November 10, 2021

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Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception
a feast of hope in God’s grace from sin

Katie Schroeder
Editorial Assistant

“The Most Blessed Virgin Mary was, from the first instant of her conception, by a singular privilege and grace granted by God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Savior of the human race, preserved exempt from all stain of original sin.”

According to Catholic News Agency’s online article “Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary,” the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, which was defined by Pope Pius IX in his declaration “Ineffabilis Deus” in 1854, finalized and confirmed the long-held belief of many members of the Church that Mary was free from original sin at the very moment of her conception. Because of her unique and important role in history as the Mother of God, Mary received the gift of salvation in Christ in an exceptional way.

Mary, Walter R. Rosati, rector of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, discussed the importance of this event in the article “Why Do We Celebrate the Immaculate Conception?” published on the Basilica’s website. He said that for members of the Catholic faith, the Immaculate Conception is more than significant — it is essential. Mary was preserved from sin due to the grace of God, and was prepared to become the sinless mother of Jesus. Because of Mary’s Immaculate Conception and her “yes” to God, the entire human race has been redeemed and given the promise of eternal life through the merits of her son. It can be said that the Immaculate Conception was the beginning of humanity’s salvation; because of this, it is now one of the central doctrines of the faith.

Regarded as the most blessed and holy of all disciples, the Blessed Virgin Mary and her Immaculate Conception have been celebrated since the seventh century under the original title, “Conception of Mary by St. Anne”; the name was changed to “Immaculate Conception” with the introduction of Pope Pius IX’s “Ineffabilis Deus” in 1854. This feast day, celebrated on Dec. 8 each year, was created with the intention of drawing attention towards the significant role Mary had in salvation history. The celebration of the Immaculate Conception holds so much importance for the Church that it was raised to a Holy Day of Obligation.

The Immaculate Conception is not only meaningful in salvation history, but in the lives of Catholics today as well. The Blessed Virgin Mary serves as an example to the faithful of what is possible through God, and she reveals what great things people can do if they put themselves in the hands of God, always open to what he requests of them and forever seeking to fulfill his will.

The doctrine of the Immaculate Conception also inspires the modern faithful to try their hardest to remain free from sin. Although members of the Church are freed from original sin through the sacrament of baptism, throughout their lives they fail and commit sins due to human weakness. The Immaculate Conception is a reminder that by cooperating with the grace of God, like Mary did, the faithful can lead a life as free from sin as humanly possible.

Second Sunday of Advent

“Almighty and merciful God, may no earthly undertaking hinder those who set out in haste to meet your Son, but may our learning of heavenly wisdom gain us admittance to his company.”

—Roman Missal second Sunday of advent

During the Advent season, the diocesan Worship office offers a Vespers worship aid during the Sundays of Advent. Please contact Shannon Barnes at (859) 392-1500.
December 2021

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Pope Francis often highlights the role older adults play in conveying faith from one generation to the next. Recently, he noted that “there is no retirement age from the work of proclaiming the Gospel.” This statement reminds us all that senior religious never retire from their vows.

Instead, the prayer and ministry of older religious are an ongoing witness to the Gospel. In their younger years, they laid the foundation for Catholic schools, hospitals, and works of mercy. Today, many serve in volunteer ministry. Others are frail and need assistance. Yet all remain wholly committed to their vocations, accepting the limitations of aging and embracing the opportunity to spend more time praying for our Church and world.

The annual Retirement Fund for Religious Collection will take place the weekend of Dec. 11 and 12. This collection benefits more than 26,000 elderly Catholic sisters, brothers, and religious order priests. Most senior religious worked for little pay, and now their religious communities do not have enough retirement savings. Your gift to the Retirement Fund for Religious offers support that helps religious communities provide loving care for older members while ensuring younger ones can continue the good works of their elders.

I recognize you may be experiencing your own financial difficulties. I ask only that you give what you can. Most importantly, please join me in praying for God’s continued blessing on our nation’s elderly sisters, brothers, and religious order priests.

Yours devotedly in Christ,

+ John C. Iffert
Bishop of Covington

Bishop’s Schedule

Dec. 5
Mass, St. James Mission, Maysville, 9:30 a.m.
Mass, St. Patrick Parish, Maysville, 11 a.m.

Dec. 7
Priest formation day
Mass, Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington, 5:30 p.m.

Dec. 8
Diocesan Curia — offices closed in observance of the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception

Dec. 9
Mass, Holy Cross District High School, Latonia, 11 a.m.

Dec. 10
Mass, Immaculate Heart of Mary School, Burlington, 1 p.m.

Dec. 11
Mass, St. Benedict Parish, Covington, 4:30 p.m.

Penance Services

Campbell County Deanery
St. Joseph Cold Spring Parish
Monday, Dec. 13, 7 p.m.

Southeast Deanery
St. Patrick Parish, Maysville
Tuesday, Dec. 14, 6:30 p.m.

Cathedral Concert Series
Advent Festival of Lessons and Carols
Sunday, Dec. 5, 3 p.m., Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington

Featuring the Cathedral Basilica Bishop’s Choir and Dr. Gregory Schaffer, organist and conductor.

The Cathedral Concert Series continues its 45th season with the Advent Festival of Lessons and Carols. Scripture and sacred song foretell of the coming nativity. Evergreen and candlelight enhance the Gothic interior of the Basilica for this annual tradition. All are welcome to attend and participate. Choral pieces and Advent hymns, spanning centuries of tradition, will echo prophetic and Gospel readings — all offered in one of the area’s most visually stunning and acoustically resonant spaces.

All Cathedral Concerts are open to the public with no admission charge. A freewill offering is gladly accepted.

Visit www.cathedralconcertseries.org

Live nativity at St. Pius X Parish

The Knights of St. John Commandery 984, Northern Kentucky and Boy Scout Troop #779, St. Pius X Parish, put together the Diocese of Covington’s live nativity at St. Pius X Parish, Edgewood. The blessing of the crib will be held Dec. 18 following 4:30 p.m. Mass. After that, actors, actresses and live animals will bring the events of Christ’s birth to life Dec. 18-23, 6:30-7:30 p.m.

All are welcome and encouraged to participate in this special Christmas event. Actors and actresses are needed to dress as the Holy Family and shepherds. Chairs are welcome to add their gift of music and joy. Catechists can load a prayer service, and students can earn service hours for their participation. For scheduling a group or family call Doug Eifert, (859) 384-3689 or e-mail dkeifert@twc.com.

