My dear Friends,

These past nine months have been difficult for everyone as we’ve seen our lives change dramatically in a way that we could not have imagined as we began Advent last year. The pandemic has shaped our lives in ways none of us had planned. And yet, through it all, as people of faith we can still have hope. Even though things have seemed dark and dreary, even though it has been difficult making the sacrifices necessary to contain the pandemic, even though at times we may feel that things will never be “normal” again, there is hope. For the people who walk in darkness can see a great light in the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ and a light will shine on our gloom! (cf. Is 9:1)

The season of Advent, my dear friends, is a time of preparation. It is a time to prepare the way of the Lord. (cf. Mark 1:2) It is a time to take stock of our lives, to contemplate what is really important, what really matters. Jesus Christ came into the world to save us from our sins. He suffered and died so that we might live. He sacrificed everything for us. If this does not demonstrate God’s love for us, what does? And we are called to imitate that selfless love that Jesus has for us. We are called to model our lives after His.

Perhaps this Advent and Christmas will look different from any Advent and Christmas we have ever celebrated because we are in the midst of a pandemic. Perhaps we will not be able to be with family and friends as we are accustomed to be at this time. Perhaps there will be fewer parties and fewer gatherings. But all of this does not mean we cannot celebrate Advent by preparing for the Lord to come into our lives. Actually, it should encourage us even more to let the light shine in our gloom.

So, as we begin this Advent season, let us open our hearts and our lives to the Lord. Let us examine our priorities and decide what really matters, what really is important. Let this Advent be a time of real preparation to let the Lord — the light of our lives — into our hearts!

Be assured of my prayers. Please, pray for me.

Yours devotedly in the Lord,

Most Rev. Roger J. Foys, D.D.
Bishop of Covington

First Sunday of Advent
Nov. 29

“With today’s first Sunday of Advent, a new liturgical year begins. The Church takes up her journey again, and invites us to reflect more intensely on the mystery of Christ, a mystery that is always new and that time cannot exhaust. Christ is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. Thanks to him, the history of humanity proceeds as a pilgrimage toward the fulfillment of the Kingdom which he inaugurated with his incarnation and victory over sin and death.

For this reason, Advent is synonymous with hope: not the vain waiting for a faceless god, but concrete and certain trust in the return of him who has already visited us, of the “Spouse” who with his blood has sealed with humanity a pact that is an eternal covenant. It is a hope that stimulates vigilance, the characteristic virtue of this special liturgical season. Vigilance in prayer, fostered by a loving expectation; vigilance in the dynamics of concrete charity, aware that the Kingdom of God comes close whenever men learn to live as brothers.”

Heartfelt gratitude for support as virtual Seminary Ball premieres

The 11th annual Seminary Ball is making history as the first time the event, which funds a significant part of the diocesan seminarians’ education, is taking place virtually. Though making a ball go virtual sounds like a daunting task, the Office of Stewardship has taken it on with enthusiasm.

This year’s event will be a virtual premiere of a video about the Diocese of Covington’s seminarians on Dec. 4 at 7 p.m. Registration is online at covdio.org/seminaryball, and donors have a plethora of options from which to choose. All money goes to Seminarian Education Fund to support education of future priests.

“This year’s event was originally Nov. 18 but has been extended to Dec. 6 before the release of the video. As a thank you, donors will receive gift boxes full of commemorative keepsake items hand delivered the week before the event. They can sit back and enjoy the video with some help from the gift box.

Donors can register for simple registration for the event, or include a larger donation: The Ordination for the Seminarian Education Fund, the seminarians would speak at various parishes throughout the Diocese. Unforeseen Seminarian Latrobe, Pennsylvania, expressed his thanks for the sacrifices that the people of the diocese make on their behalf. “The people who donate to the ball and the Seminarian Education Fund … it might be challenging for some people financially to do that, but I admire and respect the fact that they’re willing to give their hard-earned money out of love and trust of the people who are in formation,” he said. “I have so much gratitude for the people because without their support, I would not be able to follow the vocation I’ve been called to follow so that I can, in turn, be of service to them … be a shepherd to help guide them along their journey to live the life everyone is called to live. I hope to help them reach their ultimate goal of meeting the Lord some day.”

The seminarians currently studying for the Diocese of Covington at St. Vincent Seminary and the Pontifical College Josephinum, Columbus, are Michael Rämlinger; Bradley Whittle, John Darvy, Henry “Hank” Blaszko, Michael Schulte, Joshua “Josh” Heskamp, John Baumann, Justin Schwartz, Deacon Joseph Rielage, Andrew Joseph “A.J.” Gedney and Zacharias Schoen.

Mr. Murray is pleased that the community can still show their support, even from the safety of their homes, and he knows that people will step up like they always do.

“It’s a unique way in these challenging times to support seminarian education, which is the future of our Church,” said Mr. Murray.

For registration or donation, visit covdio.org/seminaryball.

### Christmas Mass

The following is a Mass times at parishes in the Diocese of Covington for the feast of Christmas, celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ. Due to spacing concerns surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, parishions are encouraged to plan ahead to ensure a seat at a Christmas Mass. The dispensation from the obligation to attend Mass is still in effect due to continuing health concerns from the virus.

#### Christmas Eve

4 p.m.
- St. Agnes; All Saints; St. Barbara; St. Mary*, St. Bernard;Sacrament; St. Cecilia; St. Francis Xavier; St. Henry, Holy Cross; Holy Spirit; Immaculate Heart of Mary; St. James Mission; St. John, Carrollton; St. John the Baptist; St. Joseph, Camp Springs; St. Joseph, Cold Spring; St. Joseph, Crescent Springs; St. Mary, Many; Queen of Heaven; St. Patrick, Maysville; St. Patrick, Taylor Mill; St. Peter and Paul; St. Philip; St. Pius X; St. Thomas*
- 4:15 p.m.
- St. Pius X

4:30 p.m.
- St. Benedict; St. Catherine; St. James, Brockley; St. William

5 p.m.
- St. Augustine, Covington**
- St. Boniface and James; St. James Mission; St. John, Covington; Mother of God; St. Paul; St. Rose of Lima; St. Therese

5:30 p.m.
- Cathedral Basilica; Divine Mercy; St. Edward, Cincinnati

6 p.m.
- St. Agnes; St. Barbara; Blessed Sacrament; St. Henry, Holy Cross; Holy Spirit; Immaculate Heart of Mary; St. John Mission; St. Joseph, Camp Springs; St. Joseph, Cold Spring; St. Joseph, Crescent Springs; St. Mary, Many; Queen of Heaven; St. Matthew, Our Savior; St. Patrick, Taylor Mill; St. Peter and Paul; St. Philip; St. Pius X; Transfiguration Mission

6:30 p.m.
- St. Augustine; St. Mary, Many; Queen of Heaven; St. Therese

8 p.m.
- St. Edward, Cincinnati

8:30 p.m.
- All Saints**

9 p.m.
- All Saints**, St. Augustine, Covington; Cathedral Basilica; St. Catherine; Divine Mercy; St. Edward, Cincinnati; St. Francis Xavier; Immaculate Heart of Mary; St. Joseph, Camp Springs; St. Joseph, Crescent Springs; St. Mary, Many; St. Matthew, Our Lady of Lourdes**; St. Patrick, Maysville; St. Paul

9:30 p.m.
- St. Ann, Covington

10 p.m.
- All Saints; St. Barbara; Blessed Sacrament; St. Cecilia; St. Henry, Holy Cross; St. Joseph, Crescent Springs; St. Mary, Many; St. Matthew, Our Lady of Lourdes**; St. Patrick, Maysville; St. Paul

11 p.m.
- Midnight

All Saints**, St. Augustine, Covington; Cathedral Basilica; St. Catherine; Divine Mercy; St. Edward, Cincinnati; St. Francis Xavier; Immaculate Heart of Mary; St. Joseph, Camp Springs; St. Joseph, Crescent Springs; St. Mary, Many; St. Matthew, Our Lady of Lourdes**; St. Patrick, Maysville; St. Paul

### Christmas Day

#### 7:30 a.m.

Cathedral Basilica

8 a.m.
- St. Henry, St. James, Brockley; St. Joseph, Cold Spring; Mars, Queen of Heaven; St. Therese, St. Pius X; St. Thomas

10 a.m.
- Midnight

All Saints**, St. Boniface and James; Mother of God; St. Thomas

10 a.m.
- All Saints**, All Saints**, St. Augustine, Covington; Cathedral Basilica; St. Catherine; Divine Mercy; St. Edward, Cincinnati; St. Francis Xavier; Immaculate Heart of Mary; St. Joseph, Cold Springs; St. Joseph, Crescent Springs; St. Mary, Many; St. Peter and Paul; St. William

11:30 a.m.
- All Saints**

11 a.m.
- All Saints**, All Saints**, St. Augustine, Covington; Cathedral Basilica; St. Catherine; St. Cecilia; St. Henry, Holy Cross; St. John, Covington; St. Joseph, St. Rose of Lima; St. Therese

11:30 a.m.
- All Saints**

8:45 a.m.
- Holy Redeemer

9 a.m.
- St. Barbara, Blessed Sacrament; St. Edward, Cincinnati; Holy Cross; Immaculate Heart of Mary; St. John Mission; St. John the Baptist; St. Joseph, Camp Springs; St. Joseph, Crescent Springs; St. Mary, Many; St. Matthew, Our Lady of Lourdes**; St. Patrick, Maysville; St. Paul; St. Peter and Paul; St. Philip; St. Rose of Lima; St. Thomas

