**Prayer to St. Joseph**

*O Glorious St. Joseph, with Jesus and Mary, you knew hunger, uncertainty and illness, but you turned your chaste heart to God in your need and those of your family and accepted the Father's responses as events unfolded. Help us to recognize God's will in our lives and to accept what He bestows in loving kindness. May we imitate your example and be shielded with your protecting help, so that we may live a noble life, die a holy death, and secure everlasting happiness in Heaven.*

*Amen.*

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**A message from Bishop Roger Foys**

This year the celebration of the Solemnity of St. Joseph falls on a Friday (19 March 2021). Since the celebration occurs on a Friday of Lent, the observance of the law of abstinence from meat on Friday is dispensed on this day. This dispensation applies to all the faithful of the Diocese of Covington as well as to anyone present in the Diocese of Covington on that day. Those who avail themselves of this dispensation are encouraged to undertake some other form of penance, especially the works of charity and exercises of piety. (cf. Canon 1253, Code of Canon Law)
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St. Joseph table family-centered celebration of petition and thanksgiving

The St. Joseph Altar or St. Joseph Table is a tradition from Sicily it originated from a time of drought and famine. In prayer, the people implored St. Joseph, their patron, for relief from the famine that gripped the island. At last the skies opened, sending down the life-giving water. To show their gratitude, they prepared a table with a special assortment of foods they had har- vested. After paying honor to St. Joseph, they distributed the food to the less for- tune.

The first St. Joseph Altar set up on the island of Sicily was a small one, of course. But as time went on and the tradition took hold, the altars grew larger and more ornate. Today, the artistic quality of the breads, cookies and pastries, which are baked in such shapes as chalices, staffs and pyramids, often rivals the exquisite flavor of the food offerings.

Though Sicilian immigrants introduced the custom to America, the celebration is not confined to any nationality. Rather, it has become a public event which its devoted participants embrace for a host of private and personal reasons. The feast is alternately a source of petition and thanksgiving.

The celebration of St. Joseph’s feast day with the St. Joseph Altar is a tradition that centers on the entire family. One of the special customs calls for the selection of children to portray members of the Holy Family and Joseph. Angels and favorite saints may also be included in the ritual, which begins with the “saints” going door to door to seek aid until finally reaching the place where the altar is on display.

After the Holy Family has eaten, guests may partake of the meal. Most of the foods presented on the altar are acquired through begging, a symbol gesture that represents what the poor of Sicily were forced to do. When the feast is over, the remaining food and whatever money has been contributed are given to the poor.

St. Joseph’s Altar is an elaborate display at an elegant church or a humble table in a modest home, it is a reflection of deep devotion to St. Joseph, the patron of those in need—workers, travelers, the persecuted, the poor, the elderly and old have begun to rediscov- er their legacy.

After many centuries, the St. Joseph Altar still serves as a reminder that those who have experienced some measure of good fortune must share it with those who have less.

This article was published online at Catholic Culture and has been edited and reprinted with permission.

DPAA is an opportunity to share the gifts God has given with others

Laura Keener

Editor

As materials for the Diocesan Parish Annual Appeal begin to be delivered to homes throughout the diocese, Karen Riegler, DPAA local chair, offered an update from the campaign’s first phase — the leadership gifts phase.

The leadership gifts phase is an important phase of the DPAA. “It sets the pace for the campaign,” Mrs. Riegler said.

During this year’s leader- ship gifts phase, 13 volunteer solicitors personally contacted the top 200 donors from last year’s DPAA, inviting them to participate again in this year’s DPAA. As of Monday, March 8, solicitors have received gifts and pledges totaling over $280k. The solicitors will complete their work and have all gifts and pledges reported to the Stewardship and Mission Services Office by March 28.

“Through the generosity of leaders throughout the diocese, the Bishop’s Partnership in Ship gifts phase, 33 volunteer solicitors have received gifts and pledges totaling over $4,999; Monsignors’ Society, $1,500–$2,499 and diocesan religious houses in the Diocese of Covington. There are over 8,000 students in diocesan schools, not including administrators, faculty and staff and hundreds of priests, employees and volunteers at the St. Vincent Seminary Board of Regents meeting, 10 a.m.–11 a.m.

March 17

COVID-19 briefing, 9:30 a.m.

March 18

Diocesan staff directors meeting, 9:30 a.m.

Holy Hour for victims of sexual abuse, for the sanctification of priests, and for an end to the pandemic, Basilica of Covington, 3 p.m.

March 19

Solennity of St. Joseph Mass, Basilica of Covington, 10 a.m.

March 20

Mass, Basilica of Covington, 4:30 p.m.

March 21

Mass, Basilica of Covington, 10 a.m.

March 16

Individual meeting, 10 a.m.

March 18

St. Vincent Seminary Board of Regents meeting, 10 a.m.–11 a.m.

March 17

COVID-19 briefing, 9:30 a.m.

Coronavirus Report

(as of Monday, March 8)

The information below includes reported cases from the Curia, schools, parishes, organizations and religious houses in the Diocese of Covington.

There are over 8,000 students in diocesan schools, not including administrators, faculty and staff and hundreds of priests, employees and volunteers at the Curia and in parishes, organizations and religious houses.

Positive Cases

Active positive cases: 25

Recovered positive cases: 816

Total ever positive cases: 841

Currently Self-quarantined

Close Contacts: 95

Close Contacts with COVID case in household: 36

Karen Riegler

Editor

There are five leadership gift clubs available to donors: Lux Christi Guild, $10,000 or above; Donors: Monsignors’ Society, $1,500–$2,499 and diocesan religious houses.

The solicitors will complete their work and have all gifts and pledges reported to the Stewardship and Mission Services Office by March 28.

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March 13

Confirmation, St. Edward Parish, 10 a.m.–12 p.m.

March 14

Mass, Cathedral Basilica, 10 a.m.

March 15

Mass, Cathedral Basilica, 4:30 p.m.

March 16

Mass, Cathedral Basilica, 10 a.m.

March 17

Individual meeting, 10 a.m.

