Blessed Sacrament School celebrates its 2021 Blue Ribbon designation

Laura Keener

The school community of Blessed Sacrament School, Ft. Mitchell, came together, Jan. 29, to celebrate its — not first, not second, not even third — but its fourth National Blue Ribbon designation from the U.S. Department of Education. Blessed Sacrament School is the first in the Diocese of Covington and one of only 26 schools across the United States to earn four or more Blue Ribbon designations.

The school has been making plans for the celebration since the designation was announced in September 2021. And while four Blue Ribbons is quite an achievement, for Dan Steffen, principal, what stands out about the 2021 Blue Ribbon is that it was earned and applied for during COVID years — a time when teaching and learning was disrupted and exhausting, with the entire country immersed in a collective malaise.

“When we completed the application, it was year two of COVID and the scores we were looking at and using are from year one of COVID,” said Mr. Steffen. “During year one of COVID — the 2019-2020 school year — students left their classrooms on a Friday in March for what was thought would be a two-week break to mitigate the spread of the coronavirus. They never returned to their classrooms and instead scrambled to remote learning — a style of learning that at the time was a mere concept at the elementary school level.

“The fact that our students achieved at that level, which is in the 85th percentile or above in reading and in math in grades 3 through 8 — it’s got to be every grade level from the same testing session, from the same year — during that COVID year, I think is really impressive for them,” he said.

And while the pandemic lingers on, at Blessed Sacrament School there was no sign of weariness as they celebrated their Blue Ribbon. An overnight snow delayed the opening of the school day but added to the excitement as the students gathered for an all-school Mass on Jan. 28, its 2021 National Blue Ribbon designation. (left) Bishop John Iffert celebrated Mass then (above and right) toured the school for a reverse parade, with Dan Steffen, principal, leading the way carrying the Blue Ribbon Award and students and teachers lining the halls, cheering in celebration.

Bishop John Iffert was the celebrant with the feast of St. Thomas Aquinas. Bishop Iffert was the celebrant with Father Damian Hils, pastor, and Father Augustine Aidoo, parochial vicar, concelebrating and Deacons James Hayne and James Fertner assisting.

In his homily Bishop Iffert encouraged the students to take to heart a teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas, that it is only in Christ Jesus where true happiness is found. That true happiness cannot be found in power, wealth, glory or material things because attaining these only leaves a desire for more. God is the source of all good and it is in seeking him where true and everlasting happiness, peace and joy are found.

Let us all seek to answer like St. Thomas Aquinas when Jesus asked him what he desires, “Only you, Lord.”

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CareNet opens its third care center expanding its life-giving services for moms and babies

Tom Ziegler
Staff Writer

The CareNet Pregnancy Centers of Northern Kentucky just opened a new location in Williamstown, Grant County, and invited Bishop John Iffert down for a blessing of the facility’s new ultrasound machine donated by the Knights of Columbus. CareNet was presented with an additional donation from the Knights of Columbus after a brief meet and greet.

The blessing ceremony began with a prayer. Lyndi Zembrodt, director, CareNet, recognized donors, volunteers and staff members that have been a tremendous help to CareNet and its clients, thanking those who have supported CareNet’s mission and work. Bishop Iffert led a blessing of the facility and a new ultrasound machine, praying that God’s healing presence would be realized by every client through the use of the machine and the help of staff members.

“Being able to serve clients in this area with ultrasound is just a huge asset to promote life and get clients early access to care,” said Tara Rapp, director of client services. “We are only two weeks in and already looking to expand our medical services.”

Last year CareNet performed over 300 ultrasounds. “The more you scan the more you promote life,” Ms. Rapp said. Ms. Rapp said that regardless of a client’s decision or circumstance, the ultrasound allows CareNet to show clients the life they are carrying.

The Williamstown location has been open since Jan. 28 and already has a full schedule of appointments booked this coming week, showing the immediate impact that is being made in the community.

CareNet is excited to extend its reach and build on its 2021 impact. Last year CareNet served 521 clients, moms and/or couples, providing 2,070 parenting and other education classes. Since 2006 the usage of ultrasound machines, to show a confirmation of the beginning of life, has contributed to the confirmed births of 1,210 babies—a number that is still growing.

Ms. Zembrodt said that the location in Williamstown is attainable for CareNet because of a generous leasing agreement supporting its mission and ministry. CareNet is excited to offer medical services at its city (Florence), residential (Cold Spring) and rural (Williamstown) locations for women in need. It is important for CareNet to have these services and locations available for the wide variety of women they serve throughout the entire Northern Kentucky community.

“The youngest client we had in my experience was 12 years old, and the oldest was 42,” Ms. Rapp said. CareNet welcomes volunteers to help with its ministry. The people who serve at CareNet are passionate about what they do, caring for every woman they serve with love and compassion with the goal of truly educating women on their dignity and the dignity of their baby. Community support shows the value of CareNet’s work, and this new Williamstown location is another blessing and step forward.

Deacon Freeman retires

The diocesan Curia celebrated, Jan. 27, the retirement of Deacon Peter Freeman. Since October 2016 Deacon Freeman has been director of the Office of Liturgy and Worship. Deacon Freeman will continue his assignment at St. Philip Parish, Melbourne. Pictured above at the retirement luncheon are (from left) Bishop John Iffert, Deacon Freeman and his wife, Tess. At the luncheon, the Curia staff joined Bishop Iffert in praying for Deacon Freeman and Tess as they begin this next part of their life together.
The Newman Knights at NKU

Tom Ziegler
Staff writer

“God bless the Knights. They are my brothers,” said Sam Manzo, president of the NKU Knights of Columbus. “I remember always wanting brothers when I was little, so I prayed to God for one. Fast forward to my life present day; I now have an abundance of brothers by my side. We hold each other accountable, and I thank God every day for each one of them that I’ve met and for each one I haven’t met yet.”

The Knights of Columbus council at Northern Kentucky University started last summer. Students were gathering as the Knights of Columbus before them, but they were not officially recognized by the University until this past summer. To become an organization at Northern Kentucky University the Knights needed a faculty member advisor to sponsor them. José Saavedra-Torres became the Knights of Columbus’ advisor so they would be a formally recognized student organization at NKU. The Newman Knights of Columbus became an official student group at NKU in July 2021.

Mr. Saavedra-Torres came to NKU’s Catholic Newman Center one night and was introduced to the Knights of Columbus. When he found out they needed a faculty sponsor he said, “Sure why not.”

After going through about two or three months of paperwork and approval, the Newman Knights are officially a student group at NKU.

“There was a new regional director for college councils and in the year of St. Joseph we had been praying, Lord what do you want to do, and it is so amazing about men ministering to men,” Mrs. Hiem said.