Retirement Fund for Religious

Please give to those who have given a lifetime.
Parish awards former pastor posthumously its Cecilian Award

St. Cecilia Parish, Independence, honored its beloved former pastor, Father Mario Tizziani by awarding him, posthumously, this year’s Cecilian Award. The Cecilian Award is given to members of the parish community who have given the gift of service and dedication to the parish. Father Mario’s family accepted the award. Additionally, the new school gym was dedicated as Father Mario J. Tizziani Memorial Court and the walking track above the court was named in honor of Father Mario’s mom and nephew. The Catherine Tizziani and Jason Motto Walking Track.

Father Tizziani was pastor at St. Cecilia Parish from April 2008 until his death December 2020. In 2015, he received the Distinguished Pastor Award from the National Catholic Educational Association. In 2017, he led the groundbreaking of a $5.5 million expansion, which included the gymnasium, at St. Cecilia Catholic School and cut the ribbon on the new facility in 2019. In October 2018, under his leadership, St. Cecilia School was named a Blue Ribbon School. His mother, Catherine Tizziani, died two weeks after Father Tizziani.

“His legacy will be noted on two levels,” said Father Harry Settle, pastor, about Father Tizziani. “His pastoral approach was quite authentic, he really cared about his parishioners. Also, he had a vision for the parish and in particular the school. This gymnasium was built during his time here and is a part of that legacy … He was a very good man and very, very committed priest.”

Parish awards former pastor posthumously its Cecilian Award

Official Assignments

Effective Nov. 19, 2021

Rev. A. Conor Kunath
To: Chaplain, Northern Kentucky Chapter of the Couple to Couple League
Term: Three years
Continues other duties

Effective Jan. 1, 2022

Deacon James Fortner
To: Spiritual Director, Diocese of Covington Cursillo Movement
Term: Three years
Continues other duties

By order of
The Most Rev. John C. Iffert
Bishop of the Diocese of Covington

Jamie N. Schroeder
Chancellor

(below) Father Mario Tizziani’s family — (from left) Regina Anderson, niece; Esther Anderson, sister; Gina and Joe Motto, sister and brother-in-law — accept the Cecilian Award on behalf of their brother.

Over 400 turkeys flock to local dinner tables

The Rose Garden Mission, Covington, held its 16th annual Thanksgiving Turkey Giveaway Nov. 23. It was a beautiful day as the Franciscan Daughters of Mary and volunteers handed out over 400 turkeys to those in need. In addition to the 20-plus pound turkeys, three boxes of canned goods, dry food and traditional Thanksgiving sides were distributed with the turkeys. After 3 p.m., those who did not call ahead were served on a first come, first serve basis, and the mission was able to assist every family and individual that attended. The mission relies 100 percent on donations to supply their giveaways. “It was beautiful to see how many people came not for themselves, but to pick-up food for their neighbors or friends who could not make it,” said Mother Seraphina.
Three comings of Christ prepare us for Advent

Bishop Robert Barron

In Exile

Father Ron Koehler

Why are so many people leaving their churches? There is no one answer to that question. People are complex. Faith is complex. The issues are complex.

Looking at the question, it can be helpful to distinguish among a number of these groups. The Dones are those who, in their own words, are done with religion and often with explicit faith as well. Done with it? They can consider themselves done for any number of reasons, from having had a bad experience with religion growing up, to anger at the church, to the intoxicating power of a culture that can seemingly offer itself as a sufficient substitute for religion. They have been there, considered religion, and moved on.

The Marginalized are those who feel themselves outside of the understanding, empathy, and spiritual scope of the churches. This includes the many inside the LGBTQ community, to the thousands who feel (consciously or unconsciously) that the messiness of their lives somehow excludes them from the churches. This is not just “one damn thing after another,” as the cynical say, but-as the cynical say has famously has it, nor simply an endless cycle, nor the eternal return that keeps time running in a circle, time has a direction, moving toward its consummation, when God will be all in all.

The Church identifies this final culmination as the “second coming” of Jesus, and the Gospels speak of it often. Here is just one example from the Gospel of Luke: “Jesus said to his disciples: ‘There will be signs in the heavens and on the earth—sun, moon, and stars—are going to be darkened, and the forces of the heavens will be disturbed. And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.’” What this remarkable language conveys is that God has won the decisive battle and will win the war.

In a recent book, “After Evangelicalism, The Path to a New Christianity,” David Guiche asks this question about the same group: “Are there any among those who are leaving church, leaving their denominations, who are clear on what is coming upon the world … And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory?” What this remarkable language conveys is the conviction that, at the close of the age, the old order will give way and God will renew the great structuring patterns of reality. At this second coming of Christ, all of the seeds that had been planted throughout nature and history will bear fruit, all of the latent potentialities of the cosmos will be actualized, and God’s justice will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.

The Church’s belief — and it governs the whole of its life — is that we are living in the in between times; that is to say, in between the culmination of history in the cross and Resurrection and the definitive fulfillment of history in the second coming of Jesus. In a sense, the war against sin and death has been won, and yet mop-up operations continue.

The Church lives in that middle zone where the final stage will be reached. Will they end up in another denomination, especially during the Advent season, to our daily Gospels at Mass. I think you’ll be surprised how often they refer to the second Advent of Jesus at the end of time. I might offer just two well-known examples: “We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection, until you come again,” and “As we await the blessed hope and the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ.” This is the hope the Church speaks of during the in-between times. Though we are beset on all sides by failure, pain, sin, sickness and the fear of death, we live in joyful hope, for we know that history is going somewhere, that God has won the decisive battle and will win the war.

Therefore, this Advent, look back; look around; and look forward. With each glance, you will see the Christ who comes.

Bishop Robert Barron is an Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. Article originally published at WordOnFire.org.

Commentary

Many years ago, in the context of a high school religion class, a very wise Benedictine nun gave me a template for understanding Advent that I’ve never forgotten. It is simply that Advent calls to mind three “comings” of Christ: the first in history, the second now, and the third at the end of time. Meditating upon each of these is a helpful preparation for the holy season upon which we are embarking.

Let us first look back. Fulton Sheen said that Jesus is the only religious founder whose coming was clearly predicted. And indeed we can find instances of prophecy in the emergence of modernity, not the revolutions of the twentieth century. Rainier von Balthasar wrote that time has a directing purpose: something happened as Jesus, the Messiah of Israel. If we turn Jesus into a mythic or legendary figure or we construe him simply as an inspiring religious teacher, we miss this crucially important truth.

