Holy Family Healthcare joins forces with Caring Network to help young mothers

By Nicole L.V. Mullis

The Van Domelen Center located at 1441 S. Westnedge in Kalamazoo is like a nesting doll. It appears as a single structure but inside the Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Kalamazoo operates several service organizations. Chief among them is Caring Network, which offers a wide range of services for young pregnant women and their children.

Last November, Caring Network teamed up with Holy Family Healthcare to expand those services. Now young mothers and their children can see a doctor on site.

“It seemed like a natural partnership,” CCDOK President Tim Lieser said, explaining both organizations use Catholic social teaching to provide whole-person care, often free of charge.

Caring Network has been helping young mothers for decades, offering health and parenting classes, as well as one-on-one parenting mentors. They provide and help find housing for young mothers. There are therapists and caseworkers, a 24-hour “Warm Line” for emotional support, a kitchen and laundry for client use, the Caring Closet, which provides free clothing and supplies.

When it came to medical services, however, all Caring Network could do was refer out to others.

“In the past, the prenatal health and well-being were truly from a psycho-educational approach because we did not have medical staff on board,” Lieser said. “Now, with Holy Family Healthcare, we have a presence in the building available not only to those who utilize the facility but to the whole community at large.”

Holy Family Healthcare started in 2012 with a group of physicians looking to return dignity to healthcare. Using the social teaching of the Catholic Church, their mission is to care for a patient’s body, mind, and soul. HFH has a medical office in Hartford, Michigan, at which 6,000 clients sought care last year. Their food pantry is the largest in Van Buren county, serving more than 50,000 meals last year.

“We don’t turn anyone away for care,” HFH President Deacon Don Bouchard, DO, said. “If they have a need, we address the need. Whether you have insurance or not, you are treated the same way. Nobody makes a ton of money but we go home feeling good.”

April 1, 2018 —EASTER SUNDAY
MESSAGE to THE FAITHFUL OF THE DIOCESE OF KALAMAZOO
BISHOP PAUL J. BRADLEY

“This is the Day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it! Alleluia!”

Dear Sisters and Brothers in the Risen Christ,

A blessed, joyful and Happy Easter to one and all! Easter celebrates the most extraordinary event in the history of the world. Jesus, Who taught the world the Good News about His Father’s Love and limitless Mercy; Jesus, Who was mercilessly tortured, scorned, crucified and murdered by nailing Him to a Cross; Jesus, Who was dead and buried in a tomb for three days….This same Jesus has been raised from the dead, not just back to life, but to a new and glorious life. Jesus’ Resurrection has conquered forever the lasting power of sin and death, and welcomes us who share in His life through Baptism and the life of the Church, to share in that “new life” forever. Easter is the birth of Hope, and we, sisters and brothers in the Risen Christ, are called to live this “Day the Lord has made” with true joy and gladness, and to live in the hope of eternal life.

God bless you, your families, our Diocese and the world as we celebrate the joy of Easter all the days of our lives.
from the editor
By Victoria Cessna

When I was five I fancied myself a trapeze artist. While honing my skill I fell upside down on my head while balancing on my tricycle requiring a trip to the doctor and some stitches. Then while in grade school I attempted to give a presentation at the 4H fair on how to make brownies and promptly forgot each step of the recipe — standing on the stage mumbling to the crowd. In High School I worked up enough courage to ask my secret “crush” to the “Turnabout (some call Sadie Hawkins) Dance. He promptly turned me down and then sought my advice on asking out a mutual acquaintance.

Being daring had not born much fruit in my life — at least that’s what was floating around in my mind when I was deciding on my choice of college. Suddenly all those “daring” moments like the ones that resulted in stitches, stage fright and a broken heart, came flooding back. I really wanted to attend a big university in a big metropolitan city. I fell in love with everything about the college when I visited. However, all my friends, and I mean all of them except for me, were continuing their education at the nearby state university. Fine school, great academics. But as I wrestled with my decision, I couldn’t shake the notion that while going to college with my friends would be safe and comfortable, I was being called to something different.

It was scary.

Each year during the Easter season I find myself musing on how I might empathize with the Apostles. They were scared, hiding in the Upper Room, despondent that their friend, Rabbi, Teacher had left. Each year during the Easter season I find myself musing on how much I empathize with the Apostles. They were scared, hiding in the Upper Room, despondent that their friend, Rabbi, Teacher had left — not quite ready to believe that Jesus had fulfilled his role as the Messiah. They were playing it safe, comfortable. For while losing their beloved Jesus was devastating what would it mean if the prophecy of His Resurrection was fulfilled? How could they ever go back to their lives? They couldn’t. They didn’t. As scary as it was, these ordinary men eventually left the Upper Room and began to spread the Gospel news around the world. And today we enjoy the fruit of the Messiah. They were playing it safe, comfortable. For while losing their beloved Jesus was devastating what would it mean if the prophecy of His Resurrection was fulfilled? How could they ever go back to their lives? They couldn’t. They didn’t. As scary as it was, these ordinary men eventually left the Upper Room and began to spread the Gospel news around the world. And today we enjoy the fruit of the Messiah.

So what’s your version of the Upper Room? Where in your faith life are you playing it safe, hiding even, from your true calling? Easter marks the communications of the Bishop of Kalamazoo. Opinion columns, features and letters to the editor that appear in this publication do not necessarily reflect the opinions held by The Good News or the Diocese of Kalamazoo.

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Mission Statement of The Good News: The Good News is the official newspaper of the Catholic Diocese of Kalamazoo. The Diocese of Kalamazoo is the publisher and president. The Good News is an extension in the print media of the teachings and outreach of the Bishop. Therefore, it must always and at all times present Catholic teaching in an orthodox, authentic and balanced manner. Its mission and goals proceed from this fundamental reality.

The mission of The Good News, therefore, is to enable its readers to grow in their Catholic faith, to develop their faith in mutu-2 | THE GOOD NEWS | APRIL 2018

age of Catholics attending weekly Mass. In addition the Diocese experienced a sharp decline this year in the number of people entering the Church during the Easter Vigil services.

Bishop outlined the three main diocesan priorities for the next three to five years which are: Fostering Priestly Vocations, Accompanying Families to Holiness and Activating Missionary Disciples. The Diocese will be implementing specific programs and initiatives under those respective categories [see related sidebar, Diocesan Priorities and Goals].

Discussions varied from Deeney to Deeney. A St. Philip Parishioner called the statistics “sobering” while others offered input into ways to help increase vocations from encouraging participation in altar serving to revitalizing a traveling crucifix program to invite dedicated prayer for an increase in vocations. Other comments included the idea for more family catechesis as well as more ways to engage the youth in the life of the Church.

In closing, Bishop Bradley invited parishioners to live “Acts 29” referring to a quote from Archbishop Allen H. Vigneron from his recent pastoral letter, “Unleash the Gospel.” The meaning behind the quote referencing that in the Bible Acts of the Apostles ends with the 28th chapter and we’re called today to live “Acts 29.” “And so I urge all of you to do what it takes to move your faith into a new springtime,” said Bishop Bradley. As Jesus said, “The harvest is rich, but the laborers are few.” We are those laborers, and we need to attract others to share in this great work of spreading the Good News of Jesus.”

Catholic Conference urges Senate passage of key sexual abuse prevention legislation

(Lansing) – Michigan Catholic Conference, the official public policy voice of the Catholic Church in this state, is calling on the Michigan Senate to pass key components of a legislative package to address child sexual abuse in society:

“The abuse of children, especially sexual abuse, is a stain on our nation’s collective soul. It is heartbreaking and disgusting, yet regrettably, it is present in every facet of society: families, schools, civic organizations, correctional facilities for juveniles, and even churches. Within this reality, and in the midst of an understandably sensitive environment, good public policy must be made as it affects citizens of this state both now and into the future.

“In order to address the scourge of sexual abuse in our society, Michigan Catholic Conference encourages the Michigan Senate to pass Senate Bills 871, 873, 874, 878, 879 and 880. These measures, which would prospectively expand the criminal statute of limitations, expand the pool of mandatory reporters, enhance penalties against repeat abusers, and lengthen the sentences for those who deal in the heinous practice of child pornography, will help to create safe environments while protecting children today and years to come.

“In recent days, several prominent organizations that represent businesses, local governments, civic organizations, public schools, and institutions of higher education have urged the Michigan Senate to evaluate in a more deliberative manner legislation that would retroactively reopen the civil statute of limitations.