10 a.m.
- St. Therese

10:30 a.m.
- All Saints**, St. Barbara, Blessed Sacrament; St. Cecilia; St. Henry, Holy Cross; St. Joseph, Crescent Springs; St. Mary, Many; St. Matthew, Our Lady of Lourdes**; St. Patrick, Maysville; St. Paul; St. Peter and Paul; St. Philip

### Midnight

All Saints**, St. Augustine, Covington; Cathedral Basilica; St. Catherine; Divine Mercy; St. Edward, Cincinnati; St. Francis Xavier; Immaculate Heart of Mary; St. Joseph, Cold Springs; St. Joseph, Crescent Springs; St. Mary, Many; St. Matthew, Our Lady of Lourdes**; St. Patrick, Maysville; St. Paul

8:30 a.m.
- St. John, Covington

9 a.m.
- All Saints**, St. Augustine, Covington; Cathedral Basilica; St. Catherine; Divine Mercy; St. Edward, Cincinnati; St. Francis Xavier; Immaculate Heart of Mary; St. Joseph, Camp Springs; St. Joseph, Crescent Springs; St. Mary, Many; St. Matthew, Our Lady of Lourdes**; St. Patrick, Maysville; St. Paul

10 a.m.
- All Saints**, St. Augustine, Covington; Cathedral Basilica; St. Catherine; Divine Mercy; St. Edward, Cincinnati; St. Francis Xavier; Immaculate Heart of Mary; St. Joseph, Cold Springs; St. Joseph, Crescent Springs; St. Mary, Many; St. Peter and Paul; St. William

11:30 a.m.
- All Saints, St. Francis Xavier; Mother of God; Our Lady of Lourdes**; St. Therese

1 a.m.
- St. Barbara, Blessed Sacrament; St. Charles Borromeo; Divine Mercy; Immaculate Heart of Mary; St. Joseph, Camp Springs; St. Joseph, Crescent Springs; St. Mary, Many; St. Peter and Paul; St. William

11:30 a.m.
- All Saints**, St. Francis Xavier; Mother of God; Our Lady of Lourdes**; St. Therese

**Overflow Mass +510 minutes later

*Extraordinary Form

**Spanish
‘Seek God’s grace and wisdom’ as Catholic schools are mandated to transition to virtual learning

Laura Keener

Editor

With the surge of COVID-19 cases in Kentucky Governor Andy Beshear announced at his Nov. 18 daily briefing that he had signed an executive order that all Kentucky schools — public and private — transition to virtual learning. High schools and middle schools will need to continue with virtu-

al learning until Jan. 4, elementary schools can return to classrooms after Dec. 7 in counties that are not in the “red zone.” The red zone is the fourth and most critical level of COVID activity in the community, meaning there are more than 25 cases per 100,000 population. On the day the execu-
tive order was signed, 112 of Kentucky’s 120 counties were in the red zone.

In the order, Gov. Beshear indicated that: “Kentucky is now experiencing a potentially catastrophic surge in COVID-19 cases, which threatens to overwhelm our health care system and cause thousands of preventable deaths.”

“Kentucky is not a big school district. It is in fact a very large diocesan school system,” explained Bishop’s Secretary Bill Krumpelbeck, biology chair, Covington Catholic High School, teaches virtually from the lab Nov. 23.

I think our schools were doing very well with managing their cases. When the mandate came through, we reviewed our plans and sustained in-person learning up through the date of the mandate. On Monday, Nov. 23, the Messenger interviewed Kendra McGuire, superintendent of Catholic Schools, to find out how schools managed during those 14 weeks of in-person instruction and what students and parents can expect dur-

ing at home learning.

How were schools doing during those weeks of in-

person instruction?

How were principals managing the COVID cases at their school?

After 14 weeks, all of the principals had become really good at monitoring their cases and knowing what their school was able to handle. When they needed to take the next step — something beyond just putting a few students in quarantine — they were ready to make that transition when necessary. Their top priority is safety and I think that comes through in all of their decision-making. They were onboard for doing what is best for the overall school community and in reviewing individual cases.

What can schools continue to provide?

The schools right now are looking at what they can still provide within the “targeted services” guidance from the Kentucky Department of Education. The targeted services guidance allows students to be brought in for essential services, necessary hands on experiences, and mental or academic counseling. These may include academic assessments to determine needs, high school lab experiences, or opportun-
ties for students to meet with the school counselors. These services can only be provided individually or in small groups and must be less than two hours daily.

We have a few schools that partner with public schools for virtual learning in our school communities. The biggest change would be in the way up to school closure when that was necessary.

Will parents still need to report to their school when their child or someone in the family tests positive for COVID?

The more we can stay on top of cases and what COVID activity is going on in our school communities the better equipped we’ll be when we return to class in January. Anything the parents can do to keep us informed is going to be helpful. According to the CDC there is a certain period of immunity (for someone who has recovered from COVID). For students who do test positive during this time away from school, it would be important to know that they would be exempt from quarantine when we resume in-

person classes. (Documentation showing the positive diag-
nosis would need to be provided to the principal.)

What does non-traditional instruction or NTI look like in our schools?

NTI will look different at each of the schools in the dio-

cese. One of the challenges that our schools experienced with being fully prepared for NTI was in obtaining Cares Act Funding, which for our schools ended up being very limited or none at all. The schools have taken the steps they could, with the resources available, to prepare for NTI. Many schools at the elementary level were unable to pur-

chase devices for students. For those schools, NTI may look more like a packet and paper-type work which needs to be done each day and teachers check in with the student. Our high schools are equipped to provide virtual classes all day, just as if the students were in school; students will just tune in online.

What are your recommendations to parents during NTI?

As a parent myself of children first grade through high school, my advice is to be patient both with your child and with your child’s teachers. NTI puts a lot of pressure on families, especially at the younger levels because parents have to have a more involved role in their students educa-
tion. This can put added stress on the parent/student relationship which in turn can lead to more stress between the school and home. We need to approach this situation with understanding and when there are challenges that we cannot solve, those in the most understanding and respectful way possi-
ble. As Catholics, we should also rely on our faith in these trying times. Starting with prayer and seeking God’s grace and wisdom in our daily activities will help all of us better manage these upcoming weeks.

Coronavirus Report

Note: Due to the mandate that all schools tran-

tion to non-traditional instruction beginning Monday, Nov. 23, the following report includes only positive COVID cases and not self-quaran-
tines.

Positive Cases

Active positive cases: 46

Recovered positive cases: 164

Total ever positive cases: 210

Schools/Parishes currently with quarantines:

Blessed Sacrament Parish, Ft. Mitchell
Blessed Sacrament School, Ft. Mitchell
Covington Catholic High School, Covington
Covington Latin School, Covington
Holy Cross District High School, Covington
Holy Trinity School, Bellevue
Immaculate Heart of Mary School, Burlington
Notre Dame Academy, Covington
St. Harry Parish High School, Erlanger
St. Augustine School, Covington
St. Katharine of Siena Parish, Ft. Thomas
St. Joseph School, Crescent Springs
St. Joseph Parish Religious Education Program, Crescent Springs
St. Mary Parish School of Religion, Alexandria
St. Mary School, Alexandria
St. Patrick School, Mayerville
St. Paul School, Florence
St. Therese School, Southgate
St. Timothy Parish School of Religion, Union
St. Timothy Parish, Union
St. Timothy School, Union
Sts. Peter and Paul School, California
Villa Madonna Academy Jr. High/High School, Villa Hills

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

Bishop’s Schedule

Nov. 28 First Sunday of Advent, Mass, Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington, 4:30 p.m.

Dec. 3 First Sunday of Advent, Mass, Cathedral Basilica, 9:30 a.m.

Dec. 5 Second Sunday of Advent, Mass, Cathedral Basilica, 4:30 p.m.

Dec. 6 Third Sunday of Advent, Mass, St. Mary’s Basilica, 4:30 p.m.

Dec. 13 Annual Seminary Ball (virtual), 6:30 p.m.
Throughout 2020 I have been reminded frequently of the literature of Michael O’Brien. His work is often apocryphal, featuring characters like "Tom the lad from Limerick" and "Four Days" novels, so in the spring his cautionary tales of worldwide governance, questionable leadership and propagandization seemed apropos.

Yet as this year goes on, my attention has drifted past the external drama of anti-Christ and world domination and into the internal drama of O’Brien’s characters’ purification and holiness. The internal and external are juxtaposed powerfully in his literature. We tend to focus on the external drama that surrounds us, but the heart of the story is really the battle inside of each person to be conformed to Christ above all. In so many of O’Brien’s books, one or more characters undergo a fictional transformation of detachment from external social and institutional arguments about voting in the two-party system or choosing our opinions to friends in case of ridicule or further embitterment. Social media jumps from the screen and the embittered worldwide governance, questionable leadership and propaganda seemed apropos.

What 2020 offers us is the opportunity to be misted by the latest critique of civilization so much as that I have become far too easily distracted. This meant we were on our own for all the meals. Many of our main kitchen staff members were quarantined. Yet we were surprised by the simplicity of physical creations, plentiful, varied and delicious and no one has lost weight to date that I can tell. Thanksgiving was like a return to a Christ-like humility and submission. Could God be using this tumultuous year as a “severe mercy” to offer us opportunities to suffer, grow and find meaning in our lives? “—He only increases, I must decrease!” Is it even possible to ourselves Christ on the cross without suffering?”

