Diocese of Covington featured in online documentary ‘The Chair,’ a series on the Catholic Church in U.S.

Laura Keener

In its dramatic opening, a drone moves in from the south over the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption as a narrator says, “The Diocese of Covington, Kentucky. The story of the faith, began with the ministry of itinerant missionary priests, was sustained and nurtured by the vocation of the Bishop, with deep love for his people and is still being written today under the leadership of its current Bishop, Roger Foys. This is the story of the bishops of America—the shepherds of the past and the shepherds of today—who through their callings and ministry carry the Church into the future.

This is ‘The Chair,’ an exploration of what it means to be an apostle in America.’

The Chair is a newly released documentary series produced by DeSales Studios, a division of DeSales Media a ministry of the Diocese of Brooklyn. N.Y. Msgr. Kieran Harrington, vicar for Communications and rector of the Co-Cathedral of St. Joseph, Diocese of Brooklyn, took up the idea of featuring the history of the Church in America through the stories of its bishops and cathedrals. The name ‘The Chair,’ refers to the bishop’s chair—a cathedral present in every cathedral and from where each bishop preaches and teaches.

I thought to myself, it’s interesting there’s no real history of the Church in the United States, like a video history, and what would you tell that history?” said Msgr. Harrington. “Here’s a way to tell the story of the Church in the United States by looking at the cathedrals—the See of the diocese—and talk to the bishops about their faith and tell the story of their local Church.”

Season 1, episode 1, of ‘The Chair’ features the Diocese of Covington. Crews from DeSales Studio visited Covington twice to videotape the Covington episode—first during the entombment of Bishop Maes in October 2019 and then again in January 2020, to interview Bishop Foys and Stephen Enzweiler, cathedral historian. The January 27 taping, coincidentally or providentially, occurred on the 119th anniversary of the dedication of the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption.

“I thought that they did a magnificent job in representing the diocese as whole and the Cathedral, the Mother church, in particular; also in highlighting the earliest bishops of the diocese who came when the diocese was a vast territory with few people and priests,” said Bishop Foys.

When the country shutdown in March 2020 due to the pandemic, production of ‘The Chair’ halted and is now picking back up. So far DeSales Studios has completed videotaping in 87 dioceses in the United States. The series released its first season in January 2021, and became available on Amazon Prime early this month. Each season includes eight 22-minute episodes. The series is expected to be available soon on Google Play and iTunes. The group hopes to have the episodes of each diocese that have currently been videotaped produced by September of this year. Their goal is to feature all 196 dioceses in the United States.

“I was not only impressed but I was really moved by the content they were able to achieve in 23 minutes,” said Father Ryan Maher, rector, Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption about the Diocese of Covington’s episode. “They gave a beautiful succinct history of the Church in the United States by looking at the cathedrals—the See of the diocese—and how the diocese and the grace of having people in our diocese who are faithful and committed.”

Interviewing the bishops and learning their stories has also been one of the most satisfying aspects of the project for Msgr. Harrington.

“It’s very hard for people to talk about their faith,” said Msgr. Harrington, “Getting people to open up and to speak about their relationship with Christ and their faith is a challenge—it’s even a challenge for bishops. Moving beyond the formality of their role, to talk about the man, to get to that place where he is not speaking in the guarded way as a person in authority speaks but in a tender way, has been very, very gratifying.”

Father Maher said he was also proud of Mr. Enzweiler’s work in the video, sharing the history and the story of Bishop Maes. “It was wonderful to have not only a parishioner but also our cathedral historian be part of this,” he said.

Msgr Harrington said that the story of the Diocese of Covington, and all of the dioceses, is the story of all of our lives.

“It is not just the witness of Bishop Foys and the witness of Bishop Carroll and others who have followed in their footsteps. It is a witnessing and experiencing of reversal and disappointment and discouragement and not being able to continue, then beginning again. That’s the story of all our lives, isn’t it? Many of us experience seasons of Lent, you start and then it stalls and then you start again, that is how we persever in the Christian life and hopefully you can see that in the life of the bishops and the life of the places and the people.”

A link to ‘The Chair’ series is available on the diocesan website www.covdio.org.
Protocols for Holy Week 2021 in all parishes in the Diocese of Covington

These requirements are based on the directives from the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments of the Holy See; the Committee on Divine Worship of the USCCB; and the protocols relating to COVID-19 from the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

For the faithful still unable to attend Mass, parishes are that are able should live-stream; parishes that are not able to livestream should direct the faithful to the cathedral livestream—www.covcathedral.com.

For families and personal prayer will be prepared by the Office of Worship. They will be able to be customized for each parish.

Music continues to be limited to soloist and one organist/pianist. No choir or congregational singing. This applies to the entirety of Holy Week and Easter Sunday.

Palm Sunday
— Palms may be blessed and distributed.
— Parishes are required to follow “Form 3” of the Entrance.
— This means that there is no roasting of the “1st Gospel” and that Mass occurs in the normal fashion.
— Mass will begin in the usual way with the sign of the cross and the greeting. After the greeting the blessing of the palms will occur. Mass continues in the usual way.
— The Passion may be read in parts. Worship Programs for the congregation will be prepared by the Office of Worship.

Chrsim Mass (7 p.m. at the Cathedral)
— Representations of priests, ministers and faithful.
— All the priests will attend and sit in the transepts and the presbytery.
— Two people from each parish will be invited.
— Two sisters from each religious house.
— Seven deacons, cf. Acts 6:3
— The deacons will distribute the oils before Holy Saturday.

Holy Thursday
— Mandatum is OMITTED.
— Procession with the Blessed Sacrament is OMITTED and the Blessed Sacrament to be reposed in the main tabernacle.
— There will not be an Altar of Repose.
— Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament (reposed in the tabernacle) may occur for up to two hours following the conclusion of Mass.

Good Friday
— The Passion may be read in parts. Worship Programs for the congregation will be prepared by the Office of Worship.
— An additional Intercession is to be prepared for those in distress, the sick and the dead. This is provided at the end of this document.
— The Intercensions may be chanted, with the response being made by a cantor/soloist (if sung).
— Veneration of the Cross is limited solely to the celebrant. There will be no veneration by other ministers or the faithful.
— There will be no procession through the church with the cross.

Easter Vigil (may not begin until 8:30 p.m.)
— The preparation and lighting of the fire may occur only if the fire can be accommodated in or near the sanctuary.
— The Pascal Candle is then prepared and lit in the sanctuary.
— The procession is OMITTED.
— There are to be no community candles.
— The minister then says or says, “Christ our Light,” with the response being made by a cantor/soloist (if sung).
— The Exsultet follows. Note: Chanting is permitted, with the response being made by a cantor/soloist (if sung).
— Baptism may take place in the usual fashion.
— If Confirmations are to occur, the celebrant is to anoint the forehead with his thumb but use a Clorex or Lysol wipe or similar after each anointing.

Easter Sunday
— Follow the usual Mass protocols.
— The renewal of Baptismal promises and the sprinkling with Holy Water may occur.
— No choir or congregational singing. An organist and soloist are allowed.

Note: The celebrant must wear a mask except when preach- ing or at the Altar. Concelebrants must wear a mask. Deacons must wear a mask unless at the Ambo. COVID-19 Protocols for the congregation, including the wearing of masks and social distancing, remain in force.

** Note: To create a substantial smokeless fire, you might utilize sand and rubbing alcohol. Do not let the fire against any garment before beginning the ritual. The fire will last for 15–20 minutes before putting itself out. It is recommended that if you have not done this before a fire is “first, then.” All other protocols should be followed in a fire extinguisher should be on hand.

Solemn Intercession

XI. For an end to the pandemic

Let us pray; dearly beloved, for a swift end to the coronavirus pandemic that affects our world, that our God and Father will heal the sick, strengthens those who care for them, and help us all to persevere in faith.

Diocese of Covington was obtained by Bishop William T. Muiack, 6th Bishop of Covington, in 1860 and taken from the principal cloak relic.

Tradition holds that the cloak of St. Joseph was brought from Jerusalem to Rome by St. Jerome at the end of the 4th century. It was deposited in an altar niche in the Basilica of Sant’Anastasia where it has remained and been guarded for centuries.

Whether a relic is “first, then,” or third, class, the purpose is the same: to be physically, tangible, concrete reminder that heaven is obtainable for us. In the presence of holy relics, and particularly the one of St. Joseph, we recall the saints’ holy lives and pray for the grace to achieve what they’ve achieved—eternity with God in heaven.

Tangible reminders: The relics of St. Joseph

Father Jordan Hainesey

Holy relics are the physical objects that have a direct association with the saints or with our Lord. First class relics are the body or fragments of the body of a saint, such as pieces of bone or flesh. Second class relics are something that a saint personally owned, such as a shirt or book. Third class relics are those items that have been touched to a first, second or another third class relic. Relics are meant to be honored and venerated, never worshipped. By honoring the memory of the saints and martyrs, their holy witness is recalled. By praying for the intercession of these saints, we throw open the saint’s intercessory power to us.

