Panels address issues surrounding sexual abuse crisis

Andy Telli

Bishop J. Mark Spalding started a recent panel discussion about the clergy sexual abuse crisis in the Catholic Church with an apology.

“I’m deeply sorry,” Bishop Spalding told a crowd of about 100 people at Our Lady of the Lake Church in Hendersonville who attended the first of four panel discussions on the issue. “People who’ve led the Church have not led in a good way, and I’m sorry.”

“When you go home tonight,” Bishop Spalding added, “remember I said I appreciate you being here, and I’m so sorry, and I do deeply apologize.”

Bishop Spalding scheduled a series of panel discussions after the issue of clergy sexual abuse exploded again in recent months, sparked by the release of a Pennsylvania grand jury report of its investigation of allegations of sexual abuse from six dioceses in that state. The Pennsylvania allegations go back as far as 70 years but included a few after the adoption of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People in 2002. The Charter came in response to the crisis that started in the Archdiocese of Boston and spread to include other dioceses across the country.

The allegations in the Pennsylvania grand jury report involved 301 priests and more than 1,000 victims. The report also detailed efforts by Church officials to cover up the abuse.

Also, the Church has been rocked by the revelations of allegations that

Continued on page 16

Seminaries provide environment for love of Christ to grow

Andy Telli

Like dioceses across the country, the Diocese of Nashville will mark Priesthood Sunday on Oct. 28, a day to reflect upon and affirm the central role of the priesthood in the life of the Church.

Key to the success of any priest is his experience in the seminary where he is formed and prepared to shepherd God’s people.

Finding the best seminary for each seminarian for the Diocese of Nashville is a big part of the responsibilities of Father Austin Gilstrap, the director of vocations.

“That’s my fundamental driving goal,” he said. “For this individual person, what is the best environment for him to grow in his love of Jesus Christ, his love for the Church, and be the best possible priest for the Diocese of Nashville.”

This year, the 27 seminarians for the diocese have been assigned to six seminaries:

- St. Joseph Abbey and Seminary College in Covington, Louisiana, where three seminarians are studying.
- Notre Dame Seminary in New Orleans, which has seven Nashville seminarians.
- The Pontifical College Josephinum in Columbus, Ohio, with three seminarians.
- St. Meinrad Seminary in St. Meinrad, Indiana, with five seminarians.
- Holy Trinity Seminary at the University of Dallas in Irving, Texas, with seven seminarians.
- The North American College in Rome, with two seminarians.

“I don’t think there’s a perfect seminary out there, but they’re all really good,” Father Gilstrap said. The seminaries are places of “real joy,” he added. “I experience that joy being there.”

The foundation of the formation and education men receive in seminaries across the United States and around the world is St. John Paul II’s encyclical “Pastores Dabo Vobis (I Will Give You Shepherds),” which outlined the four pillars for the formation of priests.

In the years since, offices in the Vatican and the bishops conferences for

Continued on page 14
Diocese merges efforts to form new Office of Faith Formation

From staff reports

Bishop J. Mark Spalding has announced a new Office of Faith Formation for the Diocese of Nashville. The new office will bring together the Office of Adult Formation and the Office of Catechetical Formation, and will be directed by Joan Watson, who formerly led adult formation efforts. Sheri Isham of the Office of Catechetical Formation will be associate director of the new office.

“This is all about how we can serve the parishes,” said Watson. “We want to help the parishes flourish.”

As Watson and Isham begin working more closely together under the new structure, “I think we’ll take a step back and ask, ‘what do we provide to the parishes, and what do people want that might be different?’” Watson said.

They will continue the work that they already do. For Watson, that includes designing and disseminating videos, and organizing pilgrimages, producing Three Minute Theology videos, and providing support for English and Spanish-speaking catechists, as well as parish RCIA leaders. She is also an organizer and point person for the Totus Tuus vacation bible school program. She will have a major role to play when the diocese rolls out its new catechist certification program next year.

“We’re going toward looking at faith formation as a lifelong formation,” said Watson, whose office will also work closely with Bill Staley, director of youth and young adult ministry, which primarily serves teens and young adults with prayer and social opportunities. “There’s a lot of overlap in the work we do,” Watson said.

“It’s a great blessing that we all work really well together,” she said.

The idea for restructuring into the Office of Faith Formation fits well with the goals set forth in the national Convocation of Catholic Leaders held in the summer of 2017, Watson said. The convocation made it clear that “the Church wants us to find new ways to reach people, to collaborate and not work in silos,” separate from one another, Watson said. “We’re all in this together.”

As the new Office of Faith Formation moves forward, the diocese will hire an administrative assistant to support the work of Isham and Watson, freeing them up to better serve the parishes.

As the director of the new Office of Faith Formation, Watson will have an expanded role to work on some bigger picture, strategic planning of how to provide the best faith formation to people of all ages across the diocese. “We’re most excited about finding new ways of serving people in the pews,” she said.

**Upcoming events**

This Fall, Watson is offering a number of adult faith formation opportunities. As part of the Highway 70 Speaker Series, Father Kevin McGoldrick, the chaplain at St. Cecilia Academy, will speak on Divine Mercy on Thursday, Oct. 25, at St. Christopher Church in Dickson.

Other talks will be held at St. Patrick Church in McEwen on Nov. 15 and Dec. 13 at the Bethany Retreat House in Dickson. All the talks begin at 6:30 p.m.

The Catholic Imagination Book Club meets every other month to discuss different pieces of literature. The first meeting on Oct. 18 featured Merideth Ochs, an English teacher at St. Cecilia Academy, talking about the short story “The Hint of an Explanation” by Graham Greene.


The theme for this year’s Fall Speaker Series is “Papal Documents: Why Should I Care?” The series will examine four documents that are having significant anniversaries this year. The speakers will talk about “what do these documents say to the culture and to us,” Watson said.

The first talk, “The Good News of Humanae Vitae: The Cure for a Culture With a Broken Heart,” will be by Jenny Uebbing of Denver, who blogs about motherhood and trying to be a faithful Catholic. It is scheduled for Oct. 22.

This year is the 50th anniversary of “Humanae Vitae,” the encyclical by Pope Paul VI.

Other talks will include:

- Oct. 29, Brian Thomas will discuss St. John Paul II’s “Fides et Ratio: The False Divorce of Faith and Reason,” which was published 20 years ago.
- Nov. 5, Joan Watson will discuss Pope Pius XII’s “Mystici Corporis Christi: Paving the Way for Vatican II,” which was published 75 years ago.
- Nov. 12, Father John Hammond will discuss St. John Paul II’s “Dies Domini: Why Sunday is the Most Important Day of the Week,” which was published 20 years ago.
- Dec. 13, Brian Thomas will discuss Pope John Paul II’s “Humanae Vitae: The Cure for a Culture With a Broken Heart,” which was published 20 years ago.

The talks are held at 10 a.m. and 7 p.m. at the Catholic Pastoral Center, 2800 McGavock Pike, Nashville, 37214.

For more information about any of the programs, email Watson at Joan.watson@dioceseofnashville.com.

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Follow Bishop Spalding on Twitter: @bpspalding

Diocese thanked for contribution

The Diocese of Nashville received a letter of thanks from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops Office of National Collections for its contribution of $13,371.53 raised from the 2018 collection for the Catholic Communication Campaign.

“I am grateful for your assistance in facilitating the generous gifts of the parishioners in your diocese,” wrote Nicole Germain, assistant director for promotions of the Office of National Collections.

Necrology

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<th>Name</th>
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<td>Rt. Rev. Joseph P. Gresham</td>
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<td>Rev. John M. Jacquet</td>
<td>October 24, 1886</td>
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<td>Rev. Angelo P. Lendino</td>
<td>October 29, 1953</td>
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<td>Rev. William E. Barcley</td>
<td>November 3, 1956</td>
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<td>Rev. William Morgan</td>
<td>November 10, 1840</td>
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Music, as only Music City can provide it, will be on display Thursday, Oct. 25, as Catholic Charities of Tennessee hosts “Singing for Self-Sufficiency: Songwriters Night” at City Winery Nashville, a benefit for its Workforce Development Program. The doors open at 6 p.m. and the program begins at 7 p.m. Aaron Barker and Allen Shamblin, both inductees in the Texas Heritage Songwriters Association Hall of Fame and the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame, will share from their amazing portfolio of top-selling hits sung by the likes of George Strait, Randy Travis, Lonestar, Toby Keith, Collin Raye, Mark Wills, Doug Supernaw, Clay Walker, David Ball, John Michael Montgomery, Bonnie Raitt, and more. “This is going to be such an exciting night,” said Pamela Russo, Catholic Charities’ Executive Director. “I was blown away when I took a look at all of the top-selling songs Aaron and Allen have created, either individually or with others.” “We are all familiar with the stars that have performed their songs,” she said. “Aaron and Allen are the artists who created the songs, though. No one can sing a song better than its writer.” For several decades, Catholic Charities has been deeply involved in connecting clients with jobs. For the most part, the clients have been recently arrived refugees eager to go to work to earn an income for their families. Typically, the work was unpleasant, temporary, and low-paying, with little in the way of benefits. “About five years ago,” explained Alisha Haddock, Director of the McGruder Family Resource Center, “Catholic Charities was presented with an opportunity to upgrade its job placement activities through the establishment of a Job Training Center in East Nashville, focused on light manufacturing and assembl work for area businesses and organizations.” The Job Training Center spawned the Sewing Training Academy, connecting a specific labor need in the marketplace – trained commercial sewers for an embryonic local clothing and fashion/apparel industry – with students working through a program specifically designed by industry representatives to address the need. “That led to where we are today,” Haddock continued. “We now have a workforce development program offering industry-inspired and taught training with partnerships in the lodging industry (starting with housekeeping and projected to grow to include front desk), the foodservice industry (starting with dishwashing, but soon to include culinary arts training), and health care (Certified Nursing Assistant training through a local hospital), as well as on-going partnerships for the Sewing Training Academy with the local fashion/apparel industry.” Many of the workforce development training sessions are held at McGruder Family Resource Center, in North Nashville. The Center has connections of United Way of Metropolitan Nashville, Metro Nashville Public Schools, and Catholic Charities. “We hope that this event will help support our efforts to connect clients with meaningful work – jobs with living wages, benefits, and opportunities for growth – so that they and their families can reach a level of permanent self-sufficiency,” said Mark Barry, Mission Advancement Director for Catholic Charities. Tickets are limited, he added, and are expected to go quickly. At this point, walk-up sales may not be available. To order tickets or become an event sponsor, go to http://bit.ly/CCNNSongwritersNight. For more information, contact Mark Barry at mbarry@ецcenn.org or 615-783-1028.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

October

22 Monday

† St. Pope John Paul II

The Good News of Humane Vitae, 10 a.m.; registration by 7 p.m. C.P.C., 2800 McGavock Pike, Nashville, Jenny Uebbing. Info: capacitorjoint作品@holyfamilycn.com.


23 Tuesday

† St. John of Capistrano

Mindful Body Movement Classes, Tuesdays, 12 p.m.; St. Joseph, Parish Center, 1215 Gallatin Pike S., Madison. Info: 615-860-0128.

Father Ryan’s Why Arts?, 6 p.m.; Father Ryan, 700 Norwood Dr., Nashville. Discussion focuses on ten lives and perspectives. The art show is November 10-11. jeanette.vogt@cks-nashville.org.

24 Wednesday

† St. Anthony Mary Claret

Meeting at the well, 8:30-9:30 a.m.; Dominican Campus White House, 4210 Harding Pike, Nashville. Led by Sr. Marian, O.P.

St. Henry School Open House, 9-11 a.m.; 6401 Harding Pike, Nashville. Tour the school, meet the principal and vice principal, Pre-K-8th grade; RSVP: leamette.very@cks-nashville.org.

Christ the King School Admissions Open House, 9-11 a.m.; 3001 Belmont Blvd, Nashville. Pre-K-8th grade; RSVP: leamette.very@cks-nashville.org.

Human Trafficking Awareness Night, 6 p.m.; St. Philip, 112 Second Ave S., Franklin. For adults, middle and high school youth. Information on what trafficking is and how to help prevent it from happening. RSVP required: StPhilipFranklin.com.


25 Thursday

† St. Daria

Theology Speaker, 6 p.m.; Father Ryan, 700 Norwood Dr., Nashville. Presentation by Dr. Pino, JD will speak about his work with death row inmates.

Fransalian Associates Meeting, Lay Order of the Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales, 6-7:30 p.m.; St. Joseph, Parish Life Center, 1225 Gallatin Pike S., Madison. Info: fransali-associate@comcast.net or 615-336-6039.

Power in My Hands, 6:30 p.m.; St. Edward cafeteria, 190 Thompson Ln., Nashville. Film containing beautiful stories that can be useful in the power of the rosary in real people’s lives.

27 Saturday

† St. Frauentius

St. Henry School Carnival and Homecoming, 11 a.m.-3:30 p.m.; 6401 Harding Pike, Nashville. Bungee jump, rock climbing wall, dunking booth, silent auction, food trucks.