November 2020

It has been years since November has topped my list as a favorite month. The trees without their crowns, left unadorned stand out in stark beauty. Shades of brown replace much of the landscape. It is often a quiet month, with fewer distractions (well, with recent elections, maybe not this year). The simplicity of physical surroundings draws one to a deeper connection with the Holy November lends itself to reflecting on the essentials of life and the importance of relationships tops the list. The month is bookended with remembrance of deceased loved ones at the beginning and ends with Thanksgiving — a time of gratitude for the persons in one’s life.

However, this November is like no other. What occurred at the end of October provided an interesting challenge for the community. Due to a positive COVID-19 case, the main kitchen staff members were quarantined. This meant we were on our own for all the meals. Many of us had the experience of cooking for 4-6, but cooking for 36 plus is another type of experience. It was heartwarming how many in the community voluntered and helped in myriad ways. The food was plentiful, varied and delicious and no one has lost weight (though some of us wish we did!). We are also most grateful to a generous benefactor who provided several evening meals from local restaurants.

This year the celebration of Thanksgiving, too, will be different. As is true for so many, there will be no guests or visiting family at the Monastery. What replacing there will be when this pandemic is over. The promise of a vaccine does give hope for life beyond the virus. In the meantime, during this November of 2020 my daily reflections are on gratitude and the many blessings in my life that have multiplied.

Our community continues to pray daily for those suffering from COVID-19 and those isolated from family members. We are grateful for all the blessings we have received from our friends and family.

Benedictine Sister Aileen Bankemer is prioress, Benedictine Sisters of St. Walburg Monastery Villa Hills, Ky.
The law of gravity and the Holy Spirit

"God is erotically charged and the world is achingly amorous, hence they caress each other in mutual attraction and interact. There are GSs everywhere, hence they caress each other in mutual attraction and interact. There are GSs everywhere.

Jewish philosopher Martin Buber made an assertion, and while it seems to perfectly echo the opening lines of St. Augustine’s auto-biography (“You have made us for yourself, Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you.”) it hints at something more: St. Augustine was talking about an insatiable ache inside the human heart, about the restlessness and pull towards God that’s felt there.

Martin Buber is talking about that too, but he’s also talking about a restlessness, an incurable pull towards God, that’s inside all of nature, inside the universe itself. It isn’t just people who are achingly amorous, it’s the whole world, all of nature, the universe itself.

What’s being said here? In essence, Buber is saying that what’s felt inside the human heart is now present inside every element within nature itself, in atoms, molecules, stones, plants, insects, and animals. There’s the same ache for God made everything that exists, that leads to a chasm, to a black hole, to a redwood tree, to our pet dogs and cats, to the heart of a saint. And in that there’s no Buber even mention the spiritual and the physical. The one God who made both is drawing them both in the same way.

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, who was both a scientist and a mystic, believed this interplay between the energy flowing from an erotically charged God and that flowing back from an amorous world is the very structure of the universe, physical and spiritual. For Teilhard, the law of gravity atomic activity, photosynthesis, ecosystems, electromagnetic fields, family, sexual identity, human friendship, creativity and altruism, all draw on and manifest one and the same energy that keeps us restless and forever aware that everything we experience is not enough because it is not complete. It utterly lures the finite. But St. Augustine was speaking of the human heart, about the restlessness and pull towards God that’s felt there.

Jesus said to His disciples: “Be watchful! Be alert! Be ready! Be on your guard. For the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected time.”

So, in reality, the law of gravity and the gifts of the Holy Spirit are one and the same. We call it the law of gravity and the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Embracing sports as Church ministry

The Project Play Report also conveyed that 76 percent of youth coaches received training in sports skills and effective motivational techniques in 2019. Thanks to programs like PLACT, which have participated in PLACT’s parent workshops. Our participants are only a small, but important, part of the 100,000 coaches and parents that PLACT has served in the United States and Canada over its 15 years of existence.

One may ask why we need sports coaching and parenting education programs. Quite simply, the youth sports experience has great opportunity but also great risk. Sport coaches have been identified as educators. Despite this identification, many coaches, especially at the youth level, have never received any formal educator training.

Sport parents want the best for their children and the PLACT sports parent workshops provide best practices for how to raise a healthy, happy young athlete.

The Project Play Report also conveyed that 96 percent of (Continued on page 21)
Karen Kuhlman
Messenger Correspondent

At this time of year, we usually feel extra-grateful for the many good things that God has given us. The challenges we have experienced this year could make it difficult to look beyond our present discomfort and recall the blessings that God continually provides all around us. A little reminder could help put things in perspective.

Some of the people responsible for many of those blessings were part of our lives long ago. When we think of them in later years, we are grateful for the sweet memories those blessings bring. When we recall the continuing contributions of the women of the religious communities to the Diocese of Covington, we realize how truly blessed we have been by their presence.

Blessed are the Benedictine Sisters of St. Walburg Monastery:
— who founded Villa Madonna Academy in 1904,
— who founded Villa Madonna College in 1921,
— who founded Madonna Manor in 1964,
— who taught students to value individuality and community; self-confidence and compassion; contemplation and action.

Blessed are the Carmelite Sisters for the Aged and Infirm:
— who stress the dignity and worth of every older person,
— who founded Carmel Manor in 1949,
— who every day carry out their ministry of tending to the sick and the elderly.

Blessed are the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth:
— who founded LaSalette Academy in 1865,
— who calmed the fears of the students of LaSalette Academy after Pearl Harbor by keeping their minds on learning and off of the frightening news of the day,
— who prepared their students for life by giving them a well-rounded education and a sense of self-worth.

Blessed are the Sisters of the Congregation of Divine Providence:
— who founded Mount St. Martin Academy in 1889,
— who founded the Academy Notre Dame of Providence (later known as Our Lady of Providence) in 1903,
— who taught children preparing for First Communion to welcome Jesus and instilled in them a love of Jesus and a great anticipation for receiving Him,
— who gave us a love of liturgical music and taught us the correct way to sing,
— who gave associates the confidence to teach musical fundamentals to others,
— who minister to the sick and the poor in daily mass for many years,
— whose ministries help feed the poor, clothe the naked and welcome immigrants by teaching them to speak and read English as a second language.

Blessed are the Franciscan Sisters of the Poor:
— who founded Villa Madonna Academy in 1875,
— who founded St Charles Care Center in 1961,
— whose friendly manner and sense of humor sets students at ease in class,
— who are peacemakers,
— who give associates the confidence to say yes to having a better prayer life and getting closer to God.

Blessed are the Sisters of the Monastery of Christ’s Passion:
— who lead an unseen spiritual life and devote their lives to “the unceasing contemplation of Christ’s passion”
— who invite us to bring our prayer requests to them during times of family trouble or worries,
— who use their gifts to bake the bread that is changed by Christ through the priest at Mass into Jesus’ Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity.

Blessed are the Sisters of St. Joseph the Worker:
— who founded St. Joseph Academy in 1976 and strive to model a true Catholic life through embracing the Gospel message of Jesus Christ, so as to help their students grow spiritually, academically and socially,
— who care for the sick and the elderly through Taylor Manor, their health care mission in Versailles, Kentucky,
— who minister to the poor in their community.

Blessed are the women religious of the Diocese of Covington:
— who bring Communion to the sick and the shut in, who taught in Catholic schools throughout the Diocese, who prepared us for the sacraments, who taught us to show respect for ourselves and others, who work for social justice, who care for the poor, who minister to one another as they live in community in service to God,
— who serve God by putting the needs of others before their own - as they have done since 1823.

Blessed are the women religious of the Diocese of Covington:
— who minister to the sick and the shut in, who taught in Catholic schools throughout the Diocese, who prepared us for the sacraments, who taught us to show respect for ourselves and others, who work for social justice, who care for the poor, who minister to one another as they live in community in service to God,
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— who gave us a love of liturgical music and taught us the correct way to sing
— who gave us a love of liturgical music and taught us the correct way to sing the Star-Spangled Banner, taught many to play the piano and organ, opening the door for some to play at daily mass for many years,
— whose ministries help feed the poor, clothe the naked and welcome immigrants by teaching them to speak and read English as a second language.

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— who bring Communion to the sick and the shut in, who taught in Catholic schools throughout the Diocese, who prepared us for the sacraments, who taught us to show respect for ourselves and others, who work for social justice, who care for the poor, who minister to one another as they live in community in service to God,
— who serve God by putting the needs of others before their own - as they have done since 1823.
"It is putting our life in the Lord’s hands, that he be the one who guides us. We can all pray like this, almost without words," the pope said Nov. 18 during his weekly general audience, which was livestreamed from the library of the Apostolic Palace.

Continuing his series of audience talks about prayer, Pope Francis reflected on Mary as a model of prayer.

Mary did not autonomously orchestrate her life, the pope said. "She waits for God to take the reins of her path and guide her where he wants."

By being docile and willing to be God’s instrument, she prepares the way for “the great events in which God takes part in the world,” he said.

People also should pray that the Lord would be present every step of the way, “that he does not leave us alone, that he does not leave us to temptation, that he does not abandon us during terrible moments,” he said.