Of all the Church’s saints, the only two of whom the Church possesses no first class relics of are the Virgin Mary and St. Joseph. The Church attributes the lack of body relics of the Virgin Mary to her Assumption into heaven, both body and soul—a dogma pronounced by Pope Pius XII in his 1950 apostolic constitution “Mater Ecclesiae.” Regarding St. Joseph, while there is no dogmatic proclamation about him being assumed into heaven after his death, many saints piously believed that the Lord did for him just as he had done for the Virgin Mary (cf. the writings of St. Bernardine of Siena, St. Francis de Sales, and Pope St. John XXIII).

The Church and her tradition venerate several relics related to St. Joseph: the wedding ring given by him to the Virgin Mary (Pergua, Italy); his belt (Jouville, France); his staff (Camaldoli, Italy); and his cloak (Rome, Italy). The cloak relic of St. Joseph traveling to the parishes of the

Schedule of traveling St. Joseph relic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Parish Name</th>
<th>Parish Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 3-4</td>
<td>Saint James (Bracken)</td>
<td>Flemingsburg</td>
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<td>April 17-18</td>
<td>Saint Charles Borromeo (Flemingsburg)</td>
<td>Flemingsburg</td>
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<td>May 8-9</td>
<td>Saint Peter and Paul (Campbell)</td>
<td>Campbell</td>
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<td>May 15-16</td>
<td>Saint Mary of the Assumption (Covington)</td>
<td>Covington</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 22-23</td>
<td>Saint Joseph (Cold Spring)</td>
<td>Cold Spring</td>
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<td>May 29-30</td>
<td>Saint Thomas (Flemingsburg)</td>
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<td>June 5-6</td>
<td>Saint Catharina (Savina)</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 12-13</td>
<td>Saint Joseph (Cynthiana)</td>
<td>Cynthiana</td>
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Post-pandemic world must learn from mistakes
Jummo Arocho Esteves
VATICAN CITY — The uncertainty and death brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic can be an opportunity for humanity to reflect on how to build a better world, Pope Francis said in a new book.

“The world will never be the same again. But it is precisely within this calamity that we must grasp those signs that can prove to be the cornerstones of reconstruction,” the pope said.

The book, titled “Io e il Mondo che Verrà” (“God and the World to Come”), was written with Italian journalist Domenico Giasello and was to be published by the Vatican publishing house March 16. An excerpt was published March 14 on Vatican News.

The pope denounced the manufacturing and trafficking of weapons where large sums of money are spent “that should be used to cure people and save lives.”

“It is no longer possible to pretend that a dramatically vicious cycle of armed violence, poverty and senseless and indifferent exploitation of the environment has not crept in,” he said. “It is a cycle that prevents reconciliation, fuels human rights violations and hinders sustainable development.”

He also said that changing the inequitable distribution of resources does not involve “a downward equalization” depriving people who are better off now but instead means giving “broader rights” to those who are marginalized.

Pope Francis also highlighted the need for protecting the environment through “sustainable behavior” that ensures that the Earth is no longer used “as a storehouse of resources to be exploited.”

“If we don’t roll up our sleeves and immediately take care of the Earth, with radical personal and political choices, with an economic turned toward green (technology) and directing technological developments in that direction, sooner or later our common home will throw us out the window,” the pope said.

Asked about the burden of economic recessions laid primarily upon women, the pope highlighted the need for the presence of women at “the center of social, political, employment and institutional renewal processes.”

He also denounced discrimination against women “in terms of pay and not only losing their jobs.”

The world, Pope Francis said, “cannot overlook the fact that the rebirth of humanity began with woman. From the Virgin Mary salvation was born, that’s why there is no salvation without the woman. If we care about the future, if we desire flourishing tomorrow, you must give the right space to the woman.”

Gifts to the DPAA help continue Christ’s ministry in the local community
Laura Keener
Editor

The Diocesan Parish Annual Appeal launched at parish es the weekend of March 13–14 with the viewing of the DPAA video which is also available online at wctv.org.

“The video, when you look at the faces of the people that are helping, that’s love,” said Randy Rawe, parishioner of St. Joseph Parish, Crescent Springs and general chair for the 2021 DPAA.

This year’s theme is taken from Chapter 3 of St. John’s Gospel, “For God did not send His Son into the World to condemn the World but that the World Might Be Saved through Him.” It is a familiar passage due in part to the passage just prior to it — John 3:16 — which has been seen on placards at sporting events. “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son.” Mr. Rawe said that “gave” is a key word in John 3:16 for the DPAA.

“To love is to give — it’s an action. In Jesus’ ministry he was always among the vulnerable,” Mr. Rawe said. “What appalls me the most vulnerable are those that take efforts, volunteers and money. The DPAA is the money phase.”

Over the last 10 years the DPAA has raised over $331 million for the ministries of the Diocese of Covington. These ministries include Catholic school education, support for retired priests, health care for priests, counseling, administration services, Pro-Life activities, St. Anne Retreat Center, NKU campus ministry and formation of deacons and seminarians.

“One of the critical ministries is sacramental forma tion,” Mr. Rawe said. “Look at what Bishop Kofc holds been able to do during his tenure for this community by his focus on vocations, providing us priests for the next 20, 30, 40 plus years. Vocations are a big part of this appeal.”

Care for priests, he said, is equally important. “I get a kick out of the term ‘retired priest.’ I know many retired priests and they work harder than I do and I’m not retired. We have priests working in their 80s and into their 90s.”

“Forty percent of the DPAA is allocated for service grants which help local inner city Catholic schools and parishes, soup kitchens, food pantries and homeless women’s shelters. Also, any money collected of a parish’s goal is rebated back to the parish for parish min istries and projects.

“Whatever we do takes money” said Mr. Rawe, “The Parish Kitchen doesn’t operate with money, and it takes with hundreds of volunteers each year but it takes money. Inner city schools need money. Everything we touch in these ministries, where would our community be without these ministries? The Catholic Church and the Diocese of Covington!”

Mr. Rawe asked emphasizing the tremendous amount of good achieved through the generous gifts to the DPAA.

The weekend of March 20-21 is DPAA commitment weekend. Everyone will have the opportunity at their parish to make a gift — either a one-time donation or a pledge over 10 months — to the DPAA. This next phase and subsequent following phases of the DPAA will be led by pastors and DPAA parish teams.

What we are seeing in the level of generosity has really picked up, people being much more generous than they were normally are. We are seeing a great response from the leader ship gifts teams that Karen Kingler is chairing,” Mr. Rawe said. “There is no shortage of ways to help people. We just need to get the message out that the need continues and people will respond. The parish coordinators are our unsung heroes. Our parish teams will get that message out and we will pray to the Holy Spirit for another successful DPAA.”

Everything supported by the DPAA and the work that is achieved “starts with the people of the diocese,” Mr. Rawe said. “We are asking people who have given before to step that level again. If you are able to increase that, we will be good stewards and take care of the ministries in our diocese. If you haven’t given, know that every dollar is provid ing miracles in our communities. Thank you to everyone.”

Coronavirus Report
(as of Monday, March 15)

The information below includes reported cases from 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: 845
Recovered positive cases: 845
Total ever positive cases: 848
Currently Self-quarantined
Close Contacts: 27
Close Contacts with COVID case in household: 23

24 Hours for the Lord
In 2015, for the Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy, Pope Francis asked dioceses to designate station churches that would set aside time for continuous celebration of the Sacrament of Confession. This time was named “24 Hours for the Lord.” The tradition continues in the Diocese of Covington with two parish churches setting aside 12 continuous hours for the faithful to avail themselves of the sacrament of confession. Additionally, adoration of the Blessed Sacrament will be held during that time.

Confessions and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament from 12 p.m. – 12 a.m.
Friday, March 19 at Divine Mercy Parish, Bellevue
Saturday, March 20 at Assumption, Covington, 10 a.m.
Solemnity of St. Joseph Mass, March 19
March 21 at Mass, Cathedral Basilica, 10 a.m.
March 22 at Diocesan Building Commission meeting, 10 a.m.
March 23 COVID-19 briefing, 9:30 a.m.
Deans meeting, 1:30 p.m.
March 24 Individual meeting, 8 a.m.
March 25 Individual meeting, 9 a.m.
COVID-19 briefing, 9:30 a.m.
March 26 Transitional diaconate rehearsal, Cathedral Basilica, 4 p.m.
March 28 Transitional diaconate ordination, Cathedral Basilica, 10 a.m.
Vigil Mass for Palm Sunday, blessing and distribution of palms, Cathedral Basilica, 4:30 p.m.
March 27 Mass for Palm Sunday, blessing and distribution of palms, Cathedral Basilica, 10 a.m.

Bishop’s Schedule
You are as sick as your sickest secret! That’s a wise axiom. What’s sick in us will remain sick unless we open it up to others and to the light of day. As long as it is a secret, it is a sickness. However, perhaps the problem is not with what we keep secret, but that we keep it secret. Maybe the sickness is the secret rather than what we deem to be sick.

