



DIOCESE OF COLUMBUS

CATHOLIC TIMES

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THE SECOND WEEK OF LENT
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COLUMBUS CONFERENCE BRINGS 3,500
WOMEN TOGETHER FOR MESSAGES OF FAITH

Editor's reflections by Doug Bean, Editor

Blessings can be found in the midst of darkness



Our country is going through some tough times.

Seventeen students were senselessly killed and others were injured in a school shooting last week in Florida. Closer to home, two devoted police officers were tragically gunned down in Westerville, a quiet suburb where violence like that just doesn't happen. A memorial service was held for Officers Anthony Morelli and Eric Joering last Friday at Westerville St. Paul Church. Many more innocent victims are murdered on U.S. streets every day in inexplicable acts of violence.

Political rancor prevails in Washington and around the country. No matter who's in office, there always seems to be tension and contentiousness. Turn on the TV news channels and it seems like all you hear is nonstop arguing. It gets old pretty quickly. Will it ever stop?

Abortion continues to be the law of the land. Several weeks ago, the U.S. Senate failed to pass the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act, which would have outlawed most abortions after 20 weeks. Fourteen professed Catholic senators voted against the bill, despite the fact that babies born as early as 22 weeks' gestation are now able to survive. America remains one of only seven nations that permits these gruesome late-term abortions, and two of those are North Korea and

China.

Cardinal Timothy Dolan of New York, who chairs the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Pro-life Activities, called the decision "appalling." He added that the Senate's rejection of this common-sense legislation "is radically out of step with most Americans" and went on to say that "the Senate must rethink its extreme stance on late-term abortions. I call upon the public to tell the Senate that this vote is absolutely unacceptable."

Some families are struggling. The opioid epidemic has reached crisis proportions in Ohio and throughout the nation. There are so many temptations nowadays for young people and adults in our culture.

Thinking about all of those things could leave us depressed, but we cannot despair. There are so many encouraging signs that should give us hope.

This past weekend, the annual Catholic Women's Conference took place in Columbus. Thousands of women came together to be uplifted in their faith through confession, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, the celebration of the Mass, and the testimony of dynamic speakers.

On Sunday, hundreds of people on their way to becoming Catholic participated in the Rite

of Election at Westerville St. Paul Church. A few of them shared their journeys in this week's *Catholic Times* (see Page 3). Nothing is more encouraging than hearing how someone is called to communion with Christ through His one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church.

There is a litany of things to pray for during the season of Lent. An end to violence. Peace in the world. Protection of all human life from conception until natural death. Healing in families. Conversions of hearts and of sinners. Aid to the poor and those in need. Suffering children. Those who feel alone and abandoned. Those who have lost their faith in God and have no hope. The sick and suffering. All who have died. For the faithfulness of priests, religious, and church leaders in their vocations.

Always remember in the darkest hours that God is there for everyone. His love and mercy know no bounds. The world might be going crazy around us, but God is in charge.

As we reflect in our prayers during Lent on Christ's life, death, and resurrection, we should be comforted in knowing that He will triumph over all the difficulties and sin that weigh us down.

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Correction

A story in the Feb. 11 *Catholic Times* gave an incorrect day of the week for a talk by Dr. Thomas Farr, president of the Religious Freedom Institute, at the Pontifical College Josephinum. The correct date is Thursday, March 8.



Front Page photo: Women pray and reflect at the Columbus Catholic Women's Conference, attended by nearly 3,500 on Saturday, Feb. 17, at the state fairgrounds.

CT photo by Ken Snow

CATHOLIC TIMES

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Diocese of Columbus names new school superintendent

Bishop Frederick Campbell has appointed Adam Dufault as episcopal moderator of Catholic education and superintendent of schools for the Diocese of Columbus, effective Monday, April 30.

“I am very pleased that Mr. Dufault has decided to join our diocesan team,” Bishop Campbell said.

“His experience, skills, and passion for Catholic education will help us in our mission of maintaining the highest of educational standards while maintaining our focus on Catholic instruction and identity – building in our students a sense of the obligations of faith, the dignity of the human person, and the responsibility everyone shares in fostering the com-

mon good.”

In his new position, he will oversee the operations of 11 high schools and 42 elementary schools within the 23-county diocese, along with the diocesan offices of Religious Education and Catechesis; Youth and Young Adult Ministry; and Recreation.

Dufault currently is interim superintendent of Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Denver, where he previously was associate superintendent.

Before going to Denver, he served



in the Archdiocese of Chicago for 14 years as a teacher, assistant principal, and principal.

A native of the Chicago area, he holds a bachelor of science degree in foreign service from Georgetown University in Washington and master of arts degrees in teaching and educational administration

from Dominican University in River Forest, Illinois.

“I have spent my entire career in Catholic education because of its power to create disciples of Jesus Christ and to educate the whole child: body,

mind, and spirit,” Dufault said. “I am looking forward to working with the talented educators of the Diocese of Columbus to build a faith-filled, academically excellent, and financially sustainable system.”

Dufault succeeds Dr. Joseph Brettbacher, who stepped down last June to become principal of Scena Memorial High School in Indianapolis so he could relocate closer to family members. Susan Streitenberger of the diocesan Office of Catholic Schools has served as its interim director during the search process.

Dufault and his wife, Lisa, have a two-year-old daughter and are excited to make the move to Columbus and return to the Midwest.

JOSEPHINUM SEMINARIANS MAKE PROFESSIONS OF FAITH



In preparation for ordination to the priesthood, nine seminarians in their fourth and final year of graduate theological study at the Pontifical College Josephinum made a profession of faith and took an oath of fidelity in the presence of Msgr. Christopher Schreck, Josephinum rector-president, and the seminary community during Evening Prayer on Thursday, Feb. 8. Four of the nine are to be ordained to the priesthood for the Diocese of Columbus on Saturday, May 26. They pledged to remain faithful to Church teachings and to be faithful teachers of the Gospel. Third-year theology students made similar promises a few weeks earlier. Pictured are (from left), Deacons Christopher Tuttle (Columbus), Jesus Oliveros Martinez (Joliet, Illinois), John Nahrgang (Phoenix), Todd Lehigh (Columbus), Luke LaFleur (Alexandria, Louisiana), Jonathan Howell (Birmingham, Alabama), and Thomas Herge (Columbus, partially hidden), Msgr. Schreck, and Deacons Brett Garland (Columbus), and Richard Childress (Nashville, Tennessee).

Photo by Peter Stetson

Faith in Action

By Jerry Freewalt

Do you need a Lenten retreat?

Do you need a retreat? I certainly do. On several days of the year, my colleagues at work say, "Jerry is out of the office again today. He's on a retreat." Actually, I'm the one leading the retreat. I enjoy my work, but it takes a lot of energy to organize and lead Church programs involving lots of people.



For my spiritual well-being, I too must go on a retreat. I need to carve out a special time to get away from the typical busyness of life to pray, reflect, and renew to strengthen my relationship with God, family, and neighbors. Even Jesus took time to get away to pray, reflect, and renew. He went on retreats.

Maybe you don't have time during Lent to take a weekend off to go on a retreat. Well, here's the next best thing: mini-retreats. Here are some suggestions.

CRS Rice Bowl – Use all of what CRS Rice Bowl has to offer. Catholic Relief Services, the U.S. Catholic Church's humanitarian aid organization which helps the poor and vulnerable overseas, offers the CRS Rice Bowl during Lent. It's more than just a small bowl-shaped box to put your loose change in every day. It's a transformational retreat in a box.

In the box is a CRS Rice Bowl Lenten family kit and calendar. It's also downloadable. It includes daily prayers, reflections, and actions. Online videos will take you to another country to witness the hands of Christ at work. Include a simple meal on your retreat, using a CRS Rice Bowl recipe. Download the CRS Rice Bowl app on your phone for additional daily prayers and reflections. Participate in the diocesan CRS Rice Bowl Lenten Challenge: Family and Schools. For more information, go to www.columbuscatholic.org/catholic-relief-services.

40 Days for Life – This peaceful prayer vigil takes place at abortion centers throughout America during Lent. Participants are asked to volunteer for one-hour shifts and sign a statement of peace. It calls for prayer and fasting, constant vigil, and community outreach. To plan your mini-retreat with 40 Days for Life, visit www.40daysforlife.com/columbus.

March is Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month – Create a mini-retreat out of the many online resources available on the National Catholic Partnership on Disability website, www.ncpd.org. Pray the prayer for inclusion of persons with disabilities. Watch an archived webinar for tips on how to make your parish more accessible and inclusive for parishioners of all abilities.

Go take a hike – I mean this in good way. Take a walk in a park or spend quality time outside. Give thanks and praise to God, our creator. As part of your mini-retreat, use the Creation Care Guide at www.columbuscatholic.org/care-for-creation for suggested activities to be a good steward of God's creation.

Share the Journey – They say Lent is a journey. You can share the journey with migrants and refugees through the new global campaign launched by Pope Francis. Watch videos about the plight of migrants and make use of the many prayers, reflections, and activities available at www.sharejourney.org.

Good Friday Walking Stations of the Cross – Plan a three-hour retreat on Good Friday, March 30. Join hundreds of youth and adults as they follow the Way of the Cross to locations throughout downtown Columbus. Pray, recognize Jesus' suffering and crucifixion, and reflect on current issues of social concern. The walk begins at 8 a.m. at St. Joseph Cathedral.

There are many more Lenten mini-retreat possibilities, but you get the idea. I know you could use a good retreat. Take a moment to schedule one today. Jerry Freewalt is an associate director of the diocesan Office for Social Concerns.

Keith Smith receives Hartley's Geist Award



Keith Smith is this year's recipient of Columbus Bishop Hartley High School's Mary Geist Service Award.

He and his wife, Michelle, have sent four children to the school: Madeleine (a 2012 graduate); Alexandra (2013); Michael (2017); and Audrey (currently a junior).

The award is given annually to individuals who have been of exemplary service to the school and its extended community.

Geist was extremely active in service to her church and the school, coming to Hartley as a volunteer in the early 1970s after her retirement and serving until her death in

2003. She was the first recipient of the award in 2000.

Smith has donated hundreds of hours of labor maintaining the school's softball and baseball fields and has provided equipment to assist in field maintenance.

When the school established its athletic hall of fame in 2014, he handled all landscaping needs for the hall's dedication at Jack Ryan Field.

Photo: Keith Smith (fourth from right) is pictured with (from left) his daughters Madeleine and Audrey; his wife, Michelle; and Columbus Bishop Hartley High School principal Michael Winters.

Photo courtesy Bishop Hartley High School

Author speaks to Downtown Serra Club

Members of the Downtown Columbus Serra Club, which supports priests and religious vocations, had their annual Valentine's Day luncheon at Columbus St. Charles Preparatory School, featuring guest speaker Emily Jaminet, co-author of *Divine Mercy for Moms*. She spoke about her most recent book, *The Friendship Project*, co-written with her frequent collaborator, Michele Faehnle. Pictured are Jaminet (left) and club member Virginia Hardy.



Jaminet opened her talk with a prayer and a litany of saints asking for their intercession. She talked about the value of friendship and its aspects of utility, pleasure, virtue, and spirituality.

She said that friendships usually are established by things people have in common and that true friendship is a shared relationship, emphasizing that it is important to value and nurture friendships. The

talk concluded with a reminder that Christ and the saints are always present for our prayers and our requests to discern and establish friendships that lead us to God and the plans He has for our lives.

The club's next meeting will be at noon Friday, Feb. 23, at St. Charles, 2010 E. Broad St., with youth evangelist Dan DeMatte as guest speaker. For more information, call (614) 486-4293.

Diocese observes Black History Month

February is Black History Month, and the diocesan Office of Black Catholic Ministries encourages members of all parishes in the Diocese of Columbus to join the nation's more than three million African American Catholics in learning more about the contributions of black Catholics to the growth and expansion of the church.

Though hardship and discrimination, Catholics of African descent have been good and faithful servants to Christ and his church throughout the nation's history. Four of these inspirational Catholics -- Father Augustus Tolton, Servant of God; Mother Mary Elizabeth Lange, Servant of God; Venerable Henrietta De Lille; and Venerable Pierre Toussaint -- are under consideration for sainthood.

Events last August in Charlottesville, Virginia, in which one person was killed while protesting a white supremacist march and two state troopers monitoring the march died

when their helicopter crashed, have strengthened the Catholic Church's efforts to combat racism. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has established a new ad hoc committee against racism and selected an Ohioan, Bishop George Murry of Youngstown, to be its chair.

"Recent events have exposed the extent to which the sin of racism continues to afflict our nation," said the USCCB's president, Cardinal Daniel DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, in announcing formation of the committee a few days after the Charlottesville events.