Bishop visits all deaneries

Last month Bishop Bradley made a Pastoral visit to each of the five deaneries around the Diocese for an evening presentation and discussion. During his talk, “A Springtime of Faith: Collaborating for a Shared Vision for the Future,” Bishop Bradley presented a brief update on the Diocesan Pastoral Plan, offered a catechesis on the faithfill’s role as baptized members of the Church, shared the Diocese’s three strategic priorities and invited discussion and ideas for moving the mission forward.

In 2016 the newly implemented Diocesan Pastoral Plan created 28 (now 26) Parish Collaboratives from the 59 Parishes and Missions. Approximately 80 percent of priests transitioned to new assignments. Bishop Bradley reaffirmed the Diocesan Pastoral Plan’s primary goal which was to provide the best pastoral care for the Church. In addition the goals were to better utilize the talents of the priests, allow Parishes to retain individual identities and stay open and also allow for an avenue for more resource sharing.

In addition Bishop Bradley shared some challenging statistics unique to the Diocese including the rise in the number of people in Southwest Michigan who identify as not having any religious affiliation as well as the declining percent...
The Bishop’s Perspective
Making all things new, starting with me

“This is the Day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it! Alleluia!”

That beautiful statement is the refrain from the Responsorial Psalm for Easter Sunday. It is a part of Psalm 118, a powerful (and lengthy) Psalm of Thanksgiving, and one with which we are more than likely very familiar, with verses such as “Give thanks to the Lord for He is good, for His mercy endures forever. . . . By the Lord has this been done; it is wonderful in our eyes.” The Psalm, proclaimed by King David many generations before Jesus came into the world, anticipated that great “Day of the Lord” when all things — all creation — all humanity would be made new.

That event that King David could only imagine is what we celebrate on Easter Sunday. This Solemn Feast is so primary and central to our faith that the Church celebrates Easter for an entire Octave — eight days; throughout Easter week, each day is treated as though it’s still Easter Day. And even beyond that, the Church celebrates the Easter Season for 50 days, 10 days longer than the Lenten Season. And throughout the Easter Season, we continue to proclaim that Easter is “the Day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it! Alleluia!”

Easter is a “new Day.” That means more than a 24-hour day, or a week-long day, or even a season of 50 days-day. Easter is a “new Day” that has opened us to a new era — and calls us to live with mind and heart renewed. That is why the Season of Easter focuses so much of our attention on calling us to a conversion of mind and heart. To not get us through those 40 days, but then revert back to the way we acted before Lent began. No, Lent is to prepare us to be consciously aware of those areas in our lives where we have become much too comfortable with sinful practices and attitudes; then, once aware and contrite, with a renewed heart and clarity of intention, to be committed to allow God’s graces to help us live in the “newness of life” that Jesus’ Victory over sin and death, through His Resurrection, accomplished on Easter.

Easter not only transformed all of history, but it clearly transformed Jesus Himself into a Glorified Jesus. The Easter Sunday Gospel accounts tell us over and over again that those who first encountered the risen Jesus did not recognize Him: Mary Magdalene, who at first thought he was the gardener, only recognized Jesus when He gently called her by name as He had done so often before Easter; the Disciples on the Road to Emmaus didn’t recognize Him for hours as the risen Jesus walked along with them talking about why they were so despondent, and only recognized Jesus “in the breaking of the bread”; and the Apostles themselves, when Jesus passed through the locked doors of where they were hiding, thought at first He was a ghost. Easter is about “newness” and “life”; Easter is about radical change from former ways of living to new ways of living: Easter is about living in hope rather than fear. Easter is a day that the Lord Himself has made; Easter calls us to “rejoice and be glad in it!”

So, how will we allow Easter to change us, to transform us, to make us renewed in Jesus’ Resurrection? Lenten resolutions and good practices are not intended to be put aside now that Easter is here. Those resolutions to pray more regularly and with greater devotion; to fast not only to sacrifice and curb our physical appetites, but also to curb our vices, our bad habits, our sinful attitudes, and our selfish ways; and those resolutions to be more generous, compassionate, thoughtful and Christ-like in our acts of mercy to those in need — if all we do now that Lent is over is go back to praying less, being thoughtless about what we say, do and think, and be unaware of others’ needs, we have sorely missed the point. Lent is to prepare us to be “new people” — to be “Easter people” — to be people that perhaps others around us may have trouble recognizing because we are changed, renewed, more zealous, and consciously and purposely giving witness to our faith in the risen Jesus.

Easter should be prompting us to be more mindful, both of those people with whom we live and associate every day, including those with whom we worship every week, but also — and perhaps even more so — with those who are strangers to us, but who really and truly are our sisters and brothers in Christ whom we have yet to recognize. Easter should be leading us to be much more intentional about reaching out to the poor, the marginalized, the vulnerable and those who the world ignores; Easter should be making us more committed to practicing the spiritual and corporal works of mercy, not just as Lenten sacrifice, but as an Easter act of joy, so that when we give food to the hungry and drink to the thirsty and clothe the naked and give shelter to the homeless, we are doing so because we see the risen Jesus in them. Easter makes all things new, including each and every one of us. May each of us make this our daily prayer: “Easter is the Day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it! Alleluia!”

May God bless you, now and always!

La Perspectiva del Obispo
Haciendo todo nuevo, empezando por mí

“Este es el día que ha hecho el Señor, gozemos y alegrémonos en él!” Aleluya!

Esa hermosa declaración es el estribillo del Salmo Responsorial para el Domingo de Pascua. Es una parte del Salmo 118, un poderoso (y extenso) Salmo de Acción de Gracias, y uno con el que estamos probablemente muy familiarizados, con versos como “Den gracias al Señor porque Él es bueno, porque Su misericordia perdura para siempre”. . . . Por el Señor ha hecho esto; es maravilloso a nuestros ojos”. El Salmo, proclamado por el Rey David muchas generaciones antes de que Jesús viniera al mundo, anticipó ese gran “Día del Señor” cuando todas las cosas — toda la creación — toda la humanidad sería hecha nueva.

Ese evento que el Rey David solo pudo imaginar es lo que celebra el Domingo de Pascua. Esta fiestasolemne es tan primaria y central para nuestra fe que la Iglesia celebra la Pascua por toda una octava — ocho días; durante la semana de Pascua, cada día es tratado como si todavía fuera el día de Pascua. Y aún más allá de eso, la Iglesia celebra el tiempo Pascual por 50 días, 10 días más que la temporada de Cuaremas. Y a lo largo del tiempo pascual, continuamos proclamando que la Pascua es “el día que ha hecho el Señor, gozemos y alegrémonos en él!” Aleluya.

La Pascua es un “nuevo día”. Eso significa más que un día de 24 horas, o un día de una semana de largo, o incluso un tiempo de 50 días-día. La Pascua es un “nuevo día” que nos ha abierto a una nueva era — y nos llama a vivir con la mente y el corazón renovados. Es por eso por lo que el Tiempo de Cuaremas enfoca gran parte de nuestra atención en llamarnos a una conversación de mente y corazón, no para llevarnos a través de esos 40 días, y luego volver a la forma en que actuábamos antes de que comenzara la Cuaremas. No, la Cuaremas es para que nos preparemos para ser conscientes de las áreas en nuestras vidas en las que nos hemos sentido demasiado cómodos con las prácticas y actitudes pecaminosas; luego, una vez consciente y contritos, con un corazón renovado y claridad de incansables, comprometidos a permitir que las gracias de Dios nos ayuden a vivir en lo “novedoso de la vida” que la Victoria de Jesús sobre el pecado y la muerte, logró a través de su Resurrección, en la Pascua.

La Pascua no solo transformó toda la historia, sino que transformó claramente a Jesús mismo en un Jesús glorificado. Los relatos de los Evangelios del Domingo de Pascua nos dicen una y otra vez que aquellos que se encontraron por primera vez con Jesús Resucitado no lo reconocieron: María Magdalena, quien al principio pensó que él era el jardinero, solo reconoció a Jesús cuando suavemente la llamó por su nombre como lo había hecho tantas veces antes de la Pascua; los Discípulos en el camino a Emaús no lo reconocieron durante horas mientras el Jesús resucitado los acompañaba hablando de por qué estaban tan desanimados, y solo reconocían a Jesús “en la fracción del pan”; y los mismos apóstoles, cuando Jesús pasó por las puertas cerradas de donde se escondían, al principio pensaron que era un fantasma. La Pascua se trata de “novedad” y “vida”; La Pascua se trata de un cambio radical de las antiguas formas de vida a las nuevas formas de vida; La Pascua se trata de vivir en la esperanza en lugar del miedo. La Pascua es un día que el Señor mismo ha hecho; La Pascua nos llama a “regocijarnos y alegrarnos por ello”.