We all have our struggles, and we can thank God for that. The image and likeness of God made us is not simply a beautiful icon impregnated in our souls. It’s fire—divine, insatiable, befuddling fire. By our very nature, there are complexities inside us that cannot make easy peace with the person we like to think we are. We all have wild fantasies and dark obsessions.

Were our daydreams ever made public, they would reveal that we all nurse fantasies of grandiosity of hatred, of vindication and that we all are periodically caught up in the grip of various emotional and sexual obsessions. There are things in our daydreams about which we would be ashamed to speak. We all harbor fantasies that are wild, earthy, grandiose and egotistical. So we keep them secret and deal with them either by pathologizing them (delegating them to a sickness) or trying to forget them. We relegate our fantasies to a sickness because we believe they are something we alone suffer from, some thing sick, shameful and unique to us. They are something we never want others to know about us. As a result, our fantasies and obsessions become something to be ashamed of—a dark sickness beneath our normal self.

Another option is denial. We can consciously deny that we ever have these thoughts and feelings. Denial saves us from feeling shame, but we pay another price for this in the end. Denying our thoughts and feeling is akin to living on the ground floor of a house and taking any garbage or anything else we do not want to deal with and simply tossing it down into the basement and closing the door. Out of sight, out of mind—for a while. Garbage doesn’t cease to exist just because we have pushed it into the basement. Eventually it ferments and sends its poisonous gases up through the vents to contaminate the air we are breathing.

However, and this is the point, the complex yearnings, obsessions and grandiosity inside our soul are not a sickness, nor something that we need to deny. Our soul, for all its wildness, is not sick. The problem is that we lack an understanding of the deeper part of our soul, our shadow; and believe there’s some sickness inside there—and it’s keeping this a secret, that’s the actual sickness.

What is our shadow? Popular literature has given us a one-sided notion of what makes for our shadow. The popular notion is that our shadow is some dark, fearful place we do our best to avoid, a place we pay at all cost not to venture into, inner demons that we want to consciously avoid. While we might at times feel those flour in the face of our own shadow, our shadow is not a dark thing at all. The opposite.

Here’s how our shadow forms. When a baby is born, it's luminous, wonderfully open and aware, looking around, simply drinking in reality. However, at this stage of life, a baby cannot think because it lacks an ego and thus lacks self-awareness. In order to form an ego and become self-aware, the baby has to make a series of massive mental contractions, each of which shuts it off from part of its own luminosity.

First, early on in life, it distinguishes between what is self and what is other; I am not my mommy. Soon afterward, it distinguishes between living and non-living; a puppy is alive, a stone is not. Sometime after that, it distinguishes between mind and body; a body is a hard, solid thing, thinking is different. Finally, and this is the critical piece in the formation of our shadow, at a point in its life, the baby will make a distinction between what it can consciously face inside of itself and what is too overwhelming to consciously face. In doing that, it forms its shadow by splitting off a huge part of its luminosity (the full image and likeness of God inside itself) from its own consciousness.

Notice that our shadow is made up of our light, not our darkness. As Marianne Williamson aptly puts it in a phrase from NonviolentCommunication (in his inauguration address) it is our light not our darkness that frightens us. In a healthy person, dark secrets generally hide the things that emanate out of the excessive light, divine energy, infinite longings and godly grandiosity inside of us. When we bring these into the light, we see that they are neither dark nor sick. The sickness lies only in not bringing them to light.

Oblate Father Ron Rolheiser is a theologian, teacher, and award-winning author.

The readings for the fifth Sunday of Lent—Cycle B are: Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hebrews 5:7-9; and John 12:23-33.

By your help, we beseech you, Lord our God, may we walk eagerly in that same charity with which, out of love for the world, your Son handed himself over to death. Ever since we began using the latest English translation of the Roman Missal (the book that contains the prayers of the Mass), I have often found myself preoccupying from these beautiful and poignant prayers. The prayer above—the Collect the prayer priest prays after the “Lord, have mercy” for this Sunday, is very rich. I will share it with you, and I will also share why I find it a further benefit from the timing of the Lenten Season. One obvious reason is that we are moving towards Holy Week. The best way to celebrate that charity is to seek Christ’s charity, the charity that moved him to hand himself over to death, these three; but the greatest of these is love.” So we seek Christ’s charity, the charity that moved him to hand himself over to death. He did this for two reasons: out of love for His Father (“not as I will, but as thou wilt”), and for love of us. This is the heart of the Christian life: to imitate Christ by giving ourselves, out of love for God, in love for our neighbor. As Christ’s life was not about him, so our lives, as Christians, are not about us.

The Collect goes even deeper: may we walk in that charity eagerly. It is hard for most of us to imagine eager ly giving up our lives, even for God, but true charity does nothing grudgingly. Paul, for instance, in his letter to the Colossians writes, “Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions for the sake of his body , that is, the church.” (Col 1:24) Paul did not just embrace his mission, along with its suffering; he did it eagerly.

We pray, “By your help,” because it is one of the ways we call the theological vision, those virtues that come only from God. For we not only have to pray for it, but we had to be taught that it was a virtue: “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy’ But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those whom persecute you.” (Matt 5:44)

Jesus not only taught it, but modeled it. As St. Paul wrote to the Romans: “Why, one will hardly die for a righteous man…. But God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners (‘enemies’) Christ died for us.” (Rom 5:8)

We are preparing to celebrate God’s charity during Holy Week. The best way to celebrate that charity is to seek to live it out ourselves. Impossible? For us, yes, “but with God all things are possible.” The Collect for this Sunday is a good prayer for us to pray this Sunday yes, in Lent, yes, and always.

Father Stephen Bankenper is pastor, St. Catherine of Sienna Parish, Ft. Thomas, Ky.
Grateful to serve

Dealing with the coronavirus rollercoaster and observing the political scene and recent election has impacted me in a surprising and sometimes distressed way. I struggled with knowing what to do, how to lead or even believe that God was present. St. Paul said, “In all circumstances give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus.” (1 Thessalonians 5:18) How am I supposed to be grateful and offer thanks when I fear what tomorrow will bring and I cannot see where God is in all of this?

A friend recently reminded me that I may need to approach these challenges from another angle, to try and see “the other side of the coin,” or what is “on the other hand.” When you look at a glass of your favorite beverage, does it look half empty or does it look half full? Answering this question begs me to see the half-full glass instead of the half-empty glass. In this approach, with a little effort, I might be able to begin seeing the good in any given circumstance, and become grateful.

In one of my favorite Scripture passages, St. Paul explains that “God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God.” (Romans 8:28) God is good, all the time. How is it possible that God could take all these circumstances, blend them together to work for the good? I must simply remind myself of this simple truth — God is good, all the time. I wouldn’t wish these events on anyone, yet after looking back, I have seen the hand of God repeatedly in the situations I have been dealing with — individually and collectively — and I know God has been present in all of it. For this, I am grateful.

The ministry at Catholic Charities has always focused on the poor, the marginalized, those who have been overlooked and forgotten. We strive to see the glass half full, and to recognize that difficult circumstances provide an opportunity for fulfillment and encouragement by serving others.

In all aspects of our ministry at Catholic Charities, we look for and see the dignity in our neighbors; and we treat the people we encounter as friends. In this, we are led to build up the kingdom of God, through our service. We are grateful for the opportunity to serve.

Our prayer for 2021 is that it will be a year of blessing, service and gratitude for all of us.

Alan Pickett is executive director for Catholic Charities, Diocese of Covington, Ky.

First cause, not the second cause

St. Paul of the Cross taught us to always look through the second cause of events to the first cause. He meant that, whatever may happen, it is either sent by our God or allowed by him. He is in absolute control of everything.

This should give us great peace of heart. Of course, it may not give us peace in our emotions if it is something that simply bothers us or is something tragic. It can, however, give us peace in our wills — that highest part of our being where we say “yes” to God.

The perfect example of this is Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. His human nature was in agony, even to the point of sweating blood, anticipating what he was to undergo, “Father, take this cup away from me.” His will, though, “not my will, but yours be done.” So our emotions may be in turmoil, but we can be saying yes to God in our will.

The Passion is like a measuring rod for life. There is nothing, absolutely nothing, that will ever happen that is as wrong, unfair, undeserved or unjust as our killing of the God-Man. All of us took part in the Passion of Christ because all of our sins were there. He took them all and forgave us. Also, out of this worst event that ever happened, there came the best thing — our salvation. There is no evil so great that God cannot bring good out of it, even if we are not aware of it.

It isn’t always an easy thing to see reality this way. From getting stuck in traffic to the tragic death of a loved one, we can ask for the deep faith that knows that our loving God has it all in his loving care — somehow. He sees things that we don’t, and wills things according to his wisdom and knowledge.

One other thing. The joys of life are part of his loving will, too. We usually think of the hard times as coming from God, forgetting that he wants joy for us even more. There’s a joke along these lines: we blame God for everything except a hole-in-one!

Let us find peace of mind in the reality that our loving God has everything in his care.

Passionist Sister Mary Catherine Thomas is a member of the Congregation of the Passion of Jesus Christ, Erlanger, 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 Valerie Aimee Raharison from Madagascar.