"The establishment of this new ad hoc committee will be wholly dedicated to engaging the church and our society to work together in unity to challenge the sin of racism, to listen to persons who are suffering under this sin, and to come together in the love of Christ to know one another as brothers and sisters."

The committee also will "welcome

and support" implementation of the U.S. bishops' new pastoral letter on racism, expected to be released later this year. In 1979, the bishops issued a pastoral on racism titled *Brothers and Sisters to Us*, in which they addressed many themes. The overall message, then as today, was "racism is a sin."

"Unfortunately, it's not only Charlottesville," Bishop Murry said. "There have been other instances of discrimination and lack of caring, of outright hate for people who are African American or other people of color, immigrants, newcomers. What the bishops are saying is we need to look at this in a concerted, organized way because this is having a negative effect on the life of our country."

The Columbus-based Dominican Sisters of Peace and other congregations of Dominican sisters in the United States also have spoken out against the violence in Charlottesville, emphasizing the commitment to peace that is part of their name. They issued the following statement in August:

"We, the Dominican Sisters Conference, representing approximately 6,000 Catholic Sisters and their associates across the United States, join our voice with the many across the United States who denounce the acts of white supremacist terrorism in Charlottesville, Virginia, on August 12, 2017.

"As Christians and as Americans we are deeply grieved, outraged and troubled by the President's most recent actions which clearly demonstrate that he is leading the country down a path of increasing hatred and violence. We need to call this violence for what it is and acknowledge that different forms of white supremacy have led to a per-

petuation of inequality economically, socially, politically, in education, in health care, and legally under the law for African Americans since 1619. Hate groups such as the KKK have no place in American society.

"Under the banner of free speech, hate speech is nothing more than hate and is not American. It is against everything we value as Americans, whether Catholic, Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, or atheist. We call on President Trump to reconsider his recent statements that have contributed to division and violent confrontation.

"We call upon the members of Congress to exercise their constitutional authority to demand that the President reverse course immediately and stand against every expression of hatred, bigotry, and violence. As women of faith, we add our voice to those calling for an end to racist violence in our country and pray that all embrace the reality that each of us is created in the image of God.

"We cannot remain silent for silence is consent. As Dominicans, we hearken to the words of our Dominican Saint Catherine of Siena, 'Preach the truth as if you had a million voices. It is silence that kills the world!'

"We commit ourselves to promote nonviolence."

Along with four other congregations, the Dominican Sisters of Peace have opened up their archives to historian Shannen Dee Williams, who is writing a book about black sisters in the United States.

Sister Anne Lythgoe, OP, told *Global Sisters Report* that her congregation

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PRINCIPAL OF CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Blessed Sacrament Church, founded in 1905, in Newark, Ohio, is seeking an experienced Catholic Educator for the position of principal of Blessed Sacrament School, a K-8 Catholic School located at 394 E. Main Street, Newark, Ohio beginning the summer of 2018 for the 2018-2019 school year.

"Blessed Sacrament School is a Catholic, Christ-centered community whose mission is to educate the whole child—body, mind, and soul—in order to form life-long disciples of Christ who love the Truth, practice the Faith, and live virtuous lives." (Mission Statement).

We are seeking a principal who is a demonstrated leader capable of helping us grow in our mission of evangelization and excellence in education. Position requirements: must be a practicing Catholic; Master's Degree; in possession of an administrator's license or be eligible for one; current FBI/BCI background check; proof of attendance at Protecting God's Children seminar; and completed the online administrator's application for the Diocese of Columbus.

Position Expectations:

- spiritual leadership to implement the New Evangelization
- instructional leadership to lead the school in educational excellence
- proven leadership and management experience with excellent written and verbal skills

Salary will be commensurate with candidate's education and experience.

Please contact Human Resources Assistant for Teacher Personnel, Jeanne Gissel, with your expression of interest by mailing resumes and questions to jgissel@columbuscatholic.org. Include in your submission a cover letter of interest, resume, educational philosophy, and a list of five references.

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Scattering ashes; Feeling close to God



QUESTION & ANSWER

by: FATHER KENNETH DOYLE
Catholic News Service

Q. When I die, I would like to be cremated and have my ashes scattered in a place of peace and beauty that I have already chosen. However, when I have asked a couple of priests, they say that I can be cremated but that my ashes must be in an urn and either buried or interred in an above-ground mausoleum.

The reason they have given is that my body/ashes must be together at the end of the world. So does that mean that people who have died in explosions and have had their bodies completely incinerated cannot be reunited with Christ? (Even if embalmed, our bodies will still rot away; will bodies actually be in heaven, or only our spirits/souls?) (Minneapolis)

A. It is true, as you learned, that in the view of the Catholic Church, cremains should be buried or interred in a sacred, church-approved place. But the reason is not so much, as you suggest, that "the ashes must be together at the end of the world."

Instead, it results from the church's belief that the human body is an essential part of a person's identity and that cremains should therefore be treated with the same respect as a human corpse.

Additionally, the church prefers that the cremains be accessible to the public so that the Christian community can come and remember the dead in prayer.

And so, in 2016 when the Vatican issued guidelines for cremation, it clarified that the cremains should not be scattered, divided up, placed in lockets or kept at home.

And, yes, it is an essential Catholic doctrine (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, No. 1017) that in heaven our bodies will be reunited with our souls -- although transformed into a glorified state, freed from any suffering or pain. Exactly how that will happen we do not know, although I feel confident that God can figure it out -- even for those whose bodies have been "completely incinerated" at death.

Q. I am 80 years old and would like to feel like a real and responsible Catholic again, but here is my problem. In the Bible, it says that we should love God with all our hearts and minds. I believe in God and know that he is there, but I just do not experience that "loving," "feel good" emotion.

I have a huge guilt complex about this, because it suggests that I just take God for granted. I can talk and pray to God, but it seems so one-sided. When I was a boy, I used to stop in church for a visit and just sit and marvel that I was in God's house. But now I leave Mass feeling empty, except for knowing that I have met my Sunday obligation.

Over the years, I have spoken with four different Catholic priests to discuss

this, and it was a complete waste of time. All I came away with was that I needed to have blind faith. I do have faith, but that does not remove my guilt for not properly loving God. (Terre Haute, Indiana)

A. Relax! The fact that you do not feel God's closeness does not mean that you don't love him. I refer you to a book called *Mother Teresa: Come Be My Light*, the record of Mother Teresa's correspondence with her spiritual director.

Mother Teresa, who devoted her life to caring for the poor in the streets of Kolkata, was canonized a saint in 2016. Yet this book reveals that she endured many years of an intense spiritual dryness, feeling abandoned by God. It is a story told by many saints.

"My own soul remains in deep darkness and desolation," noted an anguished Mother Teresa. Nevertheless, she said, "I don't complain -- let him do with me whatever he wants."

I'm sure that you appreciate that the Lord has given you the gift of life, along with many blessings over your 80 years. Your presence at Mass -- the great act of Christian thanksgiving -- demonstrates that gratitude.

I will pray that God will grant you the gift of inner peace, as well as a sense of his nearness. But meanwhile, don't worry about how you feel; it's much more important how you think and act.

Questions may be sent to Father Kenneth Doyle at askfatherdoyle@gmail.com and 30 Columbia Circle Drive, Albany NY 12203.

Parent awareness program

Columbus St. Andrew Church, 1899 McCoy Road, Columbus, will host a parent awareness program titled "Hidden in Plain Sight" at 7 p.m. Thursday, March 1, in Nugent Hall.

This parents-only program, sponsored by the Tuscarawas Anti-Drug Coalition, includes interactive exhibits, information on community resources, and

hints or ideas on behaviors that may indicate a young person is becoming involved in risky behavior. Topics covered include underage drinking, tobacco, marijuana, "spice," prescription drugs, inhalants, technology, and self-harm.

For more information, contact St. Andrew School principal Joel Wichtman at (614) 451-1626.

Appalachian project fundraiser

A fundraiser for the annual Appalachian outreach project conducted each summer by St. Catharine, Christ the King, and other parishes on Columbus' east side will take place from 3:30 to 5 p.m. Sunday, March 4 in the undercroft of St. Catharine Church, 500 S. Gould Road.

The program has assisted residents of southern Ohio for 25

years with home repairs and new construction they are unable to complete because of economic or physical hardships.

There will be a raffle, and old-fashioned apple crisp and ice cream will be served.

RSVP is appreciated to appalachianproject94@gmail.com or Anne Jupinko at (614) 499-2860.

HISTORY, continued from Page 5

was willing to examine any instances of racism that Williams might find in its history.

Earlier this month, the Martin de Porres Center, operated by the Dominican Sisters of Peace, presented a Black History Month program, "The Sound of My People," with the Through His Eyes arts ministry of the Columbus First Church of God.

The Sound of My People offered viewers a glimpse into the history of African Americans from Africa to modern-day America, told through music, drama, dance, and song. The production examined how faith in God and worship through music impacted the growth of the African American culture.

For the current school year, the diocesan Office of Black Catholic Ministries is providing financial assistance for the 2017-18 school year to several students at diocesan elementary and high schools.

Tuition awards have been presented to one student selected by the administration at each of the

following Columbus elementary schools: All Saints Academy, Holy Spirit, St. Anthony, and St. Mary in German Village.

Also receiving tuition awards were Columbus high school students Lauren Akainyah and Ruth Tesfay, St. Francis DeSales; Arec Chinua Igwebuikie, St. Charles Preparatory; and Atemnam Maker, Bishop Ready.

In addition, Columbus Cristo Rey High School was presented with \$500 to purchase uniforms for four students. Two students from St. Mary in German Village who attend Catholic high schools were presented with \$100 uniform awards.

Part of the Black Catholic Ministries office mission is to support Catholic school education within the diocesan African American community. It provides financial awards to Catholic elementary schools with a diverse population and offers individual financial assistance to African American students who attend Columbus-area Catholic high schools.

Church's Lenten observance dedicated to shooting victims, their families

By Tom Tracy

Catholic News Service

A parish community less than two miles away and directly impacted by the Feb. 14 school shooting at a Broward County, Florida, high school is finding new purpose in Lent this year, according to the parish administrator.

"We decided to hold Stations of the Cross on Fridays during Lent as is our tradition, but this (past) Friday we decided to celebrate those stations in memory and in solidarity with those who died and all their families, and those at school who experienced this violence on Wednesday," said Polish-born Father Ireneusz Ekiert, who became administrator of Mary Help of Christians Parish in Parkland, Florida, in December.

At least one member of the suburban parish northwest of Fort Lauderdale -- 14-year-old freshman Gina Montalto, who had attended Mary Help of Christians Elementary School -- was among the deceased. Her funeral was on Feb. 20.

"We have a couple of families with kids who were wounded and one that has died," the priest told the *Florida Catholic*, newspaper of the Archdiocese of Miami. "This was a perfect opportunity to bring all those who died and their families, those who suffered, all those who experienced that violence, to bring them into prayer in the Stations today."

Troubled 19-year-old Nikolas Cruz has been charged with 17 counts of first-degree premeditated murder after stalking the halls of Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School with an AR-15 rifle on Valentine's Day. Fourteen more faculty members and students were injured in the tragedy. Cruz reportedly had been expelled from the school for disciplinary reasons.

Father Ekiert said several young people from the parish who attend the high school "were also traumatized by the whole experience. We talked with them on Wednesday and again yesterday and they are scared. They don't know what to do with it."

About 75 parishioners were on hand for the Stations of the Cross, including members of the parish youth group, public high school students, and students from the parish school. The parish conducted another prayer vigil the night before and invited



parishioners and others to pray the rosary at noon, 2, 4, and 6 p.m. the day after the shooting.

Father Ekiert said he never imagined being plunged into a horrific tragedy of this scope, especially in an otherwise quiet residential area that has become home to many South American transplants.

"Unfortunately, this event is very painful, very heartbreaking," he said, "but people are coming together to pray. They were here on Ash Wednesday services in good numbers, and yesterday, we prayed the rosary every two hours for the victims and students."

He added that the community was to pray again on Feb. 18 "for those who lost their lives or were affected by this violence."

Local Catholic Charities counselors and others also were on hand to speak to student survivors.

"The kids in school and their parents were traumatized because students were locked in school for three and four hours and so yesterday and today, we were trying to reach out to (parish and parochial school) families," Father Ekiert said. "Thursday was difficult for everybody, but (our families) know that we are here for them and they know the school is a safe place."

"By participating in the suffering and pain of Christ, we are able to better understand our suffering and the sense that we are not alone in our suffering, that God understands our suffering and that God is there with us in our suffering," the priest said.