Mary not only accompanied Jesus’s entire life in prayer, right up to his death and resurrection, she also accompanied the first steps of the church, praying with “the men and women whom her son had called to form his community,” Pope Francis said.

Not only did she become the mother of God, she also became the mother of the Church through the work of the Holy Spirit, he said.

Her “natural feminine intuition is exalted by her most singular union with God in prayer,” the pope said. "This is why, reading the Gospel, we note that she seems to disappear at times, only to reappear for crucial moments: it was God’s voice that guided her heart and her steps where her presence was needed."

Pope Francis concluded his catechesis recalling how Mary’s heart has been compared to “a pearl of incomparable splendor; formed and smoothed by patient acceptance of God’s will through the mysteries of Jesus meditated on in prayer.”

"How beautiful it would be if we, too, could be a bit like our Mother with a heart open to the Word of God, with a silent, obedient heart” that lets God’s word grow.
Religious freedom advocates: Will new administration continue support?

Kurt Jensen
Catholic Near East News

WASHINGTON — One of the most frequently expressed questions during an international religious freedom symposium Nov. 19 was whether the attention granted to religious freedom during the past four years would continue with the next administration.

"As the church, we are nonpartisan and do our best, always, to stay free of politics," said Chaldean Archbishop Bashar Warda of Irbil, in the Kurdistan region of Iraq. He noted that "the present administration has stayed focused. Will this continue? We pray that it will be so."

With fewer than 250,000 professing Christians in Iraq, "it is likely we will disappear by the time the world chooses to look at us again."

"This (Trump) administration has been clear in support of us," Archbishop Warda said. "We hope and pray that this solidarity may continue."

He said he was "looking for signs" in the administration of President-elect Joe Biden. "We hope to see clear messages for this issue.

The afternoon symposium, "Act in Time: Protecting Imperiled Christians in Ancient and Other Lands," was held by the Anglosphere Society in collaboration with the Hudson Institute, the Knights of Columbus, the Institute for Ancient and Threatened Christianity and the Catholic Near East Welfare Association.

"It would be a sad day to see Christians no longer welcome in their own homeland," said Maronite Bishop Gregory J. Haddad of Brooklyn.

Although there has been a resurgence of anti-Semitism in Europe, "there's no escaping the fact that Christians are singled out in far more places," said Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan of New York.

Cardinal Dolan said issues involving persecution of Christian communities in the Middle East, as well as India, "have all been part of this administration's outreach when it's been brought to their attention."

He said that included Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, who has given "a particular attention" given to Orthodox churches.

On Nov. 17, Pompeo, on a seven-country tour of Europe and the Middle East, met with Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople in Turkey. In a tweet, Pompeo called the Orthodox leader "a key partner as we continue to champion religious freedom around the globe."

"We're one of the most blessed communities of faith on the planet ... but we can't stop there," Cardinal Dolan said.

"So we have to become advocates and champions for those who have been brought to our attention again. We encourage, constantly, intervention for the persecuted. We also want to make people aware of the suffering with all the means at our disposal."

"Here's a small remnant of a Christian community that's been beaten down by two American allies," he said. "Nicholson also noted the "very complicated entanglement of Christians in Muslim countries" that the White House "is afraid to meddle with" because the relationship with the United States "is so fragile." He said that included Turkey.

"The time to do something is now. Unfortunately, our leaders, our policymakers are so interested in keeping Turkey in the West ... they turn a blind eye to this sort of thing," Nicholson said.

Human rights of people on the move must be protected, says nuncio

Catholic News Service

UNITED NATIONS — People on the move — refugees, asylum-seekers, migrants and victims of human smuggling — are "some of the world's most vulnerable people," said Archbishop Gabriele Caccia, who heads the Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations.

They have "no fewer human rights than law-abiding residents," he added. "We must avoid, as Pope Francis has warned, a 'globalization of indifference' that makes these vulnerable people 'emblems of exclusion.'"

He made the comments in a statement to a session of UN General Assembly's Sixth Committee, the primary forum for consideration of international law and other legal matters concerning the world body.

Msgr. Fredrik Hansen, first secretary at the observer mission, delivered the archbishop's Nov. 10 statement regarding the committee's agenda item on "The Expulsion of Aliens."

"The issues before us — the expulsion of aliens, human beings who are our brothers and sisters — are complex and politically sensitive but their rights "must be fully ensured and protected," the archbishop said, adding, "It must be stressed that fundamental human rights must always take precedence over state interests."

Guiding the discussion was a draft of guidelines prepared by the International Law Commission for the Sixth Committee. The draft, the archbishop noted, had been prepared "in a cautious manner and while seeking the broadest possible consensus" among the U.N.'s member nations.

Archbishop Caccia welcomed in particular the articles in the commission's guidelines that affirmed that no one "should be expelled, returned or extradited to another state when there are substantial grounds for believing that his or her life or freedom would be threatened on account of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, or where he or she may be subjected to the death penalty."

"We believe that this provision codifies a growing consensus in the international community," he added.

He expressed caution on the article that presumes "persons subject to expulsion would be detained," saying that detention "should be the exception rather than the rule."

"It is also important to improve conditions of detention and to ensure the procedural rights of those in detention," Archbishop Caccia said. "Pope Francis has encouraged that 'no compromise' on the challenges posed by contemporary migration can be summed up in four verbs: welcome, protect, promote and integrate."

"Children, moreover, should never be detained and their best interests should be the primary consideration in all decisions made on their behalf," the U.N. nuncio said.

"The rule of law, in fact, requires that the state justify any limitation on a human right, taking into account any specific circumstances," he continued. "There should be provisions for detention facilities to be clean, provide access to doctors and take into account the needs of families, women and children, as the basic concept of human dignity requires. The right of children who may be subject to expulsion to enjoy the care of their families must be ensured."

He also said due process guarantees "are enshrined in international law" and "states must ensure respect for procedural rights."

"Providing substantive rights while denying the procedural means to claim and obtain such rights would render them virtually meaningless," he said.

A woman leaves the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services offices in New York City Aug. 15, 2012.
DCCH Center celebrates 150 adoptions, reflects on 20 years

Allegra Thatcher
Assistant Editor

When the DCCH Center for Children and Families became officially licensed as an adoption agency in 2001, they knew very few of the 150 children who would find forever homes thanks to their help.

Ron Bertsch, director, therapeutic foster care, adoption and independent living, said he started as the only staff person for what was then a residential program in 1999, and finalized the first adoption in 2002. What drove him was the need for permanence for these children.

“We realized a lot of our foster families had children that now were not able to safely go back, and the families were interested in adopting … that’s what spurred us to go and get our adoption license,” he said. “We want to help see these families and children all the way to the end, not turn the case back over to the state agency.”

The first 100 adoptions were from 2002 to 2018, but the last two years have seen 50 more. Mr. Bertsch said it’s because DCCH has grown and improved.

The DCCH is unique in that the children are older and usually have histories of severe neglect and abuse. The prospect of fostering and eventual adoption through therapeutic foster care program can be daunting. “It’s not a calling that probably everyone can do, so I think it takes somebody special to answer this ministry call and foster and adopt an older child,” said Mr. Bertsch.

However, said Mr. Bertsch, many families have shared stories while it’s not been easy ever done, it’s also the most rewarding. “A lot of people have this fear that it’s going to be harder than they can manage and I’m not saying it’s not going to challenge you — it requires sacrifice and extra time and work on your part as a parent, but to know that you helped a child who has had a rough start in life but wanted to have a child to love. We’re a long, long ways from perfect, but we knew we could offer a child a safe environment, and that might be enough to save a life,” they said. “We would say to approach it not from the perspective of ‘What might happen to this child if we don’t?’ but rather from the perspective of ‘What might happen to this child if we do?’ It’s not always sunny skies, but it is very rewarding, and we believe it is Kingdom work.”

Mr. Bertsch and the DCCH are always looking to find more foster or adoptive families, mentors and donors.

“Some people think they’re too old, but we love empty nesters in their 40s or 50s — before they get too accustomed to empty nesters, when they still are fresh on raising teenagers. I want those folks to call me,” he said. “They certainly can help by paying a prayer for healing of the children and for more families to step up and answer that call. This is a different type of vocation, but I know there are people who can do it.”

Anyone who is interested in fostering, adopting, mentoring, donating or spreading the word can call the DCCH at 331-2040.

Mike and Peggy Fury, who married late in life, adopted their daughter in 2013 and they celebrate her adoption day every year with ice cream.

Julia and Dakota have found fostering to be very rewarding for them. Julia’s biological siblings are and have always been very close to her. They love that she and Dakota have opened up their home to other children, who like themselves once upon a time needed this kind, generous and loving home life. Even Dakota’s family have embraced the idea and all are very supportive of the new members of their family.

Retired Mike Fury and his wife Peggy Fury adopted Destine, who just turned 18 this year. “We married late in life but wanted to have a child to love. We’re a long, long time foster parents, but we thought maybe this is something that we could do,” said Mr. Fury. “We wanted to be with her and be as much a part of her life as she was of ours. We had been looking for a way to have a child to love.”

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The Parish Kitchen is in need of new sleeping bags and blankets for its guests. Donations can be dropped off Monday–Friday at either Parish Kitchen, 1351 Madison Avenue, Covington, 8–11 a.m. or Catholic Charities, 3601 Church Street, Latonia, 9 a.m.–3 p.m.