Be Unafraid Traveling Exhibit, 11:30 a.m.-5 p.m.; Humble School Social, 33 Peavoy St., Nashville. Jeremiah Coward’s photo project focuses on ten lives and perspectives. Enjoy free coffee while you walk through a refugee camp via virtual reality. Info: mar-thamaria.morales@cvs.org.

Fall Festival, 4 p.m.; St. Edward, 188 Thompson Ln., Nashville. A fall-themed event with family-friendly games and activities, and a bonfire. Pleds welcome. Sts. Martha, Mark, and Stephen’s Trunk or Treat will be sold and Pleds will be there to sign them.

Art for Inspiration, pre-show exclusive reception to follow. RSVP: eadams@theschoolforthearts.com.

29 Monday

† St. Narcissus

Fides et Ratio: The False Divorce of Faith and Reason, 10 a.m.; registration by 7 p.m. C.P.C., 2800 McGavock Pike, Nashville. By the Diocese Family Life Office. Info/registration: Bill, 615-545-8900 or unowrs@comcast.net.

St. Cecilia Academy Admissions Open House, 2-4 p.m.; 4210 Harding Pike, Nashville. Info: www.stcecila.edu/openhouse.


November

2 Friday

† St. Victorius of Pettau

Holy Hour, 7 p.m., St. William, 719 N. Main St., Shelbyville.

Little Souls Memorial Mass, 7 p.m.; Cathedral, 2015 West End Ave., Nashville. If you have lost a child or would like to offer support to those who have, come to a memorial Mass, memorial rosary, and reception to follow. RSVP: eadams@theschoolfor-thearts.com.

2 Saturday

† St. Martin de Porres


Morning of Prayer, 10:30 a.m.; Carmel Center of Spirituality, 610 Bluff Rd, Liberty, TN. Mass, program, lunch. Info: 615-366-5477.


Father Ryan Placement Test for 8th graders, Pre-registration required: father-ryan.org/placementtest. Info: 615-383-4200.

4 Sunday

† St. Charles Borromeo

Bereavement Series, 1-3 p.m.; C.P.C., 2800 McGavock Pike, Nashville. By the Diocese Family Life Office. Info/registration: Bill, 615-545-8900 or unowrs@comcast.net.
Memorial Mass to support mothers who suffered miscarriage, infant loss

Andy Telli

From the grief and suffering from a miscarriage, Emily Adams found a mission in life: to help other mothers who have lost a child through miscarriage, stillbirth or infant death.

“This is a part of my life. It doesn’t define me but it may have been a defining moment,” said Adams, who has lost four children to miscarriage and has two living children and one on the way. Her goal is to bring comfort to other mothers who have suffered a similar loss.

Adams and several friends who were in a mom’s group together have started an Instagram account – the littlesouls – to offer encouragement to other mothers. They’ve also organized a 54-day Rosary novena for their lost children, and for the third year they are organizing a Little Ones Memorial Mass.

The Mass will be celebrated by Father Ben Butler at 7 p.m. Friday, Nov. 2, All Souls Day, at the Cathedral of the Incarnation. All mothers who have lost a child through miscarriage, stillbirth or infant death are invited to attend the Mass.

The Little Souls Memorial Mass will be celebrated Friday, Nov. 2, All Souls Day, at the Cathedral of the Incarnation. All mothers who have lost a child through miscarriage, stillbirth or infant death are invited to attend the Mass. The goal is to have the two groups of women support each other. Adams would like all the lectors, gift bearers and eucharistic ministers at the Mass to be either “loss moms” or “support moms.”

“While our foundation is out of our control, we can choose how we are going to live our lives,” said Adams. “Ideally it would be a family thing.”

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“All Souls Day seemed appropriate,” Adams said. “All Souls Day seemed appropriate,” Adams said.

The Instagram account was established to allow women to share their stories, Adams said. They also post encouraging messages and bible verses to help mothers.

For the novena, the mystery of the Rosary for the day will be posted, Adams said.

The Rosary novena goes through Dec. 25, Adams said.

“As the loss mom states the name of her lost child, they will be handed a candle by her support mom. For many mothers this might be the first time they have acknowledged publicly their loss, Adams said.

“The Mass will conclude with the beginning of a 54-day novena. The more than 800 followers of the Little Ones Instagram account from across the country and around the world will also be participating in the novena, Adams said.

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The Rosary novena goes through Dec. 25, Adams said.

“We are preparing to share Jesus’ love and mercy and healing,” Adams said. “It’s a nice way to share Jesus’ love and mercy and healing.”

Adams’ first pregnancy ended with a miscarriage. “Before I had my first loss, I never considered that would be a possibility,” she said. When it happened, “I felt isolated and alone.”

After she told her family, she learned that several of her aunts had suffered a miscarriage and her grandmother had five after having nine living children.

“I realized the importance of talking about it and allowing women to talk about it,” Adams said. She learned that one in four women suffer a miscarriage or stillbirth.

After her son Jude was born, Adams and her friends started their moms group. When her son was 10 months old, she suffered her second loss. This time, her moms group friends rallied to support her.

“I felt like how lucky am I to have this. The community really rallied around us and showed us the respect for this life. That opened my eyes to see we need to do this for each other when this happens.”

Adams is a graphic designer and she designed a print to give to women who suffered a loss. The print said, “For this child I have prayed,” and would include the baby’s name and the date the baby passed, she explained.

The print would give families something tangible as a reminder of their child, Adams said.

One of the group suggested they do a novena together. As they were starting the first novena four years ago, Adams and her husband David found out she was pregnant.

“I remember my whole pregnancy, I was completely at peace,” Adams said. “I never worried about anything that would happen. Just let me enjoy the pregnancy with this child no matter how long it is.”

She lost the baby at 17 weeks. “My husband and I, the first thing we did was go to the Cathedral and go to Mass. It was a beautiful opportunity for us, because I was freaking out.

“I remember sitting at Mass and they were reading off the intentions. Mass was being said for somebody I actually knew,” she said. “I thought Emily you’re so silly. All your family in heaven, all your babies in heaven are already praying for you. You have this whole family of faith right here with you.”

That led to the idea of the Little Souls Memorial Mass, Adams said. “All Souls Day seemed appropriate,” Adams said.

The first meeting will be a sharing circle for “any mom whose had a loss, at any age or stage no matter how long ago,” Adams said. “They can talk openly about their losses with a safe environment with other mothers.”

The first meeting will be held in November, though the date has not yet been set. The date will be announced at the Little Souls Memorial Mass, Adams said. “Ideally it would be a monthly thing,” she said.
With execution possible, bishops reiterate Church’s opposition to death penalty

TESTRA LAURENCE

Just hours before Tennessee death row inmate Edmund Zagorski was scheduled to be executed by lethal injection on Oct. 11, Gov. Bill Haslam issued a temporary reprieve amidst a state of last minute legal wrangling. The 10-day reprieve is set to expire on Sunday, Oct. 21, but that date has not been officially set as Zagorski’s execution. As the Tennessee Register goes to press it is unclear exactly when, or how, the execution will be carried out.

Zagorski was convicted in 1984 of murdering John Dale Dotson and Jimmie Overholtz. Prosecutors say he robbed them, shot them, and slit their throats during a botched drug deal.

As the state’s three-drug lethal injection protocol was being challenged in the Tennessee State Supreme Court earlier this month, Zagorski requested to be put to death in the electric chair, which the state at first denied, saying he had made the request too close to his execution date.

Zagorski’s October 11 execution was halted after the 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals granted a stay over concerns of inadequate representation during his original trial.

According to the Death Penalty Information Center, a national clearinghouse for death penalty-related news, “At the time of the Governor’s action, a Tennessean has been on death row for 37 years. The Association of U.S. Catholic Bishops has offered their support for those on death row who are sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole.

EXECUTIONS have been rare in Tennessee.

Since 1973, 161 people sentenced to death have been exonerated in the U.S.

Pope Francis spoke strongly against the death penalty in his address to a joint meeting of Congress in Washington in 2015. The Vatican announced on Aug. 2, 2018, that the pope has ordered a revision of the Catechism of the Catholic Church to state that the death penalty is inadmissible in all cases. The state of Tennessee carried out its first execution in nine years in August and is poised to carry out another one, possibly this month.

In a Modern Era, however, the execution will be carried out.

“I am convinced that this way of execution is an attack on the inviolability and dignity of the person,” the bishops wrote.

WASHINGTON state’s Supreme Court strikes down death penalty

Catholic News Service

SEATTLE. The Catholic bishops of Washington state Oct. 11 applauded the unanimous decision of the state Supreme Court striking down the death penalty as unconstitutional.

The court ruled its use is arbitrary and racially biased and converted the sentences for the state’s eight death row inmates to life in prison without the possibility of parole.

EXECUTIONS have been rare in Washington. Five prisoners have been put to death in recent decades. In 2014, the governor imposed a moratorium blocking its use.

“The bishops have long been on record as opposing capital punishment,” said a statement issued by the Washington State Catholic Conference, the public policy arm of the bishops. “Today’s decision by the Supreme Court indicates a move toward greater justice and greater respect for life at all stages.

“The Catholic Church’s consistent belief is that every human life is sacred from conception until natural death. It is this principle that has energized our efforts for decades to abolish the death penalty,” said Archbishop J. Peter Sartain of Seattle.

In an Oct. 16 statement, the chairmen of the U.S. bishops’ domestic policy committee echoed the Washington state bishops in applauding the court’s unanimous ruling. He also reiterated the Catholic Church’s call to end the death penalty.

“In the court’s opinion, the death penalty was deemed ‘invalid because it is imposed in an arbitrary and racially biased manner,’” said Bishop Frank J. Dewane of Venice, Florida, chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development. "This echoes one of the reasons to oppose the death penalty that the bishops gave in their 2005 statement ‘A Culture of Life and the Penalty of Death.'"

He noted that Pope Francis in his 2015 address to the joint meeting of Congress in Washington “called for the global abolition of the death penalty” and he quoted from the pope’s words: “I am convinced that this way is the best, since every life is sacred, every human person is endowed with an inalienable dignity, and society can only benefit from the rehabilitation of those convicted of crimes. ... (A) just and necessary punishment must never exclude the dimension of hope and the goal of rehabilitation.

Earlier this year, Washington’s Catholic bishops provided testimony in support of legislation to repeal the death penalty citing the country’s imperfect record in imposing the death penalty, the potential for racial biases, and specific instances where innocent people have been executed for crimes they did not commit.

Since 1973, 161 people sentenced to death have been exonerated in the U.S.

WASHINGTON state taxpayers millions of dollars that would otherwise be wasted,” said an official of Conservatives Concerned About the Death Penalty.

Hannah Cox, the organization’s national manager, added: “Conservatives in Washington state and across the country increasingly realize the death penalty is a failed government program that does not value life, threatens innocent people, and wastes money.”

“By the teaching of the Catholic Church, any punishment that is used must be proportionate to the crime committed and must respect the dignity of the person,” the bishops wrote.

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CNS photo/Paul Haring

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“By the teaching of the Catholic Church, any punishment that is used must be proportionate to the crime committed and must respect the dignity of the person,” the bishops wrote.
Pope accepts Cardinal Wuerl's resignation as Washington archbishop

Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY. Pope Francis has accepted the resignation of Cardinal Donald W. Wuerl as archbishop of Washington but did not name a successor. When the pope’s decision was announced Oct. 12, the Archdiocese of Washington released a letter from Pope Francis to the cardinal, making clear his support for Cardinal Wuerl’s ministry and leadership, but also praising the cardinal for putting the good of the Church first.

“You have sufficient elements to ‘justify’ your actions and distinguish between what it means to cover up crimes or not to deal with problems, between what it means to cover up the Church plays in our country. ‘You have sufficient elements to ‘justify’ your actions and distinguish between what it means to cover up crimes or not to deal with problems, between what it means to cover up the Church plays in our country.

“The archdiocese also announced the pope has named Cardinal Wuerl as apostolic administrator to oversee the archdiocese until a successor is named. Cardinal Wuerl had been facing pressure to resign after an Aug. 14 grand jury report detailing sexual abuse claims in six Pennsylvania dioceses painted a mixed picture of how he handled some of the cases when he was bishop in Pittsburgh from 1988 until 2006. The 77-year-old cardinal, the sixth archbishop of Washington, had submitted his resignation, as is mandatory, to the pope when he turned 75, but it had not been accepted until now.

After his resignation was announced Oct. 12, Cardinal Wuerl said in a statement: “Once again, for any past errors in judgment, I apologize and ask for pardon. My resignation is one way to express my great and abiding love for you the people of the Church of Washington.”

The cardinal also thanked Pope Francis for what he had expressed in his letter, saying, “I am profoundly grateful for his devoted commitment to the well-being of the Archdiocese of Washington and also touched by his gracious words of understanding.”

In early September, Cardinal Wuerl told priests of the archdiocese that he would meet with Pope Francis and ask him to accept his resignation “so that this archdiocesan church we all love can move forward” and can experience “a time of peace and healing”.

The Vatican announcement that the pope accepted his resignation came more than two months after the announcement that Pope Francis accepted the resignation of retired Washington Archbishop Theodore E. McCarrick from the College of Cardinals. He is not subject to any appeal, and so is no longer considered a valid cardinal.

