The Seminarian Education Fund for the Diocese of Covington will be held the weekend of Nov. 7-8 at all Masses across the diocese. All parishioners will receive a mailing before the weekend with brochures, prayer cards and response cards to facilitate donations either to be mailed or brought to Mass that weekend in the collection basket.

This year, the Diocese of Covington has 11 seminarians studying at St. Vincent Seminary, Latrobe, Penn., and the Pontifical College Josephinum in Columbus, Ohio. The cost to educate a seminarian is currently approximately $57,000.

“The future of our Church is our priests. It’s critical that people make a conscious decision to support our future,” said Michael Murray, director of Stewardship and Mission Services. “We have a very generous faith community that responds, so we’re looking forward to them responding again in a positive fashion, especially in these difficult times.”
Northern Kentuckians urged to take action now to reverse local COVID trend

**Message staff report**

In an e-mailed press release, Oct. 26, The Northern Kentucky Health Department reported a concerning rise in reported COVID-19 cases in the region. The region currently has a total of 5,000 cases of COVID-19, including 1,484 active cases, and last week saw the second highest weekly number of cases since the start of the pandemic. The number of deaths remains at 96 for the region.

“We are starting to see concerning trends here in Northern Kentucky,” Dr. Lynne Satterly, NKY Health’s district director of health. “Most of our health district is showing accelerated spread of COVID-19 and unless we slow this down, we will see a third surge here.”

Northern Kentucky’s location, bordering Ohio and Indiana where rates of COVID-19 are higher, may be contributing to the growing number of cases. However, other factors such as more people physically returning to work and school, combined with social gatherings and events and wearing adherence to protective measures are part of the increased spread. In addition, Northern Kentucky is seeing a resurgence of hotspots in some long-term care facilities.

The growth in cases is especially troublesome as colder weather and the holidays approach and more gatherings move indoors. Although the number of deaths has remained steady so far, Dr. Satterly is concerned about where Northern Kentucky may be heading.

“Northern Kentucky is entering a critical phase of the pandemic. We could see our highest case numbers to come and along with that, the possibility of an overwhelmed health care system and an increase in deaths in our most susceptible residents. I don’t want to see that happen here, so I am asking every Northern Kentuckian to take action now.”

Northern Kentuckians can turn this trend around by taking these important steps — wear a face covering, stay at least six feet away from others, avoid crowded places, keep gatherings small and ideally limited to immediate family and household members, and wash hands frequently.

**Religious sisters offer virtual open houses for vocation discernment**

*Allegra Thatcher*  
*Assistant Editor*

To celebrate National Vocations Awareness Week Nov. 1-7, local religious orders are hosting virtual open houses via Zoom. In place of traditional meet and greets, the sisters are inviting young adults to drop in on calls to learn more about religious life and specific communities.

Of the 14 participating orders, three are from Northern Kentucky. The Benedictine Sisters of St. Walburg, The Sisters of Divine Providence and the Sisters of Notre Dame are all taking part in the opportunity to share about their spirituality, ministries and their daily life with curious young adults.

Sister Leslie Keener, vocations director for the Sisters of Divine Providence said people often ask about the sisters’ prayer life, experience in ministry, what it’s like to live in community and about the vows they take. This is a new event, since their congregation usually hosts events like dinners in the spring.

“One of the gifts of being a vocation director is to go out and about and talk about this life that I love, and an event like this gives me an opportunity to do that and to interact with different people,” she said. “The gift of doing the program this way is that people don’t have to be local — anyone can be in on it and we get to meet all the different people.”

Sister Ruth Lubbers, assistant vocation director for the Sisters of Notre Dame, said their national vocation team members will be present for the events to share about their charisms and mission and to address questions that participants may have.

“We are looking forward to meeting women through these events and sharing about the Sisters of Notre Dame. We are interested in seeing how this type of event works out, and if it fills the needs of those discerning religious life,” she said.

All the meet and greets are free but pre-registration is required. Registration can be found at tinyURL.com/CincyVAW.

**Thanksgiving greetings**

*Allegra Thatcher*  
*Assistant Editor*

Bishop Roger Foys’ annual thank you card to donors of the Diocesan Parish Annual Appeal features the artwork of St. Walburg, the Sisters of Divine Providence and the Sisters of Notre Dame are all taking part in the opportunity to share about their spirituality, ministries and their daily life with curious young adults.

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**Coronavirus Report**

(as of Monday, Oct. 26)

**Positive Cases**

Active cases: 11  
Recovered positive cases: 43

**Currently Self-quarantined**

Contacts: 145  
Close Contacts: 164

**Returned to class after quarantine/self-quarantine**

From Oct. 20-Oct. 26: 55 students  
Total ever: 866 students

**Schools currently with quarantines/self-quarantines:**

Bishop Brossart High School, Alexandria  
Blessed Sacrament School, Ft. Mitchell  
Covington Latin School, Covington  
Holy Trinity School, Bellevue  
Immaculate Heart of Mary School, Burlington  
Mary, Queen of Heaven School, Erlanger  
Newport Central Catholic, Newport  
Notre Dame Academy, Covington  
St. Henry District High School, Erlanger  
St. Agnes School, Ft. Wright  
St. Catherine of Siena School, Ft. Thomas  
St. Cecilia School, Independence  
St. Henry School, Erlanger  
St. Joseph Academy, Walton  
St. Joseph Pre-K, Camp Springs  
St. John School, Alexandria  
St. Patrick School, Maysville  
St. Paul School, Florence  
St. Philip School, Melbourne  
St. Pius X School, Edgecliff  
St. Theresa School, Southgate  
St. Thomas School, Ft. Thomas  
St. Timothy Parish School of Religion, Union  
St. Timothy School, Union  
Sts. Peter and Paul School, California

Villa Madonna Elementary, Villa Hills

(Schools without students, faculty or staff in quarantine or self-quarantine do not need to report.)

**Bible verse** “Rejoice always, pray constantly, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)

She has taken an art class every semester of high school and is currently in AP Drawing to develop her own style. She enjoyed putting those skills to the test for the project.

“I was surprised to win,” she said. “I am always thankful for the Bishop, he does a lot... he even took the time to take a picture with us. I think that’s amazing."

“The Stewardship Office is thrilled at the opportunity to work with the Cincinnati secondary schools on this project,” said director Mike Murray “We are always amazed at the quality of artwork that comes and it makes the job very difficult for Bishop Foys to select the winning artwork. We’re grateful to be able to thank our donors during such an important time of the year in the Thanksgiving season.”

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Honoring our dearly departed ones

Each year, Bishop Roger Foys and the families of the dearly departed of the last year honor their deceased loved ones with an annual cemetery visitation to St. Stephen, St. Mary, and St. John cemeteries. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the public visits have been cancelled, though Bishop Foys will still be visiting the cemeteries privately. He will pray over the graves with psalms and intercession.

Anyone who has lost a loved one this year during the COVID-19 shutdown has suffered not only the loss of a beloved family member but also, in many cases, the loss of being with their loved one as they passed from this world to the next and the loss of a traditional Catholic funeral. The cancellation of the annual cemetery visitation services is again another loss.

As a way of acknowledging these losses and to honor the families and their loved ones Bishop Foys has recorded a video message, which is available on the diocesan website, www.covdio.org. Additionally, the Messenger is sharing with readers a listing of names our dearly departed ones.