Testament indications and anticipations of the arrival of the Messiah. How often the New Testament authors use the language of fulfillment and insist that the events around Jesus occurred “kata tas graphas” (according to the Scriptures). They appreciated Jesus, this particular figure from 2,000 years ago, as the one who brought to full expression all of the institutions of Israel. His raising from the dead demonstrated that he is the New Temple, the New Covenant, the definitive prophet, the Law or Torah in person. Furthermore, they understood that Jesus had brought all of history in a very real sense, to its climax. The turning point of the human drama is not, therefore, the emergence of modernity, not the revolutions of the eighteenth century, but rather the dying and rising of Jesus, the Messiah of Israel. If we turn Jesus into a mythic or legendary figure or we construe him simply as an inspiring religious teacher, we miss this crucially important truth.

Every single New Testament author witnesses to the fact that something happened in connection with Jesus, indeed something so dramatic that all of time should be understood as falling either before him or after him. And so, during Advent, we look back with deep interest and spiritual attention to that first coming.

What came in time to pass, but we must attend to the second dimension of Advent — namely, his coming to us in the here and now. We might think of that famous painting of Jesus knocking at the door: This is the Christ who presents himself every day, seeking entry into our hearts and minds.

In his first coming, he appeared in the context of Israel. In this present-day Adventus, he appears through the sacraments of the Church, through good preaching, through the witness of the saints, through the R生态保护 especially, and through the poor who cry out to be cared for. We recall his words, “Whatever you do to the least of my people, you do to me.”

Now just as many rejected him when he came in history, so we may easily reject him today. Can we see that the most important decision we will ever make — more important than decisions regarding jobs, family, marriage, etc. — is whether we allow Christ to become the Lord of our lives? During the season of Advent, we are meant to stop and pay close attention. How is Jesus coming to us and how, precisely, are we dealing with his arrival?

And finally the Advent call to mind Christ’s definitive coming at the end of time. One of the peculiar marks of Christianity is the belief that time is going somewhere. It is not just “one damn thing after another,” as the cynical say. The language of Christ’s present and future reign has its own set of issues among these groups, each has its own sets of issues which is to say, the Dones.

Father Ron Koehler

Word on Fire

The Dones are those who, in their own words, are done with religion and often with explicit faith as well. Done with it? They can consider themselves done for any number of reasons, from having had a bad experience with religion growing up, to anger at the church, to the intoxicating power of a culture that can seemingly offer itself as a sufficient substitute for religion. They have been there, considered religion, and moved on.

The Spiritual-but-not-Religious are those who believe in the value of spirituality but not of any church. They have chosen to pursue a spiritual path outside of any ecclesial community believing that (at least for them) the spiritual journey is best done outside of organized religion. There can be many reasons for this kind of attitude, not the least the overpowering ethos of individuality and personal freedom pervading our culture. In one’s faith journey today people prefer to trust only their own search and conscience.

The Inclerent are those who feel the messiness of their lives somehow excludes them from the churches. This includes the many inside the LGBTQ community, to the thousands who feel (consciously or unconsciously) that the messiness of their lives somehow excludes them from the churches. They feel like outsiders to religion and our churches.

People are leaving their churches for a multitude of reasons and this begs some further questions. When people are leaving their churches, what actually are they leaving? And where are they going to, to find what they are actually looking for? In a recent book, “After Evangelicalism, The Path to a New Christianity,” David Guiche asks this question about people who are leaving church, “Are they clear on what they are actually leaving? Do they know whether they are leaving church, leaving their denominations, leaving the faith, leaving Jesus, or just leaving?”

More importantly, he asks, what will be their endgame? Will they end up in another denomination, or as Spiritual-but-not-Religious, or as agnostic, or just disillusioned?

Perhaps that question is not so important for the (Continued on page 5)
December 3, 2021

A voice calling out to you

Habits

When faith is vandalized, it deserves many defenders

The readings for the second Sunday of Advent — Cycle C are: Baruch 5:1-6; Philippians 1:4-6, 8-11 and Luke 3:1-6. In the Gospel for this second Sunday of Advent, we hear St. John the Baptist calling out for repentance. This word “repentance” comes to us from a development of multiple words, especially the Latin prefix “re-” which basically means “to go back or anew” and “penitire,” which means “to regret” or “puniﬁce,” to make sorry. Why would St. John the Baptist be calling the people of his time and ours to regret? And mind you, not the kind of regret we have when we order something new from a restaurant and then wish we had stuck with the old favorite; but a regret that cuts to the heart, that is so deeply held that it necessitates and forces a change in mind and action. The Good News that is revealed in the person of Jesus Christ, is meant to change us — for the better. We are called to look at our lives — through a regular examination of our conscience — and see those areas which are indeed sinful and feel regret for them. Why? Because sin is ofﬁensive to God, who is all good and deserving of all our love and devotion.

This sacred time of Advent gives us time to repent of those things — those sinful things, great or small — that would keep us from truly being able to welcome the Christ child. It is a time to walk minds and hearts. And the church gives us the opportunity pretty regularly, to be made right with God and the Church and the community through the sacrament of penance. I get it, going to Confession is hard. We have to see the things — those sinful things, great or small — that it necessitates and forced us to change. We are called to be more like the Angry, for those who feel alienated from their church. Where do you go when anger keeps you away? The former is going to happen or what someone is going to say, we don’t expect anything other than what is already in our own head. As Jean Cocteau said, habits keep things covered and prevent us from seeing. In fact, they can lock us into routines that become semi-rules we expect for our- selves or others and prevent something new from rufﬂing our expectations. These thoughts about habit are not exactly theological language, but God’s life-giving actions don’t follow the rules that we humans create for ourselves. In fact, God breaks rules a lot. Have you ever noticed how many times the Old Testament prophets did irrational things follow- ing God’s command? One strange story has Jeremiah buying undue wear becoming then burying it so it would rot. (Jer 13:1-11) Then, in the New Testament, Jesus’ life was one unexpected action after another: beginning with a virgin as mother. Time after time he broke with the expectations of religious leaders and his own apostles. In the end he broke the box of a tomb. All of this was the surprising work of God. Those Scripture stories tell us God’s ways are not our, but we often unconsciously act as though the divine will and our will is the same. We forget or ignore the fact that the God of surprises is beyond our grasp. This situation should make us more attuned to the very nature of our habits get the upper hand in our daily lives. As St. Augustine said, “Habit, if not resisted, soon becomes necessity.”