The Vatican said Oct. 2, 2012, that the accusation was made but was closed due to lack of evidence. Pino also produced a recording of a conversation he allegedly had with Ordenes in 2004 asking for forgiveness for the alleged abuse of the second victim.

In the recording, a voice attributed to Ordenes told Pino, “I experienced affection for you, I felt I was losing you,” while the relationship with the other minor “was just an arousal.”

In an interview in 2012 with the Chilean newspaper El Mercurio, a longtime friend of Cox, said “It is a good day for the survivors of these monsters. Now it is time for the Chilean courts to do something!” Cruz tweeted.

Schonstatt Father Fernando Baeza, the order’s provincial superior in Santiago, said Oct. 6 that the Vatican was investigating Cox after an accusation of abuse that occurred in Germany in 2004 was reported in 2012. Ordenes, who was bishop in Pittsburgh from 1988 until 1990, and two years later Father Manuel Hervia, a diocesan priest, reported the abuse by Ordenes; Pino claimed it turned into a romantic relationship and that he reported his relationship with the priest to Ordenes told Pino, “I experienced affection for you, I felt I was losing you,” while the relationship with the other minor “was just an arousal.”

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Cardinal Ouellet responds to Archbishop Vigano on McCarrick case

Cindy Wooden CNS

VATICAN CITY. Former Cardinal Theodore E. McCarrick of Washington had been told by Vatican officials to withdraw from public life because of rumors about his sexual misconduct, said Cardinal Marc Ouellet, prefect of the Congregation for Bishops.

However, because they were only rumors and not proof, then-Pope Benedict XVI never imposed formal sanctions on the retired Washington prelate, which means Pope Francis never lifted them, Cardinal Ouellet wrote Oct. 7 in an open letter to Archbishop Carlo Maria Vigano, the former Vatican nuncio to the United States.

The archbishop had issued an open letter to Cardinal Ouellet in late September urging him to tell what he knew about now-Archbishop McCarrick. Archbishop Vigano’s letter followed a massive statement in mid-August on Pope Francis for Archbishop Vigano in 2011 when he was to begin his service as nuncio to the United States, “they say nothing at all about McCarrick.” However, the cardinal added, “I told you verbally of the situation of the bishop emeritus who was to observe certain conditions and restrictions because of rumors about his behavior in the past.”

Cardinal McCarrick “was strongly exhorted not to travel and not to appear in public so as not to provoke further rumors,” Cardinal Ouellet said, but “it is false to present these measures taken in his regard as ‘sanctions’ decreed by Pope Benedict XVI and annulled by Pope Francis. After re-examining the archives, I certify that there are no such documents signed by either pope.”

And, unlike what Archbishop Vigano claimed, there are no documents from Cardinal Ouellet’s predecessor, Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re, saying that then-Archbishop McCarrick was ordered to live a life of withdrawal and silence under the threat of canonical penalties.

The reason such measures were not taken then and were only taken in June by Pope Francis, Cardinal Ouellet said, was because there was not “sufficient proof of his presumed guilt.”

“He case would have been the object of new disciplinary measures if the nunciature in Washington or any other source would have furnished us with recent and decisive information about his behavior,” the cardinal told the former nuncio.

Archbishop Vigano had claimed he personally informed Pope Francis in June 2013 that in “2009 or 2010,” after Benedict McCarrick had retired, Pope Benedict imposed sanctions on him because of allegations of sexual misconduct with and sexual harassment of seminarians. Archbishop Vigano later explained that Pope Benedict issued the sanctions “privately” perhaps “due to the fact that he (Archbishop McCarrick) was already retired, maybe due to the fact that he (Pope Benedict) was thinking he was ready to obey.”

In his open letter, Cardinal Ouellet told Archbishop Vigano, “You say you informed Pope Francis on June 23, 2013, of the McCarrick case in an audience he granted to you like many other papal representatives he met for the first time that day.”

“I imagine the enormous quantity of verbal and written information he received that day regarding many people and situations,” the cardinal wrote. “I strongly doubt that McCarrick interested him as much as you would like us to believe, given the fact that he was an 82-year-old archbishop emeritus who had been without a post for seven years.”

As for the written instructions the Congregation for Bishops prepared for Archbishop Vigano in 2011 when he was to begin his service as nuncio to the United States, “they say nothing at all about McCarrick.” However, the cardinal added, “I told you verbally of the situation of the bishop emeritus who was to observe certain conditions and restrictions because of rumors about his behavior in the past.”

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Catholic News Service

PENSACOLA, Fla. In the wake of Hurricane Michael, which ravaged the Florida panhandle, the Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee, whose territory was smack in the path of the Category 4 storm, has moved from prayer to action.

The diocesan website still urged prayer for the hurricane’s victims, quoting two verses from Psalm 107, and also is encouraging people to donate much-needed items to those whose lives were upended by Michael.

In conjunction with Catholic Charities of Northwest Florida, the diocese is accepting cash donations at https://bit.ly/1kRb0Er.

Goods urgently needed include water, tarps, nonperishable food items, cleaning supplies and gloves, pet supplies, and baby food and diapers. The diocesan pastoral center in Pensacola was accepting these items through Oct. 15, while St. Mary Church in Fort Walton Beach was conducting a weekend collection for those items Oct. 13-14.

The latest count of deaths blamed on Hurricane Michael has reached 35. More than 250,000 people were still without power and could remain so for weeks.

“So many people have lost everything: homes, property and even their livelihood. The scenes of destruction are heart-wrenching, knowing that when we see a place where there once was a house, a family used to live there and are now homeless,” Bishop William A. Wack of Pensacola-Tallahassee said in an Oct. 12 letter to the diocese.

He said the priests and employees of the diocese have been accounted for and “personal injury seems to have been kept to a minimum given the size of the storm.” Some church buildings, parish halls, rectories, schools and other buildings may be a total loss, but the damage was still being assessed, he added.

Insurance will help with the rebuilding but it will be a long-term recovery project, Bishop Wack said. “But I know that we will come together and do what we need to pull through this.”

He asked those who are able to donate supplies or funds to help with the recovery. In the meantime, the bishop said, the diocese was working hard to arrange temporary places to celebrate the upcoming weekend Masses to accommodate parishioners whose church buildings are lost or have been deemed unsafe. “Obviously, if it is not safe – or possible – to attend Mass on a Sunday, you are not obligated to go. Your safety is most important,” Bishop Wack said.

Hurricane Michael retained hurricane-force winds up to 200 miles inland as it tore through Georgia before dumping heavy, forceful rains onto North and South Carolina through Georgia before dumping heavy, forceful winds up to 200 miles inland as it tore through Georgia before dumping heavy, forceful rains onto North and South Carolina and part of southern Virginia before heading back out to the Atlantic Ocean.

Seven of the deaths were in Virginia, which Gov. Ralph Northam declared a disaster area before the storm hit. One firefighter died while on an emergency call, while the others had reportedly drowned.

Four deaths occurred in one Florida county, including a man who was killed when a tree crashed through his home. An 11-year-old Georgia girl was killed when the hurricane’s high winds tore away a carport and sent it smashing into a modular home where the girl was visiting her grandparents.

An early estimate of losses from the hurricane was set at $4.5 billion by CoreLogic, based on the replacement cost of the houses and other buildings that would be in the storm’s path. The company’s numbers do not include flood damage.

Catholic Charities USA is a member of National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster, and is a “trusted source” by the Federal Emergency Management Administration, where people can make contributions. The homepage of its website, https://www.catholiccharitiesusa.org, has a link to make donations to assist hurricane victims.

It is the first time on record that a hurricane of this intensity had hit the Florida panhandle. Those who surveyed the damage to the towns in Michael’s path said the destruction appeared to them to be more like that from a tornado, as building after building had been flattened.

While a Florida military base in the region’s poor people found they were not evacuated, and many prisoners were not evacuated, and many of the region’s poor people found they had nowhere to go until it was too late to get out.

The hurricane rose in intensity quickly before hitting landfall Oct. 10. Those who stayed behind may have expected Michael to remain a tropical depression over water, fueled by abnormally warm water in the Gulf of Mexico, it rose from a tropical depression to a Category 2 hurricane Oct. 9, before gainingCategory 4 status early Oct. 10.

In separate statements Oct. 13, Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston and Bishop Frank J. Dewane of Venice called for prayers for the victims of Hurricane Michael and for generosity in donations of food and material goods to assist those whose homes and livelihoods have been devastated by this storm.

The cardinal is president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic bishops and Bishop Dewane is chairman of the USCCB’s Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development.

“Every American should do their part to help,” Dewane said.

“We live in the shadow of a danger over which we have no control: the Gulf, like a provoked and angry giant, can awake from its seeming lethargy, overstep its conventional boundaries, invade our land, and spread chaos and disaster. During this hurricane season we turn to you, O loving Father,” it says.

“Spare us from past tragedies whose memories are still so vivid and whose wounds seem to refuse to heal with passing of time. O Virgin, Star of the Sea, our beloved Mother, we ask you to plead with your Son on our behalf, so that spared from the calamities common to this area and animated with a true spirit of gratitude, we will walk in the footsteps of your Divine Son to reach the heavenly Jerusalem, where a stormless eternity awaits us. Amen.”

First responders and residents walk amid debris and destroyed homes Oct. 11 after Hurricane Michael swept through Mexico Beach, Florida. The Category 4 storm raged through the Florida Panhandle into Georgia Oct. 10 as the most powerful storm to hit the continental United States in decades, turning homes into piles of lumber and flooding subdivisions.
Cindy Wooden CNS

VATICAN CITY. Carrying Pope Paul VI’s pastoral staff and wearing the blood-stained belt of Archbishop Oscar Romero of San Salvador, Pope Francis formally recognized them, and five others, as saints of the Catholic Church.

Thousands of pilgrims from the new saints’ home countries – Italy, El Salvador, Spain and Germany – were joined by tens of thousands of others Oct. 14 in St. Peter’s Square to celebrate the universal recognition of the holiness of men and women they already knew were saints.

Carolina Escamilla, who traveled from San Salvador for the canonization, said she was “super happy” to be in Rome. “I don’t think there are words to describe all that we feel after such a long-awaited and long-desired moment like the ‘official’ canonization, because Archbishop Romero was already a saint when he was alive.”

Each of the new saints lived lives marked by pain and criticism – including from within the Church – but all of them dedicated themselves with passionate love to following Jesus and caring for the weak and the poor, Pope Francis said in his homily.

The new saints are: Paul VI, who led the last sessions of the Second Vatican Council and its initial implementation; Romero, who defended the poor, called “structures that are no longer adequate for proclaiming the Gospel, those weights that slow down our mission, the strings that tie us to the world.”

Among those in St. Peter’s Square for the Mass was Rossi Bonilla, a Salvadoran now living in Barcelona. “I’m really emotional, also because I did my Communion with Monsignor Romero when I was 8 years old,” she told Catholic News Service.

“He was so important for the neediest; he was really with the people and kept strong when the repression started,” Bonilla said. “The struggle continues for the people, and so here we are!”

Claudia Lombardi, 24, came to the canonization from Brescia, Italy – St. Paul VI’s hometown. Her local saint, she said, “brought great fresh air” to the Church with the Second Vatican Council and “has something to say to us today,” particularly with his 1968 encyclical “Humanae Vitae” on human life and married love, especially its teaching about “the conception of life, the protection of life always.”

In his homily, Pope Francis said that “Jesus is radical.”

“He gives all and he asks all; he gives a love that is total and asks for an undivided heart,” the pope said. “Even today he gives himself to us as the living bread; can we give him crumbs in exchange?”

Jesus, he said, “is not content with a ‘percentage of love.’ We cannot love him 20 or 50 or 60 percent. It is either all or nothing” because “our heart is like a magnet – it lets itself be attracted by love, but it can cling to one master only and it must choose: either it will love God or it will love the world’s treasure; either it will live for love or it will live for itself.”

“A leap forward in love,” he said, is “what would enable individual Christians and the whole Church to escape ‘complacency and self-indulgence.’”

Without passionate love, he said, “we find joy in some fleeting pleasure, we close ourselves off in useless gossip, we settle into the monotony of a Christian life with whom the courageous choice to risk everything to follow him, the satisfaction of leaving something behind in order to embrace his way.”

Contributing to this story were Carol Glatz, Junno Arocho Esteves and Melissa Vida.
**New saints highlight care for poor, zeal for Gospel**

**Catholic News Service**

**VATICAN CITY.** Hundreds of thousands of people around the world celebrated when Pope Francis formally declared that Pope Paul VI and Archbishop Oscar Romero of San Salvador, El Salvador, are saints. But smaller groups of pilgrims traveled to the Vatican Oct. 14 for the same Mass to celebrate the canonizations of five other holy men and women from Italy, Spain and Germany.

The following are short biographies of the five:

- **St. Vincenzo Romano**
  Called “the workers’ priest,” Vincenzo Romano was born, served and died in Torre del Greco, Italy, a town in the smoking shadow of Vesuvius. Born in June 3, 1751, in the town near Naples, he was heavily influenced by the teachings of his Neapolitan contemporary, St. Alphonso Liguori, and was ordained a priest in 1775.
  He labored with his fellow townspeople in rebuilding the city after Vesuvius erupted in 1794 and was particularly concerned about the spiritual and physical health of seafarers, requesting there be a priest and a doctor on every boat leaving the city’s port for Tunis or Sardinia; his ministry was the precursor to the Church’s seafarer’s chaplaincy.