March 18

St. Vincent Seminary Board of Regents meeting, 10 a.m.–11 a.m.

March 17

COVID-19 briefing, 9:30 a.m.
The parable of the Good Samaritan... the model of Christian charity

“The Oxford American Desk Dictionary and Thesaurus” defines “Samaritan” as a “charitable or helpful person.” But the modern usage of the term discloses a paradox, for a forment of empathy for orophorism has evolved into a passive metaphor for compassion and charity. Now it is taken for granted that persons, institutions (especially health care facilities), programs, and laws can properly be described “Good Samaritan.”

Such a meaning would simply not be the case in the original setting of Jesus’ story of the Good Samaritan. On the contrary, not even the wildest dreams of observant Jews in Jerusalem at the time of Jesus would have visualized a Samaritan as “neighbor.” In that religious culture, Samaritans symbolized a class of social and religious outcasts.

Moreover, the positive connotations of that image tend to have domesticated its raw evocative power conveyed in the historical context of Jesus’ parable of the “Good Samaritan.”

Dominican Father Timothy Radcliffe has incisively explained both the dynamics of the New Testament parables and the character of social change as demonstrated in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37).

Regarding the Gospel parables, the former provincial of the Order of Friars Preachers of Great Britain, observed, “Jesus parables should catch us and carry us away. We find ourselves inside parables and they transform us. Jesus’ parables usually did this by shocking people. The trouble is that we know them so well that they do not often surprise us. It is like listening to a joke when you know the punch line. We have to rediscover the sense of surprise.”

In applying his analyses of parables to the story of the Good Samaritan, Father Radcliffe suggested the ironic twist of that parable of Jesus: “... it is this impure man, this heretic, the Samaritan, who offers help and not the holy priest or the Levite.”

On account of the historic mutual antagonism between Jews and Samaritans, the punch line which identified a Samaritan as the hero in Jesus’ telling of the story would have caused imaginative shock in his hearers. The historic mutual antagonism between Jews and Samaritans would have generated an inveisible sense of shock.

Without doubt, a disguised Samaritan, one who stood out outside the covenant, could never have been viewed as an example of the fulfillment of the Law.

In line with this standard interpretation by biblical scholars, Blessed Sacrament Father Eugene LaVerdué (in 2008) commented that the “mistrusted and despised” Samaritan “cared for the stricken Jew in a manner which far surpassed ordinary obligation and sense of decency.”

The exegesis of the parable rendered by Pope Benedict XVI in his encyclical “Deus Caritas Est” (God is Love) (2005) offers a succinct summary of the parable’s revolutionary teaching on the meaning of “neighbor.”

In Part I of his inaugural encyclical, the Holy Father stated: “Until that time, the concept of ‘neighbor’ was understood as one who shared the same faith and race and to foreigners who had settled in the land of Israel, in other words, to the closely-knit community of their own people. This limit is now abolished. Anyone who needs me, and I offer help and not the holy priest or the Levite.”

In Part II of “Deus Caritas Est” he develops the theme of “The Practice of Love by the Church as a Community of Love.” In this section, the pope’s analysis is of the serv- ice of charity as a constitutive element of the nature of the Church. Tradition identifies a third-party responsibility of the Church — the ministry of charity (deltaouria), the proclama- tion of the Word of God (sermons and homilies), and the celebra- tion of the sacraments (leitourgia). These ancient categories of ecclesial ministries constitute indispensable and irrepa- rable elements of the Church’s mission (DCE, n. 25a).

In locating the inherent responsibilities of charity within the life of the Church as the family of God, Pope Benedict XVI recognized that the obligations of charity extend beyond the boundaries of the Church. On this point, he invoked the parable of the Good Samaritan as “the standard which imposes universal love toward the needy whom we encounter ‘by chance’ (cf. Luke 10:31), whatever they may be.” (DCE, n. 25b).

Later in the encyclical, Pope Benedict XVI returned again to this biblical story when he discusses the distinctiveness of the Church’s charitable activity: “Following the example of the Good Samaritan, Christian charity is first of all the simple response to immediate needs and specific situations: feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, caring for and healing the sick, visiting those in prison, etc.” (DCE, n. 31).

In addition to personal acts of compassion, the encyclical also addresses at length the Church’s charitable organizations. In this regard, there is clear support for professional competence. Yet, over and beyond training and credentials, workers in the field of charity need to engage those whom they serve with “humanity” and “heartfelt concern.” The call for personal encounter marked by “heartfelt concern” entails a “formation of heart” that stems from the “encounter of God in Christ which awakens their love and opens their spiriits to others.”

In this context, neighbor-love becomes effective, not on account of a commandment imposed from without, but from within, as a derivative of faith, “a faith which becomes active through love” (cf. Gal 5:6) (DCE, n. 11a).

Furthermore, Pope Benedict XVI understood the status of Christian charitable activity as being independent of “parti- san ideologies and purely secular projects but as ‘a way of making present here and now the love that man always needs.’”

Thus, he called the Christian approach to charitable activity “the program of the Good Samaritans, the program of Jesus.” The program of Jesus embodies “a heart that sees.” In other words, a heart that is grasped to see “where love is needed, and acts accordingly.” (DCE, n. 11b).

Since charitable activity under the auspices of the Church stands as “a community-initiated, spontaneous individual initiatives must be integrated with ‘planning, foresight and cooperation with other similar institutions.’” In “Deus Caritas Est” (2005), Pope Benedict XVI explained that O’Collins reflects on the relationship of spirituality to the works of mercy “A heart that sees” is formed by perseverance in prayer. “Those who live in loving and prayerful familiarity with Jesus will have the strength to go and inui- tate the selfless compassion of the Good Samaritan.” Those who generously and actively serve their neighbors will do so because prayer has shown them the face of Jesus in the sick, the old, and the dying.

Father O’Collins’ meditation closes with an engaging spiritual insight: “They can do something beautiful for Jesus because they have looked on his face in prayer.”