Entonces, ¿cómo permitiremos que la Pascua nos cambie, nos transforme, nos haga renovados en la Resurrección de Jesús? Las resoluciones cuaremasales y las buenas prácticas no están destinadas a dejarse de lado ahora que la Pascua llega. Esas resoluciones de orar más regularmente y con mayor devoción, ayunar no solo para sacrificio y controlar nuestros apetitos físicos, sino también para que consumamos nuestras malas costumbres, nuestras actitudes pecaminosas y nuestros caminos egoístas; y esas resoluciones para ser más generosos, compasivos, reflexivos y semejantes a Cristo en nuestros actos de misericordia hacia los necesitados — Si todo lo que hacemos ahora que se acaba la Cuaremas es volver a olvidar, menos pensar en lo que decímos, hacer y pensar, y desconocer las necesidades de los demás, no hemos entendido nada. La Cuaremas es para prepararnos para ser “personas nuevas” — para ser “personas de Pascua” — para ser personas que tal vez los que nos rodean puedan tener problemas para reconocernos porque hemos cambiado, nos hemos renovado, estamos más entusiastas y conscientes y deliberadamente dando testimonio de nuestra fe en el Jesús resucitado.

La Pascua debería estar incitándonos a ser más conscientes, con ambas, las personas con las que vivimos y nos asociamos todos los días, incluso a aquellos con quienes adoramos todas las semanas, pero también, y quizás aún más, con aquellos que son extraños para nosotros, pero que de verdad y verdaderamente son nuestras hermanas y hermanos en Cristo a quienes aún debemos reconocer. La Pascua debería llevarnos a ser mucho más intencionales para llegar a los pobres, a los marginados, a los vulnerables y aquellos a quie- nes el mundo ignora; La Pascua debería hacernos más comprometidos con la práctica de las obras de misericordia espirituales y corporales, no solo como sacrificio de Cuaremas, sino como un acto de alegría pascual, de modo que cuando damos comida a los hambrientos y de beber a los sedientos y vestimos a los desnudos y cobijamos a los desamparados, lo estamos haciendo porque vemos a Jesús resucitado en ellos.

La Pascua hace que todo sea nuevo, incluidos todos y cada uno de nosotros. Que cada uno de nosotros hagamos de esta nuestra oración diaria: “¡La Pascua es el día que ha hecho el Señor, gozemos y alegrémonos en él!” Aleluya.

¡Que Dios los bendiga, ahora y siempre!

“Waiting in Joyful Hope”

THE GOOD NEWS | 3
Diaconate Formation Program prepares men for Easter year-round

By Rev. German Perez Diaz

In a youth group meeting in my parish, I was speaking to the young people on the core and meaning of Easter, and how our whole Christian life is an ongoing Easter. I mentioned how the service that the Pope, bishops, priests, permanent deacons, religious men and women, and all baptized people provide to parishes, communities, and to the whole world is carried out in the name of the risen Lord and His Church. A young man raised his hand and asked me, “What is a permanent deacon?” He knew about the Pope, the bishops, the priests, and religious brothers or sisters, but he had never heard about permanent deacons. I explained to him that a permanent deacon is a married or single man who is called by God to serve Him and His Church. And I continued saying that after he accepts God’s call and goes for some years of preparation responding and discerning to “the call,” the bishop orients him as a permanent deacon by conferring on him the Sacrament of Holy Orders; after the six years of formation required by our Diocese.

I don’t know if he understood my explanation, but he went on immediately to ask, “And how do you select them?” At that moment, it came to my mind the passage from the first letter of Paul to Timothy in which St. Paul affirms, “Deacons must be dignified, not addicted to drink, not greedy for sordid gain, holding fast to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. Moreover, they should be tested first; then, if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons” (1 Tim. 3:8-10).

Immediately a young girl asked, “And how many men have you found with those characteristics in our diocese; are there any?” The other young people who were present in the group laughed. It was funny to them to hear her question that contained a certain tint of doubt about the possibility of finding kind of men in our midst nowadays. I went on to respond with certainty that there are good men with those characteristics in our Diocese. I told her that in the Diaconate Formation Program in our Diocese there are twenty men who are in the inquiry year. There are fourteen men from the English speaking community and six men from the Spanish speaking community. I shared with them that there is one man in the program from each of the following parishes: Immaculate Conception, Hartford; St. Basil, South Haven; San Felipe de Jesús, Fennville; St. Stanislaus, Dorr; St. Rose of Lima, Hastings; St. Ann, Augusta; St. Catherine of Siena, Portage; Sacred Heart, Allegan; St. Mary, Kalamazoo; SS. Cyril and Methodius, Wayland; and Our Lady Queen of Peace, Bridgman. There are two men from each of these parishes: St. Joseph, Battle Creek and St. Joseph, St. Joseph. And there are five men from Holy Angels in Sturgis. They couldn’t believe what they were hearing. It was too good to be true.

All the members of the group were interested in knowing more about the permanent deacons. “What does a permanent deacon do?” another teen asked. I succinctly responded by saying that a deacon baptizes, is a witness at the exchange of marital vows and blessings marriages, distributes Holy Communion, officiates at funerals and burials, proclaims and preaches the Gospel, and as a servant, he does works of charity in the community, among other responsibilities.

In the group, there was a moment of silence. Then, the young man who asked me at the beginning what a permanent deacon was, stated, “So if that is what a permanent deacon does, then the program prepares men for Easter and the proclamation of Easter.” I could not help but repeat vehemently the wise affirmation of the young man, “Yes, the Diaconate Formation Program prepares men for Easter and the proclamation of Easter.” Certainly, at least one of them understood clearly the life and mission of a permanent deacon. And the meeting was over.

Rev. German Perez is the Pastor of Immaculate Conception Parish, Hartford and Sacred Heart Parish, Bangor. He is also the Director of Diaconate Formation for the Diocese of Kalamazoo.

Parish group commits to offering spiritual development events

Five years ago a group of St. Joseph Parishioners, St. Joseph, came together to help plan the parish’s annual mission. The event was so well received by parishioners as a great opportunity for spiritual development that then-pastor, Rev. Jim Morris, formed the Journey in Faith (JIF) team. To date the group has been responsible for hosting a number of events and programs from a live performance of the Gospel of Mark to the recent “Art as a Doorway to Prayer Retreat” conducted by Fr. Peter Fennelly. Next month they are hosting their first-ever ticketed event which they hope will attract not just area Catholics but also the community.

“Tolton: From Slave to Priest” is a live production performed by actor Jim Coleman and directed by Leonardo Defilippis of Saint Luke Productions. Next month the production will be hosted by the JIF team on April 22nd at Lakeshore High School Auditorium. The show chronicles the life of Fr. Augustus Tolton, the first African American priest in the United States. Fr. Tolton’s cause for sainthood is being led by the Archdiocese of Chicago.

“When I first heard about the Tolton production, I wondered how I could bring it to the Diocese,” said Very Rev. Robert Creagan, Pastor, St. Joseph Parish, St. Joseph. “It seemed like the perfect fit for the JIF team and its mission to offer parishioners and the community an opportunity to grow in their spiritual development and formation.”

“Fr. Tolton’s heroic virtues are timely,” added Fr. Creagan. “Here is a story of reconciliation and healing. I hope that his story can promote evangelization and confront racial injustice.”

The parish-sponsored event marks the first ticketed event it has hosted and if successful they hope to expand to more offerings.

According to facilitator Julie Schmidt often-times the key to a successful event is the most obvious. “You have to personally invite others to attend the events,” she said. “Because our JIF events are open to everyone it is such a simple way to evangelize.” The tactic seems to be working, this year Schmidt notes that their Lenten Luncheons which in years past drew around 30 people almost tripled in size with close to 90 participants.

Admission for “Tolton: From Slave to Priest” is $5. For additional information contact St. Joseph Parish, 269-983-1575. For more information on the production, visit: www.toltondrama.com.

Cover story continued — Holy Family Healthcare

HFH has a mobile office to facilitate care outside of Hartford. One organization they frequently help is CCDOK. Now, with the Caring Network partnership, they have a permanent CCDOK presence.

“It is a natural marriage for what Holy Family Healthcare does,” Dcn. Bouchard said. “We’re not adding a ‘medical piece’ to Caring Network; we are bringing a service to the community. It’s the works of mercy.”

Medical services are offered Tuesday afternoons, but they are looking to add Thursdays. HFH is in the process of hiring a certified nurse midwife, which will enable Caring Network to offer even more women services. A one-stop resource is a gift to these mothers, many of whom struggle just to get to the Van Domen Center.

“We know if we can erase some of those barriers we are increasing our clients’ perception of why they would want to engage,” Lieser said. “They aren’t getting a handout, they are making life choices for themselves.” Both Dcn. Bouchard and Lieszers believe breaking generational poverty begins with dignity.

