Beloved friends in Christ,

I am praying that you will have a joyful and happy Advent!

A simple song lyric has been with me for more than two weeks. “There is a light that can overcome the darkness. There is no darkness that can overcome the light.”

Since hearing it for the first time, I have been humming it to myself. Today I was able to identify the song. It is called “There Is a Light.” It is by Father Cyprian Consiglio, OSB Cam., and published by Oregon Catholic Press (OCP). I was able to find it on my music streaming service. Check it out for yourself if you can.

“There is a light that can overcome the darkness. There is no darkness that can overcome the light.”

Thirty years ago, I descended into a coal mine; one of the longest in central Illinois. I traveled more than a mile into that shaft to be introduced to long wall mining.

At a midway point we stopped in a part of the mine where there was no activity and no electric light. At my guide’s prompting we turned off our headlamps. The darkness was thick and oppressive. I could not see my own hand in front of my face. I immediately felt disoriented. I could feel the threat of that darkness. I imagined I might be falling.

After a couple long minutes, my guide turned on his lamp. It was as if the sun had risen in that out-of-the-way place. All of that darkness and fear retreated at the coming of the light. Darkness, it reminded me, is nothing — literally, no thing. It is just a void, the absence of light.

“There is a light than can overcome the darkness. There is no darkness that can overcome the light.”

This week, we enter into the holy season of Advent, this season of waiting for the coming of the Light — Jesus. One way we keep Advent is by lighting the candles of an Advent wreath. Notice the colors of the Advent wreath and Advent liturgy — a dark violet shot through with rose. They are the colors of the early morning sky as we wait for the appearance of the light and our eyes begin to adjust to the dawning day.

Day-by-day and week-by-week we light the candles of the Advent wreath, waiting for the celebration of Christmas. We are reminded that we are also waiting for the second coming of Christ into the world.

We remember that the final word — the final victory — is already His.

“There is a light that can overcome the darkness. There is no darkness that can overcome the light.”

So here is an Advent prayer practice that I propose. Let’s make of ourselves living Advent candles.

Sit or kneel upright and visualize your body filled with all of the purpling fears, anxieties, frets and sins that you know. Breathe in deeply. Imagine the Light of Christ and His Spirit rushing into your being with each breath, displacing all that other bruised and bruising stuff. Have confidence that your Savior is eager to come to you.

As you exhale, visualize your attachment to sin and fear thinning. Trust in the light that fills you and drives out the darkness. Say, “Come, Lord Jesus!” Embrace repentance. Listen for what Jesus is trying to say to you.

Repeat.

When you are brightened and ready, confident in Christ and unafraid, continue your prayer as you are accustomed. Then, step out into the world to let the light of justice and mercy shine through you. Practice recognizing that same light in others. As you do, be assured of one absolute truth . . .

“There is a light that can overcome the darkness. There is no darkness that can overcome the light.”

United with you in longing for Christ’s coming,

+ John C. Iffert
Bishop of Covington

Sunday November 28th marks the beginning of Advent and a new liturgical year.

The Advent season is an opportunity to reflect on the mystery of the Incarnation of Jesus.

“Keep us alert, we pray, O Lord our God. As we await the advent of Christ your Son, So that, when he comes and knocks, he may find us watchful in prayer and exultant in his praise.”

—Collect, First Monday of Advent

Nov. 28
First Sunday
of Advent

Serving the Diocese of Covington, Kentucky since 1926

November 26, 2021
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Missed an edition? Current and back issues of the Messenger are available online at covdio.org/messenger.
The Serra Club for Vocations of Northern Kentucky held its annual priest appreciation dinner, Nov. 18. During the dinner members presented a $2,000 check for the Priests Retirement Fund. Pictured from left are Serrans: Steve Novak, Father Mark Keene and Nick Winnike.

Educational Leadership Conference

The Department of Catholic Schools hosted its annual Educational Leadership Conference, Nov. 17, at Deer Creek Conference Center. Mt. St. Mary's College (left) and David DeFouw, superintendent, with the principals answering questions and sharing his vision of the shared mission and ministry of principals and pastors and pastoral administrators — to create faithful scholars, citizens and saints.

Ministry for Separated or Divorced begins January 13

An eight-week session of New Beginnings, a support group for divorced and separated persons, will begin Jan. 13. Meetings will be held on Thursday evenings from 7–8:30 p.m. at Divine Mercy Parish, Covington.

In this faith-based group, participants will find a new understanding of themselves and their relationships and gain the courage to discover a new life. This group is sponsored by the Diocese of Covington and hosted by the Office of Catechesis and Evangelization.

Registration is required at www.covdio.org/new-beginnings-2. For more information, call Isaac A. Isaak at (859) 392-1500 ext. 1529.
At its May 2021 virtual meeting, the Diocese of Covington Pro-Life Office introduced the WWMIN program to parish pro-life coordinators. At that time, the parish pro-life coordinators were asked to take a year to evaluate parish programs and other community resources already available to local women experiencing a crisis pregnancy. The Pro-Life Office will be meeting with parish pro-life coordinators again to explore ways parishes can better assist moms through the WWMIN initiative.

Bishop's Schedule

Nov. 28
Mass, Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish, Burlington, 10:45 a.m.

Dec. 1
Mass, Bishop Brossart High School, Alexandria, 9:45 a.m.

Dec. 2
St. Joseph Pre-K, Camp Springs, 10 a.m.

Dec. 3
Diocesan Curia staff luncheon, 11:30 a.m.

Toward a more synodal Church

The Diocese of Covington’s curia met on Nov. 18 to discuss the synodal process the Catholic Church is currently entering into, and what the Diocese of Covington plans to do to participate. The meeting began with a presentation given by David Cooley, co-director of the office of Catechesis and Evangelization, and Jamie Schroeder, chancellor, which was then followed by small-group discussions. The importance of praying together and listening to one another was greatly emphasized during the meeting; the listening comes at the invitation of Pope Francis, who has asked the Church to accompany those at the peripheries, especially those on the margins. The synodal process is implemented in the diocese.

Currently in the Diocese of Covington, pastors are appointing two parishioners to lead Synod listening sessions at their parishes. These parishioners will attend one of two training sessions, which Mr. Cooley and Mrs. Schroeder will lead Dec. 2 and Dec. 4. Then, at the next Priests Continuing Education Day Dec. 7, Mr. Cooley and Mrs. Schroeder will present to all priests details on how the synodal process will be implemented in the diocese.

The extended process of consultation for this synod — two years — allows for an intensive process of collaboration and consultation. This process will take place at the diocesan level through the efforts of the people of God, who are called to participate, the bishop, who is responsible for the discernment process, the synodal team, which is in charge of coordination and animation, and pastors, who are responsible for enabling participation from the parish level. More information concerning the synod and how you can participate is available at www.covdio.org/synod.
Globalization and a vision of hope for the future

“The Year 1891” is the title of Chapter III of “Centesimus Annus” (“On the Hundredth Anniversary of ‘Rerum Novarum’”). Pope St. John Paul II’s post-Synodal apostolic exhortation in 1991 marked the centenary of the first papal social encyclical issued by Pope Leo XIII, passed in 1891, “Rerum Novarum” (“On the Condition of Labor”), which laid down the foundations for the modern social doctrine of the Church. The question of that hour was, “Is capitalism the vic- tim of the socialist ideology or is it the socialist ideology that is victim of capitalism?” (CA, n. 12)

The Church’s social doctrine has always maintained that justice must be applied to every phase of economic activity because this is always concerned with man and his needs. Locating resources, financing, production, consumption and all the other phases in the economic cycle inevitably have moral implications.

Thus every economic decision has a moral consequence.

― Pope Benedict XVI, “Caritas in Veritate,” n. 37

Msgr. Ronald Ketteler

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The priority of the Kingdom

The readings for the first Sunday of Advent —


It is a fact that each one of us will face the reality of our mortality. At the end of a certain number of days, we shall breathe our last. This truth — however obvious — is too much for modern man to bear. He exhausts himself in distractions and entertainments, frequently seeking to ward off this most fundamental of our facts. Our Blessed Lord warns us against this very temptation when he says: “Beware that your hearts do not become drowsy from carousing and drunkenness and the anxieties of daily life, and that day catch you by surprise like a trap.”

In our time, the drowsy heart that distracts us from living a life of spiritual discipline according to the priority of the Kingdom of Heaven is because we have imbibed the materialist error that is at the heart of contemporary consumer culture. Having drunk deeply of that ideology, our drowsy hearts easily become fearful hearts. And where fear reigns, there is no life.

Contemporary Christians are not immune from the materialist error or the consequent “materialist fear” of our mortality. Do we see among Christians in the 21st century a greater or a lesser longing for heaven? Greater or lesser works of sacrificial charity? Greater or lesser concern for the poor? Greater or lesser desires for more, better stuff? Greater or lesser fidelity to our baptismal and vocational commitments?