October 30, 2020

Bishop’s Schedule

Nov. 11 COVID-19 briefing, 9:30 a.m.
Nov. 12 COVID-19 briefing, 9:30 a.m.
Nov. 13 Confirmation, St. Therese Parish, 7:30 p.m.
Nov. 14 Cemetery blessings - Note: These will be private this year owing to the COVID-19 restrictions
Nov. 15 Mass, Cathedral Basilica, 10 a.m.

St. Mary Cemetery, Ft. Mitchell
Mary A. Acree
Eileen Anderson
Eylyr T. Barnes
Vincent W. Behan
Mary L. Beller
Sister Ann Berberich
James A. Berling
Joseph G. Besler
Elieah L. Blom
Paul H. Borros
Joan Bowman

(Continued on page 6)
On October 4, the feast of St. Francis of Assisi, Pope Francis released a new encyclical entitled, "Fratelli Tutti." - "On Fraternity and Social Friendship." It can appear a rather depressing road because of its soaring realism, except it plays the long game of Christian hope.

"Fratelli Tutti" lays out reasons why there’s so much in injustice, inequality and community breakdown in our world and how in faith and love these might be addressed. The intent here is not to give a synopsis of the encyclical, other than to say it’s the truth to power. Rather the intent is to highlight a number of special challenges within the encyclical.

First, it challenges us to see the poor and to see what our present political, economic and social systems are doing to them. Looking at our world, the encyclical submits that in many ways it is a broken world and it names some reasons for this: the globalization of self-interest, the globalization of superficiality and the abuse of social media, among other things. This has made for the survival of the fittest. And while the situation is broken for everyone, the poor are ending up suffering the most. The rich are getting richer, the powerful are getting more powerful and the poor are growing poorer and losing what little power they had. There’s an ever-increasing inequality of wealth and power between the rich and the poor and our world is becoming ever more calloused vis-à-vis the situation of the poor. Inequality is now accepted as normal and in fact is often justified in the name of God and religion. The poor are becoming disposable: Some parts of our human family, it appears, can be readily sacrificed for the sake of others. Wealth has increased, but together with inequality. In speaking of inequality, the encyclical twice highlights that this inequality is true of women worldwide: "It is unacceptable that some parts of our human family, it appears, can be disposed of simply because of their gender. The poor are becoming disposable: Some parts of our human family, it appears, can be disposed of simply because of their gender. Their rights are being violated and their dignity compromised. The solutions to this problem are straightforward: we need a new globalization which is more inclusive and respectful of all persons."

The encyclical goes on to warn that in the face of globalization we must resist becoming nationalistic and tribal, taking care of our own and demonizing what’s foreign. We must be tender and gracious, always speaking out of love and not out of hatred. "Kindness ought to be cultivated, it is a non-violent bourgeois virtue."

The encyclical acknowledges how difficult and counter-cultural it is to counterbalance our own agenda, conflict and freedom for community, but invites us to make that sacrifice: "I would like especially to mention solidarity which is a moral virtue and social attitude born of personal conversion."

There is no question in my mind that we are going through unprecedented times in the history of our nation. Pandemic and civil unrest seem like a presidential election don’t usually happen and yet here we are. It seems that conversations are stopped while the ranting and raving takes on a full head of steam. What are we to make of this? Now is the time to turn to the Lord for guidance. We so often forget that He is still in charge and that we are only bit players in this life. Instead of turning inward and on one another, we should look to the one who holds our future in His Divine hands. After all, our society has chosen this path when we began to sacrifice: "I would like especially to mention solidarity which is a moral virtue and social attitude born of personal conversion."

Now is not the time to cower in the proclamation of the Good News of Jesus Christ. We should be proclaiming the roofops that our hope is in the name of the Lord. There is hope and that hope comes alive when we share that Good News in our words and actions. The truth, beauty and good which God finds in faith need to be lived and shared. I’ve never been more convinced of this than on many conversations I’ve had recently with a wide variety of people. The world is starving for something to cling to during this chaos we are currently experiencing. For so many, a tipping point of sorts has occurred. They don’t know where to turn or with whom they can talk. We need to be prepared to be there with our love of Jesus and the strengthening power of our Catholic faith.

All of us has been around that person who has images in our faith in some form or another. I have noticed some beautiful sunsets recently that remind me of the beauty of God. I’ve gotten back into the habit of walking the time to read more, especially regarding the lives of the saints. The scent of the newly mowed grass here at the Retreat Center somehow has a more meaningful fragrance. I’ve slowed down enough to appreciate those things and many other gifts that I’ve been given. I’m not so tied up in technology and time management. It’s God’s time, not mine, and I’ve come to use it in the glory of His name and to take His name out into the world. There are extraordinary opportunities out there to help people who are in need. The Gospel is alive and well and we can bring it to those who are struggling during this time. We can also show our love for the Risen Lord is greater than any other virus or social unrest. Jesus left us his joy, peace and a promise that He would never abandon us. That alone should give us good reason to want to share that with the world around us. Take that opportunity and experience the blessings that come from that simple action. I wish you all the peace of Christ and the hope that comes from the one who can and will help us through anything extraordinary opportunities.

Deacon David Proffit is director of the St. Anne Retreat Center, Middletown and is assigned to Holy Spirit Parish, Newport.

Extraordinary times, extraordinary opportunity

One thing that has come out of all this craziness for me, is the appreciation for the simple things in life that I have often taken for granted. I’ve noticed some beautiful sunsets recently that remind me of the beauty of God. I’ve gotten back into the habit of walking the time to read more, especially regarding the lives of the saints. The scent of the newly mowed grass here at the Retreat Center somehow has a more meaningful fragrance. I’ve slowed down enough to appreciate those things and many other gifts that I’ve been given. I’m not so tied up in technology and time management. It’s God’s time, not mine, and I’ve come to use it in the glory of His name and to take His name out into the world. There are extraordinary opportunities out there to help people who are in need. The Gospel is alive and well and we can bring it to those who are struggling during this time. We can also show our love for the Risen Lord is greater than any other virus or social unrest. Jesus left us his joy, peace and a promise that He would never abandon us. That alone should give us good reason to want to share that with the world around us. Take that opportunity and experience the blessings that come from that simple action. I wish you all the peace of Christ and the hope that comes from the one who can and will help us through anything extraordinary opportunities.

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Celebrating the saints in our lives

This weekend, the Church celebrates the great Solemnity of All Saints. That one day a year when we honor and seek the intercession of all those who have attained the goal of every human soul — heaven!

The Preface for this Mass has an outcry: “For today by your gift we celebrate the festival of your city, the heavenly Jerusalem, our mother, where the great array of our brother and sister saints rest, and who, by your power, gives you eternal praise. Towards her, we eagerly hasten as pilgrims advancing by faith, rejoicing in the glory bestowed upon those elected members of the Church through whom you give us, in our frailty both in strength and example.”

Augustine famously said: “Our hearts are rest- less until they rest in Father Daniel Schomaker is pastor, St. Augustine School, sports, extracurricular activities, family commit- ments and an always evolving social calendar — plus the COVID-19 pandemic — lead to a tremendous amount of stress these days for many teenagers. Flowing from Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and other social media plat- forms to the equation, and we can understand why.