“Our goal is to engage them through patience, listening, and treating them with dignity in hopes they open the door from getting a fish to learning how to fish,” Lieser said.

HFH and Caring Network welcome donations of time, treasure, and talent. Consult their websites at http://ccdok.org or www.holyfamilyhealthcare.org for more information.

Pope Francis to visit Ireland for World Meeting of Families

The World Meeting of Families will take place in Dublin from August 21-26, 2018, under the theme “The Gospel of the Family: Joy for the World”. The Pope will arrive in Dublin on Saturday, 25 August, and will take part in the “Festival of Families” in Croke Park stadium which will feature personal stories of faith shared by families, each representing the five continents. On Sunday 26 August, he will preside at Holy Mass in the Phoenix Park which will close the five day event.

The gathering will include a three-day Pastoral Congress consisting of a program of workshops, talks and discussions centered on the theme: “The Gospel of the Family: Joy for the World”. The Congress will also offer a program for young people to include faith and fun activities for children.
Home heating volunteers keep people warm this winter

“Volunteers help bring our Mission to life,” says Tim Lieser, President/CEO at Catholic Charities Diocese of Kalamazoo. In 2017, approximately 100 volunteers provided more than 9,650 hours of services to support CCDOK clients. They shared their unique talents and time to provide help, create hope and cultivate a stronger community — reaching more than 10,000 individuals. “Our staff and volunteers know that service to our neighbors in need is the right thing to do,” he adds. “To serve all, with an open, compassionate heart.”

The Home Heating Volunteers at CCDOK (pictured) help the agency cultivate a stronger community and were nominated by Catholic Charities for the Kalamazoo-area STAR Volunteer Award, Good Neighbor Category. During the months of January-March, the seven-member team of volunteers dispersed $79,590 to 322 households (531 adults and 410 children) helping these families stay warm by eliminating a cut-off or termination of heating services by a vendor.

“The Diocesan Home Heating program is a powerful example of people donating needed dollars and volunteers working behind the scenes to make a difference in someone’s life!” says Hope Marotti, who volunteers her time to coordinate the program.

To learn more about how you can donate or volunteer at Catholic Charities, visit www.ccdok.org or call Jeannine Boehm at 269-381-9800.

It’s official: Pope Paul VI and Archbishop Oscar Romero will be canonized

Vatican City (CNA/EWTN News) — The Vatican has announced that Pope Francis has recognized a second miracle allowing five people on the path to sainthood to be canonized, the most prominent being Bl. Pope Paul VI and Bl. Oscar Romero.

With a second miracle approved, the path has been cleared for a date to be set for the canonization of each of the five candidates, allowing them to officially be declared a saint.

Though no date has yet been announced, both Paul VI and Oscar Romero are expected to be canonized together during the Synod of Bishops in October.

Born as Giovanni Montini in 1897 in the town of Concesio in the Lombardy region of Italy, the future Pope Paul VI was ordained a priest at the age of 22. He served as Archbishop of Milan prior to his election as Bishop of Rome in 1963.

As pope, he oversaw much of the Second Vatican Council, which had been opened by Pope St. John XXIII, and in 1969 promulgated a new Roman Missal. He died in 1978, and was beatified by Pope Francis Oct. 19, 2014.

Pope Francis himself unofficially confirmed the news of Paul VI’s canonization during his annual meeting with the priests of Rome Feb. 17. However, the Vatican’s announcement makes it official.

Apart from his role in the council, Paul VI is most widely known for his landmark encyclical Humanae Vitae, which was published in 1968 and reaffirmed the Church’s teaching against contraception in wake of the sexual revolution. This year marks the 50th anniversary of the historic encyclical, making the canonization of the author all the more relevant.

Both miracles attributed to Paul VI’s intercession involve the healing of an unborn child.

Bl. Oscar Romero, who was beatified by Pope Francis May 23, 2015, in El Salvador, was the archbishop of the nation’s capital city of San Salvador. He was shot while celebrating Mass March 24, 1980, during the birth of a civil war between leftist guerrilla forces and the dictatorial government of the right.

An outspoken critic of the violence and injustices being committed at the time, Romero was declared a martyr who was killed in hatred of the faith for his vocal defense of human rights.

The Other Six Days

Walking in Circles

Jane: The rain is pouring down in the drenching way that makes puddles on the lawn, rivulets off the roofs, and ponds out of the street. I push open the church door and tumble with my inadequate umbrella. My friend, Shirley, is behind me. “We’re going for a walk. Would you like to join us?”

“A walk? Now?”

She shrugs at the curtain of water in front of us. “This month, Karen and I started a walking group after the Tuesday morning Mass. The first week it was thirteen degrees and the wind nearly gave us frostbite. Last time, the parking lot was like an ice rink.”

I raise my eyebrows. “And you’re not discouraged?” I look past Shirley to Karen, and she has an identical cheerfully resigned expression on her face. I am intrigued by their perseverance. “Well,” I say. “All right then—I’m in.”

I learned that Karen wrote a book of novenas for parents of adult children, and that Shirley is still recovering from a hip replacement. I also learn to listen to the Holy Spirit even when the weather isn’t ideal.

That was a month ago. We are now a flexible group of five. We talk about faith, wave to the neighbors, and pick up trash occasionally. I am so happy that my new friends persevered.

Ellen: My job keeps me tied to a desk most of the day, within reach of a computer and phone, both of which remind me of things that are yet to be done. I’ve tried to make my high walled cubicle homey and comfortable, having calculated that I spend more hours in this small space than I do in my actual home. The day can fly past if I’m not careful. It’s not unusual for me to look up and see I am overdue for lunch.

A welcome distraction is when one of my coworkers pops their head around the corner. “Hey, wanna take a walk?”

Unlike the intrepid church ladies, we choose our route differently depending on the weather. A quick route takes us around the perimeter of the 7th floor, satisfying both our stiff legs and our curiosity as to what our coworkers are up to. A longer indoor route will lead us down to the 1st floor, but this is dangerous as it will also take us by the deli offering various snacks for sale. The longest route is the one that takes us around the outside of the building and circles the man-made pond at the center of our business park.

Regardless of the path we choose, the conversation is the same: hashing over little annoyances, catching up on each other’s adventures, and taking a moment to stretch our bodies and our minds. On the bad days, we stand by the pond and envy the happy ducks, or buy a chocolate bar downstairs.

The idiom “to go in circles” is associated with futility or pointless-ness, but I think we need to rescue the act from that association. When we walk in our circles we’re aware that we’ll arrive back at the start point, but it gives us a moment of space, a chance to disconnect.

In Memoriam

Sr. Maria Kassab, CSJ, who was related to St. Norman Kassab and St. Charbel Kassab, canonized saints from Lebanon, passed away last month. Mass of Christian Burial were held at Holy Family Chapel, Nazareth. Sarah Kassab was born in Houtzdale, Penn., on June 17, 1923, the daughter of Frank and Mary (Bisher) Kassab. She was a member of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in Detroit at the time of her entrance into the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Nazareth on January 3, 1946 and pronounced first vows on January 3, 1948 and final vows on January 3, 1951.

Sr. Maria earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in English from Nazareth College and was certified as a catechist in the Dioceses of Lansing and Detroit. She ministered for thirty-nine years as a teacher in several schools including St. Margaret Mary, Mary; St. John, Davison; St. Christopher, Marysville and St. Joan of Arc, St. Clair Shores. Upon leaving the classroom, for two years Sister Maria was a member of the House of Prayer in Pinckney, Mich. In 1986 Sister Maria moved to Florida to be a companion to the sick and care for her two sisters Anna and Mary, who were both in poor health. After giving many years of loving, compassionate care to the sick and elderly, Sr. Maria returned to Nazareth in 2005 because of failing health.

The Good News

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Our Journey Home: Reflections

Some are called at an early age; some after life’s many ups and downs. Regardless of their path to the Church, we celebrate this Easter season in a special way with those who entered the Church through the sacraments of Baptism, the Eucharist and Confirmation. The Good News talked with four such individuals in the weeks leading up to Easter.

Allen Acker – St. Catherine of Siena Parish, Portage
Danniel and Alaina Jaye – St. Charles Borromeo Parish, Coldwater
Brandon Culbertson – St. Monica Parish, Kalamazoo

Brief Background of your road to RCIA/Catholic Church:

Allen: I reconnected with a childhood friend. We started dating and I began going to church with her and her sons. I found myself really enjoying going to church and when we married in September 2016 I decided I wanted to learn more.