While I certainly cannot answer these questions for everyone, I think evidence suggests that we are dealing — in general — with a very slack, “bourgeois” form of Christianity as the theologian Larry Chapp has described it.

The Russian Orthodox theologian and philosopher, Nicholas Berdyaev, does an excellent job of analyzing the essence of bourgeois Christianity when he writes: “What does the word bourgeois actually mean? … The word designates a spiritual state, a direction of the soul, a peculiarity of human existence in history and vocational commitments.

One of the most damaging characteristics of “bourgeois Christianity” is that it just assumes that the “good life” is the same thing as a holy life. Before the Lord could manifest himself in glory and majesty he first had to suffer every form of rejection: the world’s preferences for power, spectacle and wealth. He then had to endure every suffering of humiliation, degradation and poverty. This is the mystery of Golgotha that gains for us the prize of eternal redemption.

Our regular reception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation prepares us for the moment of our particular judgment, when we shall come before the Lord to give an account of ourselves when we breathe our last. A humble, sincere and regular penitent knows “all the paths of the Lord are kindness and constancy to those who keep His covenant and decrees.” It’s through the Sacrament of Reconciliation that we are made “blameless in holiness before God our Father.” A sincere, regular penitent does not fear the coming of the Lord either in his particular judgment on us or in his second coming, because he regularly experiences the Lord as “good and gracious.”

On being thankful for America at Thanksgiving

This Thanksgiving, no one living in the United States should be anything but profoundly grateful for the privilege of living in this country. No one.

That’s not necessarily a popular sentiment today. The country is amidst one of its periodic spasms of self-delusion, amplified by political hucksters and charlatans of right and left (nothing new) and by social media demagogy (something new and ominous).

And no doubt there’s a lot to ponder, and repent of, in the American past and present. But that’s true of every human society and will be until the end of time.

What is worth giving thanks for in America — what demands our gratitude and our prayers of thanksgiving — is that the United States has built in resources of renewal, as it has shown time and time again.

This Thanksgiving, think of the American story as an epic of ever-expanding inclusion: a country of flawed human beings that nonetheless navigates the vicissitudes of generation after generation, to give real effect to its birth certificate’s assertion that all human beings are created equal.

Concretizing that affirmation has never been easy. Irish and German immigrants had to fight for inclusion, as, later, did the Italians, Jews, and Slavs. To vindicate human equality against the present practice of chattel slavery, Americans fought a civil war that cost three quarters of a million lives. Women were enfranchised by the 19th Amendment, the civil rights acts of 1964 and 1965 were passed, and the physical and handicapped afforded easier access to public spaces by federal law.

Each of our national achievements in widening the circle of human care and concern required struggle. But inclusion won, time and again. And the victories helped create a society that few want to leave (including those who constantly decry it) but millions want to join.

Sadly, there was one moment of drastic inversion in this historical process of expanding the boundaries of the American community of the commonly protected. That was the Supreme Court’s infamous 1973 decision, Roe v. Wade, which summarily declared an entire class of human beings, the unborn, outside the circle of common care and concern. So we should pray, at Thanksgiving 2021, that the Supreme Court will consign Roe v. Wade to the dustbin of history next year when it decides Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization. Then, as over the past half-century since Roe, it will be our obligation to provide those most vulnerable women in crisis pregnancies and their unborn children. By doing so, we will demonstrate yet again that those who take seriously the right to life celebrated in the Declaration of Independence believe that All Lives Matter — and act on that belief, thereby expanding the circle of mutual protection in America.

There is nothing more American than musical theater, and its 20th century masters, Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II, are worth revisiting at any time — but perhaps especially at Thanksgiving 2021. For as Peter Foust gets points out in the December First Things, songs from the Rodgers and Hammerstein canon provide a nice and subversive riposte to the America haters among us today.

Written in the late 1940s, “You’ve Got To Be Carefully Taught,” from South Pacific, is a well-crafted answer to the now ubiquitous claims that racial prejudice is built into the human condition, and especially the American experience. No, Lieutenant Cable sings, prejudice is a behavior we learn, as the easy, innocent friendships among every human society and race and ethnicity come.

Are Americans a rootless people, so soiled in the dissipating juices of change and endless movement that we belong nowhere? That’s not what they sing in Oklahoma!, when the chorus exults, “We know where we belong to the land/And the land we belong to is grand.”

As Tonguette points out in the December First Things, songs from the Rodgers and Hammerstein canon provide a nice and ominous answer.

“When you walk through a storm/Hold your head up high/And don’t be afraid of the dark.” At the end of a storm, there is a rainbow./And don’t be afraid of the dark./Walk on through the wind/Walk on through the rain/Through your dreams be tossed and blown./Walk on/walk on/With hope in your heart: And you’ll never walk alone./You’ll never walk alone.

At Thanksgiving 2021, America should rediscover hope in its heart. Doing so is not fantasy nor is it something unnatural to us as a people. A hopeful heart is a truly American heart. Because as the Declaration of Independence affirms, we never walk alone, but in the care of the God who gave us life and liberty at the same time.

George Weigel is a senior fellow of the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, D.C.

The perfect Thanksgiving set-up

As a result of experiencing a year (or two) of tremendous need in our community we’ve experienced tremendous growth in our operations. Our donors and loyal customers, we’ve been fortunate enough to have the means to assist in the numerous wonderful people enough. We believe, that Jesus feeding the many episodes — initially met with some doubt, but ultimately showing us that no challenge is too great when we trust in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our Executive Committee has been working together to refresh our strategic plan. We are very excited for our future direction.

One of the themes that has played out in this planning process is the commitment to keep our efforts “Vincenian,” to stay true to our roots, for why the Society was created and to why people choose to become involved in our ministry.

One of the very first principles in our Rule states: “The vocation of the Society’s members, who are called Vincents, is to follow Christ through service to those in need and so bear witness to His compassionate and liberating love. Members show their commitment through PERSON TO PERSON contact.”

Seeing and being the face of Christ in our community — this is why the Society exists. We accomplish this by building relationships and forming friendships with one another and with those we serve. This very real and personal connection — often in our neighbors’ own homes — is what makes us different from other social service agencies. We want those we encounter to know they are more than an appointment on a calendar or a case to manage. Emerging from a time of encouraged isolation, we are anxious to reengage ourselves in that principle of person-to-person contact.

As executive director, I don’t get the opportunity often enough to experience the person-to-person service. My role is focused on providing the resources the ability to fulfill our Vincentians’ mission and connect and respond to our neighbors’ needs. Some days I just want to...
Bishops agree to begin review of charter earlier than planned

Dennis Sadowski
Catholic News Service

BALTIMORE — An update on the U.S. bishops’ “Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People” will take place sooner than originally planned.

On Nov. 17, the second of two days of public sessions during their fall general assembly Nov. 15-18 in Baltimore, the bishops voted to begin the process of updating the charter in 2022 rather than in 2023. The vote was 210 bishops in favor of the plan and five bishops against it.

Bishop James V. Johnston Jr. of Kansas City-St. Joseph, Missouri, chairman of the Committee on the Protection of Children and Young People, told the bishops that events in recent years made it necessary to start the review sooner than expected.

The bishops most recently approved charter revisions in 2018 and set a seven-year period for future reviews. The review that led to those changes began in 2013 and took five years to complete because of various legal questions that arose as the process unfolded.

During the events Bishop Johnston cited for starting the new review earlier were changes in the Code of Canon Law regarding penal sanctions in the Church that take effect in December; Pope Francis’ May 2019 motu proprio “Vos Estis Lux Mundi,” revising and clarifying norms and procedures for holding bishops and religious superiors accountable for protecting abuse victims; and the Vatican report on the investigation into allegations of abuse by Theodore McCarrick, former cardinal and archbishop of Washington.

“To wait until 2023 to begin our charter review is simply too long to wait,” Bishop Johnston said.

The review is expected to begin after the bishops’ spring general assembly in June, the bishop said. He did not provide a timeline for completion of the review.

The charter was originally established by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in June 2002. It is a comprehensive set of procedures for addressing allegations of sexual abuse of minors by Catholic clergy.

It includes guidelines for reconciliation, healing, accountability and prevention of future acts. Before the 2018 revisions, the charter had been revised twice before — in 2005 and 2011.

For the new review, input will be sought from several USCCB committees and offices, the leadership of men and women religious organizations, and “other organizations with expertise,” Bishop Johnston said.

Retired Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio of Brooklyn, New York, urged that the review be expanded to include events surrounding priests accused of abuse and the lengthy investigations surrounding such claims. He said that investigation can take as long as two years, which is too long for a priest who is innocent of an allegation to be cleared by Church officials.