“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 gratefully accepted. Contact Sister Dorothy at dorothyosb@gmail.com or call 311-6324.

Newport Central Catholic High School, Newport, has rescheduled its open house to Monday, Dec. 7, starting at 5 p.m. Tours will be conducted at staggered times. Registration at nchs.com.

Divine Providence Sister Leslie Keener is sponsoring Advent evening prayer via Zoom on the four Mondays of Advent. Come and take a little time for stillness, contemplation and community. Sign up at https://forms.gle/1wk5GKsJRF75fP9 and she will send you the Zoom link.

Story of the Advent wreath

The well-known Advent wreath began as a German-Scandanavian tradition of using wreaths with lit candles during the dark of winter as a sign of light and warmth. It signified hope for spring and the light to come, and was baptized as a Christian tradition in the Middle Ages by serving as a reminder of the Light of the World, Jesus Christ.

The circle represents the cycle of seasons and life — reminding the faithful that a season of light will return with spring, just as Christ will return to his people. Made of evergreens, the wreath signifies continuance or everlasting life. Differing greens can signify different things, such as balsam to remind us of the crown of thorns, cedar to remind us of strength and healing, and all a reminder that life and growth remain when other plants or nature are dead in the heart of winter.

The candles — three purple and one rose — represent each of the weeks of Advent. The purple symbolize penance, prayer and sacrifices or good works during the penitential season, and the rose for rejoicing in the third week. The third Sunday, Gaudete Sunday, rejoices in the midpoint of Advent — rejoicing that Christmas is near, and Christ is present amid the darkness. Once three are lit, the number of lighted candles outnumber the dark candles, reminding the faithful that Christ is victorious over sin and death. The priest also wears rose vestments that Sunday.

The progressive lighting of candles symbolizes expectation and hope of the Lord’s final coming as the faithful celebrate and remember his first coming. Some wreaths even include a white candle in the center to represent Christ himself, lit on Christmas Eve. The priest in a parish or the head of the family blesses the wreath at the beginning of the Advent season, and there is a subsequent prayer for the weekly lighting of each candle.

Did you know?

St. Patrick School, Maysville, applied for and received a $4,500 grant from the International Paper Maysville Mill and International Paper Foundation. The majority of the company donations and contributions and the IP Foundation’s grants support projects or programs focused on the company’s Signature Causes — education, hunger, health and wellness and disaster relief. The money the school received will be used toward the purchase of a new oven for the school’s cafeteria.

Contact Sister Dorothy at dorothyosb@gmail.com or call 311-6324.

Newsworthy

Happy Birthday to Father Raymond Enzwiler, pastor, St. Thomas Parish, Ft. Thomas, Dec. 1; Deacon Tony Escamilla, Cristo Rey Parish, Florence, Dec. 1; Father Damian Hils, pastor, Blessed Sacrament Parish, Ft. Mitchell, Dec. 1; Father Paul Barschied, retired, Dec. 2; Deacon Peter Freeman, St. Philip Parish, Melbourne, director, Office of Worship, Dec. 6; Father Michael Barth, pastor, St. Joseph Parish, Warsaw and St. Edward Mission, Owenton, Dec. 11; and Deacon Gregory Meier, Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish, Burlington, Dec. 13.

CNS photo/Lisa Johnston, St Louis Review

 Celebrating family veterans

Students at St. Edward School, Cynthiana, brought in pictures and information, Nov. 11, of veterans in their family to share with classmates.
“Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers.”  
(3 John 2)
Catholic Medical Association unites faith and medicine

The White Mass, held for the last four years in October (cancelled this year due to COVID-19 restrictions), is an opportunity for the members of the CMA to share their work with people at the Mass, especially those in the healthcare field. Dr. Wehrman has reached out to St. Elizabeth Healthcare to help with marketing and awareness among medical professionals.

Dr. Wehrman shared that one of his favorite experiences was speaking in front of the Senate in Frankfort for Senate Bill 90, the Medical Ethics and Diversity Bill. In February of this year, “Myself and nurse Bridget McKinley were invited to participate as health professionals to support a bill,” he said. “A big thread to the bill was emphasizing the importance of healthcare conscious rights. Senator Stephen Meredith, who put it forth, did a courageous and wonderful job.” Though the bill passed the senate, it was never picked up by the House of Representatives. “I was proud to be associated,” he said.

During a normal year, the Sts. Teresa of Calcutta and Faustina Guild of Northern Kentucky met monthly for Mass at Divine Mercy Parish, Bellevue, followed by dinner at an area restaurant for fellowship and discussion of personal and professional matters. Throughout this year, the guild has faced challenges because of lack of in-person meetings. “But,” Dr. Wehrman said, “I think a positive’s that come from this year is the emphasis on online and virtual activities.” The CMA’s website, cathmed.org, offers reliable news for the medical field, including COVID-19 resources, online learning for further education, and two publications, “The Pulse of Catholic Medicine” and “Linacre Quarterly.” It also showcases different guilds, and involvement from residents and medical students.

A big focus of the CMA right now is to involve younger people, said Dr. Wehrman. The chapter at the University of Kentucky has attracted many young professionals in the medical field, and Dr. Wehrman hopes to invite Northern Kentucky University students to do the same. He’s excited to launch greater initiatives to reach young people.

One resource he mentioned is the “Doctor Doctor” podcast, put out by the CMA, which is inspiring and informative for anyone interested in medical ethics. It’s featured on the Sacred Heart Radio website at 11 a.m. Saturday mornings, and can also be found on iTunes. “They have gone above and beyond, getting experts in different fields,” said Dr. Wehrman.

Overall, Dr. Wehrman said, “It’s been a wonderful boost as a Catholic — it’s better seeing the interaction and all the facets of how our Catholic faith gives perspective on so many medical issues. You’re reminded how many ethical decisions there are in medicine and you keep up on current events in a big way. Our guild is still very young and there are so many healthcare professionals in Northern Kentucky; and I just know that so many more people would appreciate and benefit from the CMA. So it’s continuing to try to get the word out about it and garner people’s enthusiasm and time that it involves.”

Nationally, the CMA recently hosted a virtual journal club out of Palm Bay, Florida, and continues to offer chances for uplifting and intellectual formation as well as fellowship. For more information, visit cathmed.org or covingtoncma.cathmed.org.

First Place 4 Health
Nancy Bradley

“But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given you besides.” (Matthew 6:33)

This beloved Scripture verse is the guiding principle of the First Place 4 Health Program, a Christ-centered weight loss program that asks you to give God a year to change your life by putting Christ first. The program has recently revamped, with new materials based on the latest weight loss research coming out the week of Nov. 9.

If you have tried other methods and programs, only to regain what you lost and perhaps even more, why not spend some time in prayer discerning if this program

(Continued on page 13)
Target Health prompts wellness among St. Elizabeth associates

Allegria Thatcher
Assistant Editor

Wellness of patients is the prime focus of every health care system — but what about the employees? Target Health is the internal associate wellness department at St. Elizabeth Healthcare, and it seeks to promote personal health for those who devote their time and energy to taking care of patients.

Jessica Morris, wellness manager, oversees any and all programming for the health and wellness of the nearly 12,000 employees at St. Elizabeth. She and a wellness specialist run the department, which provides on-site exercise classes, on-site fitness facilities, lunch and learn, one-on-one unlimited free health coaching, exercise program design, body fat testing, girth measurements, basal metabolic rate testing and more. Everything is completely free and voluntary.

Ms. Morris’ goal, she said, is to get every associate involved in the free program that will produce lasting results. “We do all kinds of challenges,” she explained. “Associates can actually earn up to $200 a year by getting so many steps a day, an annual exam, a mammogram, colonoscopy, monthly blood pressure checks, and engaging in challenges and online courses.”

The wellness program has been at St. Elizabeth since around 2008, and established as its own department under the Human Resources Department in 2015. Back then, Ms. Morris was the only employee. As a board-certified athletic trainer, certified personal trainer, and certified health coach, she was the most qualified of anyone currently on staff to take the position. She had several roles, most significantly as a board-certified athletic trainer; for

17 years prior:

“Initially in 2015, my primary focus was brand recognition — making associates aware of what Target Health offers, getting the name familiar — that there even is a wellness department,” said Ms. Morris. “I did all the health coaching, taught the exercise classes, did blood pressure checks. In these last five years we’ve seen tremendous growth and engagement — all of our new hires now hear about Target Health on day one.”

Morris was able to bring on another employee in January 2019.

Currently, approximately half of the associates are participating in the program to some extent. Ms. Morris has established greater awareness through the Wellness Champion program, which reaches associates through their coworkers. Allies who have an interest in health and wellness and want to share all the information with their departments reach out to those who might not otherwise invest time in it. The outreach began this fall and there are currently 100 wellness champions.

“I provide the information to them each month of what will remember in Kentucky, as the day our Governor announced restrictions limiting visitation, communal dining and social activities, and limiting the movement of residents within facilities. It has been seven months since that day and along with many other policy and procedure changes, we continue to be committed to excellent care and compassion to Northern Kentucky older adults. The stress and circumstances we have been under has been daunting with little time to reflect. Scientific and medical value of what we have learned and are learning will take years to fully manifest. As a Community Relations Director of Rosedale Green and Emerald Trace, I have a unique perspective!”

The following list is by no means encompassing, but rather a quick list of what we have learned in the Nursing Care Facilities I work in.