Brandon: I believed in the Lord Jesus around the age of five but by the age of 13 I fell into the trap of wanting to be loved by the world. I became addicted to drugs early in life and it led me to a road of destruction and eventually prison for a term of four years. Before being sentenced to prison I went to my knees in prayer to God. I admitted to Him my failures and sins and completely surrendered my life into His hands holding nothing back.

When did you first feel called to the Catholic Church?

Allen: After going to church and listening to Mass and finding myself really understanding how much God is in our lives every single day and how it affected me and how going to church made me feel God is with me all the time.

When did you first feel called to the Catholic Church?

Brandon: While in prison, I asked the guard for a bible and finally received one. It was a Catholic bible. I asked God to give me wisdom, to answer all my questions and He did. All of them. I continued to ask, seek, knock, and He continued to give, love and strengthen.

What are you most looking forward to?

Allen: Being baptized and receiving the Eucharist

Danniel: The blessed sacrament of the Eucharist. I cannot wait!

Alaina: I am most excited about being closer to God.

Brandon: I am finally entering in to His One Church and have been experiencing His infinite love and grace like never before. The way He intended. And I’ve only just begun.

What is your favorite part about the Catholic Church?

Allen: Going to church with my wife and stepsons as a family, getting to see all the amazing friends that I’ve gotten to know going to church, building community and friendships through bible studies, the golf league, retreats, etc.

Brandon: I am going to try to pray every day when I wake up and when I go to sleep,” Brooke Dzwik said. “I am also going to bug my parents more to go to Mass every Sunday. After Confirmation, it is my journey, so I’m going to try to make the most of it and learn the most I can.”

Confirmation offers an invitation to new life in the Church

By Nicole L.V. Mullis

Jesus said in Matthew 9:37-38 “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”

This year, the Diocese of Kalamazoo will add more than 1,000 workers into the harvest field through the sacrament of Confirmation. For many young confirmandi, this is the first adult decision they will make, the culmination of their grade-school catechism, a multitude of service hours, and countless Masses.

It may feel like a graduation, but it is an invitation.

“A graduation is not an end even in high school and college, rather it is a beginning to a new life,” said George Dragan, Diocese of Kalamazoo’s associate director for Catechesis and Youth Ministry. “It is no different with our Catholic faith. We continue to let Christ enrich us and strengthen us to be Christ for others.”

The Confirmation ceremony is full of symbols emphasizing this call. There is the lighting of the baptismal candle, representing our baptismal promises, and the anointing with chrism, representing our union with Christ. “This idea of anointing is we become Christ,” Dragan said. “We join in his apostolic mission. It is a lived life, not something we put on the shelf when we leave Confirmation.”

This calling can be daunting for the newly confirmed, but Dragan reminds all confirmandi that the sacraments and the Mass are there to deepen our faith and reveal our vocation. Being involved in church groups, becoming lectors and lay ministers, and participating in church outreach programs are some ways the newly confirmed can continue their spiritual education.

The most important piece may be the first thing we ever learned as God’s children — to pray.

“Maintain a prayer life,” Dragan said. “I don’t just mean the formal prayers; I mean talking to God as you would a friend or a parent, sharing intimate details of your life not because God doesn’t already know it but because he wants us to. If we want to be truly successful in life, we can’t throw God out of the picture.”

Many of our young confirmandi are already thinking about how to deepen their faith life after graduation.

“I will continue to go on retreat, serve on mission trips, and be involved in my local church community through assisting with Catechism, serving at Mass, and serving the kids through our summer program,” Madalyn Perry said.

“I am going to try to pray every day when I wake up and when I go to sleep,” Brooke Dzwik said. “I am also going to bug my parents more to go to Mass every Sunday. After Confirmation, it is my journey, so I’m going to try to make the most of it and learn the most I can.”

“After Confirmation, I plan on growing my faith by continuing to attend Sunday mass, praying more, and reading more of the Bible and the Catechism,” Jacob Thome said.

“I will apply the Fruits of Gifts of the Holy Spirit to my lifestyle and stand up for my faith,” Chris Adam said. “I will listen to God’s calling and what he would like me to do in the Church.”

“I intend to keep growing in my faith after Confirmation by loving others, praying for those who need it, and doing my best to spread God’s word,” Bromwyn Pasche said.

“God is literally my all,” Arianna Pontoni said. “I have been working on the virtues of Patience and Humility and God is working on that with me as well. I plan on doing God’s will — His will and not mine.”
Catholic school community brings student into the faith

By Nicole L.V. Mullis

St. Philip Catholic Central High School sophomore Marcel Williams didn’t mean to call attention to himself. He was following directions in class, writing an essay about what his Catholic education meant to him. That essay would later take first place in a diocesan-wide contest for the Office of Schools [see page XX].

“Marcel’s essay was more about turning around his life rather than the traditional responses,” said Nina Laney, enrollment specialist for the Diocese.

Marcel was not raised Catholic. He was attending a public elementary school in Battle Creek, but things weren’t going well. He switched to a different public school system for middle school but was still falling into the wrong crowd.

“I didn’t care about school,” Marcel said. “I was bullied a lot. I was always sidetracked, talking in class and getting yelled at.”

During sixth grade, Marcel’s neighbor asked if he would like to play football for St. Joseph Middle School. Marcel agreed. That neighbor was St. Joseph Middle School theology teacher Don Shafer.

“Marcel is like a foster-son to me,” Shafer said. “He grew up playing with my kids.”

Marcel noticed a big difference on this football team.

“When I played on other teams it was not OK to lose,” Marcel said. “You get down on each other, and you start yelling at each other. With St. Joseph, you keep your head up and keep hoping for the best.”

Marcel made new friends, ones he visited at St. Joseph Middle School whenever his public school had half-days or days off. Marcel’s mother enrolled him at St. Joseph for seventh grade.

Again, there was an immediate difference.

“There was a lot more homework,” Marcel said. “It was more disciplined [than my other school], but the teachers were more enthusiastic about wanting to help. They reached out to you if they knew you were struggling.”

Marcel’s grandmother often spoke to him about God, peaking Marcel’s interest, but she was not able to answer his questions. Daily theology classes gave Marcel a chance to find those answers and develop a prayer life, something he detailed in his essay.

“Just after one year at St. Joseph, my belief in God and feeling more comfortable talking and praying to Him became very easy,” Marcel said.

As his classmates prepared for Confirmation, Marcel found he wanted to be confirmed. His first-grade sister Maddy was preparing for baptism, and Marcel discussed with his mother receiving baptism too. He worried, however, he was rushing things.

Marcel’s grandmother gave him some good advice.

“She said it was my decision and all that mattered was me growing closer in my relationship with God and finding my way home,” Marcel said.

Marcel was baptized in St. Joseph Church on April 17, 2016, along with his sister Maddy — right across the parking lot from his middle school. His family was there as well as his neighbor, coach, and teacher Mr. Shafer.

Four days later, Marcel was confirmed with the rest of his classmates, a day he considers his “favorite middle school memory.” Marcel also made his First Holy Communion that day, receiving the Precious Body and Blood from Bishop Bradley.

“It was the perfect way to receive First Communion,” Marcel said. “It was awesome.”

As he wrote in his essay, “Going to St. Joseph Catholic Middle School and St. Philip Catholic Central High School was the best thing that ever happened to me because not only do I have friends, I have a family of friends and teachers.”

Students’ essays detail Catholic school impact

By Nicole L.V. Mullis

Inspired by their Catholic school education, and perhaps the reward of pizza and money, Catholic school students offered heartfelt reflections for the inaugural “Catholic School Pride Contest” conducted by the diocesan Office of Schools.

Nina Laney, enrollment and retention specialist for the Office of Schools, initiated the diocesan-wide contest during Catholic Schools Week this past January inviting students to tell their story. Elementary and middle schools with a 75 percent participation rate earned an ice cream party. High school students had a chance to win money. All schools had participating entries; seven schools earned an ice cream party and more than 50 high school essays competed for the top prizes of $100 for first place; $50 for 2nd and 3rd place and $25 for 4th and 5th place.

“Catholic Schools Week is an exciting time to reflect on the difference a Catholic education can make,” said Laney. “As administrators and staffs, we see the difference it can have, but we wanted to hear from students how their education has impacted them.”

Four of the top five essay winners, including first place, came from St. Philip Catholic Central High School.

“Battle Creek-St. Philip’s students told a personal story – the difference in their education being here instead of what it would have been somewhere else,” Laney said.

Marcel Williams, St. Philip Catholic Central sophomore, took first place, sharing his journey from troubled public school kid to a practicing Catholic school kid.

“I’d never talked about God until I went to St. Joseph. After one year at St. Joseph, my belief in God and feeling more comfortable talking and praying to Him became very easy.”