The Newman Knights of Columbus currently has 12 members, “Which is what Jesus started with,” said Mrs. Hiem. The order needs 20 to form an official national Knights of Columbus council. Becoming a national council will allow members to join outside of the NKU student community. The Knights’ goal is to be a pipeline from NKU into the surrounding community. The Knights meet on Tuesdays from 6-7 p.m. and their meetings flow into a bible study that takes place afterwards.

“Before Christmas I remember talking about the sacred mysteries of the rosary, diving deep into what they mean and how we are to interpret what the mysteries are telling us, and I remember that being a wonderful time,” said Ryan Carraro, a member of the Newman Knights. The Knights’ activities tend to follow what goes on in the world. On the week leading up to the pro-life march, the Knights had some pro-life activities on campus and discussed the gift of life at their meeting. The Knights attend Mass on Wednesdays at St. Joseph Church, Cold Spring, at 6:30 a.m., sometimes 8:30 a.m., followed by discussion. “We have these wonderful discussions on the Mass and daily readings along with any other topics that help deepen our understanding of the faith. It really is a beautiful thing, one of my favorite parts of the week,” Mr. Carraro said.

The Knights’ activities reflect this brotherhood built in Christ. Many of them went on the Newman Center’s mission trip, traveled to Washington, D.C. for the March for Life, volunteered at CareNet Pregnancy Center moving supplies to their new location, and assisting with various construction projects, usually demolition.

“That sense of brotherhood, but the brotherhood in Christ – really, Christ being the center of the guys and seeing them transform their spirituality through that is really encouraging for me as a seminarian going to be a priest,” Mr. Baumann said. Donna Hiem added that there seems to be more “openness” to the priesthood and other vocations through the Knights.

“We would love to have more people join and I would like for us to do more in the community this semester.” Mr. Manzo said. “Whether it is helping in a soup kitchen, cleaning a church, helping other Knights of Columbus Councils, just reach out to us and the Newman Center. We’re here to help.”

José Saavedra, adviser, NKU Knights of Columbus, (left) and Ryan, a NKU Knights of Columbus member, share how the Knights of Columbus at NKU came about at the Catholic Newman center: The Knights have 12 members and need eight more to become a national council.
The Parable of the Good Samaritan – the model of Christian charity

The Oxford American Desk Dictionary and Thesaurus defines "Samaritan" as "a charitable or helpful person." But the modern usage of the term discloses a paradox, for a former synonym for opprobrium has evolved into a positive metaphor for compassion and charity. Now it is taken for granted that persons, institutions (especially health care facilities), programs and laws can procedurally be designated "Good Samaritan." Such a meaning would simply not be the case in the original setting of Jesus' story of the Good Samaritan. On the contrary, not even the wildest dreams of observers Jews in Jerusalem at the time of Jesus would have visualized a Samaritan as "neighbor." In that religious culture Samaritans symbolized a class of social and religious outcasts.

Moreover, the positive connotations of that image tend to have domesticated its raw evocative power conveyed in the historical context of Jesus' parable of the "Good Samaritan." Father Timothy Radcliffe, O.P., has incisively explained both the dynamics of the New Testament parables and, in particular, their impact as demonstrated in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37).

Regarding the Gospel parables, the former provincial of the Dominican Province of Great Britain, observes: "Jesus' parables should catch us and carry us away. We find ourselves inside parables and they transform us. Jesus' parables usually did this by shocking people. The trouble is that we know them so well that they do not often surprise us. It is like listening to a joke when we know the punch line. We have to rediscover the sense of surprise.

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

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

Without doubt, a despised Samaritan, one who stood outside the covenant, could never be viewed as an example of the fulfillment of the Law. In line with this standard interpretation by biblical scholars, Father Eugene LaVerdiere, S.S.S., comments that the "mistrusted and despised" Samaritan "cared for the Good Samaritan in a manner which far surpassed ordinary obligation and sense of decency."

The exegesis of the parable rendered by Pope Benedict XVI in his encyclical Deus Caritas Est (“God is Love,” 2005) offers a succinct summary of the parable’s revolutionary teaching on the meaning of "neighbor." In Part I of his inaugural encyclical, the Holy Father states: “Until that time, the concept of ‘neighbor’ was understood as referring essentially to one’s countrymen and to foreigners who had settled in the land of Israel; in other words, to the closely-knit community of a single country or people. This limit is now abolished. Anyone who needs me, and whom I can help, is my neighbor.”

Pope Benedict XVI concludes that the parable of the Good Samaritan universalizes the concept of "neighbor," a scope of responsibility that is at the same time not simply abstract and generic but concrete and calling “for my own practical commitment here and now” (DCE, n.15). Part II of Deus Caritas Est develops the theme of "The Practice of Love by the Church as a Community of Love."

“This the Church is God’s family in the world.

In this family no one ought to go without the necessities of life. Yet at the same time caritas – agape extends beyond the frontiers of the Church.

The parable of the Good Samaritan remains as a standard which imposes universal love towards the needy whom we encounter ‘by chance’ (cf. Luke 10:31), whoever they may be.”

Pope Benedict XVI, Deus Caritas Est

The Church stands as “a communitarian initiative,” spontaneouss individual initiatives must be integrated with “planning, foresight, and cooperation with other similar institutions.” In "Experiencing Jesus," Jesuit Father Gerald O’Collins reflects on the relationship of spirituality to the world’s mercy: “A heart that sees” is formed by persuasiveness in prayer: “Those who live in loving and prayerful familiarity with Jesus will have the strength to go and imitate the selfless compassion of the Good Samaritan. Those who generously and actively serve their neighbors will do so because prayer has shown them the face of Jesus in the sick, the old, and the dying.”

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

Msgr. Ronald Ketteler is director of ecumenism, episcopal liaison to the Messenger and theologian in residence at Thomas More University.
Kabir, a 15th century Hindu mystic, writes: “What you call ‘salvation’ belongs to the time before death. If you don’t break your ropes while you’re alive, do you think ghosts will do it after?”

If what is found now is found then.

If you find nothing new, you will simply end up with an apartment in the City of Death.

If you make love with the divine now, in the next life you will have the face of satisfied desire.

To make love with the divine, I suspect most of us will picture that as a warm, privatized, affective intimacy, the way we imagine romantic love, except where the other partner is God. Indeed, Christian mystical literature abounds with images of this kind, as does the Gospel of John. There’s nothing wrong with that, except that such a conception is over-idealized and over-personalized. Making love with the divine— if Jesus is to be believed— is something more approachable and communal than our affective image of intimacy.