A note on the “Gospel of Suffering.” The apostolic letter “Salvifici Doloris” (“On the Christian Meaning of Human Suffering,” 1989) was a profound theological reflection on the salvific meaning of human suffering. Pope St. John Paul II declared that love is “the fullest source of the answer to the question of the meaning of suffering.” That response of Love was “given by God to man in the Cross of Jesus Christ.” (SD, n. 10.)

St. John Paul II wrote the parable of the Good Samaritan into the tapestry of a major theme, “the Gospel of suffer- ing.” (SD, n. 230).

In his exegesis of the parable of the Good Samaritan, the late Father Edward Sanders mapped the meaning as an authentic ‘neighbor.’ “For of the three travelers along the road from Jerusalem to Jericho, on which there lay a half- dozen dead men who had been stripped of their clothes, only one, the Samaritan, was not afraid to help the dead man who had been stripped and beaten by robbers.” It was precisely the Samaritan who showed himself to be the “real neighbor” of the victim. ‘neighbor’ means also the per- son that carried out and who bore responsibility for the deeds of love of neighbor” (SD, n. 28).

The implications of the parable of the Good Samaritan establish an organic link with the Gospel of suffering and confirm the personal bonds that tie a Christian to a suffering neighbor. Thus, Christians who are spiritually engaged with the narrative of the parable are “not allowed to ‘pass by’ on the other side indifferently, we must ‘stop’ beside him.” Everyone who stops beside the suffering of another, whatever form it might take, is a Good Samaritan.”

“Salvifici Doloris” identifies “every individual who is sensitive to the suffering of others, who is ‘moved by the misfortune of another,’” as a Good Samaritan.

From a theological standpoint, all forms of human suffer- ing paradoxically become a summons “to unloose in the human person, that unselfish gift of one’s ‘I’ on behalf of other people, especially those who suffer.” Pope Benedict XVI added that “every- one recognizes the world of human suffering as a constant cry for the creation of another world.” “[T]he world of human love, and in a certain sense man owes to suffering, that unselfish love which stirs in his heart and actions.” (SD, n. 29)

Solidarity rather than indifference to the suffering of another enjoins a ‘neighbor’ to “stop,” “sympathize,” just like the Samaritan and parable of the Good Samaritan (SD, n. 29).

Moreover, the parable of the Good Samaritan reveals “a deeply Christian truth that every year is repeated with greater universality.” According to the apostolic letter, the activities that are undertaken on behalf of the suffering and needy are a “Good Samaritan” work.

In recent centuries, institutions have also been created to take up such “Good Samaritan” activities. In particular, the apostolic letter explicitly singles out the health care profession (e.g., doctors, nurses) and speaks of an “evangelical vocation” to those who provide care to people in need. The letter recognizes the world of human suffering as a constant cry for the creation of another world. “[T]he world of human love, and in a certain sense man owes to suffering, that unselfish love which stirs in his heart and actions.” (SD, n. 29)

Moreover, the parable of the Good Samaritan stands as “one of the essential elements of moral culture and universal human civilization.”

Magen Ronald Ketteler is director of exorcism, episcopal liaison to the Messenger and professor of theology at Thomas More University.
Capture the joys of childhood

Many parents and grandparents today are noticing the increase in technology use among children. Even if their own children do not have a device, I’m sure they have heard the common phrase “but everyone else has one.” And looking at current data that might be true.

When I was an elementary school principal, we used to collect the students’ cell phones in the office each morning and return them at the end of the day. Many parents wanted their children to carry phones to school as a means to communicate with them—especially after school. Now that I have a young driver, I share this same desire and see the technology as another tool for safety. We saw many middle school students with devices but there were also many children as young as third grade with their own device.

I recently watched a documentary titled “Childhood 2.0: The Living Experiment.” In addition to the prevalence and dangers of technology, this video discussed childhood suicides and mental illness. Rates were significantly increased since the explosion of smartphones and social media use among children.

As a parent, I want to see the information shared in this documentary was alarming but also coincides with what we are seeing in children today.

Unfortunately, the smartphones that we use for our children’s safety are also introducing them to a variety of dangers that may drastically impact their personal safety and growth and development for years to come. Every smartphone has internet access and offers thousands of free apps. The apps that many children are using include Snapchat, Instagram, TikTok and so many others are exposing our children to content and psychological challenges they are not prepared to handle. Within seconds, children can access pornography, receive direct messages from strangers all over the world, and find themselves in situations that they have no idea how to get out of safely.

As educators, we are seeing an increase in the anxiety and mental health struggles of students. We also find our students struggling to address issues that arise from students’ social media use outside of school. Through social media, students are aware of all the interactions between themselves and others. This includes the good and bad things and unfortunately the interactions, photos and videos are often public on their accounts and can be viewed with anyone within seconds. Using this technology a child can be picked on by another child at all hours of the day and night and anyone within seconds. Using this technology, a child can be picked on by another child at all hours of the day and night and anyone within seconds. This concept of the benefits mutual responsibility for the world Church was retrieved by the Second Vatican Council’s teaching on episcopal collegiality. The Fathers’ practice of fraternal challenge and correction remains to be recovered, however. That recovery is now essential as the Church in Germany falls deeper into apostasy—a denial of the truths of Catholic faith that threatens schism.

The mechanism for this is the so-called “German Synodal Way,” a multi-year process that aims to substantially alter the Deposit of Faith on matters of doctrine, Church order, and the moral life, thereby betraying Pope St. John XXIII’s intention for Vatican II. According to its recently released “Fundamental Text,” the German Synodal Way will correct the Lord Jesus on the constitution of the Church and its episcopal governance (“Time has passed over these models,” the German text declares), even as the Synodal Way rectifies and improves the Church’s teaching on “gender justice … the evaluation of queer sexual orientations, and … dealing with failure and new beginnings (e.g., marriage after divorce).” How is this possible? It’s possible, according to the Fundamental Text, because “there is no one truth of the religious, moral and political world, and no one form of thought that can lay claim to ultimate authority.” Thus, “in the Church … legitimate views and ways of life compete … with each other even in core convictions … theologically justified claims to truth, correctness, comprehensibility and honesty … can be contradictory to each other.” This is not just a word salad confected by ideologically giddy academics and power-driven Church bureaucrats. It is apostasy and apostasy in service to the post-modern creed, that they will be compelled to “support” and “promote” what they reject as departures from Christian faith. The instinct for totalitarian coercion dies hard in some cultures, it seems.