Thanksgiving and Christmas will look like — example of our elderly residents.

Throughout these last months, we have marveled at how resilient our residents are in the face of daily inconve- niences, constantly changing routines and countless unknowns. Although in many cases their bodies are frail, their spirits — and their sense of humor — have remained strong.

What is the secret to their resilience?

As members of the greatest and silent generations, our residents experienced the Great Depression and World War II, as well as tremendous social and technolog- ical changes that are mind-boggling today.

These two generations are known for their resilience in surviving hardship, their strong work ethic and their sense of personal responsibility and self-sacrifice. The men and women of the greatest and silent generations have been lucky enough to have members of these generations among your family or neighbors, take some time this “disrupted Thanksgiving” to learn from them and share in their gratitude for the little things in life. Sister Constance Veit is the director of communications for the Little Sisters of the Poor.

Finding ways to give thanks


The article then followed a question that is, according to the author, on the tip of everyone’s tongue — “Just how many whole turkeys will Americans cook this year for a holi- day that’s been clipped by the pan- demic?”

I don’t know if there was any pun intended, but I found the question quite amusing. I can’t say that this has been the big question on my mind lately, but I have been thinking ahead and planning for the节日.

Throughout the sum- mer, social distancing regulations were relaxed through- out much of the country, but we are now seeing worrying signs of a COVID second wave. In the world of long-term care, we still live in a virtual world with our elderly residents and essential staff, almost completely cut off from the outside world.

Families, volunteers and our devoted lay associates — people who provide companionship, entertainment and the little extras that make life more pleasant for our frail seniors — have all been barred from our Homes since mid-March.

We try to take one day at a time, but we are always aware that even a single positive COVID test would send our residents back into isolation. Recently some of them told me that they expect the holiday to be quite different this year since it is unlikely they will be able to spend time in close proximity with their loved ones.

Despite having minimal contact with the outside world, we remain mindful of those who have passed away due to COVID-19 and the thousands of loved ones who mourn their loss, as well as those who have lost their jobs or homes, those who struggle everyday to provide for their families and those who are risking their own lives for others.

What will Thanksgiving mean this year? In the face of so many challenges and so much loss? What will we find to be grateful for? How can we celebrate while our lives are still so thoroughly disrupted, and our wings and spir- its remain clipped?

Find answers to these questions in the faces and memories of them.

Weathering the Thanksgiving of their youth were marred by rationing and shortages of common commodi- ties such as sugar, meat and butter. Turkeys were in short supply on the home front because they were shipped overseas so that every member of the U.S. mili- tary could have a hot Thanksgiving dinner, no matter where they were stationed.

Gasoline and tire rationing prevented people from traveling long distances by car and military personnel were given priority on trains, so family gatherings were surely smaller.

The traditional Macy’s Thanksgiving Parade was can- celled as the famous giant balloons were sandwiched for scrap scrub, and even college and professional football were put on hold.

These are the saints that we celebrate on this spectac- ular feast. Those individuals who have, as St. Paul says: “I have competed well, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.” (2 Tim. 7) They have attained the goal of a life well lived — HEAVEN!

Today, let us give to the Lord the speech, through the Sacred Scriptures, the Divine Liturgy and the witness and example of our own hearts and learn the safe (although not always attained the goal of every human soul — heaven!

Many young people feel the stress and anxiety of their peers and share in their gratitude for the little things in life. Sister Constance Veit is the director of communications for the Little Sisters of the Poor.

Blessed Carlo Acutis offers a witness of Christ for all

Providentially, the recent news of a teenager on the path to sainthood serves as a reminder for people of faith who need a real life example from today’s world.

Italian teenager Carlo Acutis was beatified Oct. 10 in Assisi, Italy. He is the first millennial to be declared “blessed.”

Carlo used his computer programming skills to spread devotion to the Eucharist, which he called his “highway to heaven.” On the website he created, Carlo told people that “the more often we receive the Eucharist, the more we will become like Jesus, so that on this earth we will have a foretaste of heaven.”

Carlo’s tomb was open for veneration Oct. 1-10 at the Shrine of the Remunation at the Church of St. Mary Major in Assisi.

His body was “found in the normal state of transformation typical of the cadaveric condition,” according to Assisi Bishop Domenico Sorrentino as quoted in a Catholic News Agency article, dispelling the belief by some that it was found intact. The article states the body was “arranged with dignity for its display for public venera- tion and a silicone reconstruction of his face used.”

Placed in a glass case, his body was dressed in jeans and a track suit jacket — the attire he was accustomed to wearing and what is seen in many of the photos taken of him during his life.

Although he grew up in Milan, Carlo requested to be buried in Assisi because of his love for St. Francis of Assisi.

Carlo’s faith was evident early in life. At age 7, he wrote, “To be always united with Jesus, this is my life program.”

Before his death from leukemia at age 15 in 2006, Carlo was an average teen with an above-average knack for computers. He put that knowledge to use by creating an online database of eucharistic miracles around the world.

Carlo’s life centered around his faith: He attended daily Mass, prayed the rosary each day, received the sacrament of reconciliation weekly and prayed before the Blessed Sacrament.

In his apostolic exhortation on young people, “Christus Vivit” (“Christ Lives”), Pope Francis said Carlo was a role model for young people today who are often tempted by the traps of “self-absorption, isolation and empty pleasures.”

Carlo was well aware that the whole apparatus of (Continued on page 14)}
Pope announces new cardinals, including U.S. Archbishop Gregory

Cindy Woodward
Catholic Press Service

VATICAN CITY — Pope Francis announced he will create 13 new cardinals Nov. 28, including Archbishop Wilton D. Gregory of Washington.

The pope made the announcement at the end of his Angelus address Oct. 25, telling the crowd in St. Peter’s Square the names of the nine cardinals under the age of 80, who will be eligible to vote in a conclave, and the names of four elderly cardinals created by Pope Benedict XVI. Pope Francis will have created just over 70 percent of the electors. Sixteen of the cardinals created by St. John Paul II will still be under 80 as will 39 of the cardinals created by Pope Paul II will still be under 80 as will 39 of the cardinals created by Pope John Paul II. Pope Francis will have created 31 of the electors.

U.S. Cardinal Donald W. Wuerl, retired archbishop of Washington, will celebrate his 80th birthday Nov. 12, before the consistory. Italian Cardinal Angelo Becciu, whom the pope dismissed as prefect of the congregation for saints in late September, is 72, but renounced the rights of a cardinal, including the right to create a cardinal to elect a new pope.

Pope Francis will have created 13 new cardinals named by Pope Francis Oct. 25, 2020. He is pictured in a 2019 file photo. Italians will continue to have an outsized portion of the electorate, rising to 22 of the 128; the United States will stay at nine voters with Cardinal-designate Gregory taking Cardinal Wuerl’s place.

The Vatican press office said specifics will be announced later about how the consistory and the usual related activities will unfold given COVID-19 restrictions on travel and gatherers. According to canon law, cardinals are created by the pope’s decree, which is “published in the presence of the College of Cardinals.” Church law does not specify how many members of the college must be present nor does it insist that the new cardinal be present, although traditionally the conclave includes a public profession of faith by the new cardinal.