How do we make love with the divine in this life? I have always taught that there are four non-negotiables to Christian discipleship: moral fidelity in our private lives, a commitment to social justice, some involvement within ecclesial community, and a mellifluous, gracious heart. We make love to the divine by living out these in our lives. To make this more approachable, let me suggest that making love with the divine in this life asks 10 things of us.

A moral fidelity in our private lives: Scripture tells us, that those who love God keep his commandments and those who say they love him but don’t keep his commandments are liars. Moreover, it tells us that we are inside a body within which even our most private actions affect everyone else. We make love with the divine by not harboring any dark, hidden secrets.

An effort to live out our lives inside of community: We are called to live our lives and come to God inside of a community. We cannot make love with God alone. It’s always God, others, and ourselves. When we stand before God in judgment, as Charles Peguy suggests, we will be asked, “Where are the others?” Making love with the divine means being both spiritual and religious.

A mellow heart that radiates gratitude and forgiveness: Like the older brother of the prodigal son, we can do all the right things, but with the wrong energy. We make love with God by fostering our lives with gratitude rather than bitterness, and by forgiving others (and God) for life’s unfairness and all the things that have wounded us.

A proactive reaching out to the poor and a perennial concern for justice to the world: We cannot make love with God inside an intimacy that does not also take in the poor and the broken. Likewise, we cannot make love with God when we are indifferent to injustice. As Jesus makes clear: a private personal relationship with God never compensates for (in)difference to the poor and to injustice.

A life lived in love: If we refuse to lie no matter how inconvenient: To make love with the divine is to live in the truth. Satan is the prince of lies. The single most dangerous thing we can do spiritually is to refuse to acknowledge what is true, and the single most important way we make love with God is to value lies.

A childlikeness that never falls into the illusion of self-sufficiency: Life may never be taken for granted, but only as granted. We make love to the divine by never living in the illusion of self-sufficiency, by acknowledging always that life is a gift and that we are dependent and interdependent creatures. A perennial effort to love those who hate us, to not give back in kind: We make love with the divine whenever we love those who hate us. We make love with the divine whenever we accept to love our enemies, and for those who hurt us. This is its very essence.

A heart open to God’s eternal banquet table is open to everyone who is willing to sit down with everyone. Since God loves everyone, we make love with the divine by letting God’s universal embrace.

A habitual openness to God’s eternal banquet within our lives: We make love with the divine by letting God’s energy flourish through our lives, namely, when we let the divine energy inside us be joyous and generative so as to radiate life no matter what cards we are dealt.

A willingness to wait, to live in patience: We make love with the divine whenever we accept to live in patience, to wait according to God’s schedule, not according to our own dictates. We make love to the divine whenever we carry healthily the tension of charity, not just in the area of charity but in all the areas of our life.

The prophet Micah puts all of this succinctly— act justly love tenderly, and walk humbly. Oblate Father Ron Rolheiser is a theologian, teacher, and award-winning author. He can be contacted through his website www.rolheiser.com.

While young, 12 years ago, she gave her son to a couple who adopted him and loved him. He has blessed their life and they blessed his.” Father Schmitz said, “I’ve met him. He’s an incredible young man.”

The mom contacted Father Schmitz prior to his keynote. She recounted how she thought she hated her baby, but she recognizes that she just hated the circumstances in which she found herself back then. She urged Father Schmitz to remind people “that regardless of your choices, you are still loved, and you still matter.”

Another speaker was Katie Shore, a 37-year-old woman from Indianapolis with Down Syndrome. Her parents asked the doctors to give her the best possible life. Katie repeated the theme for this year’s March, “I believe that equality starts in the womb for me and you.”

Sadly she said, some studies show nearly 80 percent of parents who learn of their unborn child’s Down Syndrome diagnosis will abort. Katie lamented all the friends she would never know on earth because they were not given that equality. Katie shared how of the waiting list around the country of couples willing and wanting to

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Pope: People must never forget or repeat horrors of Holocaust

Carol Glatz
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — The cruelty of the Holocaust must never be repeated, Pope Francis said on the eve of the international day of commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust.

The day, celebrated Jan. 27, falls on the anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau extermination camp complex in 1945.

At the end of his weekly general audience at the Vatican Jan. 26, Pope Francis said, “It is necessary to remember the extermination of millions of Jews and people of different nationalities and religious faiths.”

“Thas unspeakable cruelty must never be repeated,” he said. “I appeal to everyone, especially educators and families, to foster in the new generations an awareness of the horror of this black page of history.”

“It must not be forgotten, so that we can build a future where human dignity is no longer trampled underfoot,” the pope said.

At the end of his audience, the pope met with Belarus-born Lidia Maksymowicz, 81, who had spent 13 months at the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp, where she and other children were subjected to Josef Mengele’s medical experiments.

It was her second meeting with Pope Francis, who — at an outdoor general audience May 26, 2021 — had spoken with her, kissed the prisoner number — 70072, tattooed on her left arm and embraced her.

That meeting sparked an idea for her to write an autobiography, with help from the Italian journalist Paolo Rodari. The book, “La bambina che non sapeva odiare. La mia testimonianza” (“The child who did not know how to hate. My testimony”), was recently released in Italian.

At the Jan. 26 audience, she gave the pope a copy of the book, which also contains a preface Pope Francis wrote.

Maksymowicz told ANSA, the Italian wire service, Jan. 26 that she and Rodari decided it would be important to describe the experience of a child during the Holocaust, since so many books cover the experiences of adults who survived.

“One must not forget that more than 200,000 children died just at Auschwitz-Birkenau,” she said.

Even though she was only 3 years old when she and her young mother were taken to the extermination camp, she explained those memories are still vivid and correspond with facts and evidence found by researchers years later.

Her mother was sent to the camp because she was part of the partisan resistance movement in Belarus, while she, as a young child, was designated to become one of Mengele’s “guinea pigs,” she said.

Maksymowicz found her birth mother 17 years after her release from the camp in 1944, when she was adopted by a Polish family.

The miracles of Lourdes

Bishop John Iffert visited Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, Park Hills, Jan. 30, where young members of the parish performed a play based on the miracles at Lourdes. Bishop Iffert’s visit included praying at the Church and meeting with Father Shannon Collins, pastor, and Father Sean Kopczynski, parochial vicar. Our Lady of Lourdes Parish is a personal parish, home to the Traditional Latin Mass. Its priests form the religious community the Missionaries of St. John the Baptist.
People’s mistakes and sins do not frighten God, pope says at audience

Carol Glatz
Catholic News Service
VATICAN CITY — God is not frightened by people’s sins, mistakes or failures, Pope Francis said.

What God is afraid of is “the closure of our hearts — this, yes, this makes him suffer — he is frightened by our lack of faith in his love,” the pope said Jan. 19 during his weekly general audience.