Where does this unending desire lead me? I have one question to continue: “Do you stay home on a Sunday? Are you searching for a more likeable church? Where do you go when you feel angry or alienated from your family table? Do you search for a more likable church? Leaving church: two questions staring us in the face.

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, tracking incidents of destruction to church-related sites around the U.S., reported Oct. 14 that there had been 100 acts of vandalism since May 2020, including sever- al in the Diocese of Brooklyn. This is more than a cry for statisﬁcation. It is a glimpse of bigger social scars that should prompt thoughtful reﬂection and meaningful action. Attacks on Catholic structures are part of a broader mischievous against people of diverse faiths, cultures and back- grounds. They call our society to a greater awareness of the whole, grim truths behind any evil actions we take. Charity must tame our anger, but the Oct. 14 statement suggests an enclosed passion and pre- vention, plus insisting that this destruction must stop.”

It is good citizenship to champion accountability in our personal and civic lives, digging for and addressing the whole, grim truths behind any evil actions we observe — or perform.

We might wonder: Is the widespread weakening of religious virtue, grounded in Christ’s love and forgive- ness, giving way to a distorted secular “religion,” mock- ing, polarizing, hating not the sin but the sinner? We need to start redirecting the restless hearts, which St. Augustine cites, back toward resting in God — not with a culture of death and distraction, but with a respect for history and tradition, embracing symbols and realities that give life meaning.

We need to point out the joy found in each unique human being and in the good images (ideally the image of God) people want to emulate. The objects of faith we see vandalized were not part of the problem. Remember, they are part of the solution.

This unsigned editorial was published online Oct. 20 by The Tablet, newspaper of the Diocese of Brooklyn, New York. It has been provided by Catholic News Service. The views or positions presented in this or any guest editorial are those of the individual publication and do not necessarily represent the views of Catholic News Service or of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.
NCYC: Faced with many choices, youth urged to choose wisely, honor Father and Son

Natalie Hoefler
Catholic News Service

INDIANAPOLIS — About 900 youths from all over central and southern Indiana chose to start their National Catholic Youth Conference experience by worshipping together at an opening archdiocesan Mass, Nov. 18, with Archbishop Charles C. Thompson.

The large hall went from silence to song as the archbishop, about 13 priests and more than 25 seminarians processed toward the altar located at a stage.

“Life, as they say, is full of choices,” Archbishop Thompson said during his homily. “Choices of course have consequences. On a regular basis, confronted with opportunity and challenge, we make choices.”

Sometimes we make choices between good and evil. Other times we make choices between seemingly equally good options, or so-called lesser of evils.”

The archbishop noted that each of those present made an intentional choice to be at NCYC.

“These consequences of this choice hopefully include strengthening our Catholic identity, deepening our faith, meeting new friends and having a memorable experience,” he said.

The ultimate consequence, however, will be a personal and even deeper personal encounter with Jesus Christ in the various ways that are made available during this NCYC.”

Archbishop Thompson acknowledged that youths today are faced with many sources “wanting your loyalty, wanting you to sacrifice to false gods rather than the true God we worship here at this altar. The overwhelming array of voices vying for our attention and dedication can be deafening at times.”

He cautioned the teens to resist such messages. Instead, he said, “We need to be grounded in prayer, in the word of God, reflection, sacraments, discernment and service.”

“These ways of discerning and praying allow us to encounter the person of Jesus Christ in our lives, in our relationships, in our families and in our communities.”

He said the choices Catholics make should reflect and honor “the choice God made for our salvation, and Jesus freely choosing to accept the Father’s will, entering into his passion and death, trusting in the ultimate outcome of the Resurrection.”

“Choices have consequences,” he reminded the youths. “Many consequences can be long-lasting, some even eternal.

“Let us not squander the opportunity to draw closer to the Lord during these special days at NCYC. May the choices we make here lead us to an ever-deepening encounter with the person of Jesus Christ our Savior, and continue to have lasting consequences of peace, joy, faith, hope and blessings despite the burdens and crosses we must carry in this life.”

“We have chosen to be here. Let the consequences begin.”

During Archbishop Thompson’s closing remarks, a long, loud cheer erupted after he shared with those present the news that the Indianapolis Archdiocese is hosting the National Eucharistic Congress in 2024.

The congress will be the culmination of a three-year National Eucharistic Revival approved by the U.S. bishops during their fall general assembly Nov. 15-18 in Baltimore.

The revival will officially start on the feast of Corpus Christi June 16, 2022.

After he shared the news on the congress, Archbishop Thompson prepared the youth for the eucharistic procession taking place after Mass through and outside of the Indiana Convention Center.

“We talk about the Indy 500 and how it’s the greatest spectacle in racing,” he said. “Well, it doesn’t compare to the Eucharist. What a great message it is, what a great spectacle, as we begin this eucharistic procession. The witness we give in our reverence and our adoration and great respect to the Eucharist — but not only to the Eucharist, but how we live out this eucharistic experience in our lives.”

Seer related story below

NCYC sets youth ‘Ablaze’ with the Holy Spirit

Emilie Zengel
Messenger Jr. Contributor

I was part of a group of high school-aged youth from Bishop Brossart High School that attended the National Catholic Youth Conference, Nov. 18-20, at Lucas Oil Stadium and the Indiana Convention Center, Indianapolis. NCYC has been hosted in Indianapolis for the past few years. While there, we got to partake in many activities, discussions, concerts, adoration and Mass that had the potential to be life changing for all.

The weekend was fully packed with faith-filled events.

The music kept the energy very high. The concert the first night included several Christian rappers, with Lecrae being the main act. The house band kept us all on our feet throughout the days, whether it was through songs to excite us for what was coming or reflective playing during adoration to help us tune in with God. We got to meet many of these musicians in between sessions, and they were all wonderful people who talked and took pictures with us.

Brian Greenfield and Society of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Sister Miriam James Heritland served as emcees for all three days. We also were given the gift of listening to several amazing speakers, such as Chika Anyanwu and Steve Angusimo. Although you may not know these names, they all did an amazing job talking about issues facing our world, how this related to us, and the main theme of “Ablaze.” We also got the opportunity to choose our own paths in attending breakout sessions that featured comedians, musicians and motivational speakers, who were all role models for the youth attending.