Here is the full list of the new cardinals, in the order named by the pope:

— Matteo Ballestri Mario Grech, 61, secretary-general of the Synod of Bishops.
— Italian Bishop Marcello Semeraro, 72, prefect of the Congregation for Saints’ Causes.
— Archbishop Antoine Kambamba Kubwa of Kuwait, who will turn 60 Nov. 10.
— Archbishop Gregory, 72.
— Archbishop Jose F. Avin udcis of Capiz, Philippines, 68.
— Archbishop Celestino Procaccini of Santiago, Chile, 75.
— Bishop Cornelius Sim, apostolic vicar of Brunei, 69.
— Archbishop Paolo Lejeu de Siena, 66.
— Francesco Paparo Mauro Gambetti, custos of the Sacred Convent of Assisi in Assisi, who was to celebrate his 75th birthday Oct. 27.
— Retired Bishop Felice Arzimendi Esquivel of San Cristóbal de las Casas, Mexico, 80.
— Retired Italian Archbishop Silvano M. Tomasi, a former nuncio, 80.
— Italian Cardinal Angelo Becciu, whom the pope dismissed as prefect of the congregation for saints in late September, is 72, but renounced the rights of a cardinal, including the right to create a cardinal to elect a new pope.

Cardinal-designate Gregory was named by the pope:

— Retired Italian Archbishop Silvano M. Tomasi, 80, a former nuncio and a member of the Scalabrinian missionaries, holds dual citizenship. He completed his studies for the priesthood in the United States and perserved as a priest in the United States and later in Rome’s Caritas.

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— Retired Bishop Felice Arzimendi Esquivel of San Cristóbal de las Casas, Mexico, 80.
— Retired Italian Archbishop Silvano M. Tomasi, a former nuncio, 80.
— Italian Cardinal Angelo Becciu, whom the pope dismissed as prefect of the congregation for saints in late September, is 72, but renounced the rights of a cardinal, including the right to create a cardinal to elect a new pope.

Cardinal-designate Gregory was named by the pope:

— Retired Italian Archbishop Silvano M. Tomasi, 80, a former nuncio and a member of the Scalabrinian missionaries, holds dual citizenship. He completed his studies for the priesthood in the United States and perserved as a priest in the United States and later in Rome’s Caritas.

Italians will continue to have an outsized portion of the electorate, rising to 22 of the 128; the United States will stay at nine voters with Cardinal-designate Gregory taking Cardinal Wuerl’s place.

The Vatican press office said specifics will be announced later about how the consistory and the usual related activities will unfold given COVID-19 restrictions on travel and gatherers. According to canon law, cardinals are created by the pope’s decree, which is “published in the presence of the College of Cardinals.” Church law does not specify how many members of the college must be present nor does it insist that the new cardinal be present, although traditionally the conclave includes a public profession of faith by the new cardinal.

Here is the full list of the new cardinals, in the order named by the pope:

— Matteo Ballestri Mario Grech, 61, secretary-general of the Synod of Bishops.
— Italian Bishop Marcello Semeraro, 72, prefect of the Congregation for Saints’ Causes.
— Archbishop Antoine Kambamba Kubwa of Kuwait, who will turn 60 Nov. 10.
— Archbishop Gregory, 72.
— Archbishop Jose F. Avin udcis of Capiz, Philippines, 68.
— Archbishop Celestino Procaccini of Santiago, Chile, 75.
— Bishop Cornelius Sim, apostolic vicar of Brunei, 69.
— Archbishop Paolo Lejeu de Siena, 66.
— Francesco Paparo Mauro Gambetti, custos of the Sacred Convent of Assisi in Assisi, who was to celebrate his 75th birthday Oct. 27.
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Prayer in a time of turmoil

Karen Kuhlm
Messenger Correspondent

The pandemic and the turmoil in our country have resulted in great difficulties for people all across America. When these trials pile up on top of the universal woes of simple humans, we find ourselves running on empty as isolation and fear for the health and safety of our loved ones and ourselves take hold. We know we can rise above it with God’s help, but we flounder about, struggling to know how to pray or what to pray for. The women religious in the Diocese of Covington offer a glimpse at how their rich prayer lives are helping them weather these storms.

Divine Providence Sister Carleen Schumacher says the residents of Holy Family Home, the retirement home for members of the Congregation of the Sisters of Divine Providence, are not exempt from the worries and sufferings of the latey. But, Sister Carleen said “Residents have been blessed in so many ways, and one of our most treasured blessings has been that there have been no coronavirus cases and thus no interruption in our daily spiritual life activities together. Morning and evening community prayer, daily Mass, bi-weekly Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, daily centering prayer and spiritual readings bring the sisters together in community to focus their prayers on asking God for an end to the pandemic, an end to racism in our country and asking the Holy Spirit for wisdom and guidance for all Americans during this election year.”

Sister Aileen Bankemper is prioress of the Benedictine Sisters of St. Walburg Monastery, and it, like so many of us, experiencing life under complete or semi-lockdown during the pandemic. Sister Aileen said that while a “COVID-19 committee” endeavors to address the physical and emotional health issues related to the virus, prayer is central to the life of a Benedictine. “As a community, we are committed to our scheduled four times of communal prayer and Lectio Divina, individual time reading pondering and praying with the word of God. Each day, we include intercessions for those impacted by COVID-19 and all of the caregivers. We are deeply mindful of the amount of social unrest, fear and political uncertainty occurring in our country. As a community, we are taking steps to address anti-racism. We are in a process of discernment so that we are more aware of our own biases and find ways to be more proactive in living lives of acceptance and harmony with all of God’s people. We fully recognize that there is plenty to pray about during these uncertain times.”

Mother Mary Christina, superior general of the Sisters of St. Joseph the Worker believes that one of the ways to pray during this time of trials is to develop more and more the gift of trust in God. “Between the pandemic, the national turmoil and whatever personal trials each of us is facing, it is easy to get discouraged. I have been praying and meditating more and more on God’s plan and my trust in His plan. There is nothing that happens in this world without God’s permission. At times it seems very difficult to see God’s will, but I keep repeating “Jesus, I trust in You.” I’ve prayed many Divine Mercy Chaplets and will continue to pray them as I try to develop more trust in God.”

To Notre Dame Sister Shauna Bankemper: these difficult times have been a call to live more mindfully and peacefully. When the news of the day becomes increasingly worrisome, she tries to calmly consider other options rather than dwell on the storms that seem to be raging all around us. “I find it very helpful for me to pray using a “Loving Kindness Meditation,” gently repeating the following phrases which represent my intentions for myself and others: May all beings be filled with loving kindness, May all beings be peaceful and at ease, May all beings be well, May all beings be happy. As each phrase is repeated, I am holding all in prayer and entrusting all into the compassionate heart of God where justice and peace reign. All will be well in all manner of things will be well!”

Mother Margaret Mary, Congregation of the Passion of Jesus Christ, (C.P.), said that the effects of the pandemic can be helpful or destructive, depending on our faith response. “Prayer can help us adjust our sights. Has our trust in God deepened, or have we slipped into a frame of mind that makes us bitter or angry? Our prayer can change our attitude, making us aware of others’ suffering, and giving us an appreciation of Jesus’s suffering and the redeeming value of the Cross. Prayer can make us aware of the need to trust in the circumstances that come each day for our own spiritual growth.”