As the names Ambrose, Augustine, Athanasius and John Chrysostom suggest, the middle centuries of the first millennium— the era of the Church Fathers— were the golden age of the Catholic episcopate. The Catholic Church recognizes 36 men and women as exemplary teachers: 14 of them— 40 percent of the entire roster of “Doctors of the Church” — were bishops who lived in that epoch. Theres were not a few saints. Even as these shepherds battled heresies within the Church and overbearing rulers who tried to subordi- nate the Church to their power, they created a spiritual patrimony from which we still benefit today as the Church regularly podnies their ser- mons, letters and biblical commentaries in the Liturgy of the Hours.

One characteristic of this golden age of bishops was the practice of fraternal challenge and correction within the episcopate. Local bishops in the mid-first millennium believed they belonged to, and shared responsibility for, a worldwide community. Convoked that what happens in one part of the body has effects on the whole, bishops like Cyril of Alexandria, Basil of Cassarea, Ambrose and Augustine did not hesitate to correct bishops they thought were mis- taken in doctrine or disciplinary practice—and sometimes did so in forceful language.

This concept of the bishops’ mutual responsibility for the world Church was retrieved by the Second Vatican Council’s teaching on episcopal collegiality. The Fathers’ practice of fraternal challenge and correction remain to be recovered, however. That recovery is now essential as the Church in Germany falls deeper into apostasy—a denial of the truths of Catholic faith that threatens schism.

As I walked in the door of the church, I heard people crying. The mother of the infant was kneeling in front of the tiny crying baby and crying aloud, “I want my baby boy back.” Over and over again she repeated that phrase. Some family members helped her so she could be seated for the serv- ice.

I do not remember what I said to try and comfort the family. I am sure that what- ever I said fell short of providing any consolation for the grieving parents and family.

In those sorrowful moments in our life, we seek the comfort and solace that are not available to us in this world. This gift brings us hope in difficult situations. This gift brings us love when we feel we are alone. This great gift—Jesus Christ—pours out his love and mercy on us each day and helps us through the trials of life.

During this Lenten season we are given the opportunity to open our eyes and truly see what this gift from the Father has done for us. The suffering and death of Jesus shows us what true and unconditional love is all about. It’s about giving of ourselves to love one another.

Jesus loved us so much that he gave up his life for us that we might be free. There is no greater love than this. There is no greater gift— Jesus Christ—pours out his love and mercy on us each day and helps us through the trials of life.

Father Gregory Bach is a priest at St. Mary Parish, Fremont, Ky.
Matthew’s Gospel invites us to remember that we are responsible for helping all our sisters and brothers, even those who are strangers to us. When we do this, we care for Christ. Through its Lenten “Stories of Hope” Catholic Relief Services invites us to reflect and make room in our hearts to welcome the stranger. This week we meet Paulino and Eliza from Timor-Leste.

Timor-Leste is a small Asian country, slightly larger than the state of Connecticut. It’s on the other side of the world near Australia, and it’s one of the world’s newest countries — only 18 years old. In comparison, the United States will be 245 years old this year.

Many families in Timor-Leste live in rural areas and work as farmers. But challenges like changing weather patterns make it difficult to grow enough food. They depend on rice as a main part of their meals, and hunger and malnutrition are big problems. More than one-third of people in Timor-Leste don’t have reliable access to enough nutritious food. This especially affects children and their ability to develop to their full potential.

With training from CRS, families are starting home gardens to grow different vegetables, beans and other foods that are rich in nutrients like vitamins A and iron. The gardens are built to withstand droughts and flooding, and the families add the food they grow — such as spinach, cabbage, peanuts, carrots and tomatoes — to their daily rice staple, providing more nourishing meals that help children grow and stay healthy.

Parents attend nutrition groups in their communities where they learn how to build and improve their gardens. They learn new recipes that incorporate the produce they grow — and they sometimes have cooking competitions to see who can prepare the tastiest meal!

Paulino da Costa Ximenes, 53, pictured in Libagua village, Timor Leste, with his wife, Eliza da Costa Martins, 34, and their 7 children: Leila da Costa Magno, 12, Sandra Salleta da Costa Magno, 7, Celcio da Costa Magno, 5, Celcia da Costa Magno, 3, Laurenfina da Costa Magno, 2, Luciano da Costa Magno, 2, and Cidalria da Costa Magno, 1. Eliza has been part of the CRS TOMAK nutrition project for 2.5 years.

**REFLECT**

To feed the hungry is a corporal work of mercy. How can you help to feed the hungry?

**Batar Da’an Recipe – Timor-Leste**

Squash, Bean and Corn Stew

1 large onion, diced
5 cloves garlic, minced
3 Tbsp. fair trade olive oil
3 cups water
1 butternut squash, cut into small pieces
15 oz. bag frozen corn
15 oz. can red kidney beans, drained
Salt and pepper to taste
2 cups cooked rice

Sauté onion and garlic in olive oil over medium heat until tender. Add water and squash, and increase heat until water is simmering. Add corn and kidney beans, reduce to medium heat, and cook stirring occasionally for 15 to 20 minutes until squash is tender. Add salt and pepper to taste. Serve with rice.

Makes 4 servings.

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

The Church dedicates the month of March to St. Joseph, whose feast is March 19. His titles include “Protector of Life” and “Patron of the Unborn.”

“To give life to someone is the greatest of all gifts.
To save a life is the next. Who gave life to Jesus? It was Mary. Who saved his life? It was Joseph.


St. Joseph: A model for protecting life from conception to natural death

Deacon Jerry Franzen
Contributor
On December 8, 2020, Pope Francis declared the start of the “Year of St. Joseph” with the apostolic letter “Patris corde” (“With a Father’s Heart”). That day marked the 150th anniversary of the declaration of St. Joseph as “Patron of the Universal Church” by Pope Pius IX. Surely that title is the highest rank for a patron saint, with the possible exception of the Blessed Mother, if there are ranks among patron saints.