Cruz allegedly went on the shooting rampage on the afternoon of Feb. 14, shortly before school was to let out for the day. He was apprehended about an hour after shots were reported at the school. Although he has confessed to the shooting, details about his motive are still being pieced together.

Among the dead were the high school's athletic director, Chris Hixon, a parishioner at Nativity Church in Hollywood, Florida; and another 14-year-old, Cara Loughran, who took part in the youth group at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church in nearby Coral Springs.

Photo: An outdoor Stations of the Cross service at Mary Help of Christians Church in Parkland, Florida, was dedicated to victims of the mass shooting at a nearby high school. CNS/Tom Tracy

Watterson athletes heading for college



Eight Columbus Bishop Watterson High School seniors recently announced their intent to play college sports. They are (from left): first row, Joshua Brobst, baseball, Lake Erie College; Lainey Billing, basketball, Lake Erie; Lilly Binion-Ferrell, women's wrestling, Campbellsville; Holden Jones, football, Walsh; second row, Kyle Simmonds, football, St. Francis (Pennsylvania); Bryant Pratt, soccer, Indiana; Kevin Laming, football, Ashland; and Gilberto Quintero, soccer, Findlay.

Photo courtesy Bishop Watterson High School

St. Patrick mission to focus on parish patron

Father Stephen Dominic Hayes, OP, will be conducting the annual Lenten parish mission for Columbus St. Patrick Church, 280 N. Grant Ave., at 7 p.m. Monday to Wednesday, March 12 to 14. It will focus on the parish's patron, St. Patrick, the apostle of Ireland.

Lent is a time for renewing our pilgrimage into the mystery of God's life and ours; to find holiness, meaning, and renewed purpose in a life lived within the embrace of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It is a time for conversion, and the story of St. Patrick demonstrates the reality

of true conversion.

Patrick was baptized when he was an infant, but as a teenager, he was an indifferent and even a bad Christian, by his own admission. He eventually was imprisoned, and his years as a captive enabled him to emerge from the spiritual darkness of the pagan people who had enslaved him.

Using St. Patrick as an example of conversion, Father Hayes will present a plan for deepening our participation in the grace of the sacraments as we make our pilgrimage with Jesus through the spiritual desert of Lent.

Catholic War Veterans have scholarship funds available

The Catholic War Veterans have a scholarship foundation that awards four \$1,000 scholarship grants to eligible high school seniors. Any high school senior is eligible if his or her parent or grandparent is a member of the Catholic War Veterans or if he or she is

a child or grandchild of a deceased Catholic veteran.

For more information, send an email to Mary Ann Janning at majanning@gmail.com or call (614) 558-1293.

The deadline to receive applications is Monday, April 30.

Vietnamese Tet Mass 2018

The annual Vietnamese lunar new year, Tet, was celebrated during Mass for the First Sunday of Lent on Feb. 18 at Columbus Ss. Augustine & Gabriel Church. Father Joseph Bay, the parish's pastor, was assisted by Deacon Joseph Nguyen.

Girls from the parish performed a traditional Vietnamese dance, and elders wore costumes representing health, happiness, and prosperity, and distributed candy to children and adults. CT photos by Ken Snow



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CEMETERY field workers will be removing winter-time and artificial decorations from graves and mausoleums at all Catholic cemeteries beginning March 1, 2018.

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Our need for others

I've been blessed with good health, through nature and nurture, but I recently experienced a medical emergency that I never could have imagined.

While driving to Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament recently, my vision blurred. I was able to turn my car around and safely drive home, and my husband, Al, drove me to the Riverside Hospital emergency room.

I felt pretty good, sitting up and talking normally, but my heart rate kept falling dangerously low. After five hours of testing in the ER, my body proved to be healthy, but they found what appeared to be a failure in the electrical system of my heart.

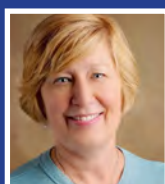
That was quite a surprise to someone who was not ill, exercises daily, and teaches others to exercise. I'm considered relatively young to be a cardiac patient (in my 50s), I didn't have much medical history to speak of, and this was my first time in the ER, so this was truly a humbling experience.

There I was with concerned nurses, doctors, and family members hovering all around me. When they attached paddle pads as a precaution, I knew I had to take this seriously.

So I prayed. I can honestly say that for the first time in my life, I prayed as Jesus calls us to pray ... without ceasing. I prayed to the Holy Trinity and my guardian angel and asked for the intercession of Our Lady and the saints, especially two of my favorites, St. Padre Pio and St. Therese of Lisieux.

I also felt an urgent need to pray for my family and friends, every hospital worker and patient, and the holy souls in purgatory ... who are closer to heaven than we are.

Much like an athlete who trains for a physical event, I felt this was it – time to run the race, to lean on God, my faith, and my loving family and friends for strength and to give every ounce of my will to



HOLY AND HEALTHY
Lori Crock

prayer. Years of receiving the Sacraments, praying, and serving – all the things we do as active Catholics – must mean something in the drama of our daily lives ... and, for me, this was it.

So, on the first night in the hospital, I had a long conversation with God. I told him that if this is my time, I'll go, but I didn't feel ready. I still need to grow in holiness (as he knows), and there are some milestones I'd like to be here to share with my husband, children, extended family, and friends. But your will be done, Lord!. Give me courage. Give my family strength. I received the Anointing of the Sick; it was time to "put on the armor of God" (Ephesians 6:11).

It's always about both prayer and action. The doctors educated me about putting in a pacemaker to regulate my heart rate. It seemed like a reasonable solution. I had to be obedient and prayerful and let the doctors and nurses do what they are trained to do. Praise God for the gifts he bestows on us so we can serve others! I was keenly aware of my great need for others, and I continued to pray for them.

The day after I returned home from the hospital, I read this beautiful reflection from Pope Benedict XVI that sums up our need for others in illness: "It is nonetheless true that illness is typically a human condition in which we feel strongly that we are not self-sufficient, but need others. In this regard we might say, paradoxically, that illness can be a salutary moment in which to experience the attention of others and to pay attention to others!"

My condition of dependence led to a beautiful crack in my faulty heart to feel a new and urgent need for God and for others. I tried to stay in the present moment. I believe this helped me stay upbeat and hopeful and freed me from the evil ones' snares of worry, fear, and 'what ifs.'

I received a pacemaker, and my heart is operating at full speed. I feel amazing and I'm amazingly grateful for my faith and family and basically everything in this life. No exercise for a while, but I'll return to it slowly, honoring my body and continuing to be grateful to God and to the people he has placed in my life.

God is teaching me through this experience. He is the great physician, and his ways are not our ways. I remain in awe of his glorious love for us, and I pray that my heart remains open to whatever He has in store for me next.

Lori Crock is a wife, mother, Plain City St. Joseph Church parishioner, strength and movement coach, and owner of MoveStrong Kettlebells in Dublin. Lori is online at movestrongkbs.com and holycatholic.com.

Men's luncheon club meeting

Bill Hinger of Worthington St. Michael Church will speak on Eucharistic Adoration at the next Catholic Men's Luncheon Club meeting on Friday, March 2. Hinger was instrumental in starting Adoration chapels that are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, except during the Sacred Triduum, at his parish and Columbus Immaculate Conception Church.

The program at Columbus St. Patrick Church, 280 N. Grant Ave., will begin at 11:45 a.m. with Mass, followed by lunch and Hinger's talk until about 1 p.m. No reservations are necessary. A \$10 donation is requested to cover the lunch and meeting. AM820 St. Gabriel Catholic Radio is this month's luncheon sponsor.

For information on the Catholic Men's Luncheon Club, visit www.catholicmensministry.com/cmlc or contact club president George Harvey at george.harvey@tvssohio.com.

In the marriage case styled MILLER – VEYAKHONE, #2018-0018, the Tribunal of the Diocese of Columbus Ohio is currently unaware of the present address of CLAIRE VARADY VEYAKHONE. The Tribunal herewith informs her of the case and invites her to contact REV. MSGR. JOHN G. JOHNSON, JCL, Presiding and sole Judge, no later than 06 MARCH 2018 – Phone (614) 241-2500. Anyone who knows of the whereabouts of CLAIRE VARADY VEYAKHONE is herewith asked to ake this Citation known to her or to inform the Tribunal of her current address. Given this 19th day of February, 2018. REV. MSGR. JOHN G. JOHNSON, JCL, Presiding and sole Judge.

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From left: Bishop Frederick Campbell speaks after Mass at the Catholic Women's Conference; Eucharistic procession with Father Ignatius Mazanowski, FHS; Father Donald Franks distributes the Eucharist; Angie Merklin (second from left) of Worthington St. Michael Church and daughters Carlee (left) and Hannah meet Sister M. Gilda, OSsS, (front) and Sister M. Eunice, OSsS, of the Bridgettine Sisters. CT photos by Ken Snow



Columbus Catholic Women's Conference speakers urge audience to be brave

BY TIM PUET

Reporter, Catholic Times

"Be Brave" was the dominant message of the four principal speakers at the 2018 Columbus Catholic Women's Conference.

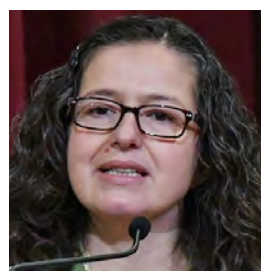
Lisa Hendey discussed the Virgin Mary's bravery in saying "Yes" to God and the call of each of us to say "our own unique and beautiful 'Yes.'"

Father Ignatius Mazanowski, FHS, told of the bravery of members of his family in dealing with the near-death and amazing recovery of his 19-month-old niece.

Derya Little talked about her courageous journey of leaving the Islamic faith into which she was born and embracing Catholicism. And Obianuju "Uju" Ekeocha spoke of the bravery of proclaiming what Pope St. John Paul II called "the Gospel of Life" in a world where many people are hostile to that message.

More than 3,500 women attended the event on Saturday, Feb. 17 at the Cardinal Center on the state fairgrounds to pray, reflect, and be inspired. The conference theme was based on a 2013 message in which Pope Francis urged 10 newly ordained priests to "ask Jesus what he wants from you, and be brave." This is the 11th year for the conference, which has become one of the nation's largest events of its kind.

Hendey, after admitting "I'm a little terrified today" by the thought of

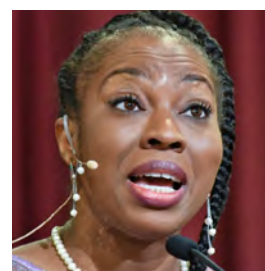


Derya Little

speaking before such a large audience, talked about Pope Francis' message and said "When we give God our 'Yes,' as Mary did, we need to be ready and to be brave, because it will amaze you where that 'Yes' will take you."

Using Fra Angelico's 15th-century painting of the Annunciation as a backdrop, she said that, although this is a traditional image of the angel Gabriel's announcement that Mary was chosen to be the mother of God, "I don't think Mary was wearing a ball gown (as the painting depicts) when it happened. I've been to the Holy Land, and it's a pretty dusty place, so Mary probably was dusting, and she probably was terrified" when she heard of God's mission for her, Hendey said. "Yet she rose through the fear she had at that moment and embraced her 'Yes.'"

Hendey, author of a book titled *The Grace of 'Yes'*, said that, like Mary, all of us are called to be radically open to God's will, to always err on the side of generosity, and to renew that commitment every day, saying "Yes" to belief, to love,



Obianuju "Uju" Ekeocha

and to humility and forgiveness. She said her own marriage of 33 years has taught her examples every day of what it means to say "Yes" to God, not knowing where it will lead, but trusting in God's constant presence.

"Sometimes after marrying Greg, I thought I was the only woman who married a graduate of the University of Notre Dame who wasn't a Catholic and who wasn't a football player," she said. "Greg and our son entered the Catholic Church at the same time, about 15 years after Greg and I were married."

"By that time, I had come to understand that Greg's spiritual journey was not my own. I had to focus on my own continuing conversion. I needed to let go of my ideas of what marriage should be like, and to fall more deeply in love with my husband as he was. ... We may never see Jesus resurrected, but we can boldly and courageously serve him through the ones we love," she said.

Hendey also said marriage vows are a constant sign of hope and



Lisa Hendey

courage, using the example of her son's wedding in California this past October. Thirty-six hours before the wedding, all of its anticipated venues were destroyed or damaged because of the fires that raced through California at that time. When the priest who was to officiate was asked whether the wedding should be rescheduled, he said, "No. It's more important than ever that you be married now, because your 'Yes' means 'Yes' more than ever" as a symbol of resilience. So the wedding went on as scheduled.

"The reception was moved from a winery to a rose nursery, and it ended with a shower of roses," the symbol of St. Therese of Lisieux. Hendey said this brought a greater meaning to the day.