Everybody must “square accounts” with what they have done, but “settling the accounts with God is a beautiful thing because we start talking and he embraces us” with tenderness, the pope said.

Pope Francis continued his series of audience talks about St. Joseph, reflecting on his tenderness.

Very little detail is found in the Gospels about St. Joseph’s fatherly approach, but “we can be sure that his being a ‘just’ man also translated into the education he gave to Jesus,” the pope said.

In fact, Jesus always used the word “father” to speak of God and his love, he said. “The most memorable account of God’s mercy is Jesus’ parable of the prodigal son, who expected punishment for his sins, but instead ‘he finds himself wrapped in his father’s embrace,’” the pope said.

“The Lord does not take away all our weaknesses, but helps us to walk on with our weaknesses, taking us by the hand” and walking by people’s side, he said.

“The experience of tenderness consists in seeing God’s power pass through precisely that which makes us most fragile; on the condition, however, that we are converted from the gaze of the Evil One who ‘makes us see and condemn our frailty,’ while the Holy Spirit ‘brings it to light with tender love,’” the pope said, quoting from his apostolic letter on St. Joseph, “Patris corde.”

“This does not mean it is easy,” Pope Francis said. “In fact, Jesus himself understands God’s tenderness and love, experiencing it first through St. Joseph.”

With this in mind, the pope highlighted what people in prison need most.

“People need, above all, to know that ‘God is not frightened by our sins,’” he said, because God “is greater than our sins: he is the father, he is love, he is tender.”

The world needs this “revolution of tenderness” and, without it, “we risk remaining imprisoned in a justice that does not allow us to rise easily and that confuses redemption with punishment,” he added.

If the devil ever speaks the truth to people, it is because he is twisting it “to tell us a lie” and to “condemn us,” the pope said. “Instead, the Lord tells us the truth and reaches out his hand to save us. We know that God’s truth does not condemn, but instead welcomes, embraces, sustains and forgives us.”

“Let us think of our brothers and sisters in prison, and think of God’s tenderness for them, and let us pray for them, so they might find in that window of hope a way out toward a better life.”

With this in mind, the pope highlighted what people in prison need most.

“It is right that those who have done wrong should pay for their mistake, but it is equally right that those who have done wrong should be able to redeem themselves from their mistake. There cannot be sentences without a window of hope,” he said, which, in past speeches, he has explained would be sentences of life in prison or the death penalty.

“Let us think of our brothers and sisters in prison, and think of God’s tenderness for them, and let us pray for them, so they might find in that window of hope a way out toward a better life.”
Accurate information is a human right, pope tells Catholic communicators

Carol Glatz
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Catholic communicators must help provide correct and truthful information about COVID-19 and its vaccines and do so in a way that avoids oversimplification and creating conflict, Pope Francis said.

The news has to be refuted, but individual persons must always be respected, for they believe it often without full awareness or responsibility," he said.

"To be properly informed, to be helped to understand situations based on scientific data and not fake news, is a human right. Correct information must be ensured above all to those who are less equipped, to the weakest and to those who are most vulnerable," he added.

The pope held a private audience in the Apostolic Palace Jan. 28 with people attending a meeting organized by the "International Catholic Media Consortium on COVID-19 Vaccines.

The consortium is headed by the Catholic media outlet, Aleteia, in collaboration with the Spain-based Verificando and French L’Media. Other founding media organizations include: Our Sunday Visitor, SanFrancisco.org and Religión Digital. It includes a scientific committee of researchers, medical experts, scientists, theologians and bioethicists, with the aim of collecting and making available fact-checked, unbiased information for Catholic media in multiple languages.

The "Catholic fact-checking" project was one of a dozen projects chosen in January 2021 to receive funding from the Google News Initiative’s "open fund" for projects promoting factual information about the pandemic and vaccines.

The pope thanked the group for coming together for an initiative that "seeks to be together for the truth," underlining the importance of people cooperating and sharing their skills and knowledge to provide correct information.

"Contributing, often unwittingly, to this climate is the sheer volume of allegedly ‘scientific’ information, comments and opinions, which ends up causing confusion for the reader or listener," he said.

"Accordingly, to be properly informed, to be helped to understand situations based on scientific data and not fake news, is a human right," he said.

Christian communicators need to do more than just fight against "injustices and lies," they also always need to promote the human person, he said. "The fundamental distinction between information and people must never be overlooked."

As people seek to "combat disinformation, to refute fake news and the manipulation of more impressionable minds," Pope Francis told them, they always must respect individuals and "be evangelical in style, a builder of bridges, a promoter of peace, also and above all, in the search for truth."

Seeking the truth means tirelessly verifying data and presenting them in a suitable way that helps people in their own search for truth, he said.

"This quest must not succumb to commercial interests, to the interests of the powerful, to the great economic interests," he said. It requires "seeking an antidote to algorithms projected to maximize commercial profit; it means working to promote an informed, just, sound and sustainable society."

"Without an ethical corrective, those instruments generate pockets of extremism and lead individuals to dangerous forms of radicalization — and this is what conflict is," Pope Francis said.

The approach of a Christian communicator "is not one of conflict, it is not marked by an attitude of superiority and it does not simplify reality, especially in a way that does not understand the limitations of science, turning into ‘a kind of fideism," he said.

The pope encouraged people to engage in "dialogue with those who have doubts."

"Reality is always more complex than we think, and we must respect the doubts, the concerns and the questions that people raise, seeking to accompany them without ever dismissing them" and to provide answers "in a serene and reasonable way to questions and objections," the pope said.

"We should work to help provide correct and truthful information about COVID-19 and vaccines, without digging trenches or creating ghettos," he said. "The pandemic invites us to open our eyes to what is essential, what is truly important, and the need for us to be saved together."

"Never let a crisis turn into a conflict," the pope said. "Promote dialogue, collaborate and ‘let us seek to emerge from it together.’"
The weekly TV Mass from the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption is broadcast locally on The CW, Sundays, noon to 1 p.m. Viewers can tune-in on the following channels: antenna 117 or 25, Cincinnati Bell 17 or 517, and DirectTV 25.

Catholic Courses for Adults — the Office of Catechesis and Evangelization offers courses for teachers, parish and school catechists, diaconate aspirants, and all adults who would like to expand their knowledge of the Catholic faith. Cost $35. Call Isak A. Isak at 392-1500, ext. 1529.

Bishop Brossart High School 23rd annual Jack and Pat McGarr Memorial Euchre Tournament, Feb. 5. Register online at McGarrBishop.org@givemart.com. Questions, e-mail Jackpmcgarreuchre@gmail.com or text/call 250-4924.