The Vatican’s Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith Sept. 1 determined that allegations of sexual abuse of a minor made against Bishop DiMarzio were found “not to have the semblance of truth.” The allegations surfaced in November 2019 and took 10 months to be resolved.

Auxiliary Bishop Mark W. O’Connell of Boston suggested the review process also explore the possibility that the charter be expanded to include vulnerable adults.

Commutation statement aims to retrieve and revive understanding

Carol Zimmermann
Catholic News Service

BALTIMORE — The U.S. bishops approved their statement on the Eucharist with 222 “yes” votes Nov. 17, the second of two days of public sessions during their Nov. 15-18 fall general assembly.

Their OK came a day after their discussion of the document — a discussion that took a drastically different tone than their previous debate about what the document could potentially contain during their virtual assembly five months ago.

At that June gathering, a major focus highlighted whether it would address denying Communion to Catholic politicians who support abortion.

Some bishops said a strong rebuke of President Joe Biden, the nation’s second Catholic president, should be included in it because of Biden’s recent actions protecting and expanding abortion access, while others warned that this would portray the bishops as a partisan force during a time of bitter political divisions across the country.

The document the bishops discussed and approved does not specifically call out Catholic political leaders, but it does more generally point out the seriousness of the sacrament.

The discussion, just prior to the vote, focused on some of the statement’s wording. Specific amendments were approved and additional comments about wording changes, that were raised on the floor, did not.

One of the bishops, for example, wanted to add the word “eternal” after a list of vulnerable people the Church was responsible for in order to show its broad inclusion, but the bishops, who had already added to the list to include the unborn, chose not to add the additional descriptor.

As points of discussion, Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann of Kansas City-Kansas, outgoing chairman of the U.S. bishops’ pro-life committee, stressed the prelates included in it because of Biden’s recent actions protecting and expanding abortion access, while others warned that this would portray the bishops as a partisan force during a time of bitter political divisions across the country.

And Bishop Donald E. DeGrood of Sioux Falls, South Dakota, noted that there is a healthy tension for the bishops, to call out what isn’t right but to do so in love and to be united as they find ways to apply this new document in their dioceses.

The document on the Eucharist states: “One should not

Call for nominations

Nominate a friend, classmate, or coworker for the 2022 Thomas More University Alumni Awards. The Alumni Awards are established to honor outstanding alumni who are now community leaders, using or have used their talents and expertise to make a significant impact (past or present) on the University and the Northern Kentucky/Cincinnati region. Award categories include: Professional Achievement, Citizenship, Service, Lasting Influence, and in celebration of the Centennial year, we will recognize and honor a special affinity group, AND we have added an Emerging Leader Award.


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celebrate Mass or receive holy Communion in the state of mortal sin without having sought the sacrament of reconciliation and received absolution."

It also says that if a Catholic in his or her personal life has "knowingly and obstinately" rejected the doctrines of the Church or its teaching on moral issues, that person should refrain from receiving Communion because it is "likely to cause scandal for others."

Back in June, at the end of the bishops' discussion of the document, Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Indiana, chairman of the bishops' doctrine committee, said the draft would not focus on denying Communion to people but would emphasize the importance of the sacrament. And in his Nov. 16 presentation of the Sirjpa statement titled "The Mystery of the Eucharist in the Life of the Church," Bishop Rhoades said it "addresses the fundamental doctrine about the Eucharist that the Church needs to retrieve and revive."

In his short presentation to U.S. bishops, followed by just a handful of comments from the floor, the bishop said the document is addressed to all Catholics in the United States and "endeavors to explain the centrality of the Eucharist in the life of the Church."

He also said it is intended to be a theological contribution to the bishops' strategic plan and to the bishops' planned eucharistic revival "by providing a doctrinal foundation to grasp it."

Just after the bishops voted to approve the document, which had eight dissents and three abstentions, a few bishops spoke with Catholic News Service about the process from the virtual June meeting — where the proposal to plan for the eucharistic revival "by providing a doctrinal foundation to grasp it" was "moving in that direction." He also said there was a desire among the bishops for unity and that their executive session before the public session gave them the chance to discuss and work things out among themselves.

"Some of us are simply relieved that we’re not getting into the debate about who can receive Communion," he added.

Archbishop Lori said many media outlets portrayed the document as one that would "deny holy Communion to politicians who oppose the Church’s teaching on abortion."

"Certainly, we are very cognizant of that challenge," he said, "but at the same time, this had an eminently pastoral intent and it deals with the question of willingness to receive holy Communion in a way that applies to all of us.

"It’s something all of us ought to be thinking about, myself very much included," he added.

Discussion from the floor included a request from Bishop Peter Baldacchino of Las Cruces, New Mexico, that the document include more about the paschal mystery or the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Bishop Richard F. Stika of Nashville, Tennessee, wondered how the document would be understood by college students, high schoolers or children, noting that “a lot of it’s over their heads” and they would have to have some kind of theological foundation to grasp it.

"We have these beautiful, beautiful documents that sometimes are just ignored," he said, suggesting that it should be made "more readable and understandable."

In response, Bishop Rhoades said the document "as it stands is really meant for adults," but he could see it being developed in high schools with a teacher who would explain it better. He also said it could be developed by publishers as a resource for catechists for grade school students.

Bishop Timothy L. Doherty of Lafayette, Indiana, said the work put into "laboring over texts should not discourage us," pointing out that often language falls short but that the Church has many other means at its disposal to express the faith such as music, dance, poetry and visuals.

The document explains the importance of Communion, often calling it a gift, and uses references from Scripture, prayers of the Church and Second Vatican Council documents to back this up. It also explains, citing words of the saints, how Communion is not just a symbol but the real presence of Christ.

This transformation of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, the document says, is "one of the central mysteries of the Catholic faith" which is a "doorway through which we, like the saints and mystics before us, may enter into a deeper perception" of God’s presence.

It notes, almost halfway through, that the Vatican II document "Lumen Gentium" (The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church) describes the Eucharist as "the source and summit of the Christian life." It also says that as Catholics understand what the Eucharist means, they should more fully participate in Mass and also reach out to serve those in need, citing the Catechism of the Catholic Church, which says: "The Eucharist commits us to the poor."

It concludes with examples of saints who were transformed by their reception of the Eucharist and their deep understanding of what it means.

This heavily footnoted statement also has a pastoral message urging those who have left the Church to come back. It ties this return back to the Eucharist quoting St. Teresa of Kolkata, who said: "Once you understand the Eucharist, you can never leave the Church. Not because the Church won’t let you but because your heart won’t let you."
Be Witnesses

“Wake up the world! Be witnesses of a different way of doing things, of acting, of living!”
— Pope Francis

Karen Kuhlman
Messenger Correspondent

We celebrate life’s special moments with great fanfare, gathering with friends and family to honor those milestones. Celebrations that highlight the honorees’ accomplishments renew our appreciation for their contributions to our lives. Recently, Bishop John Iffert celebrated Mass at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption in honor of the jubilees of eight women religious who have devoted their lives to serving God through service to his people.

Bishop Iffert’s homily at the Nov. 6 celebration addressed the essence of the jubilarians’ vocations: the giving of their lives to God, making that relationship “the center and the core” of their lives. Those gathered to witness the celebration could not help but reflect on the gift that the vocations of the women religious have been to the people of the Diocese of Covington.

In ways big and small, the sisters have helped to shape not only our lives but the lives of just about everyone in the Diocese of Covington since 1823. In that year, young women began to arrive here from their European homelands, bravely facing the perils of an ocean voyage to follow their religious vocations to America. The sisters journeyed here to assist the sick and the poor and provide religious education to the young. They began their missionary work without fanfare in a country not yet 50 years old. Though some of the sisters perished due to illness, others persevered through epidemics, food shortages and the Civil War. They established ministries that served as convent and hospital, convent and school, or convent and orphanage.

Since that time, generations of Catholic children have received their educations at schools founded by the sisters: Notre Dame Academy, founded by the Sisters of Notre Dame; Our Lady of Providence Academy and Mount St. Martin Academy, founded by the Congregation of Divine Providence; Villa Madonna Academy and Thomas More College, founded by the Benedictine Sisters of St. Walburg Monastery; LaSalle Academy, founded by Sisters of Nazareth; St. Joseph Academy, founded by the Sisters of St. Joseph the Worker; the Diocesan Catholic Children’s Home shepherded by the Benedictine Sisters of St. Walburg Monastery and the Sisters of Notre Dame.

These contributions of the Women Religious to the Diocese of Covington are known and appreciated by many. Still, there are other contributions known only to ourselves: the kind smile given to a frightened first grader on the first day of school, the second chance to hand in homework that you “forgot,” the words of encouragement to a child experiencing family difficulties; the blind eye turned to an altar server’s innocent mistake, the extra attention to a child unable to fit in with classmates.