Although Madagascar is one of the poorest countries in the world, the joy of its people is contagious, and their hospitality is overwhelming. The small communities that make up the territory are tightly-knit, and they support each other through difficulties like climate change, chronic hunger and malnutrition.

Seasonal drought — which is becoming more severe and lasts longer each year — makes it difficult for families to harvest enough food to survive. One in every two children in Madagascar are undernourished. But with new farming techniques and knowledge about nutrition, that is changing. Community members are learning how to improve their farms, grow different vegetables and prepare more nutritious meals with training and support from CRS.

Valerie Aimee Raharison’s family has farmed their land for generations. They share a large plot of land and help each other plant and sow. Aimée recently learned new ways to plant her vegetables, which has led to larger harvests — meaning more food and income for her and her family.

Sopa de Queso (Cheese Soup)

Water
1 large onion, sliced
2 green peppers, sliced
2 red tomatoes, sliced
3 cloves garlic, smashed
1 bunch mint
4 cup whole milk
2 ½ cups Maseca
Pinch of salt
3 cups queso fresco or farmer’s cheese, grated
1 ½ Tbsp. achiote paste
1 Tbsp. fair trade olive oil
4 cup whole milk

In a large pot, boil 4 cups water. Add onion, pepper, tomatoes, garlic and mint. Simmer until cooked.

Meanwhile, combine Maseca and 2 cups water in a mixing bowl. Knead to form a dough.

Mix 1 tablespoon olive oil into achiote paste. Mix cheese, salt and achiote paste into dough.

Take 1 cup of dough and place in separate bowl; stir in ½ cup water. Set aside the rest of the dough to make fritters.

In a separate pot, bring milk to a boil. Remove mint and discard half of the vegetables from the first pot. Then, add the dough-and-water mixture and boiled milk to the pot, and salt to taste. Stir and turn off heat.

To make the fritters, form the remaining dough into palm-sized circles.

Fry in oil until crispy and brown. Garnish the soup with mint, and serve with rice and fritters.

Valerie Aimee Raharison feeds her two-year-old son Marela, one of her four children. She participates in CRS’ Fararano Project, which teaches cooking techniques to improve nutrition for her and her family.

She is also learning new ways to use her fresh produce to cook more nutritious meals for her children. Her two-year-old son Marela loves the cassava and onion dish that Aimée prepares, and he eats all his food because it tastes so good.

Aimée sees that the food from her garden is helping her children grow and stay healthy. She is proud of her hard work and can see the fruits of her labor.

“What makes me happy is when I go to my garden and I see all the things that I’ve planted grow,” she said. “When I see flowers or the greens or when I see the first seeds sprouting, it’s like I’ve transferred a kind of power from my hands to the plants. That makes me happy.”

This article was originally published at crsricebowl.org. It is printed here with permission.

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ACCOUNT MANAGER
St. Joseph Academy, a private school operated by the Sisters of St. Joseph the Worker in Walton, KY, is currently offering a part-time Account Manager with the potential of being full-time. The position requires accuracy, attention to detail, and a thorough understanding of basic accounting procedures. Competency with Quickbooks, the ability to create well-organized spreadsheets, knowledge of or a willingness to learn donor perfect, PayPal, and F.A.C.T.S. is also required. This position supports some administrative needs that are important to ensure we operate within budget and plan effectively for our future needs. Organizational skills are a must. A flexible work schedule will be considered. Interested applicants can submit a resume and cover letter to Sister Patricia Jean, S.J.W. Principal at principal@wjwalton.com.

PRINCIPAL
Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic School (www.ihm-ky.org) located in Burlington KY, is seeking a new principal to begin July 1, 2021. We are a 2006 and 2018 National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence, deeply rooted in our Catholic faith. Immaculate Heart of Mary School cooperates with parents in providing quality education to its students, regarding their religious, physical, emotional, social and educational development. Together we work to foster Catholic values that will guide students to become responsible citizens who embrace the Gospel Message of Jesus Christ.

We strive to develop a positive school climate that is built on a culture of safety, respect, trust and social and emotional support.

The successful candidate will be a practicing Roman Catholic who has Kentucky certification or can become eligible for certification. The principal will oversee a staff of 36 and a student body of over 400 in preschool and grades pre-K through 8.

Salary and benefits are competitive. To apply, or to nominate a candidate, e-mail or fax Stephen Koplyay at skoplyay@covdio.org, (859) 392-1589. Candidates should include a letter of interest, a comprehensive resume, and writing samples to Stephen Koplyay by e-mail: skoplyay@covdio.org. (859) 392-1500. EOE

STAFF WRITER
The Messenger, the Diocese of Covington’s official weekly newspaper, published 44 times per year, seeks a full-time Staff Writer. Candidates must be practicing Roman Catholics in good standing with the Church. The position requires a broad range of abilities, including excellent writing, proofreading, and organizational skills, basic photography skills; a commitment to confidentiality and teamwork; a passion for completing diverse projects accurately, thoroughly, and reliably; and adaptability to interactions with colleagues, other Diocesan employees, and interviewees. The ideal candidate will be self-motivated and imaginative, with a readiness to explore multimedia platforms. In addition to regular office hours, evening and weekend assignments occur regularly and are considered part of the job.

Anticipated start date: immediate. Interested candidates may submit a resume, references, and writing samples to Stephen Koplyay by e-mail: skoplyay@covdio.org. (859) 392-1500. EOE

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STAFF WRITER
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YOU CAN ADVERTISE IN THE MESSNGER BY CALLING 859-392-1500 OR SEND AN E-MAIL TO: SKOPLYAY@COVDIO.ORG. OR VISIT WWW.COVDIO.ORG/CLASSIFIEDS.
Every March 19th, Catholics around the world celebrate the Feast of St. Joseph, the husband of Mary and the foster father of Our Lord Jesus Christ. For much of Christian history, the carpenter from Nazareth has been venerated under many titles and patronages, including St. Joseph the Worker, patron of carpenters, fathers and husbands, and patron of the Universal Church, a title conferred upon him in 1870 by Pope Pius IX. But in the northeast corner of the Cathedral Basilica near the altar of St. Joseph is a stained-glass window dedicated to another of his venerated titles — St. Joseph, patron of a Happy Death.

The window measures 21-feet high at its apex by 9-feet wide at the base and tells the story of the moment when the husband of Mary and foster father of Jesus passed from this life. St. Joseph lays on his bed, his eyes closed and hands loosely clasped. At his feet is the Virgin Mary on her knees weeping openly, her tearful gaze upon her beloved husband over whom Jesus stands, his hand raised in blessing.

Above, angels await his soul and proclaim, “Beati mor-tuui qui in Domino mortuntur” (Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.) Lillies, the symbol of St. Joseph and of purity, bloom at his side. Legend has it that lilies sprang from his staff as a sign from the Holy Spirit that he should take Mary as his spouse. Between the lilies and the Virgin, a single red rose rests on the floor as a symbol of their love and union; at right, a water pitcher sits on a low table. In the tracery above a richly ornamented grisaille are ornate fig leaves, heraldic roses, and in the apex — Joseph from the Old Testament in princely robes and a scepter.

The window was created in June 1906 by Mayer & Company (today Mayer of Munich) and the title that’s given to it is “The Death of St. Joseph.” While his nearby altar identifies him as the “Patron of the Universal Church,” the window recognizes his other longstanding title — “Patron of a Happy Death.”

Where did this devotion to St. Joseph as patron of the dying originate?

Most of what we know historically about St. Joseph comes from the Gospel accounts. St. John refers to him only twice, and St. Mark doesn’t mention him at all. Only the infancy narratives of St. Matthew and St. Luke depict him in person, and there he never speaks. After Jesus was 12, Joseph vanishes from the record completely. Scholars have concluded that he had probably died by the time Jesus began his public ministry.

In the early centuries of the Church, the emphasis on spreading the faith and correcting heresies left little time for identifying and venerating saints. Nonetheless, early church presbyters and bishops were still interested in the man who was the guardian and protector of Christ, but not for veneration purposes. Much of this effort was meant to reaffirm Joseph’s lineage as being of the House of David along with defending the doctrine of the Virgin Birth and the perpetual virginity of Our Lady. Although Church fathers mention St. Joseph here and there, they remained studiously disinterested about his life.

But the foundations of St. Joseph’s gradual rise in prominence continued with the efforts of diligent writers and historians like Papias, Eusebius and Hegesippus, who wanted to record Christian oral history as passed down by
those who knew Jesus and the Apostles. By the second cen-
tury, apocryphal texts began to appear purporting to fill
gaps in the canonical scriptures concerning Our Lord’s family. The most influential of these was the Greek
Protevangelion of James, (ca. 150) a lively account that
claimed Joseph was an old man with six grown children
when he wed the teenage Mary. It wasn’t until the seventh
century when a Byzantine text called the “History of
Joseph the Carpenter” described in detail the death of St.
Joseph for the first time. As a result, knowledge of and
devotion to Joseph increased, and for the next few cen-
turies the faithful began to seek more details about his life
beyond the sparse account found in the Gospels.