Passionist Sister Mary Catherine thinks we might be overlooking something that can be a powerful form of prayer: penance. “People often think of penance as heavy-duty deeds that they take on themselves. But the best penance is simply to accept what our Lord allows throughout the day: the inconveniences, the sorrow, the large or small pain that we encounter. All of these can be offered to our Lord and beat anything we can come up with ourselves because they come totally from outside of self. Our Lord is open to our prayers, for any intentions. Go to Him…. He is waiting, open and loving.”

For more information about consecrated life in the Diocese of Covington, contact Sister Fran Moore at (859) 392-1500.
He’s known as a piano tuner, an organist, a choir director and a lector. But few know him as a Korean war veteran, a member of the first graduating class from Covington Latin School, a proud father of six and a man who lost his wife too soon.

He might be the longest attending Mass-goer at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption (78 years), and yet he’s never officially been a member. He attended seminary before Vatican II and Thomas More University when it was still called Villa Madonna College. He wrote two Mass settings and didn’t even mention it during an interview.

And Bill Blank, now nearly 90 years old, still attends Mass every morning at the Cathedral Basilica and tunes pianos practically every day.

Not a composer by profession, Mr. Blank, whose full name is William, has composed two Mass settings — the Mass of All Saints and the Mass of the Holy Cross. A Mass setting is the words of the Mass Ordinary set to music. The Ordinary words of the Mass are the parts that do not change with the liturgical calendar — they are a part of every Mass. There are five parts to the Ordinary: Kyrie (Lord have mercy…), Gloria (Glory to God in the highest…), Credo (I believe in God the Father…), Sanctus (Holy, Holy, Holy…) and the Agnus Dei (Lamb of God…).

In the 1960s after the Church changed the common liturgy to English, Mr. Blank said he looked at some of the Masses that were coming out in English, and said to himself, “I can do better than that.” They were quickly taken up by local churches and used “quite extensively” until about 30 years later, when the ‘Lord have mercy’ changed from three repetitions to two, which made the Masses unusable at the time.

“Having been a church organist for 50 years, I knew that the problem with congregational singing is that the people who write some of these songs and motets don’t realize that the ordinary person in the congregation isn’t a great musician and can’t sing this difficult stuff,” said Mr. Blank.

“So I wrote Masses that are simple, easy to read and sing, yet devout and pleasing to God.”

Then in 2012, after the new translation of the Latin Missal was published, Mr. Blank rewrote his Masses so they would fit the new liturgies. On July 15, 2015 Bishop Roger Foys approved Mr. Blank’s Mass of All Saints and the Mass of the Holy Cross for use in the Diocese of Covington.

“They’re being used, people like them,” he said. “I’ve had a lot of comments about how good my Masses are, I don’t want to toot my own horn, but I think they’re better than a lot of what’s out there.”

He’s not a well-known composer or musician, but as a choir director he often arranged old hymns for his choirs. “I’m not trying to make money off it, I’m just doing it for

(Continued on page 9)
the honor and glory of God." His Mass of All Saints is in the process of being published for use in the diocese, if family friend Rebecca Schaffer Wells has anything to do with it. Mrs. Wells’ father, Dr. Robert Schaffer, was good friends with Mr. Blank while the two of them were church musicians around the diocese. Dr. Schaffer was choirmaster and organist at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption for 62 years, a position his son, Dr. Gregory Schaffer, now holds. Dr. Schaffer also composed Masses, such as the Missa Pange Lingua and the Chorale Mass, published by the World Library of Sacred Music.

"Bill's Mass of All Saints was one of the first ones approved for use in the diocese after the new translation in 2011," Mrs. Wells said. She hopes to see it used across the nation soon.

Mr. Blank and her father met at the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra and remained friends for many years after, as they continued to run into each other across the musical circuit of the diocese. Mr. Blank even taught the younger Dr. Schaffer some of his piano technician skills, though Mrs. Wells laughed that she always calls Mr. Blank to tune her piano.

She has great admiration for Mr. Blank's work as a piano technician. "It's a very refined skill," she said. "You have to hear the smallest beats, we call it, the smallest difference of pitch, and turn that hammer," she said. Whenever he finishes tuning, she said he'll sit down and start playing sing-along tunes from the 1920s to test the piano. "That's just the way I like it," and I didn't tune it any differently," he said. "And I said yes, because it sounded better," he said. "And I said yes, because it sounded better," he said. "It's a very refined skill," she said. "You have to hear the smallest beats, we call it, the smallest difference of pitch, and turn that hammer," she said. Whenever he finishes tuning, she said he’ll sit down and start playing sing-along tunes from the 1920s to test the piano.

Some of Mr. Blank’s best musical memories come from tuning, "enough to write a book." In 1970, he tuned for Van Cliburn when he played for the dedication of the Riverfront Stadium, with 30,000 people gathered. Mr. Blank has a sense of humor about it all, laughing as he recounted: "Clybourne looks down at me and he says, 'I can't wait to get back to Texas,' and I never did like that guy after that. I tuned for him two or three times 10 or 15 years later." He’s a man with gumption, unafraid to perform his job well, even when challenged. "I had a concert pianist from Spain who asked him to pull the two higher octaves up sharp, because it sounded better," he said. "And I said yes, ma’am, and I went ahead and tuned that piano for the next rehearsal and at the rehearsal she comes up and says, 'That’s just the way I like it,' and I didn’t tune it any different than I did the first time."

"Then I had a concert pianist who called Steinway and complained," he said. "So Henry Steinway, the president of Steinway and Sons, came to visit and check me out. He walked up and said, 'Mr. Blank, this doesn’t sound right,' and I was so nervous, but I said, 'Mr. Steinway, it sounds fine to me.' He nodded and walked away and the next day I was called in after a sleepless night and thought I was going to be fired. Mr. Steinway said, 'Keep up the good work. I was nervous but I was confident that I did a good job. He was just checking to see if I was confident.'

Mr. Blank’s family means everything to him, and he’s known his share of sorrow. "Two of his children died at the age of 37: one of pancreatitis and one in a car accident with a drunk driver. His wife died a month later, out of grief."

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The Diocese of Covington Pro-Life Office in conjunction with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, is asking all members of the Diocese of Covington to join together to pray for our great country, bearing in mind our nation’s challenges and the need for wise, moral and civic leadership.

A description, e-mail subscription form, list of intentions, and accompanying, shareable images are accessible from usccb.org/2020-election-novena. The intentions and images are available in both English and Spanish, and the daily emails will contain a link to the Spanish content for the day.

Newsworthly

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Did you know?

Halloween

Halloween recognizes the vigil for All Saints Day celebrated Nov. 1 by the Catholic Church. What are its origins and should Catholics participate in classic Halloween celebrations? The Messenger turned to Catholic Answers.

The word, Halloween is a contraction of “All Hallows Evening,” the vigil for the Christian holy day All Saints Day which falls on November 1. Part of the confusion over this holiday arises from the fact that many people no longer know what the word hallows means.

The word, not often used these days, refers to something consecrated to a special purpose. November 1 is celebrated by the Church as the Feast of All Saints, or the Feast of All Hallows, because those who are honored are all those in heaven — the holy ones of God. The vigil before that day is the Evening of All Hallows, or Halloween. Halloween, then, is a Christian holy day.