Enjoy a new twist on one of the region’s most inspiring literary variety shows, the 30th annual TMU Inside-Outloud Festival. This is being hosted on Zoom Feb. 20, 2-4 p.m. To emphasize the value of literary apprenticeship, talented student writers will participate in this historical literary occasion. Free and open to the public. Visit tmuky.outloud or e-mail creativewriting@thomasmore.edu by Feb. 19 to register and receive the Zoom link.

Sacred Heart discernment dinner — Men from 14 to 40 years of age and parents are invited to meet Bishop Lfert and Father Kunath, vocations promoter, to learn more about discerning a vocation to the priesthood. Cost $35, check in 8 a.m., retreat begins 9:30 a.m. — Sunday after 11 a.m. Mass. Cost $175; registration deadline Feb. 11. Register at www.stannereventcenter.org. Call 441-2003, ext. 301 or e-mail csmath@covdio.org.

Newborn Central Catholic High School inducts its twenty-first class of inductees to Athletic Hall of Fame: Michele Bowman Atallah ’88, Danielle Hansfeld ’11, Eric Gearding ’96, Jake Giesler ’11, Terry Mann ’96, Jeff Martin ’21, Courtney Sandfoss ’10, and Jeff Smith ’02. Also honored “Teams of Distinction” 2009, 2010 & 2011 Girls State Champion Track Teams. Ceremony is Feb 19, 2022 in the Newport Central Catholic Gymnasium. Social hour at 6 PM, dinner and the induction ceremony at 7 PM. $20.00 cost and reservations and payment will be accepted prior to Feb 11. For more information contact the NCC School Office at (859) 292-0001.

Bishop Brossart High School girls basketball alumnini night, Feb. 11, 4:30 p.m., 6 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. Call tharden@bishopbrossart.org.

Men’s Retreat, Feb. 18–20. Join Father Conor Kunath for Ignatian Spiritualty and the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius. Doors open Friday, 4 p.m.; retreat begins 11:30 p.m. and concludes Sunday after 11 a.m. Mass. Cost $175, registration deadline Feb. 4. www.stannereventcenter.org. Call 441-2003, ext. 301 or e-mail csmath@covdio.org.

Women’s Retreat Feb. 25–27 — Join Maggie Williams Cleves and Deacon Dave Pfoffit as they show how changing the way we see others and ourselves can help us in our faith journey Friday, 5:30 p.m. — Sunday after 11 a.m. Mass. $175, registration deadline Feb. 11. Register at www.stannereventcenter.org. Call 441-2003, ext. 301 or e-mail csmath@covdio.org.

The New Manna Retreat, Feb. 26, join Father Matthew Cushing and Father Thomas Pinchioni to explore the four different faces of the real Manna come down from heaven. Cost $15, check in 8 a.m.; retreat begins 9 a.m. RSVP appreciated: e-mail xproposting@administrators@gmail.com or call/text 859-8890.

New Hope Center’s Father Daughter Dance March 5 & 6, 6:30 p.m. to 10 p.m. at the Fort Thomas Mess Hall. 6th-12th graders and their fathers, $45 per father-daughter couple — $15 each additional daughter. Semi-formal attire, scholarships available, dinner served. Reserve tickets at www.givingforhope.com.

Annual Crusader Royale, March 5, 7:30 p.m. Cost $50 per person. Register at https://Royale2022.givesmart.com.

Bishop Brossart High School euchre tournament, March 11. Hegenauer Hall. Doors open 5:30 p.m.; tournament 7 p.m. Cost $25 per player. Contact cvkowr11@icloud.com or 786-7604 to register.

Society of St. Vincent de Paul Northern Kentucky is hosting its second annual art fundraiser event, “Creative Compassion,” March 31, Dreis Pavilion, Covington. Tickets available online at www.svdpnk.org. Cost $65. For information e-mail marypat.behler@svdpnky.org.

The New Manna Retreat, Feb. 26, join Father Matthew Cushing and Father Thomas Pinchioni to explore the four different faces of the real Manna come down from heaven. Cost $15, check in 8 a.m.; retreat begins 9 a.m. RSVP appreciated: e-mail xproposting@administrators@gmail.com or call/text 859-8890.

That’s the spirit!” Students and faculty at St. Joseph School, Cold Spring, are happy to support the Cincinnati Bengals in their playoff effort. Students were loud and proud showing their team spirit for the Bengals. Pictured are the students in Mrs. Darla Dressman’s fifth grade classroom.

Retreat for women and men, April 8–10, St. Walburg Monastery Guest House, Villa Hills. Due to COVID restrictions at the monastery meals will be “on your own,” bringing food in or going out. Arrangements and fees are determined with reservation. Contact Sister Dorothy Schuette, 443-8515 or dorothysosb@gmail.com.

The 6th annual Colonel Classic VEX Robotics Tournament took place Saturday, Jan. 29, at Covington Catholic High School, Park Hills. Approximately 60 teams from across the region competed.
Christian unity is a ‘worthy goal’ everyone can work toward, says priest

Catholic News Service

MASSEY, Md. — Franciscan Father Jim Gardiner told those gathered Jan. 23 at an Episcopal church in Massey that they should have “no doubt” that “the unity of Christians is an attainable and worthy goal.”

One reason to have no doubt is where they gathered for a prayer service during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity: St. Clement’s Episcopal Church. It is the home parish church of Father Paul Watson, who helped develop the week of unity, traditionally observed Jan. 18-25.

Born Jan. 16, 1863, in Millington, Maryland, he was baptized at the church and, later as an Episcopal priest, he was its pastor; as was his father before him. He was later received into the Catholic Church and is a candidate for sainthood.

Bishop Santosh Marray of the Episcopal Diocese of Easton on Maryland’s Eastern Shore was the presider at the service. Father Gardiner proclaimed the Gospel and delivered the sermon.

“Did not Christ himself pray for unity at the Last Supper when, as St. John remembers, he prayed ‘that all may be one — that the world may believe,’” said the priest, a Franciscan Friar of the Atonement, who has long been involved in ecumenical and interfaith efforts.

“Just how it will be answered, however, might in large measure, it seems to me, to be up to us,” Father Gardiner said.

He praised St. Clement’s lay pastor, Mark Hansen, and “this congregation for continuing to recognize the importance of this issue and for not allowing history — especially history that was nurtured here — to simply be relegated to the past.”

Father Gardiner gave a quick overview of the many church documents on ecumenism and interfaith relations, including the Second Vatican Council’s Decree on Ecumenism (“Unitatis Redintegratio”), which said that ecumenism should be everyone’s concern and that generalecumenical ferment involves a continual personal and institutional renewal.

Next came, in 1965, the Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions (“Nostra Aetate”).

After these documents were promulgated, “there was great ecumenical ferment as we trooped and snooded through one another’s sacristies and sanctuaries,” said the priest.