By the 12th century, St. Joseph had attracted private
devotions from Sts. Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153),
Gertrude the Great (1256-1302), and Bridget of Sweden
(1303-1373). By the end of the fourteenth century, he was
being included in the prayer books and breviaries used
in Spain, where St. Teresa of Avila (1515-1582) became an
even greater advocate, attributing her recovery from paral-
ysis to his intercession.

After the Council of Trent, (1545-1563) the Church
entered a period referred to by historians as the Counter-
Reformation, a time in which the Catholic Church encour-
aged and promoted art with an increasing eye towards a
new focus on works centered on Catholic traditions, sacra-
ments and saints. Out of this period emerged a singular
work called the “Mystical City of God,” written by
Venerable Mary of Agreda (1642-1666). In it, Agreda devot-
ed an entire chapter to the death of St. Joseph, a richly
detailed and spiritually charged account that inspired a
new generation of devotees with a focus placed on St.
Joseph’s patronage of a Good Death.

The Cathedral Basilica’s St. Joseph window contains
most of the traditional elements from Agreda’s account,
and the Mayer artists drew from this tradition. In the win-
dow, the dying Joseph asks Jesus to “pardon, O most mer-
ciful King, the faults which I have committed in your serv-
ice and interactions.” Jesus raises his hand and gives him
benediction, saying: “My father, rest in peace and in the
grace of my eternal Father; and to the Prophets and
Saints, who await you in limbo. Bring the joyful news of
the approach of their redemption.” At these words of
Jesus, and inclining in his arms, Joseph expires.

The Mayer artists included two other figures in this
window not found in any tradition, and here we’re left
with a mystery. At left, a woman stands weeping and hold-
ing a lighted candle; on the right is a man, richly attired in
what seems to be priestly garments, gazing silently down
upon the deceased Joseph. She is depicted with a halo,
indicating a saint; but he has no halo.

One suggestion is she could be Mary of Clogas, the sis-
ter of the Virgin Mary as mentioned in the Gospel of St.
John: “And standing by the cross of Jesus was his mother,
and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas…” [John
19:27]. Lighted candles have long been custom in
Catholicism based on the thoughts expressed in Proverbs
20:27 that “The life breath of man is the lamp of the Lord.”

The candle also invokes John 8:12, in which Jesus says, “I
am the light of the world. No follower of mine shall ever
walk in darkness; no, he shall possess the light of life.”

The richly dressed figure at right begs another mystery.
His clothing suggest he may be a priest, or perhaps some-
one else. Below him on a small table is a water pitcher; sug-
gesting an account from the Protevangelion of James of
what is sometimes called “St. Joseph’s Trouble” — the
dilemma he faced when the temple priests found Mary was
with child.

The dilemma is compounded when the High Priest
accuses the two of impropriety and tests them by
making them drink “the water of the Lord,” which should
“lay bare their iniquity.” When it fails to do so, the High
Priest comprehends the mystery of Mary’s pregnancy and
dismisses them. Does the water pitcher symbolize this
“water test” and could the richly dressed man be the priest
from this story?

The cathedral’s St. Joseph window reminds us that
man’s needs and sufferings on earth are many and mani-
fold, and that the cares and worries of this life are tran-
sient and fleeting. We all belong to the confraternity of
death; no one escapes it.

St. Joseph’s death is a desirable example for us in our
time. It encourages us not to fear death at all if we are full
of faith, hope and love of Him. The powers of Jesus’ bless-
ing at the saint’s deathbed are available to every one of
us by the means of grace given us by Mother Church, among
these being Christ himself in the Eucharist. It was in the
shadow of death that Christ erected his cross, and it will be
in the shadows of our crosses that he will come to assist us
in our last struggle.

This can all be found in the window.
Jesus wasn’t just good, he is God, papal preacher says

Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Plenty of non-Christs believe that Jesus was a real person and that what he taught can make the world a better place, but what makes a person a Christian is believing that Jesus is God, said the preacher of the papal household.

“Belief in the divinity of Jesus is the highest peak, the everest of faith. Believing in a God who was born in a manger and who died on a cross requires much more than believing in a far-off God does,” said Cardinal Raniero Cantalamessa March 12 as he offered a Lenten meditation to Pope Francis and officials of the Roman Curia.

Speaking in the Vatican audience hall, where the pope and officials could sit socially distanced from one another, the cardinal said that too often modern Christians — just like our nonmodem counterparts — focus so much on improving how they live what Christ taught, especially looking for the deeper meaning, he said. “The cornerstone of the edifice of Christian faith is the divinity of Christ,” he said. “Without that, everything shatters and crumbles.”

Today, like 2,000 years ago, “Jesus is not interested in what people say about him but what his disciples — we — believe about him,” the cardinal said. It’s not about repeating ancient formulas, but coming to a personal recognition of the divinity of Jesus and allowing that recognition to motivate repentance, conversion and true charity.

Cardinal Cantalamessa said that many people today seem to think that people are not looking for the ultimate meaning of their lives, but the reflections many people make are and are making during the COVID-19 pandemic and its lockdowns would seem to suggest otherwise.

And while people may find meaning in their careers, in fame, in power, in relation ships or even in their youthful energy, those things all will fade away.

But faith in Christ, fully human and fully divine, gives people the most profound sense of meaning, he said. “Those who believe in Christ do not walk in darkness. They know where they came from, where they are going and what they must do in the meantime,” he said. “But most of all, they know they are loved by one who, in order to demonstrate it, died on a cross.”

Protecting God’s Children for Adults

Virtual Safe Environment Trainings

Virtual Play Like A Champion — Secondary
Coach Trainings

Monday, April 12, 6-9:30 p.m.

Virtual Play Like A Champion — Elementary
Coach Trainings

Saturday, April 20, 9 a.m.-12 p.m.

Thursday, April 15, 6-9 p.m.

Fish fries

Like everything else this year, fish frys are going to be different. In order to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19, all parish fish frys must be drive-thru or carryout only. There will be NO dine in fish frys. Workers and guests will need to follow the safety protocols of wearing a mask and practicing social distancing 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, Augustia, March 19, 26, 5-7 p.m. Carry-out only.
St. Augustine Parish, Covington, Every Friday in Lent, 5-7:30 p.m. Carry-out and curbside.
St. Bernard Parish, Dayton, March 19, 26, 5-7 p.m. Drive-thru only.
St. Catherine of Siena Parish, FL Thomas, March 19, 26, 4:30-7 p.m. Drive-thru and walk-up only.
St. Cecilia Parish, Independence, March 19, 26, April 5, 5-8 p.m. Drive-thru only.
Holy Cross District High School, Latonia, Athletic Boosters, every Friday during Lent (except Good Friday). Carry-out only.
Knights of Columbus, Fuller Bealer Council, Elsmere, March 19, 26, Lunch: 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Dinner: 4:30-8 p.m. Carry-out only. 605 Lyde Ave.
Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish, Burlington, March 19, 26, 4:30-7:30 p.m. Drive-thru only.
St. John the Evangelist Parish, Carrollton, March 19, 26, 4:30-7:30 p.m. Carry-out and drive-thru only.
St. Joseph Academy, Walton, March 19, 26, 4:30-8 p.m. Drive-thru only.
Mary, Queen of Heaven Parish, Erlanger, March 19, 26, 4:30-8 p.m. Drive-thru and online ordering with curbside pickup.
St. Paul Parish, Florence, March 19, 26, 4:30-7:30 p.m. Carry-out only. Order online or call ahead.
St. Timothy Parish, Union, March 19, 26, 4:30-8 p.m. Drive-thru only.

NOVENA

NOVENA TO THE SACRED HEART

May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be adored, glorified; loved and preserved throughout the world now and forever. Sacred Heart of Jesus pray for us St. Jude, worker of miracles, pray for us. St. Jude, help of the hopeless, pray for us. Say this prayer 9 times a day. By the 8th day your prayers will be answered. Say it for 9 days. Thank you St. Jude. Amen. B.D.

NOVENA

NOVENA TO ST. JUDE

O glorious Apostle, St. Jude Thaddeus, true relative of Jesus and Mary, I salute you through the most sacred Heart of Jesus! Through this Heart I praise and thank God for all the graces He has bestowed upon you. Humbly prostrate before you, I implore you through this Heart to look down upon me with compassion. Oh, despise not my petition; let not my trust be confined! To you God has granted the privilege of aiding mankind in the most desperate cases. Oh, come to my aid, that I may praise the mercies of God! All my life I will be grateful to you and will be your faithful client until I can thank you in heaven. Amen. P.H.S.
Growing in Wisdom

With God’s grace, as one matures, one arrives at wisdom: the realization that we come from God and are going to God. Or as St. Augustine said, “Our hearts were made for you, O Lord, and they are restless until they rest in you.”

The wise person is always growing, always learning.
The wise person is always connecting the past with the future.
Elders share their stories, and in doing so, pass on what they have learned to future generations, through both words and example.
Their wisdom does not die with them but guides and enriches generations to come.