On the subject of humility, Hendey quoted C.S. Lewis' advice that "True humility is not thinking less of yourself, but thinking of yourself less" and said "a lack of true humility also causes us to lack the ability to say 'Yes' to true forgiveness of self, a gift that requires bravery."

"We must spring forward and face the world that you and I are called to, responding with a brave, courageous, impenetrable 'Yes,'" she said. "Most of us won't be political leaders or called on to change things in a large way, but all of us are called to create a revolution of love in the world. If we respond to the call, change will come through

each of us with all of our 'Yesses.'"

Father Mazanowski, a member of the newly established Franciscan Friars of the Holy Spirit, told the dramatic story of how on Dec. 29, 2016, his niece, Joy Loboda, had wandered away from a family gathering in Arizona, slipped through a faulty door and fell into a swimming pool, where she was found floating atop the water several minutes after it was discovered she was missing.

"We believe she had died," Father Mazanowski said, "Her father, Matt, and I were performing CPR on her, and Matt was praying the words Jesus used when he prayed over

a dead girl's body in Mark 5:41 – 'Talitha koum,' which means 'Little girl, arise!'"

"Matt said that as he prayed, he felt he had gone to the throne room of God, and God granted his request to bring his daughter back to life. The doctor told him 'Joy has a heartbeat, but she didn't have one for 30 minutes.' He said she was going to be hospitalized for about four months."

Joy's story quickly went viral on the internet, and a Facebook page titled "Pray for Joy," which continues to exist, was created to tell her story. Father Mazanowski said the speed

of Joy's recovery astounded everyone, including the doctors, and she was back home from Phoenix Children's Hospital within a month.

Matt and Kristin Loboda, the parents of Joy and her four siblings, were scheduled to come to Columbus to tell Joy's story, but Father Mazanowski said they had to stay in Arizona because of "unforeseen circumstances." His talk about Joy was in addition to a Reconciliation talk and a homily during Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, which he already had been scheduled to deliver at the conference. Father Mazanowski and his fellow friars serve native



Americans on the Gila River Reservation in Arizona and students at the Newman Center of Grand Canyon University in Phoenix.

Joy was placed in a medically induced coma for the first week of her recovery, with Father Mazanowski celebrating Mass at her bedside every day. He said his own experiences and that of others during Joy's recovery taught him three "Joy lessons."

"First, in order to have a resurrection, someone or something has to die," he said. "In this case, it was Joy's death, an experience hard to put into words. We may not experience a physical resurrection, but all of us have something that needs to die in our lives – bad attitudes, bad habits, addictions, unhealthy relationships. We need to surrender our heart, or our vocational discernment, or our finances, whatever it is that is bringing us harm, to Jesus, and he will bring resurrection."

"Second, healing takes time. It's a process, a series of steps. Some people punish themselves needlessly because healing isn't going faster. Sometimes to heal a physical wound, you have to cut it back open and wait. In healing, you can't say to God 'I'm in control.' You have to say 'I want you to be in control. I'm going to trust you.' It won't be as painful, because a lot of pain comes from the struggle to have control. In the healing process, you come to know God. Allow him to be in control. His ways, his timing,

his plan are better than yours.'

"Third, whatever the evil you are facing might be, give God permission to work a miracle in your life, to bring good out of evil, as he did through what happened to Joy. As Romans 8:28 says, 'God brings all things to good for those who love him and are called according to his purpose.' St. Augustine says it's God's will that we would freely choose to love him. Remember, he created us to be able to say 'No' to him, but we need to say 'Yes.' When we do that, miracles can happen," Father Mazanowski said.

Little told the conversion story she also recounts in greater detail in her 2017 book *From Islam to Christ: One Woman's Path Through the Riddles of God*. She was born to Islamic parents in Turkey, but said that after they divorced, "I realized that everything I had been living for was a lie."

She said that from an early age, Islamic children are told "You're Allah's slave" and have fear instilled in them, and she could not accept a religion with this kind of emphasis. In addition, she said, "I learned that Muhammad (the founder of Islam) craved power, money, and women." She ultimately became an atheist and was attending a Turkish university when she was employed as a tutor to teach the Turkish language to a Protestant missionary named Therese.

See CONFERENCE, Page 12

CONFERENCE, continued from Page 11

"I felt Christianity and Islam were all the same, and I wanted to enlighten her," she said. "I started asking her questions about her beliefs, but she counteracted all my arguments. I saw her twice a week for three hours a day for three years, and I ended up reading the entire Bible while trying to teach her Turkish.

"My god was science. Therese's God was different. My god, Allah, was volatile and inconsistent. Hers was pure and consistent," Little said. "I began to wonder why the rules of physics are always the same, where this order came from. She said it was consistent because there is a creator. After a while, I came to decide it's possible there might be a God. But I needed to explore this further, because if there is a God, then why is there so much evil?"

"The answer to that came from reading Dostoevsky's tale in *The Brothers Karamazov* of the Grand Inquisitor, who tells Christ he should have accepted Satan's temptations, but ultimately realizes that God gave humans free will because he wanted them to love him from the heart rather than being slaves. For the first time in my life, I understood free will and what freedom does. I realized the world is evil not because God is evil, but because we are."

Her experiences with Therese, Dostoevsky, and a Christian family she taught after Therese returned to America convinced her of the truth of Christianity. After a few years, she became a Catholic because she felt that the doctrine of *sola Scriptura* held by some non-Catholic churches – that the Scriptures are the only source of faith and practice – made no sense. "I don't think Jesus came to earth, ascended to heaven, then said, 'Oh, I'll send a book in a few hundred years that will explain things,'" she said.

She felt the same way about the Protestant concept of *sola fide* – salvation by faith alone, one of the key issues that led to the Protestant Reformation 500 years ago. She also had other questions about Catholicism and found answers in a book titled *By What Authority? An Evangelical Discovers Catholic Tradition* by Mark Shea.

Little is now married to a man she met on a website for Catholic singles. They have four children and live in western Pennsylvania. She concluded her talk with four thoughts on how to evangelize Muslims: Pray ("Islam is based so

much on fear, and you have to break that wall"); stay away from men "because Islam doesn't see men and women as equals"; learn all you can about Islam ("Most Muslims don't know their faith and are victims of their own religion"); and be friends "so they can see the joy in your life as a Christian."

Ekeocha, the conference's concluding speaker, is the founder and president of Culture of Life Africa, an initiative dedicated to promotion and defense of the African values of the sanctity of life, beauty of marriage, blessings of motherhood, and dignity of family life. Since founding Culture of Life Africa in 2012, she has spoken in 15 nations, including appearances at the Vatican and the United Nations.

"But until today, I have never spoken to a large group of Catholic women like this," said Ekeocha, a Nigerian native who is a hematologist at a hospital in the United Kingdom. Her first book, *Target Africa: Ideological Neocolonialism in the 21st Century*, was released during the week preceding the conference.

"Nancy Madrid and Emily Jaminet (two of the event's organizers) said last year that 'We'd like you to speak at the conference, but you don't have a book,'" she said. "I had been so busy that I hadn't had time to write one, but I had been approached to do it. This helped push me to get it written."

Ekeocha said that Culture of Life Africa started when she was angered in 2012 by Melinda Gates' plans to contribute more than \$500 million to birth-control efforts in sub-Saharan Africa. "I threw the remote at my TV when I learned of this," she said. "I couldn't sleep. Something told me to take action. When you hear a voice, do something. I knew I had to either call a friend and scream or write it out. So I started writing on my computer at 11 p.m. Six hours later, I came to a stop."

At that point, she had written 2,000 words and didn't know what to do next. She decided to send what she had written to EWTN radio personality Teresa Tomeo, whose program she listens to frequently. Tomeo read what Ekeocha had written on the air, it was printed in a British Catholic newspaper, the Vatican translated it, "and the next thing I knew, the African bishops were calling and wanting to know 'Who is she?'" Ekeocha said. "I was hurled into the deep end."



"A magazine described me as one of the 99 leading Catholic women in the world," she said. "God opened up a door for me I'd never expected at a level I'd never expected. This showed God can call anyone and wants to call anyone. Just ask him."

This year is the 30th anniversary of Pope St. John Paul's apostolic letter *Mulieris Dignitatem (On the Dignity and Vocation of Women)*. Ekeocha urged all women to read it if they haven't already done so. "Through reading it, I learned about the treasure of Catholic women in the universal church," she said.

"I'm Nigerian, and I felt this document applied strongly to me and to all women. When women abdicate their role as defenders of life, as mothers, sisters, and daughters of God, things go wrong in society."

Ekeocha said today's Catholic women have inherited a role as defenders of the faith and protectors of the family that goes back to the earliest days of Christianity, to women such as Priscilla and Dorcas who are mentioned in the New Testament, and on through examples such as St. Catherine of Siena, St. Elizabeth of Hungary, St. Joan of Arc, St. Katharine Drexel, and St. Teresa of Kolkata.

She talked of the efforts of a Scottish woman named Mary Slessor who served as a missionary in Nigeria and who spoke against the practice one ethnic group there had of killing twins because of the mistaken belief that they were split souls. Slessor died in 1915 in Nigeria. Ekeocha said one of the great moments of her pro-life efforts came in 2015, when she spoke in Slessor's hometown of Dundee, Scotland as a daughter of Nigeria to thank the Scots for Slessor's work 100 years after her death.

Ekeocha said that unlike North America, Africa is a strongly pro-life continent, with 50 of 54 nations having pro-life restrictions. However, there have been efforts in some of those nations to legalize abortion, most recently in Malawi, where pro-life activism has kept such a proposal from becoming law. She said a clause allowing abortion was slipped into an anti-violence law in a Nigerian state a few years ago, but the public outcry against it was so forceful that the provision was repealed.

"God is calling us to be brave hearts," she said. "Ask God to make you brave so you can do the work he wants you to do. I never thought he would make me speak at the United Nations or the Vatican, but I asked God and he responded. Ask him and he will show you how to play your role and to carry the Gospel of Life where no one else can. Woe to us if we do not preach and defend the Gospel of Life."

The conference began with a Mass celebrated by Bishop Frederick Campbell and concluded with a Holy Hour led by Father Mazanowski. Sister Nadine Buchanan, OP, gave a brief presentation on the efforts of the Dominican Sisters of Peace to fight human trafficking. The women of the Ohio Dominican University chorus (pictured) sang at the Mass, with His Own, a group of three women, providing accompaniment for the Holy Hour. More than 50 priests administered the Sacrament of Reconciliation to about 2,000 women, with 10 priests staying beyond the 90-minute period set aside for confessions.

Next year's conference will be on Saturday, Feb. 16 at the same site. Confirmed speakers are Father Christopher Hartley and Colleen Mitchell, who will speak about their missionary work in the Dominican Republic and Costa Rica respectively.

Catholic convert embraces the faith, helps lead friend to the Church

By Doug Bean

Catholic Times Editor

One year ago, Val Ely participated in the Rite of Election as a candidate. On Sunday, Feb. 18, she returned to Westerville St. Paul Church as part of the event again, this time as a sponsor.

In the months since Ely embraced her newfound Catholic faith, she has shared her joy with good friend Renee McPherson. And at the Easter Vigil, McPherson will be brought into full communion with the Catholic Church at Grove City Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church (*Read more about McPherson and the Rite of Election on pages 19 and 20*).

Ely's journey is like that of many people who come to know the fullness of the Catholic faith. And yet each pathway is somewhat unique.

Here is her story:

"I was raised in an evangelical family. I had a very charismatic upbringing, first in a Pentecostal church and then an Assemblies of God church, followed by a Vineyard church in Columbus for nearly nine years. My attraction to the Catholic Church began out of a curiosity of sorts, during a very emotionally and physically tumultuous time of our life. My marriage of 13 years was rocky at best due to intense stress coming at us from all sides. Our self-employment business was crumbling at the seams because of extreme fatigue from life, some special needs that our three children were dealing with, along with some physical ailments that I was struggling to deal with, as well as grieving my father who had just passed away. We had very little hope of life getting better.

"We were both raised believing in God, but it felt as though most of the time His voice was muted and we couldn't hear Him, or else He just

wasn't talking. However, I believed I knew what His voice sounded like, and I knew Scripture (at least, the version I had been taught) and I knew I could recognize truth when I heard it. I had been asked multiple times to listen to Catholic radio, and, until this point I had not wanted to listen. It just wasn't a priority. During the fall of 2016, vitriol and divisiveness surrounded me on television, social media, the radio and even in the public square, even among people from my church, I was saturated with negativity and feared that there was no one left who had morals or even a firm grasp on Christ's truth that saves us and sets us free. Where had it gone? Why couldn't I find it?