You may have experienced a one-of-a-kind contribution yourself, and it is not too late to show your appreciation to that sister with a little thank-you note. And, if that sister is deceased, you can still send a message of thanks to her order — along with a nice donation. After all, this is the time of year for the annual Retirement Fund for Religious Collection.

Jubilarians celebrating in 2021

- Sister Colleen Winston, O.S.B., 60-year jubilarian
- Sister Margaret Verhoff, C.D.P., 60-year jubilarian
- Sister Jean Menke, C.D.P., 60-year jubilarian
- Sister Barbara Patrick, C.D.P., 60-year jubilarian
- Sister Judith Coffman, C.D.P., 60-year jubilarian
- Sister Lynette Shelton, S.N.D., 60-year jubilarian
- Sister Janet Stamm, S.N.D., 60-year jubilarian
- Sister Jean Marie Hoffman, S.N.D., 50-year jubilarian

For more information about consecrated life in the Diocese of Covington, contact Sister Fran Moore at (859) 392-1500.
Bishops approve plans for three-year National Eucharistic Revival

Carol Zimmermann
Catholic News Service

BALTIMORE — The U.S. bishops focus on the significance of the Eucharist in the life of the Church isn’t just about on the statement they approved at their fall meeting.

It also is about something bigger: a three-year eucharistic revival that will culminate with the National Eucharistic Congress 2024 in Indianapolis.

The bishops approved a motion Nov. 17 during their general assembly in Baltimore to host this congress with 201 votes in favor, 17 against and five abstentions.

Auxiliary Bishop Andrew H. Cozzens of St. Paul and Minneapolis, who was recently named bishop of Crookston, Minnesota, gave the bishops details about this planned revival just before they voted on it.

The bishop, who is chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis, said the revival could be a time of healing for the entire Church as well as a movement of evangelization and a reawakening of understanding of the sacrament of the Eucharist for Catholics across the country.

The revival will officially start on the feast of Corpus Christi June 16, 2022, with a diocesan focus that will include eucharistic processions and other events of adoration and prayer around the country.

Eucharistic Congress may end up being something the Church events can be transformative and said the National Eucharistic Congress may end up being something the Catholic Church revisits 10 years from now.

Blessed Carlo Acutis will be the patron for the first year of the revival. The Italian teen, who was beatified in October 2020, died of leukemia in 2006 at age 15. He was a programmer who used social media to unite many people and spread Christian values.

In his apostolic letter proclaiming the youth “blessed,” Pope Francis said he “cultivated a friendship with our Lord Jesus, placing the Eucharist and the witness of charity at the center of his life.”

This planned revival is seen as the first step in bringing Catholics back to the Church and bringing those in the Church to a deeper sense of devotion and a stronger faith.

Part of the impetus prompting this effort was a Pew study in the fall of 2019 that showed just 30% of Catholics understand the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

Bishop Cozzens noted the price tag for the National Eucharistic Congress — $28 million — is expensive, but said it is worth it and can be doable with fundraising.

He said many apostolates and ministries are donating time and resources to help make the eucharistic revival a reality.

Some bishops questioned the cost of the congress that wraps up this venture, but others spoke about the potential this will have to bring Catholics back to the Church and bring those in the Church to a deeper sense of devotion and a stronger faith.

Bishop Cozzens pointed out that such large-scale church events can be transformative and said the National Eucharistic Congress may end up being something the Catholic Church revisits 10 years from now.

“While most of our liturgical books follow the arrangement of the Latin edition very closely, the RCIA is an exception; the edition used in this country since the 1980s rearranges the material substantially to make it more ‘user-friendly,’” Archbishop Blair said in an introductory message to the bishops.

“Our current book also supplements the material significantly, mostly for the sake of bringing already-baptized people into the Church,” he added, noting the Latin edition focuses almost entirely on the non-baptized.

In 2023, the emphasis will be on parishes and resources aimed at increasing Catholics’ understanding of what the Eucharist really means.

Under a separate action, they also did the same with a revised edition in Spanish.

Both actions took place Nov. 17, the second day of two days of public sessions during their Nov. 15-18 fall general meeting in Baltimore.

The English version passed 215-0 with two abstentions.

The Spanish version passed 218-3 with one abstention.

Bishops give approval for new Order of Christian Initiation of Adults

Mark Pattison
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — The U.S. bishops approved a revised English edition of the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults.

Under a separate action, they also did the same with a revised edition in Spanish.

Both actions took place Nov. 17, the second day of two days of public sessions during their Nov. 15-18 fall general meeting in Baltimore.

The English version passed 215-0 with two abstentions.

The Spanish version passed 218-3 with one abstention.

The U.S. Latin-rite bishops’ approval; they still require a subsequent “confirmatio” and “recognitio” by the Vatican Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments.

More commonly known over the past two generations as the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, or RCIA, the name is being changed to Order of Christian Initiation of Adults, or OCIA.

However, for those adults joining the Church at the Easter Vigil, there continue to be several rites they go through to mark their emergence as full members of the Catholic Church. (The Spanish edition will retain its acronym of RICA, for Ritual de la Iniciacion Cristiana de Adultos.)

Archbishop Leonard P. Blair of Hartford, Connecticut, chairman of the bishops’ Committee on Divine Worship, reminded the U.S. bishops they had authorized in 2019 a new translation of the texts used in the RCIA/OCIA by the International Commission on English in the Liturgy.

The English version also reflects consent from the International Commission for English in the Liturgy for the new liturgical translation materials for the RCIA/OCIA.

Under the Latin-rite liturgical books, there continue to be several rites for adults preparing for full membership in the Catholic Church.

The revised texts of the new-approved revisions run more than 250 pages in each language.

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(Continued on page 21)
Newsworthly
Happy birthday to: Father Raymond Enszweiler, faculty, Thomas More University. Dec. 1; Father Damian Hills, pastor, Blessed Sacrament Parish, Ft. Mitchell, Dec. 1; Deacon Tony Escamilla, Cristo Rey Parish, Florence, Dec. 1; Father Paul Berscheid, retired, Dec. 2; Deacon Peter Freeman, St. Philip Parish, Melbourne, Dec. 6; Father Conor Kunath, vocations promoter, Dec 10; Father Michael Barth, pastor, St. Joseph Parish, Warsaw, Dec. 11; Deacon Gregory Meier, Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish, Burlington, Dec. 12; Father Robert Henderson, retired, Dec. 19; and Deacon Joseph Wiedeman, Holy Spirit Parish, Newport, Dec. 25.

Raymond G. Hebert, Ph.D., now in his 47th year at Thomas More University, was recognized with The Pioneer Award after a review of nominations by The Kenton County Ethics Commission. This award is bestowed on residents of Kenton County who provided outstanding service to the community and exemplify the highest standards of personal integrity, all hallmarks to the mission of Thomas More University. Dr. Hebert is a current professor of history, executive director of the William T. Robertson III Institute for Religious Liberty, immediate past director of the Gemini Dual Credit Program and Dean of the College Emeritus at the University.

The prayer intention for December, as recommended by Pope Francis, is for catechists, summed to announce the Word of God, may they be its witnesses with courage and creativity and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

St. Henry School, Elsmere, Bingo has moved to Monday nights in the school cafeteria starting at 5 p.m.; games begin at 6:45 p.m. Contact (859) 760-3325.

Newport Central Catholic is pleased to offer a two-hour course to help prepare for the high school placement test. The prep course is offered Dec. 2 or 5, 4:30–6:30 p.m. This course is available to all 8th grade students in the Diocese of Covington, regardless of where they plan to take the exam on December 11. Cost $20. Pre-register: https://forms.gle/d6WKSHk6fGlw9Z9r9.

The diocesan Young Adult Ministry is hosting a screening of the film “Her Name was Jo,” where they plan to take the exam on December 11. Cost $20. Pre-register: https://forms.gle/10

The Catholic Order of Foresters Court 2514 has been busy. They gathered 50 people together to make fleece blankets for the homeless. In all, there were 54 blankets made in one night.

Where in the world was Father Wumala?
Father Matthias Wumala visited the fourth graders at Mary, Queen of Heaven School, Erlanger, to talk to them about his life in Uganda, share pictures of the different landscapes in his country, and to explain the process of becoming a US citizen.

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I would rather have bodily health than any gold, and contentment of spirit than pearls. No riches are greater than a healthy body; and no happiness than a joyful heart. (Sirach 30:15–16)
Pro-tips on joyfully aging

Julie Price
Contributor

How do you view aging? The beauty industry, Hollywood, and others urge us to address fine lines, wrinkles and appear physically younger than our biological age. Presenting an image that reflects how a person feels is important, however, aging well is about living your best life.

One of the benefits of experiencing a pandemic is the realization that aging is a privilege. Do we approach every other milestone in our lives optimistically, but cringe at the thought of being considered old? How does one approach aging holistically with grace, gratitude and, dare I say it, with joy?

