people’s material and spiritual needs were taken care of. He created jobs and hospitals and quarantine houses. He rescued orphaned infants and made sure they received the love and attention they required. The salvation of souls was always St. Charles’ number one priority. At the peak of the epidemic when churches were closed and people were confined to their homes, St. Charles erected outdoor alters all around town for daily Mass. The people prayed from their windows. He and his clergy instituted door-to-door confessions and a home-delivery program for the Eucharist on Sundays. He even organized a number of activities and resources to help his flock lead lives of piety and virtue — he was worried about possible temptations in all that idle time.

Obviously we live in different times, but we’ve seen many parallels of St. Charles’ actions during the current pandemic. His story, among others, serves as a reminder about God’s love and providence in their lives. Imagine the impact on the world if every Catholic devoted them- selves to doing small acts of love every day if we keep our eyes fixed on the Lord we can become a beacon of hope for others. Right now, we are the disciples in a boat on a stormy sea and Jesus is asking us: “Where is your faith?” (cf. Matthew 8:23–27, Mark 4:35–41, and Luke 8:22–25).

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David Coyle is co-director and office manager of the Office of Catechesis and Evangelization, Diocese of Covington, Ky.
National/World

Economy must place people above 'idle of finance,' pope says

VATICAN CITY — As many around the world face economic uncertainty due to the pandemic, a paradigm shift is needed that places the good of the many over the benefit of the few, Pope Francis said. As a general concept, economies should become “the expression of a care and concern that does not exclude but seeks to include, that does not demonize but seeks to uplift and give life,” the pope said Sept. 4 in a message to participants at an international forum sponsored by the “European House — Ambrosetti,” an economic think tank based in Rome. Economics should be an expression of “care and concern that refuses to sacrifice human dignity to the idle of finance, that does not give rise to violence and inequality and that uses financial resources not to dominate but to serve,” he said: “Genuine profit comes from treasures accessible to all.” “European House” — Ambrosetti was holding its annual forum Sept. 4-6 in the northern Italian city of Cernobbio. According to its website, the forum “gathers governments, authorities, businessmen, scholars and experts ‘to discuss current issues of major impact for the world economy and society as a whole.’”

Report abuse learned in confession or go to jail, says Australian state

BRISBANE, Australia — A new law requires priests in the state of Queensland to break the seal of confession to report child sex abuse to police or face three years in jail. The law was passed by Queensland Parliament Sept. 4. It had support from both major parties and was opposed by the Catholic Church. One Queensland priest, Bishop Tim Harris of Townsville, tweeted a link to a story on the passage of the new law and said: “Catholic priests cannot break the seal of confession.” The new law was a response to recommendations from the Royal Commission Into Child Sexual Abuse, which uncovered and documented the tragic history of abuses in religious and secular organizations, including Catholic-run schools and orphanages across the country South Australia, Victoria, Tasmania, the Australian Capital Territory and Victoria.

St. Damien’s relatives speak up against criticism of saint’s statue

HONOLULU — Uproar by the suspension raised by Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, D-New York, that St. Damien was a “typical example of white colonialism, patriarchy and white supremacists culture,” the letter said. Father Damien, a missionary of the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts, was assigned to the Hawaiian mission in 1846. He spent the last 16 years of his life caring for the victims of Hansen’s disease, or leprosy, who were permanently moved to Kalaupapa, Molokai. He died of the disease in 1889 and was canonized a saint in 2009. The letter was signed by Bob den Broek and Herman Van Boxt, chairman and representative of the Father Damien family association, respectively. It describes descendants of both Damien’s brother Gerard de Veuster.

New book recounts pope’s vision for integral ecology

VATICAN CITY — In a new book featuring his conversations with Pope Francis, Italian environmental activist Carlo Petroni said he hopes the published discussions will contribute to the groundwork laid out by “Laudato Si’.” The book, titled “TerraFutura (Future Earth): Conversations with Pope Francis on Integral Ecology,” is meant to highlight the importance of the pope’s encyclical on the environment and its impact on the world five years after its publication in 2015. “If we want to use humans like a metaphor, I would say that this encyclical is entering its adolescence. It has passed its infancy; it has learned to walk. But now comes the time of youth. I am convinced that this growth will be very stimulating,” Petroni told journalists Sept. 8, presenting the book at the Vatican’s Sala Marconi.