"I began listening to Catholic radio and found it comforting to my pangs of worry about where the 'church' (mystical body of Christ, or, rather, the invisible body of Christ) was headed. I found that I agreed strongly with Catholic morality. I enjoyed the programs and began to hear answers to questions I had never asked out loud for fear of becoming someone's conversion project. Around the same time, I began to feel led into the actual buildings of Catholic churches, so I would sit and pray. I started praying the Divine Mercy Chaplet in church sanctuaries. I had heard it on at 3 p.m. every day, and even though I thought, 'Well, the regular rosary is a little 'too about Mary,' I loved the words of the Divine Mercy Chaplet and took it as my personal prayer intention to beg God for mercy in my life. This brought about so much peace.

"I also learned of what Adoration was and thought 'I want to go sit with Jesus. I should go try that!' So I began a weekly time of visiting Eucharistic adoration, which eventually led to visiting many Mass services because I was hungry for more of the peace I was experiencing in Adoration. I



Val Ely (left) and Renee McPherson.

wanted more of Jesus. It seemed my last hope and promise of being able to deal with the insurmountable stress in my life.

"I used to think I had known all that was knowable about Christianity, or at least all that was relevant to my life. In reality, I had no clue about Church history, the Church fathers, or even a clear and succinct understanding of the Sacred Scriptures, Sacred Tradition, and the Magisterium of the Church. But what I decided to do was to answer Jesus' pulse in my heart, His beckoning that I 'come and see' what the Catholic Church had to offer me and my family.

"The biggest stumbling block of entering the Catholic Church for me was fear. Fear of the unknown. Fear of not knowing if it was true. But also fear of what it might require of me and/or what people might think of me if I came to believe that it actually was truth. I knew it would mean a completely different life for us, and that was very, very scary. You see, prior to all of this, the only person I knew who had become Catholic on either my side of the family or my husband's side of the family was my mother. Unfortunately, at that time, I was an adult and my husband and I were already married. We were actually married by his dad, who was a Church of Christ minister; in addition to that, my husband's grandfather was a former Church of Christ minister as well. So their family, along with my foundation of faith, caused me to have little to no desire to ask my mom about her conversion and why she might choose to make such a drastic change. Those strong fears were probably the most effective of the stumbling blocks in the church.

"However, knowing and having ex-

perienced just how bad life could get while trying to remain in my own strength and ability to succeed, or even to survive, based on my own efforts, were just not enough. It was too scary on my own. I did believe that I would know truth or that I could recognize it if I heard it. I knew the Holy Spirit's foremost efforts with us are to lead us to truth. So I boldly decided to commit in my heart to be led down this path that He was pulling me toward because I knew I could trust Him to not lead me into error. I decided that I should be humble in acknowledging that I actually don't know much about the Catholic Church and that if it was true, I wouldn't know, because I had never cared enough to ask before. I wanted my questions to be asked of the people who knew what Catholics believe and who are living it, after all, because you wouldn't go to a magician to ask how to become a doctor, or to a parrot to find out how to become a mother. You get it.

"I kept my journey silent for three months because I didn't want anyone or any segment of my echo chamber to affect this decision. I wanted to give it a decent, open-ended chance in the 'high unlikely' case it was truth. I decided that I should take everything and put it on the table for consideration. Basically, I was willing to enter in dialogue about anything that I might believe contributed to my worldly, religious, and transcendent truth meter, to make sure that I hadn't assumed core beliefs that were unfounded and unproven. What I found in the Catholic Church, shockingly, lined up with every core truth I had ever believed and been taught, and then some! It blows my narrow, formerly held belief in God and His plan of salvation completely out of the water!

"I don't feel intellectually equipped to even describe what this change has been able to do for my family, for my marriage, or for my parenting. Here's a clue into how we have changed: My non-Catholic sister jokes with me by calling me a '2,000 percent Catholic,' and you need to calm it down a little.' But she offers that title because we have embraced every part of our new faith to the degree that we can, in only

See CONVERTS, Page 20

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Second Sunday of Lent (Cycle B)

Two accounts that leave plenty of questions



Father
Lawrence L. Hummer

**Genesis 22:1-2,9a,10-13,15-18;
Romans 8:31b-34;
Mark 9:2-10**

Jews refer to the first reading as the *Akedah* (meaning “the binding” of Isaac). From Sunday’s reading, we have no idea that Isaac was bound, because the narrative is so chopped up in the *Lectionary*.

This passage has been called “one of the gems of biblical narrative” (*Jewish Study Bible*), which makes it all the more unfortunate to so edit this story in the *Lectionary*. The whole frightful account is found in Genesis 22:1-19. The *Lectionary* chooses to focus on Abraham’s obedience to God’s command. The intention to offer Isaac up as a holocaust (meaning the total destruction of him by fire) is stated at the outset.

Isaac (“your beloved son, whom you love” in the Septuagint) was to be the holocaust. Note how the author has presented Isaac: “your son, your only one, whom you love.” Each item (“his son, his only one, whom he loves”) adds information to the horror of what it about to happen.

It is useless to ask why Abraham did not object or raise any questions. The text never says. The text brings us to the point where Abraham is about to slay Isaac, but the Lord’s messenger stops him. At that point, we don’t know whether to laugh in relief or cry at what might have happened, a thought too awful to think about.

The entire narrative raises many more questions than it ever answers, questions which rabbis have asked for centuries. Those questions include: Why was Abraham put to the test again, after leaving his home and trusting the Lord to bring him to the land of Canaan? Why would Abraham knowingly set out to sacrifice his only, beloved son? Was this meant to

be a condemnation of human sacrifice, which was known in the ancient Near East?

What lingers is the one question we fear to ask: Could God, who is all good, ever ask of us our own life? The answer lies buried deeply in the faith of both Jews and Christians, who have, at times, had to suffer even to the point of death. The Christian looks to Christ, who said “Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will preserve it for eternal life” (John 12:25).

People protest, “Why can God demand a life, yet we are forbidden to take life?” Treading on divine turf is beyond our grasp. Some questions, like why innocent children die in a school in Florida, have no good answers. Evil is something we all know and recognize. Extreme evil is part of the mystery of living life. Job sought to answer the question of why the innocent one suffers. In the end, Job had to leave it to the unknown and unknowable mystery of God. Silence before the Lord is the only answer Job can find to his original question of why the innocent suffer. Time has produced no better answer.

The Gospel is always of the Transfiguration on the Second Sunday of Lent. The account leaves plenty of questions on the table that remain beyond our reach after all these centuries. Where was this “high mountain” supposed to be? How did the three disciples recognize Moses and Elijah? What did it mean that Jesus was “transfigured” before them?

In Mark, this event follows Peter’s confession of Jesus as the Messiah and Jesus’ first prediction of the passion, death, and resurrection. More importantly, Jesus had said to all the disciples, “Whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this faithless and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of when he comes in his Father’s glory with the holy angels. ... Amen I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see that the kingdom of God has come in power.” Together with the voice from heaven saying “This is my beloved son. Listen to him,” this event demonstrates “the coming of the kingdom in power.”

Father Lawrence Hummer, pastor of Chillicothe St. Mary Church, can be reached at hummerl@stmarychillicothe.com.

Walking with Purpose founder coming to Sunbury

Lisa Brenninkmeyer, founder and author of the Walking with Purpose women’s Bible study series, is coming to Sunbury St. John Neumann Church, 9633 E. State Route 37, on Wednesday, March 14 for talks at 10 a.m. and 7 p.m. Both talks will take place in the church and will be followed by a light reception in the parish faith and family center.

The subject for the talks will be “Fearless and Free: Experiencing Healing and Wholeness in Christ.”

Participants will learn how to gain a firm foundation to stand on, no matter the circumstances, knowing you are grounded in truth while wrapped in the embrace of the God who loves you completely and without end.

Tickets are \$15 per person and must be purchased in advance. Visit www.saintjohnsunbury.org for more information and to access the registration site, or call the parish office at (740) 965-1358.

The Weekday Bible Readings

MONDAY
Daniel 9:4b-10
Psalm 79:8-9,11-13
Luke 6:36-38

TUESDAY
Isaiah 1:10,16-20
Psalm 50:8-9,16bc-17,21,23
Matthew 23:1-12

WEDNESDAY
Jeremiah 18:18-20
Psalm 31:5-6,14-16
Matthew 20:17-28

THURSDAY
Jeremiah 17:5-10
Psalm 1:1-4,6
Luke 16:19-31

FRIDAY
Genesis 37:3-4,12-13a,17b-28a
Psalm 105:16-21
Matthew 21:33-43,45-46

SATURDAY
Micah 7:14-15,18-20
Psalm 103:1-4,9-12
Luke 15:1-3,11-32

DIOCESAN WEEKLY RADIO AND TELEVISION MASS SCHEDULE WEEK OF FEBRUARY 25, 2018

SUNDAY MASS

10:30 a.m. Mass from Columbus St. Joseph Cathedral on St. Gabriel Radio (AM 820), Columbus, and at www.stgabrielradio.com.

Mass with the Passionist Fathers at 7:30 a.m. on WWHO-TV (the CW), Channel 53, Columbus, and 10:30 a.m. on WHIZ-TV, Channel 18, Zanesville. Check local cable system for cable channel listing.

Mass from Our Lady of the Angels Monastery, Birmingham, Alabama, at 8 a.m. on EWTN (Spectrum Channel 385, Insight Channel 382, or WOW Channel 378).

(Encores at noon, 7 p.m., and midnight).

Mass from the Archdiocese of Milwaukee at 6:30 a.m. on ION TV (AT&T U-verse Channel 195, Dish Network Channel 250, or DirecTV Channel 305).

Mass from Massillon St. Mary Church at 10:30 a.m. on WILB radio (AM 1060, FM 94.5 and 89.5), Canton, heard in Tuscarawas, Holmes, and Coshocton counties.

DAILY MASS

8 a.m., Our Lady of the Angels Monastery in Birmingham, Alabama. (Encores at noon, 7 p.m. and midnight).

See EWTN above; and on I-Lifetv

(Channel 113 in Ada, Logan, Millersburg, Murray City and Washington C.H.; Channel 125 in Marion, Newark, Newcomerstown and New Philadelphia; and Channel 207 in Zanesville); 8 p.m., St. Gabriel Radio (AM 820), Columbus, and at www.stgabrielradio.com.

We pray Week II, Seasonal Proper of the Liturgy of the Hours

Conscience and grace: A Lenten meditation

The scriptures of Lent in the Church's daily liturgy invite two related reflections. The weeks immediately preceding Easter call us to walk to Jerusalem in imitation of Christ, so that at Easter, we too might be blessed with baptismal water and sent into the world on mission. The preceding weeks, those immediately following Ash Wednesday, propose a serious examination of conscience: What is there in me that's broken? What's impeding my being the missionary disciple I was baptized to be?

This Lent, that examination of conscience might well include some serious thinking about what "conscience" means.

That often-contentious subject has returned to the center of the world Catholic conversation, thanks to the forthcoming 50th anniversary of *Humanae Vitae*, Blessed Paul VI's prophetic encyclical on the morally appropriate means of family planning, and the ongoing discussion generated by Pope Francis' apostolic exhortation on marriage, *Amoris Laetitia*. In that conversation, voices have been heard urging a view of conscience that is curious, even dangerous: under certain circumstances, conscience may permit or even require that a person choose acts that the Church has consistently taught are intrinsically wrong – such as using artificial means of contraception, or receiving Holy Communion while living the married life in a union that's not been blessed by the Church.

Those propounding this idea of "conscience" urge us to recognize three things: that the spiritual and moral life is a journey; that when the Church teaches that some things are just wrong and no combination of intentions and consequences can make them right, the Church is proposing an "ideal" to which the most "generous" response may not always be possible; and that confessors and spiritual directors should be compassionate and discerning guides along the often rocky pathways of the moral life.

No reasonable person will contest the last claim.



THE CATHOLIC DIFFERENCE
George Weigel

I'm grateful that I've been the beneficiary of such thoughtful guidance, and more than once. But the other two claims seem problematic, to put it gently.

If, for example, "conscience" can command me to use artificial means of contraception because of my life circumstances, why couldn't conscience permit, or even require, that I continue to defraud customers if my business is in debt and my family would suffer from its failure, even as I work my way into a better, more honest financial situation? Why couldn't "conscience" permit me, on my journey toward the "ideal," to continue to indulge in extracurricular sex while my spouse and I work out the kinks in our marriage? Inside the idea that "conscience" can permit or even require us to do something long understood to be wrong, period, where's the circuit-breaker that would stop a couple from "discerning" that an abortion is the best resolution of the difficulties involved in carrying this unborn child to term, although under future circumstances, they would embrace the "ideal" and welcome a child into their family?