Appreciate leadership in a crisis. Never take for granted those individuals and organizations that provide procedural, safety, spiritual, and other guidance when the world is spinning.

Accept that information is fluid and that no one has all the answers. Appreciate the blessing of collaboration.

Determine that you will honor others and meet their needs, despite the obstacles. Kindness is still essential even amid bedlam. Galatians 6:2 “Bear one another burdens…”

There are no bad hair days in a crisis! It is sur- prising how little there is to complain about when you are walking through difficulties with devoted co-workers.

Do not take others presence for granted. We have all endured isolation from one degree to another in

this pandemic, and sadly we have experienced loss.

Do not eat onions or anything remotely stinky if you wear a facial mask all day.

People read lips more than you thought. Smiles and other visual cues are difficult when wearing masks and shields. We have learned to smile with our eyes!

Listening is better than talking in a facial mask. This is something that I would like to continue after COVID-19. Older adults are resilient, there is a reason why they are still with us.

There is joy in the journey if you are passionate about what you do. We celebrate our successes and share the weight of struggles in order carry on our mission.

Rosedale Green and Emerald Trace continue to be trusted Senior Care in Northern Kentucky. Call us today — all of our new hires across the state.

Jessica Morris was coordinator of First Place 4 Health at St. Elizabeth in the five years since the department was officially established. “There’s been a renewed focus on health and wellness, and that’s part of the vision of St. Elizabeth — to be one of the healthiest communities in America,” she said. “I’m working with the associates all these years, and there’s countless stories on true changes in experi- ence, whether it’s weight loss, increased energy or work satisfaction or more presentism and not absenteeism. They’re much more engaged because they’re so grateful that St. Elizabeth offers this to them, all at no cost, which not all companies do. … All these amenities really do help make their job a lot better.”

Overall, Ms. Morris said she’s proud to work at St. Elizabeth in an environment with a vision so centered on wellness. “They really do take that to heart,” she said, “everything we do, choices that we make, really are centered around our mission, vision and values, and that’s really great to work for an organization that places such value on its associates and all aspects of wellness.”

Jessica Morris is coordinator of First Place 4 Health at St. Agnes Parish, Ft. Wright.

Life lessons from COVID-19

What has COVID-19 taught us? Senior-Care Providers are on the frontlines of combating and preventing the spread of COVID-19. This insidious virus created havoc in an already vulnerable population. March 10, 2020 will now be a date that many Nursing/Senior Care Communities will remember in Kentucky, as the day our Governor announced restrictions limiting visitation, communal dining and social activities, and limiting the movement of residents within facilities. It has been seven months since that day and along with many other policy and procedure changes, we continue to be committed to excellent care and compassion to Northern Kentucky older adults. The stress and circumstances we have been under has been daunting with little time to reflect. Scientific and medical value of what we have learned and are learning will take years to fully manifest. As a Community Relations Director of Rosedale Green and Emerald Trace, I have a unique perspective!

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Rosedale Green and Emerald Trace continue to be trusted Senior Care in Northern Kentucky. Call us today with your senior care questions.

Article contributed by Rosedale Green and Emerald Trace.
Why move now?

At Madonna Manor, we understand that deciding to move into a senior living community can be difficult. It may be even harder during the COVID-19 pandemic. Should you move into an independent living residence now or wait until the pandemic is over? If a spouse or family member needs assisted living, skilled nursing and rehabilitation, or memory care, is it best to continue caring for them at home for a while longer, or find them a senior living option now while space may still be available?

Common myths and facts to consider:

I’m safer at home right now; senior living communities have had cases of COVID-19.

Some senior living communities across the country have higher numbers of positive cases, in large part because they care for those at high risk – the elderly and those with underlying medical conditions.

While living at home, you still may need to run essential errands or otherwise come into contact with others. Each time you do that, you can be exposed to the virus. Because people exposed to COVID-19 can take up to two weeks to develop symptoms, they may look perfectly healthy and feel fine, yet still expose you.

If other people live with you or help you, do they frequently wash their hands, wear a facemask whenever they are around you, and follow all CDC guidelines to prevent you from making your own choices.

If Mom moves now, she may be lonely until your visitation restrictions are lifted.

While living at home, seniors sometimes may feel lonely and may need to return to work or school now that some businesses and schools have re-opened?

Home feels secure for now, so I can wait it out.

Your home may be free from tripping and fall hazards, and have safety measures like bathroom grab bars. However, do you have any health issues that may worsen, requiring long term care services sooner than later?

Many residents often comment they are relieved they made the decision to move when they did. Waiting until a sudden injury or illness occurs could prevent you from making your own choices.

If you become a resident at Madonna Manor, in the event you ever require a different level of care, you can remain on the same campus.

If Mom moves now, she may be lonely until your visitation restrictions are lifted.

We know it’s difficult not seeing a loved one. We highly encourage our residents and families to have virtual visits (FaceTime and Skype), plus call often and send cards and special packages during the pandemic.

While living at home, seniors sometimes may feel lonely because their age isolates them. At Madonna Manor, residents often gain confidence and may feel more connected overall. That’s because they are surrounded by others similar in age – people who have the same point of reference, may share similar values or hobbies, and can reminisce about historic milestones that younger people have not experienced.

Further, our activity director offers residents ongoing activities throughout each week to keep residents actively engaged. While our employees can never replace your unconditional love, be assured we treat your loved one like our own.

My aunt is looking forward to going to Mass again soon, but your chapel may be closed.

Many houses of worship are closed or limiting live services during the pandemic. Until our chapel can safely re-open, we offer videotaped and/or live-stream services, as well as other types of spiritual support through our Director of Mission Integration.

While only you may know what is best for you or a loved one right now, Madonna Manor, a member of CHI Living Communities, offers plenty of fun activities in a safe, healthy and supportive environment – despite the COVID-19 pandemic! If you would like to explore living options now or in the future, contact us at (859) 426-6400 to discuss your specific needs.

Article contributed by Madonna Manor.
Archbishop says Catholic medical professionals live values of faith every day

Catholic News Service

During this ongoing pandemic, the commitment of health care workers to treat COVID-19 patients even at risk to their own health and lives — and some have died — is an illustration of Judeo-Christian values still at work in the larger society, said Archbishop Salvatore J. Cordileone of San Francisco.

"We bear fruit by doing what Christ commands us to do," he said. "And what does he command us to do? 'This is my commandment: Love one another as I love you no one has greater love than this than to lay down one's life for one's friends.'"

"As de-Christianized as our society has become, we still see this happening" in the work and dedication of medical professionals, he said. "This tells me we still have the vestiges of what was once a society imbued with Judeo-Christian values. This is what a Christian society looks like."

Archbishop Cordileone made the comments in his homily for the archdiocese's second annual White Mass and blessing for medical professionals.

He was the main celebrant of the evening Mass, which took place Oct. 16 outside St Augustine Church in South San Francisco with socially distanced seating. Mass-goers followed all state and local health protocols, including mask-wearing and hand-sanitizing.

The Benedict XVI Institute musicians played and sang from inside the church, and St. Augustine's audiovisual team piped the music out to those outside. The Mass invoked the Holy Spirit to provide his guidance and protection of medical professionals. The archbishop imparted a special blessing to all medical professionals in attendance.

The name of the White Mass comes from the color of uniforms traditionally worn by those in health care.

"Gathering to pray for and show spiritual support for Catholic health care workers ‘is so important,’” Archbishop Cordileone said. "As the body is all interconnected, as the church is all interconnected, so is society as a whole. We've seen this interconnectedness in the distress of the current pandemic, physical health and economic health, the health of social life."

"Above all what is important in society is spiritual health. We must give primacy to the spiritual in order for a society to be healthy," he added. "How we relate to one another, how we fulfill the duties of our state in life, how we live out our vocation, that all comes from where we are in our spiritual state, so we need to continue to exercise our most sublime duty as human beings in giving worship to God. We must make sure we do so in a safe way but we make sure that we do so."

Archbishop Cordileone thanked all in the health care profession "for your commitment to living your faith in your workplace."

"Your workplace, providing health care, is one of the most privileged places where the values of our faith can affect people on such a deep level," he said. "You understand this, you understand that your role is not only to improve the quality of your patients' life in this world but above all to help them improve the quality of their life everlasting."

Archbishop Cordileone also welcomed the formation a new chapter of the Catholic Medical Association in the archdiocese. "I am so appreciative of the vision of your founders," he said. "It’s something I have been desiring and envisioning and seeing the great need (for) here in this archdiocese, given what a great center of health care and health care research we are."

"We need to imbue this vocation, this endeavor of health care and health care research with the values that come from the Gospel otherwise what is quintessentially a Christian work can devolve into something that can be harmful in so many ways," the archbishop added.
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Children with disabilities may face stigma, but nun encourages parents

Damian Avevor
Catholic News Service

ACCRA, Ghana — A Nigerian nun working in Ghana urged parents of children with disabilities to see their situation as gift from God and not a curse.

Sister Olivia Umoh, a member of the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, said she understands it often is difficult to care for children with disabilities, but “I want to encourage parents that they are doing a special work for God, because these children belong to God and they are gracious in the sight of God.” She spoke to Catholic News Service ahead of the Dec. 3 observance of International Day of Disabled Persons.