- **Sister Nazaria Ignacia March Mesa**
  Nazaria Ignacia March Mesa was born Jan. 10, 1889, in Madrid, Spain. She first felt the call to religious life when she received her First Communion. Hearing a voice say, “You, Nazaria, follow me,” she replied “I shall follow you Jesus, as close as a human creature can.”
  Due to economic hardship, her family moved to Mexico where she went on to join the Little Sisters of the Abandoned Elderly despite her parents’ objections, dedicating 12 years of her life to caring for the elderly in Oruro, Bolivia.
  When she was 21 years old, her father died. Due to a law dictating that all property belonged to her father’s first wife, Catherine – along with her mother and siblings – had to move out, and she worked as a farm hand to earn money for her family.
  Throughout her life, she had a devotion to helping the poor and the abandoned in her village. Her care for the poor inspired other women to help her and with the encouragement of her spiritual director, she formed a religious congregation, the Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ.

- **St. Catherine Kasper**
  Born May 26, 1820, in Dernbach, Germany, Catherine Kasper was one of five other holy men and women from Italy, Spain and Germany. While his parents wanted him to go to university and study medicine, he believed he had a vocation and so, in 1871, he entered the seminary in Bergamo. He was ordained a priest in 1875.
  He promoted eucharistic prayer and adoration in his parish. In 1882, one of the women participating in the prayer told him she felt called to devote herself completely to God and to promoting eucharistic adoration. The woman is now known as St. Gertrude Catherine Comensoli and she was the first member of the religious order he founded.
  With the encouragement of the bishop of Bergamo, the congregation grew quickly and quickly racked up debts. Father Spinelli was driven from Bergamo, settling in Cremona and being incardinated as a priest of that diocese. Initially sentenced to five months in jail for bankruptcy, the priest was given a royal pardon. But, in the meantime, the sisters who remained with St. Comensoli in Bergamo formed their own congregation of Sacramentine sisters. Father Spinelli’s order was re-founded officially in Cremona and the priest remained its superior until his death Feb. 6, 1913. He was beatified by St. John Paul II in 1992.

- **St. Nunzio Sulprizio**
  Nunzio Sulprizio was born April 13, 1817, in the Abruzzo region of Italy near Pescara. Both of his parents died when he was an infant and his maternal grandmother, who raised him, died when he was 9.
  An uncle took him under his guardianship and had the young boy work for him in his blacksmith shop. However, the work was too strenuous for a boy his age and he developed a problem in his leg, which became gangrenous.
  A military colonel took care of Sulprizio, who was eventually hospitalized in Naples. The young teen faced tremendous pain with patience and serenity and suffered up his sufferings to God, according to his official biography.
  He died in Naples in 1836 at the age of 19 and was declared blessed in 1963 by St. Paul VI.

During the beatification ceremony St. Paul had said, “Nunzio Sulprizio will tell you that the period of youth should not be considered the age of free passions, of inevitable falls, of invincible crises, of decadent pessimism, of harmful selfishness. Rather, he will rather tell you how being young is a grace.”

**Banners of new saints hang from the facade of St. Peter’s Basilica before the the canonization Mass for seven new saints celebrated by Pope Francis in St. Peter’s Square at the Vatican Oct. 14. Among those canonized were St. Paul VI and St. Oscar Romero.**

CNS photo/Paul Haring
My Dear People of God,

God bless you all!

In this moment of great challenge in our Church, I ask for your prayers for healing and courage. We come before God needing His assistance so that we may reach out toward those who have been hurt or who are hurting by the abuse crisis. I am personally working to assure a better and safer future for our children! Never let us forget that all things are possible with God’s help!

Of the many blessings I was excited about when I came to Nashville was that the diocese is poised for great growth and is a leader in priestly vocations. What I have seen since becoming your bishop bears that out. We have wonderful parishes and schools, and we are blessed with a strong group of seminarians.

I will soon celebrate my first Priesthood Sunday as your bishop. In the last eight months, I have come to know the priests serving our diocese, and I am happy to be working along with them to serve you. I am grateful for each and every one of them. I am thankful for the gifts and talents they share as priests and for their dedication to living out the life of Christ among us.

Priesthood Sunday is a special day that is set aside nationally to reflect upon the role and vocation of the priesthood in the life of the Church. Please join me in thanking the priests who have made a difference in your life. Pray for these men every day!

Seminarians are our future priests and are crucial to the future of our diocese. They have been called and they are answering, but they cannot do it alone. Their education and formation requires support from our priests but also from you, the lay faithful. They need to be encouraged and guided in their vocations. They need our prayer and our support as they continue to discern God’s will. It is vitally important that these men are properly formed and educated as they prepare to minister to the People of God.

For several years now, we have sought your financial support for our Seminarian Education Fund on Priesthood Sunday, which is celebrated the weekend of October 28. You have been generous in your gifts, and your support has allowed 23 men to be ordained in the last five years. Your continued support today will assist in the education and formation of the 27 men we currently have in formation. These men represent the future of our Church in Middle Tennessee. Your contribution today helps to ensure future priests will be available when you or a loved one needs them.

At this time especially, I share your belief in Jesus Christ who heals and strengthens us all. We need good priests to bring us the light and life of Jesus. Please help me continue to form the young men who are courageously answering the call to do just that.

Please prayerfully consider supporting the Seminarian Education Fund.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend J. Mark Spalding
Bishop of Nashville

Catholic Pastoral Center, 2800 McGavock Pike, Nashville, Tennessee 37214-1402 • 615.383.6393 • Fax 615.292.8411
PRIESTHOOD SUNDAY, OCTOBER 28

A special collection on Priesthood Sunday will support seminarian education for the Diocese of Nashville.

“You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.” —Matthew 22:37

A special collection on Priesthood Sunday will support seminarian education for the Diocese of Nashville.

Thank you for your support.

Please accept my/our offering of support for the Seminarian Education Fund.

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☐ 1 Semester $18,000
☐ ½ Semester $9,000
☐ 2 Months $6,000
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Or pay online at www.dioceseofnashville.com/priesthood-sunday
Stock Gift: Please call Sandra Jordan at 615-783-0267.

☐ I/We have included my parish, the Seminarian Education Fund, or the Diocese in my estate planning.
Seminaries provide environment for love of Christ to grow

Each of the seminaries is showing them what it's going to be like. They place much emphasis on the human formation of the seminarians. It’s one of the most important parts of the seminary formation in general, Father Gilstrap said. As it is the case in finding a seminary when a man first enters formation, Father Gilstrap’s focus is on helping them find the best fit for each seminarian.

“We are looking for ways help lessen the possibility of instances of abuse in the future,” Father Gilstrap said.

Theology program, they move on to their theology studies, working toward an advanced degree. For most, that will mean a change in seminaries, Father Gilstrap said.

Seminaries are invited to consider studying in Rome. Father Gilstrap said. “A man has to have a certain level of willingness and comfortability.”

Assigning a seminarian to study in Rome “is not something you want to arbitrarily do.”

Seminarians are invited to consider studying in Rome, Father Gilstrap said. “A man has to have a certain level of willingness and comfortability.”

Currently, there are two seminarians in Rome, Deacons Rhodes Bolster and Luke Wilgenbusch. Both are scheduled to be ordained to the priesthood on May 25, 2019.

“We would love to keep sending guys to Rome, but it is on a case-by-case basis,” he said.

Serving as vocations director “is challenging, but it’s good,” Father Gilstrap said. “It’s great work to be able to walk with these guys. It’s a fantastic group of young men. The Lord has done an incredible job of calling young men in the Diocese of Nashville. … It’s a radical thing in today’s culture,” he added, “for a young man to reject what the culture tells him will make him happy in favor of what God is showing them will truly make them happy.”
Overbrook’s farm broadens lessons for students

ROBERT ALAN GLOVER

Overbrook School has established a farm on campus where students can hold baby chicks, grow pumpkins and help take care of two sheep.

They also use the farm to learn biology, math, and how to run a business.

“Sister Marie Noelle, O.P., a teacher at Overbrook, helped set up Beyond the Brook Farm last year.

“We originally designed the project as a hands-on science lesson, and not teaching it as a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) project,” said Sister Marie Noelle.

But the project quickly grew.

“Using a five-step procedure, the teachers and I got the students involved in a systematic, engineering design process,” said Sister Noelle. The five steps involve: asking a question; imagining an answer or solution; pursuing the problem; designing the project; improving on what they created in the classroom.

Overbrook students have observed a 3-day-old chick embryo’s heartbeat through a process called “candling,” and an initial, small chicken coop/garden is now a school-wide STEM project.

“Our second graders, for example, designed an ‘egg-onomics’ project, which teaches them how to apply for – and obtain – a loan, operate on a budget, and find potential customers for their eggs” laid by chickens in the classroom, said Sister Noelle.

“Seventh graders got to design a hydroponics project, which involves creating their own ecosystem using fish waste, bacteria created from it, and plants which purify the water,” said Sister Noelle. She noted that students “also had to watch and track and bacteria’s growth, keep records, and make adjustments (to the ecosystem) as needed.”

Sister Noelle is now Overbrook’s STEM coach, working with all of its teachers in all subjects using the hands-on, free-step inquiry approach.

The results include a berry orchard, 45-by-50-foot pumpkin patch, 10-by-20-foot greenhouse, and a 20-by-15-foot sheep pen. Cosmas and Damian are the pen’s resident baby-doll sheep, which students have cared for by washing, combing and walking them to their on-campus pastures.

Overbrook parents have wildly supported Beyond The Brook, and, said Sister Noelle, “over the summer it became a family affair, with our plea to parents for volunteers reaching its goal in just 48 hours.”

Future goals of the STEM project, said Sister Noelle, “will include the eighth graders organizing an on-campus Farmers’ Market (hopefully by month’s end), fourth graders making maple syrup, first graders growing pickles, and so on; each grade has a project.”

What do Overbrook’s students think about becoming scientists – and creating life from scratch?

Third grade student Sophie Crosslin worked on the egg-onomics project.

“I sold eggs to Mom, Dad and my grandparents, and we learned how to count money, take care of chickens, feed them, and manage the allowance that the school gave us” for chicken feed and bedding.

“I also liked learning how to start a business, how a loan works, and my favorite part of STEM was handling the chickens, because their feathers are really soft,” said Sophie.

“The whole thing is just great; I have four kids at Overbrook, in first, third, fifth and seventh grade, and that’s why I volunteered, because it’s an amazing addition to the school,” said Nikki Crosslin, Sophie’s mother.

Third grade students Eliot and Henry Chamberlain and their classmates, said Henry, “worked on starting a pumpkin patch and growing blueberries. They are very small but already growing real fast, and will be done in about two months.”

From the pumpkin patch, said Henry, “We will make pumpkin pie and sell the rest, just like in second grade last year where we sold eggs, and everyone had their own customer orders, labels, and a week to sell them.”

“I enjoyed thinking out and learning about the different kinds of plants, especially blueberries, and what they are like,” said Eliot Chamberlain.

“I also liked moving Cosmas and Damian from their grazing spots in the morning to the pen in the afternoon, but sometimes it was hard because they don’t want to go,” he added.

The boys’ mother, Kiran Chamberlain, said the egg-onomics project “was a wonderful opportunity for the kids to practice addition, and a business opportunity too, because they learned how to run a venture, break even money-wise, etc.”

Seventh grade student Brazier Pierce talked about building an ecosystem, which, “our class just started about 10 days ago, that is, building a stable aquaponic system.”

Her classmates, Brazier explained, “worked in groups of four, and two of my group-mates, Abby and Samantha, are trying to decide how the aqua-farm is going to look, while I am trying to figure out the mechanics of it.”

The school, said Brazier, “supplied us the pumps and aquarium tank, but we had to net pots for the plant roots so that they could touch the water. And we are also going to Pet Smart when it’s done to get goldfish, which cost just 15 cents each, and leave money for us to buy other kinds of fish.”

“Today it looks great; we just have to execute it – decide where to put everything – and we also had to be careful not to go over budget on the essentials.

The school only gave us $15 to work with,” Brazier said.

“Each child in our school, from youngest to oldest, share a common experience of joy and wonder as they witness this project (the miracle of hatching and raising baby chicks from eggs) first-hand,” said Overbrook Principal Sister Julia Marie, O.P.

“When I saw what was going on, I knew this experience was priceless, and that our teachers want to build on it and provide all the students bigger and more dynamic learning moments,” she said.

For more information about Overbrook School, call 615-292-5134 or visit www.overbrook.edu.
Archbishop Theodore McCarrick had sexually abused minors and engaged in sexual misconduct with seminarians, all while rising through the ranks of the Church hierarchy. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops will consider a plan to address the new abuse scandal at the conference’s November meeting.

Bishop Spalding called for four panel discussions to provide accountability and transparency on the part of the Diocese of Nashville in its own efforts to address the crisis and prevent future incidents of abuse.