The further claim being made here – that God can ask me, through my conscience, to do things that do not cohere with the teaching of the Church – fractures the bonds between God, the Church's teaching authority, and conscience in perilous ways.

Christ promised to maintain his Church in the truth (John 8.32; John 16.3). Has that promise been broken? The Council of Trent taught that it's always possible, with the help of God's grace, to obey the commandments – that God wills our transformation and

helps us along the way to holiness. Has that teaching been rescinded? Replaced by a "paradigm shift" into the radical subjectivism that's emptied most of liberal Protestantism of spiritual and moral ballast? Vatican II taught that within my conscience is "a law inscribed by God?" Is God now telling me that I can violate the truth he has written into my heart?

To suggest that the Church teaches "ideals" that are impossible to live undervalues the power of grace and empties the moral life of the drama built into it by God himself. Lent does not call us to confess that we've failed to live up to an unachievable "ideal." Lent does not call us to be self-exculpatory like the Pharisee in Luke 18.10-14, who went away unjustified. Lent calls us to embrace the humility of the Gospel publican and confess that we have sinned, knowing that God's mercy can heal what is broken in us if we cooperate with his grace.

George Weigel is Distinguished Senior Fellow of the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, D.C.

'Peter Pan Jr.'

Dublin St. Brigid of Kildare School will present a one-hour musical production of *Peter Pan Jr.* at 7 p.m. Thursday and Friday, March 15 and 16 in the school gym. Free will donations will be accepted to help support the school's performing arts program.

Based on the play by J.M. Barrie and the 1953 Disney film, *Peter Pan Jr.* is the story of a boy who wouldn't grow up and a girl who has to.

After finding his shadow in the Darling family nursery, Peter teaches Wendy, Michael, and John how to fly and sweeps them off to Neverland, where they meet Lost Boys, mermaids, Indians, and pirates. If the children are to return home, Peter must defeat Capt. Hook with the help of Tinker Bell and her fairy friends.

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Pray for our dead

ANDREWS, Charles M. "Mike," 75, Feb. 8
St. Nicholas Church, Zanesville

ANDREWS, Ernest R. "Ray," 89, Feb. 10
St. Nicholas Church, Zanesville

BOBB, Peggy (Doyle), 94, formerly of Columbus, Feb. 10
Basilica Shrine of St. Mary, Wilmington, N.C.

BROWNING, William H. Jr., 83, Feb. 10
St. Joseph Church, Circleville

CARINELLI, Jennie (Scaffidi), 90, Feb. 13
Sacred Heart Church, New Philadelphia

COLASURD, Donald M. Jr., 61, Feb. 16
St. Timothy Church, Columbus

DODDROE, Kathleen L. (Provost), 68, Feb. 7
St. Joseph Cathedral, Columbus

FONDRIEST, Anna M. (Liegl), 87, Feb. 13
St. Joseph Church, Dover

GOEBEL, Francis L., 87, Feb. 13
St. Joseph Church, Circleville

GREEN, Patricia J. (Hillis), 91, Feb. 17
St. Joseph Church, Somerset

HAMMER, Janice M. (Kamler), 74, Feb. 13
Church of the Resurrection, New Albany

HART, Margaret, 62, Feb. 16
St. Matthias Church, Columbus

HEDGES, Julia A. (Schmelzer), 89, Feb. 11
St. Mary Church, Lancaster

HOFFMAN, Kathy (Dougan), 68, Feb. 5
Sacred Heart Church, New Philadelphia

KAYLOR, Susan L. (Fox), 65, Feb. 15
St. Matthias Church, Columbus

KULINA, Andrew S., 88, Feb. 10
St. Matthias Church, Columbus

LORENZ, William, 88, Feb. 8
Sacred Heart Church, New Philadelphia

MACIEJEWSKI, Mary J., 92, Feb. 17
St. John XXIII Church, Columbus

MAYNARD, Paul O., 84, Feb. 7
St. Mary Church, Marion

MIDDLETON, Jackie D., 24, Feb. 10
St. Ladislav Church, Columbus

MUNK, Thelma A. (Trapp), 90, Feb. 10
Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church, Grove City

MUSSIO, Blanche B. (Santurello), 91, Feb. 10
St. Catharine Church, Columbus

NOBILUCCI, Mary T. (DiRosario), 96, Feb. 8
St. Christopher Church, Columbus

OTT, Karolina (Fisher), 83, Jan. 26
St. Mary, Mother of God Church, Columbus

RAIMONDE, Albert P., 91, Feb. 14
St. Paul Church, Westerville

SLAUSON, Bob, 75, Feb. 9
Sacred Heart Church, New Philadelphia

TROCCHIO, Peter, 80, Feb. 14
St. Mary Church, Marion

ZIEGLER, John H., 92, Feb. 14
Christ the King Church, Columbus

Doris J. Reichert

Funeral Mass for Doris J. Reichert, 86, who died Thursday, Feb. 15, was celebrated Monday, Feb. 19 at Worthington St. Michael Church. Burial will take place at a later date.

She was born on Nov. 30, 1931 in Cleveland to John and Mary Takacs.

She was a Worthington resident for

57 years and worked at St. Michael School for 35 years.

She was preceded in death by her parents and an infant daughter. Survivors include her husband, Richard; sons, Rich (Jenny) and Dan; daughter, Laura (Ray) Sanders; two grandsons; and two great-grandsons.

Barbara Vermillion

Funeral Mass for Barbara Vermillion, 91, who died Wednesday, Feb. 14, was celebrated Saturday, Feb. 17 in the chapel of Resurrection Cemetery, Lewis Center.

She was born on Nov. 1, 1926, in Newark to James and Rachel (Bailey) Fullin.

She was a social studies teacher at Columbus Bishop Hartley High School following a career as a social worker, primarily serving adolescents.

She was preceded in death by her parents; husband, Earl; and brother, James. She is survived by nieces and nephews.

Lorna Lisk

Funeral Mass for Lorna Lisk, 80, who died Sunday, Feb. 11, was held Saturday, Feb. 17 at Columbus St. Peter Church. Burial was at Norwich Township/Wesley Chapel Cemetery, Hilliard.

She was born on Nov. 8, 1937 in the Philippines to Luciano and Eufrosina Millan.

She received a bachelor's degree in chemical engineering from the University of the Philippines and a master's degree from Adamson University in Manila and completed studies in marketing and business management at Columbia University.

She was a chemical engineer for the National Reparations Commission in the Philippines before coming to the United States, where she was employed at the University of Chicago Hospitals and at Michael Reese Hospital in Chicago and as a project engineer in Point Pleasant, West Virginia.

She was honored by the Diocesan Council of Catholic Women in 2002 as its Catholic woman of the year for her activities with the Catholic charismatic renewal movement. She traveled to many nations to work with leaders of the movement, encourage their efforts, and take part in prayer services. She also was a lector, extraordinary minister of the Eucharist, and prayer chain leader at Columbus St. Peter Church.

She was preceded in death by her parents; first husband, Nestor Narcelles; brother, Luciano; and sister, Zita. Survivors include her husband, Thomas Lisk; sons, Nestor (Dana) Narcelles, Marvin (Tricia) Narcelles, and Andrew (Carrie) Narcelles; stepson, Todd (Kelsey) Lisk; stepdaughter, Erin Lisk Jones; brother, Dolf (Ida); sister, Vivian (Serafin) Talisayon; 12 grandchildren; and one step-grandchild.

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FEBRUARY

22, THURSDAY

Cenacle at Holy Name

6 p.m., Holy Name Church, 154 E. Patterson Ave., Columbus. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, with prayers in the Cenacle format of the Marian Movement of Priests.

Sung Vespers at St. Margaret of Cortona

6:30 p.m., St. Margaret of Cortona Church, 1600 N. Hague Ave., Columbus. Sung Vespers as part of parish's weekly Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, followed by Stations of the Cross at 7. 614-279-1690

Eucharistic Holy Hour at Sacred Heart

7 p.m., Sacred Heart Church, 893 Hamlet St., Columbus. Eucharistic Holy Hour with the intention of deepened holiness and an increase in the virtue of fortitude for the Holy Father, bishops, and priests, concluding with Benediction, social period, and refreshments. 614-372-5249

Frassati Society Meeting at Columbus St. Patrick

7 p.m., Aquinas Hall, St. Patrick Church, 280 N. Grant Ave., Columbus. Parish's Frassati Society for young adults meets for monthly "Christ in the City" program. Talk on Human Trafficking at St. Brigid of Kildare

All fund-raising events (festivals, bazaars, spaghetti dinners, fish fries, bake sales, pizza/sub sales, candy sales, etc.)

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"Fund-Raising Guide." An entry into the Guide will be \$18.50 for the first six lines, and \$2.65 for each additional line.

For more information, call Douglas Bean at 614-224-6530.

'Happenings' submissions

Notices for items of Catholic interest must be received at least 12 days before expected publication date. We will print them as space permits. Items not received before this deadline may not be published.

Listings cannot be taken by phone.

Mail to: The Catholic Times

Happenings,

197 East Gay St., Columbus, OH 43215

Fax to: 614-241-2518

E-mail as text to tpuet@columbuscatholic.org

7 to 8:30 p.m., Hendricks Hall, St. Brigid of Kildare Church, 7179 Avery Road, Dublin. Talk on human trafficking with Sister Nadine Buchanan, OP. First in five-week series of talks on Catholic social teaching. 614-761-3734

22-25, THURSDAY-SUNDAY

St. Charles Presents 'The Odyssey'

7:30 p.m. Thursday-Saturday, 2 p.m. Sunday, St. Charles Preparatory School, 2010 E. Broad St., Columbus. School drama department presents Mary Zimmerman's adaptation of "The Odyssey." \$10 adults, \$5 students.

23, FRIDAY

Downtown Serra Club Lunch at St. Charles

Noon, St. Charles Preparatory School, 2010 E. Broad St., Columbus. Downtown Serra Club lunch. Speaker: Youth evangelist Dan DeMattei. 614-486-4293

Soup Supper at Ada Our Lady of Lourdes

5 p.m., Our Lady of Lourdes Church, 222 E. Highland Ave., Ada. Lenten soup supper, followed by Stations of the Cross at 6. 419-634-2626

Soup Supper at St. Ladislav

5:30 p.m., St. Ladislav Church, 277 Reeb Ave., Columbus. Lenten soup supper, followed by Stations of the Cross at 7. 614-443-2828

Soup Supper at Groveport St. Mary

6 p.m., St. Mary Church, 5684 Groveport Road, Groveport. Lenten soup supper, followed by Stations of the Cross at 7. 614-497-1324

Soup Supper at Portsmouth St. Mary

6:30 p.m., St. Mary Church, 524 6th St., Portsmouth. Lenten soup supper, preceded by Stations of the Cross at 6. 740-354-4551

Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts at St. John Chrysostom

7 p.m., St. John Chrysostom Byzantine Catholic Church, 5858 Cleveland Ave., Columbus. Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, a Vespers service with Holy Eucharist.

Concert in Spanish at Marion St. Mary

7 p.m., St. Mary Church, 251 N. Main St., Marion. Concert in Spanish with Columbus Christ the King Church choir. 740-382-2118

Concert at St. Elizabeth

7:30 p.m., St. Elizabeth Church, 6077 Sharon Woods Blvd., Columbus. Concert with Rino Angelini and the Come Unto Me liturgical choirs. 614-891-0150

'People of the Passion' at St. Timothy

7:30 p.m., St. Timothy Church, 1088 Thomas Lane, Columbus. "People of the Passion," a Lenten performance of music, drama, and dance suggested for audiences age 12 and older. 614-451-2671

23-25, FRIDAY-SUNDAY

Bishop Ready Presents 'The Man Who Came to Dinner'

7 p.m. Friday and Sunday, 2:30 p.m. Saturday, Bishop Ready High School, 707 Salisbury Road, Columbus. School theater department presents the Broadway classic "The Man Who Came to Dinner." \$10 adults, \$9 seniors, \$8 students. 614-276-5263

24, SATURDAY

Catholic Men's Conference

8 a.m., Cardinal Building, State Fairgrounds, 717 E. 17th Ave., Columbus. 21st annual Catholic Men's Conference, with talks by Jeff Cavins, Chris Stefanick, and Scott Hahn and Mass with Bishop Frederick Campbell.

Life and Mercy Mass in Plain City

9 a.m. Mass, St. Joseph Church, 140 West Ave., Plain City. Saturday Life and Mercy Mass, followed by rosary and confession.

Tai Chi Workshop at Shepherd's Corner

10 to 11:30 a.m., Shepherd's Corner Ecology Center, 987 N. Waggoner Road, Blacklick. Tai Chi workshop led by Grace Franklin. Theme: "Stress-Free With Tai Chi." Part

2 of two-part program, with each being self-contained. Registration required; \$25 for one class; \$40 for two.