“Did not Father Paul Watson convinced that that ‘prayer of Jesus Christ has got to be answered,’” he said. “‘Just how it will be answered, however, might in large measure, it seems to me, to be up to us.’”

Father Gardiner, director of special projects at the Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land in Washington, expressed concern over an “ecumenical inertia” today, saying it is “an issue that’s got to be faced.”

“It’s a Gospel issue,” he added, referencing again the verse “that all may be one.” (John 17:21)

He praised St. Clement’s lay pastor, Mark Hansen, and “this congregation for continuing to recognize the importance of this issue and for not allowing history — especially history that was nurtured here — to simply be relegated to the past.”

Father Gardiner noted “it was not the first time — thanks to Dr. Mark Hansen — that I’ve had the privilege of standing at this ambo in St. Clement’s” and proclaiming God’s word from the Watson family Bible. A couple of years ago — obviously pre-COVID — “I was afforded the same honor.”

“I knew I’d be among friends, so I wasn’t intimidated as much as I was awed,” he said, because “both Father Paul Watson, whom your forebears knew as (the) Rev. Lewis Thomas Wattson, and his father before him had both been your pastors.”

The Week of Prayer began as an act of prayer, sermons and conferences encouraged by Pope Leo XIII and Anglican leaders.

Father Wattson and Mother Lurana White, Episcopal co-founders of the Society of the Atonement at Graymoor, the headquarters of the Franciscan Friars and Sisters of the Atonement in Garrison, New York.

In 1909, the friars and the sisters and 13 of their lay associates were received into the Catholic Church. The Atonement priests, sisters and brothers work for reconciliation and healing through the unity of men and women with God and one another, in fulfillment of the mandate from the Gospel of St. John: “that they all may be one.”
Sculptor Edmonia Lewis shares message of human dignity through time

Dennis Sadowski
Catholic News Service

Edmonia Lewis, the first African American and Native American sculptor to achieve international recognition through works that reflected her Catholic faith and the dignity of people, is being commemorated on a new postage stamp.

The stamp, the 49th in the U.S. Postal Service’s Black Heritage series, will be issued Jan. 26 at the Smithsonian American Art Museum in Washington.

The stamp’s design features a painted portrait based on an Augustus Marshall photograph taken between 1864 and 1871 while Lewis was in Boston, the USNS said.

Lewis overcame multiple obstacles before arriving in Rome in 1865 and opening a studio where she incorporated the neoclassical style popular at the time and establishing herself as one of the most significant sculptors of the 19th century.

Her work is in the permanent collections at the Smithsonian American Art Museum and the Howard University Gallery of Art in Washington. Works also are scattered in church institutions in the U.S. and Europe. Some continue to be discovered after standing for decades.

Art historian Elizabeth Lev, who grew up in Boston and has lived in Rome for 30 years, said it was in the Eternal City where its cosmopolitan atmosphere meant skin color mattered little, that Lewis found inspiration to pursue sculpting in her preferred medium of marble.

“Rome becomes a place where she can truly not just discover herself but become everything she always dreamed to be,” Lev told Catholic News Service. “The limitations she felt and were real in many ways in the U.S. were not limitations (in Rome).”

Lev described Lewis’ work as reflecting her mixed ancestry as she created sculptures of notable abolitionists as well as figurative images that reflected experiences of people of color; particularly following the abolition of slavery.

Lewis also portrayed religious images, at times imitating neoclassical and Renaissance artists. One such work from 1867 depicts Moses in an imitation of Michelangelo’s 16th-century statue of the man who led the Israelites out of slavery.

The stamp and others, Lev said, is how Lewis used craft works that gained enthusiasts and scholars continue to study and teach about new understandings and discoveries about Lewis and her sculptures.

Lev said that how Lewis became Catholic is uncertain.

Lev related one story which finds that the Native American tribe that raised her in New York was being ministered to by Jesuit missionaries. Lev, however, doubts that was the case and points to Lewis’ time in Rome as likely being more influential in the development of her Catholic faith.

There is the Catholicism of this Scottish convert who was very excited about her work and she is brought into this world of Catholic patronage in Rome. Part of it is the welcome of the Catholic community,” Lev said.

One of Lewis’ most well-known sculptures is “Forever Free,” created in 1867. It depicts a Black man and woman emerging from the bonds of slavery. The man is standing, the woman is shown on her knees praying in thanksgiving for being freed of the bonds of slavery.

That sculpture and others, Lev said, is how Lewis used her art to communicate in a subtle and nuanced way to address issues of social justice.

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One of Lewis’ most well-known sculptures is “Forever Free,” created in 1867. It depicts a Black man and woman emerging from the bonds of slavery. Le found that Lewis was killed while leading the all-Black 54th Massachusetts Regiment in the Union Army’s unsuccessful second assault on Fort Wagner near Charleston, South Carolina, in 1863.

Lev said Lewis’ work in Boston and Europe was inspired by her experiences as well as by the faith of the abolitionists, whose belief in human dignity was rooted in their deeply held religious principles.

Having saved enough money from the sale of her work, Lewis traveled to Europe in 1865 at age 20 in the hope of establishing her sculpting career. After stops in London, Paris and Florence, Italy, Lewis settled in Rome, where she opened a studio during the winter of 1865-1866 collaborating with other female sculptors in a male-dominated discipline.

Lewis’ work caught the eye of several benefactors, including John Patrick Crichton-Stuart, known as the 3rd Marquess of Bute, a Scottish magnate who became Catholic at age 21.

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Washington and Rome diverge in perceptions of what's
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Victor Gustan
Catholic News Service
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Looking at examples of the Church's recent and unfold-
ing actions in Central Asia and Russia, Pope Francis giv-
einsight into the unique Catholic mission to serve the com-
duct, as a neutral mediator, and as a peace-seeking faith.

Catholics live in each of the 15 former Soviet Republics,
so the Church is first, local. Giant Kazakhstan, as big as
Western Europe, sits in a hot spot between two ambitious
powers, Russia and China. It is a prosperous place, loaded
with oil and gas reserves — and some 100,000 Catholics.

Kazakhstan was suddenly in the spotlight in early
January when riots, ostensibly over gas prices, spread
across the country. The Kazakh president called on the
Collective Security Treaty Organization, a regional mili-
tary alliance led by Russia, to quell the uprising. With the
internet interrupted and few independent journalists in
the country, the conflict remained largely a mystery even
after life returned to normal.

Enter Bishop José Luis Mumbiela, president of the
country's episcopal conference, speaking on an Italian
webinar regarding the church in Kazakhstan. A Spanish-
born missionary priest living in Almaty since 1998, he gave
an account of January's events, including ill-intentioned
efforts to co-opt popular grievances. The prelate saw
snipers strategically positioned and "people militarily pre-
pared for a major action."