While making decisions regarding physical and emotional health help support an older adult’s ability to be independent, what are some of the more subtle intrinsic characteristics that promote a joyful journey in growing older? In the Psalms we read that the righteous will still bear fruit, in their old age, and they will remain fresh and green. How we approach life at whatever age we are now, continues to produce results in our future.

Of the current residents living at Rosedale Green — a Northern Kentucky nonprofit nursing facility — 37 percent are over the age of 90. I asked a few of those over 90 year old’s what they like about being older.

Aging as your children are aging gives you a special perspective. A woman celebrating her 93rd birthday shared that her second son, now age 72, was her closest child. She grinned as she shared about how having six sons increased her prayer life and experienced great joy in watching her children, and others she had invested time in, now have their own grandchildren.

A few mentioned how nice it was to be in a community where there were other people their age. The sense of not being alone in aging was very important for them to convey.

“I have found my reason for being here, after meeting someone that needs my help,” said a newer resident recently.

A gentleman who currently resides at Rosedale with his wife of 66 years offered his opinion that there is nothing greater in life than seeing a new baby. The couple enjoys seeing photos of each new family member while visiting their daughter.

In summing up, here a few of the sentiments shared: enjoying the ability to be around to see the good parts in the stories of those you love, appreciating that others are on the same journey as you, and supporting those coming behind you.

Rosedale Green and sister community Emerald Trace on Turkeyfoot Road are nonprofit skilled nursing/rehabilitation and long-term care facilities serving Northern Kentucky. And for over 50 years they have been happy to help with any senior care questions.

Julie Price is community relations director for Rosedale Green.

Catholic nuns model the art of aging well

Nancy L. Roberts
Catholic News Service


If your intuition suggests that nuns tend to live to a ripe old age, you are not mistaken. There is something about religious commitment that fosters physical, mental and spiritual well-being.

In this fascinating, beautifully written book, Anna I. Corwin illuminates the linguistic, cultural and religious practices that help a Midwestern convent of the Franciscan Sisters of the Sacred Heart age gracefully.

One key is that the nuns don’t think of aging as a problem. Not for them are euphemisms such as “senior citizen” or “older adult”; they are happy to be called “elderly.”

(Continued on page 13)
New form of wellness — drum fit classes

Pam Asher, wellness director, is delighted with the results of the Drum Fit classes she has initiated at Colonial Heights and Gardens. Colonial Heights and Gardens is a senior community in Florence, Ky. They bring the lifestyle seniors deserve with the value families expect. The community consists of Colonial Heights — Independent Living, and Colonial Gardens, Licensed Personal Care and Memory Care.

The main focus of Drum Fit is physical and mental exercise connecting the mind to the body through different drumming patterns and beats. This activity has been the most fun sensors can have while increasing their overall well-being. Seniors grab drumsticks, and drum away to amazing music all while incorporating brain fitness activities that are fun.

It is an engaging activity for the body and spirit, which is appropriate for any senior.

Ms. Asher is always creative in bringing new wellness classes to the community. At first, the residents seemed a little skeptical and hesitant to try Drum Fit. However, because Ms. Asher is very encouraging and positive, and after they watched a class, the participation level doubled.

Music and movement is accompanied by lots of laughter. Ms. Asher choreographs routines to the residents’ ability levels. She creates holiday themes when appropriate and encourages as many residents as possible to participate at their level.

Many varieties of music are used — standards, golden oldies, country, classic rock and roll, hymns and R & B. She plays it all and the residents love it. If it has a beat she uses it to keep the residents moving. She has hosted classes inside and outside. She shows modifications and her motto is, “You do you! You know what you’re feeling, I don’t, but I will challenge you.”

Drum Fit has been therapeutic for all involved and each class includes lots of laughter and comradery. Drum Fit is a hit at Colonial Heights and Gardens.

Colonial Heights and Gardens contributed this article.

(Continued from page 12)
St. Charles expands services for seniors to neighboring communities

St. Charles has been a leader in providing services for Northern Kentucky’s seniors and their families for over 60 years, and has recently expanded beyond its Farrell Drive campus with the establishment of a Senior Resource Center in Latonia. Several years ago, St. Charles received a donation to be used for outreach to seniors in the Northern Kentucky communities. With these funds St. Charles was able to create the HANDI program (Helping Adults in Need Develop Independence), as well as offer free senior resource consultation services.

Through this outreach, St. Charles realized a tremendous need in the community, and established an actual center for providing the needed services. This center is open Monday through Friday and is located at 3705 Winston Avenue, Latonia. The center’s services are free of charge and if you or your loved one have questions about these services, call (859) 697-1911.

Since its October 2021 opening, the Resource Center’s social workers have seen an influx of persons seeking help in navigating the maze of today’s aging services. It is the center’s goal to connect seniors with a variety of resources, become true partners in ministry with other area service providers and through compassionate listening, education and collaboration continue to live Jesus’ Gospel call.

This article was submitted by St. Charles Community, Ft. Wright.

Bishop Paprocki explores link between physical and spiritual fitness

Jonah McKeown
Catholic News Agency

Bishop Thomas Paprocki of Springfield, Illinois doesn’t generally introduce himself as a runner. His first love is hockey, which, at nearly 70 years old, he still plays regularly. He even coaches the goalkeepers at a local Catholic high school.

“I’m still playing hockey, and I attribute that to my running,” Paprocki told CNA.

Paprocki wasn’t a born runner. In fact, the first time he tried to “go on a run,” he kind of hated it. But he pressed on, and the reason was simple. Three of his grandparents died in their 50s from heart disease, and Paprocki realized a similar fate may be waiting for him if he didn’t

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HEALTH AND WELLNESS

November 26, 2021

‘Civilize it’ — lessons in listening to combat truth decay and build a healthier society

Joe Towalski
Catholic News Service

In September, the U.S. bishops launched a new initiative to address the bitter polarization that continues to grip our society and make it difficult to have meaningful conversa-
tions on important issues facing our communities and nation. Called “Civilize It: A Better Kind of Politics,” the effort is similar to one the bishops began at the start of the 2019-2020 election season.

The current nonpartisan campaign encourages Catholics and others of good will to follow the example of the Good Samaritan, who challenges us to reach out beyond our comfort zones and “become neighbors to all,” as Pope Francis wrote in his encyclical “Fratelli Tutti, on

(Continued from page 10)

improve his health.

The key is understanding the cardiovascular benefits of aerobic training, running, biking or swimming, and so I thought, ‘If I want to live past 55 I better take up something,’ so I took up running,” he said.

All told, since that day, Bishop Paprocki has run 24 marathons and counting. He’s also raised over half a million dollars for charity in the process.

Paprocki recently wrote a book called “Running for a higher purpose: 8 Steps to Spiritual and Physical Fitness,” (Ave Maria Press) which released March 26.

In it, he offers expert advice on running from a practical standpoint, while interweaving lessons on how to grow in one’s spiritual life.

“One of the main premises of the book is the connection between body and soul. Unlike the ancient Greek philosophers who kind of saw the body as something that was discarded at death and you wouldn’t need it anymore...We believe in the resurrection of the body, that our bodies will be re-born and we have somebody check us out. That’s where I think spiritual directors can also be helpful, because it’s a little more difficult to quantify that,” Paprocki said.

“You once identify where you need to improve, you have to figure out what you are going to do about that,” he said.

An honest assessment of one’s spiritual health is not dissimilar, he said. A spiritual director can help with this.

“It is a little more difficult to assess your spiritual fitness than it is your physical fitness. Your physical fitness, that, but even for that, we go to a doctor. We go for a physical and we have somebody check us out. That’s where I think spiritual directors can also be helpful, because it’s a little more difficult to quantify that,” Paprocki said.

“How holy am I? Well, only God knows, in a sense, how we’re growing in our holiness, but your spiritual director can help guide you in terms of making progress.”

Like with physical fitness, different people are going to be at different places in their spiritual life, and will measure their success differently.

“If you’re not praying regularly, just start out with a morning offering or say grace before your meals. If you’re not used to saying the Rosary just start with a decade... 10 Hail Marys — and work your way up to saying a full Rosary,” he suggested.

Spiritual health, like physical health, takes repeated effort and a daily commitment, Paprocki said.

“You can’t go to Mass once and say, ‘Okay, I’m good. I went to Mass.’ We have to go to Mass every week, every Sunday. We have to go to Confession, too... we have to do that frequently,” he noted.

You have measurements, like how much you weigh, what’s your blood pressure, what’s your cholesterol, things like

(Continued on page 14)
Vatican launches prayer campaign for Laudato Si’ goals for a healthy planet

Carol Glatz
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Groups and individuals who have accepted Pope Francis’ invitation to step up their commitment to caring for creation are encouraged to prepare for their journey with a new prayer campaign.