One of the favorite parts of NCYC for many was the village. Here, booths were set up by people from all around the country, promoting merchandise, colleges, non-profits, talents and plenty of other interesting things. In between sessions, we were free to wander around the village. There were games to play, things to buy, people to talk to, and much more.

Throughout the three days, we were sent on a scavenger hunt to collect 14 cards of the apostles, Mary and the Holy Spirit hidden around the convention center, and it seemed to be a favorite among the group. This tied in to the overall theme, as these were people who the Holy Spirit acted through and who are inspirations to what we can do in the Church.

Another unique activity that the event is known for are the swaps. Teenagers from discussions all over brought different hats, scarves, necklaces and other items to trade. In the beginning, the BBHS contingent were all matching with frog backpacks. By the end, almost every single person had traded at least once. Through this we got to meet new people and share our experiences. We also made clothespins to clip onto people’s bags sharing encouraging messages, candy, contact information, etc. It became a game to see who could clip the most people, only to find out you’d been clipped yourself. It was so much fun, as several personal stories made the time exciting.

(Continued on page 13)
Recycled not retired — the life of Sister Georgia Marie

Tom Ziegler  
Staff writer

Meeting the Prime Minister of Ireland, chatting with Jesse Owens during his Olympic days and telling him to share them with the class as Sister Georgia realigned her teaching career. Sister Georgia explained that as a teacher you never realize the impact you have on students until they come back years later to tell how much they appreciated something you did for them. “And sometimes you have to pause, think for a minute, and say, ‘Wow, I did that!’” she said with a chuckle.

Recently, at the Covington Latin School art show, Sister Georgia ran into one of her former geography students. The student was so inspired by Sister’s class that she has traveled many miles to visit there in the spring. Sister Georgia’s reply to her student was “I’m jealous” as she laughed heartily.

After her 40-year teaching career at elementary and high schools across the tri-state area Sister Georgia retired, but still loves the motto “cura personalis,” a Latin phrase which means “care of the person.” She picked up the phrase from the Jesuit priests during her time teaching at St. Xavier.

Retirement has not slowed down Sister Georgia; in fact, she might be busier than before. Sister Georgia now distributes holy Communion to the elderly in Kenton County who are physically unable to attend Mass. Additionally, Sister Georgia sends these individualized cards every year during the holidays. Three years ago she also began delivering ornaments to these individuals for Christmas.

When she is not caring for the elderly, Sister Georgia is helping others in need. She spends her Mondays distributing goods at the St. Bernard Food Pantry in Dayton. The pantry was founded by one of her fellow sisters over 40 years ago and Sister Georgia has never missed a Monday pantry shift. Last week the pantry distributed to families everything they would need to have a nice Thanksgiving meal and next week the pantry will stuff Christmas baskets with the help of students from Newport Central Catholic.

To top off this retirement schedule, Sister Georgia is still working as a substitute teacher at Covington Catholic where she has been given her new nickname, “the man,” by CCH stu

(Continued on page 13)
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) 760-3335.

The NKU Catholic Newman Club Knights of Columbus have weekly meetings Tuesdays, 6 p.m., at the Newman Center. Contact manzo@ymail.nku.edu if you’re a Catholic man interested in joining.

Do you have family or a friend in jail or prison? Are you looking for a safe, welcoming community where you will be accepted without judgement? Come to Catholic Charities, Latvia, the 3rd Tuesday of the month from 6:30–7:30 p.m. Questions? Contact Dave Capella at dacapel-la@covingtoncharities.org or (609) 581-8974 ext. 117.

Comboni Missionaries, Cincinnati, is offering a Breakfast in Bethlehem. Dec. 4, 8:30–11:30 a.m., pancake breakfast, face painting, arts and crafts, games and prizes. Cost $3 per person; $10 per family. RSVP by Nov. 29, nolan@combonimissionaries.org.

Nativity sets from around the world will be on display at Bishop Brossart High School, Alexandria. The display will feature nativity sets made by artists and craftsmen from 78 different countries. Free to the public on the following days: Sundays, Dec. 5, 12, 18, 19, 26, 10 a.m.–4 p.m.; Saturday, Dec. 18, 10 a.m.–4 p.m. and Friday, Dec. 24, 9 a.m.–noon.

Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington, Day of Recollection Dec. 4, 9–11:30 a.m., with Father Conor Kunath. Learn St. Ignatius’ ‘Examen’ a devotional exercise used to see God’s work in your life. No charge, no pre-registration.

Christmas at the Basilica: Community Lessons & Carols. Dec. 6, 7:30 p.m., come celebrate Thomas More University’s Centennial and join the Thomas More University music program, Boone County High School Choir, and the choir of St. Timothy in an evening of readings and choral works at the historic Basilica Cathedral of the Assumption, Covington. Dr. Daniel Parsley and organist Sara Tobe lead all three Thomas More choirs and are joined by Thomas More University’s brass faculty, student instrumental ensembles, and student soloists to lead holiday carols and hymns celebrating the Advent and Christmas seasons. Free admission. Masks required.

The Newport Central Catholic Drama Club will perform “Whodunit… And To Whom?” a spoof of the classic gumshoe story, in the school’s Ciafardini Family Black Box Theatre. Showtimes are: Dec. 10, 7 p.m.; Dec. 11, 2 and 7 p.m.; and Dec. 12, 5 p.m. Get your tickets today at Showtix4u.com.

The Diocese of Covington’s 27th annual live nativity scene is up at St. Pius X Parish, Edgewood. The crib blessing will be Dec. 18 after the 4:30 p.m. Mass. Families, friends, groups and organizations are welcome to participate as actors, actresses to bring the events of Christ’s birth to life Dec 18–23, 8:30–7:30 p.m. Chairs are welcome to add their gift of music; students can earn service hours for their participation. For scheduling a group or family call Doug Kefert, 384-3689 or e-mail dkeifert@twc.com.

The Pro-Life Office is organizing a trip to Washington, D.C., for the Annual March for Life, which will take place Jan. 21. Included in the trip is round-trip airfare, one night’s hotel accommodation and ground transportation to and from the airport and hotel. Limited seating available. Depart late morning, Jan. 20; return evening Jan. 21. Cost per person, double occupancy room: $812. Rooms are also available for those providing their own transportation. The Marriott Metro Center is located centrally in downtown Washington, D.C. Cost for room: $210. Limited availability. Contact Peggy Piccola in the Pro-Life office, at 529-1569 or ppiccola@covdio.org.