Bishop Mumbiela confirmed the Kazakh president's
assertion that rioting morphed into an attempted coup d'etat.
It's a trustworthy account because the priest is inde-
pendent and a local citizen. He embodies Pope Benedict
XV's rule that Church leaders should remain "among the
combatants instead of keeping away and preaching peace
and concord from a distance."

Sharing witness is one thing, becoming a flashpoint in
a national drama is different. To preserve neutrality, the
Church strives not to take sides in political or military con-
tests.

As the crisis in Belarus took a religious dimension,
Archbishop Paul Gallagher, the Vatican's foreign minister,
travelled to Minsk and shuttled for four days between the
various factions. He flew to neighboring Poland; they kept him out of the country for four months.

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various factions. He flew to neighboring Poland; they kept him out of the country for four months.

As a result, Archbishop Kondrusiewicz was finally
allowed home for Christmas, and the Vatican promptly
announced his resignation. He has been quiet ever since.

"Vatican neutrality is oriented toward trying to bring
together parties together," not divide them against each other explained Jesuit Father Drew Christiansen, a Georgetown
scholar.

The context for Archbishop Kondrusiewicz's sacrifice was Rome's cultivation of positive relations with Belarus,
where about 15 percent of the people are Catholic.
Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state, visited
in 2015, describing it as "a helpful country, especially in the
case of the events in Ukraine." Minsk was the site of 2014 and 2015 negotiations among France, Germany,
Russia and Ukraine.

(Continued on page 13)
Blessed Sacrament School celebrates

(Continued from page 1)

Bishop Iffert said.

During the communion meditation the blue-ribbon worthy student choir sang a song written especially for Bishop Iffert, “Lord, Wherever We Go.” Matt Spencer, choir director was inspired to write the song using the liturgical musicians for their use. It’s short and simple and that’s something we all strive for.”

Mr. Steffen carried the Blue Ribbon Award throughout the school followed by Bishop Iffert, Father Hibs, Father Azoo and Jude Hehman, mayor of Ft. Mitchell.

Mr. Steffen said that being awarded a Blue Ribbon is an important way to honor the students and teachers for the hard work that they put into education every day. “Our teachers come to work every day and put in that hard work and our students do the same,” said Mr. Steffen. “And yes, that shows on the report cards and it shows on their outcomes in high school and in college and in life, but it’s nice, just occassionally to get that pat on the back, to compare ourselves on a national level to every school in the country and come out in that top tier.”

Bishop Iffert shared this prayer and it’s like, wow, you know, that really gives us insight into who he is and what he wants to bring to Covington, the strong faith he has as well. I was just really moved by that because I think that’s something we all strive for.”

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Blessed Sacrament School celebrates

(Continued from page 1)

Who or what changes?

(Continued from page 1)

adopt children with Down Syndrome

Kirk Cameron, also known as Michael Sever from the 1988 sitcom “Facts of Life,” other film roles under his name include “War Room,” “Courageous,” and “Facing the Giants.”

This fall another movie based on a true-life story will be released titled “Lifehack.” Cameron said it is a film that highlights the value and preciousness of life in the womb and the beauty of adoption.

Cameron announced that he has partnered again with the Kendrick brothers from Georgia who brought us the movie, “Fireproof.” Other film roles under his name include “War Room,” “Courageous,” and “Facing the Giants.”

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“Hotel Transylvania: Transformania” (Amazon). Thin fourth installment in the animated franchise that kicked off in 2012, directed by Derek Drymon and Jennifer Kluska. Ongoing tension between the proprietor of the titular hostelry, Count Dracula, and his free-spirited human son-in-law leads to the transformation of the former into an ordinary mortal and the morphing of the latter into a monster. But the magic crystal that brought about these changes is broken amid the resulting upheaval, requiring the duo to set out on a quest to South America in search of a replacement, a journey on which they’re eventually joined by the bloodsucker’s beloved daughter and nurturing wife. Some of the youngsters who might be satisfied with this insubstantial adventure would be frightened by its scenes of danger while parents inclined to appreciate the film’s themes of family solidarity and the value of seeing the best in others will be less impressed by its occasional forays into mildly mature material. Characters in peril, fleeting scatological humor, rear male nudity played for laughs, vague wordplay.

CNS: A-II; MPAA: PG.

“Scream” (Paramount). Meta-stupid slasher flick in which a high school student, her estranged older sister and the senior sibling’s boyfriend, among others, find themselves in the path of a copyscat serial killer intent on upholding the homicidal tradition that has periodically plagued a small rural town and that has served as the basis for a popular horror movie franchise. When not being gutted like fish or having their jugulars slit, the two-dimensional characters, who also include a trio of survivors of earlier predations, speculate on the killer’s identity and discuss both his probable methods and the genre tropes showcased in the fictitious film series that corresponds to the all-too-real one of which this is an unwelcome extension. Directed by Matt Bettinelli-Olpin and Tyler Gillett, whether sequel or reboot, it’s as unwarrantedly self-satisfied in tone as it is sick in content. Hideous bloody violence, a scene of lesbian sensuality, several profanities, about a half-dozen milder oaths, pervasive rough and frequent crude language, obscene gestures.

CNS: O; MPAA: R.

“Munich: The Edge of War” (Netflx). Jeremy Irons as British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain dominates this historical drama that uses the story of a fictional friendship as an introduction to the controversial policy of appeasement toward Hitler pursued by the U.K. and France in an effort to avert World War II. Despite having been close pals during their student days at Oxford University, a young secretary to Chamberlain and a German foreign minister official have long been estranged after quarreling over the latter’s enthusiastic support of the Nazis. But the Brownhills’ former fan has since come to the true nature of the regime and, with the strategy of giving in to the Fuhrer’s demands about to reach its high point at the 1938 summit conference in the city of the title, tries to renew ties so the duo can collaborate on opening the eyes of his ex-buddy’s boss. Though occasionally a bit overwrought in tone and somewhat implausible in its plot developments, director Christian Schwochow’s polished adaptation of Robert Harris’ 2017 novel captures the moral as well as political dilemmas of the era and intelligently explores the issue of how well-meaning people can best oppose evil. The parents of older teens may see the film’s educational value as outweighing the unvarnished dialogue that regularly crops up in Ben Power’s script. A scene of men urinating, a couple of profanities, about a dozen milder oaths, at least one rough term, considerable crude and crass language.