— “Blessings of Age”
USCCB pastoral statement
St. Charles Community helps seniors and families navigate the maze of aging services in northern Kentucky

St. Charles Community (SCC) is reaching beyond its walls to provide care to elders in Northern Kentucky. In 2017, SCC utilized the findings of two community assessments to develop the St. Charles’ Community Benefit Plan. The overall goals for the plan are to inform, educate, empower and research for new insights and solutions in the service of seniors. The SCC Board sought to increase community outreach, especially through service to elders with financial needs that impact their access to healthcare and assistive devices and services.

Margie Volpenhein, senior resource counselor for SCC, responded to this charge and began reaching out to senior centers in Northern Kentucky to determine possible partnerships and identify needs in the region. When she initiated contact with the Northern Kentucky Area Development District (NKADD), the Helping Adults in Need Develop Independence Program, or HANDI, took off at St. Charles.

“I attended a NKADD meeting and met social workers who began contacting me,” Margie said. “I would get occasional referrals and now I’m getting calls every day.”

Referrals also come from discharge planners, physician offices, social workers or a family member or friend that knows a senior who needs help and doesn’t know where to turn.

In the last two years, HANDI has provided assistance to over 200 individuals. The majority of the fulfilled HANDI requests have been for mobility and adaptive devices. Many referrals, however, are for furniture, transportation and, most alarming by far, food. The experienced professionals at St. Charles will help seniors and their families navigate the maze of aging services, by not only walking through this process with seniors but also connecting them with the vast array of resources available in the greater community.

Margie Volpenhein explained that although her role means being confronted daily with the reality of great need in the Northern Kentucky area, it has been very rewarding to meet with people and to visit and connect while delivering items or groceries. One example that touched Mrs. Volpenhein’s heart was a local veteran who was referred to her. This individual had experienced homelessness and found housing in a subsidized community, but did not have any furniture.

“We were able to give this gentleman a couch and bed and he said it felt like he went to heaven because he had a soft, warm place to lay his head,” she said.

Identifying and responding to individuals’ needs is not new to St. Charles or to Mrs. Volpenhein. Her background is in social work. Fourteen years ago, she coordinated the At Home outreach at St. Charles Community and also serves as the Community Liaison. Altogether, Mrs. Volpenhein has worked at St. Charles for 34 years.

“Now I’m here doing things I never thought I’d be doing and it’s all because of the Sisters of Notre Dame and the St. Charles Board saying, ‘There’s a need, can you help with this?’”

For information contact St. Charles Community: e-mail, info@stcharlescommunity.org; call (859) 331-3224 or online stcharlescommunity.org.

This article was contributed by St. Charles Community.
It’s not too soon for parishes to start planning for the first World Day of Grandparents and the Elderly

Junno Arocho Esteves
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Pope Francis announced the establishment of a World Day of Grandparents and the Elderly as a reminder of the important role they play as a link between generations.

During his Sunday Angelus address Jan. 31, the pope said the day will be celebrated every year on the fourth Sunday of July to coincide with the feast of Sts. Joachim and Anne, Jesus’ grandparents. The first celebration of this day will be July 25.

“It is important for grandparents to meet their grandchildren and for grandchildren to meet their grandparents because — as the prophet Joel says — grandparents, before their grandchildren, will dream and have great desires, and young people — taking strength from their grandparents — will go forward and prophesy,” he said.

Highlighting the Feb. 2 feast of the Presentation of the Lord, the pope said the recognition of Christ as the Messiah by the elderly Simeon and Anna is a reminder that “the Holy Spirit still stirs up thoughts and words of wisdom in the elderly today.”

“They remind us that old age is a gift and that grandparents are the link between generations, passing on the experience of life and faith to the young.”

Grandparents are often forgotten and we forget this wealth of preserving roots and passing on,” he added.

In a statement published shortly after the pope’s announcement, Cardinal Kevin J. Farrell, prefect of the Dicastery for Laity, the Family and Life, said the yearly event was “a gift to the whole Church” that emphasizes the pastoral care of the elderly as “a priority that can no longer be postponed by any Christian community.”

“The Holy Spirit still stirs up thoughts and words of wisdom in the elderly today,” he said.

In the encyclical, ‘Fratelli Tutti,’ the Holy Father reminds us that no one is saved alone. With this in mind, we must treasure the spiritual and human wealth that has been handed down from generation to generation,” he said.

Cardinal Farrell added that “today, more than ever, we are committed to making every effort to dismantle the throwaway culture and to enhance the charisms of grandparents and the elderly.”

The dicastery said Pope Francis will mark the first World Day of Grandparents and the Elderly July 25 with an evening Mass in St. Peter’s Basilica. However, the Mass will be “subject to sanitary regulations in place at the time.”

“Closer to the world day, the Dicastery for Laity, the Family and Life will announce any further initiatives that will mark the event,” the statement said. “As of now, the dicastery is inviting parishes and dioceses around the world to celebrate this world day at the local level in ways that are suited to their pastoral context.”

Mark Your Calendar
World Day of Grandparents
July 25, 2021
Pope Francis will mark the first World Day of Grandparents and the Elderly with an evening Mass in St. Peter’s Basilica. Parishes and families are encouraged to celebrate grandparents and elderly friends on this first of what will be an annual day of recognition in the Church.

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It’s not too soon for parishes to start planning for the first World Day of Grandparents and the Elderly

Nicholas Capizzi poses with his grandfather and sponsor Louis Grottano prior to receiving the sacrament of confirmation at Maria Regina Church in Seaford, N.Y., Aug. 20, 2020. During his Jan. 31 Sunday Angelus, Pope Francis announced the establishment of a World Day of Grandparents and the Elderly.

Nicholas Capizzi poses with his grandfather and sponsor Louis Grottano prior to receiving the sacrament of confirmation at Maria Regina Church in Seaford, N.Y., Aug. 20, 2020. During his Jan. 31 Sunday Angelus, Pope Francis announced the establishment of a World Day of Grandparents and the Elderly.

Nicholas Capizzi poses with his grandfather and sponsor Louis Grottano prior to receiving the sacrament of confirmation at Maria Regina Church in Seaford, N.Y., Aug. 20, 2020. During his Jan. 31 Sunday Angelus, Pope Francis announced the establishment of a World Day of Grandparents and the Elderly.
Learn something new every day with help from some familiar friends

— “Let’s Make Hot Cross Buns,” March 31, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. via Zoom (Pendleton County);
— “Doing Life with Your Adult Children,” Wednesday evenings, 6:30 – 7:30 p.m. April 21 – May 12 (Pendleton County);
— “Stand Up to Falling & Tips for a Safer Home” April 13, 10 a.m. (Boone County);
— “Arthritis Basics and Food Tips” April 20, 10 a.m. (Boone County);
— “One Fun Meal: Sheet Pans” April 22, 6:30 p.m. (Boone County);
— “Cream Puffs Make-Along for Adults” April 26, 6:30 p.m. (Boone County);
— “Hike the Trails Kick-off and Tree Giveaway” Saturday, May 1, 8 a.m. (Boone County).

The county offices also have links to publications put out by the University of Kentucky Extension on dozens of subjects. Check out their websites or call the offices for information on or to register classes. Class fill quickly so register as early as you can.

County Extension Offices
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Estate planning includes your greatest asset — your life

Donald A. Powell, Esq.
Contributor

What is estate planning? Simple put, it is planning to protect your family, your wealth and your end-of-life decisions. I will briefly discuss the last of these. Please note, this article is not legal advice.

End-of-life decisions pertain to medical care at the end of your life. These decisions are foundational — in so far as they ought to be made by all competent adults, regardless of individual familial and financial situations. Importantly, decisions made now will only apply if you lack the capacity to decide in the future. Stated differently, estate planning does not restrict your legal right to direct your own health-care.

Why should competent adults make end-of-life decisions in advance? The answer to this question becomes obvious after examining the default situation.

When default decision-making authority is allocated to multiple individuals who may not agree — for example, multiple adult children — the stage is set for lasting resentment and disagreements that require a legal solution. Even for married couples, spouses may discover that they do not have unfettered access to the other’s medical records.

Beyond the disagreement or inconvenience associated with the default situation, those close to you may be required to make difficult decisions without the benefit of actionable guidance. Further, there is no guarantee that decisions made on your behalf will be consistent with Catholic moral teaching.

Planning for end-of-life decisions is the solution. The Kentucky statutory living will (available on the state attorney general’s website) addresses the administration of artificial nutrition and hydration (ANH) and the use of life-prolonging treatment. Alternatively, it enables a person to designate a health care surrogate to make these decisions on his or her behalf if you lack capacity in the future.

When executing a living will, you should understand a Catholic’s duty to preserve life and the Church’s position on euthanasia. Let us briefly discuss both.

First, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) in its document “Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services,” states, “A person has a moral obligation to use ordinary or proportionate means of preserving his or her life. Proportionate means are those that in the judgment of the patient offer a reasonable hope of benefit and do not entail an excessive burden or impose excessive expense on the family or the community.”