The day proclaimed in 1992 and observed annually aims to promote the rights and well-being of people with disabilities in all spheres of society and development and to increase awareness of the situation of people with disabilities in every aspect of political, social, economic and cultural life.

Sister Umoh is the director of Safe-Child Advocacy, a church-run center in Ghana’s Kumasi Archdiocese. She said the center features children with disabilities and their parents or guardians each fall, when her congregation marks its founder’s feast.

This year, during the COVID-19 pandemic, “there were over a hundred persons with disabilities in our courtyard” but the staff arranged sleeping mats, benches and plastic chairs to allow for social distancing and arrange for the needs of the guests.

With these challenges, Sister Umoh reminded parents of vulnerable children that they “are your children, and as you take care of them, you are serving God in a special way.” She said caring for children with various forms and severity of disability is a moving experience that must not discourage parents and the children themselves. She also said anyone who mocks disabled children is mocking God.
HHS ensures hospital patients have access to spiritual care amid pandemic

Catholic News Service
WASHINGTON — The chairman of the U.S. bishops' Committee on Religious Liberty praised the Department of Health and Human Services for resolving discrimination complaints over two hospitals' refusal to let patients have access to the sacraments of baptism and the anointing of the sick during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“The Jesus Christ, physician of our souls and bodies, gave us the sacraments to convey God's grace and healing,” Archbishop Thomas G. Wenski of Miami said in an Oct. 21 statement. “As Pope Francis has noted, the sacraments are Jesus Christ's presence in us. Without them, we are distant from God, the source of our being and meaning.”

“It is of paramount importance that our government, public health authorities and health care providers strive to respect the liberty of the faithful to receive the sacraments,” he said.

The Office for Civil Rights at HHS announced Oct. 20 the resolution of complaints involving MedStar's Southern Maryland Hospital Center, which is part of the MedStar Health System, and one involving Mary Washington Healthcare in Virginia.

“COVID-19 requires us to temporarily modify our physical interactions to some degree, in order to reduce risks to public health,” Archbishop Wenski said.

Medical experts play a natural role in this effort but must avoid treating physical interactions in religious exercises as unnecessary or unacceptable risks because they are religious,” he added. “A true understanding of human well-being accounts, as Jesus did, for the health of both body and soul.”

Regarding the Maryland hospital, the HHS Office for Civil Rights said in a news release that its Conscience and Religious Freedom Division received a complaint in July from a mother “alleging that after giving birth alone at MSMHC, she was separated from her newborn baby because she had tested positive for COVID-19” when she was admitted to the hospital.

She asked that a Catholic priest be allowed to visit her newborn son to baptize him, but according to her complaint, the hospital denied her request “due to a visitor exclusion policy adopted in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.” HHS said.

The HHS Office for Civil Rights and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services explained to the hospital and MedStar Health System they had to let chaplains or clergy make hospital visitations during the pandemic.

HHS said the health system has now updated its visitation policy for its 10 hospitals “so that patients in COVID-19 positive units or sections, as well as non-COVID units, will be able to freely exercise their religion by receiving religious services from the religious leaders of their choice at any reasonable time, as long as the visit does not disrupt care.”

“Visiting clergy must follow hospital safety policies, including screening for COVID-19 infection, must follow proper infection prevention practices — such as hand-washing/sanitizing and physical distancing — and must wear a face mask.”

The second case involved a complaint filed by the Diocese of Arlington, Virginia, with the agency in August over Mary Washington Healthcare not permitting a priest to provide holy Communion and the anointing of the sick to a COVID-19-positive patient “who was in an end-of-life situation.”

“The patient's family requested a priest be allowed to provide those sacraments. Once Mary Washington Healthcare learned of the complaint the hospital gave a priest access to the patient to administer the sacraments.”

The Arlington Diocese filed another complaint when Mary Washington Healthcare would not allow a priest to visit a surgery patient in the hospital's intensive care unit after the family requested the visit.

According to HHS, the patient did not have COVID-19, but the hospital denied the request because the entire ICU was designated as a COVID-19 unit and visitors could enter only “in end-of-life situations,” which was not the surgery patient's status.

The HHS Office for Civil Rights, after consulting with the hospital's infection control specialists, “reached a resolution that balances patient needs for compassionate spiritual support and the hospital's practical need to protect staff, patients and visitors from infection,” HHS said.

The new policy allows patients in COVID-19 units to have access to clergy in compassionate care situations, including end-of-life situations.

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November 27, 2020

ENTERTAINMENT

“Mank” (Netflix) The thesis of this historical drama is that the principal credit for the landmark 1941 film “Citizen Kane” ought to be given to screenwriter Herman Mankiewicz rather than to the movie’s director, co-writer and producer, 25-year-old wunderkind Orson Welles. As Mankiewicz states, “The Life Before Us” (published under the penname Emile Ajar), boasts a strong aesthetic appeal and some positive themes. But these assets are offset by its tendency to focus on the pain involved in creativity. Mature themes, including adultery, some crude and crass language. CNS: A-III; MPAA: R.

“Come Away” (Relativity) Intended as a revisionist origin story for J.M. Barrie’s Peter Pan and Lewis Carroll’s Alice, this intriguing if slightly schizophrenic fairy tale is mostly wholesome, family-friendly fare. In the idyllic English countryside, three carefree siblings, encouraged by their loving parents, revel in battling make-believe pirates and hosting tea parties with plush toys. But after tragedy strikes and a secret problem is revealed, two of the children embark on a perilous journey to London to find a solution, encountering versions of a variety of fictional characters along the way. Though director Brenda Chapman falls short of the ambitious goal she sets herself, this messy mash-up is still likely to spark the imaginations of young viewers. Mature themes, moments of peril. CNS: A-II; MPAA: PG.
With new president, cardinal-designate hopes for dialogue

Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — As Washington’s new cardinal and with a Catholic soon to be living in the White House, Cardinal-designate Wilton D. Gregory said he hopes to collaborate where possible while respectfully pointing out areas where he won’t agree.

“The kind of relationship that I hope we will have is a conversational relationship where we can discover areas where we can cooperate that reflect the social teachings of the Church, knowing full well that there are some areas where we won’t agree,” the cardinal-designate said. “They are areas where the Church’s position is very clear,” particularly its opposition to the president-elect’s support for legal abortion.

In deciding when to collaborate and when to criticize, he said, “I hope that I don’t highlight one over the other.”

“I hope it’s a real dialogue, because I think that’s the mantra of Pope Francis — that we should be a Church in dialogue, even with those with whom we have some serious disagreements,” he said.

The archbishop of Washington said “informed Catholics” know the Church’s teaching on the sacredness of human life from conception to natural death, so he does not believe they would be confused by the Church cooperating with a Biden administration on other issues.

“It’s not a matter of confusion,” he said. “On my part, it’s a matter of the responsibility that I have as the archbishop to be engaged and to be in dialogue with him, even in those areas where we obviously have some differences.”

While some Catholics believe Biden should not be allowed to receive Communion when he goes to Mass, Cardinal-designate Gregory said that for eight years as vice president, Biden went to Mass and received Communion.

“I’m not going to veer from that,” he said. “I’m not going to veer from that.”

The cardinal-designate said there also is a need for dialogue within the Church among people who think differently.

“Conflict within the Church is not a new reality; it goes back to apostolic times,” he said. “What seems to be new is the capacity for people to broadcast the conflicts and to allow social communications to intensify the conflict.”

Ordained to the priesthood in 1973 for the Archdiocese of Chicago, Cardinal-designate Gregory spoke about the late Chicago Cardinal Joseph L. Bernardin’s efforts to promote a way for Catholics to find “common ground” and reaffirm communion among them.

“One key,” he said, is developing “the capacity to have civil disagreements — serious disagreements, you know, really pointed disagreements — but done in such a way that the focus is on the argument, not on the demonization of the people with whom we disagree.”

Disagreements are part of “being a family a family of faith,” he said. “The difficulty is too many people want to throw out of the family of faith people with whom they have disagreements.”

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youth head coaches in 2019 were males—a wider gap between males and females than in 2018. PLACT instituted a “We Champion Female Coaches” initiative two years ago, promoting the need for more female role models to serve as coaches during a time when girls’ sports participation is at an all-time high.

During the Symposium on Sports, Education, & Pastoral Care, hosted by PLACT at the University of Notre Dame in March 2019, and in which I was fortunate to participate, a pastoral action plan was established. The symposium was a response to the Vatican’s Dicastery for Laity, Family, & Life release of “Giving the Best of Yourself: a Document on the Christian Perspective on Sport and the Human Person.” The call to action has four elements:

1. Sports must serve the human person in their integral development.
2. Sport programs must provide continuing education for coaches and pastoral workers.
3. Sports should create a culture of inclusion.
4. Sports are an opportunity to create a culture of encounter, peace and mercy.

PLACT provides us with the resources to serve our young athletes in these contexts, especially our coaches. All coaches want the best for their athletes. However, in order to live the Church’s vision of sport, they need training. According to the pastoral action plan, they need training in the following areas—all areas that the PLACT coaches’ clinic provides: embracing their role as a lay minister of the Church; making sport child-centered; honoring the “play” aspects of sport; facilitate positive team interactions and develop teams as moral communities; and learn intentional ways of teaching virtue through sports.