Special prayers have been developed for each day of the week for different communities, like parishes, dioceses, religious orders, families, hospitals, schools, businesses and others, that have joined the Laudato Si’ Action Platform.

The 60-day prayer campaign begins Oct. 4 — the feast of St. Francis, and concludes Nov. 14 — the World Day of Prayer for the Poor. The Vatican Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development announced the campaign Oct. 1.

The Laudato Si’ Action Platform is “a seven-year journey that will see our communities committed in different ways to becoming totally sustainable, in the spirit of integral ecology,” the pope said in a video message launching the platform May 25.

“We need a new ecological approach that can transform our way of dwelling in the world, our lifestyles, our relationship with the resources of the earth and, in general, our way of looking at humanity and of living life,” he said.

The platform was set up to help people with that process of conversion that leads to concrete action in a coordinated global effort. It is meant for people, particularly communities, that want to increase their commitment to bringing the encyclical “Laudato Si’” to life by promising a set of actions over a period of seven years.

The prayers are based on the Laudato Si’ goals, which are: responding to the cry of the Earth and environmental degradation; responding to the cry of the poor and vulnerable; creating an ecological-sustainable economy; adopting simple lifestyles; supporting ecological spirituality; and building community awareness, participation and action.

“The prayer campaign supports the seven sectors joining the Laudato Si’ Action Platform with a dedicated day of prayer for each, connecting each sector with a Laudato Si’ goal,” the dicastery said in a media release.

Integral ecology requires every member of the wider church to contribute their skills and action to work together on common goals, which is why the platform specifically invites certain sectors: families; parishes and dioceses; schools and universities; hospitals and health care centers; workers, businesses and others, that have joined the Laudato Si’ Action Platform.

The prayers can be found at https://laudatosi.va and an action platform at laudatosi-actionplatform.org/resources.

The next phase in the Laudato Si’ Action Platform is set to kick off Nov. 14, when the dicastery plans to publish 70 planning guides and related materials. Catholics will then be invited “to make a firm commitment to creating their own Laudato Si’ plans,” the dicastery said.

Current resources include a new website in nine languages at laudatosisa.org and an action platform at laudatosiaplatform.org as part of a “road map” of action for the next decade. The prayers can be found at https://laudatosiaplatform.org/resources.
Not me: The moral dilemma of seeking vaccine exemptions

Carol Glatt
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Getting vaccinated is “an act of love,” Pope Francis said in his latest urgent appeal, after more than a year of insisting COVID-19 vaccines be equitably available worldwide for everyone to get inoculated.

Nonetheless, some Catholics have been wondering if they should seek a religious exemption from an immunization requirement with vaccines tested or produced with cell lines originally derived from aborted fetuses more than 50 years ago.

Individuals are free to make a decision on getting the vaccine. Some, like the Archbishop of New York, have said for Catholics, refusing the vaccine would be based on a personal belief, not Catholic teaching, as the Vatican and pope have made it clear some vaccines for COVID-19 are permissible and it’s a moral duty to get vaccinated.

Because there has been “overwhelming consensus within the Catholic magisterium” for years on the permissibility of using such vaccines in the absence of alternatives, “to counsel people that it is legitimate to refuse the vaccines on religious grounds—and, in fact, to facilitate it—is to actively assist people in mal-forming their consciences,” said M. Therese Lysaught, a corresponding member of the Pontifical Academy for Life.

“In fact, in actively assisting people to put the lives of others at risk, such advocates assist them in being indifferent to and even assisting them in doing evil. This sins against charity. This is the Catholic definition of sin,” said the professor at the Neiswanger Institute for Bioethics and Healthcare Leadership of the Stritch School of Medicine at Loyola University in Chicago.

She and other experts in bioethics or moral theology responded by email Aug. 19 to a series of questions by Catholic News Service.

Vaccinations, like all medical interventions, are voluntary—a right that is upheld by the Church and democratic societies.

However, Lysaught said vaccinations are also “morally obligatory” when they are seen as an “ordinary means” of protecting human life.

According to the Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services, “An ordinary or proportionate means is one that offers a reasonable hope of benefit and does not entail an excessive burden or impose excessive expense on the family or community,” she said, saying that COVID-19 vaccines meet those requirements.

Lysaught said “Vaccines are clearly ordinary means,” and ordinary means are morally obligatory — assuming, there are no associated medical or health risks for that individual. Catholic tradition teaches that “voluntarily protecting our own life and health and the life and health of others is an overriding theological and moral commitment,” she said.

Many organizations and places of work or study have “pro-life exceptions” for vaccine refusal and hesitation “are in many cases the same as those put forward regardless of religious grounds,” that is, they have little to do with a religious teaching.

Stefano Semplici, another corresponding member of the Pontifical Academy for Life, said many of the reasons for vaccine refusal and hesitance “are in many cases the same as those put forward regardless of religious grounds,” that is, they have little to do with a religious teaching.

Reasons more often reflect concerns about a vaccine’s risks, which may be “magnified by the circulation of often-misleading news and information; an underestimation of those (risks) related to the disease, especially among young people; the idea of self-determination as inviolable when considering a health treatment; and the difficulty of communication between the scientific community and public opinion,” said Semplici, a professor of social ethics and bioethics at Rome’s Tor Vergata University.

This almost sacred sense of “self-determination” can be seen in the recent “My Body, My Choice” signs, protesting against mask mandates and vaccination requirements.

Catholic teaching, however, are “a fundamental question of public health,” Semplici said, and limits on personal freedom have to be considered when they affect the welfare of others.

A democratic government allows exemptions to particular mandates out of respect for people’s sincerely held beliefs and personal limitations or health risks.

So it is important people not be misled and become “sincerely convinced that the vaccines are somehow ‘morally tainted’ and that being vaccinated will somehow involve them in the evil of abortion,” Lysaught said.

She said if too many people refuse to be vaccinated, “more people will get sick and die, especially the poor, the ill, the incarcerated, the elderly, pregnant women,” essentially “throwaway people, who are sacrificed mainly to economics but to the theoretical moral purity of pro-life individual conscience.”

When there is no regard to how many people might be harmed or die “for their choice,” she said, “it is, ironically, a moral evil that kills.”

Bishop John Iffert rolled up his sleeve for his COVID-19 booster vaccine, Nov. 11, at St. Agnes Parish, Ft. Wright, Ludlow Community Pharmacy asked St. Agnes Parish to host a vaccination site for children ages 5–11. The FDA had authorized the emergency use of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine for children ages 5-11, Oct. 29. The authorization was based on the FDA’s thorough and transparent evaluation of the data that included input from independent advisory committee experts who overwhelmingly voted in favor of making the vaccine available to children in this age group.

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Americans’ mental health needs grow dramatically amid pandemic

CLEVELAND — The coronavirus pandemic has taken an emotional toll on Americans, with mental health professionals reporting they are getting more requests for assistance from people feeling helpless and experiencing anxiety and depression.

Inquiries are coming from people of all ages — young children, teenagers, the middle-aged and the elderly — as they struggle to cope with social isolation, financial hardship, online learning and uncertainty emerging because of the departure from the routines of pre-pandemic life.

The annual Gallup health and health care survey in November revealed that Americans’ assessment of their mental health is at its lowest point since 2001 — with 76 percent of respondents rating their mental health as good or excellent, down from 85 percent in 2019.

For many Americans, the challenges introduced by the pandemic mark the first time they have confronted mental illness. The National Alliance on Mental Illness has described the rising demand for mental health services as “the silent epidemic within the pandemic.”

“I don’t think anybody anticipated what it was going to feel like to change so drastically as we did,” said Theresa Nguyen, vice president of research and innovation at Mental Health America, which advocates for people living with mental illness.

The organization reported that nearly 2.5 million people took its mental health screening in 2020, compared with 1 million who did so in 2019.

During these uncertain times, you may have increased anxiety over the state of your health, finances and legal affairs. Pandemic or not, it is recommended that everyone, regardless of age or circumstance, have an estate plan in place.

Important questions to consider:
- Do you have a medical power of attorney and living will?
- Have you appointed guardians for your children?
- Have you funded your revocable trust?
- Have you designated the right beneficiaries for insurance policies, pensions, and IRAs?

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“Belfast” (Focus) Writer-director Kenneth Branagh uses the perspective of a 9-year-old boy living in the city of the title to examine the effects of the sectarian strife that swept across Northern Ireland at the very end of the 1960s. As the lad’s father, who journeys back and forth to England for work, resists pressure from the ruthless leader of the local Protestant extremists to join in the violence, his mother struggles to keep him and his older brother safe and morally grounded. Though emigration seems the best option for the family, it would mean separating themselves from the grandparents with whom the youth shares a close emotional bond. A sensitive exploration of the plight of decent people surrounded by malignant bigotry, this moving drama is also a celebration of romantic love, ranging from the protagonist’s shy affection for a classmate to two examples of enduring marriage. The film’s artistic merit and ethical surefootedness will probably outweigh its occasional verbal defects in the minds of parents judging its acceptability for older teens. Some stylized violence, a few instances each of profanity and mild swearing, fleeting rough and crude language, at least one crass expression. CNS: A-II, MPAA: PG-13.