As with many Christian holidays, the secular world has attached its own traditions to Halloween (e.g., costumes, trick-or-treating, parties) that are not inherently bad but can be problematic when the religious meaning of the holiday is set aside, forgotten or ignored.

Newsporthy

The pope’s universal prayer intention for the month of November is for Artificial Intelligence. We pray that the progress of robotics and artificial intelligence may always serve humankind.

Newport Central Catholic High School’s 13th Annual Winners’ Circle virtual event, the first week of November. Auction items go up for bid Nov. 2, bidding ends Nov. 7 at 8 p.m. Go to http://winners2020.givesmart.com/ to check out all of the items.

“Advent At Home” virtual directed retreat, Dec. 4-6. Join the Benedictine Sisters of St. Walburg for prayer, spiritual direction and group sessions. Retreat enrichment resources will be sent by email; some links for articles and music will be provided. Free will donations are grateful-ly accepted. Contact Sister Dorothy at dorothysosb@gmail.com or call 331-8124.

Squishy Circuits

Students at St. Henry School, Elsmere, utilize the STREAM (Science, Technology, Religion, Engineering, Art, Mathematics) concept for hands-on learning throughout the day. Using Squishy Circuits, students were given directions to make a diagram of the breeze on land and sea. The Squishy Circuits allowed the students to see that PlayDoh is conductive. They were able to connect the circuits to make wind using a fan and changed from day to night using a switch.

Learning the rosary

The third-grade students at St. Agnes School, Ft. Wright, are learning about the rosary. The students each colored a poster of a rosary and learned about praying the rosary as a way to honor Mary, the greatest saint of all.

Blood Drive

Students at Villa Madonna Academy, Villa Hills, rolled up their sleeves for the school’s annual Hoxworth Blood Drive.

People and Events

At its best, Halloween is a reminder of our own mortality and our own need to prepare ourselves to face God one day. The festivities attached to the holiday can, as Mardi Gras does for Lent, prepare us for All Saints and All Souls, and for the month of November, which the Church sets aside for remembrance of the souls in purgatory. Christian parents have a variety of options for celebrating the holiday in a Christian spirit and should feel free to choose what works best for helping their families learn the “reason for the season.”

This excerpt is taken from an article “Putting the ‘Hallows’ back in Halloween” by Michelle Arnold, published at CatholicAnswers.com. It is used with permission.
Senate confirms Amy Coney Barrett to the Supreme Court

Carol Zimmermann
Catholic News Service
WASHINGTON (CNS) — A divided Senate, in a 52-48 vote, confirmed Amy Coney Barrett as a justice for the Supreme Court the evening of Oct. 26 and soon afterward she was sworn in by Justice Clarence Thomas at a White House ceremony.

“The oath that I’ve solemnly taken tonight, means at its core that I will do my job without any fear or favor and that I will do so independently of both the political branches and of my own preferences. I love the Constitution and the democratic republic that it establishes and I will devote myself to preserving it,” Barrett said after the outdoor ceremony.

The 48-year-old, who has been on the Chicago-based U.S. Court of Appeals for the 7th Circuit since 2017, said it was a privilege to be asked to serve on the Supreme Court.

She said she was “truly honored and humbled” to be stepping into this role, which is a lifetime appointment.

Barrett is now the 115th justice for the court, replacing Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, who died Sept. 18. She is the sixth Catholic justice on the current bench.

Thomas administered the constitutional oath to Barrett, who was to take the judicial oath in a private ceremony at the Supreme Court Oct. 27.

Reaction to the confirmation was swift and just as divided as it has been since she was first announced as President Donald Trump’s nominee just weeks before the presidential election. Congressional Democrats took to Twitter to criticize the Senate for acting so swiftly on this vote but not passing a COVID-19 relief package.

The Associated Press reported that no other Senate hearing has been confirmed on a recorded vote with no support from the minority party in at least 150 years, according to information provided by the Senate Historical Office.

During her nomination hearings before the Senate Judiciary Committee, Barrett did not give direct answers on how she would vote on top issues but assured the senators that she would follow the rule of law.

“My policy preferences are irrelevant,” she said. Oct. 13 when asked if she had intended to dismantle the Affordable Care Act, and she reiterated this same view when asked about abortion and same-sex marriage.

On the opening day of the hearings, Republican senators adamantly emphasized that Barrett’s Catholic faith should not be a factor in questioning. And although it did not become a topic of questioning, it was mentioned even in opening remarks by Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Lindsey Graham, R-South Carolina.

He asked if Barrett would be able to set aside her religious beliefs to fairly decide legal cases, which she said she could.

“I can. I have done that in my time on the 7th Circuit,” she said. “If I stay on the 7th Circuit, I’ll continue to do that. If I’m confirmed to the Supreme Court, I will do that.”

Barrett is now the first Notre Dame Law School graduate on the Supreme Court and the only sitting justice with a law degree not from Harvard or Yale. She graduated summa cum laude in 1997 and also met her husband, Jesse, there.

The Barrett family lives in Indiana.

The oldest child of the couple’s seven children is a current student at the University of Notre Dame.

“On behalf of the University of Notre Dame, I congratulate Judge Amy Coney Barrett holds her hand on the Bible as she is sworn in as an associate justice of the U.S. Supreme Court in Washington Oct. 26, 2020. The 48-year-old, who has been on the Chicago-based U.S. Court of Appeals for the 7th Circuit since 2017, said it was a privilege to be asked to serve on the Supreme Court. The oath that I’ve solemnly taken tonight, means at its core that I will do my job without any fear or favor and that I will do so independently of both the political branches and of my own preferences. I love the Constitution and the democratic republic that it establishes and I will devote myself to preserving it,” Barrett said after the outdoor ceremony.\n
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Bishop J. Strickland of Tyler, Texas, said in an Oct. 26 tweet: “Thanks be to God that Amy Coney Barrett was approved as our newest Supreme Court Justice. Let us pray that she serves always guided by the truth God has revealed to His people. Immaculate Virgin Mary intercede for her.”

Similarly, Bishop Richard F. Stika of Knoxville, Tennessee, tweeted his congratulations and added: “Note to the Democrats. Justice Ginsburg was against packing the SC!” He was referring to a plan by President Franklin D. Roosevelt that has recently been touted by progressive Democrats to increase the number of justices on the court.

New Orleans Archbishop Gregory M. Aymond issued a more personal statement, pointing out that Barrett is from Metairie, Louisiana, and that her parents: Deacon Michael Coney and his wife, Linda, are members of St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Metairie.

“One of our own, Judge Amy Coney Barrett, has been confirmed by the U.S. Senate as an associate justice of the Supreme Court,” he said. “We pray that the Holy Spirit will continue to lead her and guide her in her service to our country.”
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VATICAN CITY — Being indifferent to or hating others is to deny the existence of God’s presence in one’s neighbor, Pope Francis said.

“This is practical atheism,” the pope said Oct. 21 during his weekly general audience.

“To not recognize the human person as an image of God is a sacrilege, an abomination, the worst offense that can be directed toward the temple and the altar,” he said.

Arriving in the Paul VI audience hall, the pope once again observed social-distancing measures by taking his seat immediately rather than going to greet members of the crowd up close.

He also apologized and explained that mingling with them would increase “the danger of infection for you.”

“I am sorry for this, but it’s for your safety,” he said.