Eagle Scout
Alex Parnitzke, parishioner, St. Henry Parish, Elsmere, and 2021 St. Henry District High School graduate, celebrates with family after earning the rank of Eagle Scout. He is a member of St. Henry Troop 76.

Thanksgiving Day parade
Second and fifth-graders at St. Agnes School, Ft. Wright, team-up for a STEM activity making Thanksgiving Day parade balloons.

Patience people
Students at St. Pius X School, Edgewood, held an Advent prayer service Nov. 29. Father Baiju, pastor, spoke on the virtue of patience and preparing for the coming of Christ.
For Waukesha Catholic community, parade tragedy’s devastation ‘runs deep’
Colleen Jurkiewicz
Catholic News Service

WAUKESHA, Wis. — It began as an evening of “comfort and joy” — that was the theme for the 38th annual Waukesha Christmas Parade.

But the evening of Nov. 21, ended in horror just under an hour after the parade began, when a man driving an SUV burst through barricades along the parade route and barreled down Waukesha’s Main Street, striking marchers and attendees.

Five people were killed at the scene and more than 60 others were injured, including the Catholic Community of Waukesha’s Father Pat Heppe. The senior pastor of Cathedral Memorial High School, told the Catholic Herald, newspaper of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee. “We face this with God, and we face this with Jesus, and we face this with prayer.”

For those of you who do not live in Waukesha, you need to know that Waukesha is a community that helps its neighbors,” he said. “Waukesha looks after each other.”

Facilitating that unity is the best thing the Catholic Community of Waukesha can do at the moment, said Father Wrobel. “People need God, and they need him right now, and we need to help them to see that he’s here. Them coming together — I believe that is one of the most healing things that can happen,” he said.

“We’re aware that parishioners are injured, we’ve been in contact with the families and that’s really all the details we can give,” said Monica Cardenas, director of stewardship and communication for the Catholic Community of Waukesha.

Cardenas said that Father Heppe had been hospitalized for minor injuries and released the day after the parade. Father Matthew Widder, the current pastor of the community’s four parishes, also was present at the parade.

It was the first time the community, which includes the parishes of St. John Neumann, St. William, St. Mary and St. Joseph as well as Catholic Memorial High School and the Waukesha Catholic School System, had walked together in the parade, and it was supposed to be the beginning of a beautiful annual tradition, said Cardenas.

“They’re devastated because of the great, close-knit community that Waukesha is, and the love for this community that extends well beyond graduation,” she said.

Widder added that Cathedral Memorial has been “getting calls from alumni all over the country” who have heard about the tragedy.

“We’ve been called to help. We’ve been called to be the hands that Jesus would have used to help those who are in need.”

The Catholic Community of Waukesha group had just gathered for a bilingual prayer service Nov. 22 at Catholic Memorial High School for a community Mass Nov. 22, 2021. A driver plowed through a holiday parade in the Milwaukee suburb Nov. 21, killing five people at the scene and injuring more than 60 others. People in Waukesha, Wis., gather at Catholic Memorial High School for a community Mass Nov. 22, 2021. A driver plowed through a holiday parade in the Milwaukee suburb Nov. 21, killing five people at the scene and injuring more than 60 others.

We recognize that people grieve and process in different ways,” she said. “That is going to be a long-term need for our community, and we want to make sure we have the right resources for employees, for our students, for our students’ families.”

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The lonely can find an ‘ally’ in St. Joseph, pope says at audience

Jeanne Arocho Esteves
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — As the guardian of Jesus and Mary, St. Joseph’s reassuring presence is an example for Christians who are called to care for the lonely and those who struggle in their lives, Pope Francis said.

In a society where relationships are constantly in flux, St. Joseph’s life and example give “a clear indication of the importance of human bonds,” the pope said during his weekly general audience Nov. 24.

“Joseph, with his life, seems to want to tell us that we are always called to feel that we are the guardians of our brothers and sisters, the custodians of those placed close to us, of those whom the Lord entrusts to us through the circumstances of life,” he said.

Before the general audience, the pope went to St. Peter’s Basilica to meet with several large groups of pilgrims unable to enter the Paul VI audience hall due to their numbers, including a group led by the Vincentian Fathers who were in Rome to commemorate the feast of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal.

According to a communique released by the Vincentians, the meeting was the “culmination and the continuation” of a yearlong Italian pilgrimage with a statue of Mary the pope blessed last year to mark the 190th anniversary of the Marian apparitions to St. Catherine Labouré.

It was during the second apparition, in November 1830, that St. Catherine said Mary told her to make medals of the image she was seeing — Mary, standing on a globe, with the words “O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to you” written as an oval frame around her.

The pope also welcomed pilgrims from the St. John Paul II Association and the Italian Association for Victims of Violence before making his way to the audience hall.

At the audience, Pope Francis continued his new series of talks on St. Joseph, reflecting on his role in the history of salvation.

Recalling St. Matthew’s compilation of Jesus’ genealogy, the pope said that although St. Joseph is not Jesus’ biological father, he is still “the father of Jesus” and “is in fact a central element in the history of salvation.”

“Everyone can find in St. Joseph — the man who goes unnoticed, the man of daily, discreet and hidden presence — an intercessor, a support and a guide in times of difficulty,” the pope said. “He reminds us that all those who are seemingly hidden or in the ‘second row’ have unparalleled agency in the history of salvation.”

While St. Luke described St. Joseph as the “guardian of Jesus and Mary,” the pope said his protection extends to the whole Church and is a reminder for Christians “that our lives are made up of bonds that precede and accompany us.”

“Charity is the cement which binds communities to God and persons to one another.” — Saint Vincent de Paul.

Before concluding his talk, Pope Francis led those present in praying that those who “lack the strength and courage to go on” in their lives may find in St. Joseph “an ally, a friend and a support.”

“St. Joseph, you who guarded the bond with Mary and Jesus, help us to care for the relationships in our lives,” the pope prayed. “May no one experience the sense of abandonment that comes from loneliness.”

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.

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Pope Francis greets a sleeping baby during his general audience in St. Peter’s Basilica at the Vatican Nov. 24, 2021.
Climate talks: From ‘blah, blah, blah’ to spurring action rooted in care

By Carol Glatz
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — After two weeks of talks among world leaders at the 26th U.N. Climate Change Conference, there were plenty of tense tweets and editorial hashtags offering varying assessments of the final Glasgow Climate Pact.