Cultural Festival at Ohio Dominican

11 a.m. to 2 p.m., Bishop Griffin Center, Ohio Dominican University, 1216 Sunbury Road, Columbus. Cultural festival featuring food from around the world, music, dance, a fashion show, face painting, campus tours (Spanish-speaking guides available), and basketball against Davis & Elkins at 1 (men's) and 3 p.m. (women's).

Bishop Hartley Luncheon, Style Show

11 a.m. to 2 p.m., Jefferson Country Club, 7271 Jefferson Meadows Drive, Blacklick. School's 27th annual luncheon and style show, with seniors modeling prom fashions. 614-580-7381

25, SUNDAY

Exposition at Our Lady of Mount Carmel

9:15 to 10:15 a.m., Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church, 5133 Walnut Road S.E., Buckeye Lake. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament each Sunday during Lent.

St. Agatha Adult Education

9:30 a.m., St. Agatha Church, 1860 Northam Road, Columbus. "The Gospel According to John," part 4 of four-part series on the Gospels with Father Edmund Hussey.

St. Christopher Adult Religious Education

10 to 11:20 a.m., Library, Trinity Catholic School, 1440 Grandview Ave., Columbus. First of two talks on "Job Wasn't Really Patient" with Scripture scholar Angela Burge.

Praise Mass at Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal

11 a.m., Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal Church, 5225 Refugee Road, Columbus. Praise Mass with upbeat contemporary music. 614-861-1242

Mass Ad Orientem at Columbus St. Patrick

Noon, St. Patrick Church, 280 N. Grant Ave., Columbus. Celebration of Mass Ad Orientem (with priest facing the altar). 614-224-9522

GriefShare at St. Matthew

1:30 to 3:30 p.m., St. Raphael Room, St. Matthew Church, 807 Havens Corners Road, Gahanna. First meeting of 11-week GriefShare support group for people mourning the loss of a loved one. Concludes May 20; no meetings on Palm Sunday or Easter Sunday. Contact Mary Lager at mary0613@hotmail.com.

St. Catherine of Bologna Secular Franciscans

2 to 4:30 p.m., St. Francis of Assisi Church, 386 Buttles Ave., Columbus. Meet in church for prayer, followed by general meeting, ongoing formation, and fellowship. Visitors welcome. 614-895-7792

Exposition at Coshocton Sacred Heart

4 to 5 p.m., Sacred Heart Church, Walnut Street and Park Avenue, Coshocton. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, concluding with Benediction, each Sunday during Lent. 740-622-8817

Sung Vespers at Lancaster St. Mary

4 p.m., St. Mary Church, 132 S. High St., Lancaster. Evening Prayer featuring sung Vespers. 740-653-0997

Sung Vespers at Cathedral

4:45 p.m., St. Joseph Cathedral, 212 E. Broad St., Columbus. Singing of Vespers preceding 5:15 p.m. Mass.

Prayer Group Meeting at Christ the King

5 to 7 p.m., Christ the King Church, 2777 E. Livingston Ave., Columbus (enter at daily Mass entrance). Weekly parish prayer group meets for praise, worship, ministry, and teaching. 614-237-0401

Spanish Mass at Columbus St. Peter

7 p.m., St. Peter Church, 6899 Smoky Row Road, Columbus. Mass in Spanish. 706-761-4054

Family Prayer Night at St. Joan of Arc

7 to 8:30 p.m., St. Joan of Arc Church, 10700 Liberty Road, Powell. Family prayer night with talk by Father James Black, followed by examples of Lectio Divina, Praying the Mass, and family blessings.

26, MONDAY

Adoration and Reconciliation at New Philadelphia

5 p.m., Sacred Heart Church, 139 3rd St. N.E., New Philadelphia. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, with Reconciliation available, and Evening Prayer at 6:30.

Ohio Dominican MBA Information Session

6 p.m., Room 274, Bishop Griffin Center, Ohio Dominican University, 1216 Sunbury Road, Information session on university's master of business administration program.

Evening Prayer at St. John Neumann

6:30 p.m., St. John Neumann Church, 9633 E. State Route 37, Sunbury. Evening Prayer led by Deacon Carl Calcara.

Bethesda Post-Abortion Healing Ministry

6:30 p.m., support group meeting, 2744 Dover Road, Columbus (Christ the King convent, first building west of the church). 614-718-0277, 614-309-2651, 614-309-0157

Our Lady of Peace Men's Bible Study

7 p.m., Our Lady of Peace Church, 20 E. Dominion Blvd., Columbus. Bible study of Sunday Scripture readings.

27, TUESDAY

Padre Pio Prayer Group at St. John the Baptist

12:30 p.m., St. John the Baptist Church, 168 E. Lincoln Ave., Columbus. Padre Pio Prayer Group meeting, including rosary, devotions, and 1 p.m. Mass. 614-294-5319

Adoration, Confession, Mass, Bible Study at Dover

5 p.m., St. Joseph Church, 613 N. Tuscarawas Ave., Dover. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and confessions, followed by Mass at 6 and "A Biblical Walk through the Mass" at 7 in family life center. 330-364-6661

Soup Supper at St. Edward

6 p.m., St. Edward Church, 785 Newark-Granville Road, Granville. Soup supper, followed by Stations.

Soup Supper at St. Brigid of Kildare

6 p.m., Immke Room, Hendricks Hall, St. Brigid of Kildare Church, 7179 Avery Road, Dublin. Soup supper hosted by parish music ministry, followed by Stations.

Diocesan Honor Choir Concert

6:30 p.m., St. Elizabeth Seton Parish, 600 Hill Road N., Pickerington. 11th annual Diocesan Honor Choir concert, with singers representing 13 elementary schools and Ohio Dominican University. Free-will offering for Holy Family Soup Kitchen will be taken.

Soup Supper at St. Elizabeth

6:30 p.m., St. Elizabeth Church, 6077 Sharon Woods Blvd., Columbus. Soup supper hosted by Knights of Columbus Council 11193.

Rosary for Life at St. Joan of Arc

Following 6:15 p.m. Mass, St. Joan of Arc Church, 10700 Liberty Road, Powell. Recital of Rosary for Life, sponsored by church's respect life committee.

27-MARCH 1, TUESDAY-THURSDAY

Parish Mission at St. James the Less

7 to 9 p.m., St. James the Less Church, 1652 Oakland Park Ave., Columbus. Parish mission led by Sister Mary Louis Passeri, OP, and Sister Shirley Bodisch, OP. Theme: "God's Presence Within the Human Family."

Parish Mission at Marion St. Mary

7 p.m., St. Mary Church, 251 N. Main St., Marion. Parish mission with theme "Lost and Found: How to Deal With Difficulty in Life," led by Father Joshua Wagner, pastor, Columbus St. Dominic and Holy Rosary-St. John churches. Holy Hour and confessions from 5 to 6 and Mass at 6:30 Tuesday and soup supper at 6 Thursday.

28, WEDNESDAY

Center for Dominican Studies Lecture Series

Noon to 12:30 p.m., St. Catherine of Siena Room, Erskine Hall, Ohio Dominican University, 1215 Sunbury Road, Columbus. Center for Dominican Studies lecture with Sister Carol Ann Spencer, OP, speaking on "Lent: A Time to Focus Discipleship." Second of four parts. 614-251-4722

focus on
ART

BOOK REVIEW

DEVOTION TO TRUTH

By Tim Puet

Catholic Times

Devotion to Truth: The Life of Rt. Rev. Sylvester H. Rosecrans, D.D., First Bishop of Columbus, by Donald M. Schlegel. Outskirts Press (Columbus, Ohio, 2018). 218 pages, \$20.95.

This year is the 150th anniversary of the founding of the Diocese of Columbus, and Donald Schlegel marks the occasion appropriately with this book about the first bishop of the diocese.

There is no one better than Schlegel to write the story, for he has written extensively about diocesan history for more than 40 years. Since 1985, he has been the editor of the monthly bulletin of the diocesan Catholic Record Society.

His most notable work, *An Illustrated History of the Diocese of Columbus*, written in 2001, is the definitive volume on the story of the diocese and is consulted nearly every week by the *Catholic Times* for information about past events and their impact on the diocese today.

Extensive research is a hallmark of Schlegel's work, and that is the case with this book, the first full-length biography of Bishop Rosecrans. The bishop's story covers 142 of its 218 pages, there are 18 pages of source listings

and footnotes, and the rest of the book includes several of Bishop Rosecrans' sermons and a number of editorials he wrote for the diocese's first weekly newspaper, *The Catholic Columbian*.

The last of these, written in 1876, is an example of the bishop's self-deprecating humor, as he agrees with a comment from *The Cincinnati Enquirer* that "Bishop Rosecrans ... has a fool to write the editorials for his organ."

Bishop Rosecrans was a remarkable man. He was a pastor, an educator, a journalist, and a bishop. What he did in any one of those fields would have been enough to merit a book in their own right. But perhaps the most remarkable of all his achievements was that he was able to accomplish so much in the short span of 51 years.

Bishop Rosecrans was auxiliary bishop in Cincinnati when he received the call to come to Columbus. He arrived with no fanfare, getting off a train in early 1867 and walking alone from the railroad station to St. Patrick Church with a tattered carpetbag in his hand.

He didn't like the city at first, but quickly came to love Columbus, so much so that he asked for and received permission from the Vatican to skip the First Vatican Council in 1869 and 1870 because he

was too busy getting his new diocese established and overseeing his crowning achievement, the building of St. Joseph Cathedral.

That magnificent edifice in the heart of downtown was a 12-year project. Plans for its construction began being made shortly after the diocese was formed in 1866. Work got underway in 1868, the first Masses there were celebrated on Christmas Day of 1872, and the consecration ceremony was on Oct. 20, 1878.

It's well-known that Bishop Rosecrans died the day after the dedication and is buried in the cathedral undercroft, and it can fairly be said that the effort of getting it completed cost him his life.

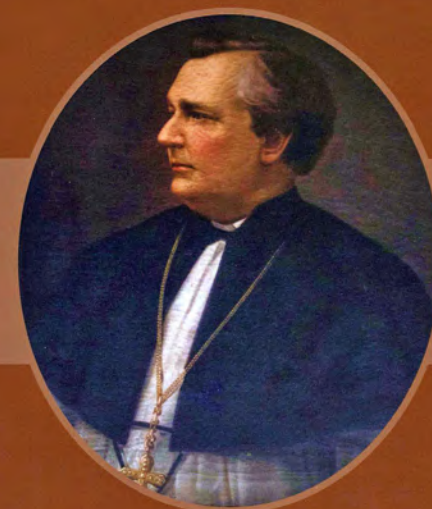
He suffered hemorrhages on many occasions when he became excited. Those hemorrhages became especially acute in the last two years of his life, with four attacks coming on the evening of the dedication and ultimately killing him.

On his death, the *Columbian* said, "He aspired to no distinction as a prelate, but delighted in the simplicity of a humble priest."

He wasn't the most well-known member of his family, which came from the tiny Licking County town of Homer. Civil War buffs are fa-

Devotion to Truth

THE LIFE OF
RT. REV. SYLVESTER H. ROSECRANS, D.D.,
FIRST BISHOP OF COLUMBUS



Donald M. Schlegel

miliar with the exploits of his brother, Gen. William Rosecrans, in Tennessee during the Civil War.

After the war, William served as U.S. ambassador to Mexico, became a large landowner in California, was elected to Congress from that state, and ended his public career with eight years as register of the U.S. Treasury.

William plays a significant role in the bishop's story because the older brother's conversion to Catholicism in 1845 led to the younger brother following in William's footsteps. William also served as what may be termed a consulting architect on construction of the cathedral

Other members of the bishop's family also answered the call to God's service. Three nieces and a nephew followed him into religious life. Their

stories also are briefly told in this volume.

The bishop will be remembered for his efforts in building the diocese and the cathedral, but he had his share of disappointments and controversies. The book acknowledges that he had problems with Archbishop Edward Purcell of Cincinnati and had a rocky relationship with the Dominican Sisters of St. Mary of the Springs, now the Dominican Sisters of Peace, who have been an important part of the diocese since its earliest days.

If you're interested in history in general and the early history of the Catholic Church in Ohio in particular, you'll be entertained and enlightened by this book. It is available online at www.amazon.com and www.barnesandnoble.com.

465 adults on the road to becoming Catholic participate in Rite of Election

By Doug Bean,

Catholic Times Editor

After months of preparation, 465 catechumens and candidates have moved one step closer to being received into the Catholic Church at Easter.