In his apostolic letter, Pope Francis considered several characteristics of St. Joseph as the “Father of Jesus.” Some might prefer to call him the stepfather of Jesus, but really both roles are identical in their fatherly characteristics. No matter how a man attains the title “father,” it brings him gifts and responsibilities to be exercised throughout the life of his child, and every father can benefit from contemplating how St. Joseph mastered that paternal role.

Some fatherly characteristics explored by Pope Francis, particularly St. Joseph’s obedience, creative courage, humility and tender love, explain why St. Joseph has been called “Protector of Life” and “Patron of the Unborn.” Just as he protected Jesus before and beyond his birth, St. Joseph can exert his role of protector throughout all stages of human life, and it is proper to seek his pro-life intercession.

Sacred Scripture says little about St. Joseph, but we can learn a lot from what is there. St. Joseph began serving in the role of Jesus’ father from the time of Jesus’ conception, for he was betrothed to Mary at the time the Angel Gabriel announced that Jesus had been conceived by the Holy Spirit. Throughout the rest of St. Joseph’s life, he was clearly recognized by those around him as Jesus’ father “Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?” (John 6:42a) In short, Jesus grew up with St. Joseph as his earthly father, and certainly the carpenter filled that role for his son.

St. Joseph was obedient. He followed God’s direction in a dream about not “divorcing” Mary “quietly” (Matt. 1:19) because she had conceived a child Today, countless fathers are faced with the decision of receiving children only to abandon them or even violate the Fifth Commandment by encouraging abortion of those precious sons and daughters. When we read how the young Jesus quickly left “my Father’s house” (the Temple) at his parent’s bidding, we see what St. Joseph had taught the boy — both fidelity to family obligations and the discipline of obedience. “Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them.” (Luke 2:51)

St. Joseph was a loving father. Looking past the shock and embarrassment of Mary’s pregnancy, he saw that Mary and her child needed care and protection. He chose to suffer whatever gossip and criticism came his way for accepting Mary into his home, simply because he loved her and, by extension, loved her child.

That willingness to sacrifice self-esteem in order to protect Mary and Jesus is exemplary. It shows the strong love on which St. Joseph built their home, the deep affection that unified their family. Their heart — a place of willing sacrifice, warmed by love — was the springboard for Jesus’ ministry.

St. Joseph was an accepting father. We do not hear that he obeyed the malicious in his dreams grudgingly saying, “Okay I’ll do it because the law says I have to care for my betrothed and her child. But I won’t like it.” Or, “Sure, I’ll take care of them, but don’t ask me to love a child that isn’t mine.” No. St. Joseph humbly submitted his own life plan and accepted the one God presented to him. Just like Mary at the Annunciation and Jesus later with his disciples and in the garden, we can almost hear St. Joseph saying the family prayer: “Thy will be done.”

St. Joseph was creatively courageous. Undertaking a weeklong journey with his heavily pregnant wife in order to be enrolled in Bethlehem, the town of his ancestor King David, (Luke 2:1), required enterprise and grit, but how else could he ensure his little family was safe? It took the same initiative and courage to act on the dream warning about King Herod’s intent to kill Jesus (Matt. 2:16-18). Boldly abandoning his home and workplace, he escaped with Mary and Jesus to hide in a foreign land (Matt 2:13-15), and he found a way to make a living among strangers until it was safe to return. In St. Joseph we see headless problem solving combined with the fortitude to take swift action when necessary — fatherly skills every son admires. Jesus must have felt the same pride as the family saga was retold over the years.

Every man who has hopes to become a father has much to learn from St. Joseph’s example of the paternal characteristics Pope Francis celebrated. St. Joseph was a loving, accepting and courageous father. Like St. Joseph, a father will obediently accept the divine plan for his life as it plays out, choosing to follow God’s will. He will protect his children from danger of sin and physical harm with creative courage, from the vulnerable child in the womb to the adult who still seeks his fatherly advice, approval and love. And he will treat all human life as sacred in every circumstance, for he knows that each life is a precious gift from God. A father’s work is never done.

Every child deserves such an obedient, loving, accepting and courageous father. That man’s determined protection can prevent an abortion. That man’s presence can make the difference between an abandoned mother and one proud to share in building a strong family and home. That man’s example of nurturing care will strengthen his children from infancy throughout the rest of their lives.

Mothers, too, have a role in protecting life at all stages, of course. How good it is for every family to join in honoring the Holy Family and particularly St. Joseph. May his intercession obtain for us the grace always to act in defense of human life, from conception to natural death. St. Joseph, dear father, pray for us “with a father’s heart.”

— Blessed William Joseph Chaminade

— St. Thomas Aquinas

Petition to St. Joseph for adoption
St. Joseph, though you must have been troubled by Mary’s news, you trusted in God’s promises. Elizabeth, too, though she was thought to be barren, trusted in the promises of God, and she bore a son, John, who would herald the arrival of the Messiah. Hear the prayers of all mothers who place their children for adoption and intercede for them before your adopted Son and Savior. St. Joseph, husband of the Blessed Virgin Mary, pray for us.

— U.S.C.C.—Lif Protect, Respect Life Program 2016-17

Prayer to St. Joseph for Life
St. Joseph, you are the chaste and loving spouse of the Virgin Mary, the foster father of Jesus, the protector and provider of the Holy Family and of all families. We have complete confidence in your loving care for new life and in your fidelity to the law. We commend our efforts to your prayers and protection. Help us always to defend the gift of human life that it may grow to the abundance of eternal life promised and bestowed on you by your son, our brother, Jesus Christ. Amen.

— Manual of Prayers, Pontifical North American College, Rome

There are many saints to whom God has given the power to assist us in the necessities of life, but the power given to St. Joseph is unlimited: It extends to all our needs, and all those who invoke him with confidence are sure to be heard.”