Some disappointed commentators on Twitter called COP26 a “COPout26” and climate activist Greta Thunberg told BBC Scotland Nov. 15 that while there were some “small steps forward,” the final agreement, on the whole, “succeeded in watering down the ‘blah, blah, blah,’ which is quite an achievement.”

Even António Guterres, secretary-general of the United Nations, called the final deal “a compromise” on Twitter Nov. 13. “It’s an important step, but it’s not enough. It’s time to go into emergency mode. The climate battle is the fight of our lives & that fight must be won.”

Even though promises and practical action fell short in the final agreement, “we are on a road from which there is no turning back. The level of realization from right across the world that we need to act and act with urgency is no turning back. The level of realization from right across the world that we need to act and act with urgency absolutely took place,” Allen said.

The pope’s 2015 encyclical, “Laudato Si,’” has “cascaded to other parts of the church, with so many new initiatives, deepened reflection and increased personal commitment and by the Vatican delegation,” Allen said. “What I thought was significant this year was, and I think this reflects some things Pope Francis has been calling us to do, is that broader ecological conversion,” she said.

Development launched the Laudato Si’ Action Platform Nov. 14, which shows “the church is really coming together” and really pushing for it.”

The Vatican Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, the Vatican’s development agency in England and Wales, which had a representative on the Vatican delegation.

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QuickBooks knowledge preferred but is not required.
If interested please send your resume to Renee Murphy at Renee.Murphy@milant.com.

PART-TIME CUSTODIAN
Notre Dame Academy (NDA) is searching for a part-time custodian to assist with facility cleaning, trash removal, event setups, and other routine housekeeping and maintenance tasks. Regular hours are from 6:30PM to 9:00PM, Monday through Friday, but schedule can be somewhat flexible.
This position requires the physical ability to walk and stand for long periods of time, as well as the ability to lift and move equipment and supplies up to 50lbs. Custodial experience is preferred. A high school diploma or GED equivalent, background check, valid driver’s license and Virtus training is required.
Please submit letter of interest, resume, and salary requirements to ndahr@ndapanadas.org.

ASSEMBLER
A small company in Florence, KY with more than 30 years’ experience producing medical products for veterinarians is seeking workers for permanent part-time or permanent fulltime positions, up to 40 hours per week. This production position involves the assembly and packaging of lightweight items in a clean room environment. Candidate must be detail oriented, able to handle small parts, and dependable.
Please email resume or work history to Renee Murphy@milant.com.

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TG DNOW HIRING - St. Mary Parish is in need of two cleaning technicians for our school. One position is full-time, the other position is part-time, both are 2nd shift. Great pay and full benefits.
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Opportunities to Serve at Catholic Charities
Do you have a desire to find your purpose? Are you passionate about witnessing your faith by serving others?
Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Covington has a few open paid positions that may be the perfect opportunity to fit your calling:

School-based Counselor is a master’s level position in our school-based counseling program, which works together serving 13 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 5 fulltime 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. Other duties include maintaining 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 pursuing independent licensing.

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

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

Music Director
Saint Joseph Catholic Church in Crescent Springs is seeking talented keyboard musicians interested in the position of Music Director. The successful candidate will be proficient on the piano and/or organ, knowledgeable about the Catholic liturgy and sacred music, and capable of leading congregational singing/chant and of training and leading a choir. Must be available to lead three masses each weekend: 5 pm Saturday, and 9 am and 11 am Sunday, plus availability to lead on major religious feasts and holidays. This is a competitively-paying part-time position. Interested candidates may submit a letter of interest and resume to the Parish office by email to salcm@stjosephcrescents.com.

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12 December 3, 2021 Messenger
NCYC provides a strong example of the amazing youth movement that is dedicated to share their experiences with us during sessions through music, prayer, and testimony. They helped inspire the rest of us by showing us that what we do is powerful and meaningful for the Church. Imagine looking around at 12,000 people during adoration, all sharing the same yet individual experience of being moved by God. The room was truly “Ablaze.”

While all of the headlines made the experience unforgettable, it was the little things that tied it all together. Spending that much time with a fantastic group of young people who shared a faith so important to me was amazing. Although we were all exhausted, it was entirely worth it.

There was so much laughter, some tears, and so many memories that were made. This was easily a favorite trip — 2023 is just around the corner! I hope you’ll join us!

Emilie Zengel is a high school student and parishioner at St. Mary Parish, Alexandria. She has been volunteering as a Messenger Junior Correspondent, exploring parish youth groups and events. See related article page 6.

(right) The inside of Lucas Oil Stadium is filled with youth from around the country for the 2021 National Catholic Youth Conference, Nov. 18-20.

Enjoyed article page 6.

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“Encanto” (Disney) Vivacious animated musical about a teen girl living in an enchanted enclave in Colombia who is the sole member of her family not to have received a supernatural talent granted years before to the last uncle on the verge of fulfillment. Amid colorful visuals and catchy songs by Lin-Manuel Miranda, the script, penned by Charise Castro Smith and Jared Bush (both of whom cowrote with Byron Howard), delivers worthy messages about community service, cooperation and family reconciliation. Yet, while the sequestered setting includes a Catholic church whose amiable, briefly glimpsed priest is shown to be a local leader, the strong emphasis on magic, including divination, together with the dangers through which the protagonist passes, may be a source of concern for the parents of impressionable youngsters. Nonscriptural beliefs and practices, characters in peril. CNS: A-II, MPAA: PG.

“House of Gucci” (MGM) Despite its tragic ending, for most of its running time this fact-based dynastic saga, fueled by tumultuous emotions, has the feel of a high-end soap opera. Lady Gaga plays a middle-class woman who marries into the titular fashion family her unsuitable new husband, a law student, would rather steer clear of both of the clan’s business empire and of its tangled relationships. But she has other ideas, and together they become caught up in the shifting alliances and rivalries among her imperious father-in-law, his son, a dastardly brother and business partner and the latter’s eccentric, harebrained son. Glossy and well-acted, but marred by an unnecessarily explicit liaison between the two principals in the lead-up to their wedding, director Ridley Scott’s adaptation of Sara Gay Forden’s 2001 book “The House of Gucci” is a hot-house affair that may prove a guilty pleasure for those grown-ups willing to overlook its fleeting detour into offensiveness. A scene of graphic premarital sexual activity, including an aberrant act, a glimpse of rear nudity, an adultery theme, cohabitation, momentary irreverence, at least one use of profanity, a couple of milder oaths, frequent rough and much crude language. CNS: O, MPAA: R.