Forty years after killings, Salvadoran city says Maryknoll Sisters as its own

CHALATANANGO, El Salvador — On a bright and clear March afternoon, Bishop Oscar Romero Aguilar walked into a cemetery and gently dusted off a white marble plaque on top of a tiny headstone of Timoteo Ramirez. Despite the years ahead, he told secretary Violeta Kereleska Serrano that they need to make sure the tomb was decorated with flowers Dec. 2. That’s the day when, in 1980, two of three U.S. Maryknoll sisters buried there were killed near the country’s capital of San Salvador, along with two other American Catholic women. Though the killings came as a shock around the country and in the U.S., the loss of the Maryknoll sisters was keenly felt in the Diocese of Chalatenango, in northern El Salvador, where the women lived and served. Maryknoll Sisters Maura Clarke and Ita Ford, along with Ursuline Sister Dorothy Kanal and lay missionary Jean Donovan, were raped and murdered by Salvadorean Catholic national guards as the civil war and the bloodshed among poor Catholic communities in the country ramped up.

Chalatenango ramped up. Today, almost four decades after their deaths, the women are remembered, not because of how they died, but as examples of Christian lives well-lived, with the words “martyrs” and “saints” thrown about by those keeping their memory alive.

San Francisco archbishop asks city to ease Mass restrictions

SAN FRANCISCO — Archbishop Salvatore J. Cordileone of San Francisco has asked the city’s mayor and health officials to ease attendance restrictions on public Masses the archbishop says are unfair. Currently, Masses may be celebrated only outdoors in San Francisco with only 12 attendees. According to archdiocesan spokesman Mike Brown, a dozen priests have been celebrating Masses simultaneously at Our Lady of the Assumption Cathedral Plaza in the city “San Francisco is the only government in the entire Bay Area that restricts public gatherings to 12 people out of doors. Ours and others’ faith is being treated as less important than a trip to the hardware store, or a nice dinner out on the patio,” Archbishop Cordileone said in his Aug. 31 message to Mayor London Breed, Dr. Grant Colfax, the director of public health, and Dr. Tomas Aragon, a city health officer: “This denial of access to safe outdoor public worship is a serious deprivation of our rights as Americans under the First Amendment and our spiritual needs as people of faith,” the archbishop said, adding that more than one million public Masses have been celebrated since the pandemic without any outbreaks of COVID-19.

Visiting Lebanon, Cardinal Parolin emphasises ‘you are not alone’

BEIRUT — Bringing a message of hope to Lebanon, a month after a double blast struck Beirut, Pope Francis’ closest collaborator assured the Lebanese: “You are not alone. The whole world feels your pain.” Cardinal Pietro Parolin, who serves as the Vatican’s secretary of state, arrived in Lebanon Sept. 4 to express the nearness of the Catholic Church throughout the world. His Holiness Pope Francis has asked me to come and express the solidarity with Beirut and with Lebanon. The response to the papal call for believers around the world to observe “a universal day of prayer and fasting for Lebanon” Sept. 4. Lebanon’s population, already exhausted by a collapsing econo- my that has plunged the middle class into poverty, has been traumatized by the disaster, blamed on 2,750 metric tons of ammonium nitrate stored for years as a port warehouse. At least 180 people died, more than 6,500 were injured and more than 350,000 people remain homeless. “I come to your historic country on behalf of Pope Francis coincides with the papal call for believers around the world to observe “a universal day of prayer and fasting for Lebanon” Sept. 4,” Cardinal Parolin said in his Aug. 31 message to Mayor London Breed, Dr. Grant Colfax, the director of public health, and Dr. Tomas Aragon, a city health officer: “This denial of access to safe outdoor public worship is a serious deprivation of our rights as Americans under the First Amendment and our spiritual needs as people of faith,” the archbishop said, adding that more than one million public Masses have been celebrated since the pandemic without any outbreaks of COVID-19.
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