The first discussion was held at Our Lady of the Lake on Thursday, Oct. 4, followed by another at St. Henry Church in Nashville on Sunday, Oct. 7. Two more are scheduled: Sunday, Oct. 21, 3-5 p.m., at Holy Family Church in Brentwood, and Thursday, Nov. 8, 6:30-8 p.m., at St. Rose of Lima Church in Murfreesboro.

Bishop Spalding is scheduled to attend all the discussions, as are Gino Marchetti, the attorney for the diocese, and Joe McLaughlin, an associate clinical professor of psychology and human development at Vanderbilt University who also has a private practice in Brentwood. The Safe Environment Coordinator at each of the host parishes and Donna Harper, the mother of a victim and a member of the diocesan Review Board, will also be part of the panels.

When he received the call that Pope Francis was appointing him as the Bishop of Nashville, Bishop Spalding said, “I knew I had to be here for you, and this is one of those times.”

When the USCCB considers the issue at its November meeting, Bishop Spalding will be calling for more women to be involved in the Church’s response to the abuse crisis, he said. “Women bring a profound wisdom. … That’s something I’m going to be supporting and pushing.”

Each of the panelists spoke and then answered questions submitted in writing by members of the audience.

The diocese first began addressing the issue of clergy sexual abuse in the 1980s, Marchetti said. In the early 1980s, he was one of the diocesan officials who attended a conference about the issue hosted by Catholic Mutual Group, which provides insurance to most dioceses in the country, he said.

When they returned, they sat down with then Bishop James Niedergerkes to discuss what they had learned at the conference, Marchetti said, and Bishop Niedergerkes was quick to adopt all the recommendations.

The diocese also began in 1986 conducting background checks on everyone who worked with minors, Marchetti said.

“Over the years, the diocese has done 40,000 background checks,” he said.

The Pennsylvania grand jury report also called for laws requiring people to report suspected abuse to civil authorities, Marchetti said. “Tennessee has had that since 1985.”

He also noted that most of the cases cited in the grand jury report involved incidents that happened before the Charter was adopted in 2002, though most news reports made it seem like they had happened in the last few days, Marchetti said.

“They were people who were angry, angry, angry, and they had a right to be,” Marchetti said of the grand jury members.

People need to avoid euphemisms when talking about sexual abuse of minors and recognize that it is a crime, McLaughlin said.

“Our Church has to protect our children and our whole community from such criminal activity,” McLaughlin said.

“We also have to work in the community to reduce the isolation of people,” said, because isolation can make people vulnerable to predators.

“Protecting our youth and creating a safe environment takes a top priority at our parish,” said Cyndi Sabatino, the Safe Environment Coordinator at Our Lady of the Lake.

The parish’s efforts include background checks for everyone who works with youth and training and education programs for adults and children so they can recognize the signs of abuse and know how to report their suspicions, Sabatino said.

“We now have the knowledge to pass on to our children,” Sabatino said. “Forty years ago our parents didn’t know the signs and symptoms of abuse.”

Bishop Spalding speaks with Our Lady of the Lake parishioner Tim Lynch after the discussion.

“We’re still learning about sexuality,” McLaughlin said. “These cases of sexual abuse are sexual but they’re also an abuse of power. The control aspect of it is very big psychologically.”

Bishop Spalding responded to a question about how the selection of seminarians has been affected by the sexual abuse crisis.

Since the adoption of the Charter, the rate of abuse by priests is not much different than that found in the broader society, he noted.

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Author puts lessons of life with one arm in new children’s book

Mary McWilliams

Her experience as a Paralympic competitive swimmer, working with disabled veterans, and years-long relationship with pen pal Fred Rogers of Mr. Rogers television fame all played a vital role in helping St. Cecilia Academy alumna Katie Laurel Wells write her first children’s book, “I Can Still Do Everything with One Arm.”

“The book is, essentially, Wells’ own story of overcoming challenges of having been born with one arm, but it is a story that she thinks can appeal to all children, both able-bodied and disabled.

“I think most children’s books are fiction ... and children learn through real-life experiences,” explained Wells, who works at her alma mater as a substitute teacher and in the library. There are also very few books on the market that address a child with a disability and she found none in which the lead character is an amputee.

“I wrote this book for all ages. Adults have bought the book and loved it. Parents have read it to their 2-year-olds, 5-year-olds. Junior high students have read it. But probably the best age range would be kindergarten to fourth grade,” Wells said.

The book, coupled with talks she gives to school students, can help cut back on the shock factor that not only children experience upon seeing an amputee, but adults as well.

At a recent talk with second and third graders at Overbrook School, Wells, a life-long St. Henry Church parishioner, showed the students she can do things that people with both arms can do, and demonstrated how she paints her fingernails with her toes.

She is currently scheduling talks at 15 schools.

In addition to decreasing or eliminating the shock factor, Wells would like to transform the often rude questions and comments she hears, into, “Can I help you?” Those questions and comments she hears like to transform the often rude questions that the public may ask.

“Why do you have one arm?” But it was the blunt question that Wells heard years ago that really tested her mettle. When she was the only one present at breaststroke, beating out seven other swimmers with two arms. When she asked “What do you do?” Wells, who already knew a lot of things about me. He really helped me come to terms with my disability. He said we’re all different because God made us that different because God made us that differently at the age of 4 watching his television show and hearing his message of how special we are.

He put so much thought and energy into it,” she said. “He made it really fun working on this project. He already knew a lot of things about me. He already knows my left arm is missing.”

He also knows that Wells, in addition to being a national and international swimming competitor who represented the Nashville Aquatic Club, is also a figure skater, a dancer, a teacher, and an artist, and portrayed her performing all those activities – even painting her nails.

But in the book, Wells talks about the difficulties and pain of being different and how she overcame it.

“I was born with one arm,” she writes in the beginning. “I thought God was too tired to finish making me, but then I learned we all have differences and those differences are the greatest gift in this world. God makes us all different because that’s how special we are.”

She thanks Mr. Rogers for helping her to realize that. She remembers very clearly at the age of 4 watching his television show and hearing his message of how special she was. But it wasn’t until she was in high school that she wrote him and told him the difficulties she faced.

“I had no idea that kids would make fun of me when I started school,” she recalled, saying her family never made an issue of her missing arm.

“I really helped me come to terms with my disability. He said we’re all different because God made us that way,”

But he also wrote back. And she wrote back to him. And he continued to write to her.

“I think the swimming connection bonded us,” Wells said. Rogers told her that he swam seven days a week as a promise to his mother to stay healthy. He took an interest in Wells’ swimming competitions, encouraging her and celebrating her victories.

Each year for his birthday, March 20, she sent him a cookie bouquet. It continued like this from 1998 until just a few weeks before his death in January 2003. His letters are preserved in a binder.

She continues to receive letters from Hedda Sharapan, who worked on Rogers’ show from its beginning. Wells sent her and Rogers’ widow copies of her book. She spoke with Sharapan for the first time this summer.

“Hedda said Fred would be really proud of this book,” Wells recalled. “I Can Still Do Everything with One Arm” may be the first in a series. Wells is brainstorming other ideas, from navigating Washington, D.C., public transit with one arm while a White House intern, knowing when to ask for help and when to figure out something for herself, and the little ways others can help.

For now, however, “I Can Still Do Everything with One Arm” has many lessons to offer. It’s currently available through Amazon.com, and at Fiarraas Books, Phillips Toy Mart and Hey Sugar Bakery, all in Nashville.

Katie Wells, a parishioner at St. Henry Church in Nashville, has written a children’s book based on her life, “I Can Still Do Everything with One Arm.” Although she was born with one arm, she became a competitive swimmer.
Young people can help rejuvenate Church

Andy Telli

While Bill Staley, diocesan director of youth and young adult ministry, was in Rome for the ordination of Deacon Luke Wilgenbusch, he was able to attend the opening Mass of the Synod of Bishops on Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment on Oct. 3.

“From the beginning of the synod, we have found that we can see dozens and dozens of bishops come out in the entrance procession and to see all the synod fathers there ready to focus on the youth,” said Staley.

The Synod is looking at a wide variety of issues facing young people in the Church, and Staley is awaiting the final document to see how the Church will proceed into the future.

“It’s a special time in the Church,” Staley said. “We’re taking the time to really take a look at the young Church.

“This generation is the biggest and most technologically advanced the world has ever seen,” he added. “So how do we share with them the good news of Jesus Christ?”

Answering that question is a major focus of Staley’s efforts for the diocese.

“Teens spend more time in front of a screen than ever before and have shorter attention spans,” he said. “It challenges us to be more creative and more agile.

“While those challenges are not new, he said, “When they came out with the printing press, they had to teach people how to read, so history has always had challenges that we’ve had to overcome.”

Vocational discernment has to begin with young people understanding what a vocation is, Staley said. With all the messages of secular culture swirling around young people, it can be difficult to hear God’s call in their life, Staley said.

“This movement is pushing you here and that movement is pushing you there,” he said. “But where’s God pushing you?”

Much discussion at the Synod has focused on the clergy sexual abuse crisis roiling the Church.

“This is the generation of scandal,” Staley said. “It’s been scandal after shooting after scandal. They’re kind of numb to this in a strange way.”

But young people have a resilience in the face of the scandal and can help rejuvenate the Church, Staley said. To rejuvenate means to take back to a youthful state, he noted.

“Despite all the scandals they’ve seen, they’ll help bring us back to a better state both culturally and spiritually,” Staley said of young people.

Young people want leaders who are fathers, not Pharisees, observer says

Carol Glatz CNS

VATICAN CITY. The Catholic Church must be a place of justice and mercy, and its members must be catalysts for change, some young observers said at the Synod of Bishops Oct. 11.

“In order to teach justice and mercy to our young people, the Church must first be a place of justice and mercy for our young people,” said Joseph Moeono-Kolio from Samoa, who was representing the Caritas Internationalis Youth Forum and young people from the Pacific Islands.

He asked the synod what young people could do about uprooting injustice from the world “when we can’t do it within our own churches?”

The problem of clerical sexual abuse and corruption are present in his region, he said, but “reporting it or even speaking of it here is professional and cultural suicide.”

“Young people are tired of Pharisees, we need fathers,” he said.

Moeono-Kolio used an analogy for how he would like to see young people and elders work together. When his ancestors would sail from island to island, he said, strong young people were put in charge of paddling while the elders were in charge of reading the stars in the sky and the ocean currents in order to guide the boat to their common destination.

“Whether it is the Pacific Ocean or today’s sea of challenges, he said, “until we start paddling together by way of listening and equipping our young people with the tools to navigate the inevitable storms, our canoe will only float into irrelevance.”

“But if you, our elders, set the right course and steer this canoe in the right direction, we, young faithful are ready to help you power it through the challenges” and bring the light of faith to the ends of the world, he said.

Nicole Anne Perez, who is a catechist in the Philippines, voiced her concerns to the synod about how Catholics in youth ministry can be catalysts of change and find solace, guidance and love in a region with so many huge problems.

The breakdown of families, parents focused more on money than their children, predators taking advantage of children’s poverty for sexual exploitation, inauthentic online relationships and casual sex all leave “ordinary” people wondering what they can do to solve these problems, she said.

Her answer, she explained, is found in Jesus telling the Pharisees that the greatest commandment of all is love—loving God and loving one’s neighbor as oneself.

Perez said she looks inside herself to make sure she is being “a spark of light in the dark,” spreading that spark to others and leading other people to “the true light.”

“Let us be Jesus to others, letting them see the source of true light in our own lives and relationships,” she said.

Chaldean Catholic Safa al Abbia, a 26-year-old dentist from Iraq, urged the synod participants to pray for Iraq and support its Christians and churches.

He said he understands the importance of talking about the more common themes at the synod – the family, sexuality and social media – but the main challenge for young people in Iraq is “peace and stability and their right to live in dignity.”

Young people are struggling to remain faithful as witnesses to Jesus and hold onto their traditions, values and liturgy, he said. But they have grown up seeing many of their brothers and sisters martyred and their churches bombed.

“I will never forget the face of my friends after the Mass when they said, ‘See you next week,’ and I never saw them again because they were burned under the fire of the bombed car” near their church one year.

Young people also are leaving the country because of diminishing opportunities in employment and education as well as a breakdown in values and the law, he said. As a result, “Iraqi youth are questioning the impact of being Iraqi on their life, the role of the Church and the role of the Church in spite of all the good effort of the Church in assisting.”

Al Abbia told Pope Francis that he had a message for him from young people.

They hope one day to see you in Iraq.”

Nicole Anne Perez, a member of the Catholic scouts in Guinea, told the synod that the scout movement “is deeply permeated with Gospel values” and it helps young people deepen their faith and love for Christ and the Church.

Catholic scouts can help those young people who have given up on life or are headed down errant paths, she said, because “we are young optimists who face life’s daily problems with stamina, courage and wisdom.”

Mantantu Vita, who works in youth ministry at the Congo bishops’ conference, told the synod the ministry’s aim is to guide young people in all aspects of their lives so they can become responsible adults.

To be someone who accompanies, she said, isn’t about trying to attract young people to entertain them, keep them busy or help them “kill their free time.”