Second, euthanasia is morally impermissible but needs to be distinguished from palliative care. Palliative care provides relief from the symptoms and stress of a terminal illness. The USCCB explains, “Patients should be kept as free of pain as possible so that they may die comfortably and with dignity, and in the place where they wish to die. Since a person has the right to prepare for his or her death while fully conscious, he or she should not be deprived of consciousness without a compelling reason. Medicines capable of alleviating or suppressing pain may be given to a dying person, even if this therapy may indirectly shorten the person’s life so long as the intent is not to hasten death.” (Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services).

Adhering to Church teaching and your own wishes via the check-the-box options of the statutory living will — as applied to an unknown future medical situation — may prove difficult. Thus, it is preferable to designate a health care surrogate who understands the Church’s teachings (or who has access to someone who does) and with whom you have discussed your own wishes about ANH and life-prolonging treatment. It is also important to name a successor surrogate.

To learn more about end-of-life decision making, as well as how estate planning protects your family and your wealth, please visit www.CatholicEstates.com for a free primer that addresses these matters from a Catholic perspective.

This article was contributed by Donald A. Powell, Esq.
A lesson in aging — making peace with and drawing deeply from the soul

Father Ron Rolheiser, O.M.I.
Messenger Contributor

We live in a culture that idealizes youth and marginalizes the old. And, as James Hillman says, the old don't let achieving those things so early. And so I always thought of myself as young, even as the years piled up and my body began to betray my conception of myself as young. Moreover for most of those years, I tried to stay young too in soul, staying on top of what was shaping youth culture, its movies, its popular songs, its lingo. During my years in seminary and for a good number of years after ordination, I was involved in youth ministry, helping give youth retreats in various high schools and colleges. At that time, I could name all the popular songs, movies, and trends, speak youth's language, and I prided myself in being young.

But nature offers no exceptions. Nobody stays young forever. Moreover, aging doesn't normally announce its arrival. You're mostly blind to it until one day you see yourself in a mirror, see a recent photo of yourself, or get a diagnosis from your doctor and suddenly you're hit on the head with the unwelcome realization that you're no longer a young person. That usually comes as a surprise. Aging generally makes itself known in ways that have you denying it, fighting it, and accepting it only piecemeal, and with some bitterness.

But that day comes round for everyone when you're surprised, stunned, that what you are seeing in the mirror is so different from how you have been imagining yourself and you ask yourself: “Is this really me? Am I this old person?” Moreover you begin to notice with some bitterness. Indeed we're meant to be always young in spirit. Our zest, our fire, our eagerness, our wit, our brightness, and our humor, are not meant to dim with age. Indeed, they're meant to be the very color of a mature soul.

Aging generally makes itself known in ways that have you denying it, fighting it, and accepting it only piecemeal, and with some bitterness. Moreover gravity doesn't just affect your body, pulling things downward, so too for the soul. It's pulled downward along with the body, though aging means something very different here. The soul doesn't age, it matures. You can stay young in soul long after the body betrays you. Indeed we’re meant to be always young in spirit.

Souls carry life differently than do bodies because bodies are built to eventually die. Inside of every living body the life-principle has an exit strategy. It has no such strategy inside a soul, only a strategy to deepen, grow richer, and more textured. Aging forces us, mostly against our will, to listen to our soul more deeply and more honestly so as to unveil its complexity, its shadow, and its deepest proclivities — and the aging of the soul plays the key role in this. To employ a metaphor from James Hillman: The best wines are aged in cracked old barrels. So too for the soul: The aging process is designed by God and nature to force the soul, whether it wants to or not, to delve ever deeper into the mystery of life, of community, of God, and of itself. Our souls don't age, like a wine, they mature, and so we can always be young in spirit. Our zest, our fire, our eagerness, our wit, our brightness, and our humor, are not meant to dim with age. Indeed, they're meant to be the very color of a mature soul.

So, in the end, aging is a gift, even if unwanted. Aging takes us to a deeper place, whether we want to go or not.

Like most everyone else, I still haven't made my full peace with this and would still like to think of myself as young. However I was particularly happy to celebrate my 70th birthday two years ago, not because I was happy to be that age, but because, after two serious bouts with cancer in recent years, I was very happy just to be alive and wise enough now to be a little grateful for what aging and a cancer diagnosis has taught me. There are certain secrets hidden from health, writes John Updike. True. And aging uncovers a lot of them because, as Swedish proverb puts it, "afternoon knows what the morning never suspected.”

Oblate Father Ron Rolheiser, theologian, teacher and award-winning author, is president of the Oblate School of Theology, San Antonio, Texas.
Older adults aging at home gracefully and safely with Habitat

Since moving into her ranch house decades ago, Rachel had hoped of tackling the upkeep it required. But those hopes — including refreshing the flaking exterior paint — took a back seat to more immediate needs, like putting gas in the tank and food on the table.

“I always thought, well, next year, next year,” says Rachel, who lives in Fresno, California. Before she knew it, the 85-year-old says, “Thirty years passed — and I lived in a weather-beaten house. I was embarrassed. I was accepting the fact that my house looked bad.”

Rachel pauses before her blue eyes light up, a smile spreading. “Then the angels came along.”

After responding to an ad in the local paper, Rachel connected with Habitat for Humanity Greater Fresno’s Aging in Place program, an initiative to help older adults remain and age safely in their homes.

In a single afternoon, Habitat staff and volunteers checked off Rachel’s years-long dream of repainting her home — transforming its original tanage stucco with a coat of modern light gray paint and replacing the fading blue trim with bright white. “I am so proud of my house now,” says Rachel.

While there, the crew discovered that Rachel’s water heater had broken and that for over a month, she had been heating water on the stove — one pot at a time — to bathe and wash dishes. This wasn’t just time-consuming; it was dangerous because of the potential risk of being scalded by the water.

“They couldn’t believe that I was sitting here with no hot water and not asking for help, but that’s just the way I was raised,” Rachel says. After a full day of scraping, sanding and painting, Habitat staff returned to repair the water heater — restoring Rachel’s warm water and her safety.

“They turned my old house into new,” Rachel says. “They made me feel like a queen for the day.”

According to the Census Bureau, 62 million women and men in the U.S. are 65 or older. The number is expected to grow to 78 million over the next 15 years. A 2018 AARP survey found that, like Rachel, more than three-fourths of older Americans prefer to stay in their home as they age. However, that same survey found that only 46 percent of participants anticipate they’ll be able to.

For some people, the combination of physical challenges and a fixed income in the face of costly repairs can force them to move. Deferred but critical home projects often snowball into larger, more expensive issues that can threaten residents’ health, safety and even their homeownership through repeated code violations.

For others, their homes simply weren’t built to accommodate the changing needs and abilities that come with aging. Stairs can cut residents off from second stories and basements, and even the outside world. Shelves become unreachable.

Through Aging in Place, Habitat hopes to alleviate these issues so more people can have the choice of where they grow older. For Rachel, who has always wanted to age in the comfort of her own home, she feels more confident in that desire now that these repairs have been made.

“This is my home, and I’d still be trying to make do if it wasn’t for their help,” she says. “So I am so grateful to them, and I will spend the rest of my life trying to pay that back.”

This article is from Habitat for Humanity International online at habitat.org.

But just as you excel in everything — in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us — see that you also excel in this grace of giving.” (2 Cor 8:7-9)
There are so many reasons folks retire these days — some chosen, some forced on us. Either way, sometimes you find yourself missing the sense of purpose, companionship, gratitude for God-given opportunities that were a part of your life. But it doesn’t have to be that way. If you’re still here, God isn’t finished with you yet.

The Ignatian Volunteer Corps (IVC) is women and men, age 50 or better who volunteer in area non-profits that serve those in need. And while we’re nurturing others, IVC nurtures us. We find a sense of purpose in the work that we do and the people with whom we serve. We find companionship, not only at our service sites but also in the monthly gatherings. We share how we find God (in the spirit of St. Ignatius). We share communion. We share a meal. And we have a book study currently “Finding God in Ordinary Time.” We also have two retreats a year. We find spiritual growth — a growing awareness of God’s companionship in our lives.

Shane Claiborne once shared the story of how the truck full of hay his grandpa was hauling caught fire, and his grandpa, in the confusion sped up, thinking that that might blow out the flames. Instead piles of flaming hay fell off the truck and lit fires throughout the surroundings. Shane says we are called to light a different kind of fire. The Ignatian Volunteer Corps is lighting fires throughout the country — with those in the works, 20+ regions throughout the United States. This fire doesn’t destroy; it lifts spirits, serves those in need, provides purposeful retirement and brings us closer to God and one another. Are you ready for “Refire-ment”? And if you are a director of a non-profit organization in the area please consider how our volunteers can empower you to accomplish your mission. We have a lot of wisdom and skills to offer your agency.

For information on the Ignatian Volunteer Corps visit https://ivcusa.org/. God isn’t finished with you yet.

Main article by the Ignatian Volunteer Corps of Greater Cincinnati, tutoring youth.

**‘Blessings of Age— The call to community**

People become holy within a community. For most people, including older persons, the primary community is the family. You rejoice in additions to your family circle — daughters and sons-in-law; grandchildren, great-nieces, and nephews. You pass on your family’s cultural heritage through stories, celebrations, and rituals. You worry about a child’s divorce or a grandchild’s exposure to drugs and violence. Some of you find yourselves in unexpected situations, such as caring for older family members or at the other end of the spectrum, for grandchildren.