Michael Johnston, Lake Michigan Catholic senior, took second place, writing about the Christ-center classroom.

“No student is ever overlooked, left behind, or dismissed. A deep will to see everyone succeed is present in every teacher in the building.”

Faith Scriber, St. Philip Catholic Central junior, took third place, sharing her joy in weekly Mass.

“I noticed that once I truly started to pray and pay attention in Mass, the void in my heart started to fill.”

Diego Campos, St. Philip Catholic Central junior, took fourth place, focusing on his call to serve.

“I have maintained going to Mexico for mission trips, something encouraged by my school. I’m not sure if I would have that opportunity at any other school.”

Ben Rutherford, St. Philip Catholic Central sophomore, took fifth place, sharing life as a Catholic school kid.

“Normally, you hear kids complain about school, but I don’t mind it. I truly think it’s the Catholic school difference. The Faith is strong, the Spirit is high, and the Love is deep.”

The Office of Schools will share these essays, as well as other student entries, through social media and at http://catholic-schools.diokezoo.org/.
Learning from the White Rose

By George Weigel

Seventy-five years ago last month, Sophie and Hans Scholl and their friend Christian Probst were executed by guillotine at Munich’s Stadelheim Prison for high treason. Their crime? They were the leaders of an anti-Nazi student organization, the White Rose, and had been caught distributing leaflets at their university in the Bavarian capital; the leaflets condemned the Third Reich, its genocide of the Jews, and its futile war.

How did young people once active in the Hitler Youth come to recognize the evil of the Nazi regime and risk their lives to oppose it?

The 2005 Oscar-nominated film, Sophie Scholl: The Final Days, offers a part of the answer. The garish brutality of the Nazis, not least at its Nuremberg party rallies, was a first hint to serious young people that something was wrong here. The White Rose youngsters were also thinkers, and studied Socrates, Plato, and Pascal under the tutelage of Kurt Huber, a philosophy professor who despised the Hitler regime. The leaflets that were their primary resistance tool included references to Goethe, Aristotle, Schiller, and Lao Tzu — further signs of deep and broad reading.

What you won’t learn from the film, however, is that the triggering inspiration for their activism was the “Lion of Muenster,” Archbishop Clemens von Galen, whose anti-Nazi preaching convinced the members of the White Rose that thought and discussion must give way to action. So, between June 1942 and February 1943, the White Rose produced and distributed six leaflets urging others to nonviolent resistance against the Nazi regime. To stand by silently, they claimed, was to be complicit in “the most horrible of crimes — crimes that infinitely outdistance every human measure.” To do nothing was to truckle to Hitler; and “every word that comes out of Hitler’s mouth is a lie.”

The fourth pamphlet made a promise: “We will not be silent. We are your bad consciences. The White Rose will not leave you in peace.” And therein lies a clue to another inspiration for the Scholls and their friends: John Henry Newman and his writings on conscience.

In Britain’s Catholic Herald, Paul Shrimpton notes that the youngsters of the White Rose were deeply influenced by Augustine’s Confessions and George Bernanos’s Diary of a Country Priest. But it was Newman’s sermons, recommended to the White Rose students by a philosopher who had converted to Catholicism after reading Newman’s Grammar of Assent, which prompted that fourth pamphlet with its call to heed the demanding voice of conscience.

Shrimpton reports that when Sophie Scholl’s boyfriend, Fritz Hartnagel, was assigned to the Russian front in 1942, Sophie gave him two volumes of Newman’s sermons. He later wrote her that “we know by whom you are inspired. Take a look at what Newman does in the Church these days about ‘conscience,’ and you will stand in a relationship of moral obligation to our creator. Conscience gives us the capacity to distinguish between good and evil” — words Shrimpton notes, that “were taken almost verbatim from a famous sermon of Newman’s called ‘The Testimony of Conscience.’” On the witness stand before the notorious Nazi “People’s Court” judge Rudolph Freisler, 21-year-old Sophie Scholl testified that it was her conscience, and her Christian conviction, that had led her to nonviolent resistance against Hitler and his gangsters. That Christian conscience, we now know, was formed in part by a serious intellectual and spiritual encounter with Blessed John Henry Newman.

There is a lot of talk in the Church these days about “conscience,” and Newman is invoked by many prominent personalities in those debates. So it might be useful for all concerned, including Church leaders in the Munich where the White Rose youngsters gave their lives for the truth, to ponder Newman’s influence on these contemporary martyrs.

What did the members of the White Rose learn from Newman about conscience? They learned that conscience could not be ignored or manipulated. They learned that the voice of God speaking through our consciences sets before us what is life-giving and what is death-dealing. They learned that conscience can be stern, but that in submitting to the truths it conveys, we are liberated in the deepest meaning of human freedom.

They learned that obedience to conscience can make us courageous, and that to strive to live an ideal with the help of grace is to live a truly noble life with an undivided heart.

George Weigel

Distinguished Senior Fellow and William E. Simon Chair in Catholic Studies Ethics and Public Policy Center

New book captures Pope Francis’ reflections on the Our Father

Vatican City, Mar 15, 2018 (CNA) — In commemoration of the fifth anniversary of Pope Francis’ election to the papacy, Penguin Random House has published a collection of the Pope’s reflections on the Our Father.

Released March 13, “Our Father: Reflections on the Lord’s Prayer” focuses on issues of social justice and charity around the world, urging Christians to reflect on solidarity and forgiveness.

“I hope that in praying the Our Father, every one of us will feel ever more loved, forgiven, bathed in the dew of the Holy Spirit, and I will thus be able in turn to love and forgive every other brother, every other sister,” writes Pope Francis in the book’s introduction. “This will give us an idea of what Heaven is like.”


In the series, Pope Francis collaborated with Father Marco Pazzo, a theologian and prison chaplain in Northern Italy, to reflect on the Lord’s Prayer.

Additionally, the book contains excerpts from homilies of his general audiences and angelus addresses, with an afterword by Father Pazzo.

Each chapter breaks down one section of the Our Father. They also include reflections on topics such as hope, Mary’s fiat, the elderly, and the poor.

In the beginning of the book, Pope Francis focuses on the importance of the title of God as “Our Father.” The word “Father” is power, he writes, and shows us an intimate image of God as creator of sons and daughters and as a provider for his children.

“What I say is this: we must humble ourselves into saying ‘Daddy’ and to truly believing that God is the Father who accompanies us, forgives us, gives us bread, is attentive to all that we ask, clothes us even better than the flowers of the field.” The book emphasizes the need for prayer and compassion for those who suffer from hunger around the world. Quoting the book of James, the Pope writes that the Gospel is not lived properly without attending to the bodily needs of those who are hungry and sick.

“Always someone is hungry and thirsty and needs me… This person needs me, my help, my words, my efforts, we are all in this together.”

Pope Francis also expresses the importance of the elderly, stating that their prayers are a gift to the Church. He says their prayers sustain the workers of the Church.

“The lives of the elderly and of the grandparents are prayers. They are a gift for the Church. They are a treasure!”

In December, during one of the filmed sessions for the “Our Father” series, Pope Francis garnered media attention for suggesting that part of the Our Father was “poorly translated.”

“This, ‘lead us not into temptation,’ is not a good translation… It is not God who tosses me into temptation in order to see how I fall. A father does not do this. A father helps his child get up right away.”

He further clarified that God is the good father who helps his children, but it is rather Satan who leads people into temptation.

Pope is a very human person who experiences anxiety and nervousness... and is someone who is invested with enormous responsibilities as the leader of the Catholic Church, with more than one billion people,” he said.

The illustrations for “The Pope’s Cat” were done by Roy DeLeon, a Benedictine oblate and retired graphic designer from Seattle.

“He’s done a beautiful job,” Sweeney said. “He’s putting a lot of himself into it, and a lot of research into what it might look like in the Pope’s apartment, or what the Swiss guards look like.”

“The Pope’s Cat” is the first book in a series of four books so far. The next book, “Margaret’s Night in St. Peter’s Square,” is a Christmas story with fully colored illustrations. Books three and four will see Margaret venture into the Vatican’s Holy Week festivities and to Assisi with the Pope.

The series’ intended audience is for 1st-4th graders, and is published by Paraclete Press.
In touching documentary, son reunites with mother who almost aborted him

New Orleans, La. (CNA) - Melissa Coles found herself pregnant at the age of 18. Fearing that she and the father could not support a child, she went to the local abortion clinic on Parker Avenue in Indianapolis. But right before the abortion, she told the doctor, "I can’t do this," and left.

Melissa’s son David was born Dec. 22, 1993. Soon after, he was adopted by the Scotton family in Louisiana, who had been longing for a child.