“Resident Evil: Welcome to Raccoon City” (Screen Gems) A corrupt corporation has poisoned the water supply of the titular factory town, transforming most of its inhabitants into flesh-eating zombies. Among their targets are a police officer, his estranged sister and three of his colleagues. Writer-director Johannes Roberts’ reboot of the videogame-based franchise in a drab ordeal, and the initially somewhat restrained bloodletting by which it’s characterized eventually turns into a foul flood. Excessive gore violence, gruesome images, numerous uses of profanity about a half-dozen milder oaths, pervasive rough and much crude language. CNS: O, MPAA: R.

For full reviews of each of these films — go to catholicnews.com and click on “Extras,” then choose “Movies.” Catholic News Service (CNS) classifications are:

- A-I — general patronage;
- A-II — adults and adolescents;
- A-III — adults;
- L — limited adult audience;
- O — morally offensive.

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National/World

All eyes are on Supreme Court for its biggest abortion case in decades

WASHINGTON — When the Supreme Court hears oral arguments Dec. 1 for the biggest abortion case in decades, all eyes — and ears — will be on the court. Diocesan websites across the country have posted links to the arguments as well as resources for priests and pastors, but it is likely most of the nation’s high court, Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization, is an appeal from Mississippi to keep its ban on abortions after 15 weeks of pregnancy. This ban was struck down by a federal District Court in Mississippi in 2018 and upheld a year later by the New Orleans-based U.S. Court of Appeals for the 5th Circuit. The Mississippi law is being challenged by the state’s only abortion facility, the Jackson Women’s Health Organization.

Catholic church burned as Myanmar military continues assault

YANGON, Myanmar — Myanmar’s military continues to target churches in predominantly Christian regions in the Buddhist-majority country, ignoring appeals by the Catholic Church and world leaders, reported ucanews.com. The latest military assault on Christians in Myanmar’s ethnic regions is not the first time the minority has been attacked and targeted. St. Nicholas Catholic Church burned as Myanmar military continues assault.

Churches, including four churches, have been destroyed by military, which ruled for more than five decades. The latest attack came within a couple of days of an arson attack, including four churches, have been destroyed by military, which ruled for more than five decades. The latest attack came within a couple of days of an arson attack, including 43 churches, 11 mosques and 200 homes, including four churches, being burned to the ground. More than 300 houses, including four churches, have been destroyed by military arson attacks in the town since September. In the predominantly Christian states of Kayah and Chin, more than 130,000 civilians have been forced to seek refuge in churches, convents and makeshift camps even as armed soldiers continued arson attacks.

Teacher fired by Catholic school wins appeal to continue lawsuit

WASHINGTON — The Indiana Court of Appeals ruled Nov. 23 that an Indiana trial court “committed reversible error” when it dismissed a former teacher’s lawsuit against the Archdiocese of Indianapolis earlier this year. The unanimous decision by the appellate court’s panel allows the initial lawsuit filed by the teacher, who was fired from a Catholic school, to move forward. The case involves Joshua Payne-Elliott, a former world language and social studies teacher at Cathedral High School in Indianapolis who was fired in June 2019. Payne-Elliott claimed the Archdiocese of Indianapolis illegally interfered with his contract with the school where he had been teaching for 15 years by mandating that all Catholic schools in the archdiocese enforce a morals-clause that did not permit employees to be in same-sex marriages. Payne-Elliott married Layton Payne-Elliott, a teacher at Brebeuf Jesuit Preparatory School, also in Indianapolis, in 2017. Indiana’s Marion County Superior Court dismissed Payne-Elliott’s lawsuit against the Archdiocese of Indianapolis in May, which the former teacher appealed. The Indianapolis Archdiocese had asked a lower court to dismiss the suit when it was initially filed, saying it went against the First Amendment’s guarantees of religious freedom.

Congress urged to pass Conscience Protection Act for health care workers

WASHINGTON — U.S. Rep. Andy Harris, R-Md., has urged Congress to pass the Conscience Protection Act. It would amend the Public Health Service Act to prohibit government discrimination against health care providers who, on serious moral or religious grounds, strongly object to participating in medical procedures, namely abortion. Harris, a Catholic physician, reintroduced the measure Nov. 19 and is one of 100 Republican lawmakers who support the bill. Baltimore Archbishop William E. Lori, chairman of the U.S. bishops’ Committee on Pro-Life Activities, endorsed the measure. According to Harris, the bill is needed because of various actions by the Biden administration, including its dismissal earlier this year of a government suit against a Vermont hospital for violating nurses’ objections, on moral grounds, to participating in abortion. Harris said in a statement that, earlier this year, Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra, who also is a Catholic, had made a commitment to him and U.S. Rep. Congressionman Tom Cole, R-Okla., as members of the House Appropriations Committee, that “he would ensure the protection of the legal rights of conscience for providers — but sadly this has not occurred.” In July the Department of Justice dropped a lawsuit initially filed in 2018 against the University of Vermont Medical Center after it was found to have violated existing conscience statutes on multiple occasions.

HHS rescinds rule protecting faith-based foster care, adoption agencies

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Nov. 14 rescinded a Trump administration rule that all Catholic schools in the archdiocese enforce a morals-clause that did not permit employees to be in same-sex marriages. Payne-Elliott married Layton Payne-Elliott, a teacher at Brebeuf Jesuit Preparatory School, also in Indianapolis, in 2017. Indiana’s Marion County Superior Court dismissed Payne-Elliott’s lawsuit against the Archdiocese of Indianapolis in May, which the former teacher appealed. The Indianapolis Archdiocese had asked a lower court to dismiss the suit when it was initially filed, saying it went against the First Amendment’s guarantees of religious freedom.

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) earlier this year of a government suit against a Vermont hospital for violating nurses’ objections, on moral grounds, to participating in abortion. Harris said in a statement that, earlier this year, Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra, who also is a Catholic, had made a commitment to him and U.S. Rep. Congressionman Tom Cole, R-Okla., as members of the House Appropriations Committee, that “he would ensure the protection of the legal rights of conscience for providers — but sadly this has not occurred.” In July the Department of Justice dropped a lawsuit initially filed in 2018 against the University of Vermont Medical Center after it was found to have violated existing conscience statutes on multiple occasions.

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