It is being someone who is a true guide, leading them toward Jesus, whom they greatly need, she said.

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Synod groups focus on need for qualified accompaniment

Carol Glatz CNS

VATICAN CITY. In their second round of reports to the Synod of Bishops, a number of working groups called for qualified and, in some way, supervised spiritual mentors or directors, recommended including more female figures from the Bible as examples and role models for young people, and praised having the inspiring input of young people during the gathering.

The second week of discussions centered on discernment, vocations and accompaniment, and the 14 working groups, which are divided by language, each came up with a number of suggestions, critiques and recommendations for the synod’s final document. The Vatican released the reports Oct. 16.

The working group English-A, which includes bishops from the United States, Australia, Ireland and England, said the synod “came alive” when young people gave their interventions, with one bishop in the group commenting, “I never realized a synod could be so much fun!”

The group recommended the final document present “a clear definition of vocation,” keeping in mind it should be speaking not only to practicing Catholics, but also to the “nones.”

The group also suggested including in the final document “a distinct treatment of the response of Mary to God’s call” and seeing her as the “archetypal disciple.”

While recognizing the key role families, friends and schools play in accompanying young people on their faith journey, the English-A group emphasized the need for “trained mentors” who had proper formation as well as “accompaniment/supervision” themselves so they could be effective spiritual guides.

The English-B group proposed that young people be prompted to “connect with Jesus’ youth and understand their lives in its light,” for example, by recognizing how Jesus personally experienced many young people’s struggles, such as being a refugee, growing up in an “underprivileged household,” belonging to gangs. “Their vocation of those who remain single simply because they exist and because they have certain qualities or are part of a group.

The Portuguese-language group said one of the most important tasks all members of the Church have is to show young people that they are loved simply because they exist and because of who they are, not because they are already good, capable, efficient, because they have certain qualities or are part of a group.

The German-language group said when it comes to sharing the faith, “we cannot reduce faith to a morality. The Christian proposal needs to be embodied in concrete experiences. It is necessary to return to the proposal of Jesus: ‘Come and see!’”

Concerning affection and sexuality, the Church should begin with the basic Christian principles of the value of human life and the dignity of the body as a way to open dialogue with nonbelievers, the group said.

“The doctrine of the Church in this field is beautiful and rich. It is necessary to present it with clarity, believing in the force of attraction contained therein and in the beauty of those who see it only as something rigid.”

The synod should also reflect on the vocation of those who remain single and those who are homosexual, it said. “It is not the mission of the Church to respond to all particular realities, but it is her duty to care for, to accompany, to help the young person to give direction and direction to his or her own life, to help them to do good.”

Contributing to this story was Junno Arocho Esteves.

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10/19/18
‘Be Unafraid’ photo exhibit aims to spark conversations about refugees

Andy Telli

Catholic Relief Services is bringing a photo exhibit to Nashville that it hopes will open a dialogue between refugees and those most fearful of their arrival in the United States. “People don’t have the chance necessarily to meet these refugees and talk with them so they would be more than numbers on a page,” said Megan Gilbert, Catholic Relief Services’ communications director for its work in the Middle East and Europe. “We wanted these encounters to happen.”

So Catholic Relief Services turned to Nashville photographer Jeremy Cowart, who is known nationally for his portraits of the homeless and his advocacy for refugees and immigrants. Cowart brought refugees and those who are resettling groups to the United States together in Nashville to photograph them and to give them the opportunity to meet each other and talk.

The result is the “Be Unafraid” photo exhibit and tour that will include a stop in Nashville on Saturday, Oct. 27, 1:30-5 p.m. at the Pinewood Social restaurant, located at 33 Peabody St. in downtown Nashville.

The goal is to spark a conversation, Gilbert said. “People have misconceptions about refugees,” she said. “You see something on television, it shapes your views. I’m afraid they’re coming here to hurt us. They’re going to take our jobs, change our way of life here.’”

“It’s important to listen to those concerns and help them work their way through it,” Gilbert said.

That’s exactly what happened for two of the subjects in Cowart’s exhibit, Boyad Sharef and Maggie Anderson.

Cowart photographed the two together, Anderson the native-born American holding the prayer beads of Sharef, a Muslim and Kurdish refugee from Iraq, and he holding her rosary.

After the photo shoot, the pair went out for some coffee. “She was publicly very anti-immigrant,” Sharef said. “I was very hesitant. … To my surprise it was a normal conversation.”

The jokingly agreed to disagree on a lot of subjects, Sharef said, but the conversation had its intended effect.

“We had an accepting view toward each other’s views,” he said.

During the conversation, Sharef told Anderson his family’s story.

His father had been a translator for U.S. officials in Iraq, and the family was selected to be resettled in Nashville, home of a thriving Kurdish community, under the Special Immigrant Visa program, designed specifically for people who work with the U.S. government in Iraq and Afghanistan “because the affiliation with the U.S. government in those countries is dangerous,” Sharef said.

They landed at the airport in the United States in January 2017 just as the Trump Administration’s travel ban went into effect and they were blocked from entering the country. “It was a very unsettling time for us,” Sharef said. “It was very desperate. We didn’t have anything to go back to in Iran.”

Sharef’s family decided to tell their story to the media, which prompted legal help from the Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition, for which Sharef now works as a part-time community organizer, and U.S. Rep. Jim Cooper’s office, which helped win an exception to the ban for Sharef’s family.

“We get to Nashville and there was a big welcoming party for us, 200 to 300 people at the airport to welcome us,” Sharef said. “That night was very special.”

One person who was not celebrating was Anderson, who had seen the media report about Sharef’s family on television. “I told my sister this was liberal propaganda,” Anderson recalled.

She later moved to Nashville, and was shopping one day when a woman approached and asked if she believed refugees should be resettled in the United States. “And I said no.”

“Essentially, I was afraid a mass migration of refugees would bring extreme Islam to the United States,” which would threaten Americans’ freedoms, Anderson said.

She was invited to participate in the photo exhibit. “I thought it was going to be more of a debate. I studied for it,” Anderson said. “I was expecting to crucify them and show them how wrong they were.”

“I wasn’t prepared for what occurred,” said Anderson.

After hearing the story of Sharef’s family, “It made me cry,” she said. It ultimately led to a change in her opinions. “My old views horrified me now. I can’t believe I believed what I did,” said Anderson, who is a student at Northwestern Michigan College and hopes someday to become an attorney representing immigrants and refugees.

“After coming here you kind of see this fear that people have of immigrants or Muslim people,” said Sharef. “They’ve never had an opportunity to meet people of that background. It’s an unfounded fear. People are angry without a good reason.”

“My fear is they would act on those fears without meeting a refugee or immigrant or Muslim,” he added. “When they meet, they realize who they are: people who at the end of the day want to make a living and have a future for their families and grow and prosper.”

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James Ramos CNS

HOUSTON. When Edrina Villagomez’s parents came to the United States illegally, they achieved the dream of her grandfather: to come to “El Norte,” the North, and live and work in the U.S. A college senior majoring in international studies, Villagomez understands the sacrifices her family had to make to realize the dream.

The family’s situation, involving a complex web of international and local factors, was the focus of a Sept. 25 forum on immigration hosted by the University of St. Thomas campus ministry and co-sponsored by Catholic Charities of Galveston-Houston and the Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops.

Panelists included Jennifer Carr Allmon, executive director of the state Catholic conference; Elise Griesmyer, supervising attorney for Catholic Charities of Galveston-Houston’s St. Frances Cabrini Center for Immigrant Legal Assistance; Aisha Koroma, a former refugee from Sierra Leone now working in social services; and Maria Trevino-Rodriguez, an activist at the University of Houston.

Allmon focused on Catholic social teaching, noting that the Texas bishops’ position is “rooted in human dignity and believes enforcement should be targeted, proportional and humane. Enforcement efforts should not divide families, abridge any basic rights, or risk danger to immigrants or enforcement officers, she said.”

Griesmyer encouraged the audience to maintain empathy for immigrants and to open their hearts and minds when discussing the issues facing people on the move.

Likewise, Koroma urged people to “see the human in someone first” and to move beyond government labels such as refugee, asylee or immigrant.

“These are not immigrant issues, these are people issues,” said Koroma, who lived in a refugee camp as a child, but came to Houston when she was 14.

Trevino-Rodriguez often advocates for those who benefit from the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, known as DACA, for young people brought to the U.S. as minors by parents or family members. She crossed into the U.S. with her parents as a 1-year-old and said she didn’t know she was in the country illegally until she started applying to colleges.

“My life is political whether I like it or not,” she said, highlighting the upcoming November elections and encouraging the audience to be informed and to vote.

“When you vote, you vote for people who cannot (such as me),” she said. “Vote for people who make a difference, make them accountable for their actions, and make your voice known.”

Noting that the immigration issue is both controversial and often difficult to discuss, Trevino-Rodriguez encouraged that dialogue begin on common ground.

The idea of finding common ground struck Villagomez.

“We’re so polarized, and I don’t think we should be polarized,” she said. “It’s just about meeting that common ground and make it a bipartisan issue … both parties need to take a conscious effort and be cognizant in actually making reforms and laws that are going to help immigration.”

Basillian Father Chris Valka, university chaplain and campus ministry director, said he appreciated the diversity of perspectives on an “issue that is very complicated and not one dimensional.”

He found that the discussion reflected much of what Pope Francis has stressed during his pontificate.

“It’s embedded in our Catholic social teaching about the migrations of people,” Father Valka said. “This is a human dignity issue. As a diocese in Texas, we are particularly affected by the impacts of decisions that are made at a national level. It affects us at a local level.”

Pope Francis, with a network of international relief agencies, invited people of goodwill to get to know people on the move. He introduced the Share the Journey program in September 2017 as one way to connect refugees and immigrants with people living stable lives.

Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, working with other faith leaders, has called for comprehensive immigration policy reform on the federal level that can defend the dignity of immigrants as well as protect the country’s borders.

During a visit to Brownsville, Texas, in July, Cardinal DiNardo addressed myriad issues including the separation and detention of children from their families.

The cardinal said the Church was willing to join any conversation to reach humane solutions because even a policy of detaining entire families in facilities caused concern. The U.S. border bishops have frequent communication with their counterparts in Mexico and Central America on many topics, he said, but the problems driving immigration to the U.S. are complex.

Villagomez said knowing her family’s history helps her to understand her future choices “because now I have the ability and the opportunity to dream as much as I want. I can have anything, but (my grandpa) didn’t have that opportunity.”

She encouraged other college students to stay informed and to “know that you can make a change.”

“We are the new generation, and so we want to be the ones to build a road for change.”

James Ramos is a staff writer and designer for the Texas Catholic Herald, newspaper of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston.
Don’t give up on politics; bring the Gospel to the debate

We are heading into the final, frenzied weeks of the campaign season. Political ads are all around us, exchanging charges and counter-charges, desperately trying to lure our attention — and our vote — to one candidate or another.

In our modern media culture we can be buried under an avalanche of information and opinions, all shouted at us, making it difficult for us to hear the truth. There is always the danger that the process can be so overwhelming, so cynical, so over-the-top that we lose the ability to evaluate public issues in the four basic principles of Catholic social doctrine: the dignity of the human person, the common good, subsidiarity, and solidarity. We risk being so overwhelmed that we don’t even realize we are disconnected from our lives.

In his 2013 apostolic exhortation “Evangelii Gaudium,” Pope Francis wrote: “An authentic faith … always involves a deep desire to change the world, to transmit values, to leave this earth somehow better than we found it. We love this magnificence that God has put us, and we love the human family which dwells here, with all its tragedies and strengths, wishes and aspirations, its strengths and weaknesses. The earth is our common home and all of us are brothers and sisters. If indeed the just ordering of society and of the state is a central responsibility of politics, the Church, cannot and must not remain on the sidelines in the fight for justice.”

The Catholic faith has much to offer in politics and a discussion of public policy. In its document “Faithful Citizenship,” the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops reminds us that Catholic teaching provides a guide to evaluating public issues in the four basic principles of Catholic social doctrine: the dignity of the human person, the common good, subsidiarity, and solidarity. “With this foundation, Catholics are better able to evaluate policy positions, party platforms, and candidates’ promises and actions in light of the Gospel and the moral and social teaching of the Church in order to help build a better world,” the bishops wrote.

It is often a complex and difficult process to apply those principles to the wide variety of issues facing our country, whether it’s weighing the fairness of tax policy. Or finding the most effective means to promote peace. Or balancing a call to welcome the stranger while also being mindful of the nation’s right to maintain the integrity of its borders. Or respecting the dignity of life from conception to natural death. Or developing programs that provide the poor with the best possible path to self-sufficiency without denying them the basic necessities of life, like good food, health care system that ensures care they need. Or balancing economic development with the moral obligation to be good stewards of God’s creation.

We shouldn’t take the easy way of sourcings our positions to partisanship, because no single party embodies all of Church teaching. But no disciple of Christ has ever been promised an easy path in this life, and that is true as we wade into the political maelstrom of our place. So don’t give up on politics. Dive in instead. Arm yourself with an understanding of the issues and candidates’ positions as well as Church teaching and the message of the Gospel. Read “Faithful Citizenship” and follow its admonition to pray for “God to give us the ability to effectively proclaim the Gospel of Christ through our daily witness to our faith and its teachings.”