David was raised by the Scottons, knowing that he was adopted and almost aborted. Eventually, he began to speak at public events, sharing his story with pro-life groups. He won the Louisiana Pro-Life Oratory Contest at Jesuit High School in New Orleans, drawing local recognition for doing so.

Soon afterward, his birth mother, Melissa, contacted the adoption agency to see if David would be willing to meet her. David agreed.

Reflecting on the decision, he told CNA in a recent interview, "I wanted to thank my biological parents for leaving the abortion clinic and giving me the life I have today." "I am forever thankful they chose the adoption option for me," he continued.

Around the same time, the executive director of the Louisiana Right to Life, Benjamin Clapper, reached out to David to see if he would be interested in filming the reunion between him and his biological parents.

Clapper’s original idea of filming the reunion as a pro-life video clip soon turned into the makings of a film, now called “I Lived on Parker Avenue.”

The short documentary, directed by Philip Braun III and produced by Joie De Vivre Media, was released online on March 8. The film explores the story of David’s birth parents, the Scotton family, and David’s own journey in discovering where his life began.

"From day one, our goal with this film was to reclaim the beauty of adoption," said David. "I’ve dedicated so much of the last 5 years of my life, for free, to simply get this message out there.”

A film premier for the documentary was held earlier this week at the Louisiana Governor’s Mansion.

The documentary’s message struck a particular chord with the governor, John Bel Edwards and his wife, who were instructed by their doctors to abort their own daughter after discovering a birth defect during pregnancy. However, they rejected the abortion.

David, who has promoted the film across the nation, to members of Congress and on television appearances, hopes that the documentary will showcase the extraordinary journey of adoption and invite women considering abortion to consider adoption instead.

“I hope those who watch will see what the adoption option can do. Without the adoption option, I would not be here today...my parents would not have the gift of their only child; nor would my grandparents have the gift of their only grandchild. That’s what adoption does. It can save lives and build families,” he said.

Moving forward, David plans on “always keeping in touch” with his birth parents, saying, “I am looking forward to seeing my biological sister and half-sister grow up as well.”

The documentary “I Lived on Parker Avenue” is now available online for free or for DVD purchase, and was also featured at the NewFilMakers Los Angeles Annual DocuSlate festival in December.

Good News and Brews

Good News and Brews features live music, dynamic speakers, engaging topics on popular issues, and fellowship for married and single young adults from college through their 30s. The group is held on the second Thursday of each month. Join young adults this month on April 12th from 7 - 9 pm at Arcadia Brewing Company (701 E. Michigan Ave., Kalamazoo, MI 49007).

Contact Tim McNamara (tmcnamara@dikzoo.org) with any questions.

Ron Rolheiser Column

Our Ache for earthly immortality

We share the world with more than seven and a half billion people, and each of us has the irreplaceable, innate sense that we are special and uniquely destined. This isn’t surprising since each one of us is indeed unique and special. But how does one feel special among seven and half billion others?

We try to stand out. Generally we don’t succeed, and so, as Allan Jones puts it, “We nurse within our hearts the hope that we are different, that we are special, that we are extraordinary. We long for the assurance that our birth was no accident, that a god had a hand in our coming to be, that we exist by divine fiat. We ache for a cure for the ultimate disease of mortality. Our madness comes when the pressure is too great and we fabricate a vital lie to cover up the fact that we are mediocre, accidental, mortal. We fail to see the glory of the Good News. The vital lie is unnecessary because all the things we truly long for have been freely given us.”

All of us know what those words mean: We sense that we are extraordinary, precious, and significant, irrespective of our practical fortunes in life.

Deep down we have the feeling that we are uniquely loved and specially called to a life of meaning and significance. We know too, though more in faith than in feeling, that we are precious not on the basis of what we accomplish but rather on the basis of having been created and loved by God.

But this intuition, however deep in our souls, invariably melts in the face of trying to live a life that’s unique and special in a world in which billions of others are also trying to do the same thing. And so we can be overwhelmed by a sense of our own mediocrity, anonymity, and mortality and begin to fear that we’re not precious but are merely another among many, nobody special, one of billions, living among billions. When we feel like this, we are tempted to believe that we are precious and unique only when we accomplish something which precisely sets us apart and ensures that we will be remembered. For most of us, the task of our lives then becomes that of guaranteeing our own preciousness, meaning, and immortality because, at the end of the day, we believe that this is contingent upon our own accomplishments, on creating our own specialness.

And so we struggle to be content with ordinary lives of anonymity, hidden in God. Rather we try to stand out, to leave a mark, to accomplish something extraordinary, and so ensure that we will be recognized and remembered. Few things impede our peace and happiness as does this effort. We set for ourselves the impossible, frustrating task of assuring for ourselves something which only God can give us, significance and immortality. Ordinary life then never seems enough for us, and we live restless, competitive, driven lives. Why isn’t ordinary life enough for us? Why do our lives always seem too small and not exciting enough? Why do we habitually feel dissatisfied at not being special?

Why our need to leave a mark? Why does our own situation often feel so suffocating? Why can’t we more easily embrace each other as sisters and brothers and rejoice in each other’s gifts and each other’s existence? Why the perennial feeling that the other is a rival? Why the need for masks, for pretense, to project a certain image about ourselves?

The answer: We do all of these things to try to set ourselves apart because we are trying to give ourselves something that only God can give us, significance and immortality.

Scripture tells us that “faith alone saves.” That simple line reveals the secret: Only God gives eternal life. Preciousness, meaning, significance and immortality are free gifts from God and we would be a whole lot more restful, peaceful, humble, grateful, happy, and less competitive if we could believe that. A humble, ordinary life, shared with billions of others, would then contain enough to give us a sense of our preciousness, meaning, and significance. Thomas Merton, on one of his less restful days wrote: “It is enough to be, in an ordinary human mode, with one’s hunger and sleep, one’s cold and warmth, rising and going to bed. Putting on blankets and taking them off, making coffee and then drinking it. Defrosting the refrigerator, reading, meditating, working, praying. I live as my Fathers have lived on this earth, until eventually I die. Amen. There is no need to make an assertion of my life, especially so about it as mine, though doubtless it is not somebody else’s. I must learn to live so as to gradually forget program and artifice.”

Ordinary life is enough. There isn’t any need to make an assertion with our lives. Our preciousness and meaning lie within the preciousness and meaning of life itself, not in having to accomplish something special.
“Si Cristo No Hubiera Resucitado Vana Sería Nuestra Fe”
por las Hermanas Misioneras Siervas del Divino Espíritu

En la carta a los Corintios San Pablo nos recuerda que “si Cristo no hubiera resucitado vana sería nuestra predicación y nuestra fe”, (1Cor. 1, 1) es Cristo resucitado quien da sentido profundo y verdadero no solo a la vida de la iglesia sino también a la vida interior de cada cristiano. El tiempo de la pascua con todo lo que Él es y significa debe convertirse para la vida del cristiano en el centro de su ser y hacer. Nuestra fe en la resurrección de Cristo no es solo la fe en un acontecimiento pasado, o en un conocimiento meramente intelectual, sino en una persona que vivió, vive en medio de nosotros y seguirá viviendo sin fin. Este tiempo pascual debe motivar y renovar nuestra vida en todas sus dimensiones, dejando atrás al hombre viejo con todas las caídas y los errores del pasado y dar comienzo al hombre nuevo, para vivir y permanecer en la alegría del resucitado, que ha venido a darnos vida, y vida en abundancia.

“Dios Padre por su gran misericordia, nos ha hecho nacer de nuevo mediante la resurrección de Jesucristo, para que tengamos una esperanza viva”. Cristo con su resurrección nos ofrece: Una vida nueva en Él; esta vida nueva es ofrecida gratuitamente desde el momento que recibimos el bautismo, que se va realizando y plenificando en la medida que nos decidimos a vivir como verdaderos hijos de Dios. También nos ofrece el Poder de vencer el pecado; Cristo ha vencido toda obra del mal con su resurrección y nos transmite la gracia de no ser dominados por ninguna tentación; Nos da vida eterna para resucitar junto con Él, donde Él se da como la resurrección y la vida según el evangelio de San Juan, de una vida eterna después de la muerte y también de la vida que clamamos cuando se ve opacada la vida según el evangelio de San Juan, de una vida eterna después de la muerte y también de la vida que clamamos cuando se ve opacada la vida. Jesús mismo nos dice en el evangelio de San Mateo retomando las palabras del libro del Deuteronomio. Es por eso que la iglesia también nos da tres luces o tres direcciones que nos ayudan a vivir más plenamente el tiempo de la claresa: la oración, el ayuno, y la limosna.