— St. Thomas Aquinas

For more information about the Pro-Life Office or to be added to our e-mail newsgroups, visit us online at www.covdiocese.org/prolife/ or call (819) 392-1360.
Pope Francis traveled to Iraq as a ‘penitential pilgrim’ seeking God’s forgiveness

VATICAN CITY — Pope Francis told the people of Iraq he was going to their country as a “penitential pilgrim,” asking God’s forgiveness for years of war, persecution and destruction, and as a “pilgrim of peace,” hoping to remind people that they are all brothers and sisters no matter their ethnic or religious identity. “I will finally be among you,” he said in a video message, released by the Vatican March 4, the day before the trip was to begin. “I come as a pilgrim, as a penitential pilgrim to implore forgiveness and reconciliation from the Lord after years of war and terrorism, to ask God for consolation for hearts and healing for wounds,” the pope said. “And I come among you as a pilgrim of peace, to repeat: ‘You are all brothers and sisters.’”

His March 5-8 pilgrimage of peace, he said, would aim to strengthen a sense of fraternity “animated by the desire to pray together and to walk together, including with brothers and sisters of other religious traditions,” under the gaze of Abraham, who was born in Iraq and is recognized as patriarch by Jews, Christians and Muslims. What follows here, in briefs, is Pope Francis’ trip.

Pope arrives in Iraq, promoting peace, tolerance, equality

BAGHDAD — To consolidate peace and ensure progress, the government and people of Iraq must never treat anyone as a second-class citizen and must work each day to promote harmony, Pope Francis said. “I came as a pilgrim of peace,” he said, hoping to remind people that they are all brothers and sisters no matter their ethnic or religious traditions, “under the gaze of Abraham, who was born in Iraq and is recognized as patriarch by Jews, Christians and Muslims.”

That world religious leaders should work to hold “great and dear guest,” expressing his gratitude for a better Iraq — Visiting a Baghdad cathedral “hallowed by the blood of our brothers and sisters” murdered in a terrorist attack that shook the world, Pope Francis said their sacrifices must motivate faith and a commitment to working for the common good. The Catholic churches of Iraq are made up of Chaldean, Syriac and Assyrian Catholic dioceses.

Pope: Honor martyrs by remaining faithful, working for a better Iraq

BAGHDAD — Visiting a Baghdad cathedral “hallowed by the blood of our brothers and sisters” murdered in a terrorist attack that shook the world, Pope Francis said their sacrifices must motivate faith and a commitment to working for the common good. The Syriac Catholic Cathedral of Our Lady of Deliverance, sometimes referred to as Our Lady of Salvation, is now a shrine to 48 Christian martyrs who died Oct. 31, 2010, when militants belonging to a group linked to al-Qaeda laid siege to the church, detonating explosives and shooting people: 48 Catholics — including two priests — died inside and more than 130 people were wounded. Photos of the dead, including a 3-year-old, hang over the altar. According to the Vatican, before the terrorist attack and the 2014-2017 war against Islamic State militants, some 5,000 Syriac Catholic families frequented the cathedral; now, it said, no more than 1,000 families belong to all three Syriac Catholic parishes in the capital. Pope Francis met in the church March 5 with the nation’s bishops and a representative group of priests, religious, seminarians and catechists. They came from the Syriac Catholic community, but also Chaldean Catholic, Armenian Catholic and Latin rite Catholic parishes.

Pope, Iraqi Shiite leader affirm importance of dialogue, respect

NASIRIYAH, Iraq — In a low-key meeting followed closely in Iraq and beyond, Pope Francis and Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, the influential leader of Shiite Muslims in Iraq, spent 45 minutes speaking privately. The 90-year-old ayatollah, who turns down most meeting requests, issued a statement after his encounter in Najaf with the pope March 6, saying that world religious leaders should work to hold “great respect for the suffering of the Iraqis, but also Chaldean Catholic, Armenian Catholic and Latin rite Catholic parishes.

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from 2014 to 2017. people” when Islamic State militants were on a rampage of human life and the importance of the unity of the Iraqi Shiite community, which “raised their voices in defense of the weakest and the persecuted, affirming the sacredness of their religion,” the Vatican said in a statement. The meeting, the Vatican said, also gave the pope a chance to thank the ayatollah and the Iraqi government officials, asking God to help them be “exam- ples of honesty for the common good” and “know how to collaborate for a renewed world in which liberty and harmony reign.”

Hostility, violence are ‘betrayals’ of religion, pope says in Iraq

UR, Iraq — Traveling to the birthplace of Abraham, Pope Francis urged believers to prove their faith in the one God and father of all by accepting one another as brothers and sisters. From a stage set on a dusty hill overlooking the archaeological dig at Ur, Abraham’s birthplace about 10 miles from modern-day Nasiriyah, the pope called on representatives of the country’s religious communities to denounce all violence committed in God’s name and to work together to rebuild their country. “From this place, where faith was born, from the land of our father Abraham, let us affirm that God is merciful and that the greatest blasphemy is to profane his name by hating our brothers and sisters,” the pope told the representatives. “Hostility, extremism and violence are not born of a religious heart: they are betrayals of religion,” he insisted. At the large interreligious meeting later, with the Ziggurat of Ur, a partially reconstructed Bronze-Age pagan temple, visible in the haze, Pope Francis insisted that when Jews, Christians and Muslims make a pilgrimage to Abraham’s birthplace, they are going home, back to the place that reminds them they are brothers and sisters. Representatives of Iraq’s Shi’ite Muslim majority, its Sunni Muslim community, Christians, Yazidis and Mandaeans, a group that claims to be older than Christianity and reveres St. John the Baptist, joined Pope Francis at Ur.