Only when we answer this challenge will we see our society reflect Christ’s saving grace and mercy.

The pope and the martyr: New saints offer youths a road map to holiness

**EDITORIAL**

JUNNO AROCHO ESTEVES

VATICAN CITY. The Catholic Church has its share of young saints who gave witness through their lives that holiness can be attained even at a young age.

Others, like Sts. Paul VI and Oscar Romero, show that the path to holiness begins early. The two were declared saints Oct. 14 during the Synod of Bishops on young people and discernment.

Although Pope Paul VI is best remembered for seeing the Second Vatican Council through to its end and helping implement its far-reaching reforms, his journey toward holiness began much earlier in life, said Father Claudio Zarandini, rector of the Basílica di Santa Maria delle Grazie in the northern Italian province of Brescia, where Blessed Paul VI celebrated his first Mass May 30, 1920.

“We here in Brescia are trying — at Pope Francis’ request — to make Paul VI’s younger years more known. That is, how he lived his time of voca- tional discernment and his for- mation so that he can become a model for young people who are on their own path of forma- tion,” Father Zarandini told Catholic News Service Sept. 27. Born Giovanni Battista Montini in 1897, the future pope and his brothers would attend youth meetings organized by St. Philip Neri in Brescia.

Father Zarandini told CNS that those gatherings were a time of “spiritual and human formation” for Blessed Paul, where he built friendships and adopted the local priests’ charism of ministering to young people.

Blessed Paul’s relationship with his family as well as a “deep sense of prayerfulness and an acute involvement in the social issues of his time were one of the legacies of his parents and brothers,” Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle of Manila told CNS Sept. 25.

“The family atmosphere centered on faith and the common good prepared him to be a discerning person: listening to God’s word and the world; being at home in the solitude of prayer, which gave him the most profound experience of communion and the decisive- ness to pursue a discerned course,” Cardinal Tagle said.

Father Zarandini told CNS that St. Paul’s canonization would be “a beautiful sign that he truly is a pope who still has much to say” to young men and women today.

St. Paul VI was also remem- bered as a strong leader who was close to Catholics who suffered persecution, including the archbishop of San Salvador who was declared a saint along with St. Oscar Romero.

While visiting the pope on June 21, 1978, St. Romero wrote in his diary that St. Paul encouraged him to “proceed with courage and with strength with strength, with hope.”

Born in Ciudad Barrios, El Salvador, St. Romero entered a minor seminary at the age of 13. During his years of priestly ministry, young Romero served the poor and the suffer- ing of his country.

In 1977, St. Paul VI appointed him to lead the archdiocese of San Salvador during a tumultu- ous time when priests and reli- gious who stood with the poor were targeted by right-wing paramilitary groups aligned with the government.

Italian Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia, the postulator of the Salvadoran archbishop’s cause, told CNS that St. Romero’s canonization is a “great oppor- tunity to rediscover the primacy of love that must char- acterize, energize and excite today’s generation, today’s young people.”

Archbishop Paglia cited a letter sent by G. Mirna Garcia, a 17-year-old Salvadoran girl, to St. Romero in which she thanked him for fighting for her peoples’ rights and dignity.

“In reading and listening to your homilies, I recognize that you have shown the path for our salvacion,” she wrote to the archbishop. “Harder days will come and faith will sustain us in those days, the certainty that God is with us and if he is with us, nothing will be against us.”

Salvadoran Mercy Sister Ana Maria Pineda, associate professor of religious studies at California’s University of Santa Clara, told CNS that her students see in St. Romero “the best of what they hope for in Church leaders” and identify with his humanity as a person with both “gifts and limita- tions.”

It was Archbishop Romero’s determination “to overcome his limitations and fol- low God’s call that the students most identify and find encour- agement for themselves in the themes of their lives and chal- lenges,” she said.

Julian Filiowchowski, chair of the U.K.-based Archbishop Romero Trust, said St. Romero brought an authenticity to the Gospel message in words and deeds that attracted young people in El Salvador.

“He was not a populist politician dressed in a cassock. Rather a humble and self- efficacing pastor seeking to love God, love the poor and love the Church,” Filiowchowski said.

“People, especially young people, can sense this,” he said, “and at such a difficult time for the hierarchical Church, he stands as a shining example of authenticity in his faith, a beacon of hope radiant- unconditional love for his people.”

Pope Francis canonized Saints Paul VI and Oscar Romero Oct. 14. They are pictured in undated combination photos.

Pope Francis canonized Saints Paul VI and Oscar Romero Oct. 14. They are pictured in undated combination photos.

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God’s mercy is everlasting, because He is eternal and unchanging.

At the time of Jesus, persons with severe physical challenges, such as blindness, were reduced to begging unless their families assisted them.

Blindness, as all other bodily difficulties, had a spiritual component for the ancient Jews. God willed nothing evil or heartless. Disease and incapacity were signs of the presence that had been committed.

Thus, when Jesus healed, the effects and power of sin also were overcome.

The key to Bartimeus’ being healed was his faith.

Reflection

Jeremiah was hardly the only ancient Hebrew writer who concentrated on the merits of God as seen in the Exodus.

God’s mercy is everlasting, because God is eternal and unchanging. God is not forgiving and blessing in one instance, but punitive and angry in another.

Just as hardships and great worries troubled the ancient Hebrews long after they had left Egypt, so sadness and difficulties confront us today.

We cannot do everything ourselves, but the loving God of the Exodus, with us because of the reconciling death of Jesus, still comes to our aid. The key is that we, as Bartimeus, love God and trust in the Lord.

Msgr. Owen Campion is a former editor of the Tennessee Register.

Msgr. Owen F. Campion

BACKGROUND. The Book of Jeremiah provides the first reading for the weekend of Oct. 28. A few facts about Jeremiah are known from the book itself. He was from Anathoth, a village only a few miles from Jerusalem, and he was the son of Hilkiah, a priest. He acted as a prophet for more than 40 years.

Being the son of a priest, he in all likelihood was quite familiar with ancient Hebrew religious traditions. He would have been particularly aware of the importance of the Exodus, the flight from Egypt and slavery that molded the Hebrews into one distinctive race, and that resulted in their settlement in the Holy Land.

He would have thought that the Hebrews did not escape Egypt simply because they were lucky, or because they were clever. To the contrary, they succeeded in fleeing the miseries they had endured in Egypt only by the mercy and power of God.

To Jeremiah, the events in his lifetime were as threatening, or as awful, as the plights of his people centuries earlier in Egypt. He lived to see Babylonia completely overtake the Hebrew homeland, and he saw the coercion brought to bear upon his people by Babylon and other imperialistic neighbors.

He addressed these threats, and the humiliation and destruction of being conquered, with faith that the merciful God of the Exodus again would rescue the people. This weekend’s reading is a powerful and expressive acclamation of God’s power and goodness, and in the assurance that once more God will protect and lead the people.

As is typical of this book, this reading literally is moving in its eloquence and feeling, For its second reading, the Church presents a selection from the Epistle to the Hebrews.

This New Testament Scripture is abundant in its references to ancient Jewish beliefs and customs. Its author is unknown, but obviously the author knew Judaism and Jewish life in the First Century A.D. very well. Supreme in Jewish cult, and in many other aspects of Jewish life, in the First Century A.D., was the high priest, descending in office from Aaron, brother of Moses. The high priest acted for the entire nation as he offered the sacrifice in the temple.

The Epistle to the Hebrews sees Jesus as the great high priest of the new era of salvation, the era of Christianity. Jesus acts for all humanity in sacrificing to God, bringing reconciliation and a new bonding after sin tore humanity away from God.

St. Mark’s Gospel furnishes the last reading. It is the story of Bartimeus, a blind man who begged by the roadside in Jericho. It is no wonder that Bartimeus had to beg in order to survive.

Mary Margaret Lambert

T he grocery list was pinned securely to my dress as I walked down the concrete sidewalk towards the busy city thoroughfare. I stopped a few times on my journey to play a quick game of hopscotch on a previously chalking images, and waved to playmates as I passed their houses.

My grandmother decided that I was old enough to cross the street by myself when I stayed at her house. I was sworn in secret and cautioned never to tell my parents about this adventure. They never allowed me out of our yard, much less to cross our lightly traveled suburban street.

The neighborhood grocery that my grandparents frequented, however, was exciting and rewarding. When I arrived at the “little store,” the owner would remove the list from my lapel, offer me a piece of penny candy, and begin to pull requested items from the crowded shelves.

Because I was too small to carry the heavy box back up the hill, there was a grocery boy whose job it was to make deliveries on his bicycle.

I would pop a jawbreaker or taffy now as I walk into the store. I tend to pick up a few items that are not on my list, and occasionally encounter a special unadvertised sale on something that is too good to pass up.

As days go by, there is no need for money to exchange hands, but when accounts are opened for the pick up or home delivery service, a credit card is put on file to expedite the purchases.

There is no longer any need for a shopping list to be pinned to my lapel, or for me to brave crossing a busy thoroughfare in order to get our groceries, but if they will serve as a reminder of my efforts, I just might consider using these services. Please, no jawbreakers or taffy now as I walk into the store. It is a fashion statement I don’t care to emulate.

Personally, while the premise of online shopping is appealing, I still have the need to squeeze the packages of toilet paper, (ignoring the advertisement admonitions from Mr. Whipple), smell the cantaloupes, and check the expiration dates on our bread and milk.

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Msgr. Owen Campion

Mary Margaret Lambert

Sunday, October 28, 2018
Thirty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time

Readings:
Jeremiah 31:7-9
Hebrews 5:1-6
Mark 10:46-52

Sunday, November 4, 2018
Thirty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time

Readings:
Deuteronomy 6:2-6
Hebrews 7:23-28
Mark 12:28-34

Painting “Healing of the Blind Man” (1871); Carl Bloch.
Five reasons the rosary is the perfect prayer for families

Gretchen R. Crowe CNS

It was one of those days you never forget. Sitting on the beach one summer evening last year, my husband and I decided to pray the rosary. Close by on a blanket was our son, only 8 weeks old. As we started praying out loud, our son began to coo along with every word. Maybe he didn’t know their meaning, but he sensed the rhythm of every Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be. That was my first lived experience of the rosary’s power as a family prayer.

Over the centuries, many Catholics of all walks of life have underscored the familial nature of praying the rosary. Notable among these include two great 20th-century rosary devotees, Father Patrick Peyton and St. John Paul II.

In the mid-20th century, Father Peyton, who founded Holy Cross Family Ministries, also known as the “rosary priest,” became famous for the saying, “The family that prays together, stays together.” In his autobiography, he explained why praying to Jesus through Mary in the rosary was so fundamental to his childhood that it eventually became the core of his life.

Pope John Paul II wrote in “Rosarium Virginis Mariæ,” his masterful 2002 apostolic letter on the rosary, that the rosary is “a prayer of and for the family.”

“It is important not to lose this precious inheritance,” the pope said. “We need to return to the practice of family prayer and prayer for families, continuing to use the rosary.”

Surely we know there is no better prayer suited to family life than the rosary — but why? Here are five reasons.

• The rosary is simple. The short, repetitive prayers of the rosary make it a perfect devotion for families. It can be prayed by anyone, anywhere. The prayers are easily memorized and recited, and even young children can be encouraged to lead a decade.

• The rosary is tactile. A rosary comes with an almost built-in “fidget spinner” for young ones. Holding a rosary in their hands, they can keep track of how much is completed and how much remains.

• The rosary brings peace. St. Pius X is credited with saying, “If you wish to give a sign in your homes, regive the family rosary.” For families, moments of quiet can be hard to come by. Peace is also shattered by the day-to-day conflicts that are bound to occur in family life. But by its rote nature, the rosary invites quiet reflection and meditation. Through the rosary, we are able to entrust any and all worries and anxieties over to Mary. By carving out a space each night for a family rosary, you also are carving out a space for peace to take root in the family home.

• The rosary tells a story. The mysteries of the rosary make the story of salvation come alive. Every member of the family, no matter how small, can understand to some extent the events and relationships illustrated. In the joyful mysteries, we learn about the life of Jesus and God’s plan for him and his family. The sorrowful mysteries, through meditation on Jesus’ passion and death, illustrate that no one is immune from suffering, even the Son of God. The luminous mysteries offer us an opportunity to grow in knowledge of ourselves and the universe, and, most importantly, of God and our relationship with him. The glorious mysteries provide a backdrop for our hope in eternal life, according to which we pattern our lives.

• The rosary is a family prayer. The rosary invites the whole family to participate in prayer together, thereby bringing each person into closer relationship with the other members of the family about the life of Jesus, thereby bringing each person into closer relationship with him.