“Ghostbusters: Afterlife” (Columbia) Crowd-pleasing gothic comedy finds a cash-strapped single mom and her two children moving into the remote, dilapidated farmhouse left to her by her estranged, recently deceased father, a seemingly eccentric recluse. As the kids, aided by the girl’s new science teacher and the first real friend she’s ever made, get swept up in battling the swarm of evil spirits that haunt their grandparent, an original member of the titular ensemble of anti-specter protectors, had secretly kept at bay, mom wrestles with his long-ago abandonment of her while engaging in a wry romance with the educator. Director and co-writer Jason Reitman ignores the 2016 reboot helmed by Paul Feig in an effort to return to the roots of the franchise (with the help of some crucial high-profile cameos) and the results are generally jaunty. Some of the jokes are coarse and an off-screen encounter, its moral status muddled by the weird circumstances under which it’s initiated, is treated as fodder for fun. Frivolous occult elements, implied premarital sexual activity, occasional sexual humor, about a half-dozen instances of mild oaths and crude expressions. CNS: A-III, MPAA: PG-13.

“King Richard” (Warner Bros.) A vivid performance from Will Smith as the father of future tennis greats Venus and Serena Williams energizes this intriguing fact-based sports drama. By turns determined and, as the nickname of the title suggests, domineering, with the help of his dedicated wife, he overcomes long odds to fulfill his dream of making his daughters world-renowned champions. Yet the obstacles barring his way include not only the meagerness of his economic resources, the dangers of life in the gang-ridden Los Angeles neighborhood his family inhabits and the racism, both institutional and personal, he frequently encounters the downsides of his own personality, negative traits that bring him into conflict with a duo of highly regarded coaches. Though overlong, director Reinaldo Marcus Green’s film highlights the value of persistence, humility, self-discipline and good parenting. Some vulgar dialogue aside, moreover, there’s not much to prevent the sharing of these life lessons with older adolescents. Brief gun and physical violence, at least one instance each of profanity, mild swearing and rough language, a few crude and several crass expressions. CNS: A-III, MPAA: PG-13.
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School-based Counselor is a master’s level position in our school-based counseling program, which works together serving 11 Northern Kentucky schools. If you enjoy helping teens, are positive, and enjoy working with a team, this is the career opportunity for you! We have an immediate opening in our School-Based Counseling Program serving two Northern Kentucky High Schools. This is a full or part-time position during the academic year and could be extended over the summer.

Parish Kitchen Manager – Parish Kitchen in the heart of Covington, KY. is open year-round serving a wholesome lunch to anyone who is hungry. The ideal candidate would have experience or aptitude for both food services and social services. Ministry. The Parish Kitchen Manager oversees the entire operation and ministry, supervising 6 full-time and part-time staff, and over 200 volunteers. You would immediately make an impact, and your heart will grow. This is a full-time position.

Client Services Specialist is on the front-line assisting, serving and supporting clients and inquirers seeking services and assistance at our office in Latonia, KY. Orients includes managing case files and providing customer service through the entire process.

Mental Health Counselor is a master’s level position in our Mental Health and Pregnancy/Adoption Programs. Includes general counseling services to individuals and families, including pregnancy and adoption cases. Must be independently licensed or pursing independent licensing.

Additional details about each of the above opportunities can be found on our website at https://www.covingtoncharities.org/news-events/job-opportunities.

If you would like to learn more about any of these opportunities, please contact Shannon Braun directly at sbraun@covingtoncharities.org

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Perfect Thanksgiving set-up

(Continued from page 5)

I experienced a Vincentian moment — person-to-person service, delivering joy and hope to my lateral neighbor in need. All kinds of things came together to allow me to have that experience. The one Thanksgiving meal left, being in the office when I normally would not and the address of my neighbor. It was a welcome gift on that very different Thanksgiving. I am convinced that God loved us both and he would take care of us.

It is our hope that the future direction of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul will provide these same opportunities for those who wish to join us. Feeling and seeing the love of God here in our community is a gift we love to share with as many people as possible. Karen Zengel is executive director, Society of St. Vincent de Paul Northern Kentucky

New Order of Christian Initiation of Adults

(Continued from page 9)

The U.S. experience differs significantly. While some enter the Church needing all three sacraments of initiation — baptism, confirmation and Communion — some have already been baptized, either as Catholics or in another Christian faith, and Catholicism recognizes the validity of baptism received in other Christian communities, he said. Another adaptation, Archbishop Blair said, takes into account “four distinct groups” entering the Church: “catechumens, unbaptized infants, baptized Christians and baptized Catholics in need of confirmation.”

“The RCIA book that we’ve been using in the United States in the 1980s both recalibrates and supplemen ts the Latin version extensively,” Archbishop Blair told the bishops Nov. 16.

The revised version would preserve the reordered and supplementary material in the earlier book.

The rites now contain texts for the baptism of infants at the Easter Vigil. “Although rare, it does happen, and is certainly permitted,” Archbishop Blair said.

Any amendments made to either the Spanish text, approved in 1991, or the English version may need to be cross-checked to assure that each language’s text is saying the same thing, he said.

In years past, Catholic grade schoolers would be stumped by a what-if question: What if a kid walking to church on his way to being baptized is hit by a car and killed? Does he go to heaven because of the intention to be baptized, or does he go to limbo because he still has Original Sin?

The text to the OCIA now provides a chart on page 11: “If they die during their catechumenate, they receive a Christian funeral.”

Priority of the Kingdom

(Continued from page 5)

This month we celebrate the feast day of St. Vincent de Paul, and honor hundreds of Vincentian volunteers in our community for their dedication to the ministry of charity. Because of your continued support and the unwavering service of Vincentian volunteers, thousands in our community have received the help they so desperately needed.

A special thank you to all for providing hope to our NKY neighbors in need.
Bishops urged to implement framework for marriage and family ministry

Baltimore — The chairman of the U.S. bishops’ Committee on Liturgy, Marriage, Family Life and Youth called on his fellow bishops Nov. 17 to work “in every way possible” to implement the national pastoral framework for marriage and family ministry that they approved in June.

Archbishop Salvatore J. Cordileone of San Francisco said that addressing marriage and family life is vital in a time when families are under rising threats from “sweeping ideological currents that destroy and undermine our sexual identity as man and woman and God-given vocations as father and mother, son or daughter.”

Addressing marriage and family ministry is an appropri-
ate undertaking to start during the “Amoris Laetitia Family Year,” declared by Pope Francis, the archbishop said in remarks on the second day of public sessions during the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ fall general assembly Nov. 15-18 in Baltimore.

Titled “Called to the Joy of Love: A Pastoral Framework for Marriage and Family Life Ministry,” the document can serve as a practical guidebook to serve couples and families because it offers an adaptable set of principles and strategies for pastoral care, Archbishop Cordileone explained.

To help implement the framework, the Catholic Marriage Initiatives Fund, seeded with $1 million, has been established, the archbishop said. Funds will be distributed on a competitive basis in amounts ranging from $50,000 to $500,000, provided a diocese or eparchy can match the amount being awarded.

Applications for the first round of awards are due Dec. 10. Applications are online at CatholicMarriageFund.org.

The archbishop reviewed the contents of the framework, which was overwhelmingly approved by the bishops in June, saying the committee and USCCB staff have developed an implementation and distribution plan to assure it reaches dioceses, eparchies, national organizations and interested constituents.


It grew from the bishops’ belief that Catholic families and married couples need more support from the church at large.

It is meant to offer parishes resources and ideas for ministry through a pastoral plan for marriage and family life.

It emphasizes the importance of family members being “missionary disciples” and their role “to be actively engaged in evangelization.”

The archbishop recalled the words of St. John Paul II in his 1981 apostolic exhortation “Familiaris Consortio,” on the role of the Christian family in the world, in which he recognized that the family is “the object of numerous forces that seek to destroy it or in some way deform it.”

Continuing to quote the exhortation, Archbishop Cordileone said the Church is “aware the well-being of society and her own good are intimately tied to the good family,” giving the Church a more “urgent and compelling mission of proclaiming to all people the plan of God for marriage and the family ensuring their full vitality and human and Christian development, and thus contributing to the renewal of society by the people of God.”

“We can and must repeat these words of ‘Familiaris Consortio’ with even more conviction and courage now than 38 years ago.” Archbishop Cordileone told the bishops.

The committee chairman identified the framework’s four “pillars” for ministry: prayer and relationship with Christ, formation, accompaniment and advocacy.