Many older people turn to parishes and parish-based small groups to find the community they need. As a family of families, the parish connects older adults with each other and with other generations. The parish provides spiritual and sacramental nourishment as well as social and service opportunities. Even here, however, some older people feel isolated or excluded. If you are a friend or family member, you may move away. You may relocate. Spouses and siblings may pass away. After many years of normal family activity, you may feel alone, even abandoned by those you love most.

Many older adults live alone or with a close partner, but they can hesitate to reach out for it.

Some of you experience the special joys of grandparenting. Freed from the responsibilities of day-to-day parenting, you give young family members the gift of unhurried time and attention. With the experience of years, you can continue to encourage children to develop new skills or talents and to make important life decisions.

Some of your peers may feel isolated because of a lack of transportation to parish activities. Perhaps someone you know simply needs a personal invitation, a reassurance that he or she is wanted and welcomed. Especially during transition times, people need the support of a caring community, but they can hesitate to reach out for it.

If you have received the gift of such a community, we ask you to share it with other older adults. For example, invite them to attend Sunday Mass and if possible, offer them a ride. Offer to introduce them at the next meeting of the parish seniors group. Invite them to help make sandwiches for the local soup kitchen. Reach out to another person, and draw him or her into a caring community.

Finally, the faith community can be the fertile soil in which life-giving friendships blossom. Here you often find men and women who share your values and experiences — people who understand the particular losses and fears of later life but whose faith gives them strength and courage. These friendships, often unexpected, can lighten the cares and multiply the joys of later life.

*Taken from the “Blessings of Age” a pastoral statement of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.*
Local

TMU renames Lawyers Lunch to honor Justice Donald C. Wintersheimer

CRESTVIEW HILLS, Ky. — Thomas More University will honor the late Justice Donald C. Wintersheimer ’53, an alumnus and longtime serving lawyer at the University, through the renaming of the annual Lawyers Lunch to the Justice Donald C. Wintersheimer ’53 Lawyers Lunch. Additionally, the University has announced an initiative to secure $50,000 in donations to permanently endow the lunch in his name.

“Late last month, the University and law community lost an icon in the passing of Justice Donald C. Wintersheimer ’53,” said President Joseph Chillo. “He was a brilliant lawyer, scholar, and teacher who epitomized the values that Sir Thomas More instilled upon many generations of lawyers and others who have had an impact on our society. We are honored to remember and recognize Justice Wintersheimer’s legacy through the renaming of our Lawyers Lunch.” Wintersheimer served the University in many capacities. He held the roles of former adjunct instructor of business law, former president of the Thomas More Alumni Association Board, and as a lead member of the Planning Committee and honorary chairman of the annual Lawyers Lunch for decades. He was also a recipient of an Outstanding Teacher Award in 1975. His wife, Alice, is also an alumna who graduated in 1956.

National/World

Virginia bishops say allowing unlimited abortion is ‘deplorable policy’

RICHMOND, Va. — By signing a measure that asserts abortion without limits into Virginia’s health benefits exchange, Gov. Ralph Northam “has closed yet another tragic threshold,” said the heads of the state’s two Catholic dioceses. “We decry the enactment of this year, however, that provision will be eradicated from our law. Consequently, and tragically, health plans in the exchange will be allowed to cover abortions for any reason.”

Bishops back bill to protect faith-based foster care, adoption providers

WASHINGTON — Legislation introduced in the Senate and the House aims to protect “the cherished freedom of religious liberty” of faith-based foster care and adoption providers who believe children “deserve to be placed with a married mother and father,” the chairmen of three U.S. bishops’ committees said March 15. The Child Welfare Provider Inclusion Act of 2021 would prevent the federal government and any state receiving federal funds for child welfare services from taking “adverse action against a provider that declines to conduct its services in a manner that would violate its religious or moral principles,” Sen. Tim Scott, R-S.C., and Rep. Mike Kelly, R-Pa., introduced identical bills in their respective chambers March 10. The measure would cover all agencies that receive funding under Part B or Part E of Title IV of the Social Security Act. Part B covers child and family services, and Part E covers federal payments for foster care, prevention and permanency services. The measure would cover all agencies that receive funding under Part B or Part E of Title IV of the Social Security Act. Part B covers child and family services, and Part E covers federal payments for foster care, prevention and permanency services.

Vatican says no blessing gay unions, no negative judgment on gay people

VATICAN CITY — While homosexual men and women must be respected, any form of blessing a same-sex union is “illicit,” said the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. The negative judgment is on the blessing of unions, not the people who may still receive a blessing in individual cases, it said in a statement published March 15. The statement was a response to a question or “dubium” that came from priests and lay faithful “who require clarification and guidance concerning a controversial issue,” said an official commentary accompanying the statement. The response to the question, “Does the church have the power to give the blessing to unions of persons of the same sex?” was “Negative.” “It is not licit to impart a blessing on relationships, or partnerships, even stable, that involve sexual activity outside of marriage — i.e., outside the indissoluble union of a man and a woman open in itself to the transmission of life — as is the case of the unions between persons of the same sex,” the doctrinal office said in an explanatory note accompanying the statement. Pope Francis approved both the statement and the note for publication. “The Christian community and its pastors are called to welcome with respect and sensitivity persons with homosexual inclinations and will know how to find the most appropriate ways, consistent with church teaching, to proclaim to them the Gospel in its fullness,” the explanatory note said.

War in Syria must end; tormented people need relief, pope says

VATICAN City — All sides need to come together to end the war in Syria and bring some sign of hope to an exhausted and tormented people, Pope Francis said. The international community also needs to commit itself to helping rebuild the nation, so that once the fighting has stopped, “the social fabric can be mended and reconstruction and economic recovery can begin,” the pope said after praying the Angelus with visitors gathered in St. Peter’s Square March 14. March 15 marked 10 years since the beginning of the war in Syria, causing “one of the most serious humanitarian disasters of our time,” the pope said. Protesters began calls demanding an end to repression in Syria March 15, 2011, after being inspired by other “Arab Spring” demonstrations in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya. However, President Bashar Assad’s government responded with the military shooting demonstrators and triggering an on-going civil war that has drawn in rebels, Islamic State militants and other nations in a proxy war.
Iraq visit was ‘sign of hope’ for suffering people, pope says

Junno Arocho Esteves  
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Despite years of suffering due to war and terrorism, the people of Iraq continue to look to the future with hope, Pope Francis said.

Recalling his recent visit to the country during his weekly general audience March 10, the pope said that while he saw “the opened wounds of destruction,” he also saw “around me the joy of welcoming Christ’s message.”

“I saw the hope of being open to a horizon of peace and fraternity, summed up in Jesus’ words that were the motto of the visit: ‘You are all brothers,’” he said.

In his talk, the pope said he was grateful to God for the March 5-8 visit, a trip that his predecessor, St. John Paul II, had wanted to make.

“Never before has a pope been in the land of Abraham,” he said. “Providence willed that this should happen now, as a sign of hope, after years of war and terrorism, and during a severe pandemic.”

Affirming the right of the Iraqi people to live in peace, Pope Francis praised the country’s rich history as the “cradle of civilization.” Nevertheless, despite its cultural significance in the world, Iraq was destroyed by war, which is “always the monster that, as the ages change, transforms itself and devours humanity,” he said.

Departing from his prepared remarks, the pope denounced arms dealers who profit from war and sold weapons to terrorists not only in Iraq, but in other parts of the world suffering from violence.

“The answer to war, he added, is fraternity, which is a challenge for Iraq and ‘for many regions in conflict and, ultimately, for the entire world.’”

Continuing his talk, the pope said the interreligious meeting in the ancient city of Ur, the birthplace of Abraham, was a significant moment that brought together the spiritual descendants of “our father in the faith.”

In Ur, the pope said, “standing together under those luminous heavens — the same heavens (from which) our father Abraham saw us, his descendants — the phrase you are all brothers and sisters seemed to resound once again.”

Recalling his visits to Mosul and Qaraqosh, two cities devastated by Islamic State militants, the pope called for prayers for the people so that God may give them the strength to rebuild.

He also appealed to those who fled those cities and urged them to “keep the faith and hope. Be weavers of friendship and of fraternity wherever you are.”

And, if you can,” return” to Mosul and Qaraqosh, the pope said.

Pope Francis said that, in Iraq, “despite the roar of destruction and weapons, the palm, a symbol of the country and of its hope, has continued to grow and bear fruit.”

The same goes “for fraternity: It does not make noise, but is fruitful and makes us grow,” the pope said. “May God, who is peace, grant a future of fraternity to Iraq, the Middle East and the entire world!”

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Pope Francis prays as he leads his general audience in the library of the Apostolic Palace at the Vatican March 10, 2021. The pope recalled his recent visit to Iraq and said it was meant to be a “sign of hope” for the people of the country who suffered from war, terrorism and the pandemic.