¿Por qué demos de orar? En el evangelio de san Lucas, repetidas veces nos muestran a un Jesús orante, especialmente en momentos importantes de su vida: cuando eligió a los doce discípulos nos dice la palabra que subió al monte a orar, también lo vemos en el monte del Getsemani orando para no caer en la prueba, también lo vemos en el cruz orando al Padre pidiendo perdón por quienes lo ultraron y entregando su Espíritu. Jesús no solo mente nos manda a orar sino que también nos da testimonio de su vida de oración nos muestra la necesidad de estar unidos a Él. A través de una vida de oración podemos crecer en fe, darle un sentido nuevo a nuestra vida, y adquirir la fuerza que necesitamos para seguir luchando.

La Cuaresma, Camino hacia la Pascua
por las Hermanas Misioneras Siervas del Divino Espíritu

Hemos escuchado muchas veces que el tiempo de la Cuaresma es un camino de 40 días, donde buscamos volver a Dios con todo el corazón con toda la vida y con todas nuestras fuerzas como Jesús mismo nos dice en el evangelio de San Mateo retomando las palabras del libro del Deuteronomio. Es por eso que la iglesia también nos da tres luces o tres direcciones que nos ayudan a vivir más plenamente el tiempo de la claresa: la oración, el ayuno, y la limosna.

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Conejos y Huevos de Pascua
Ya comenzamos a ver en los almacenes conejos y huevos de diferentes colores para decorar y jugar. Sobre todo para los niños es símbolo de alegría y señal de la primavera!

Queso en Pascua
El queso en Pascua es una tradición en muchos países. Desde la antigüedad, en Europa se mata la oveja para tener los huevos para la pascua. Mariana de decir especialmente a los niños: ¡Hay vida, Cristo ha resucitado!! ¡Felices Pascuas! ¡Disfruten y estén alegres! ¡Llegó la primavera!

Quinto Encuentro: Diócesis de Kalamazoo
por M. Veronica Rodriguez
Seguimos en nuestro camino del proceso del V Encuen-
tro de Pastoral Hispana en la Diócesis de Kalamazoo al igual que en el resto de la nación. Ahora es el tiempo de preparar y programar el Encuentro Regional de la Región Episcopál V1 que será el 2 y 3 de junio del 2018 en Detroit. La Región Episco-
al está compuesta por las arquidiócesis y diócesis de los es-
tados de Michigan y Ohio. Son un total de 13 diócesis. Se espera que haya más de 300 delegados representando a sus arquidiócesis y diócesis en el Encuen-
tro Regional. Los delegados de las diócesis son personas que partic-
iparon en las sesiones de las parro-
quias, en los encuentros parroquiales y en los encuentros
diocesanos. Nosotros nos reuniremos el viernes 20 de abril con los 26 del-
egados que representaran a la Diócesis de Kalamazoo en el En-
cuentro Regional. Los delegados representan a la mayoría de las parroquias de la diócesis que tienen comunidad hispana. En la reunión estaremos informando sobre los detalles del Encuentro Regional y será una oportunidad para responder a las preguntas que tengan los delegados.

El Encuentro Regional está diseñado para: Reunir a los delega-
dados de las diócesis, grupos apostólicos y organizaciones católicas para compartir las experiencias de reflexión, discernimiento, consulta y evangelización. Reflexionar jun-
tos en las diferentes realidades sociales, culturales y pastorales experimentadas por los His-
apanos/Latinos en los Estados Unidos. Proponer respuestas
practicas a necesidades específicas y las aspiraciones de la comuni-
hidad Hispana, en un proceso de reflexión y discernimiento de la Región. Hacer compromisos concretos como Región para avanzar la Nueva Evangelización apoyando el trabajo de las diócesis, parroquias, pequeñas comunidades, movimientos eclesiales u otros grupos. Y celebrar en nuestro compartir, en la oración y en la Eucaristía. Para todo este proceso del Encuentro Regional, los delegados de cada diócesis llevarán las prioridades y todo el trabajo que se hizo durante los Encuentros Diocesanos de cada diócesis.

Si desea más información sobre el proceso del V Encuen-
tro, comuníquese con su párroco o con la Oficina Diocesana del Ministerio Hispano al 269-903-0197 o en la página nacional del V Encuentro, https://vencuen-
тро.org/.
Bishop to celebrate Healing Mass April 17

In recognition of National Child Abuse Prevention Month, Bishop Bradley will be celebrating a Mass of Healing for victims and survivors of child abuse. The special Mass will be held during the regularly-scheduled 12:10 p.m. Mass on Tuesday, April 17th at St. Augustine Cathedral.

“The Diocese of Kalamazoo works diligently in the area of child abuse prevention,” says Marina Hentz, Associate Director, Safe Environment for the Diocese, “including completing background checks for all who work with minors and vulnerable adults in our parishes and schools, conducting approximately 60 Virtus: Protecting God’s Children Sessions every year, and facilitating ongoing education of both adults and children prevention measures.

If you are a victim of child abuse or trauma and would like information on the Diocesan Trauma Recovery Program, please contact Dr. Phyllis Florian, 269-903-0134. If you need to make a report of sexual misconduct or child abuse within Diocesan institutions or ministries, please call (877) 802-0115 to reach the Diocese of Kalamazoo’s Sexual Misconduct Question and Reporting Line.

For questions related to the Office of Safe Environment, please contact Associate Director Marina Hentz at mhfentz@diokzoo.org or (269) 903-0171.

Page 2 story continued — Catholic Conference

Michigan Catholic Conference opposes retroactively amending the civil statute of limitations. As publicly stated this week by leading academic and legal scholars, both in Michigan and from outside the state, civil retroactivity would put institutions and employers in the impossible position of defending claims that are decades old. Civil retroactivity would hold the people and taxpayers who support today's churches, schools, civic organizations, and local and state government financially accountable for allegations from decades past.

"Over the past fifteen years, the Catholic Church has talked with survivors, committed to protecting children by creating safe environments, required background checks and fingerprints of both volunteers and employees, increasing ongoing awareness and education about abuse and protecting children. Our unwavering support for healing assistance and counseling will continue regardless of when a survivor's claim is confirmed."
Bishop's Annual Appeal kicks off this month

Did you know that the average cost of one year of seminary is close to $50,000? Or that $10,000 in scholarships are awarded to outstanding Catholic high schools seniors each year? Or that more than $250,000 is given to the local Catholic Charities and Catholic Community Center, Benton Harbor? These are just a few of the highlighted ministries, programs and services funded each year by generous support of the Bishop’s Annual Appeal.

The annual fundraising campaign supports the ministries of Bishop Bradley and the Diocesan Pastoral Center offices which also offer many centralized services and support to the 26 Parish Collaboratives (59 parishes/missions) in the Diocese. Each year parishes are given annual targets to raise and any amount of the target is returned to the parish. Last year more than $115,000 was returned to parishes.

In his letter to registered parishioners, Bishop Bradley details his gratitude for the generous support of the campaign and explains in detail this year’s campaign theme, “We are called: so faith, hope and charity may flourish.”

...I am always very grateful for your sacrificial generosity,” he writes. “When there is need, your response is great. Our need through the Bishop’s Annual Appeal is to help further the mission of the Church and bring the Love of Jesus to all who so desperately yearn for it through faith-formation programs, hope-filled family resources or an offer of a charitable outreach. We take our responsibility seriously to use well the monetary gifts given through the Bishop’s Annual Appeal for the ultimate purpose of building God’s Kingdom here in the Diocese of Kalamazoo.”

More than 20,000 registered parishioners throughout the nine counties of the Diocese will receive a Bishop’s Annual Appeal packet this month including a letter from Bishop Bradley, a pledge card and an infographic detailing where the more than $3 million raised goes. For more information on the Bishop’s Annual Appeal visit: www.diokzoo.org.

The Diocese of Kalamazoo Catholic Committee on Scouting (CCOS) will host the annual Scout Mass with Bishop Bradley, celebrant, Sunday April 22, 2018 at 3 p.m. at St. Augustine Cathedral. Scouts, leaders, parents and families are invited to come together to celebrate scouting as a ministry to our youth.

The Committee, which was established in 1993, celebrates 25 years this year. In recognition of this special anniversary the Committee invites all those who have served on the Committee in the past or have been involved with Scouting as a youth or as an adult, to join in the Mass. If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact George Dragan - gdragan@diokzoo.org or John Hallacy - bchallacy@aol.com. Shown is a photo from the 2017 Scout Mass with Very Rev. Richard Altine, Scouting Chaplain, Bishop Paul Bradley and a Brownie scout.