Bishop Frederick Campbell presided over the annual diocesan Rite of Election at Westerville St. Paul Church on Sunday, Feb. 18. A total of 200 catechumens and 265 candidates, along with godparents or sponsors from parishes in the Diocese of Columbus, declared their intention to enter into full communion with the Catholic Church.

Here are a few of their stories:

Jeff Hutchinson, who is in the RCIA program at Columbus St. Patrick Church, had been a Presbyterian for all of his adult life. He's an ordained elder who led an active church life at Worthington Presbyterian and in the Scioto Presbytery and the General Assembly, the national level of Presbytery USA.

But he said he began feeling a sense of unfulfillment when dealing with the terminal illnesses of his parents before they died. He also had a difficult year working out of town.

"In any case, I am a very conservative and traditional individual," he said. "My faith was never compromised, as I have a wonderful relationship with and have had continual prayer and conversation with Jesus. That has never wavered. Due to my strong commitment to the Biblical text and my deep-rooted understanding and faith, it is extremely important that the church faithfully follow God's word."

"It was at the time that the Presbytery elected to adopt the secular concept of performing marriages for the LGBT community. I sat through the process in which the Presbytery voted to allow and embrace this. Ultimately, this was passed. I could not bring myself to support the Presbytery once this was endorsed."

Hutchinson's journey to the Catholic Church began last year, when a friend invited him to attend the Columbus Catholic Men's Conference.

"At the invitation of the first speaker for all participants, I participated in confession," he said. "I spoke at length with Father Juan. Based on that conversation and conversations with my sponsor, I elected to attend RCIA. It has been



Cassie and Chris Wells

a rewarding and fulfilling experience."

"This path is totally ordained by God," he said. "I feel privileged and blessed by all involved in this walk. I have the comfort of knowing that the Catholic Church will stay firmly rooted in the Bible and the path Jesus would want us to walk."

Chris Wells, who, with his wife, Cassie, will be received into the Catholic Church at Washington Court House St. Colman of Cloyne Church, said he had been in and out of Protestant churches throughout his life.

"It was a routine that felt incomplete, to say the least," he said. "I have always known that Catholics worshiped differently than I, but I didn't know how. I was simply told at a young age that Catholics do things differently, and it was something I simply accepted without question. I had no idea what separated the Protestant faith from the Catholic faith."

He finally decided to take his curiosity to the next level and research the Catholic faith. He purchased *Catholicism for Dummies*, which answered basic questions. His study evolved into an examination of the Protestant Reformation and Martin Luther. Catholic radio played a significant role in his conversion.

"I also happened to be the mailman who delivered mail to our local Catholic church," he said. "Tina (Garland), the church secretary, was always more than willing to answer any questions I had regarding the faith. When I finally came to the conclusion that the Catholic Church is the church that was founded by Jesus Christ when he walked on this earth, I knew I wanted to become Catholic."

The next step was to tell his wife.

"She was anxious," he said. "She had very little experience at all in any church and knew that being Catholic was a big deal. I convinced her to come

and give RCIA a try with me. She was nervous at first, but now I think she enjoys it as much as I do. Everyone at my local church has been so accommodating to me and my family. The priests, the church staff, and all of the lay people have welcomed us with open arms.

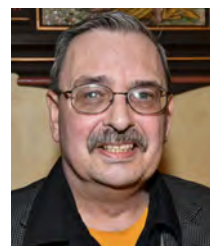
"My wife and I are both excited to become members of the church and to become closer to God through the sacraments. We couldn't be happier with the decision we've both made and look forward to a future in Christ."

Sandy Wilson, who is also part of the RCIA program at St. Colman, was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in 1999. She later went through a difficult relapse, could not see out of one eye, and had so much trouble walking that she was in a wheelchair for a short period.

"My dear friend Bridget, who is Catholic, knew some members of the church were going to the Vatican and were taking prayer requests with them," Wilson said. "She asked me if I would mind if she sent a prayer request for me. I definitely was open to it, and so she did. Soon after, I was offered a new treatment for my MS."

After two years on this treatment, her condition improved dramatically.

"Some may attribute my improvement just to the treatment, but I attribute it to Bridget's prayer, in addition to my treatment," Wilson said. "Through my times of hardship, Bridget was there to take me to breakfast gatherings, girls' day out events, and basically anything she could squeeze in with her busy schedule. Bridget epitomizes what all Christians should be. She is what I hope to become. She is why I am choosing to become Catholic."



Larry Copeland's long and winding road of faith led him to the RCIA program at Chillicothe St. Peter Church.

He was baptized at 17 at a Methodist church in Lima, but never became a member. He then became involved with the Jehovah's Witnesses for 20 years before leaving. After that, he attended several masses at Lancaster St. Mary Church, "but my faith was so damaged that I trusted no religion and I was overcoming the in-



Amie Vandy writes her name in the Book of the Elect while her sponsor, Solomon Owusu of Columbus St. Matthias Church, places his hand on her shoulder. CT photos by Ken Snow

doctrination and prejudice I had been exposed to."

From there, he investigated neopaganism, but said he could not forsake the Scriptures or God. Copeland was bothered by "people elevating themselves to God's position" and disassociated himself within three years.

"It was hedonism under a religious disguise," Copeland said. "This led me to an examination of early Christianity, and I began looking at the various faiths through that prism."

Encouraged by a minister to explore other churches, Copeland visited St. Peter's website. He found a video from EWTN's *The Journey Home*.

"Afterward, I pondered the words of (historian) Pliny the Younger, who wrote: 'They asserted, however, that the sum and substance of their fault or error had been that they were accustomed to meet on a fixed day before dawn and sing responsively a hymn to Christ as to a god, and to bind themselves by oath, not to some crime, but not to commit fraud, theft, or adultery, not falsify their trust, nor to refuse to return a trust when called upon to do so. When this was over, it was their custom to depart and to assemble again to partake of food.'

"The question 'What faith still to this day does that?' came to mind, and the answer was the Catholic Church. So I thrust myself headlong into research."

A lover of history and archaeology, Copeland was propelled into Catholicism through "the historicity of the faith ... its liturgy. The Church reflects

See RITE OF ELECTION, Page 20

RITE OF ELECTION, *continued from Page 19*

early Christianity. I approach things in an academic way. After thorough research, then I accept the practices based on historical evidence. For example, Marian devotion is recorded as early as circa 250 BC in the *Sub Tuum Praesidium*, where the Blessed Virgin is referenced as the *Theotokos* (God Bearer). Once a foundation is evidenced, I do not quibble about it. In fact, my brother, who passed away in September, was enthusiastic about my approach to the Catholic faith.

“As I told the RCIA coordinator in our first meeting last spring, I’d done enough research to conclude that the Lord’s meal or Eucharist should be the centerpiece of Christian faith and that wine and unleavened bread must be used. Further, female priests are not supported in history or holy writ.

“All that was left meeting the criteria set out, in Scripture and historically, was the Catholic Church.”

For Renee McPherson, a conversion begat a conversion.

A friend, Val Ely, had come into the Catholic Church last year, and that triggered conversations about Catholicism. Their talks prompted McPherson to enter the RCIA class at Grove City Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church, with Ely as her sponsor.

“I was actually joking with Val that we should write a book one day, *How to Effectively Catechize Your Friends Through Text Messages*,” McPherson said. “It’s similar to how Jesus chose 12 to fully invest his life in, then it moves from there into this giant rippling effect that changed the world. It’s the willingness to bring someone along on the journey.

... Just being there to present truth. Helping walk people through their questions. Bringing them to church and praying for them. Essentially, it’s friendship evangelization and asking God to bring you the low-hanging fruit -- the souls ready to be harvested.”

McPherson grew up in a small Pentecostal church and switched to an Assemblies of God church. She went on to attend a bible college and receive a master’s degree in theology before entering “a dark night of the soul for about a decade,” she said.

“I never left Jesus, but I walked away from the Church. I couldn’t find him there any more and I was utterly lost. The picture I can offer is this -- a wounded soldier left for dead, hiding out in a foxhole.”

Eventually, she found the Catholic Church.

“There are too many miracles to recount,” she said, “but God moved heaven and earth to bring my soul back to life. Jesus knew I couldn’t enter the church through the Protestant door any more, so he showed me another, fuller way -- the Catholic Church.”

McPherson says she has an overwhelming passion to pursue holiness and “set the world ablaze.”

“What most led to this was the beauty of discovering the purpose of suffering and how to offer it up, and the communion of saints,” she said. “The Church shows us how we can live out holiness, why it matters to God, and the difference one holy life can make in changing the face of a generation.”

She believes there are others waiting to be led into the Catholic Church.

“There are many Protestants and unbelievers who

will come if someone will take them to edge of the water and show them how to cross the Tiberius,” she said. “The Church is crying for unity and wholeness and God is looking for bridge builders, way finders and reformers willing to lay their lives down so that all may come to know this Jesus, this good shepherd who will pull them out of their foxholes.”

McPherson, Copeland, Hutchinson, and Chris Wells are considered candidates for membership in the Catholic Church. Candidates were baptized in another Christian denomination. Catechumens such as Wilson and Cassie Wells have not been baptized.

Catechumens sign the Book of the Elect to confirm their intention to become “members of the elect.” Candidates respond to the call to full communion by signing the book and presenting a record of their baptism for the baptismal record book.

Bishop Campbell witnessed the signatures and spoke about Christ’s power to transform his people. He said the Lord is encountered in the sacraments, in Baptism and Confirmation but “most substantially in his body and blood offered upon the altar at each and every Mass. It is the food of our journey. It is the gift of immortality, often called the bread of angels, the bread of manna, sustenance.

“It is this that you will be invited to participate in. As we begin this final period of preparation, the Church prays for you ardently. We ask you to deepen your prayer and remember all the members of the Church and to realize how important you are to the body of Christ, for your presence will not only expand it, but enrich it,” he said.

CONVERTS, *continued from Page 13*

one year’s time, we look more like devout cradle Catholics than like newbie converts. But the reason we have fallen headlong into the offerings of what it means and what it looks like to be Catholic is because we WANTED to! I am convinced that our transformation exists as proof of the power of the grace of the sacraments. We went from being burnt-out, nondenominational Christians who struggled to even make it to church every week to being faithful to attend Sunday Mass every week, some weekday masses, confession every two to four weeks, and weekly Eucharistic Adoration. We have volunteered to help with teaching Alpha, playing music for worship in LifeTeen, and have joined the core team, as well as staying after some Masses for prayer and for rosaries, and also have enrolled our kids in Catholic school. All of this I say not to boast of our efforts, because we couldn’t have done it without grace, but also, we wouldn’t even have wanted to do it if it weren’t for the grace we are receiving from so many of these instruments of grace that we call the sacraments and/or sacramentals.

“We have been able to see great value not only in raising our kids here, but also in being actively present in receiving all that is offered to us in this precious treasure trove of faith that we call the Cath-

olic Church! We don’t participate in all that we do because we have to, or even out of some spiritual obligation to be the best servant(s) of all. If we were under the heavy burden of obligation to the law or felt bound by rules that make us feel like ‘we have to do this or God will be mad and send us to hell,’ we would never be capable to accomplish even a portion of what we have be able to do in our parish. We feel excited and even honored that we now get to explain to people that we don’t follow the precepts of the Church out of fear or out of obligation. We follow the precepts of the Church out of a deep and consoling love for one who created us, for one who died for us, and for one who leads us every day back to the graces which sustain us for this life and will lead us lovingly into the next.

“We have learned so much. When you make a huge lifestyle change such as this one, you can’t help but lose some friends and sometimes even become alienated from friends or family members. We have experienced loss as a result of our choices to enter the Catholic Church, to follow Christ into a deeper and more full relationship with Him. The amazing part is that in Matthew 19:29, Jesus says, ‘And everyone who has left houses, or brothers, or sisters, or father or mother, or wife or children, or fields for my

sake, will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life!’ So I know that no matter what following Jesus looks like in this life, no matter who is willing to join me, or who is just not able to have the ears to hear and the eyes to see truth just yet, I will never back down from inviting those who I love to join me in following Jesus on a journey into his Church. He will always honor us when we go out of our way to honor Him. This journey has been inexplicable. I am already blessed beyond measure to be receiving the gift of sponsoring my best friend (Renee) into the Catholic Church.

“I am not where I would love to be as a follower of Jesus. I say that because I know that every day, I could do more to proclaim Christ’s love for His people. So often, we become consumed with our personal lives and assume that Christ will reach His people through the clergy. What I’ve come to learn as a Catholic is that most of the time, the Holy Spirit uses the laity to draw others in, to spark interest or start a conversation about His Church. It is YOU who Christ speaks through to get others into the building, then His clergy can teach us, but it’s always a joint effort to see growth in Christ’s family. We should never underestimate our role in growing the Kingdom for Christ.”