Rich Hoyt is an assistant professor at the University of Cincinnati, a parishioner at St. Agnes Parish, Ft. Wright, and a longtime youth and high school coach. He is the lead trainer for the Play Like A Champion Today program in the Diocese of Covington. If you are interested in learning more about Play Like A Champion Today programs, access their website: www.playlikeachampion.org. To learn how you can become more involved with the PLACT program throughout the Diocese of Covington, e-mail lead trainer Rich Hoyt (rich.hoyt.317@gmail.com). Play Like A Champion Today trainings are currently available; registration is available through your VIRTUS account.

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Touring Sistine Chapel exhibit gives visitors close-up look at ceiling frescoes

Dave Hrbacek
Catholic News Service

BLOOMINGTON, Minn. — The internationally acclaimed Michelangelo’s Sistine Chapel Exhibition with its 34 life-size reproductions is designed to give visitors a closer look at the frescoes that adorn the ceiling of the chapel at the Vatican than if they visited in person.

The exhibit opened to the general public Nov. 13 at the Mall of America in the Twin Cities’ suburb of Bloomington.

It includes all of Michelangelo’s works displayed on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, from his famous fresco, “The Creation of Adam,” all the way to the “Last Judgment,” which was completed in 1514 as part of an altar wall redesign.

The exhibit, consisting of images put on large panels up to 41 feet by 41 feet, has been traveling over the past five years to cities across the U.S. and countries around the world, including Canada, where it premiered in July 2015, China, Poland, Germany, Austria, Panama and Colombia.

It will remain at the Mall of America through at least Jan. 31, possibly longer depending on demand.

“I’ve always wanted to see the Sistine Chapel, but knew we probably wouldn’t get there,” said Jackie Krenske of Divine Mercy Parish in Faribault, Minn. “So, we just thought this would be a real good way of being able to see it. It’s great.”

SEE Global Entertainment in Los Angeles produced the exhibit. SEE’s CEO, Martin Biallas, visited the Mall of America Nov. 15 with his wife, Dave. “We are thrilled to bring this exhibit to Mall of America for guests to enjoy a safe and immersive exhibit experience,” said Jill Renslow, executive vice president of Mall of America. “This exhibit will provide a unique, cultural opportunity for Mall of America visitors of all ages throughout the holiday season.”

Registration. Follow the block arrow for children. Please check your account, contact your parish, school or institution. Note: If your Training Tab is missing or you cannot access your account, contact your parish, school or institution. For other difficulties, contact Marylu Steffen at (859) 392-1500 or msteffen@covdio.org.
Amid rising protests, Guatemala’s bishops call on president to veto budget

GUATEMALA CITY — Guatemala’s bishops urged the country’s president to veto a budget Tuesday approved by the country’s Senate — as an example of the “dispossession” and “opaque and certainly murky” lawmakers cut funds for the national human rights office and health and education, in a country where “the poor are the population is poor and outgoing migration prior to the pandemic was commonplace.”

The lawmakers also voted to increase funds for their own meals, Guatemalan media reported, even as they cut nutrition programs. “I don’t expect this,” Father Fields said. “I live in an atmosphere of fear and it’s generally people who do not love their country, do not love peace, do not love justice,” the archbishop said.

New ‘Beatitude Center’ to teach peace online first, then in person

WASHINGTON — Maybe the key to teaching, learning and practicing peace is a spot that is itself full of peace. “I live in an incredible place right along the Pacific Ocean” near Cambrria, California, along the state’s central coast near Big Sur, “which seems idyllic to the eye,” Father Dear, for example, said in a statement the day after protesters entered the Capitol. “It has been the core of his vocation. “They have this peace in the center of peace, in Rome.”

The Diocese of Monterey, California, after spending 32 years as a priest in Rome, Father Dear’s Beatitudes Center for the Nonviolent Pastoral Commission, drew on data from several Catholic organizations and created huge uncertainties for any life ethic. “We have the knowledge to plan other ceremonies as well, planning to be ordained a bishop — not only affecting the population’s health, but disrupting all dimensions of existence,” said a report to the Nov. 16-20 Spanish bishops’ conference plenary.

VATICAN CITY — Despite quickly shifting travel restrictions in place across the global pandemic, the majority of cardinals-designate were planning to attend the Vatican ceremony to receive their red hats and cardinal’s rings. Several had been or planned to appear for the big day: for example, Cardinal-designate Wilfrid D. Gregory of Washington arrived in Rome safely he could quarantine 10 days before the Nov 28 cardinal-designate Celestino Aos Braco, the 75-year-old archbishop of Santiago, Chile, was also quarantining as a precautionary measure, staying at the Domus Sanctae Marthae, the residence where Pope Francis lives. Others had to plan other ceremonies as well, planning to be ordained a cardinal — normally a pope’s favorites for prisons before they are destined to the rank of cardinal. For example, 80-year-old Cardinal-designate K VICI, who spent 16 years as a priest in Rome, had his papal ordination Nov. 8 — the World Day of Peace, a date he found significant because of his many years serving the poor through his parishes and as a former director of Rome’s Caritas.

MEXICO CITY — A Dominican sister was shot in the leg as she humanized her role of woman and gathered from paramilitaries in Mexico’s southern Chiapas state. Dominican Sister Maria Isabel Hernandez Rosu, 52, was struck in the leg Nov. 18 while attempting to take food to a group of Indigenous Tzotzil people displaced from a hamlet in the municipality of Aldama. They had been forced to flee due to land dispute. The injures sustained by Sister Maria Isabel, part of the Dominican Sisters of the Holy Rosary and a pasted director of the Diocese of San Cristobal de las Casas, were not considered life-threatening, according to the diocese. She had traveled to the community with the diocesan Caritas team and a nongovernmental group promoting Indigenous children’s health. “This action is criminal,” said Ofelia Medina Espinosa, an actress and director of the NGO, Fideicomiso para la Salud de los Ninos Indigenas de Mexico. “We couldn’t get close (and) the people are experiencing a food emergency because of daily gunfights.”

Majority of cardinals-designate expected to attend consistory

WASHINGTON — When Father John Fields received an email from the University of Pennsylvania Aug. 28 asking him if he wanted to participate in the third and final phase of Moderna’s COVID-19 vaccine trial, he answered “yes” immediately “I did not hesitate. For me, it was a go.”

“I just hoped I would be accepted,” he said in a Nov. 17 email to Catholic News Service. “It would be a great opportunity to fight this deadly virus that outwardly appeared and wreathed havoc throughout the world, bringing death and disrupting every aspect of our lives,” Father Fields, an archbishop of the Ukrainian Catholic Archeparchy of Philadelphia, who is director of communication for the archeparchy “Several weeks ago, I assisted one of my former parishioners from Frickville, Pa., who was dying of cancer at the hospital of the University Pennsylvania,” he recalled. “I knew he was cancer terminal but signed up for an experimental cancer research study at Penn. Even in this day, I think of his courage and bravery while he was at death’s door.” On Nov. 6, Moderna said preliminary data from the phase three trial shows its coronavirus vaccine is 94 percent effective in preventing COVID-19. It’s the second vacc in the United States to have “a strikingly high success rate,” as CNN described it. The first is a vaccine by Pfizer, which announced Nov. 11 its vaccine is 95 percent effective.

Spanish bishops, Europeans warn of economic, social wounds from pandemic

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VATICAN CITY — While the coronavirus lockdowns and restrictions have interrupted people’s lives and brought suffering on a global scale, every individual — including the pope — has or will experience traumatic interruptions in their lives, Pope Francis said in a new book.

“Illness, the failure of a marriage or a business, some great disappointment or betrayal,” he said, are moments that “generate a tension, a crisis that reveals what is in our hearts.”

In “Let Us Dream: The Path to A Better Future,” a book written with author Austen Ivereigh, Pope Francis said he had experienced three “COVID moments” in his lifetime: lung problems that threatened his life when he was 21; his “displacement” in Germany in 1986 for studies; and when he was sent away to Cordoba, Argentina, for almost two years in the early 1990s.

“But if you dig in, you come out worse.”

Writing about his diseased lung, the pope said, “I remember the date: Aug. 13, 1957. I got taken to hospital by a (seminary) prefect who realized mine was not the kind of flu you treat with aspirin. Straightaway they took a liter and a half of water out of the lung, and I remained there fighting for my life.”

He was in his second year at the diocesan seminary and it was his “first experience of limit, of pain and loneliness,” he said. “It changed the way I saw life.”

For months, I didn’t know who I was and whether I would live or die. The doctors had no idea whether I’d make it either,” the pope wrote. “I remember hugging my mother and saying: ‘Just tell me if I’m going to die.’

After three months in the hospital, “they operated to take out the upper right lobe of one of the lungs,” he said. “I have some sense of how people with coronavirus feel as they struggle to breathe on ventilators.”

One of the nurses, “Sister Cornelia Caraglio, saved my life” by doubling his antibiotics, he said. “Because of her regular contact with sick people, she understood better than the doctor what they needed, and she had the courage to act on her knowledge.”

Pope Francis said he also learned the meaning of “cheap consolations.”

“People came in to tell me I was going to be fine, how with all that pain I’d never have to suffer again — really dumb things, empty words,” he said.

Instead, he learned from a nun who had prepared him for his first Communion and would come and hold his hand, how important it was to sit with people, touch them and keep words to a minimum.

The time in the hospital recovering, he said, gave him the time and space he needed to “rethink my vocation” and explore his longing to enter a religious order rather than the diocesan priesthood. It was then that he decided to join the Jesuits.