Under each pillar, various situations are addressed and offer three steps, which Archbishop Cordileone called the “three Es” — educate, encourage and engage. All are meant to provide practical steps in ministry to aid people in various life situations, he explained.

The framework is currently available in English on the USCCB website at https://bit.ly/3os4HQD. It will be distributed in print in English and Spanish in the future, he added.

The committee, the archbishop said, has proposed that the framework be implemented over one or two five-year cycles.

The first step would have each diocese and eparchy complete a pre-inventory evaluation tool to assess marriage and family life ministries. The inventory would be shared with the diocesan bishop or eparch as they seek to identify the effectiveness of such ministries.

Archbishop Cordileone said such an evaluation also would “inspire a greater recognition of the fundamental importance of a specific ministry to marriages and families in every stage of life.”

A second resource the archbishop identified was a parish resource tool kit, which would help parishes promote the importance of placing families “front and center” in parish life.

The tool kit offers ways to develop a pastoral plan for ministry, encourage the training of marriage ministers and family life ministers, and to inspire families to take an active role in the missionary work of the Church by extending outreach to families outside of the parish.

Implementation also calls for a designated website that would include new resources and plans, the archbishop said.

Plans also call for education and formation to help ministry participants to effectively work with the framework in their specific setting, he added.

Such efforts would include diocesan consultation sessions, regional conversations and a series of orientation and discussion sessions encompassing webinars and online workshops for clergy seminarians, parish staff, organizational leaders and pastoral ministers.
National/World

Pope gives Italian bishops beatitudes to be good shepherds

VATICAN CITY — Pope Francis invited Italy’s bishops to live the “beatitudes of a bishop,” an adaptation of the traditional Eight Beatitudes to provide guiding principles for being a “good shepherd” of a diocese. Blessed is the bishop who walks a path of poverty and sharing, of accents released who suffer, of humility that finds joy in hard effort, of justice, of mercy of peace and tenderness, according to the new set of beatitudes, written in Italian. The invitation came during a two-hour closed-door meeting Nov. 22 with Italian bishops, who were meeting in Rome Nov. 21-25 for an extraordinary general assembly on “The syzyial world of the church in Italy.” The pope traveled by car to the Rome hotel where the bishops were meeting and opened the assembly for what was a “strictly private encounter,” according to a written statement by the Vatican press office Nov. 22. However, the press office shared a copy of the card that the pope distributed to all the bishops at the assembly as part of “launching a conversation with the bishops.” The card had a color image of “The Good Shepherd” painting by the German Renaissance artist Lucas Cranach der Ältere and, on the reverse, listed “The Beatitudes of the Bishop.”

Pope sends condolences to victims of Waukesha parade attack

VATICAN CITY — Pope Francis expressed his condolences to the victims of a tragic attack at a Christmas parade in Waukesha, Wisconsin, that claimed the lives of five people and left dozens injured. In a message sent by Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state, to Archbishop Jerome E. Listecki of Milwaukee, the pope assured “his spiritual close- ers, urges them to turn from crime and take time to come to terms with what happened. “My message for (the man and woman who did this) is that they should consider a change of life and look at things differently and realize that doing violence and crime just makes a bad situation worse,” said Pallottine Father Bernard Carman. The pastor emphasized the importance of forgiveness. “Our calling is to be better — to be different and follow the Lord,” he said. Father Carman told the Catholic Review, Baltimore’s archdiocesan news outlet. Father Carman, who had been recovering from Nov. 9 vascular surgery, arrived at St. Leo around 4 p.m. Nov. 12. After getting out of his car, he was approached by a man and a woman. The man demanded the priest’s wallet before hitting him on his head with the gun. The attacker stole the wallet while his accomplice took Father Carman’s cellphone. During the assault, Father Carman fell and hit his head on a wall. “It was surprising they didn’t shoot because that would have been possible,” said Father Carman, noting that he had about $100 in his wallet. Father Carman said bystanders aided him, along with police. He received medical attention in an ambulance and did not need to be hospitalized. He made a police report, but did not get a good look at the suspects, he said.

Catholic leaders applaud decision to commute Julius Jones’ death sentence

WASHINGTON — Catholic opponents of the death penalty, including Oklahoma City’s archbishop, praised the Nov. 18 announcement that the Oklahoma governor granted death-row inmate Julius Jones clemency — just hours before he was scheduled to be executed. “It took tremendous courage in the face of intense pressure for Gov. (Kevin) Stitt to grant clemency in this case,” said Archbishop Paul S. Coakley of Oklahoma City. “I applaud his hesitation to seeking justice while providing the condemned an opportunity for redemption.” The archbishop said in a Nov. 18 statement. Stitt reduced Jones’ sentence to life in prison without parole, partially following a recommendation from the Oklahoma Pardon and Parole Board but voicing from that recommendation, reached in a 3-1 vote Nov. 4, to reduce Jones’ sentence to life in prison with the possibility of parole. Jones was convicted of first-degree murder and sentenced to die for the 1999 shooting death of a 45-year-old man, Paul Howell, during a carjacking. Jones was 19 at the time. His case gained some high-profile attention after it was featured in a 2014 ABC documentary “The Last Defense.” Jones’ attorney, Amanda Bass, said the Oklahoma governor “took an important step today toward restoring public faith in the criminal justice system by ensuring that Oklahoma does not execute an innocent man.”

To fight child labor, eliminate poverty, give adults fair wages, pope says

VATICAN CITY — Extreme poverty, the lack of employment that can support a family and despair are the major drivers of exploitive child labor, Pope Francis said. “If we want to stamp out the scourge of child labor, we must work together to eradicate poverty (and) to correct the distortions in the current economic system, which concentrates wealth in the hands of a few,” he said. “We must encourage nations and the stakeholders of the world of business to create opportunities for decent employment with fair wages that let families meet their needs without their children being forced to work,” he said Nov. 19 during a meeting with people taking part in an international conference on “Eradicating Child Labor, Building a Better Future.” “We must combine our efforts to promote qual- ity education that is free for everyone in every country, as well as a health care system that is equally accessible to everyone,” he added. The Vatican COVID Commission of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development supported the conference, which was organized in collaboration with the Permanent Mission of the Holy See to the U.N.’s Food and Agriculture Organization.

Mass arrests in Ethiopia scare Tigrayans in neighboring countries

NAIROBI, Kenya — Amid reports of mass arrests of Tigrayans in Ethiopia, a church source said fear has gripped those residing in the neighboring countries who fear they could be the next targets. The U.N. reported Nov. 18 that at least 1,000 people were believed to have been detained by police in the Tigrayan capital, Addis Ababa, in the previous seven days. More Tigrayans have been reported arrested in Gondar and Bahir Dar on suspicion that they affiliated with or sup- porting the Tigray People’s Liberation Front. “We have received information that those arrested are being kept in camps where the conditions are extremely bad. We have also heard that every night some disappear and are not seen again,” said an Ethiopian church source who could not be named for fear of his safety. At the same time, the sources said Ethiopian authorities had made public their intentions to crack down on Tigrayans in neighboring countries, “for preventing wrong information about the conflict.” They said reports going out are using the help of “Tigrayans” in other countries, the source said “I think I can’t and I won’t go back to Ethiopia unless things change, I have been told too many lies for me.”

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St. Joseph reminds Church to pay attention to the essential, pope says

Carol Glatz
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — During this time marked by global crisis, St. Joseph can offer people support, consolation and guidance, Pope Francis said.

St. Joseph is a man full of faith in God and his providence, the pope said Dec. 17 at his weekly general audience in the Vatican’s Paul VI hall.

The saint also “reminds the Church to keep her eyes on what the world deliberately ignores” and to consider as important what others discard, he said.

“He is truly a master of the essential. He reminds us that what truly matters does not attract our attention, but requires patient discernment to be discovered and appreciated,” he added.

The day’s audience talk was the first of a new series of talks dedicated to the foster father of Jesus and husband of Mary.

Pope Francis had proclaimed a “Year of St. Joseph” from Dec. 8, 2020, to Dec. 8, 2021, to mark the 150th anniversary of St. Joseph’s declaration as patron of the universal Church.

The pope also offered a special prayer and message to “all the men and women who live in the most forgotten geographical peripheries of the world or who experience situations of existential marginalization.”

“May you find in St. Joseph the witness and protector to look to,” he said, offering the following prayer: “St. Joseph, you who have always trusted God and have made your choices guided by his providence, teach us not to count so much on our own plans but on his plan of love. You who come from the peripheries, help us to convert our gaze and to prefer what the world discards and marginalizes. Comfort those who feel alone and support those who work silently to defend life and human dignity. Amen.”

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At no cost, we’ll help you:

1. Customize coverage to your needs
2. Trade in your current plan for a better fit
3. Access new and improved benefits for 2022

We’re here to help!

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Annual enrollment is Oct. 15 – Dec. 7.

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