1. Make the Sign of the Cross and say the Apostles’ Creed
2. Say the Our Father
3. Say three Hail Marys
4. Say the Glory Be
5. Announce the first mystery and then say the Our Father
6. Say 10 Hail Marys while meditating on the mystery
7. Say the Glory Be (Optional: Say the O My Jesus prayer requested by Mary at Fatima)
8. Announce the second mystery; then say the Our Father and repeat these steps as you continue through the remaining mysteries.
9. Say the Hail, Holy Queen
10. Make the Sign of the Cross

Find the mysteries here: https://bit.ly/1hNNoC4

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Gretchen R. Crowe is editor-in-chief at Our Sunday Visitor and author of “Why the Rosary, Why Now?”
Rosary offers tweet-sized mysteries leading us to Christ

**Father Geoffrey A. Brooke Jr. CNS**

The rosary simultaneously manages to be one of the easiest and the most difficult prayers of the Catholic Church. Easy because it was developed to simplify the Gospels and contains the most commonly known prayers, the Hail Mary and Our Father. Difficult because it is so easy to get distracted while repeating the same prayers over and over.

One of the noted side effects to the new digital age is a rapidly shortening attention span. This makes it even more difficult for the younger generation to pray the rosary when they’ve grown up on a steady diet of social media and the now seemingly antiquated 24-hour news cycle.

Does this mean that the rosary should be given up, forgotten or abolished for the younger generations? In the words of the great sportscaster, Lee Corso, “Not so fast my friends!” Perhaps instead of abandoning the rosary, it can be looked at in a different light and seen as a great gift to the young faithful.

Two of my fondest memories growing up are going to ballgames and going on vacation. There is something that both have in common: crowds. For a small child, those crowds can be quite scary or intimidating. Difficult because it is so easy to get lost or distracted while waiting in lines or trying to find the best advice capable of resolving our problems.

When we pray the rosary, Mary does the exact same thing. She leads us not through the crowds at the stadium but rather through life. Like a good mother, she wants to keep us close and safe. As we navigate the various temptations, struggles and difficulties of life, Mary desires to lead us through the mess.

Life throws its twists and turns at all of us. We often feel like we have nowhere to go, no idea what to do. We in the younger generation will jump on YouTube, Pinterest or Facebook to find the best advice capable of resolving our problems.

All the time, there is Mary, holding out her hand, the rosary, for us to latch on and allow her to guide us in our time of need, fear or sorrow. Instead of trying to come up with all the answers ourselves, we can allow Mary to pull us through.

There is of course a great irony about young people complaining that the rosary is “too repetitious” and “boring” for their short attention spans. In a certain sense, the rosary was developed just for them, albeit some 800 or more years in advance.

The rosary grew out of a necessity for those who couldn’t read to learn the Gospel stories. It was, and still is, much easier to learn the 15 (now 20) mysteries of the rosary than to read the entire New Testament.

As a modern-day analogy, the mysteries become like “tweets” of the Gospel. On Twitter (now 280-) character messages reminding us of the essential mysteries of the life of Jesus. On Twitter there is a hashtag, #GIFtheGospel in which users post GIFs (compressed images) to humorously tell particular Gospel stories.

The reality is that the rosary has been doing this very work for centuries. When the mysteries of the rosary are seen as a “Twitter version” of the Gospel, then it becomes a great tool to help introduce young people to Jesus, not something to be abandoned.

Younger people today, myself included, might be tempted to think of the rosary as boring, repetitious or as an antiquated practice for older generations.

However, when contemplated with a fresh perspective, one can see how through the rosary, Mary reaches out to lead us on life’s journey. It’s not a journey to nowhere. Rather it’s filled with many digestible and short signposts, tweet-sized mysteries leading us to Christ.

Father Brooke is a priest of the Diocese of Jefferson City, Missouri. His website is http://padregregory.com and his social media handle is @PadreGeoffrey

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**Knights of Columbus, USAID collaborate to aid minorities in Middle East**

**Catholic News Service**

WASHINGTON. The Knights of Columbus and the U.S. Agency for International Development have agreed to collaborate in efforts to help religious minorities in the Middle East rebuild their communities destroyed by Islamic State militants.

A memorandum of understanding signed Oct. 12 by representatives of the two parties formally establishes an arrangement that such a collaboration can be given. According to the memorandum, the Knights produced a nearly 300-page report in 2016 detailing atrocities in the region. The report was instrumental in securing genocide designations in the region by successive U.S. secretaries of state since then.

“In the aftermath of ISIS’ campaign of genocide, Christian and Yazidi populations, and those of other religious minorities, in Iraq, Syria and elsewhere in the region are under extreme pressure,” Anderson said. “Our work with USAID is intended to help these populations survive and prosper in lands they have called home for centuries, and even millennia. We cannot allow ISIS to succeed in driving them out.”

The memorandum suggested that cooperation between USAID and the Knights of Columbus “will bring together funding not only from the U.S. government, but also from the vast network of American philanthropists to assist the survivors of genocide and persecuted communities to reestablish themselves after years of suffering and war.”

In 2014, when the Knights began raising funds for devastated Christians and other minority religious groups, the fraternal organization led a major campaign urging Congress and the State Department to declare Islamic State terrorism an act of genocide. In a decisive step, the Knights produced a nearly 300-page report detailing atrocities against Christians that was used to support Secretary of State John Kerry’s 2016 finding that genocide was indeed taking place.

The Knights partnered with the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops on a “Week of Awareness” for persecuted Christians in November 2017. “We are not asking for a privileged life. We are asking for the minimum,” said Archbishop Bashar Warda of Irbil, Iraq, at a news conference that was part of the weeklong observance. “The minimum would be a sense of security and stability. What we are really requesting is the minimum to live a dignified life.”

As part of the now-$25 million campaign, the Knights are urging Congress to provide funding for a campaign to aid the beleaguered Christians, $2 million was earmarked to the rebuilding of the predominantly Christian town of Karamles on the Nineveh Plain. Karamles had been overrun by ISIS, which destroyed homes and desecrated churches before the town was liberated in 2017.

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**Parishioners from St. Cecilia Church in Waynesboro, Holy Trinity Church in Hohenwald, and Christ the Redeemer Church in Centerville participated in a Rosary Rally to mark the 100th anniversary of the Miracle of the Sun at Fatima on the town square of Waynesboro on Saturday, Oct. 14, 2017.**

**Tennessee Register file photo by Andy Telli**
Nashville native makes solemn vows with Franciscan friars

Theresa Laurence

Brother David Dodd, a native of Nashville, recently professed solemn (final) vows with the Third Order Regular of St. Francis, Province of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus in Loretto, Pennsylvania. As a professed member of the Third Order Regular of St. Francis, Brother David has made lifelong vows of poverty, chastity and obedience.

"Whether you're ordained as priest is really a separate question," Brother David said. But it's a question he has been exploring for a long time, and one he is prepared to answer with a "yes." Brother David will be ordained to the diaconate on Oct. 27 and will then move toward being ordained as a priest at a future date.

For most of his life, he said, he has been listening and deciphering an answer to the questions, "What is God trying to say to me? What does God want me to do?"

Raised in Nashville in a strong Catholic family, questions like that were always at the forefront for young Will Dodd, who chose the name David when he was 10 and received his religious vows. The son of John and Kay Sappenfield Dodd, Brother David has three siblings: his youngest sister Hannah was a big influence on his vocation. Hannah, who has Down syndrome, "really brought a transformative aspect to our family," he said. Hannah, who is now an eighth grader at St. Ann School, "is really an inspiration to us. She inspires us to be better people."

Brother David also credits his many years in the Diocese of Nashville's Catholic schools for pushing him to answer the deeper questions of life. He attended St. Henry School and is a 2008 graduate of Pope John Paul II High School in Hendersonville.

From there he went on to attend Franciscan University in Steubenville, Ohio, which is where he first encountered the Franciscan friars and began to contemplate a vocation with them. When he visited the Franciscan community in Loretto, "I met the men in formation and they seemed like very normal people, and there was something very powerful about that. ... I felt at home with this group."

Brother David was especially drawn to the Franciscan friars' commitment to life in community. "It's a staple of our life that we live life together," he said. "To have that personal growth in community, that accountability to live a holy, Christian life, that was really attractive."

The friars of Third Order Regular are one of three religious orders founded by St. Francis of Assisi, along with the Order of Friars Minor and the Order of St. Clare (Poor Clares). According to their mission statement, members of the Third Order Regular are "animated by the spirit of Francis-can joy and open to constant renewal, endeavor to spend all their energy in advancing the kingdom of God in the world. Our way of life provides a fraternity where we are nourished and strengthened so that we may go out and be of service to the Church."

Members of Brother David’s particular province, the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus in Loretto, vow themselves to living in poverty, chastity and obedience in the presence of the Church. In their primary ministry of education, the friars are committed to "the ongoing process of conversion and strengthening our relationship with God and love of neighbor," Brother David said.

In his recent Apostolic year, Brother David worked in campus ministry at St. Francis University, supporting student leaders on various outreach projects, including serving at soup kitchens and praying at abortion clinics.

He now lives at the Third Order Regular House of Studies in Washington, D.C., and is completing his masters of divinity degree at the Catholic University of America while preparing for ordination to the priesthood.

Four Ryan seniors named National Merit semifinalists

Four seniors at Father Ryan High School have qualified as National Merit Scholarship semifinalists and five more have qualified as commended scholars.

Father Ryan has the largest number of semifinalists of any Catholic high school in Tennessee.

The semifinalists are John Bottei, twin sisters Kate and Meg Connor, and Ward Jaeger.

They are among the nearly 1.6 million juniors in 22,000 high schools last year that entered the 2019 National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test through their high scores on the PSAT, which served as an initial screen of program entrants.

The nationwide pool of semifinalists, representing less than 1 percent of U.S. high school seniors, includes the highest-scoring entrants in each state. The number of semifinalists in a state is proportional to the state’s percentage of the national total of graduating seniors.

These academically talented high school seniors have an opportunity to continue in the competition for some 7,500 National Merit Scholarships worth more than $32 million that will be offered next spring. To be considered for a Merit Scholarship award, semifinalists must fulfill several requirements to advance to the final level of the competition.

About 90 percent of the semifinalists are expected to attain finalist standing, and about half of the finalists will win a National Merit Scholarship, earning the Merit Scholar title.

To become a finalist, the semifinalist and his or her high school must submit a detailed scholarship application, in which they provide information about the semifinalist’s academic record, participation in school and community activities, demonstrated leadership abilities, employment, and honors and awards received.

A semifinalist must have an outstanding academic record throughout high school, be endorsed and recommended by a high school official, write an essay, and earn SAT scores that confirm the student’s earlier performance on the qualifying test.

Three types of National Merit Scholarships will be offered in the spring of 2018. Every finalist will compete for one of 2,500 National Merit $2,500 Scholarships that will be awarded on a state-representational basis.

About 1,000 corporate-sponsored Merit Scholarship awards will be provided by approximately 230 corporations and business organizations for finalists who meet their specified criteria, such as children of the grantor’s employees or residents of communities where sponsor plants or offices are located.

In addition, about 190 colleges and universities are expected to finance some 4,000 college-sponsored Merit Scholarship awards for finalists who will attend the sponsor institution.

The five Father Ryan seniors named commended scholars are Owen Chann-ness, Joseph Gallivan, Truman McDan- nel, T.J. Nicholson and Alex Saavedra.

In addition, Alex was named to College Board’s National Hispanic Recognition Program.
The Syro-Malabar Catholic community in the Nashville area once again marked the feast day of their patroness, St. Teresa of Kolkata, with Mass and a luncheon on Saturday, Oct. 6, at the Church of the Assumption in Nashville. Bishop Jacob Angadiath of the St. Thomas Syro-Malabar Diocese of Chicago celebrated the Mass, and Bishop J. Mark Spalding of Nashville, at left, gave the homily. The Syro-Malabar Rite is one of the Eastern Rites in communion with the Roman Catholic Church. It traces its roots to St. Thomas the Apostle, who first brought Christianity to India. Most of its members have ties to Kerala State in southwest India.

Photos by Andy Telli

Ann Mary Thomas and her daughter Joann pick up grains of rice in front of the image of St. Teresa of Kolkata as part of a traditional Indian blessing. Bishop Jacob and Bishop Spalding blessed family members of the sponsors of the day’s events.

Philip and Elsie Ollapally carry an image of St. Teresa of Kolkata as part of a procession along Seventh Avenue North in front of the Church of the Assumption.
Assumption celebrates German legacy at Oktoberfest

The Church of the Assumption in the Germantown neighborhood of Nashville hosted an Oktoberfest celebration on Saturday, Oct. 13, to raise funds for the maintenance of the historic church, built in the 1850s to serve the city’s German-speaking Catholic community. The parish launched Oktoberfest in the 1980s as a homecoming for people who grew up in Germantown and members of Assumption and its neighbor Monroe Street United Methodist Church. As the festival grew, it helped spark a revitalization of the neighborhood, which has become one of the city’s trendiest places to live. The day’s festivities included delicious German food, fun games for children, plenty of music, and arts and crafts vendors selling their wares.

John Drury, above, a drummer with the 17th Lancers Pipes and Drums of Nashville, performs. At right, James Cassman, 15, holds James Sanchez as they head down the slide at the festival.

Alex Shor, left photo, plays the accordion during a performance at the Oktoberfest celebration. Laura Sanders Christy, left, and Cynthia Bruer look over the T-shirts for sale at the event. Mrs. Christy graduated from the old Assumption School in 1953.