Living the beatitudes can change the world, pope says in Iraq

BAGHDAD — Pope Francis told Iraqi Christians that when they suffer discrimination, persecution or war, the Eight Beatitudes are addressed to them. “Whatever the world takes from us is nothing compared to the tender and patient love with which the Lord fulfills his promises,” the pope told the congregation sitting inside and outside the Chaldean Catholic Cathedral of St. Joseph March 6. “Dear sister, dear brother, perhaps when you look at your hands, they seem empty, perhaps you feel disheartened and unsatis-

Life triumphs over death as Christians rebuild in Iraq, pope says

QARAQOSH, Iraq — Amid the rubble and bombed out remains of four churches destroyed by Islamic State mili-
tants, Pope Francis paid tribute to Iraqi Christians who endured persecution and even death. But visiting Mosul and Qaraqosh in northern Iraq March 7, he also urged the Christians to live up to their faith and honor the sacrifice of those who died by promoting peace and reconciliation. Much of Mosul’s old city center remains in ruins or under powers “to account, calling upon them “to give priority to reason and wisdom, to reject the language of war, and not to expand concern for their self-interests over the rights of people to live in freedom and dignity.” Pope Francis "underlined the importance of collaboration and friend-
ship among religious communities so that, cultivating mutual respect and dialogue, they can contribute to the good of Iraq, the region and all humanity,” the Vatican said in a statement. The meeting, the Vatican said, also gave the pope a chance to thank the ayatollah and the Iraqi Shiite community which “raised their voices in defense of the weakest and the persecuted, affirming the sacredness of human life and the importance of the unity of the Iraqi people” when Islamic State militants were on a rampage from 2014 to 2017.

(Continued on page 10)
reconstruction. And Pope Francis stood in Hosh al-Bieaa, church square, facing some of those ruins: the remains of the Syriac Catholic, Armenian Orthodox, Syriac Orthodox and Chaldean Catholic churches all destroyed between 2014 and 2017. His message was clear: “If God is the God of life — for so he is — then it is wrong for us to hate our brothers and sisters.” In Mosul, Qaraqosh and other towns that had been under the thumb of Islamic State militants in 2014-2017. After blessing the altar with incense, Pope Francis blessed a partially restored statue of Mary from a parish in Karmless. The Islamic State militants decapitated the statue and cut off its hands. The restoration re-attached the head, but left the hands dangling. “Here in Iraq, how many of your brothers and sisters in his name. If God is the God of peace — for so he is — then it is wrong for us to kill our brothers and sisters in his name. If God is the God of love — for so he is — then it is wrong for us to hate our brothers and sisters.” In Mosul, 250 miles north of Baghdad, Pope Francis listened to the stories of Christians forced to flee, the fear many have to return and the encouragement of Muslim neighbors committed to making the city a thriving, multicultural metropolis again. But he also heard choirs of children singing in welcome, women ululating to honor his arrival and the cheers of young people waving flags.

Cleanse your hearts of anger, live the Gospel, pope says at Mass in Irbil

IRBIL, Iraq — Having witnessed or even experienced persecution for their faith, the Christians of Iraq must be careful not to harbor thoughts of revenge, Pope Francis told them. After a full morning paying tribute to the victims of Islamic State violence, Pope Francis reached the last major event of his trip to Iraq: Mass March 7 with some 10,000 people at Irbil’s Franso Hariri Stadium. Many ignored the social distancing measures put in place, and few wore the masks they were required to have because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Irbil, capital of the Kurdistan autonomous region in northern Iraq, hosts Syrian refugees and hundreds of thousands of displaced people, particularly Christians, from Mosul, Qaraqosh and other towns that had been under the thumb of Islamic State militants in 2014-2017. After blessing the altar with incense, Pope Francis blessed a partially restored statue of Mary from a parish in Karmless. The Islamic State militants decapitated the statue and cut off its hands. The restoration re-attached the head, but left the hands dangling. “Here in Iraq, how many of your brothers and sisters, friends and fellow citizens bear the wounds of war and violence, wounds both visible and invisible,” the pope told the crowd. “The temptation is to react to these and other painful experiences with human power, human wisdom,” but the path of Jesus was to serve, to heal, to love and to offer his life for others.

Pope Francis participates in a memorial prayer for the victims of the war at Hosh al-Bieaa (church square) in Mosul, Iraq, March 7, 2021.

(Continued FROM page 9)

Gospel, pope says at Mass in Irbil

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Fish fries

Like everything else this year, fish fries are going to be different. In order to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19, all parish fish fries must be drive-thru or carryout only. There will be NO dine-in fish fries. Workers and guests will need to follow the safety protocols of wearing a mask and practicing safe social distancing of at least six feet apart. For the health and safety of all, everyone is encouraged to make patience and charity a part of their Lenten practices while waiting for your order.

St. Augustine Parish
Augusta, March 12, 19, 26, 5-7 p.m. Carry-out only.

St. Augustine Parish
Covington, Every Friday in Lent, 5 – 7:30 p.m. Drive-thru and carry-out.

St. Bernard Parish
Dayton, March 12, 19, 26, 5-7 p.m. Drive-thru only.

St. Catherine of Siena Parish, Ft. Thomas, March 12, 19, 26, 4:30-7 p.m. Drive-thru and walk-up only.

St. Cecilia Parish, Independence, March 12, 19, 26, April 5, 5-8 p.m. Drive-thru only.

St. John the Evangelist Parish, Carrollton, March 19, 4:30-7 p.m. Carry-out and drive-thru only.

St. Joseph Academy, Walton, March 12, 19, 26, 4:30-8 p.m. Carry-out only, 605 Lytle Ave.

Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish, Burlington, March 12, 19, 26, 4:30-7:30 p.m. Drive-thru only.

St. Paul Parish, Florence, March 12, 19, 26, 4:30-7:30 p.m. Carry-out only; drive thru, order online or call ahead.

St. Timothy Parish, Union, March 12, 19, 26, 4:30-8 p.m. Drive-thru only.

The weekly TV Mass from the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption will be broadcast on Sunday, 5-6 p.m. on station Me TV WLWT, on channels: over air 5-2; Spectrum 188 in Kentucky and Cincinnati Bell 21 or 291.


Holy Cross District High School Mulch and Pine Straw Sale. Three kinds of mulch in 2 cubic foot bags for $4.25 per bag and pine straw for $8 per bale. All prices include free delivery and sales tax. Holy Cross students will deliver mulch to homes, businesses or rental properties anywhere in Kenton, Boone and Campbell Counties starting April 15 and continuing for at least three weeks. All proceeds benefit Holy Cross District High School. To order, visit hcmulch.com or call 392-8999.