For full reviews of each of these films — go to catholincnews.com and click on “Extras,” then choose “Movies.” Catholic News Service 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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Shopper’s Guide
Pakistanis Christians mourn after gun attack on two ministers kills one

LAHORE, Pakistan — The daylight attack by motorcycle-riding gunmen on two Church of Pakistan ministers, killing one and wounding another, has reignited fears among Pakistan’s beleaguered minority community. The priests were attacked as they drove home from a service in the northwestern city of Peshawar Jan. 30. Assistant lay pastor William Siraj died while the Rev. Patrick Nazem lived, reported ucanews.com. “The bullets scratched my body. They (the gunmen) were a shock. I couldn’t recognize them. It was a planned attack,” recalled the Church of Pakistan pastor in a video message recorded later. “I thank God for saving me to share his witness. He gives martyrdom and life. Our churches will never get closed. We will continue worshipping. We need your prayers,” he appealed to the faithful. Rev. Nazem recited the Bible at Siraj’s funeral at All Saints Church. Catholic priests of Peshawar joined the mourners. Church-run schools remained closed around the capital city of Kabul and Paktia provinces. This massacre is another step toward survival of Christians in this country. The local church faces many challenges. We are very sad,” said Church of Pakistan Bishop Brampur Shabana Peters of Peshawar.

Christian leaders seek release of Jimmy Lai, other activists in Hong Kong

HONG KONG — An international coalition of Christian leaders, including the president of the Federation of Asian Bishops’ Conferences, appealed for the release of Hong Kong’s Catholic pro-democracy supporter Jimmy Lai and other imprisoned activists as part of a Chinese New Year amnesty. Cardinal Charles Bo of Myanmar’s FABC president, joined other Catholic and Protestant leaders from across Europe, North America and Asia to send a letter to Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam, a practicing Catholic, reported ucanews.com. “There is the very real prospect that Jimmy Lai may spend the rest of his years in prison. This would be a sad injustice and would raise uncomfortable doubts as to China’s continued commitment to the ‘one country, two systems’ model and the tolerance it engenders,” the letter said.

Ucanews.com reported Father Francisco Mella of the Pontifical Institute for Foreign Missions and the Rev. Fang Chi-Wei, former Hong Kong legislator and a priest of the Hong Kong Anglican Church, handed the letter to Lam Jan. 31. Lai, the 74-year-old founder of the now-defunct Apple Daily newspaper, faces life imprisonment if found guilty of charges of foreign collusion, sedition and fraud under Hong Kong’s controversial national security law. Ucanews.com reported the letter said these charges were most concerning given the potential penalty of life imprisonment.

On Bloody Sunday, Irish archbishop says unanswered questions slow healing

DUBLIN — The president of the Irish bishops’ conference used the 50th anniversary of the unexplained killing of 14 unarmed Catholics by the British army in Northern Ireland to criticize the fact that no one has ever been prosecuted. “Very painfully, the Bloody Sunday families were denied for too long the truth about what happened to their loved ones. And sadly they are not alone. A legacy of heartbreak, and with it, a dark shadow of secrecy, still hangs over much of our troubled past,” said Archbishop Eamon Martin of Armagh, Northern Ireland, president of the bishops’ conference. Speaking at Mass in St. Eugene’s Cathedral in Londonderry, Northern Ireland, the archbishop said, “Many families from right across our communities still endure the anguish of not knowing why or how their loved ones were killed or injured or punished or targeted or disappeared or defamed or locked up, or injured or otherwise bashed. Their unanswered questions linger on, as a constant nagging reminder to the next generation of unfinished business, of a grief that is unsatisfied with silence, of wounds that never heal, of lives that never quite carry on. The attacks that occurred that day still resonate in the minds of so many of us today.”

Bishop in Cabo Delgado: ‘The attacks on the villages continue’

PEMBA, Mozambique — Bishop Antonio Julião Sandramo of Pemba told Catholic News Service that the situation in Cabo Delgado province has fallen out of the news, so the disease is receiving fewer donations. “The world does not talk about Cabo Delgado anymore,” he said. “At times, people say the situation is going back to normal, but it is not true. The attacks on the villages continue.” He said military progress forced the terror- ists to leave the bases they had, and now “they have been assaulting more distant locations, whose residents end up flee- ing. In many places we have an emergency, so we have been dis- tributing food, clothes, and medicines to the displaced. In other regions, our challenge is to improve the conditions of the peo- ple living in the camps,” Bishop Sandramo told CNS. A Human Rights Watch report released in mid-January said the humani- tarian crisis in Cabo Delgado and neighboring provinces inten- sified in 2021, despite the military’s efforts to defeat insurgents. Violent murders of civilians, many times involving decapita- tion, and kidnappings of women and children continue to occur. The Catholic Church has been offering relief “to the displaced and denouncing the injustices since the beginning of the crisis, in 2016. Most of those displaced live in temporary camps in precarious conditions.

Knights of Malta official confirms reforms will respect sovereignty

VATICAN CITY — A week after expressing concern in a priv- ate letter about the Vatican’s reform of the Knights of Malta, the order’s grand chancellor said he is confident the process is now on the right path. In a statement released Jan. 30, Albrecht Freiherr von Bosselager, the grand chancellor, said that misun-
Little scholars — big potential at the Notre Dame Urban Education Center

Tom Ziegler  
Staff Writer

The Notre Dame Urban Education Center, Covington, recently addressed the need for technology in the classroom; especially with the recent pandemic, technology has become an integral part of learning outside the classroom. Recognizing this need highlighted the disparities between the students NDUEC serves, because not every student has that technology and internet access at home. NDUEC wanted to provide access to that technology at their facility.

The Kentucky Colonels assisted in achieving this goal through its 2021 Good Works Program grant, which allowed 10 Apple iPads with compatible keyboards and cases into the curriculum on a rotational basis serving over 50 students.

“The partnership just worked out perfectly during the pandemic because all of our students are doing NTI and at-home learning, so it was just a perfect marriage at the time,” said Erin Woods, director of development and mission advancement.

The Notre Dame Urban Education Center began in 2009; the sisters of Notre Dame purchased the building which was renovated and opened in 2010 with its summer academics program, followed by the homework plus program in September of the same year, the family support program in 2013 and most recently the early learning program in 2019. The programs at NDUEC are offered to students in grades K-12.

“We will take them until they don’t want to come anymore,” Notre Dame Sister Maria Therese, executive director, said.

The one-on-one tutoring, interactive learning, such as cardio drumming, and the genuine care for each individual student is what makes the Notre Dame Urban Education Center such a wonderful place. This environment is created by the NDUEC’s passionate staff.

“We are working, this is our happy place. We don’t let the drama of the world bother us here. We are trying to do our job for our students and our families,” said Sister Maria Therese.  

More information about the programs offered at NDUEC, such as cost for students to attend along with any other questions or interests, can be found on the center’s website, nduec.org, or on social media (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and more).