“But please know that I am close to you in my heart. I hope you understand why I do this.”

Before his main talk, the pope said he noticed a mother cuddling and breastfeeding her crying baby at the start of the audience.

Upon seeing this, he said, “I thought, ‘That’s what God does with us, like that mother, who with such tenderness tried to rock the baby, to feed the baby. It is a beautiful image.’”

“Never silence a child who cries in church. Never. Because it is a voice that recalls God’s tenderness,” he said.

Continuing his series of talks on prayer, the pope talked about “the wicked” person often mentioned in the Book of Psalms and described them as someone who “lives as if God does not exist.”

The Book of Psalms, he said, presents prayer as a “fundamental reality of life” that serves as a “boundary,” which prevents “us from venturing into life in a predatory and voracious manner.”

However, he said, there are “the wicked” ones, like those who go to Mass “only to be seen” or to show off, or those who pray out of habit and with no depth, thus rendering “a false prayer” to God.

True prayer, like true faith, leads to care for others, pope says

Pope Francis greets the crowd during his general audience in the Paul VI hall at the Vatican Oct. 21, 2020.

“The worst service someone can give God, and others as well, is to pray tiredly; in a habitual way to pray like a parrot; blah, blah, blah. No. We must pray with our hearts,” the pope said.

“Prayer is not a sedative to alleviate life’s anxieties; or, in any case, this type of prayer is certainly not Christian,” he added. “Rather, prayer makes the person responsible for others as can be seen “clearly in the ‘Our Father’ that Jesus taught his disciples.”

Pope Francis said the psalms teach Christians that prayer is more than just seeking God’s help for oneself but rather a “collective patrimony, to the point of being prayed by everyone and for everyone,” the pope said.

“If you pray so many rosaries and then gossip about others, you have resentments, you hate against others, this (prayer) is purely artificial,” the pope said.
communications, advertising and social networking can be used to sell us, to make us addicted to consumerism and buying the latest thing on the market, obsessed with technology to transmit the Gospel, to communicate values and beauty,” the pope added.

Carlo’s mother, Antonia Salzano, said in an interview a few days before the beatification liturgy that she was “overjoyed that Carlo’s tomb has finally been opened,” and that those who have been touched by the young teen’s testimony will be able to see him and venerate him in a stronger and more engaging way.

There was fruit born from Carlo’s devotion. His witness of faith led to a deep conversion in his mom, because, according to the priest promoting his cause for sainthood, he “managed to drag his relatives, his parents to Mass every day. It was not the other way around; it was he who managed to get himself to Mass and to convince others to receive Communion daily.”

Carlo also was known for defending kids at school who were picked on, especially students with disabilities. “We hope that through the exposition of Carlo’s body, the faithful will be able to raise with more fervor and faith their prayers to God who, through Carlo, invites us all to have more faith, hope and love for him and for our brothers and sisters just as Carlo did in his earthly life,” his mother said.

Pope Francis called Blessed Carlo a witness of Christ for younger generations.

But we believe Carlo’s words and actions are worth all people emulating.

“The only thing we have to ask God for, in prayer, is the desire to be holy.” Blessed Carlo once said.

As we celebrate his life and continue our journey of faith, together we say: Blessed Carlo Acutis, pray for us.

Mike Krokos is editor of The Criterion, newspaper of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. His commentary has been provided by Catholic News Service. The views or positions presented in this or any guest editorial are those of the individual publication and do not necessarily represent the views of Catholic News Service or of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.
WARSAW, Poland — Poland’s bishops’ conference decried attacks on churches by demonstrators protesting a near-total ban on abortions by the country’s Constitutional Court and urged restraint from violence and dialogue.

Archbishop Stanislaw Gadecki of Poznan, conference president, acknowledged that the court’s Oct. 22 decision “has caused unusually emotional reactions,” but said that “the vulgarities, abusive daubings, service disruptions and profanations seen in recent days are not a proper form of action in a democratic state, however much they may help certain people relieve their emotions.”

Demonstrators entered churches during Masses Oct. 26 in Warsaw, Krakow, Poznan and other cities to protest the Constitutional Court’s ruling that found a clause in Poland’s 1993 abortion law allowing pregnancy terminations in cases of “severe and irreparable fetal damage” was unconstitutional.

All but 26 of the 1,100 abortions in Poland in 2019 involved unborn children diagnosed with severe disabilities, according to Health Ministry data.

Archbishop Gadecki said the Church’s “unchanging and publicly known” position on the right to life had been set out in St. John Paul II’s 1995 encyclical “Evangelium Vitae” (“The Gospel of Life”) and reaffirmed in Pope Francis’ recent encyclical “Fratelli Tutti, on Fraternity and Social Friendship.”

He appealed for dialogue “on how to protect the right to life and women’s rights.”

“The Church cannot stop defending life or give up proclaiming the need to protect every human being from conception to natural death. On this question, we can accept no compromise,” he said.

The archbishop also urged the public to “express their views in a socially acceptable way, respecting every person’s dignity” and called on “politicians and journalists not to escalate the tensions and show responsibility for social peace.”

Protesters waved signs outside churches and offices of the governing Law and Justice party and spray-painted walls during the demonstrations.

A Law and Justice spokeswoman, Anita Czerwinska, accused opposition parties Oct. 23 of “playing with women’s emotions.” Michal Wos, Poland’s deputy justice minister, told the Catholic Information Agency, KAI, Oct. 25 the anti-church protests represented “criminality and barbarism,” and could be punished with fines and jail terms.

Meanwhile, Bishop Wieslaw Smigiel of Torun, who heads the Polish church’s Family Council, told the KAI agency Oct. 26 that the court’s judgment “presented church and state with an even greater task” of providing “concrete help for families with handicapped children.”
Vatican extends time to obtain full indulgences for souls in purgatory

Carol Glatz
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Plenary or full indulgences traditionally obtained during the first week of November for the souls of the faithful in purgatory can now be gained throughout the entire month of November, the Vatican said.

Also, those who are ill or homebound and would not be able to physically visit a church or cemetery in the prescribed timeframe still will be able to receive a plenary indulgence when meeting certain conditions, the Apostolic Penitentiary, a Vatican tribunal that deals with matters of conscience, said in a notice released Oct. 23.

The tribunal also asked that priests be particularly generous throughout November in offering the sacrament of reconciliation and in administering Communion to those who are infirm.

The new provisions were made after a number of bishops asked for guidance as to how the faithful could perform the works required for receiving a plenary indulgence given the ongoing pandemic and restrictions in many parts of the world limiting the number of people who can gather in one place, Cardinal Mauro Piacenza, head of the Apostolic Penitentiary, told Vatican News Oct. 23.

Traditionally, the faithful could receive a full indulgence each day from Nov. 1 to Nov. 8 when they visited a cemetery to pray for the departed and fulfilled other conditions, and, in particular, when they went to a church or an oratory to pray Nov 2, All Souls’ Day.

Bishops' conferences in countries where large numbers of faithful traditionally go to confession, attend Mass and visit cemeteries during the week had asked how the faithful could be accommodated given COVID-19 restrictions or in the case that a member of the faithful was ill, in isolation or in quarantine, the cardinal said.

The Vatican decided to extend the time one can receive a full indulgence to include the whole month of November, he said. Typically, only a partial indulgence is granted to include the whole month of November, he added.