“The Eucharistic Miracles of the World Display,” St. Henry Parish, Elsmere, a display created from the work of Blessed Carlo Acutis available for prayer and meditation through Lent; the church is open daily 9 a.m.–6 p.m.; masks and social distancing required.

Sisters of Notre Dame Women’s virtual retreat March 27-28, learn about various forms of prayer, discuss ways to integrate the prayers into your life, and meet other women interested in expanding their prayer life. Link with all details are at https://www.sndky.org/newsfeed/entry/women%27s-weekend-retreat-2021/
ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

The Roman Catholic Diocese of Covington, KY (www.covdio.org) is seeking qualified candidates for the position of Assistant Superintendent of Catholic Schools. The Assistant Superintendent assists in carrying out the primary Diocesan educational mission of transmitting the Catholic faith through quality Catholic education. The Assistant Superintendent’s role is broad, multi-dimensional, and multi-layered, including such responsibilities as a representative of the Bishop of Covington and being an advocate for Catholic schools in the Diocese; monitoring the quality of the academic programs in schools; maintaining frequent and positive communications with Pastors, principals, and boards (where appropriate); collecting and aggregating specific statistical data for each school; managing school-wide testing at the elementary school level; overseeing, monitoring, and support- ing Diocesan professional development activities; and coordinating the Diocesan response to data requests by state and federal agencies. The Assistant Superintendent also assists with the educational administration of the Alliance for Catholic Urban Education (ACUE) schools. Overall, the position involves a high degree of complexity with responsibility for advising and decision making in many areas. Candidates must be practicing Roman Catholics in good standing, with a Master’s degree in Education/Administration and previous experience in school administrative leadership. Interested individuals should submit a letter of interest along with a compre- hensive resume or C-V, recent Baptismal certificate indicating sacramental preparation, and a list of at least five professional references to Stephen Koplyay, SPHR: skoplyay@covdio.org, FAX 859/392-1589, or mail to 1125 Madison Avenue, Covington, KY 41011-3115. EOE

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Slaying of nine Filipino activists in raid sparks outrage

MANILA, Philippines — A Catholic bishop and a lay group have joined rights organizations to denounce and call for an investigation into the killing of nine activists by security forces in raids in four Philippine provinces March 7. Police and soldiers shot the activists while serving search warrants for firearms and explosives, ucanews.com reported.

Several victims, including a married couple, were members of human rights group Karapatan, a staunch critic of Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte’s war on illegal drugs. The couple were reportedly shot in the presence of their 10-year-old son. The killings have sparked a public outcry, with the Church leading calls for justice. “The blood of these fellow Filipinos is literally crying for justice as they are wiped off the floor tiles leading calls for justice. "The blood of these fellow Filipinos is literally crying for justice as they are wiped off the floor tiles.”

Doctors seek permanent relief from mandate to do transgender surgeries

NEW ORLEANS — Attorneys for doctors and hospitals argued in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 5th Circuit March 3 that they shouldn’t be forced to perform gender transition surgeries required under the Affordable Care Act, stressing this is an issue of conscience. The case focuses on a 2016 regulation issued by the Department of Health and Human Services requiring doctors to perform those procedures in children and adults or be held liable for discrimination. After the rule was first issued, Becket, a religious liberty law firm, filed a lawsuit in the U.S. District Court in Texas, saying the rule violated the Religious Freedom Restoration Act. The lawsuit was filed on behalf of Franciscan Alliance, a religious hospital network serving Indiana and Illinois that now goes by the name Franciscan Health, and the Christian Medical and Dental Associations. Texas, Kansas, Kentucky, Nebraska and (Continued on page 15)
I’m Right Here.

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Wisconsin joined in the suit. Two federal courts in 2016 placed an injunction on the mandate. Two other federal district court judges also ruled against the mandate in 2019 and 2020. However, the courts didn’t issue a permanent injunction against HHS to prevent it from enforcing this rule in the future, which the group of doctors and hospitals were seeking March 3 before the 5th Circuit, which is based in New Orleans.

“Medical decisions related to gender transition have serious implications, and it is clearly in patients’ best interests to ensure that doctors are able to serve in keeping with their consciences and their medical judgment,” said Luke Goodrich, a senior counsel at Becket.

COVID-19 bill OK’d without Hyde language to prevent funding of abortion

WASHINGTON — Democratic members of the U.S. Senate were hopeful their version of a $1.9 trillion COVID-19 relief package would be passed the second week of March, so they could send it to President Joe Biden for his signature before unemployment assistance expires March 14. The measure includes $246 billion for extending unemployment benefits through August and increasing the federal supplemental payment from $300 per week to $400. The House, which approved its pandemic relief measure early Feb. 27 and included this provision, will likely have to vote again on its bill to reconcile any changes in the Senate version. Republicans said they would oppose the legislation because it includes billions for programs and projects that do not immediately address pandemic needs. In the House, 212 members — all of the Republicans, plus two Democrats — voted against the bill. It passed with 259 votes. From the floor ahead of the vote, Rep. Chris Smith, R-New Jersey, criticized House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-California, for refusing to allow a vote on adding language to the bill “to ensure that taxpayers aren’t forced to subsidize abortion,” as provided by the Hyde Amendment.
“EVERY SPRING WE ARE CALLED . . .

by our Bishop, The Most Reverend Roger J. Foys, D.D., to participate in the Diocesan Parish Annual Appeal. We are encouraged to prayerfully consider our response as faithful stewards for the gifts which God has generously provided us. Your contribution will provide the necessary funding that enables the essential ministries and programs of the Diocese to continue serving those most in need.

The impact and spread of the COVID-19 pandemic has created extraordinary challenges not only for our Diocese, but also for our parishes, schools, and ministries. Many of your fellow parishioners may not be able to contribute this year, so your participation to the DPAA Campaign will be crucial in providing assistance to our diocesan family and friends. Your gift, no matter the amount, helps to feed and clothe the poor, educate and form our young, and strengthen those that spend their lives in service to those that need a helping hand.

HOW TO GIVE YOUR PLEDGE OR ONE TIME GIFT:

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• Call the Stewardship Office 859-392-1500
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