Those who cannot leave their homes or reside for “serious reasons,” which includes government restrictions during the pandemic, he said, also can receive a plenary indulgence after reciting specific prayers for the deceased or reflecting on a Gospel reading designated for All Souls’ Day, as allowed for in a 1915 document by Pope Benedict XV.

The hope is that the Church teaches that prayer, particularly the Mass, and sacrifices may be offered on behalf of the souls in purgatory.

The new provisions were made after a number of bishops asked for guidance as to how the faithful could perform the works required for receiving a plenary indulgence, which demonstrate a resolve to turn away from sin and convert to God. Those conditions include: having a spirit detached from sin, going to confession as soon as possible; receiving Communion as soon as possible; praying for the pope’s intentions; and being united spiritually with all the faithful.

Cardinal Piacenza said his office also strongly urged all priests to celebrate Mass three times on All Souls’ Day as allowed for in a 1915 document by Pope Benedict XV.

The hope is that the availability of more Masses that day would help everyone wanting to attend Mass to do so while respecting capacity limits in churches and places of worship, he said.

The church teaches that prayer, particularly the Mass, and sacrifices may be offered on behalf of the souls in purgatory. The feast of All Souls differs from the Nov. 1 feast of All Saints precisely because it offers prayers for the eternal peace and heavenly rest of all those who died in a state of grace, but not totally purified.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church says, “All who die in God’s grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their eternal salvation, but after death they undergo purification so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven.”

Below) The Church teaches that there are seven Spiritual Works of Mercy — one of these is to pray for the living and the dead. St. Gertrude, who lived during the 14th century, was a mystic who saw visions sent to her from God.

One of these was of Purgatory, and when Catherine asked if her prayers had any effect, Jesus gave her a prayer for the holy souls in Purgatory. This short prayer is commonly believed to release 1,000 souls every time it is prayed.

The Prayer of St. Gertrude

Eternal Father, I offer Thee the Most Precious Blood of Thy Divine Son, Jesus, in union with the Masses said throughout the world today for all the holy souls in Purgatory, for sinners everywhere, for sinners in the universal Church, those in my own home and within my family... Amen.
Catechetical Cataclysms: Restored Holy Stairs give meaning to crisis

Carol Glatt
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — After 20 years of restoration work and millions in funding from benefactors worldwide, the unveiling of the Pontifical Sanctuary of the Holy Stairs in Rome was supposed to be a grand, celebratory moment. But for this spring, in time for Holy Week and Easter. The public was going to be able to see the brilliantly revived frescoes of the passion of Christ as they climbed the shrine’s central marble stairs that, according to tradition, are the ones Jesus descended when Pontius Pilate brought him before the crowd and handed him over to be crucified.

But, like the tomb on Easter, the shrine was empty. The shock of a nationwide lockdown and the ongoing pandemic, however, have resurrected the actual significance of the shrine and what it represents: finding strength, meaning and grace during times of difficulty, fear or suffering.

Passionist Father Leonello Leidi, rector of the sanctuary, told Catholic News Service that since the shrine opened to the public in late May, “the faithful have seen a deepened dimension of communion and union with the passion of Christ in this place.”

People worldwide have been tested and tried, experiencing or witnessing illness or death from the coronavirus as a deepened dimension of communion and union with the passion of Christ. People pray on their knees as they climb the Holy Stairs at the Pontifical Sanctuary of the Holy Stairs in Rome Oct. 8, 2020. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

“For those unable to visit the shrine in Rome, Father Pasquale said, nurturing one’s relationship with God does not depend on the specifics of the location, but on the quality of time spent in prayerful dialogue and with willingness to be transformed.”

The U.S. priest recalled climbing the stairs when he was a seminarian “and not realizing even the freshness because it was so sooty black and really unrecognizable,” he said. “There are the clouds. Clouds float away on the horizon. Objects remain, while Noah’s ark floats away on the horizon toward rains of sunlight breaking through the storm clouds.”

This event, Father Pasquale said, is not to punish but to bring to himself this negative effect and transform it into something good. But it is also a process that takes time and hard “labor to be born again.”

No longer accommodating huge crowds because of ongoing travel restrictions into Italy, in October the shrine was welcoming only a handful or so visitors each day. People can take their time and ascend the stairs more slowly with mandatory distancing between steps.

Those unable to visit the shrine in Rome, Father Pasquale said, nurturing one’s relationship with God does not depend on the specifics of the location, but on the quality of time spent in prayerful dialogue and with a willingness “to be transformed.”

“Even far from here you can live the devotion of the Passion,” he said, by meditating on those steps Jesus took. It is the time, not space, that opens the door to “the grace and the opportunity to transform my life and help me to understand the problems, find the solution or deal with it. Sometimes we don’t have the answers, the solution, but he can give us the strength to cope with a situation,” he said.

“Jesus wasn’t happy to live his passion, but he received the strength to live it for the greater good,” he said. “The Holy Spirit helps us see the bigger picture and so that can be done from anywhere, starting from the devotion the Passion that has at its (heart) Jesus, not just the stairs.”

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A divided Europe cannot stand; solidarity needed, pope says

VATICAN CITY — Europeans must not see their rich history simply as a fond memory of a time long gone, but they must look to it as a guide to overcoming divisions and challenges aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic, Pope Francis said.

Pope Francis reflected on the current state of the European Union in a letter marking the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Holy See and the EU, the 40th anniversary of the Commission of the Bishops’ Conferences of the European Community and the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Conference of European Bishops’ Conferences at the Council of Europe. The letter to Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of State, was released by the Vatican Oct. 27.

The pandemic, the pope said, “emerged as a kind of water-shed” moment when countries can choose either to yield “to the temptation to autonomy,” which leads to more disagreement and conflict, or “rediscover the path of fraternity that inspired and guided the founders of modern Europe.”

HHS ensures hospital patients have access to spiritual care amid pandemic

WASHINGTON — HHS ensures hospital patients have access to spiritual care amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

The health agency cited changing circumstances within other countries and one involving Mary Washington Healthcare in Virginia.

Hospital Center, which is part of the MedStar Health System, has two reasons to celebrate Oct. 25. The church in the Archdiocese of Washington was marking the 250th anniversary of its founding with a special Mass, and for the main celebrant, it was his first Mass since being named a cardinal that morning by Pope Francis, Cardinal-designate Wilton D. Gregory. The church is near the cradle of U.S. Catholicism, a few miles from St. Clement’s Island, where Jesuit Father Andrew White celebrated the first Mass in the English-speaking colonies March 21, 1640, after colonists from England made landfall there. In welcoming Washington’s archbishop to Holy Angels at the beginning of Mass, Father Stephen Wyble, the parish’s administrator, noted Pope Francis had named him a few hours earlier as a new cardinal, which drew applause from the congregation and a broad smile from him.

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“MAY GOD WHO HAS BEGUN THIS GOOD WORK IN YOU BRING IT TO COMPLETION.”

PHILIPPIANS 1:6

Those ordained by the Diocese of Covington are an active and loving presence of Christ among the people, sharing their faith and participating in the struggles of the people they are serving. Most priests serve in parishes, while some serve as teachers and chaplains in schools and others serve in various diocesan institutions. Wherever they serve, priests work in bringing peace, love and justice to those around them.

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